

# North Lanarkshire Council

## Report

### Education and Families Committee

approval  noting

Ref BD/ AM

Date 19/05/20

### Empowering Clusters to Achieve Change

**From** Anne Munro

**Email** munroan@northlan.gov.uk

**Telephone** 01236 812221

---

#### Executive Summary

Empowering Clusters is an essential driver for change in North Lanarkshire. The model for cluster working advocated in this paper will ensure that schools and school leaders, supported by central staff, will work together to enable real change on behalf of the families and communities they serve.

The planning to empower clusters is drawn from the Scottish Government approach to empowerment. It also draws from the Plan for North Lanarkshire. Lastly, it supports planning relating to decisions taken in the 2020 budget setting process.

Cluster approaches are referenced in the accompanying report to committee, *Scottish Attainment Challenge Plan (2020 – 2021)*. It also underpins recommendations made in the related report to committee, *Review of Additional Support Needs Update (2020)*. Thirdly, it relates closely to planned activity described in the accompanying report, *Developing Executive Headships*.

---

#### Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

- (1) Note the content of the report and accompanying appendices and
- (2) Approve the proposed model for Empowering Clusters.

---

#### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities
Ambition statement	(7) Enhance collaborative working to maximise support and ensure all our children and young people are included, supported, and safe

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Government's 2017 consultation 'Empowering Schools: A consultation on the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill' set out clear aims and objectives in relation to improving the education and life chances of our children and young people, closing the unacceptable gap in attainment between the least and most disadvantaged children and raising attainment for all. It stressed the need for a collaborative effort in order to achieve the overall aims, starting with teachers and leadership in schools and Local Authorities and new Regional Improvement Collaboratives.
- 1.2 The government's subsequent strategy has been to establish an 'Empowered System' which is accompanied by draft guidance for schools and local authorities.
- 1.3 Within Education and Families the national 'Empowered System' agenda is progressed through three mechanisms:
  - National Improvement Framework work streams
  - Family Groups
  - Cluster Groups
- 1.4 Cluster working in North Lanarkshire schools has traditionally focused on transition processes from primary to secondary schools, especially for pastoral transitions. Since the introduction of Family Groups for primary schools in 2015, this has been further emphasised with improvement discussions taking place outwith cluster arrangements.
- 1.5 Head teachers and heads of establishments from all sectors attended an Education and Families conference in January 2019. Feedback from this conference showed a clear appetite for greater collegiate working within clusters.
- 1.6 Following on from the conference, a series of meetings with cluster lead head teachers were held to discuss developing this collegiate work within the context of 'Empowering Clusters'. These meetings led to the establishment of a Cluster Improvement Plan (CIP) and the role of 'Cluster Chair'.
- 1.7 These meetings have also influenced the design of the cluster system which is described in section 2 below. They reflect the thinking of school leaders and central officers and make important connections to other areas of related activity within Education and Families.
- 1.8 Education and Families published its 'Additional Support Needs Review' (ASN Review) in September 2019. The review process identified that existing policies and practices needed to be modernised to reflect national and local drivers. One of the drivers identified is the national 'Empowering Schools' agenda.
- 1.9 The ASN Review presented 12 recommendations. Four of these recommendations, as detailed in section 2.2, can be delivered, either fully or in part, via the 'Empowering Clusters' system.

- 1.10 The Service has developed the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) plan for 2020/21 to support schools on a wider universal platform thereby strengthening the empowering clusters model. Details can be found in the SAC plan submitted to Education and Families Committee, May 2020.
- 

## **2. Report**

### **2.1 Cluster Functions and Improvement Planning**

- 2.1.1 The Empowering Clusters system will be designed to deliver on five strategic and operational functions:

- Equity
- GIRFEC
- The Additional Support Needs Review
- Improvement
- Curriculum.

- 2.1.2 The system will be built around the role of the Cluster Chair. This role will be fulfilled by a head teacher from each cluster for a period of two years. The Cluster Chair will have overall strategic responsibility, with final decisions around cluster funding and allocations of additional support resting with them. The role of Cluster Chair will be a vital one as Education and Families moves forward with its transformational change programme.

- 2.1.3 A team of 15 Cluster Improvement and Integration Leads (CIILs) will be appointed to support the role of the cluster chair. This team will be funded via SAC, which will last for a minimum of two years until March 2022 and will help to further develop an integrated systems approach to raising attainment and tackling the poverty related attainment gap. The role of CIIL will play a key role in supporting the cluster chair in providing information on specific areas of need alongside an in-depth working knowledge of the types of support that the SAC team can offer. The CIILs will play a pivotal role in the allocations process and in identifying additional and intensive support for children in their clusters. The allocation of the CIILs across the system can be seen in Appendix 1.

- 2.1.4 Further support for the Cluster Chair will be delivered via Education and Families Managers who will work closely with all individuals and services to ensure efficacy of the operational model and a consistent approach across all of North Lanarkshire.

- 2.1.5 Education and Families Managers will have line management responsibility for the CIILs, however Cluster Chairs will direct the work of the CIILs.

- 2.1.6 Additional detail on the key functions of these roles within the cluster system are outlined in appendix 2.

- 2.1.7 It is anticipated that head teachers who have taken on the role of cluster chair thus far will continue in the role until June 2022:

- Head teachers currently in this role will be asked to confirm their commitment to remaining in the role for this period by Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This confirmation

will come via email to the Education and Families Manager with oversight of Empowering Clusters.

- A follow up, confirmatory conversation will then take place between the head teacher and the Education and Families Manager with management responsibility for that cluster.
- After a period of 23 months a new chair will be nominated by the cluster head teachers and confirmed by Education and Families Managers on a two yearly cycle.

2.1.8 Recruitment for the role of Cluster Improvement and Integration Leads will take place in May 2020 in line with HR guidelines and procedures.

2.1.9 Training for cluster chairs and cluster improvement and integration leads will be delivered from June 2020. The focus for this training is described in appendix 3.

2.1.10 The development of the cluster improvement planning process is intended to lead to more effective collegiate working in clusters. This collegiate work will include an annual focus on raising attainment. It is envisaged that the CIIL will have a direct input in to the CIP and play a key role in evidencing impact which will feature in SAC Plans and reports to the Scottish Government.

2.1.11 The cluster improvement planning process is intended to lead to schools pooling resources in order to support improvement and the council's tackling poverty strategy. Initially, schools will be encouraged to use their Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) in this way and will be assisted in their planning by the SAC Equity Lead who will support heads of establishment in developing greater alignment and synergy between SAC and PEF priorities at both school and cluster level. The Equity Lead will also support the development of a reporting/monitoring framework and confirmation of PEF funding contribution required for individual school PEF plans and impact on PEF spend.

## **2.2 The Additional Support Needs Review**

2.2.1 The Additional Support Needs (ASN) Review contains 12 recommendations, four of which will be delivered via the Empowering Clusters system. The 4 recommendations are:

- ASN head teachers, teachers and support staff should be systematically included in the programme of head teacher engagement, school improvement and cluster planning (recommendation 3).
- Partnership working will be strengthened in a revised SAS model, which will enable greater empowerment of staff to meet the needs of young people and enable a greater connection between needs and the partnership response to them. A more holistic approach to supporting families will underpin this (recommendation 8).
- Cluster based ASN hubs (Well Being Bases) will be created under the control of head teachers with staffing and financial resources aligned to them as part of a managed process that sits alongside future budget setting. This will ensure that there is appropriate resource deployed to meet needs (recommendation 9). Staffing resources will include 46 support for learning teachers. These teachers will be line managed by the head teacher of the respective hub where they will be based.

- There will be a transparent, formula-driven allocations process, which provides a cache of resource to be deployed locally. Implementation of the new GIRFEC wellbeing pathway will ensure that the allocation of resources and placements are directed towards the most vulnerable children and young people (recommendation 10).

2.2.2 Since September 2019 there has been a range of engagements with head teachers and partners relating to strengthening cluster working, a key aspect of which is strengthening partnership working (Support around the School).

---

### **3. Equality and Diversity**

#### **3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty**

The ASN Review took account of relevant legislation relating to meeting the additional needs of pupils, including the Standards in Schools (2000) Act, which established the presumption of mainstream in law; the Additional Support for Learning (2004) Act, which established that meeting the additional needs of young people was a responsibility of teachers; and the Children and Young People's Act (2014) which strengthened arrangements to support the wellbeing of children.

#### **3.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been started and will be reviewed dependent on developments. The assessment takes into account the potential impacts of the ASN review.

---

### **4. Implications**

#### **4.1 Financial Impact**

The earmarked resources linked to the Empowering Clusters model consists of the 15 FTE CIIL posts and the 45 FTE Network Support staff. In terms of the CIILs the funding for these posts will be supported from SAC grant until March 2022. Funding for the Network Support staff will be realigned from secondary school budgets.

#### **4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

The Cluster Improvement and Integration Lead (CIIL) post has been approved via the Council's Workforce Steering Group, subject to the application of the national job sizing process. Given the bespoke nature to this post, there will be a reliance on the approved benchmarking exercise involving consultation via the Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers. This will ensure that the appropriate salary grade and associated terms and conditions are applied.

The recruitment process associated with the newly established CIIL posts will be in line with Council's Workforce Change Policy.

#### **4.3 Environmental Impact**

There is no environmental impact anticipated with these proposals.

#### 4.4 Risk Impact

A detailed Programme Plan for Change in ASN Provision has been begun and will be progressed further after a risk workshop.

---

### 5. Measures of success

5.1 Improved attainment

5.2 Improved outcomes for ASN pupils (attendance, reductions in exclusion, positive destinations and attainment in literacy and numeracy)

---

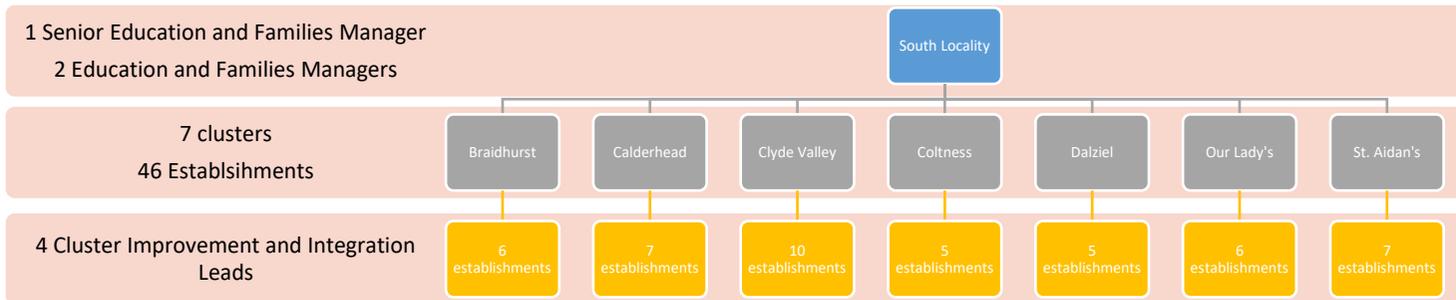
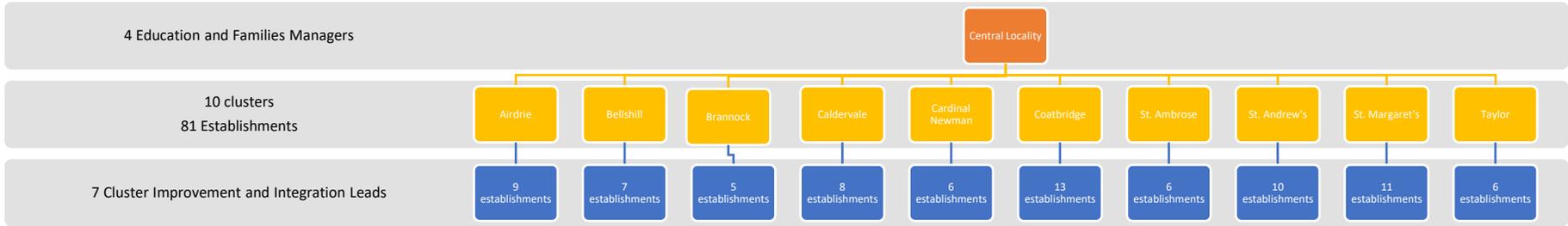
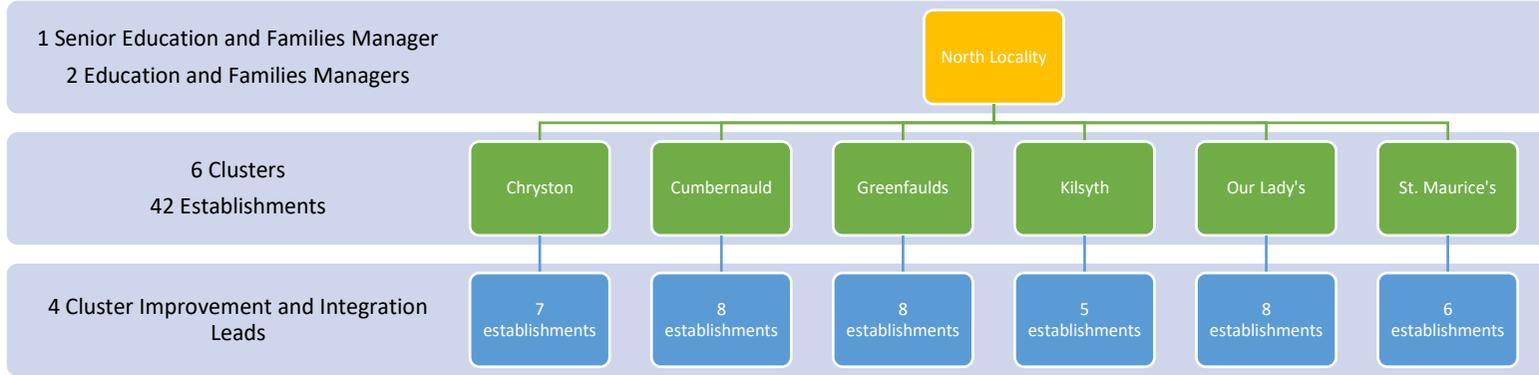
### 6. Supporting documents

6.1 [Additional Support Needs Review](#)



**Anne Munro**  
**Head of Education (South)**

## Appendix 1- Locality and Cluster Operating Model



## Appendix 2

### Cluster Roles

#### Cluster Chair

- Strategic Lead for the cluster,
- Oversight and submission of the Cluster Improvement Plan and Report,
- Strategic responsibility and final decisions around funding to the cluster alongside deployment and operational focus of the CIILs,
- Overall responsibility of ASN review allocations i.e. support from lead practitioners including Support for Learning teachers and Support Assistants. The ASN Review Update, submitted to Education and Families Committee in May 2020, highlights that this approach will provide more local solutions and reduce pressure on specialist provision and make provision for 46 FTE Support for Learning Teachers, from the current peripatetic Network Teacher team, to be deployed to the Wellbeing bases from August 2020.
- Chairing and coordination of Support Around School (SAS) meetings,
- Liaison with other head teachers and Education and Families Manager.

#### Cluster Improvement and Integration Leads

##### **Attainment**

- Analysis and understanding of data related to impact of the support around the school process and the CIP,
- Collegiate working with cluster schools and the Attainment Challenge team to raise attainment, close the poverty related attainment gap and ensure equity for all,
- Liaison with the SAC team to facilitate support in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing,
- Signposting staff to relevant career long professional learning (CLPL) opportunities,
- Support staff confidence in determining for all children and young people their achievement of a level through assessment and moderation activities.

##### **GIRFEC and ASN**

- Liaison with agencies and partners in line with the support around the school process,
- Involvement with the support around the school process including engaging with parents and families,
- Signposting of supports/other agencies for individual and groups of children.

##### **Cluster Improvement Priorities**

- Support for the Improvement Methodology approach,
- Work with the Robert Owen Centre (ROC) team. The **Robert Owen Centre** for Educational Change aims to promote more equitable education systems through theory-driven applied research underpinned by a commitment to the principles of social justice and lifelong learning

- Identification and sharing of good practice,
- Provision of feedback/ reporting to the SAC team and input to the reporting cycle to Scottish Government,
- Liaison with cluster chairs in terms of next steps,
- Progression of the cluster equity agenda.

### **Education and Families Manager**

- Coordination of ASN Review Allocations (in partnership with the cluster chair),
- Liaison and planning with cluster chairs in locality,
- Line management of Cluster Improvement and Integration Leads

## **Appendix 3**

### **Training for Cluster Chairs and CILLs**

#### **Cluster Chairs**

- System leadership,
- Support Around the Child allocations,
- GIRFEC Pathway,
- Function of wellbeing hubs.

#### **Cluster Improvement and Integration Leads**

- System Leadership,
- Incubated practice delivered by SAC i.e. literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing,
- GIRFEC Pathway,
- Digital Communication,
- North Lanarkshire's Tackling Poverty strategy.