

**EDUCATION VISION AND STRATEGY – CONSULTATION RESPONSE OVERVIEW  
AND NEXT STEPS**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of the paper is to advise Elected Members of the programme of engagement that officers undertook during the consultation exercise on the Education Vision and Strategy document *Our Children, Their Future* and to report on the main themes of stakeholder views gathered through this engagement as well as next steps. This document has been prepared by Education to allow the Service to effectively consider the views of all stakeholder groups and plan for how these views will shape the refreshed Education Vision and Strategy document.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The purpose of the paper is to advise Elected Members of the programme of engagement that officers undertook during the consultation exercise on the Education Vision and Strategy document *Our Children, Their Future* as the previous decision of the Community Services Committee on the [Education Refresh Strategy](#) on 24 August 2023 detailed. Further to this, the report will highlight the main themes of stakeholder views gathered through the engagement exercise and identify next steps. This document has been prepared by Education to allow the Service to effectively consider the views of all stakeholder groups and plan for how these views will shape the refreshed Education Vision and Strategy document.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- 3.1 Consider the synopsis of stakeholder responses from the Education Vision and Strategy consultation and;
- 3.2 Agree the next steps as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 The Education Service strives to ensure the best possible outcomes for all of our children and young people across Argyll and Bute and the Education Vision and Strategy document provides a framework for this. The current Education Vision and Strategy, *Our Children, Their Future*, was developed in 2016 and remains a robust and meaningful document, but with the impacts of a global pandemic and a changing national landscape in regards to Education, a planned and informed refresh has been advancing with these considerations.

- 4.2 During the period of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024, the Education Service held a stakeholder consultation on the Education Vision and Strategy. This date range includes an extension of three weeks to the original consultation period, as requested by stakeholders, the extension was agreed to ensure the fullest opportunity for all stakeholder groups to provide responses. The aim of the engagement exercise was to gather views from stakeholder groups on their thoughts on the current Education Vision and Strategy, *Our Children, Their Future* as well as to define what was important to them for education in Argyll and Bute as detailed in the full overview report in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3 In order to capture the voices and views of as many of our stakeholder groups as possible the consultation included opportunities for in-person and online group sessions along with an online individual questionnaire and was supported by parent and pupil groups as well as school staff. We aimed to make the consultation as accessible as possible and offered the questionnaire in Ukrainian, Russian and Gaelic. Our establishments and central team staff worked with parent councils, pupil councils as well as staff and pupils to complete the consultation.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- 5.1 The consultation had 661 individual on-line questionnaire respondents from pupils (44.3%), staff (24.8%), parents (26.5%) and wider stakeholders (4.4%). With 64 responses from group sessions representing staff (44.4%), parents (15.9%) and pupils (39.7%). The individual respondents represented all areas of Argyll and Bute including rural, island and urban areas. 53% of individual respondents reported that they were aware of the Education Vision and Strategy, *Our Children, Their Future*.
- 5.2 Respondents were asked about their view on the importance of the values of ambition, excellence and equality detailed in the Education Vision and Strategy document, *Our Children, Their Future*. Respondents could rate each value 1 to 5 with 1 being not important and 5 being very important. Equality received the highest rating of all three values with 84.5% of the overall respondents rating this important or very important. Ambition received 79.46% of the overall respondents rating this as important or very important. The value of excellence was rated lowest of all three values with only 60.24% of respondents rating this as important or very important. The pupil response showed a rating of 14%-20% lower for excellence than equality and ambition
- 5.3 Respondents were asked to rate each of the six current outcomes of *Our Children, Their Future* on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). The six outcomes are:
1. Raise educational attainment and achievement for all
  2. Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people

3. Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
4. Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life
5. Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement
6. Strengthen leadership at all levels

Aggregating the responses of important (4) and very important (5) it was almost unanimous across all stakeholder groups that they felt the most important outcomes were number three '*Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed*' (87.21% overall) and number four '*Equip young people to secure positive destinations and achieve success in life*' (87.39% overall). With staff and wider stakeholders also identifying outcome one '*Raise educational attainment and achievement for all*'.

5.4 Respondents were asked open text questions including '*What words and/or short phrases are important to you when you think of education in Argyll and Bute?*' Across all stakeholder groups the most common responses included:

- Inclusive
- Nurturing
- Achievement
- Equity
- Respectful
- Ambitious
- Opportunities

5.5 The final section of the consultation asked for respondents to consider '*Is there something important to you that you think should be clearer or included in the strategy?*' The information from this was collated by individual stakeholder group and themed under headings.

- For pupils, the themes that had the most comments centred on learning and curriculum, skills, developing the young workforce, children's rights and sustainability.
- For parents, learning/curriculum/assessment, skills, sustainability and children's rights featured as important themes.
- For staff, learning, children's rights, health and wellbeing and partnership/collaboration were important themes.
- For other stakeholders, developing the young workforce, UNCRC, health and wellbeing and sustainability were important themes.
- It was also noted across stakeholder groups that they felt that the current document was not easily accessible and understandable by all stakeholder groups and a number of ideas were submitted in regards to considerations for the refreshed document.

5.6 It is important that the refreshed Education Vision and Strategy document continues to drive improvement across our system. Next, we will feedback to our stakeholder groups on the findings of the consultation via our [simple](#),

[interactive and accessible reporting](#) format. We will also engage with a number of stakeholder groups to help shape the format, content and accessibility of the refreshed document to ensure the new Vision and Strategy remains a dynamic and relevant document for the future of education in Argyll and Bute.

Following the development work a final draft version of the Education Vision and Strategy document, informed by the consultation process, will be presented to the Community Services Committee in March 2025 for consideration and approval.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 A refreshed Education Vision and Strategy document which incorporates the views of stakeholders, gathered through this consultation exercise, while simultaneously responding to the changing national and local policy contexts will help shape the future delivery of an Education Service which will support our children, young people and communities to achieve the best possible outcomes.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Policy - The refreshed strategy incorporating the views of stakeholders will present an opportunity for Education to effectively respond to the changing policy context at both national and local levels. The strategy makes an effective contribution to SOA outcomes 3 and 4.
- 7.2 Financial - none
- 7.3 Legal - none
- 7.4 HR - none
- 7.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
  - 7.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics - none
  - 7.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - none
  - 7.5.3 Islands - none
- 7.6 Climate Change - none
- 7.7 Risk - none
- 7.8 Customer Service – none
- 7.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC)- Children and young people are central to the refreshed strategy and as per Article 12 (Right to be heard), pupils views have been clearly sought and represented in the consultation findings.

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**Councillor Audrey Forrest – Policy Lead for Education**

29th April 2024

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – OCTF consultation overview report