

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

11 June 2020

Report by Director of Education

COVID-19 LOCAL DELIVERY PHASING PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek elected member endorsement for the Education Department's COVID-19 Local Delivery Phasing Plan following publication of the Scottish Government's [Route Map](#) on 21 May 2020 and [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): re-opening of schools guidance](#).

RECOMMENDATION

2. Elected members are asked to endorse the Local Delivery Phasing Plan and the production of individual recovery plans for each school and early years setting.

BACKGROUND

3. On Friday 20 March 2020 all schools and early years settings across Scotland closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As set out in Scottish Government guidance, education provision was required to continue for specific pupil groups, including the children of certain identified key workers and those children deemed to be vulnerable, or at risk of becoming so. From Monday 23 March 2020, East Renfrewshire Council has continued to provide this emergency provision through 6 geographical hubs in communities across the authority which pupils have been able to access. In addition, Isobel Mair School has continued to support pupils and families throughout this period.

4. Detailed information about the provision and support offered throughout this time was presented to the Emergencies Committee on 21 May 2020.

5. The publication of the Scottish Government's Route Map on 21 May 2020 outlines the potential next steps for recovery across a range of different sectors, including education provision. Further to the Route Map, [a strategic framework](#) has been produced to support local authorities with their own approaches to a phased reopening of schools and early years settings. More detailed [guidance](#) from the Scottish Government was published on Friday 29 May and this will support the department and schools to prepare our recovery and action plans, detail which will support the re-opening of schools, completing risk assessments, etc. The guidance is subject to change and as such our own and school plans will also be considered and reconsidered as we move through the phases of the relaxation of lockdown.

6. As part of the department's robust approach to business continuity planning, work has been underway for some weeks on the potential opportunities and challenges resulting from the Scottish Government's likely announcements. It has been prudent to

consider the various iterations of any recovery and this has informed the development of the Local Delivery Phasing Plan.

REPORT

7. The Local Delivery Phasing Plan (the ‘plan’) is appended to this paper and sets out the department’s approach to recovery planning to support schools and early years settings in developing their own bespoke plans.

8. The plan sets out the agreed principles underpinning East Renfrewshire’s approach to recovery and the establishment of a local Education Recovery Group, comprising of senior officers and head teachers from all sectors, as well as Trade Union representatives, to support the department’s scenario planning and considerations for recovery. Importantly, the plan outlines the key considerations and assumptions which will inform any recovery planning, both at a departmental and individual school or setting level.

9. The plan sets out the phased recovery approach being adopted in East Renfrewshire:

- **Phase 1** – Schools and centres reopen in June 2020 to an increased number of children and young people for transition purposes;
- **Phase 2** – Schools and centres reopen on 11 August 2020 to all staff with pupils attending on a part-time basis with a blended model of in-school and out of school learning;
- **Phase 3** – Schools and centres incrementally increase the number of hours pupils spend in schools while reducing out of school learning;
- **Phase 4** – Schools and centres reopen fully to all pupils.

10. Elected members will be aware that we are currently in Phase 1 of the plan with a partial reopening of schools and early years centres, with staff physically coming to work only when required and if they are able to do so. This is an important first step in our recovery helping to support the more detailed planning required for subsequent phases and build the confidence of staff to re-enter the workplace.

11. A detailed action plan has been issued to schools and further action plans will be prepared for each of the following three phases following the national guidance available at the time. It should be noted that while Phase 2 has a confirmed start date, at present Phase 3 and Phase 4 will remain under review and be implemented when it is safe to do so as informed by the Scottish Government. Furthermore, we will continue to adhere closely to national guidance and all plans will remain subject to ongoing review should the situation require us to do so.

12. Work is currently being undertaken to support schools and early years centres in returning all pupils from August 2020. As we continue to consider the detailed national guidance, changes to the school day and the location of certain classes or year groups may have to be considered to ensure all pupils can access education provision. In addition, given the requirements for smaller class sizes due to social distancing requirements, further detailed planning will be required to overcome the staffing and accommodation challenges this is likely to present.

13. Throughout this period, free school meal provision has continued through the delivery of food bags to families entitled to this benefit. This model has been well received by recipients, with approximately 1,350 parcels being delivered on a weekly basis. It is proposed that this scheme will continue to support families across East Renfrewshire for the foreseeable future and we are working closely with the Scottish Government to secure this.

14. The unprecedented nature of the pandemic has understandably caused a degree of anxiety and concern amongst parents and carers. As future phases progress, it will be very important to ensure we continue to engage closely with families and other stakeholders to keep them updated on any changes but also to ensure that any concerns can be addressed. This remains an uncertain time for everyone and so it is crucial that this is recognised in our approach to ongoing communication.

CONSULTATION

15. As indicated above and in the Local Delivery Phasing Plan attached, we have worked closely with our school senior leaders and Trade Union partners through our Education Recovery Group.

16. The Director has written to all parents and the Convener will chair a meeting of Parent Council Chairs on Monday 8 June to consult on our Local Delivery Phasing Plan. This will be the first of our normal pattern of meetings with Parent Council Chairs where the Local Delivery Phasing Plan and its progress will be discussed.

17. Many schools have been continuing to meet with Parent Councils remotely throughout the pandemic and will be expected to consult with staff, pupils and parents on their individual recovery plans.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

18. Elected members will be aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant financial cost being borne by East Renfrewshire Council in ensuring key services can continue to be provided. There have been additional costs and loss of income for the Education Department and these will likely continue through the department's recovery phase. The department will continue to work closely with colleagues in Finance to ensure these are accurately recorded.

19. As set out in the plan, it is likely that Phase 3 in particular will require significant additional resources to ensure appropriate education provision across all sectors. In addition to the likely pressures on staffing as schools adhere to social distancing, many schools will be under extreme pressure in seeking to accommodate all pupils and it may be necessary to consider alternative additional accommodation.

20. In following the latest guidance from the Scottish Government, there will also likely be an ongoing cost of increased childcare provision to supplement the time that pupils attend school, whether through breakfast club or after school provision. Given the potential shifts in the school day, this may look different to what has previously been provided or may become an increasing part of some pupils' days. This will be particularly true for those children of key workers or those deemed to be vulnerable or requiring extra support. The department is working closely with out of school care providers and partners to explore the options for enhanced provision and the potential future costs.

21. In addition, as noted above, East Renfrewshire Council continues to provide free school meals through home deliveries to eligible families. Discussions are ongoing with the Scottish Government about the future provision of this service; however, it is anticipated that there will be an ongoing cost to the Council for this to continue.

CONCLUSION

22. The Education Department's Local Delivery Phasing Plan sets out the phased approach by which schools and early years settings across the authority will seek to reopen and deliver education provision in the months ahead as we recover from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

23. Through a blended model of in-school and out of school learning, staff will support pupils to re-engage with their education provision, ensuring that the health, wellbeing and safety of everyone is prioritised at all times.

24. Given the unpredictability of the pandemic, it should be emphasised that the planning assumptions and considerations set out above, as well as the timing of any future phasing, will remain under review and will be subject to any future changes in the national guidance issued by the Scottish Government, Public Health or other relevant national body.

RECOMMENDATION

25. Elected members are asked to endorse the Local Delivery Phasing Plan and the production of individual recovery plans for each school and early years setting.

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Director of Education
May 2020

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East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department COVID-19: Local Delivery Phasing Plan

Introduction

The Scottish Government published [A Framework for Decision Making](#) related to COVID-19 on Thursday 23 April 2020, outlining its approach and considerations as we plan as a country to come out of lock down. On Wednesday 21 May it published [Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis](#) and with it a specific [strategic framework](#) for reopening of schools and ELC settings and on Friday 29 May published [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): re-opening schools guidance](#). It is clear from these documents that there will be a gradual and phased approach over the rest of the calendar year, which the Scottish Government will lead taking key decisions based on evidence which will ensure we take steps to stay safe and continue to control the spread of Covid-19. In East Renfrewshire we will follow this guidance closely and align our plans with the phases set out in the national route map.

From the Strategic Framework for education settings it is clear there are key principles on which we will base our local decision making, but it is also clear there is room for local flexibility, including at a school level. As such we must think through our own recovery plans to best meet the needs of our own communities and settings.

We can also continue to learn from other countries as they recover from lock down before Scotland, and while devising our own plans we will learn from what has worked and what has not with others. We must continue to contribute to the national efforts to contain the virus, follow Public Health and NHS guidance to try to ensure it does not flair out of control; but we must also be ready to adjust our plans should scientific evidence show we can move more quickly. As such we will set out timelines where we can be definite and phases which we can move into at a pace determined by national advice.

The Council is devising its own recovery plan, which will inform those of the department, schools, ELC settings and services. As we plan it will be important to consider the Council's values: Kindness, Trust and Ambition, and ensure that as we plan we keep these uppermost in our thinking as well as those for each establishment / service and our collective endeavour to realise our vision: *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*.

Key Principles

Directors and Chief Education Officers across the West Partnership have agreed the following key principles to guide our recovery planning. These are very well aligned to those of the Scottish Government:

Safety: The safety of our staff and service users will be our top priority throughout the recovery phase and beyond. We must ensure we take steps to continue to socially distance in schools, ELC settings and the workplace to contain and prevent further outbreaks of the virus

Fairness: The virus will have had a disproportionate impact on some families and communities and our recovery must consider how we redress this.

Transparency: We must be clear and open about the decisions we take and why, based on those

core values and the key principles set out in the Scottish Government, Council and department's recovery plans.

Collegiate: We will work with our Trade Union partners, our stakeholders and those who support the delivery of education in East Renfrewshire, including those in the HSCP and Partner Providers in ELC.

Learning: We will consider the steps we have all taken throughout this crisis and learn from what we could have done better, especially if there is a need or a decision to re-establish lock down procedures in the future.

Aims & Objectives

The recovery planning framework aims to set out the department's overarching approach to service recovery stemming from the lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2019. While setting out a number of milestones and considerations, it will provide an overall phased framework, enabling individual schools, early years settings and services to devise their own individual recovery plans, based on the specific circumstances they operate within.

The overall aims that the framework will seek to achieve are:

- Supporting education establishments across East Renfrewshire to devise a phased return to full capacity;
- Prioritising the health and safety of all children, young people and staff working in our early years settings and schools; and,
- Delivery of business support services across education establishments and offices, in line with the Council's recovery plan.

Education Recovery Group

We have established a sub-group of the Education Resilience Leadership Team (ERLT) which has met and agreed the principles, aims and objectives, role and remit and the milestones set out in this document. This will provide the basis for the development of the working group set out below to take forward the next steps.

The group has met digitally over the last few weeks, drawing from expertise across the department, early years and schools to ensure that the framework best supports all establishments to meet the aims set out above, and will continue to meet as we plan subsequent recovery phases and of course to keep our plans under review.

The membership of the group is:

- Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change), Chair
- Education Leadership Team (attending based on requirement)
- Education Provision Manager
- 4x Primary/Early Years Head Teachers
- 2x Secondary Head Teachers
- 2x TU Representatives
- 2 x Quality Improvement Officers
- 1x Educational Psychologist

Role & Remit

The working group has been tasked with developing the department's approach to recovery planning, bringing in the expertise from within and across establishments and services to ensure that we are well placed to respond to future developments and national advice and guidance as we move out of lockdown and towards resuming service delivery in the weeks and months ahead.

More specifically, the group will continue to:

- Support the development of our Recovery Planning Strategy;
- Contribute to departmental prioritisation of functions to support recovery;
- Consider the implications in meeting agreed milestones; and,
- Scenario Plan and in doing so evaluate options for recovery.

Key Considerations

1. Scottish Government

We are conscious that any decisions on the relaxation of restrictions and the phased reopening of early years settings and schools will be advised by the Scottish Government. To ensure a successful recovery, it is essential that Education is well placed to respond to a rapidly changing situation and has a phased approach in place to support a swift deployment of plans, including the need to close schools and ELC facilities and re-establish school hubs should there be a need for lockdown procedures to be re-invoked.

In addition to the Scottish Government, how we respond to any future guidance will also be influenced by a number of organisations, including Public Health, COSLA, ADES, East Renfrewshire Council and the West Partnership.

2. Phased Approach

As set out in the Scottish Government documentation any reopening will be undertaken on a phased approach, given the need for continued adherence to social distancing. This paper sets out the department's phased approach to reopening schools to all staff and some pupils; initially to support key transitions and particular groups of children and young people for whom we consider the closure of schools has had the most impact. This includes vulnerable children and young people for whom re-engagement in school before the summer holidays will be vital.

This phased approach will be based on the need for a blended approach for in-school and out of school learning, increasing the amount of time in school while proportionately decreasing out of school learning.

3. Continued Attendance of Key Worker Children/Equity Groups

As we move to a phased re-opening, involving part time attendance, we need to continue to make provision for key worker and vulnerable children. There is the likelihood of families seeking increased hours for their children, particularly if more parents are required to return to work and we will need a flexible approach in place which may be restricted by the availability of school staff. Therefore, we will work to ensure provision is available working with partners such as Out of School Care to contribute to the need for some children and young people to have full

time provision whilst COVID-19 restrictions remain. We will introduce an application process for the provision for key workers.

4. Staffing

Given the scale of the outbreak and the likelihood and timing of a vaccine becoming available, it is likely that we will see above average rates of absence amongst staff in the months ahead. We will address the need to support the confidence and health and wellbeing of staff while ensuring continuity of teaching and learning throughout this time. School plans will be guided by the need to continue to apply national agreements on teacher contractual duties, while making efforts to deliver these in as efficient a way as possible. School and departmental plans will also need to be able to adjust should groups of staff need to self-isolate for up to 14 days as a result of Test and Protect (Test, Trace, Isolate and Support).

5. Safety

At all times staff and pupils will be encouraged to maintain social distancing and hand hygiene advice and guidance. This includes in the class / play room, playgrounds, social areas, corridors, transport, dining facilities and so on. All class / play rooms will have hand sanitisers where no hand washing facilities are available, and resources to keep work stations and desks clean after use. PPE will be available for staff should they wish or need to use it and for pupils, especially those using public / school transport to get to and from school.

Phased Planning

To ensure the department is best prepared and schools are supported for the recovery, it is suggested that a phased approach is taken to recovery planning:

- Phase 1: Schools and centres reopen in June 2020 to staff and an increased number of children and young people for transition purposes (children of key workers and vulnerable groups will continue to attend). All other children and young people continue to receive out of school learning.
- Phase 2: Schools and centres reopen on 11 August 2020 to all staff with pupils attending on a part-time basis with a blended model of in-school and out of school learning.
- Phase 3: Schools and centres incrementally increase the number of hours spent in school while reducing out of school learning.
- Phase 4: Schools and services reopen fully to all pupils.

Leaders and managers will consider the restrictions which will remain in place for some time and depending on Scottish Government guidance, plan to increase incrementally the amount of time children and young people will spend in school. Communication with staff, pupils, parents and partners will need to be well planned and timeous, making sure stakeholders are consulted and informed to give pupils, staff and parents notice of attendance as learning time in school increases. There will be a need to be flexible in our thinking and planning, including with our School Improvement and Service Plans.

We must also accept that there may be decisions taken to re-invoke lockdown procedures and as such the considerations set out below may change dependent on the progress made in

continuing to contain the virus.

Phase 1: June 2020

The Scottish Government's strategic framework suggests that June could see an increase in pupil attendance for particular groups of children:

This will include both keyworker children and children whom teachers, ELC professionals and other partners, in consultation with the local authority, think would benefit most from early direct contact with education and care staff. There should be a particular focus on supporting children at key transition points (e.g. due to start P1 or S1) which may include some in-school experience in late June, so that they are fully supported to make the next steps in their education.

The timeline below has been agreed with all Head Teachers and the Recovery Group:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1.6.20 | Facilities Management back into schools;
Leadership Teams back into own school;
Risk Assessments complete for each building;
Plans drafted for consultation, including plans for transition activities |
| 5.6.20 | School Hubs close |
| From 8.6.20 | Key worker and vulnerable children back to own schools;
School staff return to own schools (in groups to be determined by HT) to consult on and firm up recovery plans, roles and responsibilities and for August redesign own classrooms and prepare in school and out of school learning. |
| From 15.6.20 | Targeted groups of children and young people (group size to be determined by HT) attend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELC / Primary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key worker and vulnerable young people (probably in increased numbers) • Pre-school children () for transition • Primary 7 children () purposes • Any other children who would benefit from transition activities • Secondary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key worker and vulnerable young people (probably in increased numbers) • Others who would benefit from some face to face / transition activities as determined by the school. This will include new S1 pupils. |
| 29.6.20 | Summer Programme begins for key worker and vulnerable children, delivered by ERLCT in three secondary school sites (to be confirmed), Cart Mill and Arthurlie family centres |

In Phase 1 school meals will not be available in secondary schools. Those attending primary schools will be asked to bring in a packed lunch should they be attending over the lunch period. Children entitled to free school meals (poverty related) will continue to be provided with free school meal bags. At lunch periods classrooms and the dining area will be used to maximise opportunity for social distancing. Snacks will be available in ELC settings for those entitled to free meals. School meals for those not attending school and entitled to free meals will continue to be delivered as they have been since lock down procedures were invoked. It is envisaged that

provision for free school meals will continue over the summer period with delivery to homes, although this will be subject to available resources and ongoing discussions with Scottish Government.

School transport arrangements for those who currently receive it will be made by the department and will consider the need to adhere to social distancing and the need for face coverings on buses and trains. Schools will make arrangements for staggered starting and finishing of the school day in all sectors, taking school transport arrangements into consideration. ELC settings will continue to operate from 08.00 – 18.00, although staggering arrangements will also be put in place.

Phase 2: August 2020

As set out in the national strategic framework all schools will return 11 August 2020. At the point of writing it is not clear whether 11th and 12th August will be in-service days, but until clarified this is what will be planned for, with pupils returning on the 13th August. This phase starting in August will last until the Scottish Government indicates that it is safe to relax lock down procedures further.

From August, schools will work on the basis that all children and young people will be accessing their school or early years setting every week as a minimum. This could mean primary schools, in particular, amending the timing of their school day to ensure they manage efficiently what may be restricted staffing, while continuing to meet responsibilities related to teacher contracts. For instance, half the school roll may attend two full days per week, say Monday and Tuesday from 9.00 – 3.00, with the remainder attending for the same pattern on Thursdays and Fridays. Schools will plan for siblings to attend on the same days to support families. This will allow teaching staff non-class contact time, as per their contractual rights and duties, time on Wednesdays to continue to plan for their class for both in and out of school learning. This example of this sort of approach is likely to be adopted and adapted across the West Partnership, but the detail of such considerations are for head teachers to determine in consultation with cluster colleagues and other stakeholders.

To ensure pupils enter and leave school buildings safely, there will be staggered start and finishing times to the school day, which we will ask parents to respect when dropping off and picking up, especially in ELC settings and primary schools. Access to the school building by anyone other than staff and pupils will be restricted.

Provision will continue to be made for key worker and vulnerable children to access childcare on a full time basis including before and after school through Out of School Care Providers (primary schools); ELC settings will continue to make provision from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm.

During Phase 2 pupils will continue to learn both in and out of school with a blended approach of face to face and remote learning. It is important to note that it is not envisaged that all remote activities will be digital, but there will be a balance of experiences planned to ensure learning is progressive, continuous and high quality. As soon as is practicably possible and as stated earlier dependent on the availability of staff and accommodation, we will look to increase pupil hours in schools. It should be noted, however, that whatever schools are able to provide, we will not be able to match to all parents' working needs and as such will continue to work in partnership with them throughout Phases 2 and 3.

School meals will be made available in all sectors, but options will be limited and will be planned on the basis that children and young people will have staggered lunch times to ensure the need for social distancing. This will be planned on a school-by-school basis through a partnership

between senior leaders and Facilities Management. School transport arrangements for those who currently receive it will be made by the department, as far as possible and based on availability from suppliers.

Phase 3

We do not know when Phase 2 will end and Phase 3 will begin, but as stated earlier, it will be informed by the Scottish Government advice and decisions to relax lock down type procedures further and we will look to increase the number of hours children and young people spend in school as quickly as possible, depending on the availability of staff and accommodation.

In this phase the amount of time spent in school by pupils will increase incrementally with the balance of out of school learning decreasing. The department will support both primary and secondary schools to plan for an incremental increase in pupil attendance, with accommodation in schools coming under increased pressure as more groups of children will need to attend more often. As such schools will work with the department to maximise the use of school accommodation, such as making sure all PE takes place outdoors to free up gym halls, and, where necessary, consider extending the school estate by using facilities in the wider community, such as community halls, libraries, sports centres, etc. It may mean, for instance that where a school has unused surplus accommodation and staff resource, it may need to be shared with cluster schools.

Careful timetabling for both accommodation, pupils and staff will be necessary and as such, careful communication will also be necessary. At this point it is likely that the uniformity of approaches across all sectors will diverge, since not all schools will have the same hurdles to overcome, depending on the availability of accommodation and staff. It will be unlikely that primary schools will be able to continue to allocate one full day for non-class contact time and as such, pupil attendance patterns will adjust. Again, communications with parents will be paramount.

Full time provision will continue to be made for key worker and vulnerable children.

School transport and meal provision will also need to flex in agreement with services in Phase 3 to reflect pupil attendance, the detail of which will be communicated to stakeholders timeously.

Phase 4

As indicated above with other phases we do not know and cannot plan for when this phase will be reached, but it will be when the Scottish Government relaxes all lock down procedures as well as the need for social distancing. At this point all children and young people will return to and attend school as usual, with all other extraordinary measures reverting back to what previously was the normal school day.

Action Planning

This overarching plan will be accompanied by specific guidance and action plans for schools and centres for each phase. These are designed to support and guide recovery plans at school level which will be devised by Head Teachers in consultation with all key stakeholders.

Clarity and Transparency

Schools, ELC settings and services should be prepared to share their plans with stakeholders, to

seek views and to ensure clarity and transparency. Communication will be key during the recovery phase and it will be important that our service users know what is planned and why. As such the department will liaise closely with the Council's Communications team, LNCT, SCC, Parent Council Chairs and elected members to ensure key messages are shared. Schools and ELC settings should be prepared to share their plans with their staff, pupils, Parent Councils / parent committees on an ongoing basis as we enter into and out of the phases set out above.

Review

As with the Scottish Government's Road Map through and out of the crisis, this plan is not set in stone and as such will be kept under review by the Education Leadership Team, informed by the Scottish Government, senior leaders in schools and our partner Trade Union colleagues. Regular reports will be taken to Education Committee to keep elected members abreast of its progress and success in cautiously, carefully and timeously returning East Renfrewshire's pupils to schools. To do so we will report on the following measures:

- Percentage of pupils returning to school in Phase 1
- Percentage of pupils returning to school in Phase 2
- Balance of in school and out of school learning in Phases 1 – 3
- Pupil engagement in out of school learning in Phases 1 - 3