

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE20 August 2020Report by Director of EducationCOVID-19 EDUCATION RECOVERY UPDATE**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to update elected members on the Education Department's recovery planning and the reopening of all schools across East Renfrewshire in August 2020, in line with the Scottish Government's [Guidance on Preparing for the Start of the New School Term in August 2020](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Elected members are asked to:
 - a. note the contents of the report and endorse the Department's recovery planning approach;
 - b. welcome the successful reopening of all East Renfrewshire schools and early learning settings to children, young people and staff and the efforts of staff across the Council to support this; and
 - c. request that further updates are provided to committee on the department's recovery and the use of additional Scottish Government resources to address learning loss amongst school pupils.

BACKGROUND

3. At its meeting in June 2020, Education Committee endorsed the Education Department's Local Delivery Phasing Plan (LDPP), setting out the principles and approach to recovery planning across the authority. This plan was based on guidance published by the Scottish Government on 29 May 2020. The LDPP set out a plan for a blended learning approach to education for the beginning of school session 2020/2021, with pupils attending school on a part time basis, along with out of school learning. The LDPP outlined the department's proposed phases for recovery, gradually increasing the amount of time pupils would spend in school and moving towards resumption of a full time offer.
4. It was noted at Education Committee that a follow up report would be submitted to the next committee meeting to update elected members on recovery progress.
5. Following endorsement by the Education Committee, the LDPP was submitted to Education Scotland for review on 24 June 2020, as required by the Scottish

Government. The department's submission to Education Scotland is attached as Appendix 1. At this time, the LDPP was also shared with individual head teachers, in addition to an action plan template, to support the development of their own bespoke recovery plans. Throughout this period we continued to work closely with our trade union partners in consulting on future plans.

6. HM Inspectors of Education carried out a desk top review of the department's LDPP and considered it against the guidance issued by the Scottish Government. The overwhelmingly positive feedback provided (Appendix 2) specifically noted that the LDPP demonstrated the presence of strategic processes to support recovery with clear governance arrangements; a phased approach to planning enabling establishments to create their own context specific approaches; and a clear focus on the safety and wellbeing of all staff and pupils. Importantly, the feedback also acknowledged the collaborative way in which the LDPP had been prepared.
7. Elected members will be aware that on 23 June 2020, the Scottish Government announced its aim to have all schools return on a full time basis from the beginning of school session in August 2020. This decision was confirmed by the First Minister in a statement to the Scottish Parliament on 30 July 2020. Following this decision, detailed [guidance](#) was published to support all local authorities and schools with the return to full time provision from August.
8. As part of the department's approach to supporting families throughout the pandemic, elected members will be aware of the geographical hubs that were operated across the authority to support both key worker families and many of our most vulnerable families throughout the lockdown period. Over the summer holiday, the department worked closely with the Trust who operated summer provision to continue to offer vital support to families across the authority. Going beyond the requirements set out in the Scottish Government's guidance, this provision continued until Friday 7 August, enabling families to continue to access provision throughout the summer holiday. In addition, elected members will recall that free school meal provision continued throughout this time through the delivery of food bags.
9. It should be noted that although the decision to proceed with the full time reopening from August was confirmed in July, individual establishments have continued to maintain their own bespoke recovery plans based on the department's LDPP. These plans will now act as a contingency plan for each establishment and are able to be implemented should there be a requirement for any further restrictions or lockdowns to be imposed.

REPORT

10. Elected members will be aware that, in line with national guidance, all schools and early years settings across East Renfrewshire reopened to staff on Monday 10 August, with children and young people returning on a full time basis on Wednesday 12 August. Given the relatively short period available between the final decision being announced on 30 July and the reopening of establishments, there has been a hugely significant effort made by senior leadership teams and facilities management staff to ensure that all buildings have been prepared to welcome back children, young people and staff safely.

11. In addition, the Education Department and individual establishments have been supported by colleagues from across the Council, especially colleagues in Corporate Health and Safety, in ensuring that our learners have been able to return and the appropriate measures have been put in place.
12. Following the publication of the national guidance, the department prepared a template action plan outlining the key safety measures which schools were required to take into account when preparing for reopening. This document was distributed to each head teacher, alongside further departmental guidance, to support their own planning for recovery. Given the consistency of much of the national guidance, particularly in relation to the need for appropriate social distancing between adults and adults and children and the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), many of the required interventions and safety measures had already been implemented across establishments as part of their preparations before the summer.
13. The action plan outlined specific key measures and actions that would require to be taken by each setting ahead of being able to reopen. This wide ranging document included the following sections, each with detailed action points:
 - a. Staffing
 - b. Pupil Attendance
 - c. Curriculum
 - d. Buildings and Outdoors
 - e. Safety (including enhanced cleaning regimes)
 - f. Communication
 - g. Contingency for a Local Outbreak
14. In addition to the individual school recovery plans, the department has continued to work closely with the Corporate Health and Safety Unit to review all individual building risk assessments and ensure that they reflect all updated guidance. These official building risk assessments have been supplemented by individual establishment risk assessments, with a focus on education specific elements and individual risk assessments for children, young people and staff where this is required. Role-based risk assessments have also been developed for certain posts and curriculum subject areas have specific professional guidance referenced in risk assessments which is being followed.
15. A detailed guidance note has been issued to all schools and early learning centres on the process for responding to any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID. All head teachers are familiar with the process and have communicated this with the relevant staff in their own establishment. The department continues to work closely with colleagues in Environmental Health and the local Health Protection Team to ensure that a robust response procedure is in place should there be any localised school cases in the weeks and months ahead.
16. Given the uncertainty that many families have been experiencing over recent months, there has been a recognition that communication with parents will form an important part of any recovery and its importance has been highlighted by the inclusion in the action plan noted above. All schools have led on the communication with their own parents and have been supported with template materials from the department. In addition, a letter was issued to all parents by the Director of Education and shared on

social media outlining the department's approach to recovery and highlighting the individual plans being put in place by each establishment. Understandably there remains a level of anxiety amongst some parents and the department is continuing to support establishments with materials and guidance to address these concerns and ensure all learners are able to return safely.

17. As part of the Scottish Government's national approach to recovery, additional resources have been made available to local authorities to support the recovery of learning loss. At present, a total of £1.1m has been confirmed for this school session, with further allocations pending, and the department is currently working with head teachers on the opportunities that this additional funding provides. Detailed guidance on addressing learning loss has been issued to head teachers and a further report on the use of this additional resource will be brought to committee at a later date.
18. The department will continue to review the national guidance available as it evolves and, where required, will update the guidance provided to schools and early learning centres through revised action plans. As previously indicated, all establishments are mindful of the need to maintain robust contingency arrangements which may need to be deployed at short notice should there be any future restrictions or localised lockdowns. These individual plans will remain under review on an ongoing basis.

CONSULTATION

19. Elected members will be aware that, in developing the LDPP, the department consulted widely with staff, trade unions and parents to ensure that a wide range of views were reflected. Given the relatively short period available in recent weeks as we have prepared for the return of schools, particularly over the summer holiday break, there have been limited opportunities to consult with parents or staff on the full time return of pupils in the manner we would have normally sought to do. In addition, given the changes in guidance over the summer holiday, there have been limited opportunities to consult with the department's own Education Recovery Group on the proposals, albeit there was an effort to do this electronically.
20. Consultation has been undertaken where possible, both by the department and by individual head teachers consulting with their own parent communities. In addition, through the Council's Resilience Management Team (CRMT), there has been ongoing engagement with trade union partners which has proven valuable.
21. The department is committed to ensuring that the views of staff, parents and, crucially, pupils are taken in to account and that any concerns can be addressed. In the coming weeks, we will be looking to bring forward a number of the usual consultation events to ensure that the views of all stakeholders can inform our recovery progress and we can ensure these are reflected as we continue to develop our recovery plans further in the months ahead.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

22. Elected members will be aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant financial cost being borne by East Renfrewshire Council and this continues as we begin recovering services. Discussions are ongoing through COSLA with the Scottish Government on any additional funding that will be made available to local authorities to support approved COVID related expenditure. The Chief Financial Officer regularly advises Cabinet on the Council's financial position. This includes estimated projected revenue out-turn for 2020/21, taking in to account the assessment of pressures arising from COVID and any additional resources made available in this context.
23. Whilst the acceleration of the recovery and full time return of all pupils has reduced the extent of significant expenditure on additional temporary accommodation and teaching resources to ensure the delivery of a blended model of learning, there remains significant challenges in ensuring that schools can operate safely for all pupils and staff.
24. In following the guidance from the Scottish Government, there is a requirement for an enhanced cleaning regime to be in place across all schools and early years settings, including a focus on regular day cleaning. In recent months the department has recruited additional day cleaning staff for establishments across the authority complemented by the introduction of new systems. There is also a significant increase in the amount of cleaning and hygiene supplies required, with regular wiping down of surfaces before and after use and regular hand sanitising being required. It is unclear at present how long these additional measures will be required, but costs have been projected to the end of this financial year.
25. As indicated above, additional resources are being made available by the Scottish Government to all schools to support the recovery of learning loss through the allocation of funding for additional teaching staff. This additional resource will be used by individual schools to supplement their existing budgets, including PEF and Lowest 20% resource allocations. Head teachers have the discretion to make decisions about how they will spend these resources and in doing so will consider collaboration and pooling of resources in clusters or local geographical areas where there is benefit to their learners.

CONCLUSION

26. Following the decision taken by the Scottish Government and publication of national guidance, all schools and early learning centres across the authority have now reopened on a full time basis for the new school session, supported by the department's recovery planning framework.
27. Given the potential for suspected or confirmed cases or a future outbreak, the department will continue to work closely with partners across Environmental Health and Health Protection to take the appropriate action as required. Individual schools will continue to keep their own contingency plans under review to enable them to be implemented in the event of any future restrictions or localised lockdowns which impact on the provision of education.

28. In seeking to address the learning loss experienced by pupils over the school closure period, the department will be working closely with individual schools to explore the opportunities made available by the additional Scottish Government funding, and will provide a further report to committee at a later date.

RECOMMENDATION

29. Elected members are asked to:

- a. note the contents of the report and endorse the Department's recovery planning approach;
- b. welcome the successful reopening of all East Renfrewshire schools and early learning settings to children, young people and staff and the efforts of staff across the Council to support this; and
- c. request that further updates are provided to committee on the department's recovery and the use of additional Scottish Government resources to address learning loss amongst school pupils.

Mhairi Shaw
Director of Education
20 August 2020

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Appendices

1. ERC LDPP to HMle
2. ERC Local Authority Phasing Plan Delivery Plan Review Letter

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 lockdown 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 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*.

Context of Recovery of Education in East Renfrewshire

The Education Resilience Leadership Team (ERLT) was established on Monday 16 March 2020 and met initially daily to lead and manage the department's response and subsequently its recovery from the crisis. Logs and Action Logs from each meeting are available on request. The ERLT fed and continues to feed into the Corporate Resilience Management Team (CRMT) and the corporate recovery group, which in turn feeds into the Corporate Management Team (CMT) ensuring a cohesive approach across the Council.

Following the closure of schools on Friday 20 March 2020, East Renfrewshire Council continued to provide key worker childcare provision and support for our most vulnerable children and young people through six geographical hub schools, based in communities across the authority. In addition, we maintained provision at Isobel Mair School to support the pupil group, many with very complex additional support needs.

East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of key workers amongst its population at 44.6%¹. As a result, demand for key worker childcare provision has continued to increase throughout the school closure period, with many schools seeing significant numbers of pupils in attendance throughout.

¹ ONS – Key Workers: Population & Characteristics, May 2020
(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/keyworkerspopulationandcharacteristics2019>)

Schools are well prepared to respond to the challenges posed through the recovery and have been working for many weeks on identifying and addressing issues raised. Throughout this period we have continued to stringently adhere to national guidance throughout all of our planning.

The wellbeing of children and families has been at the forefront of all decisions relating to our recovery. From the announcement of school closures to date, we have worked closely with families and colleagues in health and social care to ensure that we are there for those who need us most. Regular communication has allowed us to plan responsively not only for emergency childcare but for the re-opening of schools. As we plan our recovery we continue to work closely with partners to ensure support and transition arrangements are bespoke for our most vulnerable families. We are also mindful of the vital role schools play in protecting children and keeping them safe, so will continue to provide hub childcare provision to reduce the likelihood of risk.

Staffing

The blended model of learning that will be a necessity for any successful recovery in education will require a significant element of workforce flexibility. Whilst a range of flexibilities have been afforded for temporary changes to teachers terms and conditions (SNCT 20-74), as a department we must first and foremost ensure that our existing workforce is fully utilised in responding to local challenges. To ensure there is sufficient capacity in the workforce to deliver our vision of *“Everyone Attaining Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences”* under a new blended model of education, a review of the availability of teaching and support staff is essential.

In Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) a teacher is allocated for each setting (or 2 FTE if capacity over 80). The importance of local government support staff and their role in helping teachers to focus on their prime locus as leaders of learning should not be underestimated. Child Development Officers are appointed to settings on a basis of staff:pupil ratio of 1:8, with a promoted post structure. All ELC settings have benefitted from an additional support to raise attainment from the lowest performing 20% budget, which has been reduced this year to meet a saving to the overall education budget. In addition, to support flexibility and the roll out of 1140 hours all ELC settings have additional staffing of 1 CDO per 24 children and 1 Early Years Playworker per 32 children.

To give a context to the provision of staffing in East Renfrewshire, in primary schools, 1.11 FTE is normally allocated for every class to be formed (i.e. 1 FTE teacher plus associated non-class contact time) as well as an FTE allocation for nursery class (where appropriate). Management time FTE in primary schools is also based on a pupil roll band model. In addition, primary establishments receive an allocation of Pupil Support Teachers – 1 FTE per school plus a further allocation in recognition of levels of ASN, SIMD (1-3) and Ethnicity. Primary schools have also benefitted from additional staffing to improve attainment of the lowest performing 20%, although in the current year this has been reduced given the level of savings which need to be achieved by the Council.

In terms of secondary schools the formula for teaching staff is 9.7 plus an adjustment in respect of the pupil roll together with additional pupil support staff e.g. behaviour support, Support for Learning, Pastoral. Management time in secondary schools is also based on a pupil roll band model. As in the primary sector additional staffing to address lowest performing 20% has been reduced to meet a reduction in budget.

East Renfrewshire has one special school, Isobel Mair, and a small number of specialist units and services: PreSchool Assessment and Development Unit (PSADU); Carlbar Communications Centre (CCC); Outreach Service (Behaviour); Williamwood Communications Service. Each of these is staffed on a needs basis reflecting SNCT advice on class sizes for special schools and units.

East Renfrewshire education department has, by necessity, recently made significant budget savings through the reduction of local government and teaching staff during the period 2018-19 and 2019-20 including clerical, PSAs, school technicians and music instructors. Such reductions in school staff will inevitably have an effect on each establishment's ability to adequately staff and timetable to support the recovery process whilst ensuring teacher workload is minimised (the planned budget saving for janitorial and cleaning staff has been placed on hold to ensure we can deliver the health and safety requirements for this recovery).

An analysis of employees known to be in the shielding or in the clinically vulnerable category has also been undertaken for every establishment: firstly to understand the impact of any required shielding or self-isolation on an establishment's ability to deliver a quality education to pupils, and secondly to ascertain the need for any additional supports such employees may require, which would facilitate a possible return to the workplace once schools reopen to all pupils in August 2020. At this stage, and in line with government advice, these groups of employees should not be requested to return to the workplace. However provision can be made for them to work from home in the preparation of classroom resources, supporting pupils remotely or in developing on line digital resources and CLPL for staff.

During March our primary schools undertook a large scale recruitment exercise for our August intake and they were able to ensure the majority were in the position of being "fully staffed" for the new academic session. Equally, secondary schools have been recruiting on an ongoing basis to all available vacancies such that, other than long term absence cover and vacancies for some promoted posts, there are few if any un-promoted teaching vacancies to be filled. In addition, the retention of supply teacher provisions (JS/20/78) has facilitated a number of supply teachers securing permanent employment with the authority which has also assisted with recruitment to vacancies at this time.

ERC has been allocated an additional number of both primary and secondary probationers. Whilst this may assist the staffing of establishments in terms of raw numbers, the department will need to be mindful of the potential increased workload for management in some schools particularly around the need for support and mentoring with some primary schools being allocated 6 probationers. This will be particularly difficult in the early phases of recovery as in order to deliver a blended model which adheres to social distancing requirements, all leadership posts in schools will need to be fully class committed with only minimum management time.

In terms of managing workload, whilst we welcome the advice set out in SNCT JS/20/79, East Renfrewshire LNCT agreed that negotiations at a local level should go ahead as part of the process of planning at a school level for recovery. In light of the additional demands placed on teachers as well as the practical restrictions created by the current situation, head teachers were encouraged to consider the factors which could contribute to increased teacher workload. Working Time Agreements (WTAs) will reflect the majority of teacher's time being allocated to recovery in terms of planning, preparing and assessment of lessons and digital/remote learning, with limited allocation of time for school plans, collegiate activities and CLPL. WTAs will also be flexible enough to ensure regular review and revision where necessary and set aside time for meaningful discussion and reflection for all staff.

Accommodation- Provision

East Renfrewshire has a well-earned reputation for providing an excellent education for children and young people and this success has contributed to a growth in the number of pupils in our schools and children in nursery classes and family centres. The number of East Renfrewshire resident pupils has risen by 12% from 2012 to 2018, with a similar increase evident in the number of 3 and 4 year old East Renfrewshire children attending local authority and funded provider places. Based on the National Records of Scotland projections for the school age population is expected to grow by a further 5.4% by 2025.

East Renfrewshire has two main geographical areas split into the east and west of the authority, named Eastwood and Levern Valley respectively, with the east more socially advantaged and higher levels of poverty seen in the west. Many educational establishments have high occupancy levels and increasingly so within the Eastwood area; however places in the Levern Valley area are also now starting to face pressure.

The educational estate has been developed to date in a planned and phased way to ensure there are sufficient educational places to meet the needs of our resident population; including the increased requirements of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. Places remain under constant review as developers seek to build new housing in response to the marketability of the area alongside the impact of the second hand house market and private rental accommodation and changing demographics as houses in established communities change ownership increasing the numbers of families with younger children and those of school age. This provides a constant increase in demand for places at schools and early years' facilities with many of them having high occupancy levels.

In addition to this growth in demand from a resident population, schools attract a significant number placing requests from families residing outwith the authority which are granted or refused within the legislative framework. This results in our establishments facing changes to their pupil numbers and challenges to places throughout the school year for many schools. In particular in advance of a new school session there is an increased number of new catchment applications received by the department following the processing of school placing request applications from parents/carers who previously had a placing request refused. Consequently school places are subject to change and under particular pressure in advance of a new school session.

The main phase of the Council's early year's expansion programme for 1140 hours is dependent on the construction of new facilities, including 6 major new builds that were planned to be available for August 2020. COVID-19 lockdown has necessarily impacted on all projects that were under construction. This means that our early years offering for August 2020 must now concentrate on existing available provision and seeking to maximise that with a reduced more limited offer to families than originally planned. Of note is that one of the new build family centres was planned to accommodate the relocation of a large nursery class in one of our primary schools to increase early years places and help ease pressure on primary school places in the school's catchment via much needed additional space for primary children. This arrangement must still stand to meet the demand for non-denominational primary children and also means that 3 and 4 year olds intended for that provision are dispersed over a number of other centres increasing occupancy levels across the board.

The Council's education estate has developed over the years including through internal remodeling to provide additional teaching spaces, major and minor new extensions built and new schools have been established. School grounds in many schools are now limited for potential extension. All options have been exhausted and the Council must now substantially extend its school estate to cope with any further additional new residential development as noted in the Council's latest Local Development Plan (LDP).

Whilst the educational estate has expanded in response to growth and new requirements, nonetheless many educational establishments have increasingly high occupancy levels. Further expansion is planned to meet continued needs associated with local development planning and known approved windfall sites (not originally allocated for development under LDP process); and the Council is committed to fully addressing future education infrastructure requirements in a long term, coordinated and planned way through future LDPs.

Looking also at the latest nationally published school estate statistics (2019) we see that East Renfrewshire has the second highest (89%) overall occupancy rate for the primary sector and the sixth highest (88%) in the secondary sector; the equivalent national averages being respectively 78% and 80%. The data also shows that 42% of our primary schools have occupancy rates at 90% or more, which is the second highest in Scotland and the national average has 20% in this category. In terms of secondary 29% of our schools have occupancy rates at 90% or more, which is the 15th highest in Scotland where the national average has 26% in this category.

When we consider the occupancy rates in our schools based on the school roll as currently anticipated for the new session in August 2020, another primary school's occupancy increases beyond 100% and there is over a 3 point increase from 2019 in the overall occupancy rate for the secondary sector which increases to 92%.

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 2020. 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.

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 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, and thereafter to all children and young people as accommodation, staffing and other factors, such as transport, allow.

This phased approach will be based on the need for a blended approach for in-school and out of school learning, increasing as speedily as we can the amount of time in school while proportionately decreasing out of school learning. Out of school care will also be considered and evolve during the phased approach in partnership with Out of School Care Providers.

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. To allow us to continue to plan for sufficient provision to support keyworker attendance we have introduced an online application process asking parents to apply for emergency childcare. The categories provided by the Scottish Government will continue to be used to assess applications. Successful applicants will continue to benefit from hub childcare provision within their locality. The hub provision will have a childcare focus, however as a support to families' children will be encouraged to complete their remote learning like other children who are at home. Our most vulnerable children will also benefit from this childcare offer. Schools will continue to track progress of all our children carefully and take steps to increase attendance of our key equity groups to enable us to continue to focus on reducing any gaps.

4. Staffing

Whilst there has been a relaxation of the guidance issued to individuals shielding or considered as clinically vulnerable, Scottish Government advice for these groups continues to be to "work from home where possible". East Renfrewshire has carried out an analysis of those employees (both teaching and local government) who fall into the shielding category and who have received appropriate correspondence to confirm this status, as well as those who consider themselves to fall within the clinically vulnerable group (Appendix A). In summary we have 19 (16.9 FTE) teaching staff in the shielding category and 61 (57.5) FTE in the clinically vulnerable. For Local Government Employees (LGE) we have 14 (11.3 FTE) shielding and 69 (56.79) FTE clinically vulnerable. Within this there are naturally sectors / schools / subject areas more affected than others; for example 36 of those clinically vulnerable are CDOs and as such would have a detrimental effect on our capacity to deliver our phasing models.

In seeking to ensure that all staff can return to work safely, the department has also provided a template for individual risk assessments to be undertaken for identified staff. These will be undertaken where a member of staff may be deemed to be vulnerable, be living with someone considered vulnerable or shielding, or where it is deemed to be appropriate. In addition, following guidance issued by our Trade Union partners,

and given the higher rates of COVID-19 amongst BAME individuals, all BAME staff will be able to have an individual risk assessment undertaken when returning to work. It would be hoped that at least a majority of the 130 (114.30 FTE) Teaching and Support staff across the school estate who are clinically vulnerable will be able to make a safe return to the workplace in August given the appropriate risk assessments and support.

As part of their recovery planning, schools are considering how staff working from home can support the blended learning model with perhaps a focus on supporting children when they are not in school. The department has taken a number of proactive steps to secure a wide pool of supply staff particularly from last year's probationers who were unable to secure permanent employment at this time. In collaboration with schools, the department may also need to look at a number of flexible options in line with SNCT 20-74 eg re-allocation of staff to alternative schools to support shortages.

The department has undertaken an analysis and identified the number of additional staff who will be needed to implement the Local Delivery Phasing Plan. The department has staff in place for the 1140hours offering to families that will enable us to provide models of early learning and childcare complying with the impact of social distancing and recognising 600hours is the statutory minimum within resources.

Teaching Staff	40%	50%	60%	80%	100%
ELC	-	-	-	-	NA – back to full return: offer 1140hrs
Primary	-	30.3	196.1	32.3	+ NA – back to full return
Secondary	-	-	-	-	+ NA – back to full return
Special	-	-	-	-	+ NA – back to full return

* Secondary head teachers can manage within available staffing and provide for up to a 50% pupil attendance. As noted below on the section on Action Planning and phasing, beyond this head teachers have been asked to focus on the most vulnerable groups to further seek to increase pupil attendance within their resources.

+ Whilst back to full return at 100% the department would advocate that for school session 2020/21, additional teaching staffing should be retained and funded through to the end of the school year to help address the loss of learning in schools that our children and young people have experienced with a focus on equity and excellence. The intention is that this would be addressed through providing probationer teachers who have reached the standard for full registration an offer of a contract for a year.

In terms of local government staff there are 106 FTE additional over June to December as we progress through the phased period. This comprises 46 FTE for facilities management (cleaning/janitorial) and 60 FTE for Pupil Support Staff.

As the nation slowly moves from lockdown to greater social integration and rules on social distancing relax, we may experience a further peak in the virus and corresponding increase in staff absences 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. Accommodation / Provision

It is evident from the context set out above that educational provision in East Renfrewshire schools is highly occupied and is overall under increasing pressure. The capacity is based on the number of class bases used for teaching classes of pupils and does not include for example other spaces such as communal areas (dining/assembly) and general purpose rooms in primary schools. There is scope to re-provision such areas in schools to temporarily increase the number of spaces for small class/group teaching.

Overall there is limited availability of space within many schools making it difficult and in some cases impossible to allow for social distancing and smaller pupil groups. There is a need to source additional facilities for schools to enable them to deliver the increase in the number of hours spent in school as we move from phase 2 to phase 3 under our phased planning described below.

Out of School Care (OSC) services normally operate from a number of our schools and with the need to maximise space for learning and teaching the department is working in partnership with OSC providers to relocate their services where necessary to suitable alternative provision within localities.

The department in partnership with schools is maximising all available indoor and outdoor space that exists in schools for learning and teaching; and thereafter is actively extending the education estate where necessary by repurposing other council and community facilities, or by securing temporary accommodation units to provide additional indoor/outdoor class spaces. Accordingly our plans include, for example, the use of dining/gym/assembly areas in schools for small class/group teaching, with PE undertaken outside and arrangements made to deliver meals to classrooms in schools; the use of general purpose rooms like IT and library spaces in primary schools to provide for smaller sized teaching groups/ half classes as social distancing allows. Even so in many cases that is not providing an adequate number of spaces for small class/group teaching and we must establish teaching spaces in community halls/business centres/ local church halls etc. For example over 40% of our primary schools require non-school facilities to extend their educational space during social distancing and almost all primary schools must re-provision gyms and dining etc. to provide sufficient spaces whilst operating under the restrictions related to COVID-19. Please see Appendix B for a summary of identified needs.

6. Safety

To reopen schools safely in June, Head Teachers, in partnership with Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives and colleagues from Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CSHU) and officers of the department have completed risk assessments for all aspects of school life and building usage. These set out the steps which all stakeholders are expected to adhere to in order to secure the safety and health of all. These have been shared as appropriate with staff, pupils and parents and are available on request at each establishment.

As a minimum, 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. Enhanced cleaning will be undertaken in establishments including any repurposed spaces for school use. 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.

7. Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

Updated guidance, reflecting COVID-19, has been provided to Head Teachers in relation to recovery planning and reporting, which complements existing authority approaches and mirrors the national guidance that has been issued by Scottish Government. Establishments have been asked to prioritise supporting pupil and staff health and wellbeing; transitions at all levels; identifying gaps in learning; and a renewed focus on closing the attainment gap.

Specifically in terms of a recovery curriculum, all ERC establishments are focusing on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. There will also be a focus on ensuring our children and young people have the necessary skills for life, learning and work; this will support our learners to develop their independence and resilience when learning at home. In primary, other areas of the curriculum will be taught in both discrete lessons and as part of integrated learning. In secondary schools pupils will be able to experience learning across the eight curriculum areas, with PSHE used to provide a focus on health and wellbeing. Schools have also been asked to maximise the opportunities for outdoor learning experiences, ensuring that this is delivered in a way that supports skills across the curriculum.

Schools will provide this curriculum in a blended way with work set by the class teacher for pupils to complete while learning out-of-school. Tasks will be set based on the new work pupils have been set during in school learning and will give them the opportunity to practice and apply the new skills and knowledge while out of school. Schools will also use the out-of-school learning to introduce pupils to new learning before spending time in class deepening understanding through discussion and activities facilitated by the teacher. 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.

Communication with key stakeholders has highlighted that the current approach to home learning will need to change as it is highly likely the class teacher will be face to face teaching other groups of learners during the day; as such they will be unable to respond to questions and provide feedback as frequently. Schools are making arrangements to monitor engagement and progress; with any concerns identified and addressed either remotely or the next time the pupil is in school learning.

To support the introduction of a blended model of learning the Education Department has developed a clear framework to support schools with assessment and moderation in 2020-21. This will support teachers to assess pupil progress in learning in and out of school, with a focus on effective use of formative assessment. It will also ensure opportunities are provided for practitioners to engage in professional dialogue about learning, teaching and assessment leading to a shared understanding of the standards needed to achieve a curriculum level.

Following the closure of schools on the 20 March 2020, national guidance indicated that 'Local authorities should ensure they have appropriate arrangements in place to protect children who may be particularly vulnerable in the current circumstances when school closures are in place.'² In line with the Education Department's vision statement '*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*' our schools have been supported to ensure they have a clear strategy for supporting all children and young people with their learning and wellbeing. Intelligence gathered by the QIO team indicated very high levels of engagement across schools, with around 90% of all learners engaging with home learning. Since March 23rd we have had an average of 12,000 unique student users per day accessing Glow. Nationally, we have higher Glow usage in terms of unique daily users per 100 of the roll compared to almost all other local authorities. For example for the period up until w/e 3 May 2020, we had the second highest usage nationally with 65.23 pupils per 100 of the roll accessing Glow.

² COVID 19 – Closure of schools and ELC Premises – Protection of Key Interests (19/3/2020)

Over the period of closure ERC schools have continued to develop the quality of home learning experiences with teachers looking to ensure that they are creative in the way that they engage with pupils. Education Scotland highlighted and shared the effective approaches to Digital Learning and Teaching in East Renfrewshire. A number of our schools feature on the DigiLearn Scotland blog where their practice in a variety of areas relating to online learning and teaching, particularly since school closures in March has been documented.

Schools are now providing more video content from class teachers. As an authority we have been developing an online video resource for staff (Video Vault). It contains a range of literacy and numeracy videos for primary schools and a range of videos available for secondary school subject areas. The Video Vault has been designed so that teachers can use the videos with children and young people before they start a topic or to consolidate learning and will complement the work that is set on Google classrooms and other online platforms. It can be used to support individuals and as part of the activities that teachers provide for groups, ensuring that learning is more varied, interesting and appropriately personalised. The authority is also planning to support staff to use Google Meet, once it is 'switched on' by Education Scotland. This will provide staff with a safe platform to interact and provide live lessons for pupils.

The Education Department is also contributing to the West Partnership work to support schools with blended learning. This includes the development of a bank of recorded lessons along with subject webinars. This will further strengthen the range of quality of online materials available for teachers to use with children and young people. The department is also working within the West Partnership to develop E-Sgoil provision across the regional improvement collaborative.

To ensure equity in online learning, East Renfrewshire Council has already made significant investment. Over the last 3 years, the Department has made just over 2,100 Chromebooks available for pupils who reside in postcodes from SIMD deciles 1-3. During the current pandemic Wi-Fi boxes were purchased for families with no internet connection along with a further 113 Chromebooks. Schools have also made almost 900 digital devices available to families. However further devices are being sought through the Connecting Scotland fund as some families have been sharing devices or relying on their own 3/4G mobile phones.

8. Equity

Initially all schools will open in June to ensure emergency childcare for key worker and vulnerable children. In reopening all schools and settings we expect that the numbers of children in key equity groups will increase their attendance; indeed we expect that schools will reach out to those children and young people to encourage them to do so.

As set out below, we will take steps to ensure a minimum level of attendance for all children and young people across all sectors, incrementally increasing the time learners have with staff in schools, in line with the relaxation of lock down arrangements. In areas of greatest deprivation in East Renfrewshire, we will take steps to maximize pupil attendance for key groups and individual learners to give them more time in school to redress the impact of their lost learning time.

An individual risk assessment will be undertaken for a pupil where it is deemed necessary for them to safely return to school.

As referenced above, the council has taken steps to address the provision of digital mobile devices for those affected by poverty.

Our Educational Psychology Team will continue to work closely with school colleagues to identify emerging needs for pupils, staff and families in light of circumstances and events over the past few months. They will

support training and research which is closely tied to the immediate needs of recovery and reconnection. There will be an increase in their face to face time in schools, particularly in the first part of the school year.

Phased Planning

To ensure the department is best prepared and schools are supported for the recovery, the following phased approach will be 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 10 August 2020 to all staff with pupils attending from 12 August 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 as accommodation, staffing and other limitations (such as transport) allow. The increasing percentage of pupil attendance per phase for each sector is set out below. It should be noted that decisions may be taken nationally which will entail a change to the need for physical distancing in schools and ELC settings. As such the timing of the phases, or indeed the need for all 4 phases, will be kept under close review.

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.

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.

Phase 1: June 2020

The Scottish Government's strategic framework allowed local authorities to increase in pupil attendance in June 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.

As such all East Renfrewshire schools and ELC settings reopened in June following completion of risk assessments, with all children and young people using the emergency childcare provision in hubs returning to their own school from 8 June, with small groups of staff working from the same date to provide childcare / prepare for the blended learning model.

The following week small groups of children in ELC and primary sectors attended schools / settings for the purposes of transition. For others, learning at home continues to be provided.

Schools will close for the summer recess on 26 June and emergency childcare for key workers and vulnerable children will be provided by ERCLT in partnership with Education from 29 June through to 7 August 2020, with OSC providers providing wraparound care at the beginning and end of the traditional school day. For younger children, the department will continue to provide nursery hubs for emergency childcare.

Further detail such as provision of transport and school meals, is provided to schools in the Action Plan for Phase 1.

Phase 2: August

Staff will return to school on Monday 10 August 2020 with pupils returning on Wednesday 12 August. From Phase 2 onwards 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.

As set out above work is already underway in schools with the department to maximise the use of school accommodation and where necessary, consider extending the school estate by using suitable high quality facilities in the wider community, such as community halls, libraries, sports centres, business centres, etc. With additional accommodation remote from base schools comes the need for additional managers (a role which may be fulfilled by the Quality Improvement Team), facilities management and support staff. In addition the department is working with Out of School Care Providers where it is considered necessary to relocate these services given the need to maximise and set up spaces within schools. Additional community facilities and hub arrangements will be agreed in this regard.

The model of attendance for each sector is set out below:

Early Learning and Childcare

All children will be offered places based on an allocation on the basis of 600 hours, which meets the council's statutory duty and therefore 100% attendance. All of our nurseries will continue to be open 08.00 – 18.00 and parents will access 8 hours per day, for example, 08.00 – 16.00 or 09.00 – 17.00. Individual settings will contact parents to agree attendance patterns.

Children will attend in two groups:

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A	In nursery	In nursery	Out of nursery	Out of nursery	Out of nursery
B	Out of nursery	Out of nursery	Out of nursery	In nursery	In nursery

Provision will continue to be made for emergency childcare.

This pattern allows for siblings in ELC and Primary sectors to attend on the same days and allows staff to plan for a blended learning approach and rigorous cleansing of play areas equipment and resources.

Primary Schools

The timelines set out below are indicative and may be subject to change depending on the relaxation of physical distancing measures.

A similar pattern to the week will be applied in the primary sector, with children attending in two consistent groups:

Phase 2A 10 August 2020

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A	In school	In school	Out of school	Out of school	Out of school
B	Out of school	Out of school	Out of school	In school	In school

The above pattern equates to 40% attendance and will allow schools to test their arrangements for social distancing in and around the school building.

Normal school hours will apply, for example, 09.00 – 15.00. 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. 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 look to employers to have a flexible approach to working hours.

Provision will continue to be made for key worker and vulnerable children through hub provision within their locality. The provision will be delivered in partnership with Out of School Care Providers.

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 as outlined above.

Phase 2B Schools will move to this model if there is insufficient staffing to move directly to Phase 3.

Group		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A	(1)	In school	In school	Out of school	In school AM	Out of school
	(2)	In school	In school	Out of school	Out of school	In School AM
B	(1)	In school AM	Out of school	Out of school	In school	In school
	(2)	Out of school	In school AM	Out of school	In school	In school

The above pattern equates to 52% attendance for all pupils with each attending 13 hours each week. Again schools will keep arrangements for physical distancing under review ensuring the social aspects of school do not compromise the national advice. This model allows schools to increase the number of groups attending at one time, while testing the plans for use of social spaces and adjust as necessary before moving to Phase 3.

Further detail such as provision of transport and school meals, is provided to schools in the Action Plan for Phase 2-3.

Secondary Schools

This sector has devised a temporary 30 period timetable which restricts the need for movement around the school at period changeover. Children and young people will attend a mix of mornings or afternoons for half the school week (50%) with lessons being delivered mostly in double or treble periods. This is dependent on additional accommodation being available for some of schools.

Each school will consider targeted equity groups and individuals and look to increase the time they have in school when not in class with peers and subject teachers. Again this is subject to accommodation and staffing availability.

Again further detail such as provision of transport and school meals, is provided to schools in the Action Plan for Phase 2-3.

Phase 3 - September 2020

Our intended start date for Phase 3 is 31 August 2020, but this is subject to ongoing review and could be brought forward. This is when we will look to increase the number of hours children and young people spend in school further depending on the availability of staff and accommodation. During Phase 3 pupils will continue to learn both in and out of school with a blended approach of face to face and remote learning as outlined above, increasing to 1140 hours in ELC and initially to 60% and then 80% in primary, although our plan is flexible enough to be able to move to 80% as soon as physical distancing is relaxed to 1m, depending still 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 set out above work is already underway in schools with the department to maximise the use of school accommodation and where necessary, consider extending the school estate by using suitable high quality facilities in the wider community, such as community halls, libraries, sports centres, business centres, etc. With additional accommodation remote from base schools comes the need for additional managers, possibly QIOs, facilities management and support staff.

Careful timetabling of 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 will have the same hurdles to overcome, depending on the availability of accommodation and staff. Again, communications with parents will be paramount.

If necessary full time provision will continue to be made for key worker families and vulnerable children and young people, however the ability to accommodate all applications for this provision will be a challenge, we will therefore look to provide geographical learning hubs that would allow families from the same locality to access this provision on a needs basis. Again a partnership approach with Out of School Care Providers will be required to ensure appropriate staffing.

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.

Early Learning and Childcare

To respond to Scottish Government advice and given that our plans will allow children to attend nursery which would meet our statutory obligations of 600 hours, an increase to the hours children will attend is most easily achieved if they attend based on their allocations of 1140 hours, rather than a model which may not be able to be replicated in primary schools, and as such having families with asynchronous attendance for their children. This may mean children reducing their hours on the two day pattern and increasing the number of days they will attend. For staff it may mean a change to their working patterns. The date for moving to the new model will be determined by the relaxation of physical distancing.

Provision will continue to be made for emergency childcare.

Primary Schools

Initially schools will increase the amount of time children spend in school to three days per week, i.e. 60%.

Group		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A	(1)	In school	In school	Out of school	In school	Out of school
	(2)	In school	In school	Out of school	Out of school	In School
B	(1)	In school	Out of school	Out of school	In school	In school
	(2)	Out of school	In school	Out of school	In school	In school

Again schools will keep arrangements for physical distancing under review ensuring the social aspects of school do not compromise the national advice with regards to physical distancing. Staggered interval and lunch times will be vital for each “bubble” to be in their designated area of the playground at different times. The need for pupil supervision by support staff will also need to be increased.

Further detail such as provision of transport and school meals, is provided to schools in the Action Plan for Phase 2-3.

When physical distancing is relaxed to 1m we will move to ensure all children attend 80% of the school week. In this phase children will be organised in groups of 20 – 22 or 2/3 of the class and will attend 4 days per week. The example set out below is based on 2 classes at P4 stage.

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
P4	(1)	In school	In school	Out of school	In school	In school
	(2)	In school	In school	Out of school	In school	In School
	(3)	In school	In school	Out of school	In school	In school

This continues to allow teachers non-class contact time, joint planning, etc. but does mean that the “bubbles” established for Phase 2 would be disrupted, with new groups being established. However, by this time, we expect that the need for physical distancing between children would be at a minimum level.

This will continue to be dependent on accommodation and staffing availability, the financial implications of which are set out below. It is proposed that Wednesdays are maintained for non-class contact time since this is an efficient use of the staffing resource.

The need to continue with the management and organisation of social areas would be kept under review, as such the need for staggered start, finish and interval timings would be reconsidered.

Secondary Schools

The temporary 30 period week will continue. Schools are actively considering how to secure an increase in pupil attendance, but this is heavily dependent on accommodation and staffing.

Again further detail such as provision of transport and school meals, is provided to schools in the Action Plan for Phase 2-3.

Phase 4

At the point of writing we do not know 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.

Given the need for additional resources outlined above to incrementally increase the amount of time children and young people spend in school, and the loss of learning time experienced by all learners since schools closed, and with only a partial reopening, we would advocate that for school session 20 – 21, the additional staffing should be retained and funded. The additional teaching and support staff would be deployed to address the need to intervene for those most greatly affected by the closure of schools. With a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in the Broad General Education (BGE) and high quality interventions in both the BGE and Senior Phase, we could start to address the loss of learning time for all pupils, but especially those in key equity groups and those with additional support for learning needs.

Clarity and Transparency

Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout both our response and recovery phases, East Renfrewshire Council has worked closely with stakeholders to deliver solutions to the challenges we continue to face. This has been crucial in ensuring ongoing scrutiny of our plans which have been developed in a collegiate manner through a number of different forums and groups as identified below.

Education Recovery Group

A sub-group of the Education Resilience Leadership Team (ERLT) has been established to support departmental recovery planning. The membership and remit of the group is included in Appendix C.

The group has met digitally several times over recent weeks to devise and evaluate the proposed recovery framework and will continue to meet in the months ahead as we keep our Local Delivery Phasing Plan under review and continue to work towards a longer-term recovery of schools across East Renfrewshire.

Agendas and minutes of the meetings of the group are available on request.

Head Teacher Meetings

As a department, we have regular sector meetings with Head Teachers during the school year. Throughout this period, these have been held with greater regularity, utilising Microsoft Teams during lockdown.

Throughout the response and recovery phases of the crisis briefings (initially daily) were issued to schools. The briefings, agendas, presentations and minutes of meetings are available on request.

Staff Forums

A series of forums with individual sector specific staff groups were hosted by the Director of Education to consult on the department's recovery planning and the Local Delivery Phasing Plan (presentation and minutes available on request). This provided an opportunity for staff to raise concerns both directly and indirectly through discussion of issues.

Individual forums were held on 27 May 2020 for:

- early years local government staff;
- early years teaching staff;
- primary local government staff;
- primary teaching staff;
- secondary local government staff;
- secondary teaching staff; and
- central support function staff.

Parental Engagement

Both the department and individual schools have continued to closely engage with parents throughout this period. We recognise the pressure and anxiety that many parents have been facing due to the uncertainty around their child's schooling and we have therefore sought to consult with them on various key elements of our recovery planning process.

In addition to individual school parent council meetings, an authority wide Parent Council Chairs meeting was held on 8 June, chaired by the Convener for Education and Equalities, with the Director of Education and senior officers presenting the proposals and responding to questions (agenda, presentation and minutes available on request). Over 600 questions were received in advance and have subsequently been grouped with answers now available publicly on the Council's website ([FAQS](#)). These will continue to be updated as our plans mature.

Pupil Engagement

Through the development of their own bespoke recovery plans, every school in East Renfrewshire has engaged with its pupils on their proposals. This engagement has been taken forward by each school individually, however, has ensured pupils have been contributing to the school plans on the make-up of the school day, adherence to safety measures and, crucially, blended learning.

Importantly, our schools will continue to consult with their pupils through all phases of the return to ensure that their views are central to our planning.

Wider Corporate Engagement

Throughout both response and recovery from the crisis the Education Department has been a key element of the Council's wider corporate planning processes.

Through the Council's Crisis Resilience Management Team, the department has been engaging constructively with stakeholders across other Council departments and key partners in HSCP and ERCLT and ensuring that all of our recovery planning aligns with authority wide proposals. We will continue to work closely with colleagues across the Council in the months ahead.

Ongoing Consultation and Communication

Throughout recent months, the department has worked closely with the Council's Communication function to ensure we are engaging with parents and the wider public on our plans, both in the initial closing of schools but also in our gradual phased reopening over recent weeks. We have sought to utilise the Council's wide reaching social media channels and local media to ensure that all members of the public have been informed about our plans and been able to raise any concerns or questions with us throughout.

Schools, ELC settings and services have already shared and will continue to share their plans with stakeholders, to seek views and to ensure clarity and transparency. Communication will continue to 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 continue to liaise closely with the Council's Communications team, LNCT, SCC, Parent Council Chairs and elected members to ensure key messages are shared. A timeline for communication for schools and ELC settings (Appendix D) has been issued indicating when the department and establishments should consult and share their plans with their staff, pupils, Parent Councils / parent committees prior to the end of school session 19 – 20.

Financial Implications – Summary

Given the welcome announcement by the Deputy First Minister on 23 June 2020 of the aim to reopen schools to all pupils from August 2020, the recovery plan effectively becomes our contingency plan and therefore we would not intend to progress spend in all these areas at this stage. However, should this contingency plan need to be invoked, our ability to move quickly beyond 40% pupil attendance would be dependent on lead-in times to secure additional accommodation and indeed staffing.

In line with most aspects of our recovery/contingency planning, the financial implications continue to be developed and refined. As well as regular updates being included as part of the COSLA cost collection exercise, a report presented to our elected members on 24 June 2020 detailed the projected financial impact of COVID-19 for financial year 2020/21, based on the position planned for the first term of the new school session representing on average an offer of 50%. This also included the projected loss of income and the ongoing provision of free school meals to eligible children and young people. Given this is separately collected and the nature of this recovery plan these elements are not included below.

The following table summarises anticipated costs (excluding teachers) over the June to December 2020 period. In line with our recovery plan, Phases 2-3 cover the period August to December 2020. Other than costs for additional teachers, almost all costs are consistent over the period. The focus of certain staff groups may change as we progress through the phased period but costs would remain the same. For example, in phase 2 with 40% of pupils attending the additional staff involved to help with pupil supervision will support other areas such as supporting teaching staff prepare blended learning materials; as we move to 60% in phase 3 there will be a greater focus in-school supervision. As noted below in terms of teachers, the plan is to continue with an enhanced focus on cleaning and hygiene throughout the remainder of the school year.

Additional Expenditure (excluding cost of additional teachers)	Estimated costs June-December 2020 (£000)
Day Cleaners/cleaning & hygiene supplies	718
Pupil Supervision re social distancing etc.	453
Additional transport costs (net of SPT saving for April-June 2020 period)	380
Additional accommodation requirements (full impact on ERC)	755
Emergency Childcare (including summer programme)*	789
Incorporation of Digital Technologies**	65
Total Additional Cost June-December 2020 (excluding teachers)	3,160
<i>Additional cost of Day Cleaners/cleaning & hygiene supplies to end of school session 2020/21</i>	916
Total Additional Costs Session 2020/21 (excluding teachers)	4,076

* Limited flexibility within ELC expansion revenue funding will be utilised as a contribution towards these costs.

** Includes costs contained in bid submitted to Connecting Scotland programme.

In addition to the above, and as noted in the Staffing section of the recovery plan, additional teaching staff are required. The associated costs for the August to December 2020 period are set-out below.

Additional Teaching Staff Costs August – December 2020 (£000)	40%	50%	60%	80% (assuming 1m social distancing)	100%
ELC	-	-	-	-	NA – back to full return
Primary	-	447	3,563	525	+ NA – back to full return
Secondary #	-	-	-	-	+ NA – back to full return
Special	-	-	-	-	+ NA – back to full return
Total	-	447	3,563	525	-

As noted within the phasing sections of the recovery plan, secondary head teachers can manage within available resources and provide for up to a 50% pupil attendance. Beyond this head teachers have been asked to focus on the most vulnerable groups to further seek to increase pupil attendance within their resources.

A key part of our recovery planning is to seek to address the loss of learning that our children and young people have experienced. In order to do so we would advocate that for school session 2020/21, additional teaching staffing should be retained and funded to provide additional support to pupils. This also supports the Deputy First Minister's objective of ensuring that every probationer teacher who has reached the standard for full registration is able to secure a teaching post for the next school year. To meet this objective for all ERC 2019/20 probationers would require additional funding of £3.1m to cover the period August 2020 to June 2021, of which £447k is included from the phasing at 50% per above assumption.

In summary, the cost of East Renfrewshire's recovery plan equates to £7.2m based on the assumptions and phasing as described.

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 accessing face to face learning in Phase 2
- Percentage of pupils accessing face to face learning in Phase 3
- Pupil engagement in out of school learning in Phases 1 - 3
- Staff absence rates (Teaching and LGE)
- Referral rates to child support services

Teaching Staff – Shielding and Vulnerable

	Total Staff FTE	Shielding (Nos)	Shielding (FTE)	Vulnerable (Nos)	Vulnerable (FTE)
Secondary	564.50	11	9.60	25	23.10
Primary	508.58	8	7.30	29	27.40
Early Years	10.00	0	0	2	2.00
Isobel Mair	31.50	0	0	5	5.00
TOTAL	1114.58	19	16.90	61	57.50

Support Staff – Shielding and Vulnerable

	Total Staff FTE	Shielding (Nos)	Shielding (FTE)	Vulnerable (Nos)	Vulnerable (FTE)
Secondary	152.10	6	4.00	10	6.25
Primary	291.20	8	6.20	17	17.64
Early Years	134.00	0	0.43	23	20.20
Isobel Mair	68.85	0	0	19	12.70
TOTAL	646.15	14	11.30	69	56.79

Summary of Accommodation / Provision Analysis and Needs

The department has undertaken an analysis and identified the spaces required for learning and teaching for schools over and above existing class bases to implement the Local Delivery Phasing Plan.

Number of Additional Learning & Teaching Group Spaces Required	40%	50%	60%	80%	100%
Repurpose space within schools e.g. use of gym, dining, general purpose	NA	128	128	128	NA- full return back
Use of outdoor space within grounds for class groups	NA	15	15	15	NA- full return back
Extend estate by using community facilities (e.g. community halls, business centre, church hall) or hiring temporary accommodation units	10	33	33	33	NA- full return back
Total	10	176	176	176	NA- full return back

Education Recovery Group

The Education Resilience Leadership Team (ERLT) met and agreed the principles, aims and objectives, role and remit which has provided the basis for the development of the working group set out below to take forward recovery planning at departmental and school levels.

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.

Suggested Timeline for Communicating Recovery Plans

Date	Action	Purpose	Responsible
8.6.20	Meet Parent Council Chairs	Share outline plans	Directorate
9.6.20	Share Phase 2-3 Action Plan	Support planning	Directorate
11.6.20	Education Committee	Endorse LDPP	Directorate
11.6.20	Issue key principles and dates	Information Sharing	ERC Comms Team
From 11.6.20	Consult on plans	Share with staff groups	Head Teachers
From 15.6.20	Consult with PCs and Pupils	Consultation	Head Teachers
19.6.20	Finalise recovery plans	Preparedness for August	Head Teachers
23.6.20	Issue plans to all stakeholders	Information sharing	Head Teachers

14 July 2020

Dear Ms Shaw

HM Inspectors of Education review of East Renfrewshire Council local authority phasing delivery plan

HM Inspectors of Education have carried out a desk top review of your local authority phasing delivery plan. HM Inspectors of Education acknowledge that you may have additional information or guidance not contained within the plan submitted.

In reviewing your plan, HM Inspectors of Education have considered the criteria set out in [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): strategic framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision](#) and [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): reopening schools guide](#).

Your plan has set out clearly the following:

- The strategic process in place for supporting the delivery of education recovery. Approaches to planning for educational recovery have been produced in a collaborative way, with clear governance arrangements in place.
- The phased approach to planning which is supported by guidance and action plans at school level, designed to allow establishments to create their own context specific solutions. Joint working across headteachers, corporate health and safety and trade unions has taken place to ensure school safety, with risk assessment carried out for school life and building use.
- A focus supporting wellbeing for staff, children and young people, including curriculum support, to enable young people to become independent and resilient as they return to school. This is supported by the educational psychology department.
- A phased approach, which goes into considerable detail about the gradual increase in the amount of time young people will spend in school and which has built in flexibility to respond to changes in national guidance. This approach will incrementally increase the amount of time children and young people will spend in school. In your plan, you state that during phase two, children in primary school will attend for 40% of the week, moving to 52% attendance if staffing allows. Young people in secondary schools will attend for 50%. Given the accommodation capacity constraints you face, you plan to keep under review any further changes to staffing or spaces for learning and teaching, which may help maximise face-to-face learning for children and young people. You have calculated the additional costs that this would incur. Applying these additional staffing and accommodation resources as necessary to some schools will allow all ELC settings to move to 1140 hours and primary schools to 60% and then 80%.
- Social distancing measures which are in place in all establishments. Your plan takes into account the impact of changes in physical distancing on the increasing numbers of children and young people attending early learning and childcare and school.

- The assessment of risk has particular provision for staff, children and young people who are clinically vulnerable or shielding.
- Your plan identifies the need for workforce flexibility including the continued recruitment to minimise vacancies. Approaches to recovery planning also take into account that there may be an increase in staff absence at points, which will have an impact on the plan. It clearly articulates the breakdown in staffing needed across all sectors and the associated costs.
- The exploration of a wide range of options for maximising the available spaces for learning and teaching is clear in your plan. This includes maximising all use of space in establishments, use of community buildings and using temporary accommodation units to extend the accommodation provision across the estate.
- Engagement with parents and other stakeholders, which has taken place through meetings of the education recovery group, as well as focused meetings with headteachers, staff, parents and young people.
- Your approaches to the overall monitoring and engagement with individual schools. This includes how existing quality improvement approaches will be adapted or modified to ensure high quality learning and teaching.

**HM Inspectors of Education
July 2020**