

Policy & Sustainability Committee

10am, Thursday, 23 July 2020

Schools Re-opening Update

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

The Policy and Sustainability Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 Note the contents of this report.
- 1.2 Agree a further update will be provided for the next committee meeting on 6th August 2020.

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Schools Re-opening Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council has developed a Local Authority Delivery Phasing Plan as required by the Scottish Government of all local authorities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the route-map that sets out the phased lifting of restrictions. The update sets out the steps the Council has taken since the reports was taken to Committee on the 25th June and 9th July 2020, to reopen schools from 10 August 2020. The report and plan has been amended following the Deputy First Minister's (DFM) briefing on 16th July and further iterations of this report and plan will be submitted in line with anticipated future guidance.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report follows the statement of the Deputy First Minister on 23 June which determined that the implementation of Phase 4 rather than Phase 3, was now the objective for the return to school in August.
- 3.2 Appended to this report is the updated Schools Re-opening Delivery Phasing Plan.

4. Main report

The Local Authority Delivery Plan (v4) sets out the City of Edinburgh Council's planning for a 100% attendance model, whilst also continuing to develop and prepare for a 50% contingency model. As requested at the last P&S Committee, the plan details:

- 4.1 Communications to parents/ carers, on a minimum of a fortnightly frequency, taking two formats;
- Updates to FAQs, with text messages to parents with links alerting them of updates
 - Stakeholder discussion forums based on geographic localities, based on the following themes; Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Resilience, Teaching, learning and Assessment, Equity and Inclusion.

- 4.2 There are no additional hygiene measures that need to be implemented in order to move immediately to Phase 4 rather than Phase 3, as hygiene measures remain constant in each model. The difference in cost can be found in the financial information section of the document, under cleaning 100% and 50% models. There is also additional details on the hygiene measures being undertaken including Electrostatic Cleaning/ Fogging.
- 4.3 The plan provides a summary of responsive closure plans should a school or centre be connected to a virus outbreak.
- 4.4 The plan includes shielding information in regard to; online provision that can be made available to shielding children; children who live with a parent falling into the shielding category and the percentage of teaching staff falling into the shielding category or living in shielding households (there is now a presumption shielding will cease on 1st August 2020).
- 4.5 Actions currently being undertaken to fill any gaps in teaching provision and the associated costs are outlined in the plan
- 4.6 Further development of the 50% contingency model which evaluates potential properties available to provide extra classroom capacity including buildings beyond the school estate.

The option of hubs in localities to mitigate any inconsistencies in school capacities is also being explored and costed in conjunction with the above.

The contingency model comes with the acceptance that the repurposed buildings will not be available for their “normal” usage if required for schools.

Officers are communicating with stakeholders who have an interest in the contingency buildings – e.g. Community Centre Management Committees, Out of School Care Providers, staff.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 We will continue discussions with Scottish Government on the costings for both 100% return and 50% contingency model, including the impact on other Council budgets should the council not be supported by an extra uplift in funding.
- 5.2 The Phased Delivery Plan will be kept under review and continue to be amended in line with Scottish Government and Public Health guidance.
- 5.3 Continue to develop additional Catch-Up Learning opportunities.
- 5.4 Representation has been made to the Scottish Government to clarify what testing will be made available in schools, particularly for teachers and other staff. A national response is expected in the coming weeks.
- 5.5 Design and undertake a survey for all stakeholders to discover mental welfare status prior to school return, and make and necessary adaptations.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The revised financial impact of opening schools at 100% and at 50% is detailed in the report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Regular and ongoing consultation and engagement with relevant Trade Unions
- 7.2 Consultative Committees and Locality Consultative Committees have been held with parents throughout June and are being arranged for July and early August.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Updated Delivery Plan (v4) (attached)