

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Education, Children and Families Committee

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref BS/JMcP

Date 26/05/26

Summary of Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Model

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Executive Summary

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) aims to reduce educational inequality by closing the poverty-related attainment gap and ensuring equity in educational outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland.

In November 2021, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced plans for the continuation of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) from 2022-23 to 2025-26. Details of this refresh can be found [on the Scottish Government website](#).

Notably, the plan outlined a reconfigured model through which all local authorities would benefit from a new funding model, referred to as Scottish Equity Fund (SEF). This revised funding model resulted in a phased reduction of approximately £3 million in Scottish Government funding to North Lanarkshire Council between 2022-23 and 2025-26.

To enable the Service to manage this reduction effectively, whilst reducing risk to the Council and maximising benefits for learners, a core programme of activity worth circa £3 million was approved by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in (February 2023). This protected a core programme of activity and allowed the tapering to be managed effectively through reductions to funding/resources out with the core model.

Recent confirmation from the current Government indicates that the existing SAC/SEF funding model is expected to continue for a further year, until March 2027. While this provides short-term continuity, it also reinforces the need for careful forward planning.

This report provides Education and Families Committee with an update on how the Education and Families Service has managed the tapered funding during the final SAC period to maximise impact and build stronger linkages between services to support children and young people by raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

This report specifically updates members on three key areas:

- The evolution of the SAC core model
 - Management of SAC funds in North Lanarkshire
 - The risks associated with end of SAC and how the Service is assessing and managing these.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that the Education, Children and Families Committee:

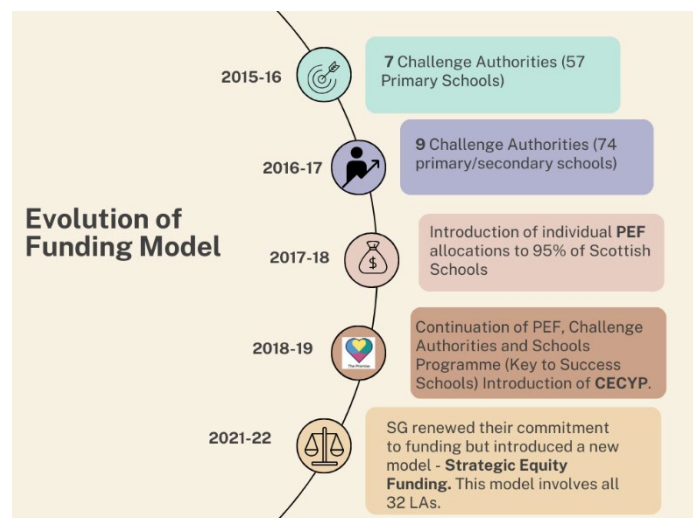
- (1) Consider the report noting the staffing and financial implications
- (2) Recognises the Service level risks associated with the removal of this funding

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Support all children and young people to realise their full potential
Ambition statement	(9) Invest in early interventions, positive transitions, and preventative approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people
Programme of Work	Brighter Futures

1. Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) fund is a Scottish Government programme aimed at raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The model has evolved significantly since its inception, and the diagram below summarises the main changes.



- 1.2 As highlighted in the diagram above, the initial phase of SAC ended in session 2021–22, followed by the introduction of a reconfigured Scottish Equity Fund (SEF) model for 2022–2026. Although the SEF model ensured all local authorities received funding, it also led to changes in funding levels, with reductions experienced by some authorities, particularly the original seven Challenge Authorities, including North Lanarkshire. Within the new model, NLC's funding reduced by circa £1million per year.
- 1.3 In its current iteration, overarching SAC funding is made up of three main elements: Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) which is allocated to local authorities to support targeted, authority-wide improvement activity; Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), which is devolved directly to schools to allow headteachers to address local need; and Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) funding, which is targeted at improving outcomes for care-experienced learners. Together, these funding streams are intended to support

evidence-based interventions that improve equity, attainment and wellbeing for children and young people affected by poverty.

- 1.4 Scottish Attainment Challenge planning guidance states that local authorities should consider the totality of Attainment Scotland Funding; Strategic Equity Funding (SEF), Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) funding, working collaboratively with headteachers, senior leaders and other partners to identify how the funding is best utilised to enhance local plans to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap and contribute to the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It emphasises that Strategic Equity Funding must be used to deliver targeted activities, approaches or resources which are clearly additional to universal local improvement plans.
- 1.5 The table below outlines the totality of North Lanarkshire's SAC funding from sessions 2021-2022 to 2025-2026.

Scottish Attainment Challenge – Attainment Scotland Fund			
Session	SEF	PEF	CECYP
2021-2022	£7,478,859	£10,926,499	£673,200
2022-2023	£6,454,948	£9,682,080	£612,458
2023-2024	£5,431,037	£9,682,080	£570,654
2024-2025	£4,407,126	£9,678,420	£587,241
2025-2026	£3,383,214	£9,678,420	£587,961

- 1.6 As shown in the table above, under the reconfigured SEF allocation model, funding for North Lanarkshire, has decreased from approximately £7.5 million in 2021–22 to £3.5 million in 2025–26. This reflects a tapered reduction of £1 million per annum.
- 1.7 To enable the Service to manage this reduction effectively, maximising benefits for children and families, the Service developed a reconfigured Scottish Equity Fund (SEF) core plan worth circa £3 million. This core plan was designed to strengthen the work of the Service overall, aligning roles and protecting a core programme of activity to support sustainable approaches to improvement.
- 1.8 The Service evaluated the core model and use of additional remaining allocation every year and presented a new plan to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to ensure clear governance and best value. Where possible, the Service sought to use core Education and Families budget and other funding streams, adopting a holistic approach to meeting needs, to maximise use of all available funds to support children and families.

- 1.9 The table below illustrates, the core and ‘additional’ funding allocations and impact of tapering since the introduction of SEF. Notably in session 2025-26, there are very limited additional funds out with the core model.

Local Authority	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
North Lanarkshire Total Allocation	£6,454,948	£5,431,037	£4,407,126	£3,383,214
Allocation for core model (circa)	£3,000,000	£3,000,000	£3,000,000	£3,000,000
Remaining allocation to provide further support	£3,454,948	£2,431,037	£1,407,126	£383,214

- 1.10 Importantly, although core plans are developed, submitted and approved through agreed governance arrangements, they remain subject to ongoing review. This enables the Service to take a holistic view of all available funding streams and, where necessary, adapt plans to maximise resources and improve outcomes for children and families.
- 1.11 At present, the Scottish Government has not confirmed any plans to extend or replace Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding, including Strategic Equity Funding (SEF), Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) or Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) funding, beyond the current parliamentary period. On this basis, the Service was planning on the assumption that SAC funding would cease after March 2026.
- 1.12 However, the Scottish Government (SG) has recently confirmed that the existing SAC funding model will be extended for a further one-year period, until March 2027. The 2026-27 allocation will match the 2025-26 allocation of £3.283m. This provides short-term continuity but also reinforces the need for careful forward planning.
- 1.13 This report highlights the evolution of the SAC model, illustrating how the Service has strategically maximised available resources and assessed the risks arising from the potential removal of this funding stream.

2. Report

Scottish Attainment Challenge National and Local Context

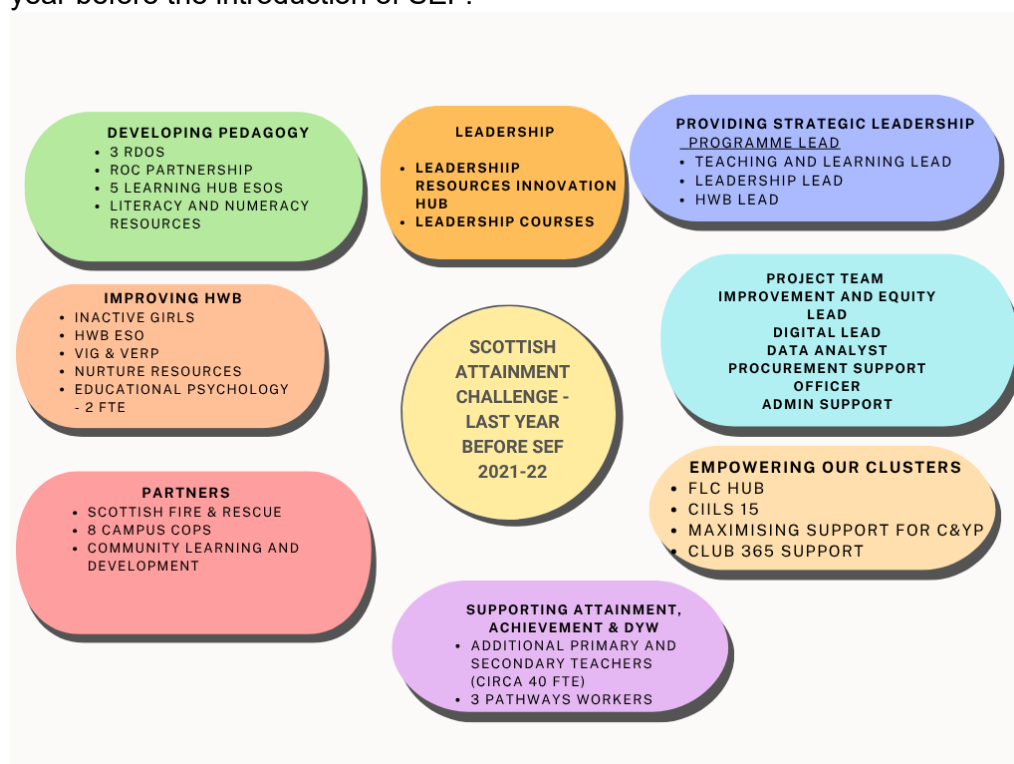
- 2.1 In North Lanarkshire a significant number of children and families live in areas of high deprivation with approximately 32% in SIMD 1 and 2; over 15,500 children and young people in primary and secondary. There is clear evidence that poverty significantly influences children's educational outcomes with students from the richest households consistently outperforming those from poorer backgrounds (Scottish Government, 2014; Scottish Government, 2015b; OECD, 2016; Sosu and Ellis, 2014). Therefore, the Service has a clear focus on implementing strategies to close the poverty related attainment gap.
- 2.2 At establishment level, school leaders benefit from access to a range of additional supports, funded through core and SEF funding to improve outcomes and close the poverty related attainment gap. SEF funding is downloaded directly to Local Authorities

to utilise in accordance with national guidance. Schools also receive another layer of additional funding from the Scottish Government known as Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Although Pupil Equity Funding forms part of the overall Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund, the governance arrangements are significantly different, with PEF funding being delegated directly to individual establishments. Headteachers are responsible for controlling and monitoring PEF spend (in accordance with Scottish Government guidance). The Scottish Government has committed to this funding as part of the new phase of the programme from 2022 to 2026.

- 2.3 The first section of the report illustrates how the SEF Central model has evolved in response to needs and funds available. The final section of the report highlights some of the key risks associated with the removal of the SAC programme and how the Service is planning to reduce the associated risk.

Strategic Equity Fund – Evolution of Core Model

- 2.4 The reconfigured core plan was carefully designed to strengthen Service delivery by strengthening integrated working, aligning roles and safeguarding a core programme of high-impact activity that supported sustainable improvement. The approach was firmly grounded in national policy and priorities, with a clear focus on the Scottish Attainment Challenge organisers of learning and teaching, leadership, and families and communities. The core model was approved by SLT in February 2023.
- 2.5 In response to changing priorities and reduced funding, difficult decisions were taken following rigorous evaluation to ensure best value, with savings achieved where possible through vacancy management. While some programmes and partnerships were reduced or ended, the Service sought to sustain them for as long as possible and provided notice where services had to cease.
- 2.6 The diagram below illustrates the main uses of the SAC funding in 2021-22, the last year before the introduction of SEF.



Evolution of the SEF model

2.7 2021-22 – 2022-23

The 2022–23 SEF plan was not a wholesale redesign but a scaled and reprioritised version of 2021–22 plan. Core leadership posts and strategic programmes continued, with minor adaptations to some staffing aspect, lower financial allocations for resources, and the introduction of new preventative/engagement activity, notably the introduction of Family Engagement Support Assistant (FESA) roles and funding to support the new Future Friday programme across secondary schools.

2.8 The table below illustrates some of the main changes from session 2021-22 to 2022-23.

Category	Key Changes to SAC plan from session 2021-22 to 2022-23
Continues	Leadership structure, Health and Wellbeing core staffing, Community Learning and Development (CLD) x3, Robert Owen Centre (ROC) – Glasgow University, Police Partners - 8 campus officers deployed across 12 secondary schools. Partnership with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
Scaled Down	Cost associated with Cluster Improvement and Integration Leads; reduced from 15 in session 2021-22 to 5 in session 2022-23 with Funding for 10 CIILs realigned to core funding streams. Funding for Literacy/Numeracy resources and leadership resources. Funding to support secondary inactive girls
Scaled Up	Number of Education Support Officers increased from 3 to 5, expanding to include a specific focus on STEM and Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Additional staffing for primary and secondary (circa 40.85 in session 2021-22 increasing to 60 FTE in session 2022-23). 14 FTE was used to create a strategic central pedagogy team with 14 Pedagogy Practitioners appointed to provide direct coaching and modelling to teachers in schools. The remaining 46 FTE were allocated as cluster support teachers (CSTS) to provide intensive support to learners within schools. (Predominantly primary)
Removed	Realignment of 2 FTE Educational Psychologists to core funding. Family Learning Hub Funding associated with Club 365 realigned to another budget line.
New	Future Friday Funding for Secondary schools to support new Secondary model. Introduction of Family Engagement Support Assistants (FESA) posts (18) Introduction of another research development officers (RDOs) to support research and development work; now 3FTE.

2.9 2022-23 to 2023-24

The 2023–24 SEF plan largely sustained the 2022–23 investment profile. However, a major change was the removal of the Project Lead post in 2023-24 with a current EFM assuming the remit of SAC lead alongside existing duties. Simultaneously, the SAC lead roles were reconfigured reducing from 4 to 3 in session 2023-24. This restructure allowed existing funding to be remodelled and refined to strengthen system leadership and build further curriculum capacity. It also reduced the impact of the reduction on front line service delivery.

2.10 The focus moved from programme-based delivery to leadership for improvement, with the addition of three curriculum manager (CM) roles and clearer alignment between learning, teaching and improvement. Staffing for the Health and Wellbeing workstream remained stable.

2.11 The table below summarises some of the key changes between academic sessions 2022-23 and 2023-24:

Category	Summary key changes 2022–23 to 2023–24
Continues	ESOs, Literacy & Numeracy resources, Data Analyst, Future Friday allocation, RDO capacity, HWB core staffing, Cluster CILs and Pathways support * <i>SFRS partnership (see point 1 below).</i>
Scaled Down	SAC project team with leadership roles reframed rather than expanded. Partnership with Robert Owen Centre (ROC)
Removed	Removal of the Project Lead post and 1 SAC lead post in 2023-24. The digital lead role was deleted, with seconded post holder returning to substantive role. Procurement officer NL 9 – left the Service during session 2023-24) Central funding for VIG and VERP was removed. (Establishments could continue to access this via Educational Psychologists.)
New	Introduction of A&CC post to replace the previously unfilled NL 10 post within the 2022-23 model. Addition of 3 Curriculum Manager roles to strengthen improvement capacity.

*1 *Although original 2023-24 plan advised that the SFRS partnership would cease, the underspend allowed this programme to continue.*

2.12 2023-24 to 2024-25

The 2024–25 SEF plan retains the core leadership teams and wellbeing capacity while scaling delivery to reflect reduced funding. Investment is increasingly focused on targeted curriculum leadership, attainment and wellbeing, with reduced reliance on

large-scale staffing models and greater emphasis on sustainability and prioritisation. It exemplifies the Service’s commitment to implementing the approved core SEF model (Feb 2023 - worth circa 3million) and to begin to realign elements of the previous delivery model to other funding streams and core budgets to effectively manage the tapering funds.

Category	Summary key changes 2023–24 to 2024–25
Continues	Core SAC leadership structure, 3 Curriculum Manager roles, HWB core staffing, CLD support, Police Partners, Pathways support, SFRS – See 2.14 below.
Scaled Down	Future Friday Funding, Reduction in the number of RDOs posts from 3 to 2 through existing vacancy management. ESO capacity reduced by 1 through realignment of roles. Inactive secondary girls programme and Literacy & Numeracy delivery models reduced. Early Years began to fund 3 FESA posts resulting in a small savings to SAC budget.
Removed	Funding to support Leadership Improvement and Integration Hub, Data Analyst – now funded through central budget Unfilled Active & Creative Communities post.
New / Reintroduced	Digital & Data Curriculum Manager Posts (Part funded), EFM Raising Attainment (Part funded), Business/Modern Apprentice, West Partnership Funding. 2 x FTE support for Virtual School

2.13 The Service proposed to end its SAC partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) at the end of session 2023-24 however, there was a significant underspend due to staffing issues with SFRS. By using the underspend from session 2023-24 we were able to continue with SFRS into session 2024-25. This enabled us to use session 2024-25 as a transition/exit year and to explore the possibility of encouraging schools to use their Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) fund to access this provision for session 2025-26, where possible. Unfortunately, after exploration it was determined that this was not a viable option as guaranteed funding was required to secure the staffing required to deliver this. Therefore, SFRS were advised that the partnership was likely to cease at the end of session 2024-25. However, the Service has subsequently identified core funding to extend the partnership with SFRS for session 2026-27.

2.14 **2024-25 to 2025-26**

The 2025–26 SAC plan marks the final, guaranteed year of the SEF funding with no funds available out with the core SEF model. Scottish Government have confirmed that funding will be made available to match the 2025-26 allocation of £3.283m. (Any additional money will be due to accrued underspends.) Therefore, there is a clear focus on protecting essential leadership, wellbeing and curriculum capacity while significantly reducing discretionary and programme-based spend. The focus shifts to fewer, more sustainable delivery mechanisms. Where feasible and financially prudent, the Service will prioritise the effective use of all available funding streams to maintain sustainable partnerships and deliver targeted support for vulnerable learners, aligned to a reduced funding envelope and future-year affordability.

Category	Summary key changes 2024–25 to 2025–26
Continues	CLD x 3FTE, Pedagogy team support for schools 5 ESOs Support for CECYP – 2FTE West Partnership 2 x FTE support for Virtual School
Scaled Down	Core SAC Leadership Team reduced to 1.6 FTE CMs and 1.6 FTE SAC Leads.
Removed	SFRS Police (Ends June 2026) 3 CM posts, Future Fridays funding – elements of this funding has been realigned to other funding streams.
New / Reintroduced	Missing Young Person Funding

- 2.15 Recognising the positive impact of existing partnerships with Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), the Service is currently exploring the potential to align and utilise alternative service-level funding streams to sustain both partnerships for one further academic year (2026–27), aligning with the end of the SAC funding period. A report will be taken to SLT to seek approval for this should available funds be identified.

Risks associated with the removal of SAC Funding

- 2.16 The Service recognises several significant risks associated with the planned removal of Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding. While some progress has been made, nationally and locally, across several key measures linked to closing the poverty-related attainment gap, this progress remains fragile. Continued and targeted funding has been central to sustaining improvement, and without it there is a risk that recent gains cannot be maintained or built upon. This is particularly pertinent given the increasing complexity of poverty-related barriers experienced by children, young people and families, which continue to evolve and intensify.
- 2.17 The removal of SAC funding is also likely to have a direct and substantial impact on staffing capacity across establishments and central teams. Establishments may have reduced ability to secure additional teaching and support staff by using SEF or PEF allocations. This reduction in staffing capacity risks limiting the level of targeted support available to learners and families who are most vulnerable to underachievement, potentially widening existing attainment gaps.
- 2.18 In addition, rising levels of Additional Support Needs present a further challenge. Increasing demand for specialist and targeted interventions places additional pressure on already constrained resources and may hinder the Service’s ability to sustain improvements in attainment and equity.
- 2.19 Collectively, these factors underline the importance of sustained investment in education to facilitate improved outcomes through early and preventative family-based approaches which remove barriers, raise attainment and reduce the impact of poverty related challenges.

2.20 Operationally, the Service is currently preparing for a potential end to SAC (SEF/PEF and CECYP) funding and have identified staff who are likely to be impacted upon, should the funding cease. Plans are in place to mitigate the impact as far as possible through early planning, transparent communication, exploration of redeployment opportunities, and adherence to established workforce and HR processes. A prior commitment has been made to fund SAC CECYP posts through core funding, ensuring continuity of provision within this area of the Service.

Conclusion

2.21 This report demonstrates how the Education and Families Service has taken a planned and strategic approach to managing the tapering of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding, protecting a core programme of activity focused on equity, attainment and wellbeing. The development of a £3 million core model enabled essential leadership, curriculum and wellbeing capacity to be safeguarded while funding reduced significantly over successive years.

2.22 While SAC investment has supported identifiable improvement and strengthened partnership and system leadership approaches across North Lanarkshire, the Service recognises that progress remains fragile. The potential removal of SAC funding presents clear risks to sustainability, workforce capacity and the ability to respond to increasing levels of need.

2.23 In summary, there is strong and consistent evidence in Scotland, and in North Lanarkshire, that children and young people living in the most deprived areas experience significantly poorer educational attainment than their peers living in less deprived areas. The poverty-related attainment gap is evident from the early years, widens through primary school, and is largest at secondary stage and school-leaving outcomes, particularly for learners living in SIMD 1 (the 20% most deprived areas).

2.24 Scottish longitudinal and academic research demonstrates that:

- The attainment gap linked to deprivation is persistent and systemic
- Children experiencing long-term poverty have the poorest educational outcomes
- By early secondary school, pupils from the most affluent areas are more than twice as likely to perform well in key attainment measures compared with pupils from the most deprived areas

2.25 Accordingly, the Service is actively planning for the end of SAC through early workforce planning, realignment of resources and embedding sustainable practice within core provision, reaffirming its commitment to closing the poverty-related attainment gap despite ongoing financial constraints.

2.26 Planning for the next phase of delivery will commence early in the next academic session. As part of this planning, careful consideration will be given to which elements of the current model may need to transition into core provision, recognising that the risks associated with removing some areas of support entirely are too significant. This will require a detailed review of affordability and the potential realignment of existing budgets to ensure sustainability. A further update will be provided to Committee in due course.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Controlled management of tapered SAC/SEF funding, with delivery of the approved £3 million core model within agreed governance and financial arrangements.
- 3.2 Protection and embedding of core leadership, curriculum, wellbeing and family support capacity, despite reducing external funding.
- 3.3 Service readiness for the potential end of SAC funding, evidenced through sustainable practice, workforce planning and active risk management.

4. Supporting documentation

Appendix 1: SAC Reductions Journey (2021–22 to 2025–26) – Audit RAG Table



Name Barry Smedley and James McParland
Title Chief Officers (Education)

5. Impacts

5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? Ongoing discussions are being held to mitigate the risks of cessation of funding and the impact on staff/ wage rights/ job rights etc.
5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.5 Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.6 Technology / Digital impact

Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes No

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.8 Communications impact

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.9 Risk impact

Is there a risk impact?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

Risks are recorded on the Corporate Risk Register.

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Cessation of SAC funding will potentially impact on outcomes for children and families impacted by poverty-related attainment barriers. Removal of this funding would have a significant impact on the supports available at establishment and central level to provide targeted, early and preventative interventions that uphold

children's rights to education, development, wellbeing and protection, as set out in the UNCRC (including Articles 3, 6, 12, 28 and 29). The Service has sought to mitigate these impacts through early planning, protection of core provision, alignment with other funding streams, and a continued focus on equity and targeted support for the most vulnerable children and young people. However, despite mitigations in place removal of this fund will impact on children and families and potentially on educational outcomes and attainment.




If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?








Yes

No

Appendix 1: SAC Reductions Journey (2021–22 to 2025–26) – Audit RAG Table

RAG key

 Green – Planned, controlled, low-risk change	 Amber – Managed reduction or redesign with delivery implications	 Red – Significant capacity loss / high delivery risk
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Area / Provision	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	Change Trajectory	RAG	Audit Commentary
Overall, SAC model	Expansion / recovery model	Re-prioritised	Core model introduced	Managed reduction	Managed reduction	Scale → reduce → stabilise		Phased, planned alignment to reducing allocations
SAC Programme Lead	Programme Lead	Programme Lead	Programme Lead -exiting	EFM assumes role of SAC lead	Continued	Role evolution		Leadership rationalised, not removed
SAC Lead Officers	4 Programme Leads	Transition from 4 to 3 Leads	3 Lead	3 Leads	1.6 SAC Leads	Role Evolution		Functions redistributed
Curriculum leadership model	–	–	3 Curriculum Managers (CMs) introduced	3 CMs + 1 part funded Digital/Data	1.6 SAC CMs	Expansion then consolidation		Streamlined structure
Procurement Support Officer	In place	In place	Left the Service mid term	–	–	Ceased		Duties absorbed corporately
Admin Support	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	Continued		Role will need to be absorbed centrally at end of SAC period or HR procedures followed.
Business Apprentice	–	–	–	Introduced	Exit planning for end of this post	Ceased		

Area / Provision	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	Change Trajectory	RAG	Audit Commentary
Digital Lead	1 FTE	In place	In place – part year	Returned to substantive post	—	Ceased	●	End of temporary position
Data Analyst	In place	In place	In place	Recoded to another part of the Service	—	Ceased	●	Analytical capacity protected by absorption of another part of Service
NLC Pedagogy Team	In place	In place	Reconfigured model (Principal Teachers and class teachers)	In place	Refined delivery model	New model	●	Strategic use of additional staffing to raise attainment and CPRAG. Cognisance taken of impact of accruing job rights.
Education Support Officer capacity (Learning)	3 ESOs	5 ESOs	5-6 ESOs (with changes mid sessions)	Sustained	5 ESOs	Expansion then reduction	●	Strategic use of additional staffing to raise attainment and CPRAG. Cognisance taken of impact of accruing job rights.
Additional Staffing	40.85 FTE	60 FTE	Sustained and reconfigured to align with and supplement other funding streams	Sustained	Sustained	Aligned with wider strategic approaches to supporting schools and raising attainment.	●	Strategic use of additional staffing to raise attainment and CPRAG.
RDO capacity	2 FTE	3 FTE	3 FTE	2 FTE	2 FTE	Increase then reduction	●	Reduced delivery reach but stabilised
Leadership: Improvement and Integration Hub	In place	In place	Reduced	Ceased	—	Incorporated into wider	●	Non-core activity withdrawn

Area / Provision	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	Change Trajectory	RAG	Audit Commentary
						leadership budget		
Robert Owen Centre / Self-Improving Schools	In place	Reduced	Scaled down	Sustained	Ceased	Maintained then ceased	●	Removal and move towards increasing West partnership and Teacher Centre for Excellence links
Future Friday	—	Introduced	Sustained	Reduced	Sustained	Growth → phased reduction	●	Gradual scaling protects impact
Pathways (Young People)	Winter leavers	Sustained	Re-focused	Continued	Continued	Refocused	●	Targeted support retained
Cluster model - Cluster Improvement and Integration Leads (CIILs)	In place (15 FTE)	Reduced to 5 FTE	Continued	Continued	Continued	Protected	●	Targeted support retained
Club 365	Coordinators & Resource	Removed	—	—	—	Ceased	●	Initially transferred to non-core budget but later removed in line with a wider council decision.
Inactive secondary girls	In place	Reduced	Reduced	Reduced	Ceased	Phased withdrawal	●	Mitigated via HWB core
Family Learning / Engagement Support	FLC Hub	Family Engagement Support Assistants introduced (18FTE)	Sustained	Reduced to 15 FTE	Sustained	Reduced + cost-shared	●	EY funding used to offset cost for 3 FTE.
Educational Psychologists (2 FTE SAC)	In place	Recoded to central funding	—	—	—	Incorporated into central budget	●	Mitigated via core budget

Area / Provision	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	Change Trajectory	RAG	Audit Commentary
Police Partnership (8 FTE)	In place	Sustained	Sustained	Sustained	Exit planning -possible cessation	Maintained then ceased	●	Non-core activity withdrawn
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	In place	In place	Sustained	Retained using underspend	Exit planning – possible cessation	Maintained then ceased	●	Non-core activity withdrawn
CLD (NLC12 x3)	In place	Sustained	Sustained	Sustained	Sustained	Protected	●	Priority safeguarded – support for families
Maximising Support C&YP/ A&CC	In place	—	New ACC post introduced	Removed	—	—	●	Unfilled vacancy management - no impact on Service delivery.
Missing Young People Support	—	—	—	—	In place	New targeted support for identified cohort	●	Planned intervention: High-risk cohort focus
Support for CECYP – Virtual School	—	—	—	2 FTE	Sustained	New targeted support for identified cohort	●	Planned intervention: High-risk cohort focus
West Partnership	—	—	—	—	In place	New partnership	●	Leverages regional capacity
Resources (including literacy, numeracy, leadership and HWB)	In place	Reduced	Reduced	Reduced	Sustained	Progressive reduction	●	Discretionary spend minimised