

EE25. Children's Services – Local Phased Education Delivery Plan (COVID-19 Recovery)

The Emergency Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an overview of the key plans and strategic aims associated with the Local Phased Education Delivery Plan and details around the current challenges and limiting factors in progressing the plan.

All education establishments were closed from Monday 23 March 2020 and the Government's "route map through and out of the crisis" detailed that schools would be re-opened in Phase 3. The re-opening date for schools was 11 August 2020, although the date for Early Learning Childcare (ELC) establishments was not confirmed. The Scottish Government had revoked its plans to implement 1140 hours of ELC in light of the challenges faced as a result of the Covid situation.

The Service had been working with Headteachers to consider the options to re-open schools on a phased basis. All options reflected the guidance at the time of writing, in particular the physical distancing specification. Liaison with parental groups, professional associations and trade unions had also taken place. There were a number of significant internal and external factors that would influence the ability to progress delivery of the Local Phased Delivery Plan. Critical areas included: Transport Operators Capacity; digital access at home; absence levels amongst current workforce; physical distancing rules, and increased cleaning regimes.

In an update to Parliament by the Deputy First Minister on plans to reopen schools on Tuesday 23 June it was set out that the Scottish Government sought to prepare for children to be able to return to school full time in August. In light of this announcement, which was made after the publication of the report being considered by the Emergency Executive on a phased return to education, members sought to continue the matter to a future date to be provided with more up to date information.

Decision

The Emergency Executive agreed to adjourn the item and reconvene at a future date once further information was available to the Director of Children's Services to allow for an updated report to be submitted.