**Item 4**

**25th April 2024**

**Glasgow City Council**

**Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee**

**Report by Executive Director of Education Services**

**Contact: Jean Miller Ext: 70204**

# ADVANCED HIGHER PROVISION REVIEW

## Purpose of Report:

To update the committee on the Advanced Higher Provision Review taking place across Glasgow Secondary Schools.

## Recommendations:

To note the changes to the Advanced Higher provision in secondary schools moving forward from 2024.

Ward No(s): Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

***PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING**:*

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## 1 Background

1.1 Across our 30 mainstream secondary schools, last session there were awards in 1507 Advanced Higher qualifications. Some schools have a substantial offer in relation to Advanced Highers whilst some schools, mainly related to context and staffing, have a limited number. Across all schools there are opportunities to study Advanced Highers in a neighbouring school and this is organised by schools themselves. With the exception of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, Advanced Highers are not a specific entry requirement for universities. However, they are helpful for preparing young people for the more independent study they will encounter at university and are valuable as part of an overall portfolio of qualifications.

1.2 In session 2022/23 the decision was taken to stop funding the Advanced Higher Hub provision at Glasgow Caledonian University. GCC funding last session was £230,000. The Scottish Funding Council, who provided match funding, also said it would stop its funding for the provision. The Hub provision last session accounted for 159 Advanced Higher awards. We are very grateful to the colleagues at Glasgow Caledonian University for their support of our young people over the years of the Hub and their contribution to their education outcomes.

1.3 Partly as a consequence of this change and since there had not been a review of Advanced Higher provision in some time, it was decided to organise a review and a group was established to do this. The group's terms of reference were set by the Head of Service, Jean Miller, and she supports the work of the group. The group itself is chaired by an experienced Depute Headteacher (DHT) and members are DHT colleagues from schools across the city. The group looked at present provision in schools and listened to the views of young people and staff about what could improve the school offer. The group also explored other issues such as which qualifications specifically required Advanced Highers, and features of the Hub experience which students benefitted from. One of these was being able to attend a university campus. The report includes information from the widening access lead officer about opportunities for our young people to be on university campuses. There is also a case study from one of our schools, Notre Dame High school, which highlights the way a school can promote widening access including campus visit opportunities.

## 2 Advanced Higher provision in Glasgow secondary schools

2.1 The group began by organising questionnaires for staff in schools and young people studying Advanced Highers. The findings from this would be presented to secondary headteachers to inform and consult on a model for Advanced Higher provision across the city moving forward.

2.2 In relation to provision of Advanced Highers(AH) across the secondary school estate, the group found that 10 schools had a significant offering of roughly 10 AH or more. All these schools also offered places to young people from other, mainly nearby, secondaries.

2.3 The next part of the questionnaire focussed on the views of young people. There were 371 senior phase young people who gave questionnaire responses and these were primarily from 21 schools across the city.

Their responses included the following;

| Why did you want to study Advanced Highers? | Number of people | % |
|---|---|---|
| University (requirements / experience of 1st year university /expectations of university / UCAS application) | 159 | 43 |
| Further my subject knowledge | 109 | 29 |
| Like / Enjoy / Passion for Subject | 65 | 18 |
| Career Requirement | 24 | 7 |
| Challenge themselves / Ability | 12 | 3 |
| Teacher recommendation | 3 | 0.8 |

More than half of the young people were studying two or more Advanced Highers (AH). Some of the young people taking part were not studying AH and this was because their preferred AH was not offered in their school or another local school. Other reasons were mentioned including travel, combinations with subjects and not offered at Hub where that was appropriate. Most of those questioned studied AH at their own school.

| Benefits of being in own school | Number of comments | % |
|---|---|---|
| No travel / No wasted time travelling / More time left to study in school. | 104 | 43 |
| Relationships with staff / Access to support from staff in your school | 70 | 30 |
| Better timetable / not missing other classes | 35 | 15 |
| Familiar setting / comfortable learning environment | 13 | 6 |
| Familiar Peers | 11 | 5 |

Young people did still express challenges whilst studying AH and the most common challenge of 68% of young people was the workload of AH and the knowledge and skills increase from Higher. Those who attended the Hub provision, 38% said that they mostly liked experiencing a university and 30% said they liked meeting new people.

Young people were also asked about the challenges of studying in another school. Whilst there wasn't a particularly high response to this, those who did respond mainly cited missing some time in other classes at their own school, travel and integrating with other students and teachers. Whilst there were some disadvantages from studying AH expressed by some young people, mainly the workload impact on other subjects, the overall experience was very positive with almost 95% of those questioned saying that their experience was between good to excellent.

Very few offered ways to improve provision and those who did mainly asked for more provision in school.

2.4 The next part of the questionnaire looked at staff views. There were 85 staff responses and these came from 22 schools with 21 AH subjects represented. Staff felt that in general AH gave students a better understanding of what studying would be like post school, it gave learners more control of their learning and the opportunity to develop their own interest and skill base, AH promote self-confidence and they offer a natural progression in learning.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental questions for staff was whether schools could work together in a more efficient way to improve our current offer for young people. 86% of respondents said that we could with 8% saying maybe and only 6% saying no.

We also explored the number of young people in classes with 45% saying they had less than 10 young people and 55% saying they had more. This is always a key consideration for schools since, like all subjects, teaching AH involves an allocation of time. Sometimes Headteachers have to weigh up running an AH course for a very small number of young people at the expense of a course where there could be much higher numbers of young people.

84% of staff said that they did have young people from other schools and to increase this may require greater flexibility and potentially aligned timetables, workload of greater numbers would need to be looked at and it would be helpful to have a colleague to link with to help coordinate projects and assignments.

Staff were also asked about the potential for greater online learning. 68% felt that aspects of the course could be online but there seemed to be a preference for face to face and questions about the impact on attainment if a lot of the courses moved online were asked. Some felt a tutorial type approach might work online but practical elements of many courses could not be done online. However, all young people having an ipad in Glasgow does make aspects of delivery more possible.

## 3 Consultation on Proposals

3.1 The findings from the questionnaires and focus groups were discussed with Headteachers in January 2024. Headteachers were asked to return to their schools and explore proposals in a number of areas, and then provide feedback to the AH review group by the end of January, although this became mid-February due to other pressures on Headteachers' workloads. The key areas to consider were as follows ;

- An Advanced Higher central team is created to administer allocation of places based on criteria. There is a cut-off date for applications and allocations.
- The criteria for an Advanced Higher place at another school includes UCAS application choices, travel, any other factors.
- The application is completed by young people but signed off by PT Pastoral Care and then sent by DHT/HT.
- A central team will collate schools' offers and align with pupil choices for AH
- The ten schools who have a significant offer continue with this and offer places (via the central team) for any available spaces.
- The remaining twenty schools will offer at least one to two AH (beyond Art AH and Music AH) ie add something to their provision (some of these schools are offering five to six already).
- Advanced Higher classes should be no fewer than 10 young people.
- Additional time should be available to teachers who are new to Advanced Higher or have increased classes.
- Classes can be a mixture of 'in person' and online. Teacher will decide this.
- Timetables should be harmonised across the city.

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One column on the college offer Tuesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon.

3.2 The initial meeting in January was followed up by a further meeting a week later to explore some of the areas in more detail. Across February, a number of responses came back from schools and these were mainly technical about the process for applications and how the central team would take these forward. There were other issues around timetabling especially when a school had multiple AH subjects therefore whilst some schools will look at harmonising this may be a challenge initially. Also, some headteachers felt that you couldn't prioritise more time for staff new to AH. However, some of the technical issues aside, all schools were generally positive about the proposals moving forward.

## 4 Present Situation

4.1 Following the consultation period, the AH group has now been linking directly with schools on taking the proposals forward. Their timeline is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| February | Collation of Headteacher feedback<br>Recommendations/Feedback provided to Headteachers |
| March | School information gathered regarding current/proposed Advanced Higher offer w/b 26th February (deadline 15th March)<br>Central team meet to confirm clear guidelines/policy following consultations recommendations<br>Start of pupil application process |
| April/May | Central team meet to allocate spaces<br>Schools notified of potential students<br>Students notified of places |
| August | DHT form to confirm any changes to student applications<br>Central team meeting to allocate paces/remove from process where appropriate |

4.2 The allocation of places will be done in collaboration with schools. There will also be additional places offered from other institutions to supplement our provision.

## 5 Experience of Higher Education Institutions

5.1 One of the benefits articulated by some of the young people who attended the Hub at Glasgow Caledonian University was that they enjoyed the experience of being at university. It is important to note that our young people who are considering, or even the school is considering, a higher education pathway already have a number of opportunities to experience life at university. These include ;

- Campus visits for all Glasgow universities (and other universities where young people are interested). These had halted during covid but have now been reinstated.
- Focus on 4 – Programme delivered by student mentors from Strathclyde University which includes days on campus.
- SOS Accelerate programme – Strathclyde University organises this for senior phase young people and it takes place over a week at their campus.
- Taster sessions by Glasgow University – these involve three days on campus and some online opportunities. They are organised for different disciplines.
- Access to Career programmes – these are delivered by Glasgow University and involve campus visits
- Top up programme – part of this includes campus visits to Glasgow University

- Routes for All programme – this is delivered by Glasgow Caledonian University and involves campus visits
- Summer schools delivered by Glasgow University and Strathclyde University and these take place on campus.
- Young Strathclyder programme for selected primary schools and this involves a day visit to campus

5.2 Some schools also have bespoke arrangements such as Springburn Academy who have had a long running mentor programme with Strathclyde University. The following example from Notre Dame High School also gives a flavour of some of the varied opportunities schools can offer.

5.3 Case Study – Notre Dame High School

**Partnerships with Higher Education Institutions**

**Cambridge Shadowing Scheme** – six S5 Students attend a weekend on campus, attending lectures and experiencing college life, e.g. formal dining experiences.

**Medic Mentor/Medic Insight**- workshops throughout the year delivered by university medical students on surgical procedures and the problem-based learning approach pupils can expect at university - S4-S6.

**Social Mobility Foundation** – UK-wide mentoring provided to pupils in S5/6 within their chosen career path, attending online lectures and summer placements.

**Sutton Trust Summer Programmes** (including US programme)- summer school for S5 within Sutton Trust universities, e.g., pupils would attend St. Andrew's University summer school.

**Nuffield Research Placement**- S5 pupils apply for a STEM-related six week placement at university during summer holidays.

Focus West:

- Top Up programme with S6 pupils – widening participation
- Campus Visits to Strathclyde Uni, Caledonian Uni and Glasgow University
- One to One interviews with Higher Education Advisors- S5 (February)/ S6 (September)
- Routes for all Workshops (S5/S6 students with >3 Highers)

Strathclyde Widening Access programme:

- A number of young people are successful in their applications to Young Strathclyder Accelerate summer programme (S4/S5 students in June)

Glasgow Widening Access programme:

- Reach S4-S6 (for pupils applying to Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Studies)
- Access to University S4 (Education, Accountancy/Finance, Engineering)
- University of Glasgow Taster Weeks (S4/S5 June)

Glasgow Caledonian University Connect Team

- Online support for carers/parents
- Online support for personal statements (S6)
- S6 Team building insets (June)

## 6 Conclusion

6.1 The Advanced Higher Review group proposals are now being taken forward and will hopefully enhance an already significant offering across our schools. We also hope that the coordinated approach will bring more equity to the system and lead to further improvements over time.

## 7 Policy and Resource Implications

**Resource Implications:**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Financial:* | Resources are within the present allocated budget |
| *Legal:* | None |
| *Personnel:* | Within the present staffing allocation |
| *Procurement:* | None |
| **Council Strategic Plan:** | Grand Challenge 1 – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities.<br>Mission 2: Meet the learning and care needs of children and their families before and through school.<br><br>Grand Challenge 2 – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens.<br>Mission 3: Raise attainment amongst Glasgow's children and young people. |

**Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Does the proposal support the Council's* | Outcome 14: Glasgow City Council (Education Services) has continued to improve outcomes |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.* | in relation to attainment and achievement for children and young people including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, those for whom English is not their first language, those who identify as black and minority ethnic, and disabled children and young people. |
| *What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* | This has a positive impact since it ensures our young people can have the opportunity to achieve more success in relation to their attainment. |
| *Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.* | Our Advanced Higher Offer ensures that more of our young people from a socio-economic disadvantaged background have opportunities to study AH. This is combined with a significant amount of widening access opportunities across our schools. |

**Climate Impacts:**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:* | Travel between schools is likely to be by bus or walking. |
| *What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?* | None |
| *Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?* | No |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:** | None |
| Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N | |
| If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out | |

## 8 Recommendations

8.1 To note the changes to the Advanced Higher provision in secondary schools moving forward from 2024.