1. The scale of the third and private sectors’ involvement in schools, in terms of improving attainment and achievement, and the appropriate dividing line between their role and the role of education authorities;

Firstly, there needs to be clarity of definition for the terms, ‘attainment’ and ‘achievement’ and consequently how these are recorded and measured to reflect individual learning pathways. Frequently, activities which are easy to score and benchmark become our primary measures of success. This can lead to measures becoming more valued than the learning they are designed to underpin. They also fail to take into account the context in which learning is taking place and as such can only provide a very approximate measurement of individual capacity, development and skill.

Any kind of partnership work between schools and another organisation becomes necessarily more complex than any model involving a single delivery source. We have in the past often tended towards binary definitions of success and failure – particularly in respect of the traditionally held notion of ‘attainment’ – such that more complex delivery arrangements create risks and complexities which dilute the power of schools to effect success with pupils using these models of measurement. Schools and Local Authorities are increasingly forging partnerships with the third and private sector to better reflect the needs of pupils and their learner journeys. We need a more nuanced system of measurement to reflect this progressive approach to learning and teaching.

Schools must retain the lead responsibility for pupils’ learning journeys, however these need to be plotted in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to maximise value. For example, support from e-commerce / e-marketing organisations in delivering IT and Maths curriculum-based learning can provide context and practical applications for learning which stimulate and enthuse pupils to further engage in learning and explore potential new career pathways. There is not a single area of the curriculum which does not benefit from this collaborative approach to learning where it is managed by education professionals and links to the development of educational, career and / or personal goals.

Another way in which this collaborative approach to improving attainment / achievement can achieve real success is by creating opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. By applying abstractions to practical circumstances, we are immediately required to address contingencies outwith the scope of purely theoretical learning. This creates huge opportunities for broader approaches to how the curriculum is delivered. The e-commerce example above, brings in applications of mathematics and IT as noted, but also require a focus on written work, research, communications, design, project management, concepts of profit and loss etc. At a macro-level pupils’ overall employability skills are enhanced as are their personal networks – two key elements and predictors of positive and sustained transition from secondary education.

Within this collaborative approach to learning we must retain schools as the lead organisation in supporting each pupil’s journey. The ‘lead organisation’ has responsibility for delivering learning, but as crucially facilitating others to deliver
where they are expert or can present applications of theory into business or community settings.

2. **Whether their approaches have been particularly successful in improving achievement and attainment for school pupils. If so, whether their methods could be more embedded in the curriculum;**

   Collaboration across the third / private sectors with schools is often developed and delivered in an ad-hoc way, dependent on the availability of transient funding and political priorities. This scattergun approach to delivery can compromise the effectiveness of delivery. In particular, the short term nature of many collaborative approaches can reduce or remove opportunities to learn from mistakes and drive up quality.

   All effective partnerships are defined by positive relationships, mutual respect, a common vision, a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities and an understanding of what success 'looks-like'. None of these success-factors can be fully realised without the necessary investment of time across a nascent partnership. Our current and most frequently applied models for funding new activities do not afford the requisite time to allow partnerships to grow and develop the capacity to demonstrate their effectiveness. The most recent example of this is through the allocation of 1-year funding to support the implementation of the national youth employment strategy. The step-change required in Scotland’s disparate cultures, Education and Industry, to meet the aims of the new strategy, requires a concerted, consistent and combined effort over the next 5-10 years. The strategy itself sets targets for 2020 – the allocation of a single year’s worth of funding sets a far less ambitious tone.

   Where partnerships flourish – meeting the key criteria outlined above – their value exceeds significantly that which can be achieved by working in isolation. The current systemic factors around still mainly short-term public sector investment and changing political priorities limit our opportunities to fully embed collaborative design and delivery models within the curriculum. Longer term investment plans would substantially support many more collaborative models to become sustainable and successful and consequently to improve outcomes for our young people.

3. **Whether the full potential of the third and private sectors in helping to improve children’s attainment and achievement is being realised;**

   Neither the third nor the private sector is currently realising its full potential in improving children’s attainment or achievement in partnership with schools. The impediments here can be broadly divided into three categories financial, structural and cultural – many of the central issues cross over into more than one of these areas.

   Some of the financial issues are explained in detail at point 2. As well as the need for longer term sustained investment planning from Scottish Govt we should also consider financial incentives for private industry to better support work in our schools. These could take the form of tax breaks based on the satisfaction of specific criteria – e.g. evidence of a working school partnership, x number of work experience placements supported, x number of business mentors provided etc. - potentially overseen by Local Authorities.
Another way in which we could encourage more support and involvement from both sectors would be to make additional ‘asks’ of businesses which use publicly funded employer recruitment incentives to support elements of their workforce. As a quid pro quo, terms of the financial arrangement could be developed to require involvement with local schools to some degree. These arrangements could pertain equally to the 3rd sector as they might with the private sector.

Structurally, the issues around measurement of success are discussed in detail at point 1. Other issues which create structural barriers to greater collaboration include the adherence in some schools to a rigidly organised school day and an equally inflexible timetable to support it. Across Glasgow and the rest of the country, there are many very good examples of where greater flexibility in timetabling, the length of school days and extended learning outwith school terms are paying huge dividends. Glasgow’s Scholarship Programme (a forerunner to the new Foundation Apprenticeship qualification), the city’s Advanced Higher Hub, and summer internships supported by projects like Career Academies are supporting pupils to greater successes than they had expected. Education Scotland has a key role here in sharing these positive stories and leading – along with Local Authority partners - the implementation of best practice as an entitlement for every young person across the country.

Culturally, Scotland lacks the traditions of school and business partnerships that drive the economy in countries like Germany and Switzerland along with the Nordic countries. The mixed economies across these countries have retained elements of their traditional industries as well as growing new service and technology based industries. Scotland has retained far less of its traditional manufacturing employer base and is almost wholly dependent on its service based industry. This new economy has had less time to develop a civic infrastructure than that which is apparent in much of the rest of northern Europe. Not surprisingly, youth unemployment remained lowest over the last 10 years where there was a broader range of industry and where there had been a greater retention of traditional industry than that seen in Scotland. More needs to be done therefore to stimulate the development of civic and cultural links between new industry and the school sector in Scotland. Partly this can be done through financial and taxation measures as described above, but it also needs a compelling and sustained narrative from the Govt., Local Authorities and key business leaders over a time period of 5-10 years – in line with the DYW strategy. Since 2006, starting with More Choices More Chances and Determined to Succeed, year on year, the Govt has introduced a range of initiatives and policy documents all based on improving attainment, achievement and sustained destinations through greater collaboration between disciplines. These have customarily been introduced as policy changes and/or new initiatives with new funding packages attached. This approach is counter-productive in fostering the culture change and partnerships required to fully draw out the potential across private, public and third sectors.

How successful schools have been in reporting on pupils’ wider achievements (i.e. not just examination results) such as those the third sector helps to deliver. Whether such achievements are valued by parents, employers and learning providers as much as formal qualifications;

Annual employer surveys carried out, by among others UKCES and CBI, consistently highlight the importance that employers place on attitude and aptitude - capacities such as resilience, motivation and teamwork are fundamental. In all but the most
technical of job roles, these kinds of capacities are the ones most sought by employers.

We have a plethora of awards and frameworks designed to enable young people to develop and demonstrate their personal effectiveness. With the exception of a few well-established awards schemes however – most notably Duke of Edinburgh’s Award – these have little profile or currency within industry. This is largely due to the complexity and scale of the ‘wider achievement’ landscape. Consequently, attainment in traditional exams and evidence of social networks within relevant industries – usually fostered by a parent, family member or family friends - become far bigger determinants of a young person’s post school destination than the key capacities of attitude and aptitude which employers consistently say they need.

The lack of currency around ‘achievement’ awards extends to an extent into school and with parents. However, the challenge here is less about the awards themselves and more about how we use them in telling a more nuanced, accurate story about individual young people, their journeys and capacities. The first step in addressing this issue is to fundamentally review the current SCQF framework or at the very least the narrative that goes around it. This review should be led by a consortium of employers, educationalists and parents with the express aim of generating credibility and currency in this area: the simpler the better. An overall, simple, credit based national achievement system, to recognise progress may be one way of developing a more streamlined approach. This should link directly into the evolving INSIGHT tool for performance measurement and analysis currently being rolled out nationally.

5. **Given the strong policy focus on the early years, whether the third and private sectors have been able to work equally effectively with pupils of all ages.**

We have seen a significant increase in the involvement of the third sector in local authority early years services in Glasgow over the last 3 years, however, the primary focus of this has been work with parents and families, rather than with children. Third sector services have become key in supporting “family learning”, building parent confidence and self-esteem, supporting improved parenting skills and facilitating pathways for parents into further education, training and employment. Whilst not directly working with children, the positive impact for parents and wider family members leads to an improved experience for young children.

The third sector are particularly well placed to offer support of this nature, with greater capacity to spend time on building relationships with parents and to support the delivery of individualised programmes for families. They also often offer a route into mainstream statutory services which is less threatening for parents who may have a history of concerns arising from poor experiences in their own childhood – reaching families who the statutory services may struggle to engage. Long-term sustainability of such models, however, remains a significant issue as grant funders frequently focus on short-term 1-3 year funding with an expectation of new / innovative work being delivered. Whilst there is value in innovation, the core principles behind the delivery of quality family learning and support do not change and should be supported.

There has been almost no engagement with the private sector in early years settings to date. A first pilot programme is about to be established in the south of Glasgow with the charity Bedrock ([http://www.bedrockcharity.org/](http://www.bedrockcharity.org/)) who play a role in matching
up private sector organisations with early years services in their local area to explore what additionality may be found through such partnerships.