

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION, LEARNING AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 28 MAY, 2015

Present: Councillor I Davidson (Chair), Mr D Bilsland, Ms S Smith, Dr E Anderson, Dr I R Findlay, Mrs M Nelson, Councillors D R Aitchison, A J Allan, P W Bellarby, C C Buchan, G W Carr, R J Christie, J B Dick, M A Findlater, M F Ingleby, C R McKail, F McRae, P Oddie (substitute for Councillor Malone) and L Pirie.

Apology: Councillor T Malone.

Officers: Director of Education and Children's Services, Head of Secondary and Additional Support, Head of Resources and Performance, Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure, Quality Improvement Officers (Ms Hendry and Mr Lennon), Asset Project Leader, Strategic Development Officer (Ms Burke), Project Officer (Ms Jarvis), Solicitor, Governance (Mr Munro), Chief Accountant, Senior Auditor (Ms Beattie) and Principal Committee Officer.

MRS MARY NELSON

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 30 April, 2015 (Item 7, Page 1793), the Chair welcomed Mrs Mary Nelson, who was attending her first meeting of the Committee as Roman Catholic Church representative.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. Councillor Oddie declared an interest in Item 5 which she did not consider to be clear and substantial and she remained in the room during discussion of the item.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act, 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) where an Equality Impact Assessment was provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching their decision.

3. ABERDEENSHIRE'S SCHOOLS ENHANCED PROVISION - REPORT ON THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION FOR CRIMOND SCHOOL AND KELLANDS SCHOOL LEARNING (DYSLEXIA) UNITS

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 4 December, 2014 (Item 6, Page 1212), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services on the outcome of formal consultation on proposals for the redesign of the support and reallocation of the

dyslexia units at Kellands and Crimond Schools to an area model. The report stated that the Buchan Area Committee on 21 April, 2015 (Item 13 refers) had agreed to recommend the adoption of the proposals, subject to a number of comments. The Garioch Area Committee on 21 April, 2015 (Item 14 refers) had agreed to recommend acceptance of the need to move to the new model with best practice in all schools, that support be put in place so that there was no further need to refer pupils to the dyslexia unit, and that the dyslexia unit should only cease to exist when all the pupils currently attending had completed their allocated time in the unit. In response to the comments from Area Committees and after full consideration of parental concerns, the recommendations from officers were set out in section 2.5 of the report, including a revised phased implementation timescale extended to March 2016.

The Chair advised that a request to address the Committee had been received from Mr Graham Ellis and Mrs Tanya Doig, and the Committee agreed to hear the deputation. The Chair also advised that a petition had been received signed by nearly 1,100 people opposed to the closure of the Kellands and Crimond dyslexia units.

Mr Ellis stated that his family had lived with dyslexia for years and knew what worked and what did not. The enhanced provision model failed to address stage 4 dyslexia. While broadly supportive of most of the proposals there were specific gaps which needed to be addressed, and there was no compelling evidence that this was being done. For children to get through the P5-7 years required dedicated support to ensure future outcomes.

Mrs Doig explained that by the time pupils with dyslexia were identified in school they often had feelings of low self-esteem and self-worth. Although schools did a lot of good work it was not enough to deal with stage 4 dyslexia. A dedicated unit supported children emotionally and transformed them, while allowing them to join their wider peer group for other subjects.

Mr Ellis concluded by saying that he was not convinced the current system was unsustainable. Many small schools had very little access to Support for Learning teachers and it was more sensible to put the resources into a central location. There was a shortage of teachers to deal with dyslexia and IT provision could not take the place of an actual teacher. He asked members to consider whether there would be support for stage 4 dyslexia, whether the Council could support 71 rural schools, and how the concerns expressed by Education Scotland would be addressed.

The Project Officer commented that the definition of stage 4 dyslexia was not a terminology used by the service. A staged intervention model was used with all schools being dyslexia friendly. It was estimated that some 1,400 children had dyslexia across Aberdeenshire. The unit at Crimond served 32 primary schools, but only 4 schools were referring pupils to the unit, while the unit at Kellands served 17 primary schools, with only 6 schools referring. Not all the schools which could make referrals were doing so. In addition there was a presumption of mainstreaming in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000.

After a full discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the contents of the Consultation Report as detailed in Appendix A of the report,
- (2) to note the comments of the Buchan and Garioch Area Committees,
- (3) to approve the recommendations set out in section 2.5 of the report with timescales,
- (4) to instruct officers to notify Ministers of the decision in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010,
- (5) to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of the units at Crimond and Kellands and the benefits they have given to pupils, and

- (6) that a further report be submitted to the Committee in a year's time including an external evaluation of the progress of the service.

4. ABERDEENSHIRE'S SCHOOLS ENHANCED PROVISION - PROPOSAL FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 28 August, 2014 (Item 6, Page 571), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services referring to the nine proposals which had been agreed for statutory consultation on a model of enhanced provision of support to individual children and young people with additional support needs. The report outlined in more detail the proposal to consult on the relocation of Newtonhill School enhanced provision centre to Portlethen School, Portlethen, and the establishment of an enhanced provision centre at Mill O'Forest School, Stonehaven.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the timeline for the statutory consultation on the relocation of Newtonhill School enhanced provision centre to Portlethen School, Portlethen, and the establishment of an enhanced provision centre at Mill O'Forest School, Stonehaven, from 24 August, 2015, to 9 October, 2015,
- (2) to approve the statutory consultation proposals as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report for the relocation of Newtonhill School enhanced provision centre to Portlethen School, Portlethen, and the establishment of a new enhanced provision centre at Mill O'Forest School, Stonehaven, and
- (3) to request a detailed proposal for each of the remaining statutory consultations with proposed timelines.

5. REPLACEMENT INVERURIE MARKET PLACE SCHOOL AT URYSIDE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 21 June, 2012 (Item 24, Page 552), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services seeking authorisation to conduct formal consultation exercises with local stakeholders on proposals regarding the replacement and relocation of Inverurie Market Place Primary School, in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Appended to the report was a proposal document which outlined the proposal to replace the existing Inverurie Market Place School with a new primary school located at Uryside. The consultation would take place between 1 June, 2015, and 4 September, 2015, and a public meeting would be held at Inverurie Market Place Primary School on 24 June, 2015.

The Committee **agreed** to authorise formal consultation exercises with local stakeholders on proposals regarding the replacement and relocation of Inverurie Market Place Primary School, in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

6. SCHOOL ROLL CAPPING - RAYNE NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 6 February, 2014 (Item 10, Page 1303), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services setting out proposals for capping the school roll at Rayne North Primary School in order to enable the school to fully deliver the curriculum. It was reported that the Garioch Area Committee on 12 May, 2015 (Item 11 refers), had agreed to approve the proposed capping of Rayne North Primary School roll at 75 pupils with effect from August, 2015, as an interim measure for one year initially.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the response of the Garioch Area Committee, and
- (2) to approve the capping of the school roll at Rayne North Primary School at 75 pupils with effect from August, 2015, as an interim measure for one year initially.

7. CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF KINTORE PRIMARY SCHOOL ZONES

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 9 October, 2014 (Item 5, Page 860), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services on the outcome of formal consultation on proposals to realign primary school catchment areas in the Kintore network. The report stated that the recommendation from officers was to adopt the proposal in the consultation document, but to allow the houses at Nicol Road and Macallan Road to continue to be zoned for Kintore Primary School. The Garioch Area Committee on 12 May, 2015 (Item 9 refers), had agreed to recommend that the rezoning proposals in the consultation document be adopted.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the response of the Garioch Area Committee, and
- (2) to adopt the proposal in the consultation document, subject to the houses at Nicol Road and Macallan Road continuing to be zoned for Kintore Primary School.

8. WESTHILL REZONING CONSULTATION LAUNCH

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 28 August, 2014 (Item 2, Page 570), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services seeking authorisation to conduct informal and formal consultation exercises with local stakeholders on proposals to realign primary school catchment areas in the Westhill network, in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The formal consultation would take place in July-August 2015.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to authorise an informal and thereafter statutory consultation with local stakeholders (Parent Councils, parents, pupils, staff and local communities) in respect of Westhill from May to September 2015, and
- (2) to receive a further report on the outcomes of the consultation in early 2016.

9. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2015-2018

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 29 May, 2014 (Item 4, Page 1895), there had been circulated a report dated 28 April, 2015, by the Director of Education and Children's Services, together with a draft Education and Children's Services Service Plan 2015-2018. The report stated that the plan reflected the current state of progress with the 2014-2017 plan for the Education, Learning and Leisure service and incorporated those workstreams from that plan which, as of March 2015, remained incomplete, as well as reflecting the areas of responsibility that now sat within Education and Children's Services, which did not previously sit within Education, Learning and Leisure.

The Committee **agreed** to approve the Education and Children's Services Service Plan for 2015-2018, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

10. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORTING JANUARY - MARCH 2015, INCLUDING UPDATE ON SERVICE PLAN (ABERDEENSHIRE PERFORMS)

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 26 March, 2015 (Item 7, Page 1781), there had been circulated a report dated 30 April, 2015, by the Director of Education and Children's Services advising on how Education and Children's Services was performing against key performance measures and associated targets as set out in the Education, Learning and Leisure Service Plan 2014-2017 in the period from January to March, 2015. The report commented on the 8 performance measures which were currently demonstrating performance below expectations and the actions being taken to improve performance. The report also advised that good progress was being made in respect of the 18 projects/action plans associated with the Education, Learning and Leisure Service Plan for 2014-2017.

During discussion, members commented and asked questions about the undernoted performance measures and projects/action plans which were answered by officers.

- 1.2a relating to the % of positive HMle school inspections (satisfactory or better)
- Develop and implement a comprehensive raising achievement and attainment strategy - results to be reported back regularly
- Develop and implement a strategy for the use and promotion of innovative ICT solutions to support learning – give more information about mobile devices
- Establish pathways for positive relationship development - explain what is meant by nurturing approaches
- Deliver projects identified within the Council capital plan to support EL&L objectives - status of Buchanhaven extension
- Conduct a review of the service's arrangements for performance management and implement outcomes - explain what is meant by shadow measures

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the performance achieved in January to March 2015 referred to in sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 of the report,
- (2) to note those measures where performance was below expectations in January to March 2015 referred to in sections 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6 of the report,
- (3) to note the publication of the complete January to March 2015 performance report on Ward Pages, including an update on progress with Service Plan projects, and
- (4) to instruct the Director of Education and Children's Services to continue to report, by exception, to Committee quarterly on performance measures against service objectives, and six monthly on progress in delivering all aspects of the Service Plan.

11. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY ACTIVITY BY EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF EDUCATION) IN ABERDEENSHIRE - SUMMARY REPORT FOR TERMS 1 TO 3, 2014/15

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 28 August, 2014 (Item 7, Page 572), there had been circulated a report dated 30 April, 2015, by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing an update report on the outcome of Education Scotland inspection activity during terms 1 - 3 of session 2014/15. The report stated that there had been fewer school inspections taking place in this session, with a total of three inspections up to the end of term 3. In view of this, and in the expectation that inspections might occur with a similar frequency in coming sessions, the service was seeking the approval to grant the Director of Education

and Children's Services the discretion to vary the schedule of reporting when the number of inspections in a term was very low (1 or 0).

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report,
- (2) to commend the achievement of Marykirk Primary School in obtaining a very good inspection report, and
- (3) to grant the Director of Education and Children's Services the discretion to vary the frequency of reports of this type to the Committee in line with the proposal set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report.

12. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 28 August, 2014 (Item 5, Page 571), there had been circulated a report dated 2 May, 2015, by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing an update on how the implementation of the Aberdeenshire 3-18 Curriculum Policy had been supported and detailing areas for support which would be the focus of development across education services including schools, early years establishments and community learning and development as priorities for session 2015/16.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the progress to date in relation to implementing Aberdeenshire 3-18 Curriculum Policy, and
- (2) to approve the curriculum development priorities for session 2015/16 as detailed in Table 1 of the report.

13. YOUTH COMMISSION #BULLYING - ANTI-BULLYING GUIDANCE AND POLICY

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 29 May, 2014 (Item 9, Page 1897), there had been circulated a report dated 2 May, 2015, by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing an update on the work of the Youth Commission #Bullying to provide an up to date and fit for purpose anti-bullying policy in accordance with national guidance. The report stated that an Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance had now been developed based on the recommendations of the Youth Commission, to be issued to learning establishments, and that training would be delivered across Education and Children's Services to support the implementation of the policy.

During discussion, members asked questions about the incidence of cyber bullying and whether more Youth Commissioners would be recruited. Comments were also made about the level at which bullying would start to be recorded and the extent of the recording and whether there were sufficient resources to cope with the nature and frequency of recording.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to commend the work of the Youth Commission #Bullying,
- (2) to approve the Anti-Bullying Policy document, and
- (3) that the Guidance and Policy be issued to all establishments.

The Committee unanimously **agreed** to suspend Standing Order 20(8)(c) in order to allow the meeting to continue beyond 12.45 pm.

14. SCHOOL MEAL SERVICE UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 20 March, 2014 (Item 8, Page 1550), there had been circulated a report dated 27 April, 2015, by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing an update on developments within the school meals service which commented on uptake of school meals and advised that Scottish Government policy had extended the eligibility for free school meals to all P1 to P3 pupils from January 2015. In order to implement this policy a review of all primary school catering facilities had been undertaken, and in a number of schools this had resulted in improvements to facilities. Following the achievement by the Catering Service of the Food for Life Bronze Award in Autumn 2014, it was hoped that the Silver level of award could be achieved in the future and work was ongoing to address and cost the necessary changes and improvements. The report also proposed an increase in the price of a primary school meal at the start of the 2015/16 school year in August to reflect increases to some food costs and staffing costs since the last price increase.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve a 10p price increase to primary school meals for P4-P7 pupils meals and the meal equivalent in secondary schools, and
- (2) to note the detail of updates to the school meals service provided to Aberdeenshire's schools.

15. ABERDEENSHIRE MUSEUM SERVICE ACCREDITATION

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 21 May, 2009 (Item 15, Page 405), there had been circulated a report dated 14 May, 2015, by the Director of Education and Children's Services requesting approval of a range of updated policies to support the work of Aberdeenshire's Museums and Heritage staff. The report explained that, as part of the formal accreditation process for national facilities and quality standards set by Museums and Galleries Scotland, the Council was required to regularly review and update museum related policies to ensure that they were fit for purpose.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the updated Museum policies covering the subjects of Entry, Exit, Loss, Loan Out, Loan In, Access and Collections Development attached as Appendices 1-7 of the report, and
- (2) to approve the draft Museum Development Plan 2015-2017 attached as Appendix 8 of the report.

16. EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL - CALL FOR EVIDENCE

There had been circulated a report dated 18 May, 2015, by the Director of Education and Children's Services advising that the Education (Scotland) Bill had been introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 23 March, 2015, covering a range of school policy issues, in particular school attainment, the provision of Gaelic medium education and additional support for learning. The report stated that a Call for Evidence for the Bill had to be submitted to the Education and Culture Committee of the Scottish Parliament by 18 May, 2015, and set out the Aberdeenshire submission from officers in Appendix 1 of the report.

During discussion, a few members expressed concern that the submission had not been seen by the Committee before it was sent, and that the response did not fully represent Aberdeenshire's strengths. Officers advised that the response deadline did not allow time for the Committee to see the response, and clarified that this was a Call for Evidence, and not a consultation on the Bill, which was anticipated at a later date. The Chair commented that the cross-party COSLA Education, Children and Young People Executive Group had serious concerns about the content of the Bill. Officers believed that the issues in it were already covered in other legislation and care would be required to avoid confusion.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the contents of the Education (Scotland) Bill, and
- (2) to note the submitted response from Aberdeenshire to the Scottish Parliament Education and Culture Committee.

17. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

There had been circulated a report dated 14 May, 2015, by the Chief Internal Auditor on recent internal audit reports outlining audits into Sport and Leisure Management Budget Monitoring and School catering, together with an appendix setting out the progress made by Education and Children's Services in implementing recommendations made in previous internal audit reports which should have been implemented by 31 March, 2015.

The Committee **agreed** to note the contents of the report and the attached appendices.