

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL**EDUCATION, LEARNING AND LEISURE COMMITTEE****WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 8 DECEMBER, 2016**

Present: Councillor A Evison (Chair), Mr D Bilsland, Ms A Guy, Dr E Anderson, Dr I R Findlay, Mrs M Nelson, Councillors A S Buchan, C C Buchan, G W Carr, R A Cassie (substitute for Councillor A J Allan), I Davidson, M A Ford, M F Ingleby, C R McKail, F McRae, G E Petrie (substitute for Councillor Dick), L Pirie, M M Stewart and I W Taylor.

Apologies: Councillors A J Allan and J B Dick.

Officers: Director of Education and Children's Services, Head of Primary and Curriculum Development, Head of Secondary and Additional Support, Head of Resources and Performance, Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure, Head of Children's Services, Lead Officer, Primary Education, Quality Improvement Manager (Ms Davies), Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager (Ms Milne), Service Manager (Ms Thomson), Team Manager (Ms Redford), Solicitor, Governance (Ms Overton), Chief Accountant and Principal Committee Officer.

COUNCILLOR IAN TAYLOR AND MS ADRIENNE GUY

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Councillor Ian Taylor and Ms Adrienne Guy, the new primary teacher representative, who were attending their first meeting as members of the Committee.

ALEX JOHNSTONE MSP

The Chair referred to the recent sad death of Alex Johnstone, who had been a Member of the Scottish Parliament for North East Scotland since 1999, and paid tribute to his commitment to Aberdeenshire. The Committee observed a minute's silence for Mr Johnstone.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. No interests were intimated.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In taking decisions on the undernoted 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 and 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, and
- (2) to consider, where an equality impact assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

3. PROPOSAL FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON RELOCATION OF ST ANDREW'S SCHOOL TO INVERURIE COMMUNITY CAMPUS

There had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services requesting approval to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposed relocation of St Andrew's School to a purpose built facility within the new Inverurie Community Campus. The report stated that the proposal emerged from the culmination of extensive and ongoing informal engagement with St Andrew's School staff and parents and the timing of the statutory consultation would ensure that any progression of the proposal would align to the wider project process for Inverurie Community Campus, including the related Gateway milestones.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposed relocation of St Andrew's School to Inverurie Community Campus during the period from 9 January to 24 February, 2017, and
- (2) to approve the statutory consultation proposal as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

4. DRAFT STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON GAELIC EDUCATION - CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON DRAFT GUIDANCE ON GAELIC LANGUAGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005 AND GAELIC PROVISIONS OF THE EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2016

There had been circulated a report dated 23 November, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services referring to consultation on draft statutory guidance on Gaelic Education which had been prepared under Section 9 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gaelic provisions of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. The report stated that the guidance provided information on how to request Gaelic Medium Education as well as recommendations and best practice in the delivery of all forms of Gaelic education and included an Aberdeenshire Council response to the consultation.

The Committee **agreed** to note the response provided on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council with regard to the consultation on the draft statutory guidance on Gaelic Education.

5. EMPOWERING TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO ACHIEVE - EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION - A GOVERNANCE REVIEW

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 27 October, 2016 (Item 5, Page 647), there had been circulated a report dated 16 November, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services referring to the Scottish Government's delivery plan "Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education" and the consultation document "Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities to Achieve - A Governance Review", and set out a potential Aberdeenshire Council response to the consultation.

During discussion, the Committee was advised that the teaching unions were very supportive of the Council response but wished to make the additional points that restructuring of the governance of education was seen as a distraction at this time, and that the proposals would result in a lack of the democratic accountability which was seen as a key strength of the current system. There could be harm to industrial relations at local and national level. Cuts in budgets were the biggest barriers to improving standards and there should be a national minimum standard for staffing. Members commented that there was no demand from head teachers for more powers and there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the current arrangements. There was a need for stability to allow Curriculum for Excellence to settle in and to emphasise the involvement of parents in the education of their children. The overall view was that these were not the key issues in education at this time.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the proposed Aberdeenshire Council response to the Scottish Government consultation on the Excellence and Equity in Education governance review, subject to the inclusion of points raised during the discussion, and
- (2) that the final response would be approved by the Chair, Vice Chair and opposition spokespersons prior to submission to the Scottish Government.

6. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORTING, JULY - SEPTEMBER 2016, INCLUDING UPDATE ON SERVICE PLAN (ABERDEENSHIRE PERFORMS)

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 26 May, 2016 (Item 8, Page 1854), there had been circulated a report dated 28 October, 2016, 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 and Children's Services Service Plan 2016-2019 in the period from July to September, 2016. The report commented on the 9 performance measures which were currently demonstrating performance below expectations and the actions being taken to improve performance. The report also provided a summary of progress being made with each of the projects/action plans associated with the Education and Children's Services Service Plan 2016-2019.

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

- 4.4b relating to the % satisfaction with libraries
- PI 7.2 & 7.3 relating to number of users of sports facilities
- PI 13 relating to % of children living in poverty (before housing costs)
- M5.1 relating to work at Ellon Primary School

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the performance achieved in July to September 2016 referred to in sections 2.4 - 2.9 of the report,
- (2) to note those measures where performance was below expectations in July to September 2016 referred to in sections 2.6 and 2.7 of the report,
- (3) to note the progress made with projects and actions in the 2016-2019 Service Plan for Education and Children's Services referred to in sections 2.8 and 2.9 of the report,
- (3) to note the publication of the full July to September 2016 performance report on Ward Pages, 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.

7. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2015/16

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 8 October, 2015 (Item 3, Page 673), there had been circulated a report dated 12 October, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services, together with the Standards and Quality Report for Education and Children's

Services for 2015/16. The report stated that the Standards and Quality Report presented an annual evidence based evaluation of the performance of the service against nationally recognised benchmarks of quality. This assessment of quality complemented the reporting on performance against achievement of the service's strategic objectives which was available through the Service Plan and performance monitoring regime. The report set out the key strengths of the service in 2015/16 and the areas where the service had identified a need for further development and improvement. The report also advised that the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 had replaced the duty to provide this kind of Standards and Quality Report with a number of new duties relating to the publication of annual plans and reports about a range of areas, including progress in reducing inequalities, the educational benefits for pupils that have derived from the actions taken by the authority and equal opportunities. As a consequence of this change, it was proposed that the present Standards and Quality Report 2015/16 would be the last report of this type and subsequent reporting on standards and quality would be incorporated in the annual reporting arrangements being developed in line with the 2016 Act.

During discussion, members commented on the good work in relation to Looked After Children and Corporate Parenting. Members also proposed the undernoted minor amendments to the text of the Standards and Quality Report before it was published on the website.

- Page 8 Foster Care - footnote to explain what grades 4 and 5 meant
- Include reference to teacher recruitment and the Council's funding position

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the contents of the Standards and Quality Report for Education and Children's Services for 2015/16, subject to the comments made during the discussion, and
- (2) that subsequent annual standards and quality information for Education and Children's Services should be reported as part of the annual report that education authorities were required to prepare and publish in accordance with the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

8. ABERDEENSHIRE COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN - YEAR ONE UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 27 August, 2015 (Item 8, Page 422), there had been circulated a report dated 11 November, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services setting out the progress made in developing Learning Community Partnerships across Aberdeenshire, and the role played by the partnerships in supporting the Community Learning and Development Plan. The report advised that the Aberdeenshire Learning Community Partnership (LCP) had undertaken a self-evaluation exercise in April 2016, which concluded that the Aberdeenshire LCP was in its early stages but had been able to create a positive space for partnership working. The report explained how the local LCP model had been implemented across Aberdeenshire, commented on the benefits and challenges and referred to key target groups and areas of unmet need.

During discussion, members commented that there had been more elected member input when there were Community Development Groups and members lacked information on LCPs and how people were recruited to them. It was suggested that there should be an annual update report to Area Committees.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the progress made in developing Learning Community Partnerships across Aberdeenshire, and the role played by the partnerships in supporting the Community Learning and Development Plan,
- (2) to note the benefits identified by partners from participation in Learning Community Partnerships and the challenges which were being addressed as detailed in the report, and
- (3) to endorse the partnerships' proposals to focus on the areas of unmet need identified in the report.

9. GRANT SUPPORT FOR CULTURE, SPORT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 24 March, 2016 (Item 7, Page 1509), there had been circulated a report dated 26 October, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services proposing the replacement of the Sustainability Grants scheme with a new Key Partner Core Funding programme and the development and implementation of a Capacity Grants funding scheme. The report explained that the new suite of financial support would recognise the evolving needs of partners and the future financial context for the Council. The Key Partner Core Funding scheme would be designed to support core costs of charitable organisations within sport, culture and Community Learning and Development which were strategically aligned with the Council's objectives, while the Capacity Grants funding would support delivery of projects and programmes across Aberdeenshire that met local needs and develop and support local organisations in delivering council priorities on health and wellbeing, regeneration and learning outcomes.

During discussion, members considered the proposal that at least 50% of the funding for Connecting Communities should be allocated to the four regeneration towns of Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh and Peterhead, or whether all of the funding should be allocated to the areas of greatest need regardless of location. It was noted that a report would come back to the Committee when applications had been received which would allow members to monitor the geographical spread of the applications.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the replacement of the Sustainability Grants scheme with a new Key Partner Core Funding programme from 2017/18, and
- (2) to approve the development and implementation of a Capacity Grants funding scheme of £364,000 for 2017 and 2018/19.