

**ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL**

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 16 FEBRUARY, 2017**

**Present:** Councillor A Evison (Chair), Mr D Bilsland, Ms A Guy, Dr E Anderson, Councillors A J Allan, A S Buchan, C C Buchan, G W Carr, 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 J B Dick, Dr I R Findlay and Mrs M Nelson.

**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), Lead Officer (Developing Young Workforce), Quality Improvement Manager (Learning Estates), Workforce Planning and Staffing Manager (Ms Milne), Learning Estates Team Leader, Quality Improvement Officer (Ms Jarvis), Solicitor, Governance (Ms Overton), Chief Accountant and Principal Committee Officer.

**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. ABERDEENSHIRE'S SCHOOLS ENHANCED PROVISION - REPORT ON THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION FOR THE RELOCATION OF NEWTONHILL SCHOOL ENHANCED PROVISION CENTRE TO PORTLETHEN PRIMARY SCHOOL, PORTLETHEN**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 26 May, 2016 (Item 3, Page 1852), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services on the outcome of statutory consultation on proposals to relocate Newtonhill School Enhanced Provision Centre to Portlethen Primary School, Portlethen, with a phased implementation up to August 2017. The report detailed the feedback received during the statutory consultation and gave the views of Education Scotland on the proposal.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the consultation feedback report, and
- (2) to approve the officer recommendations to relocate Newtonhill School Enhanced Provision Centre to Portlethen Primary School, Portlethen, with a phased implementation up to August 2017.

#### **4. ABERDEENSHIRE'S SCHOOLS ENHANCED PROVISION - THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENHANCED PROVISION CENTRE AT MILL OF FOREST SCHOOL, STONEHAVEN**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 26 May, 2016 (Item 3, Page 1852), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services on the outcome of statutory consultation on proposals to establish an Enhanced Provision Centre at Mill O' Forest School, Stonehaven. The report detailed the feedback received during the statutory consultation and gave the views of Education Scotland on the proposal.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the consultation feedback report, and
- (2) to approve the officer recommendations to establish an Enhanced Provision Centre at Mill O' Forest School, Stonehaven.

#### **5. THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE**

There had been circulated a report dated 29 December, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services referring to the Northern Alliance, which was a collaborative regional partnership of seven education authorities in Northern Scotland intended to build capacity and to provide a clear voice for the delivery of better outcomes for children and families. The report stated that Aberdeenshire Council had played a strong central role as part of the Northern Alliance, which supported the statutory duty of Councils for education and children's services functions to improve outcomes for communities and to drive improvement by being effective at individual authority, regional and national level. The report detailed the achievements of the Northern Alliance so far and commented on the way forward.

The Committee **agreed** to note and welcome the role of the Northern Alliance.

#### **6. DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE**

There had been circulated a report dated 21 December, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services referring to the seven year Scottish Government programme Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) which aimed to better prepare children and young people from 3-24 years old for the world of work, building on the foundations which were already in place as part of Curriculum for Excellence. The report stated that Aberdeenshire Council had a long-standing, positive reputation in delivering enterprise and work-related experiences and employment opportunities for young people, which had continued with progress in taking forward DYW priorities and included effective partnership working with a variety of organisations and agencies. The report provided an overview of progress in 2016/17 and detailed the key messages and focus areas for 2017.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the progress of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) in Aberdeenshire,

- (2) to approve the key messages and focus areas for DYW Aberdeenshire set out in section 2.4 of the report, and
- (3) to approve the Strategic Plan for DYW in Aberdeenshire attached as Appendix 3 of the report.

## **7. ACHIEVEMENT OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE LEVELS**

There had been circulated a report dated 29 December, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services advising that, in December 2016, the Scottish Government had published experimental data on "Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels" in Scotland. This publication contained details of pupils' achievements based on teachers' professional judgements in reading, writing, listening/talking and numeracy and provided information at national and local authority level. The report stated that the information was based on teacher professional judgements as at June 2016. The statistics were highly experimental as there was no current national benchmarking of data and no consistent national approach to using standardised assessments. Therefore, extreme caution should be taken when looking at this data and drawing conclusions. The report also included the percentage figures for Aberdeenshire which had been published.

The Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the Aberdeenshire "Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence" levels, and
- (2) to approve the approaches outlined in paragraph 2.4 of the report to support continued development.

## **8. SCOTS (DORIC) LANGUAGE GUIDELINES**

There had been circulated a report dated 10 January, 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services, together with draft Scots language guidelines which were designed to promote Doric in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The report stated that the Scots language was an essential element of the culture and heritage of Scotland, and in North East Scotland (Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, Kincardineshire and Moray), Scots language was known as "Doric". Doric was an important feature of communities in the North East as a day-to-day spoken language and in the cultural heritage, literature, poetry and song. It was heard daily in work and learning environments across the North East and was the language that many pupils brought to their learning setting.

The Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) that Doric should be recognised as a valued language of the North East and should be supported accordingly,
- (2) to approve the development of a strategic plan to ensure that Aberdeenshire Council would work in partnership with other agencies and organisations to promote Doric language and culture across the North East,
- (3) that Aberdeenshire Council would promote and support Doric, encouraging its respect and recognition across the local area,
- (4) that Aberdeenshire Council specifically supported engagement with Doric in all 3-18 educational establishments to offer an entitlement to Doric for all pupils, and

- (5) to approve the Aberdeenshire Council Scots language guidelines set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

## 9. TEACHER RECRUITMENT

There had been circulated a report dated 30 January, 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing an update on measures being taken to address teacher recruitment issues in Aberdeenshire schools. The report stated that recruitment pressures for permanent and supply staff in schools had been more acute in north Aberdeenshire, however schools across the authority, both primary and secondary, had been affected. The vacancy rate fluctuated and efforts were being focused on recruiting to classroom teacher vacancies. The report detailed the actions taken to date and set out further measures to be progressed.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the impact of the continued drive to maintain a secure teaching staffing position.

## 10. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE IN ABERDEENSHIRE SCHOOLS 2015/16

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 4 February, 2016 (Item 6, Page 1298), there had been circulated a report dated 30 January, 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing information and analysis of the attendance and absence rates of Aberdeenshire pupils during session 2015/16. The report stated that there was no national level data available for 2015/16 to provide context for the Aberdeenshire level data and that there were improved levels of attendance in Aberdeenshire schools across the primary and special school sectors, with attendance in secondary schools marginally lower than it was in 2014/15 (down 0.1%), but remaining significantly above that for secondary schools across Scotland (based on the 2014/15 figures available).

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report, and
- (2) to congratulate pupils, parents/carers and staff on the continued high rates of attendance at schools in Aberdeenshire.

## 11. LEARNING ESTATES STRATEGY - UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee of 4 February, 2016 (Item 9, Page 1300), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services advising of the progress made on developing a learning estate strategy. The report stated that progress had been made on many of the goals set out by the Learning Estate Board and commented on the five major projects which were currently in development at Inverurie, Peterhead, Newmachar, Fraserburgh and Stonehaven.

During discussion, officers undertook to circulate the appropriate information in the report to the Area Committees.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the progress regarding the continued development of the learning estate as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report,
- (2) to approve the ongoing priorities for the review in future years as detailed in Section 5 of the report,
- (3) to receive further update reports on progress as appropriate, and

- (4) to approve the publication and circulation of Appendix 3 of the report as the official Aberdeenshire 2016 based school roll forecasts.

## **12. CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF MINTLAW NETWORK PRIMARY SCHOOL ZONES**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee of 25 August, 2016 (Item 10, Page 393), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services on the outcome of statutory consultation on proposals to realign primary school catchment areas in the Mintlaw network, in particular focusing on Mintlaw Primary School, Pitfour School, Stuartfield School and neighbouring Fetterangus School, Longside School and Maud School. The report stated that the recommendation from officers was to rezone Old Deer to Maud School and to rezone Nether Aden and all streets to the west of South Street, Mintlaw, to Pitfour School, with Mintlaw Primary School retaining the Northwoods development and Clola. The Buchan Area Committee on 31 January, 2017 (Item 13 refers) had agreed to recommend that the Committee adopt these proposals.

The Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the formal report on the consultation regarding the review of the Mintlaw Network primary school zones,
- (2) to note the recommendation from the Buchan Area Committee regarding the report, and
- (3) to approve the implementation of the proposals as detailed in the consultation report attached as Appendix A of the report, such that Old Deer would be rezoned from Stuartfield School to Maud School, and that the Nether Aden development and the established streets to the west of South Road, Mintlaw, would be rezoned to Pitfour School from Mintlaw Primary School.

## **13. ESTABLISHING A NORTH EAST HUB FOR THE ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE OF SCOTLAND**

There had been circulated a report dated 10 December, 2016, by the Director of Education and Children's Services detailing a proposal to enter into a partnership with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) to establish the Conservatoire's North East hub for performing arts in Fraserburgh. The report explained that RCS was unique as a specialist provider of education and training in the performing arts, offering programmes across a spectrum of art forms including music, dance, drama, musical theatre, production arts and television and screen. The range of programmes offered by RCS was designed to nurture talent and potential, creativity and active citizenship through encouraging engagement in the performing arts from pre-school to third age and from across communities in Scotland. The wealth of talent in Fraserburgh, with the academy, college campus, sports centre and dance studio and Dalrymple Arts Centre meant that it was well placed in terms of existing connections, relationships and infrastructure to contribute to a successful partnership and the geographic reach of RCS would be significantly extended.

The Committee welcomed Mr Andrew Comrie, Director of Academic Innovation at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, who provided more information about the proposal and stated that one of the Conservatoire's main aims was to establish local access points for the arts in key parts of Scotland.

Councillors praised the exciting opportunity and said they were looking forward to the development of performing arts programmes targeted for children and young people in Aberdeenshire so they could build on their existing talents.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the proposal to enter into a partnership in March 2017 to establish in Aberdeenshire a North East Hub for the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, to be centred around Fraserburgh,
- (2) to note the initial programme of activities, and
- (3) to note the proposed re-prioritisation of existing resources to financially support the partnership.

#### 14. LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE PRICING POLICY

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 11 February, 2016 (Item 6, Page 1311), there had been circulated a report dated 11 January, 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services detailing a proposed pricing policy for libraries and heritage based on prices being based on a 'cost recovery' of service basis and with a presumption of full cost recovery in the first instance, though this could be reduced based on a range of circumstances, including the need to subsidise services to attain policy objectives and/or a recognition of market forces.

During discussion, Councillor Davidson, seconded by Councillor McKail, moved that the report be circulated to the Area Committees for comment before coming back to this Committee for a final decision.

As an amendment, Councillor Ford, seconded by Councillor McRae, moved that the report not be circulated to the Area Committees before coming back to this Committee for a final decision.

The members of the Committee voted:-

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|-------------------|-----|--|
| for the motion    | (7) | Councillors A S Buchan, Carr, Davidson, Ingleby, McKail, M M Stewart and Taylor.       |
| for the amendment | (8) | Councillors A J Allan, C C Buchan, Evison, Ford, McRae, Petrie, Pirie and Dr Anderson. |

The **amendment was carried** and the Committee **agreed** that the report not be circulated to the Area Committees before coming back to this Committee for a final decision.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the positive impact of cultural activity on promoting health and reducing health inequalities,
- (2) to maximise the positive impact on wellbeing, learning and regeneration outcomes, by focusing concession prices on individuals and families who had low incomes, and increasing the discount rate to those users from 50% to 60%, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report,

- (3) to approve a universal discount rate of 30% for all young people who were 18 or under, and to people in full-time education who were 25 or under, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report,
- (4) to note the commitment of the service to enhance marketing and outreach activities to support people who were not currently participating in cultural activities (particularly from low income families),
- (5) to approve the proposed standard prices as detailed in Appendices 3a - 4 of the report,
- (6) to phase price increases over two years, and
- (7) to streamline categories for room and facility hires, and cease the practice of condition discounts and unstaffed facility discount, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.

The Committee unanimously **agreed** to suspend Standing Order 2.1.2 in order to allow the meeting to continue beyond 1.00 pm.

#### **15. FINANCIAL MONITORING AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2016**

There had been circulated a report dated 23 January, 2017, by the Director of Business Services explaining the current financial position of Education and Children's Services and highlighting significant variances currently identified from agreed budgets. The report stated that the forecast to the end of the financial year was expected to be in excess of budget and that officers had put in place a number of measures designed to bring the budget back to a breakeven position, which had resulted in a reduction in the forecast. At this point in the financial year it was possible that the pressures being forecast could create pressures next year and they would therefore be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy discussions.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the revenue and capital budget monitoring as at 31 December, 2016, and
- (2) to approve the revenue budget virement as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

