

## ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

### EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 30 AUGUST, 2018

**Present:** Councillors G Owen (Chair), M Findlater (Vice Chair), Dr E Anderson, Mr B Bilisland, Mrs R Paterson, Mrs A Guy, Councillors R Bruce, C Buchan, S Dickinson, A Evison, M Ford, V Harper, M Ingleby, R McKail, A Simpson, I Taylor (as substitute for Councillor M Buchan), J Whyte and L Wilson.

**Apology:** Councillor M Buchan.

**Officers:** Director of Education and Children's Services, Head of Primary Education and Curriculum Development, Head of Secondary Education and Additional Support, Lead Officer Primary Education, Corporate Finance Manager, Principal Solicitor (Governance) and Principal Committee Officer.

The Chair welcomed Mr Laurence Findlay to his first meeting of the Committee following his appointment as Director of Education and Children's Services.

#### 1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members' if they had any interests to declare, in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and Councillor Evison declared an interest in Items 5 and 11 by virtue of her involvement in Local Government work and as President of COSLA but, having applied the objective test, considered the interests to be remote and insignificant and continued to participate in the meeting.

#### 2. RESOLUTIONS

##### A. 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.

##### B. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of item 13 so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

### **3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 17 MAY, 2018**

The Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 17 May, 2018, had been circulated, was **approved** as a correct record and thereafter signed by the Chair.

### **4. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CLD) PLAN REFRESH (2018-2021)**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee of 8 December 2016 (Item 8, Page 920) there was circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services (1) providing an update on work undertaken by the Aberdeenshire Learning Communities Partnership (ALCP) in leading on the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan (2015-2018); (2) on the positive findings of an Education Scotland inspection of CLD in 2017 and areas for improvement; (3) presenting a draft three year CLD plan for 2018-2021 for consideration and comment; and (4) advising that a workshop for elected members had been scheduled for the end of the year.

The Committee heard from the Service Manager on the key areas of progress, the evaluation and engagement process undertaken and the statutory requirement to publish the Plan by 1 September 2018, and responded to Members questions on how the Service would respond to unplanned need, women returning to work or learning, how the comments from Education Scotland relating to effective partnership working were being addressed, mental health and wellbeing provision, access to Youth Platforms and involvement of faith groups and other organisations.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the work undertaken by the Aberdeenshire Learning Communities Partnership (ALCP) in leading on the CLD Plan (2015-18) to co-ordinate the delivery of community learning and development activity in Aberdeenshire;
- (2) to endorse the draft three-year CLD plan circulated for the period September 2018 to August 2021 and to recommend approval to the Community Planning Partnership Board subject to the following additions –
  - (a) that priorities/actions relating to specific life changes including women returning to work or to learning be referenced in the plan; and
  - (b) that further clarity be included in the plan on how Education Scotland's comments relating to effective partnership working would be addressed;
- (3) to note that a workshop for elected members had been planned for the end of the year and that an invitation to attend the workshop should be extended to all Members of the Council.

### **5. ABERDEENSHIRE CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 23 March, 2017 (Item 7), there had been circulated a report dated 27 July, 2018 by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing a progress report on action taken to support delivery of the five priorities contained in the Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan 2017 to 2020. The report explained that the Children's Services Plan was a Partnership Plan on behalf of the Community Planning Board, which was informed and underpinned by other Plans such as the National Improvement Framework Plan and the CLD plan, and provided an overview of Children's Services provision in Aberdeenshire.

The Service Transformation Manager introduced the report and responded to questions from Members on prevention and support for victims of child trafficking and exploitation, connectivity and transport issues for children in more rural areas participating in activities, the need for more rural data on child and fuel poverty, health and wellbeing and social exclusion, access to professional help for children presenting with mental health and drug and alcohol issues and family learning opportunities.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note year one progress against agreed aims and multi-agency action plans;
- (2) to receive and consider further annual reports on progress of the Plan; and
- (3) that the Director schedule a workshop on Mental Health matters for Members of the Committee.

#### **6. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS REPORTING DUTIES AND ABERDEENSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHARTER**

There was circulated a report dated 30 July, 2018 by the Director of Education and Children's Services highlighting the Council's statutory duty as a public body to publish a report on steps taken in promoting Children's Rights, on progress made in this connection over the year 2017/2018 and introducing Aberdeenshire's Children and Young People's Charter, which would be launched at Full Council in recognition of the Council's role in championing children and young people's rights.

The Service Transformation Manager introduced the report and explained that the Charter had been developed over a period of time involving youths from all 17 networks across Aberdeenshire and including input from looked after children, gypsy/traveller liaison officers and children with additional support needs. A Doric version of the Charter had also been produced.

The Committee heard from Lauren McGill and Josh Macrae, from Inverurie Academy, who had both been involved in developing the Charter.

The Chair then thanked Lauren and Josh for their presentation and, following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the statutory duty on Aberdeenshire Council as a public body and the Committee's role in promoting Children's Rights;
- (2) to endorse Aberdeenshire's Children and Young People's Charter and support its launch at Full Council in recognition of the Council's role in championing children and young people's rights;
- (3) that the Chair write to other Policy Committee Chairs inviting them to utilise the Charter as part of the decision making process;
- (4) to support scrutiny of Council business presented to Committee to ensure it is in line with Children's Rights reporting requirements and contributes to continued improvement in rights-based service planning and delivery for children and young people; and
- (5) that the Chair, Director and Corporate Finance Manager engage with youth representatives at an appropriate time as part of the budget participation process and a briefing note on the outcome of that engagement be provided to Members of the Committee thereafter.

## 7. NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT AND PLAN

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 31 August 2017 (Item 13), there had been circulated a report dated 30 July, 2018 by the Director of Education and Children's Services seeking approval of the Aberdeenshire National Improvement Framework (NIF) Plan for 2018/19, which captured a combination of key strategic areas for improvement as well as specific aspects of development to deliver the NIF priorities to address the excellence and equity agenda. As part of the NIF, it was reported that Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) from the Scottish Government had also been provided for the majority of schools in Aberdeenshire and was included in the plan. PEF was provided to schools and Head Teachers to identify the most appropriate way of using the funding to close the attainment gap at school and cluster level.

The Head of Primary Education and Curriculum Development introduced the report and responded to Members questions on parental engagement, professional judgement as a means of assessment, access to materials to support learning at home, staffing data, closing the attainment gap, pupil equity funding and catering provision for schools.

The Committee **agreed** to approve the NIF Plan for 2018/19 subject to –

- (1) further clarity being added to the figures on the number of teachers prior to publication; and
- (2) a bullet point being added to reflect the importance of culture and music activities.

## 8. PARTNER PROVIDERS AND ELIGIBLE TWOS

There was circulated a report dated August, 2018 by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing an overview of the provision and uptake of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to families of eligible two year olds and seeking agreement to increases in partner provider settings for eligible twos. It was noted that the expansion of early learning and childcare remained a major focus for the work of the Education and Children's Service with much activity taking place locally, regionally and nationally in this area.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** the following changes with effect from 1 October, 2018 -

- (1) partner providers, including childminders, be paid £6.00 per hour for all eligible twos; and
- (2) eligible twos in partner providers be offered up to 1140 hours per year.

## 9. CATCHMENT AREA REVIEWS FOR THE INVERURIE SCHOOL CLUSTER

There was circulated a report dated 15 August, 2018 by the Director of Education and Children's Services explaining that rising pupil numbers at both Kellands and Strathburn Schools, along with the opening of Uryside School, had prompted the need for a review of the catchment area and seeking approval for the launch of informal engagement to review the catchment areas for primary schools within Inverurie and the catchment area for Inverurie Academy.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) approve the launch of informal engagement regarding the catchment areas for primary schools within Inverurie, and the catchment area for Inverurie Academy; and

- (2) receive future reports regarding progress and details of statutory consultation as required.

## **10. COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS – SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Audit Committee of 21 March, 2018 (Item 4) and the Education and Children's Services Committee of 17 May, 2018 (Item 9) there was circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing details of the Committee Review Process (CRP) undertaken in respect of a matter of service delivery for improvement relating to noncompliance with Financial Regulations and the Service's financial procedures in Secondary Schools which had been identified by the Audit Committee and referred to the Education and Children's Services Committee. The report outlined the details of the Stage 1 investigation which had been undertaken and a report from the Service on the issue identified and actions taken was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the support provision available to Secondary Head Teachers and Administrators through the Audit Compliance process and other support mechanisms in place;
- (2) to note the commitment from Education and Children's Service (ECS) to continue to embed training programmes on an annual basis for all Head Teachers and Administrators on Financial Regulations and Procurement;
- (3) to note that ECS had reviewed the Audit Compliance process to include greater involvement of the Head Teachers' line managers, particularly where areas for development had been identified;
- (4) to note that a Focus Group had now been established including Head Teachers and other stakeholders, enabling direct feedback on matters such as the compliance process and training provision, enabling ongoing refinement and improvement, and that the Head of Commercial and Procurement Service be invited to nominate an officer from that Service to participate in the Focus Group; and
- (5) that a report be presented to the Audit Committee on 20 September 2018 under Section G.2.2 of Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance Committee Review Process (CRP) indicating that this Committee is satisfied with the support mechanisms in place to support Secondary Schools with adherence to Financial and Governance regulations.

## **11. NORTHERN ALLIANCE: REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PHASE 2)**

There had been circulated a report dated 24 July, 2018 by the Director of Education and Children's Services highlighting the work of the Regional Improvement Collaborative and presenting the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2). The report explained that the Northern Alliance was a Regional Improvement Collaborative [RIC] between eight local authorities, across the north of Scotland including Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar [Western Isles], Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands committed to improving the educational and life chances of children and young people. Each RIC had been requested to produce a Regional Improvement Plan outlining how the RIC intended to reduce inequalities and target improvement in the four national priorities from the National Improvement Framework [NIF]. The Committee was requested to note the content of the Regional Improvement Plan and endorse the work of the RIC.

Having heard from the Director, the Committee **agreed** to:

- (1) note the content of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2); and
- (2) endorse the work of the Northern Alliance, Regional Improvement Collaborative.

At this stage in the proceedings, the Committee unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue after 1pm.

## **12. FINANCIAL MONITORING AS AT 30 JUNE 2018**

There had been circulated a report dated 14 August, 2018 by the Director of Education and Children's Services which detailed the position with regard to financial monitoring as at 30 June 2018 for both Revenue and Capital Budget in respect of Education and Children's Services.

The revenue budget for monitoring purposes in 2018/19 had been agreed at Full Council on 8 February 2018 at £296,401,000 and with proposed virements would increase the budget to £301,185,000. The expenditure forecast position to the end of June 2018 exceeded budget by £2,205,000, and was shown in more detail in Appendix 1, along with reasons behind variances for each service, which were detailed in Appendix 2. The report highlighted a number of areas of risk together with a range of actions being pursued to address those areas of risk and achieve the proposed savings.

The overall capital expenditure for the year 2018/19 was forecast to be £39,326,000 which was £1,931,000 lower than the revised budget figure. The reasons for variances were detailed in Appendix 5 to the report. Any movements to the position would be reported back to a future Committee meeting as and when identified.

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced the report and responded to questions from Members on supply teacher costs, overspend in cleaning costs, pupil equity funding (PEF), out of authority placements and demand led spending.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the revenue and capital budget monitoring for the Education and Children's Service as at 30 June 2018;
- (2) to approve the revenue budget virements set out in Appendix 3; and
- (3) that the Director provide a briefing paper to Members on how the PEF is used, at an appropriate time.

## **13. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SUPPLEMENTARY WORK PLAN**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 1 February, 2018 (Item 14), when the Directorate Annual Work Plan had been approved, there was circulated a report dated 30 July, 2018 by the Director of Education and Children's Services seeking the addition of six items to the Directorate Work Plan and the approval of Business Cases in respect of the procurement of LPG Gas and for the Provision of Meat.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) approve the addition of the six items to the Directorate Work Plan approved by Committee on 1 February 2018;

- (2) approve the Business Cases for LPG Gas and Provision of Meat as detailed in Appendices 3 and 4 of the report;
- (3) note that the Business Cases for the three procurements, the costs of which would be met from Pupil Equity Funding, would be approved by the Director, following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokesperson of the Committee; and
- (4) note that Chief Officers had the necessary delegated powers to award the contracts for all of the items added to the Directorate Work Plan.

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