

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEENSHIRE EDUCATIONAL TRUST SUB-COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 17 MAY, 2018

Present: Councillors I Davidson (Chair), M Findlater, V Harper (substituting for A Forsyth) and J Whyte.

Apologies: Councillor A Forsyth and Ms A Guy.

Officers: Principal Accountant (Mrs S Gordon), Accountant (Mrs W Evans), Principal Solicitor (Ms R O'Hare) and Committee Officer (Ms F Brown).

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 no interests were intimated.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In taking decisions on the undernoted item of business, the Sub-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. DRAFT MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF 12 OCTOBER, 2017

The Aberdeenshire Educational Trust Sub-Committee had before them, the draft Minute of the meeting of 12 October, 2017.

Following discussion, Officers were asked to submit an amended minute, to reflect discussions and agreed actions from the last meeting, which they were minded had not been reflected within the draft minute; namely:-

- (1) Officers were asked to provide Information on the Investment Strategy and Benchmarking for the Aberdeenshire Educational Trust; and
- (2) Officers were asked to provide information on the allocation of funds to various trusts as part of the Treasury Management Strategy.

4. ABEDEENSHIRE EDUCATIONAL TRUST (AET) – GRANT FUNDING

Reference was made to the minute of the Aberdeenshire Educational Trust Sub-Committee meeting of 12 October, 2017 (Item 4), where the Committee agreed to delegate the awarding of grants to the Head of Finance for a period of six months, to allow officers to undertake a review of the application process; the criteria applied; and the level of grants available to enable them to streamline the application process, increasing the value of grants available and further publicising of funding.

The Principal Accountant introduced the report and advised the Sub-Committee that as part of the review of the application process, officers had consulted with colleagues in the Education Service and the Benefits Team. Following that review, the report provided proposals for the application process for school trips where parents/guardians would be asked to confirm whether they were in receipt of benefits as listed in Appendix 2 to the report; the criteria for school trips which proposed an increase to the maximum grant from £350 to £500 to cover the full cost of an average trip; the criteria for other grants which proposed an increase to a maximum grant from £250 to £500 which should not be means tested for students going into further education and to delegate authority to the Head of Finance to award grants for another period of six months, and if the Sub-Committee agreed that the delegation should be permanent delegation, to require an amendment to the List of Officers' Powers, as part of the Review of Scheme of Governance with a report being presented to the Procedures Committee on 25 May, 2018.

It was reported that the next step would be publicise the funding available more widely to attract a greater number of applications. and the Sub-Committee were then asked to consider, and comment on the suggested changes contained within the report as part of the review.

During discussion, the Sub-Committee considered each of the Sections contained within the report in detail and provided comment on the proposed changes:-

(i) Section 2.2 – Application School Trips

To include a discretion criteria (delegated to the Head of Finance) for a child with protected characteristics, to ensure a parent/guardian, who may exceed the income threshold, as presented in Appendix 2 to the report, would not be penalised or excluded from applying for a grant.

(ii) Section 2.3 to 2.8 – Criteria – School Trips

To agree that the maximum grant should be raised from £250 to £500, and increased annually in line with the retail price index; to raise the grant % from 10% to 25% for the cost of a school trip up to the value of £1,000 per financial year, provided at least 70% of the pupils offered the trip would attend.

(iii) Section 2.9 – 2.10 – Criteria – Other Grants

To agree that the grant for those in “post school education” should be raised from £200 to £500 per annum, and that applicants' would be eligible to reapply each year while in “post school education” and that the grants should not be means tested.

The Sub-Committee also agreed that while the AET grants had mainly been used for travel grants for school trips and further education grants, it was envisaged that by promoting the scheme, more applications would be received from other themes i.e, clubs and sports facilities and as such it was agreed that funding should be ring fenced (with discretion) at 10% of the annual income from the trust to each criteria. This would

be reviewed at the end of six months to see how the money was being allocated and Officers should provide the Sub-Committee with briefing notes every 3 months.

(iv) Section 2.11 – Delegation to Head of Finance

To agree that the Sub-Committee should delegate authority for another period of six months, with a view to the delegation being a permanent delegation, following the proposed amendments to the List of Officers' Powers, as part of the Review of the Scheme of Governance, which would be considered by the Procedures Committee at its meeting of 25 May, 2018.

After due consideration, the Sub-Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) That the award of travel and further education grants, be delegated to the Head of Finance for a period of six months;
- (2) To recommend that the delegation would be included in the proposed amendments to the List of Officers' Powers, to be considered by the Procedures Committee on 25 May, 2018;
- (3) That the criteria for grants should be amended, taking into account (i) – (iv) above;
- (4) That the Sub-Committee would convene in 12 months, to review the criteria again following the approved changes and the publication of the scheme;
- (5) Officers would provide 3 monthly updates to the Sub-Committee (by email) on grants approved by the Head of Finance.

5. ABERDEENSHIRE EDUCATIONAL TRUST (AET) – TRANSPORT FUNDING APPLICATION FROM MINTLAW ACADEMY

There was circulated a report, dated 10 May, 2018 by the Director of Business Services, which presented an application from Mintlaw Academy, for funding towards the cost of transporting pupils to the North East College (NESCOL) to attend some taster sessions from other grants from Aberdeenshire Educational Trust (AET) as presented in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report had highlighted that section 2.10 to the previous report (Agenda Item 4) had suggested that the original trust deed had mentioned that other themes such as clubs, sports facilities, education in art, drama and research which could be supported by AET and those applications should be brought to the Sub-Committee for approval.

After due consideration, the Sub-Committee **agreed** to delegate to the Head of Finance, the decision on the award of transport funding for Mintlaw Academy. Reference decision (1) for Agenda Item 4.

