

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

SKYPE MEETING, 8 OCTOBER, 2020

Present: Councillors G Owen (Chair) and R Bruce (Vice-Chair), Mr D Bilsland and Ms C Eade, and Councillors K Adam, D Beagrie, C Buchan, S Dickinson, A Evison, M Ford, V Harper, M Ingleby, R McKail, A Simpson, J Whyte and L Wilson.

Apology: Mrs R Paterson.

Officers: Director of Education and Children's Services; Head of Children's Services; Head of Resources and Performance; Service Manager (Educational Development); Strategic Finance Manager; Acting Legal Services Manager (Governance); Estates Programme Manager (Educational Development); Regeneration and Town Centres Manager, Economic Development and Protective Services; Team Manager (Resources and Performance); Lead Officer (Developing the Young Workforce); Virtual Head Teacher for Looked After Children; Senior Committee Officer (Allan Bell); and Learning Estates Officer (Anna Zadka-Labus).

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 declared.

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 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, 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. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF 27 AUGUST, 2020

On consideration of the circulated Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 27 August, 2020, members **approved** it as a correct record.

4. PROGRESS WITH OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There was circulated a report by the Director of Business Services, which updated members on progress made with actions agreed at previous meetings of the Education and Children's Services Committee held since 29 August, 2019.

After consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **noted** the current position in respect of actions arising at previous meetings,
- (2) **agreed** that those actions which had been completed should be removed from the outstanding actions list,
- (3) **noted** that an update would be provided to members by the Director of Education and Children's Services regarding the current situation at Gartly School, and
- (4) **agreed** to include within the outstanding business list the date for the intended workshop on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on school pupils, especially those with additional support needs.

5. COVID-19 UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 27 August, 2020 (Item 7), when members had been provided with an update on the work of Education and Children's Services during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, there was circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which (1) provided further detail on steps taken within the Service to respond to the pandemic situation, (2) detailed information in respect of staffing issues, cleaning and janitorial services, and the range of work provided by the Community Learning and Development (CLD) team and (3) highlighted CLD's step plan for a phased return to delivery of services.

After detailed consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **noted** the ongoing response of the Service to the Covid-19 pandemic,
- (2) **noted** members' comments in respect of janitorial staff, ventilation and heating in schools, the concerns raised by Additional Support Needs staff and the need to produce guidance for them, the importance of the CLD service, pressures on cleaning staff, staff absences and resilience, and
- (3) **agreed** that an update on the impact of the pandemic would be provided to each future meeting of the Committee as an oral report.

6. RELOCATION OF PETERHEAD ACADEMY

With reference to the Minutes of Meetings of (1) the Committee of 10 October, 2019 (Item 8), when it had been agreed to authorise a statutory consultation with local stakeholders on proposals for the replacement and relocation of Peterhead Academy and officers had been instructed to submit a further report on the outcomes of that consultation and (2) Buchan Area Committee of 15 September, 2020 (Item 10), when members had strongly endorsed the proposals for the replacement and

relocation of Peterhead Academy, there was circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services (1) which explained the background to the proposed replacement and relocation of Peterhead Academy, (2) which advised that a consultation exercise had been undertaken in late 2019, after which a new town centre and socio-economic impact assessment had been carried out, (3) which outlined comments made during the consultation phase, with particular reference to the prospective economic impact of the project on the centre of Peterhead and (4) to which were appended consultation responses, together with the town centre survey and the updated town centre and socio-economic impact assessment.

After detailed consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **noted** the formal consultation report regarding the replacement and relocation of Peterhead Academy,
- (2) **noted** the recommendation of Buchan Area Committee at its meeting on 15 September, 2020,
- (3) **agreed** to adopt the proposal to relocate Peterhead Academy to the Kinmundy site, as detailed within the appended consultation report,
- (4) **noted** that the Peterhead Community Campus project had been a Council priority since 2016 and had been the main project within the Education and Children's Services Service Plan 2016-2019,
- (5) **requested** the Director of Education and Children's Services to ensure that future reports on the subject reflected the history of the project, and
- (6) **noted** members' comments regarding the need to mitigate adverse impacts on the town centre, the legislative procedure for public consultation, the promotion of energy reduction by the new school, and safe walking and cycling routes.

7. COMMUNITY ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 21 March, 2019 (Item 16), when it had been agreed to undertake a review of the policy on community access to educational premises, there was circulated a report dated 18 September, 2020, by the Director of Education and Children's Services (1) which advised that Aberdeenshire Council was committed to promoting the use of its facilities to develop links with local communities, (2) which set out plans to enhance community access to educational establishments and (3) to which was appended a set of principles to inform community use of those establishments.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (1) **approved** the community access guidelines for the use of educational establishments, and
- (2) **acknowledged** that the matter would also be considered by the Communities Committee at its meeting on 5 November, 2020, and, in the event that that Committee decided to propose any changes to the guidelines, **agreed** that authority should be delegated to the Director of Education and Children's

Services (following consultation with Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee and the main opposition group spokesperson) to agree the final version of the guidelines, taking into account observations made by both Committees.

8. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCQF LEVEL 4 AND 5 FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIPS IN ABERDEENSHIRE SCHOOLS AND THE USE OF DELEGATED POWERS BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES BY REASON OF SPECIAL URGENCY

With reference to the Minutes of Meetings of the Committee of (1) 21 March, 2019 (Item 10), when members had acknowledged the Council's successful bid to become a lead provider for the delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships in Aberdeenshire schools from August, 2019, and had requested officers to provide regular updates to the Committee and (2) 19 March, 2020 (Item 13), when progress with the delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) had been acknowledged, together with the successful bid by the Council to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to continue as a lead provider for the delivery of FAs in session 2020/21, there was circulated a report dated 10 September, 2020, by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which (1) explained the background to the development of FAs in Aberdeenshire schools, (2) advised that the Council had made a successful bid to SDS to deliver Level 4 and 5 Foundation Apprenticeships in Construction, Hospitality and Automotive and (3) indicated that, due to the timescales involved, the Director of Education and Children's Services had required to exercise delegated powers by reason of special urgency to approve the appointment of external providers, where required, to deliver the courses.

After consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **acknowledged** the successful bid by Aberdeenshire Council to Skills Development Scotland to become a lead provider for the delivery of Level 4 and 5 Foundation Apprenticeships for session 2020/21, at a contract value of £275,000,
- (2) **acknowledged** the use by the Director of Education and Children's Services of delegated powers, as detailed within an appendix to the report, in order to engage external providers to delivery Level 4 and 5 FAs in schools, and
- (3) **agreed** that Level 4 and 5 Foundation Apprenticeship progress should be reported to future meetings of the Committee, with regular annual updates to be provided to members alongside ongoing "milestone" evidence reporting to Skills Development Scotland.

9. CARBON BUDGET SIX-MONTHLY UPDATE AND COVID-19 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE LESSONS LEARNED

With reference to the Minutes of Meetings of (1) Aberdeenshire Council of 18 March, 2020 (Item 10), when, in considering the Carbon Budget 2020/21, members had instructed each Director to report in-year progress, at six monthly intervals, to relevant policy committees and to the Sustainability Committee and (2) the Sustainability Committee of 20 May, 2020 (Item 5), when members had noted that reports on levels of carbon reduction within each directorate should also include lessons learned within each Service during the lockdown, there was circulated a

report dated 18 September, 2020, by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which (1) provided an update on the compliance of Education and Children's Services with its Carbon Budget for 2020/21 (2) highlighted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the work of the Service, including changes to working practices and the use of resources, including a significant reduction in energy and paper usage, (3) outlined the expansion of food waste recycling to all schools within Aberdeenshire, together with waste collection arrangements and (4) detailed the content of the Service's carbon reduction action plan.

After consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **acknowledged** the Education and Children's Services Carbon Budget six-monthly update, as appended to the report,
- (2) **acknowledged** the Service's lessons learned in respect of sustainability and climate change, and
- (3) **requested** the Director of Education and Children's Services to consider litter reduction initiatives and the deployment of carbon abatement cost curves within the Service, in pursuit of the objectives of the Carbon Budget and Covid-19 sustainability and climate change lessons learned.

10. KINSHIP SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

There was circulated and **noted** a report dated 25 August, 2020, by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which (1) provided details of the framework for kinship care for Aberdeenshire's most vulnerable children, and the services available to assess and support carers and (2) to which was appended a copy of the Kinship Service Annual Report 2019/20.

Having **noted** members' comments regarding the promotion of available support for private family arrangements and kinship carers over the age of 70, the Committee **agreed** to continue to support the ongoing work of the Kinship Care Team and to work to place children within their extended families, wherever safe and appropriate to their needs.

11. VIRTUAL HEAD TEACHER ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

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

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 27 August, 2020 (Item 15), when consideration had been given to the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2019/20, there was circulated and **noted** a report dated 11 September, 2020, by the Director of Education and Children's Services (1) which provided additional information on the role and achievements of the Virtual Head Teacher (VHT), working collaboratively across Services to improve outcomes for Care Experienced Young People (CEYP), (2) which demonstrated, through an annual report, the ongoing commitment to listening to CEYP to ensure that lived experience directed and influenced service design and provision and (3) to which was appended a copy of the VHT Annual Report for 2019/20.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- (1) **acknowledged** progress made during the period from August, 2019, to August, 2020, in respect of the role of the Virtual Head Teacher, and
- (2) **noted** the work planned for 2020/21, in line with the Corporate Parenting Plan 2020-2023.

12. UPDATE ON EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE DELIVERY PROPOSAL FOR THE 2020/21 ACADEMIC YEAR

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 28 May, 2020 (Item 8), when members had acknowledged the progress and ongoing work of Education and Children's Services in providing the expansion of 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to date, there was circulated a report dated 30 September, 2020, by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which (1) provided an update on the impact of Covid-19 on the implementation of 1140 hours of ELC, (2) outlined the proposed model for ELC delivery from August, 2020 and (3) set out the staged plan for the implementation of 1140 rollout over the forthcoming year.

After consideration, the Committee:-

- (1) **acknowledged** work undertaken to date on the implementation of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare provision, and
- (2) **noted** members' comments on engagement with partner providers, the role of childminders, the sufficiency of staff for further rollouts of 1140 ELC and notifying parents about changes in funding arrangements.