

## ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

### EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

#### SKYPE MEETING, 26 AUGUST 2021

**Present:** Councillors G Owen (Chair), R Bruce (Vice Chair), D Beagrie, C Buchan, S Dickinson, A Evison, M Ford, J Gifford, L McAllister, R McKail, A Simpson, A Stirling (as a substitute for Councillor M Ingleby), Mr D Bilsland and Ms C Eade.

**Apologies:** Councillors M Ingleby, L Wilson and Mrs R Paterson.

**Officers:** Director of Education and Children's Services, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships, Head of Resources and Performance, Head of Education, Education Support Officer (Education Development), Service Manager (Education Development), Service Manager (Lifelong Learning and Leisure), Quality Improvement Manager (Resources and Performance), Learning Estates Team Leader (Resources and Performance), Quality Improvement Manager, Area Catering Officer (Support Services), Business Strategy Manager (Customer and Digital Services), Business Partner, Principal Solicitor (Legal and People), and Committee Officer (Kasia Balina).

**Also in attendance:** Sarah Burton (LEAD Scotland)

#### INTRODUCTION

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, expressed the satisfaction that all children were back in school after a well-deserved summer break. She also highlighted the success of the Holiday Recovery Programme offering a range of opportunities across Aberdeenshire designed to meet the needs and aspirations of all children and young people.

The Chair also mentioned how beneficial the recent meeting of the committee members and senior officers with young representatives from across Aberdeenshire had been. The meeting was a part of a regular programme of engagement, giving young people a chance to share their feedback and shape decision-making. The Chair paid tribute to those representatives who were moving on to the world of work or further education and thanked them for their participation and engagement.

#### 1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare, in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Councillor Beagrie declared an interest in Items 8, 9, 15 and 17 by virtue of being the Chair of the Peterhead Area Community Trust. Councillor Beagrie concluded that having applied the objective test, the interest was remote and insignificant, and she would remain and participate when the items 8, 9 and 15 were being considered. She also concluded that having applied the objective test, the interest was

significant, and therefore she would leave the meeting during consideration of item 17.

Miss Eade declared an interest in Item 11 by virtue of being a teacher at Meethill School. Miss Eade concluded that having applied the objective test, the interest was significant, and therefore she would leave the meeting during consideration of that item.

## **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. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 27 MAY 2021**

On consideration of the circulated Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 27 May, 2021, Members **agreed** to approve it as a correct record.

## **4. PETITION FOR CONSIDERATION - 'SAVE THE PUDDINGS IN ABERDEENSHIRE SCHOOLS'**

There was circulated a report dated 22 July, 2021 by the Director of Business Services advising the Committee of a petition which had been received and requested the reinstatement of treats (puddings, ice cream and custard) on school lunch menus as part of taking a more balanced approach to a healthy lifestyle.

The Committee heard from William Dibb, from The Gordon Schools, who submitted the petition while he was in P7 at Rhynie Primary School. William Dibb represented his peers during the meeting and highlighted the importance of exercise as well as a healthy diet. He also presented examples of menus introduced in other local authority areas.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**: -

- (1) to note the petition received by the Director of Business Services;

- (2) that the Head of Resources and Performance submit a report on catering services covering the subject matter of the petition to the Committee meeting on 7 October, 2021; and
- (3) to instruct Officers to provide Members with a set of menus introduced in schools across Aberdeenshire.

## **5. PROGRESS WITH OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

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

Thereafter, and having considered Members' comments regarding the timeline for a workshop on trauma informed communities, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the current position in respect of actions arising from previous meetings; and
- (2) that those actions which had been completed should be removed from the outstanding actions list.

## **6. COVID-19 VERBAL UPDATE**

The Director of Education and Children's Services provided an update on steps taken within the Service to respond to the current pandemic.

It was highlighted that Aberdeenshire's school attendance rate and staff attendance continued to be positive despite the challenges caused by a rising number of cases of Covid-19. It was felt that children and young people, as well as parents and staff, were very positive about the return to schools.

Holiday Activity Programme was a great success and helped to improve wellbeing, mental and physical health amongst children and young people across Aberdeenshire.

The Committee **agreed** to note the ongoing response of the Service to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **7. INCORPORATION OF UNCRC (UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD) INTO SCOTS LAW: UPDATE**

There was circulated a report dated 27 May, 2021 by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which updated Members on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) incorporation into Scots Law.

In April 2019, the Scottish Government agreed to recognise children's rights by incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law, ensuring children and young people would be involved in decisions that affect them and their rights protected by law.

Members commented on embedding the UNCRC across all Council services; extending incorporation of UNCRC beyond school environment; areas of interest for children and young people; diverse approach to engagement of children and young people; list of stakeholders; inclusion of community councils and the need for Care Experienced Young People be involved in engagement process.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the current position with regard to the incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law and the associated opportunities and challenges and work currently underway in Aberdeenshire;
- (2) note the “next steps” identified at the conclusion of the report; and
- (3) the report being submitted to Full Council given its cross cutting nature and also arrange workshops for local Councillors at an area level.

## **8. NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT AND PLAN**

Consideration was given to a circulated report dated 13 August, 2021 by the Director of Education and Children’s Services which (1) explained that the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education provided a structured approach for delivering the national ambition of achieving excellence and equity for every child in Scotland, including addressing the poverty-related attainment gap, (2) outlined the Framework’s four key priorities for action and (3) had appended the Council’s NIF Work Plan, to be submitted to Scottish Ministers, together with its report on progress with the Plan.

Thereafter, and having considered Members’ comments regarding the progress on outcomes and improvements; tackling poverty and family learning; developing young workforce; digital improvement and remote learning; data for pupil and teacher ratio for secondary schools, school leavers and destinations, the Committee **agreed** to approve: -

- (1) the Aberdeenshire National Improvement Framework Report 2020/2021, as detailed in Appendix 1; and
- (2) the Aberdeenshire National Improvement Framework Plan 2021/2022, as detailed in Appendix 2.

## **9. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CLD) PLAN REFRESH (2021-23)**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Committee of 20 August, 20218 (Item 4), when the Committee had endorsed the draft three-year CLD Plan for the period September 2018 to August 2021, there was circulated a report dated 16 June, 2021 by the Director of Education and Children’s Services which (1) provided an update on progress of the development of the Aberdeenshire Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan; and (2) presented a draft three year CLD plan 2021-2023 for consideration and comment.

Thereafter, and having considered Members' comments regarding the collaborative process and partnership work; tackling inequalities caused by Covid-19; different stages of the empowerment journey in communities and support provided to CLD the Council, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the work undertaken by the Aberdeenshire Learning Communities Partnership (ALCP) in leading on the development of the CLD Plan (2021-24) to co-ordinate the delivery of community learning and development activity in Aberdeenshire; and
- (2) acknowledge the three-year CLD plan September 2021 - August 2024 (Appendix B), the Action Plan (Appendix C), and Action tracker outlining the process for development of the plan (Appendix D) and recommend approval to the Community Planning Partnership Board.

### **10. LONGHAVEN SCHOOL**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 29 August, 2019 (Item 7), when approval had been given to the options appraisal on the future of Longhaven School, with one of the potential options being permanent closure of the School, there was circulated a report dated 14 June, 2021 by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which provided an update on Longhaven School and update on the engagement carried out with the community as part of the approved options appraisal process.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the updated information on Longhaven School; and
- (2) receive a further report in December 2021, following completion of the options appraisal which would include the next steps for Longhaven School.

### **11. MERGER OF DALES PARK AND MEETHILL SCHOOLS**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 3 December, 2020 (Item 12), when (1) approval had been given to the statutory consultation with local stakeholders on the proposal regarding the merger of Dales Park and Meethill School, and (2) it had been requested to receive a further report on the outcomes of the consultation in Summer 2021, there was circulated a report dated 30 July, 2021 by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which asked Members to consider the consultation responses regarding the merger of Dales Park and Meethill Schools, and the officer recommendation to continue engagement with stakeholders and the proposed merger of those schools into a new school at Peterhead Community Campus.

Following discussion, Councillor Bruce moved, seconded by Councillor Gifford, to support the recommendation to close both Dales Park and Meethill Schools and merge both schools at the new Community Campus at Kinmundy Road, Peterhead.

As an amendment, Councillor Evison moved, seconded by Councillor McAllister, that the Meethill School be retained on site and should not become part of Peterhead Community Campus with the Dales Park should be a part of the Peterhead Community Campus.

Members of the Committee voted:

for the motion	9	Councillors Owen, Bruce, Beagrie, Dickinson, Ford, Gifford, McKail and Stirling.
for the amendment	3	Councillors Buchan, Evison and McAllister.

The motion was carried, namely to support the recommendation to close both Dales Park and Meethill Schools and merge both schools at the new Community Campus at Kinmundy Road, Peterhead. Thereafter, the Committee **agreed to**:-

- (1) note the formal consultation report attached as Appendix A regarding the Merger of Dales Park and Meethill Schools at the Community Campus;
- (2) note the comments of Buchan Area Committee on 22 June 2021;
- (3) note the recommendation within the consultation report at 9.1 that officers would continue to engage with stakeholders of Dales Park and Meethill Schools to address their concerns regarding road safety and safe walking routes to school; and
- (4) to recommend to Full Council the officer recommendation within the consultation report at 9.2 to continue with the proposal to close both Dales Park and Meethill Schools and merge both schools at the new Community Campus at Kinmundy Road, Peterhead.

## **12. RELOCATION OF ANNA RITCHIE SCHOOL WITHIN PETERHEAD COMMUNITY CAMPUS**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 3 December, 2020 (Item 11), when (1) approval had been given to the statutory consultation with local stakeholders on the proposal regarding the relocation of Anna Ritchie School, and (2) it had been agreed to receive a further report on the outcome of the consultation process in Summer 2021, there was circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which provided an update on the formal consultation regarding the relocation of Anna Ritchie School within Peterhead Community Campus and sought approval for the proposal agreed by officers.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed to**:-

- (1) note the formal consultation report, attached as Appendix A to the report, regarding the relocation of Anna Ritchie School within Peterhead Community Campus;
- (2) note the comments of the meeting of Buchan Area Committee of 22 June 2021, as detailed at within the report;

- (3) approve the officer recommendation within the consultation report to continue with the proposal to relocate Anna Ritchie School within the Peterhead Community Campus at Kinmundy Road, Peterhead; and
- (4) instruct Officers to arrange a visit in Inverurie Community Campus and St Andrew's School.

### 13. GARTLY SCHOOL OPTION APPRAISAL

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 28 January, 2021 (Item 9), when approval had been given to a full option appraisal and extensive engagement on all options including the re-instatement of Gartly School, there was circulated a report dated 30 July, 2021 by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which provided the outcome of the Gartly School Option Appraisal.

Following discussion, Councillor Gifford moved, seconded by Councillor McKail, to support Option 2, namely to formalise the current arrangement with Rhynie School.

As an amendment Councillor Evison moved, seconded by Councillor McAllister, to agree that Option 1 be the preferred option, namely reinstatement; however to delegate the final decision on feasibility to the Director of Education and Children's Services, and if in his view, reinstatement was possible, it should take place; if it was not feasible, Option 3, namely to merge with Kennethmont, should take place.

Members of the Committee voted:

for the motion	9	Councillors Owen, Bruce, Beagrie, Dickinson, Ford, Gifford, McKail and Stirling.
for the amendment	3	Councillors Buchan, Evison and McAllister.

The motion was carried, namely to support Option 2, to formalise the current arrangement with Rhynie School. Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to -

- (1) note the comments from Marr Area Committee as detailed in paragraphs 3.7-3.9;
- (2) note the intent to narrow the options as detailed in 4.84; and
- (3) recommend to Option 2, namely to formalise the current arrangement and effectively merge Gartly School with Rhynie School.

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

### 14. UPDATE OF ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL'S EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE EXPANSION PROGRAMME

There was circulated a report dated 4 August, 2021 by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which updated Members on progress of the provision of the

1140 hours of free fully funded early learning and childcare and additional planned actions up to June 2021.

Members questioned aspects including: the way the new rate was set and the methodology used; independent collaboration as per Scottish government guidance; and reasons for unused hours.

Thereafter, and having considered Members' comments on partnership working; transparency of the working group; two additional support needs (ASN) rates introduced for funded ELC placements with funded providers; and the outcomes from the working group, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the work to date and actions detailed in the report; and
- (2) instruct officers to organise briefings for local Members on the uptake of 1140 in their areas, with detail about the flexibility of provision available to parents and information on unresolved issues reported back to Education and Children's Services Committee.

#### **15. EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING AND OUTCOMES REPORT 2021**

There was circulated a report dated 2 June, 2021 by the Director of Business Services, which asked Members to consider the progress made towards meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and to approve new the Equality Outcomes for the next four years.

Thereafter, and having considered Members' comments on the wording used to describe the group affected by period poverty; and challenges in measuring outcomes, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the progress made towards meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in the Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2021, attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) note the progress made towards achieving the Equality Outcomes 2017 – 2021, detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (3) approve the Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 (specifically Outcome 3 in relation to the Education Authority) set out in paragraph 4.5.6 of the report; and
- (4) note that the Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2021 would be considered by Full Council at the meeting on 23 September 2021.

#### **16. Q1 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AS AT 30 JUNE 2021**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 17 March, 2021 (Item 5), when approval had been given to the Education and Children's Services Revenue Budget for financial year 2021/2022, there was circulated a report dated 19 July, 2021 by the Director of Education and Children's Services, which (1) provided the Committee with financial performance information pertaining to the areas of service delivery for which the Committee had responsibility, (2) highlighted the



financial information and forecast position, as at 30 June, 2021, and (3) listed the number of emerging issues, together with actions taken to address those considerations.

Having considered Members' comments on the restructure of Instrumental Music Service and vacancy management, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the financial information and forecast position, as at 30 June 2021 and endorse the budget movement set out in Appendix 4b to the report;
- (2) note the progress in achieving the agreed savings set out in Appendix 3 to the report; and
- (3) instruct Officers to provide regular updates on the restructure of the Service, reallocated savings and the impact it may have on the Service and remaining staff.

## **17. LIVE LIFE ABERDEENSHIRE PITCH AND OPEN SPACE STRATEGY**

With the reference to the Minute of Meeting of Culture and Sport Sub-Committee of 22 January, 2020 (Item 6) when recommendations detailing the key principles of a future Pitch and Open Space Strategy for Aberdeenshire, as well as a governance route for approval had been agreed, there was circulated a report dated 5 May, 2021, by the Director of Education and Children's Services Committee which provided Members with proposals for a Pitch and Open Space Strategy.

Thereafter and having considered Members' comments on the ranking system used in the report; repeated use of rubber crumb surfaces; the requirement for greater engagement with local communities; and facilities located in Westhill, the Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the comments made by the Area Committees, as detailed in Appendix 2, as part of their deliberation of the Draft Strategy;
- (2) acknowledge and endorse the key principles of the draft Pitch and Open Space Strategy, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, and make recommendations to Full Council, including the following: endorse the approach of using network pitch plans, and the specific strategies that had been submitted to the respective area committees; endorse the approach to prioritising enhanced capacity where it was required - using the information contained within Appendix 3 of the report as a contemporaneous means of establishing priority needs; and that there would be one process for the community booking of pitches, whilst recognising that Education and Children's Services should control school pitch use during the delivery of the school curriculum and be able to input to processes to ensure that they were not overused out with the curriculum;
- (3) acknowledge and endorse the approach to prioritising investment according to need, as detailed in Appendix 4;
- (4) acknowledge the information set out in the Network Capacity Table, as detailed in Appendix 3;

- (5) acknowledge and endorse the Area Network Plans, as detailed in Appendix 5; and
- (6) note that the draft Strategy would also be considered by the Infrastructure Services and Communities Committees before being submitted to Full Council for approval.

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