

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 14 JUNE, 2017

Present: Councillor G Owen (Chair), M Findlater (Vice Chair), Mr D Bilsland, Dr E Anderson, Dr I R Findlay, Mrs M Nelson, Councillors R Bruce, C Buchan, M Buchan, A Evison, M Ford, V Harper, F Hood (as substitute for Cllr S Dickinson), M Ingleby, R McKail, A Simpson, J Whyte and L Wilson.

Apologies: Councillors S Dickinson, R McKail and Ms A Guy.

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, Head of Finance, Lead Officer Primary Education, Principal Solicitor, Governance and Principal Committee Services Officer (Mrs Riddell).

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 declarations of interest were intimated.

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 3 so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

ADJOURNEMENT

At this point in the proceedings the meeting was adjourned for a training and development session for substantive and substitute Members of the Committee on the committee and officer roles and responsibilities, including legislative requirements, for delivery of the Service. The meeting reconvened at 11.30am.

3. EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES KEY ACTIVITY, PROJECT AND PROCUREMENT PLAN – 2017/18

There had been circulated a report dated May 2017 by the Director of Education and Children's Services seeking approval of procurements falling within the jurisdiction of the Committee as detailed in the annual Work Plan for Education and Children's Services attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee heard from the Head of Resources and Performance who explained that approval of the Work Plan would provide officers with the necessary authority to proceed with procurements with an estimated value up to £1million and that those exceeding that value would be reported back to Committee in the form of a Business Case. He provided an update on the entry relating to Pupil Equity Funding including the total estimated cost and made reference to the Business Cases attached to Appendix 1 for a cross area and cross service procurement for the provision of milk and for the procurement of educational materials, library and textbooks and social care services.

Discussion took place on mobile classroom provision, social care contracts and the benefits of using Scotland Excel frameworks. Reassurance was sought in respect of achieving best value, sustainability and community benefits in respect of all procurements.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to delegate authority to the Director of Education and Children's Services, following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and opposition spokesperson, to approve the items on the work plan identified as falling within the remit of the Committee subject to Members' being reassured that the procurements for which Business Cases had been submitted achieving best value, reducing inequality, delivering community benefits and clarifying estimated start, finish and extension dates;
- (3) to note that the relevant Chief Officer would determine the Business Case for any item on the Work Plan falling within the Committee's remit where the value of the matter was between £50,000 and £1,000,000; and
- (4) to note that the Committee would receive the Business Case for approval for any item on the Work Plan which was within the Committee's remit and the value of the matter is over £1,000,000.

4. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 23 MARCH, 2017

The Minute of Meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee of 23 March, 2017, had been circulated, was **approved** as a correct record, and thereafter signed by the Chair.

5. FINANCIAL MONITORING FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

A report dated 24 May 2017 by the Director of Education and Children's Services had been circulated containing financial monitoring information for the year ended 31 March 2017.

The report provided information on the unaudited outturn for both revenue and capital budget monitoring for Education and Children's Services excluding the budgets for Visitor Attractions, Active Aberdeenshire, Sports and Leisure Management Client and Sports and Leisure Management contractor which would instead be reported separately to the Infrastructure Services and Communities Committees respectively based on their remits. The report advised that the figures contained in the report were subject to audit and may change in the light of external audit work and should therefore be treated as provisional.

In terms of actual net revenue expenditure, the report stated that this was £293,496,000 which was over budget by £1,590,000 and made reference to measures put in place to reduce expenditure to assist in rebalancing the forecast position across the Council as a whole including a number of budget virements. In terms of the capital budget, this was £42,931,000 which was £2,785,000 more than the revised budget figure and would mean that the budget from 2017/18 would need to be brought forward from future years which would require the approval of Full Council on 29 June 2017.

The Head of Finance presented the report and Officers responded to questions from Members on demand led spending, rising pupil numbers including accuracy of forecasting, national pay awards, recruitment costs including use of supply teachers and out of authority placements.

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

- (1) note the revenue and capital budget monitoring for the year ended 31 March 2017; and
- (2) approve the virements set out in Appendix 3 and note the revenue budget adjustments, some of which will be reported to Full Council for approval.

6. APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES

A report dated 11 May 2017 by the Director of Business Services had been circulated inviting the Committee to consider whether it wished to reappoint the Sub-Committees previously established under the Committee and, if so, to agree membership of the Sub-Committees.

The Committee agreed to reappoint the Sub-Committees detailed in the report and to appoint members as follows –

- (1) The Aberdeenshire Educational Trust Scheme Sub-Committee – comprising 3 members from the Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Aligned Independents, 1 from the Partnership and 1 Teacher representative. Councillors Davidson, Findlater, Forsyth and Whyte were appointed with the Teacher representative to be advised in due course.
- (2) Education of Children at Home Sub-Committee – comprising standard 8 model Sub-Committee with 5 members from the Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Aligned Independents and 3 from the Partnership. Councillors Adam, C Buchan, M Buchan, Ewenson, Harper, Mair, McKail and Owen were appointed.

7. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Council of 18 May 2017 (Item 8) when it had been agreed, in principle, to nominate members to a number of outside bodies and to delegate authority to the relevant policy committee to nominate Members as required, there had been circulated a report dated 19 May 2017 by the Director of Business Services inviting the Committee to nominate Members to the bodies detailed in the Appendix to the report.

The Committee agreed to nominate Members to outside bodies as follows –

- (1) County of Banff Bursary Fund – decision making capacity - Cllr Findlater.
- (2) Dick Request Trust – decision making capacity - Cllrs C Buchan and Davidson.
- (3) Pennan Village Hall Trust – decision making capacity - Cllr Findlater.
- (4) Robb's Trust – decision making capacity - Cllrs Davidson, Hood and Gifford, subject to further consideration of the appointments following the resolution of current issues.
- (5) Robert Nicol Trust – decision making capacity - Cllr McKail.
- (6) Scottish Lighthouse Museum – decision making capacity - Cllrs C Buchan and Stirling

8. 1+2 LANGUAGES INITIATIVE: UPDATE ON STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION FOR ABERDEENSHIRE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 4 February 2016 (Item 5, Page 1298) there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services advising of progress made in Aberdeenshire Council on implementation of the national initiative outlined in the report *Language Learning in Scotland: a 1+2 Approach*, which tasked local authorities and schools with ensuring that all children learned two languages in addition to their mother tongue. The report detailed actions which had been taken to support the implementation of the 1+2 Languages initiative in primary and secondary schools and identified the areas which would be the focus of development work in 2017.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) note the actions taken by the Service since the last report on 4 February 2016 and the continued commitment of the Service to support schools and staff in the implementation of this national initiative; and
- (2) support the ongoing implementation of the 1+2 Languages Initiative in Aberdeenshire.

9. CATERING SERVICES UPDATE REPORT

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 26 May, 2016 (Item 10, Page 1856), there had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services providing an update on the provision of school catering. The report stated that the uptake of primary school meals in Aberdeenshire continued to be one of the highest in Scotland and that the roll out of Online Payments and classroom ordering for school lunches in all primary and special schools across Aberdeenshire had been completed in June 2016. The school catering service recently retained the Food for Life Silver Catering Mark Award for the lunchtime service provided to all primary and special schools. The quality of produce used in

school catering was kept under regular review and any new products were trialed appropriately to test the quality and popularity with pupils. An example of this was that chicken used in school catering for all schools was British in origin and Farm Assured to Red Tractor standard.

During discussion, members expressed the wish to continue to use local suppliers as much as possible and commended the catering service for the good work to increase uptake of school meals, encourage healthy eating and reduce food waste.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to note the progress made in the provision of school catering.

10. ANALYSIS OF INITIAL SCHOOL LEAVERS DESTINATIONS DATA 2016/17

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 26 May, 2016 (Item 9, Page 1855), there had been circulated a report dated 25 May 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services presenting an analysis of the destinations of Aberdeenshire school leavers during the period 16 September, 2015, to 20 September, 2016, commenting on how this compared with other education authorities and the overall national position, and providing data on school leaver destinations broken down by school, as well as for young people in Aberdeenshire who are Looked After and accommodated, or for whom English was not their first language. The report stated that it was consistently the case that a higher proportion of school leavers in Aberdeenshire secured positive destinations when they left school than was the case across the rest of the country, or in relation to Aberdeenshire's virtual comparator although the positive destination rate had reduced slightly from 95.9% to 94.7%.

During discussion, members asked questions about developing the young workforce, joint partnership working and the increase in numbers of school leavers at S4 which were responded to by officers.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed** to note the analysis of data relating to initial school leavers' destinations as detailed in the report.

11. STONEHAVEN REZONING AND BLAIRS REZONING STATUTORY CONSULTATION LAUNCH

There had been circulated a report by the Director of Education and Children's Services seeking authorisation to conduct informal and formal consultation exercises with local stakeholders on proposals to rezone catchment areas for three primary schools, Arduthie, Dunnottar and Mill O'Forest, within the Stonehaven network and formalize the secondary catchment for pupils from the Blairs Housing Development, in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The formal consultation was proposed to take place between 26 June and 29 September 2017.

The Committee **agreed**, subject to the figures on page 130, table 3 relating to Portlethen Academy school role forecast being reviewed before publication, to:-

- (1) authorise a statutory consultation with local stakeholders (Parent Councils, parents, pupils, staff and local communities) in respect of the Stonehaven Network from 26 June to 29 September 2017 focussing on Arduthie School, Dunnottar School and Mill O'Forest School;
- (2) authorise a statutory consultation with local stakeholders (Parent Councils, parents, pupils, staff and local communities) in respect of the Mackie Academy Catchment Area and the Blairs Housing Development from 26 June to 29 September 2017; and

- (3) to receive a further report on the outcomes of the consultation in early 2018.

12. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORTING JANUARY – MARCH 2017, INCLUDING UPDATE ON SERVICE PLAN (ABERDEENSHIRE PERFORMS)

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 26 May 2016 (Item 8, Page 1854), there had been circulated a report dated 16 May 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services advising on how Education and Children's Services was performing against key performance measures and associated targets as set out in the Education and Children's Services Service Plan 2016-2019 in the period from January to March, 2017. The report commented on the 5 performance measures which were currently demonstrating performance below expectations and the actions being taken to improve performance. The report also provided a summary of progress being made with each of the 24 main projects/action plans associated with the Education and Children's Services Service Plan 2016-2017.

During discussion, members commented and asked questions about the undernoted performance measures and projects/actions which were answered by officers.

2.5a – Percentage of half day truancy/unexplained absences of looked after children

4.1 – Percentage Calendar days lost to sickness per quarter

5.2 - Service plan priorities – timescale for reporting back on outcomes of Fraserburgh consultation events

7.6 - Service Plan Priorities – Partner Project with Macmillan Move More

General - The need for protected time to be set aside with Members to look at the relevancy and accuracy of performance indicators being used.

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

- (1) acknowledge the performance achieved January – March 2017 referred to in paragraphs 2.4 to 2.7;
- (2) note the progress made with projects and actions within the 2016-19 Service Plan for the Education and Children's Services referred to in paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9;
- (4) note the publication of the complete January – March 2017 Performance Report on Ward Pages;
- (5) instruct the Director of Education & Children's Services to continue to report, by exception, to Committee quarterly performance measures against Service objectives, and on a six monthly basis the progress in delivering all aspects of the Service Plan; and
- (6) that a briefing note be issued to Members on the partner project with Macmillan Move More.

13. REPORT ON THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION FOR THE RELOCATION OF ST ANDREW'S SCHOOL WITHIN THE INVERURIE COMMUNITY CAMPUS

In terms of Standing Order 6.3.5, the Chair reported that she had accepted a late request to speak on this item from the Chair of St Andrew's School Parent Council (Ms Jane Keenan) and the Committee **agreed** to hear from Ms Keenan prior to determination of the matter.

Ms Keenan, confirmed that she was Chair of the St Andrew's School Parent Council and that her presentation reflected the views of all parents. She provided information on her son's needs and commended the excellent service and facilities available at St Andrew's School. She confirmed that the Parent Council had been involved in the consultation events relating

to the proposed relocation over the previous year and advised that they had recently issued a survey to all parents of pupils at the School providing details of the latest plans, highlighting the benefits and concerns and asking parents to confirm if they were supportive of the proposals. The survey had been issued to 89 parents. 48 responses had been received, 37 of which expressed a preference for remaining on the current site and 11 were supportive of the proposals for relocation.

She stated that the parents were not resistant to change and would be supportive of the proposed relocation if it offered a better alternative to the current provision. The majority of parents were of the view that the proposals would lead to a reduction in physical class size and space and a possible increase in pupil numbers, less dedicated and secure outdoor space than that currently available and less options/scope for future expansion given the limited size of the site. She expressed concern regarding the lack of a full investigation of options for replacement or refurbishment on the current site and considered that the provision for inclusion was inappropriate.

She urged the Committee to visit the School before taking a decision on the relocation proposals.

Members of the Committee were then given the opportunity to ask questions and Ms Keenan responded to questions on engagement with all parents of pupils, the level of responses received to the survey undertaken by the Parent Council, Parent Council feedback from field trips including discussion with officers on any proposed changes to plans, current class size and teacher/pupil ratio.

Officers also responded to questions from members on the feasibility of refurbishing/rebuilding on the current site, educational benefits of the proposals and on staffing and teacher/pupil ratio.

The Chair then thanked Ms Keenan for her presentation and Ms Keenan returned to the public benches.

Reference was made to the Minute of Meeting of 8 December 2016 (Item 3, Page 918) when it had been agreed to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposed relocation of St Andrew's School to Inverurie Community Campus, and to the circulated report by the Director of Education and Children's Services on the consultation process undertaken including with Education Scotland, on responses to representations received and recommending that St Andrew's School be relocated within the Inverurie Community Campus.

During debate members asked questions on continued and ongoing engagement with stakeholders, action being taken to address the recommendations of Education Scotland, proposals for dedicated outdoor space for St Andrew's School and on options available to accommodate a polytunnel, the timeline for decision making and options to visit the site.

At this stage in the proceedings, the Committee unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Order 2.2 to allow the meeting to continue beyond 1pm to conclude the business.

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

- (1) that it would not be appropriate for Members of the Committee to undertake a site visit St Andrew's School;
- (2) to approve the officer recommendation to relocate St Andrew's School within the Inverurie Community Campus; and

- (3) that the Director of Education and Children's Services establish a steering group of parents and other stakeholder representatives from the area to contribute to arrangements going forward and work cooperatively to agree mutually beneficial outcomes and report back to the Committee as required.

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