

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 24 January 2023. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Blake, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Grant, Macdonald, MacGregor, McLeod, Radley and van Sweeden. External Members:- Mrs Frances Cardno (Parent Representative - Primary Schools/ASN)(for articles 1 to 14), Mr Michael Crawford (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN)(for articles 1 to 14), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative)(for articles 1 to 11), Mr Mike Paul (Teacher Representative (Secondary Schools)) (for articles 1 to 8), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative)(for articles 1 to 14), Miss Pamela Scott (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools)(for articles 1 to 14); and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative)(for articles 1 to 14).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. The following statements of transparency were noted:-
 - in relation to item 11.3 (Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2022-2024), the Vice Convener advised that her daughter attended Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision, and Councillor Grant advised that his child attended ELC provision at Tillydrone, however neither Member considered that the nature of their connections amounted to an interest which would require them to withdraw from the meeting; and
 - in relation to item 11.6 (Music Centre Options), Mrs Cardno advised that her children participated in music tuition, however having applied the objective test, she did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would require her to withdraw from the meeting.

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2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 8 November 2022 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it a planner of committee business as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance.

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As agreed at the previous meeting, the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services provided an update to the Committee on Northfield Academy. Mrs Sheppard advised Northfield had welcomed inspectors on 9 January 2023 and that initial feedback had been provided with the full report expected in March. She stated that initial support plans were in place at Northfield and that these would be reviewed against the outcomes of the inspection findings, and advised that officers would bring a report to Committee once the inspection was published. It was hoped that this would be available for the March 2023 meeting. Mrs Sheppard further explained the work that was being done to support the staff team.

Members asked a number of questions on the verbal update.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the verbal update from the Interim Director for Children's and Family Services in relation to Northfield Academy and to request that the report back to Committee on the outcome of the inspection include detail of the work being undertaken to support the school; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the planner.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK - EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - CUS/23/038

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer Services and the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which presented the status of key performance measures relating to the Children's and Family Services function; as well as a progress update in relation to implementation of the Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 2022/23.

Members asked a number of questions on the report.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and provide comments and observations on the information contained in the report appendices.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III PUBLIC HOLIDAY - CFS/23/037

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which advised of the announcement by the UK and Scottish Governments that there was to be an extended long weekend in May 2023 to mark King Charles III's Coronation, and sought delegated authority for the Chief Officer -

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Education to make a formal request to the Scottish Government for an additional closure day for schools.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee delegate authority to the Chief Officer - Education to make a formal request to the Scottish Government for an additional closure day on 8 May 2023, subject to approval of an additional public holiday for staff at the Staff Governance Committee on 30 January 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

EDUCATION REFORM - CFS/22/009

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update in relation to Education Reform, further to an earlier report to Committee which had provided an overview of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) report on Scottish education. The OECD report had been the catalyst for work designed to reform Scottish education and Appendix A to the report set out the OECD recommendations against the Scottish Government commitment, and progress to date.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the update on education reform; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education to update Committee on further developments within one calendar year or earlier if ongoing education reform triggered a change in the current operating model.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE CONCESSION AGREEMENTS - CFS/23/019

7. With reference to article 6 of the minute of the meeting of the former Strategic Commissioning Committee of 15 April 2021, the Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the operation of the concession agreements at Tillydrone and Cumming Parks Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, as per the instruction that a report be submitted following 12 months of operation.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report; and

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- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to continue to monitor the concession contracts and report back to Committee at the end of the first 3 full years of the current concession agreement.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE DELIVERY PLAN 2022-24 UPDATE - CFS/23/003

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which presented the implications of the national Childcare Delivery Plan on the work of Aberdeen City Council and also sought approval for amended Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) delivery models based on demand.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the Best Start: Strategic early learning and school age childcare plan for Scotland 2022-26 (Scottish Government: October 2022)
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report on the progress and outcomes of the Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2022-24, and to prepare an updated Delivery Plan for 2024-26, in June 2024, to dovetail with the Strategic Plan for Scotland;
- (c) approve the amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, based on demand; and
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report on the National Delivery Framework for School Age Childcare and local delivery plans in 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would undertake analysis of data around any changes to those choosing to defer their child's entry to primary school as a result of the new legislation and provide that to Members;
- (ii) to request that officers give consideration to future reports including a map to show the provision in each area;
- (iii) to approve recommendations (a) to (d) as set out above;
- (iv) to note that the Scottish Government set out three original aims of the expansion in ELC which were to:
 - improve children's outcomes and help close the poverty-related attainment gap
 - increase family resilience through improved health and wellbeing of children and parents
 - support parents into work, study or training;
- (v) to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report back to the next Committee with a scope to evaluate the performance of the new ELC service including how it would seek the feedback of staff, parents and children in

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- assessing the extent to which the original key performance indicators (KPIs) were being met, including timescales for this evaluation to take place; and
- (vi) to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report back to Committee in early 2024 with the outcomes of the evaluation and any recommendations that may need to be considered.

INSPECTION REPORTING - CFS/22/008

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which detailed how Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings had engaged with His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and The Care Inspectorate since November 2022.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with the Quality Frameworks; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to monitor progress against the Action Plan put in place to realise improvements at Kingsford Early Learning and Childcare provision and report progress towards achieving the actions within two committee cycles.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that there was an error in the table on page 126 of the report and that Beech House Nursery had received two Very Good ratings and two Good ratings; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

KINGSFORD ELC ASSURANCE - CFS/22/002

10. With reference to article 3 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services in response to the Urgent Notice of Motion moved by the Convener and Councillor Brooks in respect of the incident at the Kingsford Early Learning and Childcare setting, namely:-

That the Committee:-

- (a) express sincere regret about the recent case at Kingsford Nursery and sympathise with the parents and family and others involved;
- (b) agree the safety of children in our care is of paramount importance;
- (c) note the involvement of the Care Inspectorate and their reported finding of a 'failure to protect the toddler from risk of harm';

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- (d) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to ascertain the confidence of staff in following agreed Council policies designed to keep children safe;
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to review door security arrangements at all early years settings; and
- (f) instruct a report back on the above at the next Education and Children's Services Committee detailing the outcome of the above instructions.

The report provided an update on the actions taken in responding to the incident in August 2022, and provided assurance that all efforts had been taken to prevent similar incidents occurring across the Early Learning and Childcare estate.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education to continue to support improvement at Kingsford Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Education to continue to monitor compliance with local procedures designed to keep children safe; and
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to continue to be proactive in addressing any vulnerabilities identified across our children's estate.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would provide a service update towards the end of the year which would set out the timescale for the work to be undertaken with settings where additional actions were required to achieve the desired standard;
- (ii) to request that officers provide a service update towards the end of the year following the further monitoring of compliance with local procedures designed to keep children safe; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

MUSIC CENTRE OPTIONS - CFS/22/020

11. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the meeting of the former Education Operational Delivery Committee of 8 September 2022, the Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the instruction for officers to explore models and costings for the establishment of a Music Centre, prior to the budget setting process for 2023.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) endorse the draft vision and aims for the provision of the Music Centre in paragraph 3.3;
- (b) note the Options Appraisal on potential models contained in Appendix A;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to make arrangements to immediately implement Option 2;

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- (d) refer the potential allocation of an additional £20,000 to further extend the provision of Music Centre opportunities to enhance Option 2 (as set out in Appendix A) to the Council Budget meeting in March 2023;
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to work with stakeholders to develop a strategic vision for the provision of Music across the city to inform next steps; and
- (f) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report back on progress within one calendar year.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

AUTUMN IN THE CITY - CFS/22/004

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided a high-level evaluation of the Autumn in the City programme and sought delegated authority for officers to design and deliver a programme for the Easter school holiday period.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the high-level evaluation of the Autumn in the City programme;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to design and deliver a programme for the Easter school holiday using underspend from the Autumn programme; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report to Committee on the impact of the Easter 2023 programme following delivery.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

SUPPORTING LEARNERS - CFS/22/021

13. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the meeting of the former Education Operational Delivery Committee of 26 January 2022, the Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the progress of work undertaken to support learners in Aberdeen.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the approaches being taken and the progress made to date; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report ongoing progress through National Improvement Framework reporting.

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The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would ensure that the Supporting Learners updates were clearly signposted in the National Improvement Framework reports; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS REPORTING - CFS/22/022

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which sought approval to publish the statutory Aberdeen City Council Children's Rights Report in line with Scottish Government non-statutory guidance by March 2023.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the publication of the Children's Rights Report in Appendix A;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education to present a refreshed Local Authority Plan for implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to the Education and Children's Services Committee following receipt of the anticipated Statutory Guidance in 2023; and
- (c) note that officers will prioritise compliance with the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill ahead of the Unicef Child Friendly Cities (CFC) programme.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

At this juncture, the External Members of the Committee departed the meeting.

CHILDREN'S CARE AND JUSTICE BILL - CFS/22/023

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the proposals set out in the Children's Care and Justice Bill and the potential implications for Aberdeen City.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the intended outcomes of the Children's Care and Justice Bill and some of the implications Aberdeen City Council would need to consider upon its approval; and
- (b) note the Education and Children's Services Committee instruction for the Chief Social Work Officer to update Committee on the progress of the Bill when the outcome of the Secure Review is concluded, anticipated Autumn 2023.

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The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

REPLACEMENT OF CAREFIRST / D365 IMPLEMENTATION

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the successful implementation of D365 as the new client management system and the replacement of Carefirst.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the report and recognise the contribution and commitment of social work staff from across all functions, in addition to that of staff from the Finance, Digital and Technology, Data and Insights and People and Organisational Development clusters to the successful delivery of Dynamics 365 (D365); and
- (b) instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to progress conversations with partners, to see if D365 could be a platform that could deliver integrated multi-agency chronologies.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**