

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 12 September 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, Boulton, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Grant, MacGregor, McLellan (as substitute for Councillor van Sweeden), McLeod (to article 15) and Radley. External Members:- Mrs Frances Cardno (Parent Representative - Primary Schools/ASN) (to article 18), Mr Michael Crawford (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN) (for articles 1 to 16), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (to article 14), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative) (to article 15) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (to article 18).

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.

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

1. The Committee was requested to determine that the following item of business which contained exempt information as described in paragraph 8 of Schedule 7(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 be taken in private – Item 12.1 (Outline Business Case: Oldmachar Primary Schools Excess Capacity – Exempt Appendix).

The Committee resolved:-

to consider item 12.1 with the press and public excluded.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. The Committee noted the following transparency statements:-

- In relation to item 9.1 (Music Service Update), Councillor Blake advised for reasons of transparency that she had two sons who attended music lessons; Councillor Grant advised that he had a son who took music lessons; and Mrs Cardno advised that she had two children who also participated in music lessons, however none of the Members considered that this amounted to a declaration of interest, and they advised that they would be participating in the discussion on the item;
- Also in relation to item 9.1 (Music Service Update), Councillor McLeod advised for reasons of transparency that he had previously been employed by Aberdeen City Council as Music Co-ordinator for the Council, but did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the item;
- In relation to item 11.4 (Summer in the City Programme), Councillor Blake advised for reasons of transparency that she was on the Board of Aberdeen Sports Village, and had also participated in one of the Summer in the City

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activities, but she did not consider that this amounted to a declaration of interest and would be remaining in the meeting for that item;

- In relation to item 11.8 (Outline Business Case: Oldmachar Primary Schools Excess Capacity) (School Estate Plan Update), Mrs Cardno advised for reasons of transparency that she had two children attending school in the Oldmachar catchment area, but did not consider that this amounted to a declaration of interest and would be remaining in the meeting for that item;
- In relation to item 11.9 (School Estate Plan), Mr Murray advised for reasons of transparency that he had two grandchildren who attended St Joseph's RC School, but did not consider that this amounted to a declaration of interest and would be remaining in the meeting for that item.
- In relation to item 11.10 (St Peter's RC School – Long Term Education Provision), Mr Murray advised for reasons of transparency that his daughter was a teacher at St Peter's RC School, but again, he did not consider that this amounted to an interest which needed to be declared and he would be remaining in the meeting for consideration of that item.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 4 JULY 2023

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 4 July 2023 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord had advised that he expected to present the withdrawn report (Item 13 – Northfield ASG Primary Schools Excess Capacity - Outline Business Case) to Committee within two cycles;
- (ii) to agree to remove item 31 (Health and Wellbeing Summit Progress Update) as it was due to be merged with item 51 on the planner;
- (iii) to note that the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord had undertaken to provide an update to each Committee on the situation with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) when appropriate; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the planner.

MUSIC SERVICE UPDATE - CFS/23/232

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5. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the former Educational 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 set out an evaluation of the quality and provision of music across the city and report the findings to Committee, including details of the digital offering.

Members of the Committee were also given a musical performance by pupils prior to consideration of the report.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the evaluation of the second year of free instrumental instruction;
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to continue to extend opportunities for music making through partnership working between the Music Service and Aberdeen Music School and others; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to report back on progress within one calendar year.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank the pupils for their performance and officers for their work to date on the music provision; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT - CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY SERVICE/EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK DATA TRACKER - COM/23/281

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning and the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which presented (a) the status of key performance measures relating to the Children's and Family Services function and (b) Education Improvement Data Tracker information arising from analysis of National Benchmark data suites released over the course of the past 12 months.

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.

ABERDEEN CITY NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - CFS/23/268

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7. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which sought approval to implement the refreshed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2023/24 following submission of the Self-Evaluation and Plan to the Scottish Government.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the service Self-Evaluation and Plan contained in Appendices A and B;
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to implement the proposed Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 23/24;
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to maintain a review of the 23/24 Plan in light of any impacting national legislative or policy provisions through the education reform agendas and advise Committee of any required changes in due course;
- (d) note the evaluative reports on MCR pathways included in Appendices C and D of the report; and
- (e) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to work with MCR Pathways to address the data issues to inform a further review in March 2024 to help shape a longer term and sustainable approach to the delivery of mentoring for young people.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers provide a demonstration for Members on Power BI and school profiles;
- (ii) to note that the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services had undertaken to circulate research in relation to mentoring and experience of a working environment;
- (iii) to approve recommendations (a), (b) and (c);
- (iv) to note recommendations (d) and (e) of the report and the instruction to work with MCR Pathways to "address data issues";
- (v) to note section 3.14 of the report which suggested that, by agreeing to officer recommendations, MCR Pathways programme would no longer be funded centrally by Attainment Challenge Funding and instead paid for by participant schools Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) allocation, should they wish to continue with the programme;
- (vi) to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report back to Committee outlining which of the participating MCR Pathways schools were agreeable to support the programme via their respective PEF allocation;
- (vii) to note the suggestion that Attainment Challenge funding be diverted to in part accelerate phase 2 of the ABZCampus; and
- (viii) to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report back to Committee detailing specific deliverables on how Phase 2 of ABZCampus, the expansion of the edge of care pilot to St Machar Academy, and the expansion of Pathways co-ordinators would support a larger group of care experienced young

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people before any agreement by Committee to support this change in allocation of Attainment Challenge funding.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES REFORMS - CFS/23/228

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the progress being made on education and wider children's services reforms.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the update on education and wider children's services reforms;
- (b) instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to continue to consider the implications of each published report to ensure the Council remained ready to respond positively to any national policy changes; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to update Committee following publication of the final Daniel's report in October 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

INSPECTION REPORTING - CFS/23/234

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 (ELC) settings had engaged with His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and The Care Inspectorate and had a report published since July 2023.

The report provided updates on the following:-

Flexible Childcare Services Cummings Park
Glashieburn ELC
Kittybrewster ELC
Milltimber ELC
Walker Road ELC
Kirkhill ELC; and
the Disabled Children and Young People Thematic Review.

Members asked a number of questions of officers on the inspection outcomes. It was noted that the action plan for Kittybrewster ELC had some gaps in relation to actions which had been taken. Officers advised that the plan had been updated since the papers had been prepared and undertook to circulate the revised version to Members.

The report recommended:-

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that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of this report; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with the Quality Framework agreed at Committee in July 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Interim Chief Education Officer would circulate the updated action plan in relation to Kittybrewster ELC; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

NORTHFIELD ADVISORY GROUP - CFS/23/229

10. With reference to article 14 of the minute of its meeting of 23 May 2023, the Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the output of the Advisory Group, established to help drive improvements at Northfield Academy in the longer term, following its first meeting of 23 June 2023.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the output of the first meeting of the Advisory Group.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Interim Director for Children's and Family Services would provide a copy of the earlier report on the Advisory Group to Councillor Boulton; and
- (ii) to note the report.

SUMMER IN THE CITY PROGRAMME 2023 - CFS/23/257

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided detail on the high level evaluation of the Summer in the City programme 2023 and outlined a planned approach for delivering a holiday programme for the 2023 autumn holiday period.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the high level evaluation of the Summer in the City programme; and
- (b) note that the Interim Chief Education Officer would report to Committee on the impact of the autumn 2023 programme following delivery.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

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ARMED FORCES COVENANT - CFS/23/243

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided detail on how the Education Service intended to continue to discharge its duties under The Armed Forces Covenant which came into force on 22 November 2022.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to monitor implementation of the proposed actions for education and build them into the National Improvement Framework Plan; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to update on progress through routine reporting on the National Improvement Framework Plan.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN - CUS/23/288

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which (a) provided an update on progress towards delivery of the Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024; and (b) proposed a change in governance arrangements to better align the work of Community Learning to other partnership activity relating to the model of Family Support.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made towards delivery of the Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024;
- (b) endorse the proposed change in governance for the Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 and for future Community Learning and Development plans; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to report to the Education and Children's Services Committee with an annual update on progress.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - CFS/23/263

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which sought approval for the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan 2023-2026.

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The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan (Appendix 1);
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to review the impact of the Plan in 2026 in accordance with legislation; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to present an updated Accessibility Plan to the Education and Children's Services Committee within 3 calendar years.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would circulate information to Members outwith the meeting on the proportion of schools with an Active Schools assistant; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE: OLDMACHAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS EXCESS CAPACITY - RES/23/278

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which presented a completed Outline Business Case, setting out the findings of a recent feasibility study, to identify options for reducing the number of primary schools within the Oldmachar Associated Schools Group (ASG).

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note that no suitable options for reducing the number of primary schools within the Oldmachar ASG have been identified within the outline business case; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out further work to identify potential future options for improving and consolidating primary school provision in the Oldmachar ASG, alongside the planned work to review secondary school provision in this area of the city, and to report back to the Committee with recommendations and next steps as appropriate.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

SCHOOL ESTATE PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE - RES/23/282

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which presented the 2023 annual update to the School Estate Plan, providing updates on progress with implementation of the Plan, and highlighting new priorities which had been identified since the School Estate Plan was first approved in September 2022.

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Members also received an update from the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord on the work which was being undertaken in relation to the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) situation.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the updates to the School Estate Plan which were provided at Appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue to implement the School Estate Plan in accordance with the updated timeline, presented at Appendix 1 of the report;
- (c) note that the review of sports facilities at Harlaw Road and Rubislaw sports fields would now be incorporated within the feasibility study for improving the suitability of facilities at Harlaw Academy (Recommendation H1); and
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a public consultation on a proposal to alter the school catchment areas for Greenbrae School and Scotstown School, so that they aligned with the city boundary and no longer extended beyond it into Aberdeenshire. (Recommendation O4/BD2).

The Convener, seconded by Councillor Al-Samarai, moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Blake, seconded by Councillor Grant, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee –

- (a) notes officer recommendations;
- (b) notes with concern the reports about RAAC concrete being identified in seven schools in Aberdeen City Council and that in the school estate plan all of these schools received a B rating for condition;
- (c) instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to report back to the next Committee on where the school estate plan might require to be amended in light of the changing risk to our schools and pupils; and
- (d) instructs the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services, in consultation with the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee, to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills expressing concern at the continued delays to the announcement of LEIP 3 funding and asking for an updated timeline, advising members of the Committee by email as soon as possible and reporting back to the Education and Children's Services Committee thereafter on any implications for the LEIP funded projects on the Education and Children's Services Committee business planner.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (9) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Al-Samarai, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, MacGregor, McLellan and Radley; and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (4) – Councillors Blake, Boulton, Brooks and Grant; declined to vote (3) – Mrs Cardno, Mr Crawford and Mr Haywood; absent from the division (3) – Councillor McLeod, Mr Murray and Mr Regmi.

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The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would circulate information to Members when it was available in relation to the timescale for the full business case for the Bucksburn Academy extension;
- (ii) to note that officers would circulate information to Members in relation to the trigger numbers for the Grandhome primary school provision to be built; and
- (iii) to approve the motion.

ST PETER'S RC SCHOOL - LONG TERM EDUCATION PROVISION - RES/23/283

17. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which (a) provided an update on the work to date regarding the refurbishment of the Riverbank school building; and (b) sought instruction from Members to conduct a feasibility study to assess the potential of refurbishing Old Aberdeen House, as an alternative option for providing improved facilities for St. Peter's RC school.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the identified alternative option and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a feasibility study to assess the feasibility of refurbishing and repurposing Old Aberdeen House to provide a two stream building for St. Peter's School;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to commence engagement with the RC diocese and the school community regarding this new additional option; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee in November with an updated Outline Business Case for the relocation of St Peter's RC Primary School, to include the outcome of this feasibility study as an additional option, and the associated stakeholder feedback.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that since officers were tasked, in September 2022, with submitting an application to the Scottish Government's third phase of LEIP funding, that no material update had been provided;
- (ii) to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to seek and circulate any written confirmation that there would not be any risk associated with the existing LEIP funding application which had been "pending" with the Scottish Government since September 2022 as a result of the feasibility work taking place;
- (iii) to agree that the feasibility work should also report on the potential interim arrangements and costs that would be required should officers propose at the November Committee a preference for a two-stream school at Old Aberdeen House;

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- (iv) to agree that if, at the November Committee, officers recommended a preference for a two-stream school at Old Aberdeen House, that due regard be given to the potential uses/costs associated with any exit strategy of the existing Riverbank School site; and
- (v) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE: OLDMACHAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS EXCESS CAPACITY - RES/23/278 - EXEMPT APPENDIX

18. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix in relation to Item 11.8 (Outline Business Case: Oldmachar Primary Schools Excess Capacity) (article 15 of this minute refers).

The Committee resolved:-
to note the exempt appendix.

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

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK STATISTICS, SCOTLAND 2021-22, AND AN ABERDEEN COMPARISON - CFS/23/260

19. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which outlined the Children's Social Work Statistics, Scotland 2021-22 report and provided a commentary on the performance of Aberdeen City Council compared with the national position.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee -

- (a) note that care experienced children and those children who needed protection in Aberdeen City, were, predominantly, receiving care and protection in line with national averages; and
- (b) note that where performance differed from national averages, there were improvement plans in place.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

BAIRNS HOOSE - CFS/23/289

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20. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on Aberdeen City's Children's Services partnership Bairns Hoose Pathfinder application and the associated planning.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note Aberdeen City's Pathfinder Application, Appendix 1; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services/Chief Social Work Officer to provide a service update in early 2024 on the outcome of the Pathfinder application and progress to develop Aberdeen City's Bairns Hoose.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**