

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 4 July 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, Lawrence, MacGregor, McLeod, Radley and van Sweeden. External Members:- Mrs Frances Cardno (Parent Representative - Primary Schools/ASN) (for articles 1 to 13 and 15), Mr Michael Crawford (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN) (for articles 8 to 13 and 15), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (for article 1 to part of article 12), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative) (for articles 1 to 13 and 15), Miss Pamela Scott (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools) (for article 1 to part of article 12) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (for articles 1 to 13 and 15).

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 Schedule 7(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 be taken in private – Item 12.1 (Newhills Additional Primary School Provision – Exempt Appendix).

The Committee resolved:-

in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the above-mentioned item so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 8.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. The Committee noted the following transparency statements:-

- In relation to item 10.4 (School Transport - Establishment of Catchment Areas for Gaelic Medium Education), the Vice Convener noted for reasons of transparency that her daughter would be attending Gilcomstoun School after the summer. Similarly, she noted for reasons of transparency in relation to item 10.6 (Inspection Reporting) that her daughter currently attended Gilcomstoun ELC provision, however she did not consider either connection to require a declaration of interest, and indicated that she would remain in the meeting for consideration of both items.
- In relation to item 10.3 (Free School Meals Annual Update), Councillor Grant advised for reasons of transparency that his daughter was currently in receipt of

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free school meals, and in relation to item 10.6 (Inspection Reporting), his youngest daughter currently attended Riverbank ELC provision, however he did not consider that either connection required him to make a declaration of interest and he would therefore remain in the meeting for consideration of both items.

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the update provided by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services in relation to MCR Pathways, and that the evaluation would likely come to Committee in September; and
- (ii) to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the reasons outlined in the planner for the delays to items 6 (Hazlehead / Countesswells Secondary Provision – Outline Business Case), 21 (Annual Effectiveness Report), 28 (Autism Strategy and Action Plan) and 31 (National Delivery Framework for School Age Children);
- (ii) to note that service updates would be provided to Members prior to the September meeting in relation to items 6 (Hazlehead / Countesswells Secondary Provision – Outline Business Case) and 72 (Riverbank School – Learning Estate Investment Programme Funding Update); and
- (iii) to otherwise note the planner.

NEWHILLS ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION - REFERRED FROM FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 17 MAY 2023

5. With reference to article 14 of the minute of the former Education Operational Delivery Committee of 8 September 2022, the Committee had before it, by way of referral from the Finance and Resources Committee of 17 May 2023, a report by the Director of Resources which provided information on the preferred design option for the new school at Newhills.

The report recommended:-

that the Finance and Resources Committee –

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- (a) note and endorse the preferred design option which would be an exemplar school for net zero and green credentials;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to a future meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee in 2024 with the Full Business Case; and
- (c) refer the report for noting to the Education and Children’s Services Committee in July 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT – EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - COM/23/203

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which provided an update on the status of key performance measures relating to the Children’s and Family Services function.

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:-

- (i) to note that the Interim Director of Children’s and Family Services had advised that officers would include further narrative around the performance indicator data relating to inspections (pages 42 and 43 of the report) in future reports to provide greater clarity for Members; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED NEW SCHOOL AT BUCKSBURN/NEWHILLS - RES/23/205

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which sought approval to carry out a statutory public consultation on the establishment of a new primary school and catchment area to serve new housing developments at Bucksburn/Newhills.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new primary school at Bucksburn/Newhills, and on proposed changes to the existing school catchment area for Brimmond School, to create a new catchment area which would be served by the proposed new school; and

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- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the consultation at its next available meeting following conclusion of the consultation process.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new primary school at Bucksburn/Newhills, and on proposed changes to the existing school catchment area for Brimmond School, to create a new catchment area which would be served by the proposed new school;
- (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to provide Members with a firm date for the statutory consultation and to report the date to the next Committee meeting; and
- (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the consultation at the first available meeting following conclusion of the consultation process.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND GUIDANCE - CFS/23/201

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which presented a refreshed anti-bullying policy for approval and sought approval to implement the refreshed policy from August 2023.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to the policy, and the Committee heard from Mrs Cardno that parents still had some concerns about communication from schools following the reporting of any incidents of bullying.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the content of the policy; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to implement the policy from August 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the feedback from the Aberdeen City Parent Forum in relation to the policy and to note that officers would take on board any feedback from parents gathered by the Aberdeen City Parent Forum throughout the initial review period of 12 months; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS ANNUAL UPDATE - CUS/23/172

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer Services which fulfilled the annual instruction to bring a report to Committee prior to the close of

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each school year (a) detailing the numbers registered for and taking free school meals by school; and (b) assessing the progress made by implementing the new workstreams and detailing any required adjustments for the following school year.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the progress in Free School Meal provision and actions to continue developing uptake.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved the recommendation contained in the report.

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) note the progress in Free School Meal provision and actions in 3.7;
- (b) agree that there was a moral imperative to ensure the children of Aberdeen were not hungry, as hungry children were not in the best position to learn;
- (c) support the Scottish Youth Parliament's "Right to Food" campaign and work with young people to ensure that any stigma associated with accessing food was eliminated;
- (d) recognise that young people should have meaningful involvement in decision-making about the content and quality of school meals, and in making improvements to their eating environment;
- (e) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education in conjunction with the Chief Officer – Operations and Protective Services to conduct a pilot in a secondary school consulting young people on the above with the view of increasing the uptake of free school meals and to report back to committee;
- (f) note that Primary 6 and Primary 7 rollout of free school meals to all pupils promised for August 2022 had been delayed until 2026 and the pilot programme for secondary school had not been progressed by the Scottish Government, and that this continued to have a detrimental impact on our young people who suffered from food insecurity and hunger;
- (g) agree with Willie Rennie, the Liberal Democrat MSP, on the delays to free school meals for Primary 6 and 7 pupils - "these delays and broken pledges are a perfect illustration of why voters should not vote for the Scottish nationalists"; and
- (h) instruct the Chief Officer - Finance, in consultation with the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee, to write to the Scottish Government asking for a response to the Council's request in October 2021 for an additional £15 million to expand catering facilities to enable the roll out to Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (10) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Al-Samarai, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, MacGregor, Radley and van Sweeden; and Mr Crawford and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (7) – Councillors Blake,

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Brooks, Grant, Lawrence and McLeod; and Mrs Cardno and Mr Regmi; declined to vote (2) – Mr Murray and Miss Scott.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services and the Interim Chief Officer – Education would undertake a trend analysis of the data contained in the appendices and provide a verbal update to the September meeting; and
- (ii) to approve the motion.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT - ESTABLISHMENT OF CATCHMENT AREAS FOR GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION - RES/23/208

10. With reference to article 8 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which confirmed the funding arrangements for the cost of providing free school transport to the Gaelic Medium Education (GME) provisions at Hazlehead Academy and Gilcomstoun School for those pupils eligible to receive it, for the 2023/24 Academic Year, and sought approval to implement the catchment areas for GME.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the provision of funding from the 2022/2023 Bus Lane Enforcement Surplus for the provision of school transport associated with Gaelic Medium Education for the 2023/24 Academic Year;
- (b) implement catchment areas for the existing Gaelic Medium Education provision at Hazlehead Academy and Gilcomstoun School as defined within Maps A and B in the consultation report at Appendix 1 of this report, with effect from 1 August 2023; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Operations and Protective Services, in conjunction with the Chief Officer - Finance to refer the provision of free school transport to the Gaelic Medium Education provisions at Hazlehead Academy and Gilcomstoun School for those pupils eligible to receive it, to the 2024/25 budget setting process.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

APPROACHES TO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT - CFS/23/204

11. 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 would be supported to improve performance against the Core

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Quality Indicators used by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and The Care Inspectorate.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to implement the approach detailed in the Early Learning and Childcare Quality Improvement Calendar;
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to implement the approach detailed in the Aberdeen City Council Quality Improvement Framework from August 2023 across all schools; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to review the impact of arrangements on evaluations of core Quality Indicators over school session 2023/24, amending approaches as required, and report back to Committee in advance of the 2024/25 school session.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that Early Learning and Childcare settings and schools were currently undertaking self-evaluation and following a period of quality assurance, the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services would share information with Members as to where each setting sat within the levels of support (set out on page 146 of the report) once that detail was available; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

INSPECTION REPORTING - CFS/23/202

12. 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 since May 2023.

The report provided updates on the following:-

Sunnybank Primary School
Kingswells Primary School
Northfield Academy
Riverbank ELC
Gilcomstoun ELC
The Links Nursery and Hub
Duthie Park Outdoor Nursery
J Puddleducks
Cornhill Out of School Care
Kingsford ELC

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

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- (a) note the content of this report; and
- (b) instruct the Interim 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.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved the recommendations contained in the report.

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) agree the recommendations within the report;
- (b) note that in 2014 and in 2017 Riverbank Nursery had scores of 5s and 4s respectively; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to lead a review of the circumstances resulting in the poor inspection outcomes at Riverbank Nursery Care Inspectorate report which highlighted, amongst other matters, issues with providing a clean and safe environment with some children not provided with "cuddles, warmth and comfort" on a regular basis, and for that report to be presented to Committee two cycles from now.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (11) - the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Al-Samarai, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, MacGregor, Radley and van Sweeden; and Mrs Cardno, Mr Crawford and Mr Regmi; for the amendment (5) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Grant, Lawrence and McLeod. Absent from the division (3) – Mr Murray, Miss Scott and Mrs Smith.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that some of the dates had been incorrectly labelled as 2023 in Appendix B (Sunnybank Action Plan) instead of 2024 and this would be corrected;
- (ii) with reference to Appendix C (Northfield Academy Update Action Plan) and the offer of specific courses through partner providers (for example, automotive, construction and make up artistry courses), to note that officers would provide an update to the next meeting as to whether there was an intention to roll this out more widely; and
- (iii) to approve the motion.

DEVELOPING A FAMILY SUPPORT MODEL AND THE EDGE OF CARE PILOTS - CFS/23/207

13. With reference to articles 7 and 8 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 progress in developing a Family Support Model for children and

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families; and an early evaluation of the impact of the two Edge of Care Pilots operating within Lochside and Northfield Academies and the proposed next steps.

Appended to the report were the pilot case studies and the Child Poverty Action Report 2022-2023.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress being made to develop a family support model;
- (b) instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report progress in developing a Family Support Model through the Children's Services Plan annual progress report;
- (c) note the high level evaluation of the two Edge of Care pilots;
- (d) instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to bring a final evaluative report to committee in early 2024 to include recommendations of how to scale up the Edge of Care pilots in a sustainable manner subject to positive final evaluation; and
- (e) note the content of the Child Poverty Report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

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

KINSHIP CARE SERVICE PLANNING - CFS/23/183

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which set out plans to enhance multi agency support to kinship families and use of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to improve outcomes for children and young people living within a kinship arrangement.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note that the improvement planning in relation to supporting kinship carers was fully aligned to the Children's Services Plan and the development of the Family Support Model; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report progress on the impact of delivering improved multi-agency support to Kinship Carers through the Children's Services Plan annual progress report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

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In accordance with the decision taken under article 1, the following item was considered with the press and public excluded.

NEWHILLS ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION - REFERRED FROM FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 17 MAY 2023 - EXEMPT APPENDIX

15. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix in relation to Item 8.1 (Newhills Additional Primary School Provision) (article 5 refers).

The Committee resolved:-

to note the exempt appendix.

- COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener