

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 20 February 2024. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Blake, Boulton (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Stewart), Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Grant, Hutchison (as substitute for Councillor Fairfull), MacGregor, McLeod (for articles 1 to 12), McRae (as substitute for Councillor Allard) and Radley. External Members:- Mrs Frances Cardno (Parent Representative - Primary Schools/ASN) (for articles 1 to 13), Mr Michael Crawford (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN) (for articles 1 to 13), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools) (for articles 1 to 13), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (for articles 1 to 13), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative) (for articles 6 to 9), Miss Pamela Scott (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools) (for articles 1 to 9) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (for articles 10 to 13).

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 9.3 (Inspection Reporting), Mrs Cardno advised that her daughter attended Forehill School, but not the Early Learning and Childcare provision, therefore she did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would prevent her from participating in the item;
- in relation to item 10.4 (Autumn in the City Programme), Councillor Blake advised that she had participated in activities but did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would prevent her from participating in the item;
- Councillor Grant made a general transparency statement that he had children at Riverbank School, which was mentioned in various items on the agenda, but he did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the items;
- Councillor McRae made a general transparency statement that his partner was a teacher at Lochside Academy, but he did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the items.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 21 November 2023 for approval.

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The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to item 9 (Autism Strategy and Action Plan), to note that guidance from the Scottish Government was still awaited but that the Chief Officer – Integrated Children’s and Family Services would issue a service update in the interim;
- (ii) to note that there was no requirement for a report this cycle in respect of Education and Children’s Services reforms (item 16) and therefore the item was removed from the planner; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the planner.

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT/NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK
PROGRESS REPORT - CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY SERVICES - COM/24/052**

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children’s and Family Services which presented (a) the status of key performance measures relating to the Children’s and Family Services function, (b) summary achievement data relating to the December national data release of Curriculum for Excellence outcomes in 2022/23 and (c) an interim progress update in relation to implementation of the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2023/24.

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) in relation to school attendance data, to note that the Interim Director - Children’s and Family Services and the Interim Chief Officer – Education would ascertain whether communication could be developed for parents and carers to highlight the potential impacts on, for example, attainment and life expectancy, where school attendance was below 95%;
- (ii) further to the recent behaviour in schools survey undertaken by the EIS, to note the significant, ongoing work to support all school communities so that they could offer a safe, respectful and peaceful environment for all;
- (iii) to instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to prepare a report back to the next Committee on managing behaviour in city learning settings;

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- (iv) to note that officers would include within this report (a) detail of work undertaken in relation to improving the processes for reporting incidents in schools and making it easier for school staff to report and (b) information on the outputs from the Magpie Meet held in January 2024 and the sub group of Head Teachers meeting to discuss allocation of resources on staff training etc in respect of anti-bullying; and
- (v) to otherwise note the report.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024 - CFS/24/046

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children’s and Family Services which outlined work undertaken by the Children’s Services Board over 2023/24, as well as proposed changes to the agreed Aberdeen City Integrated Children’s Services Strategic Plan to support Community Planning Partners to positively respond to changes in published data and national policy intent.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made in delivering the Aberdeen City Integrated Children’s Services Strategic Plan from April 2023 to date;
- (b) note the changes evident in data sets released over the reporting period;
- (c) approve the Aberdeen City Integrated Children’s Services Strategic Plan Annual Report 2023/24;
- (d) delegate authority to the Interim Director Children’s and Family Services to submit the Annual Report to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee for further review and thereafter to the Community Planning Management Board for ratification;
- (e) delegate authority to the Interim Director - Children’s and Family Services to submit the Annual Report to Scottish Government; and
- (f) instruct the Interim Director - Children’s and Family Services to report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee within 2 committee cycles on proposed approaches to progressing:
 - more family centric approaches to support families facing complex challenges living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1; and
 - a whole system approach to addressing obesity.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Aberdeen City Parent Forum was organising a survey of parents in relation to school meals, and that once the results were available, officers could convene a working group including parents and catering staff to discuss further, noting the suggestions about potentially sampling school meals as part of this review and taking on board previous work undertaken by the Scottish Youth Parliament in this area;

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- (ii) in relation to the extension of free school meals to Primary 6 and 7 pupils, to note that officers were still awaiting detail of the timescales around this and would update the Committee once this was available;
- (iii) in relation to the work to be undertaken on progressing more family centric approaches to support families facing complex challenges living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1, to note that officers would engage with local ward Members during that process;
- (iv) to note that the Interim Director would ascertain whether it would be possible to provide information in relation to the capacities of specialist provision from pre-mainstreaming compared to now, noting that data might not be available due to the time since mainstreaming was introduced; and
- (v) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

INSPECTION REPORTING - CFS/24/050

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children’s and Family Services which detailed the outcome of inspection reports published by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and The Care Inspectorate on the quality of Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings since the last meeting of the Education and Children’s Services Committee.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report; and
- (b) instruct 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 Framework agreed at Committee in July 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that there had been a number of ELC settings where inspections had returned a variation of gradings;
- (ii) to reaffirm Aberdeen City Council’s commitment to providing the highest quality Early Learning and Childcare; and acknowledge with encouragement that there was an overall upward trend of improvement in inspections;
- (iii) to acknowledge that there had been significant collaboration with officers and Head Teachers to work on improvement through the Collaborative Improvement model; and note that this provided a central monitoring role to allow wider team support for individual schools to provide quality teaching and learning;
- (iv) therefore, to instruct the Interim Chief Officer - Education to continue to report to committee on the improvement journey; and continue to work closely with Head Teachers to ensure ELC settings were receiving adequate support to deliver high quality ELC provision for all children in Aberdeen City; and
- (v) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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COLLABORATIVE IMPROVEMENT REPORT - CFS/24/048

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children’s and Family Services which outlined the process of a Collaborative Improvement Review which the Education Service had participated in during November 2023, and presented the outcome of the peer review model.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the Collaborative Improvement Review report; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to keep Committee sighted on national developments around Collaborative Improvement models which impact the remit of the Education and Children’s Services Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

MANAGEMENT OF RAAC IN SCHOOLS - RES/24/053

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which provided assurance in relation to the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in school buildings. The report included details of the outcome of building inspections, along with an overview of the strategies and procedures which had been put in place to manage and maintain the affected buildings; and provided an update on progress with longer term planning for the removal of the RAAC from the buildings.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the contents of the report; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a detailed options appraisal for the long term future of Northfield Academy, with a view to providing a solution to address the presence of RAAC within the building, and to include an update on progress within the next annual update to the School Estate Plan in September 2024.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations contained in the report; and
- (iii) to agree that there would be active engagement with the local community and young people.

NORTHFIELD PRIMARIES - RES/24/054

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9. With reference to article 10 of the minute its meeting of 8 November 2022, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which presented a summary of the findings from a recent feasibility study which aimed to identify options for reducing the number of primary schools within the Northfield Associated Schools Group (ASG).

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report; 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 Northfield ASG, alongside the planned review of the long term future of Northfield Academy, and to include an update on progress within the annual update to the School Estate Plan in September 2024.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would circulate information on the outline process for the work set out in the report to Members outwith the meeting;
- (ii) to approve the recommendations contained in the report; and
- (iii) to agree that there would be active engagement with the local community and young people to provide reassurance that primary and secondary changes would be considered together.

SCHOOL ESTATE PLAN TIMELINE - RES/24/055

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which set out a draft revised timeline for the continued implementation of the recommended actions from the School Estate Plan.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to implement the School Estate Plan in accordance with the revised timeline presented at Appendix 1 of the report.

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

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) note that in appendix 1, the full business case for Bucksburn Academy extension was scheduled for winter 2024/25;
- (b) agree that Bucksburn Academy required a permanent extension because it was over capacity with a pupil roll of 890 and a capacity of 765;

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- (c) agree that the temporary extension had a planning condition to remove within 5 years of planning consent given on 1 September 2022;
- (d) agree that for a permanent extension to be available before September 2027, then a full business case must be expedited rather than delayed by a year;
- (e) note the inclusion of 'St Peter's School Refurbishment' within the School Estate Plan, following the approval of officer recommendations at the Education and Children's Services Committee in November 2023;
- (f) note that officers had advised Committee members that the new Riverbank Primary school would now not be completed until at least 'late 2024' and that progress for the St Peter's School Refurbishment was interdependent upon completion of the new Riverbank Primary School; and
- (g) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report to the next meeting of Education and Children's Services Committee, following decisions made at the Council budget meeting, setting out clear milestones against the St Peter's School Refurbishment section of the School Estate Plan.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (12) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Boulton, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLeod, McRae and Radley; and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (5) – Councillors Blake and Grant; and Mrs Cardno, Mr Crawford and Mr Murray; declined to vote (1) – Ms Munro; and absent from the division (2) – Mr Regmi and Miss Scott.

The Committee resolved:-
to adopt the motion.

AUTUMN IN THE CITY PROGRAMME 2023 - CFS/24/047

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children's and Family Services which presented the high level evaluation of the Autumn in the City programme 2023.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –

- (a) note the high level evaluation of the Autumn in the City programme;
- (b) agree to utilise the £27,914.83 which remained in the In the City 23/24 budget to design and deliver a more limited programme for the Easter holiday period; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to report to Committee on the impact of the Easter (2024) programme following delivery.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

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SCHOOL HOLIDAY PATTERN 2025 - 2030 - CFS/24/044

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children’s and Family Services which sought approval for a recommended school holiday pattern for school sessions 2025–2026 to 2029–2030.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the proposed school holiday pattern to 2030 outlined in Appendix A of the report; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to publish details of the holiday pattern.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

NATIONAL DELIVERY FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE AND LOCAL DELIVERY PLANS - CFS/24/014

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children’s and Family Services which provided an update on the National Delivery Framework for School Age Childcare and on local delivery plans in Aberdeen.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the Scottish Government Delivery Framework for School Age Childcare 2023;
- (b) note the update on local delivery plans for School Age Childcare in Aberdeen;
- (c) welcome the additional funding from a successful bid to Scottish Government Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces Programme; and
- (d) instruct the Interim Chief Officer - Education to work with key stakeholders to review and refresh the Aberdeen City Council Out of School Care Policy, in line with national policy, and report back to Committee in September 2024.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would consider feedback given at the meeting by Members in respect of gaps in provision in particular areas of the city, for example, Sheddocksley and Lower Deeside when undertaking future reviews; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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

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SOCIAL WORK SERVICE PROVISION FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (UASYP) - CFS/24/045

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children’s and Family Services which provided assurance that appropriate and effective support was afforded to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People (UASYP) within Aberdeen City.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the current plans to provide appropriate accommodation, support and intervention to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of children and young people; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to provide an annual update through the Children’s Services Plan Annual Report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

BAIRNS HOOSE - CFS/24/049

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children’s and Family Services which provided an update on the outcome of Aberdeen City’s Bairns Hoose Pathfinder application and the subsequent “bid” application.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note Aberdeen City’s successful Bairns Hoose Pathfinder application;
- (b) note the award of £281,875 for the year 2023/24 to support Aberdeen City’s delivery of a Bairns Hoose and to note a further round of funding would be made available for 2024/25 with a bid being required to be submitted by 21 February 2024; and
- (c) request that the Chief Social Work Officer provides Members with an update on progress to deliver a Bairns Hoose within the Annual Child Protection Committee Report and within the annual update to Aberdeen City’s Children’s Services Plan.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank officers for the immense amount of work undertaken so far to ensure a successful Pathfinder application for Aberdeen City; and note the ongoing work to deliver this transformative service for vulnerable children and young people across Aberdeen City and further;
- (ii) to understand that a Bairns Hoose was a transformative way of working with vulnerable children, minimising trauma and increasing wrap around support for children and young people within the justice system;

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- (iii) to reaffirm the Council's long-term commitment to a Bairns Hoose in Aberdeen as part of the Promise;
- (iv) to instruct the Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services to organise a return visit of the Committee to the Bairns Hoose, once construction of the facility was finished; and
- (v) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

SECURE CARE PATHWAY REVIEW - CFS/24/051

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director – Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the learning identified in the recently published Secure Care Pathway report and highlighted any immediate implications for the delivery of services to children and young people from Aberdeen who were in or on the edges of secure care.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the contents of the report; and
- (b) note that the outcome of the Council's self-evaluation would contribute to the annual review of the statutory Children's Services Plan with required actions being built into the plan.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**