

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 29 April 2025. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost (as substitute for Councillor Bouse); and Councillors Allard, Blake, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, MacGregor, Malik (as substitute for Councillor Grant) McLeod, Radley and Mrs Stewart. External Members:- Ms Danielle Barclay (Parent Representative Nursery/Primary (for article 13) Mr Doug Haywood (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools for articles 1 to 13), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools for articles 1 to 13), Dr Alison Murray (Parent Representative - Secondary for articles 1 to 13) Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative for articles 1 to 13); and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland Representative for articles 8 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.

NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1. The Convener advised that there was an urgent motion from himself and the Vice Convener. He had also accepted an urgent notice of motion by Councillor Blake, Dr Murray and Mrs Barclay onto the agenda as a matter of urgency in terms of Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and advised that they would be considered at the appropriate point.

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2. The Convener proposed that the Committee consider item 11.1 (Victorian Schools Programme: Outline Business Case Exempt Appendix), with the press and public excluded from the meeting.

The Committee resolved:-

in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the above item so as to avoid disclosure of information of the class described in the following paragraph of Schedule 7(A) to the Act – paragraph 8.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

3. The following transparency statements were intimated:-

- Dr Murray made a transparency statement in relation to item 10.1 (Early Intervention Service), as she had a child who had additional support needs.

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- Councillor Blake made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.2 (International Travel - Music Service Trip to Regensburg) as she had two children who attended the music service;
- Councillor McLeod also made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.2 as he was previously a coordinator for the service;
- The Vice Convener made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 (Victorian Schools Programme: Outline Business Case) as her child attending one of the Victorian schools;
- Councillor Malik also made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as he had two grandchildren who attended one of the Victorian schools;
- Mr Murray also made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3, as he had two grandchildren who attended St Joseph's RC School and his daughter was a teacher at the school; and
- Ms Munro and Mr Haywood also made transparency statements in regards to 10.3, as they were both teachers at one of the Victorian schools.

None of the above Members considered that these amounted to interests which required declarations to be made.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 18 FEBRUARY 2025

4. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 18 February 2025, for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

5. The Committee had before it the business planner as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the committee business planner.

URGENT NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR GREIG & COUNCILLOR MENNIE

6. The Committee had before it an urgent notice of motion by the Convener and Vice Convener in the following terms:-

That the Committee:-

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Instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to provide a report to the next meeting of Education and Children's Services to Members with a broad overview of the ongoing preventative work to tackle behaviour issues in schools, including progress against the national Behaviour Action Plan, any specific trends in respect of incidents, and any comparator figures with other local authorities if available.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

That the Committee approve the urgent notice of motion.

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

That the Committee instructs the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to produce a report to the meeting of Council on 20 August 2025 with a broad overview of the ongoing preventative work to tackle behaviour issues in schools, including progress against the national Behaviour Action Plan, any specific trends in respect of incidents, and any comparator figures with other local authorities if available.

On a division, there voted – for the motion (10) – the Convener, the Vice Convener, Councillor Cameron, the Lord Provost and Councillors Allard, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, MacGregor and Radley and Dr Murray and Mr Murray – for the amendment (6) Councillors Blake, Brooks, Malik, McLeod and Mrs Stewart and Mr Regmi – declined to vote (2) – Mr Haywood and Ms Munro.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

URGENT NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR BLAKE, MRS BARCLAY, DR MURRAY

7. The Committee had before it an urgent notice of motion by Councillor Blake, Mrs Barclay and Dr Murray in the following terms:-

That the Committee -

1. note that the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 came into force on 1 April 2025 and made the PVG scheme mandatory for everyone carrying out a regulated role with children and vulnerable adults;
2. note the importance of PVGs to safeguarding our young people
3. note that Connect and Volunteer Scotland have provided guidance to parent councils and this has raised more question and concerns
4. note that Aberdeen parent councils and PTAs who already struggle to get parental engagement are concerned by the ramifications of the changes on their operations including volunteer recruitment for school events, the additional administrative burden, and cost.

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5. instruct the Executive Director of Families and Communities to write to the Cabinet Secretary of Education and Skills to ask for an extension of the grace deadline for parent groups and provide additional guidance including scenario planning to parent councils; and
6. instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning after consultation with the Interim Chief Officer - Governance to write to parent councils to confirm the date of requirement to have PVG checks in place.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the urgent notice of motion.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK/NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK PROGRESS UPDATE - CORS/25/079

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Data Insights, Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning and the Chief Officer - Children's Social Work and Family Support, which presented Committee with (a) the status of key quarterly and annual performance measures relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's and Families Clusters, and (b) a Progress Update around Aberdeen City Council's National Improvement Framework Plan 2024/25.

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 request that information on pupil attendance pre COVID, be included in future reports;
- (ii) to request that officers clarify the staff expenditure costs at page 33, table 13, quarter 4 of the report and send this information to the Lord Provost by way of email;
- (iii) for future reporting, to request that more information is included in relations to trends; and
- (iv) to note the report.

ABERDEEN CITY INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 - F&C/25/078

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning, which outlined work undertaken by the Children's Services Board over 2024/25. The report also 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.

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The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made in delivering the Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan from April 2024 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 Executive Director Families and Communities to submit the Annual Report to the Community Planning Aberdeen Board for ratification; and
- (e) delegate authority to the Executive Director Families and Communities to submit the Annual Report to Scottish Government pending approval from the Community Planning Aberdeen Board.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that a report would be brought to a future committee with information on child to adult transitions, which would summarise the work that had been progressed;
- (ii) to request that the use of appropriate wording be reviewed within the Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan Annual Report, specifically the use of the word obesity;
- (iii) in relation to the number of young people between the ages of 11-25 and the local suicide rate, that information be included in a future report on work that was being undertaken to try and prevent suicides; and
- (iv) to approve the recommendations.

INSPECTION REPORTING - F&C/25/081

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning, which provided details on the outcome of inspection reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and The Care Inspectorate since the last meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) notes the contents of the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with agreed Quality Improvement Frameworks approved at committee in July 2024; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to utilise learning from the National Thematic Report: Local authority approaches to support school improvement to inform the development of the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Plan and Quality Improvement Framework for 2025/26.

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The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE - F&C/25/074

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning, which presented a proposed operating model for a cost neutral time limited Early Intervention service, to be based at Riverbank School for up to 10 primary children and to share a summary of progress against the recommendations from 'Support for Learning: All our Children and Their Potential' (Angela Morgan, 2020) known as the Morgan Review.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to progress with a time limited (12 months) Early Intervention Service Test of Change at Riverbank School for younger primary school pupils, operational August 2025;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to report back on progress in 2 committee cycles from commencement of service; and
- (c) to instruct the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to report a full evaluation of the Test of Change within 4 committee cycles from commencement of service'.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations;
- (ii) to note that children attending the Early Intervention Service would have no/limited participation in their home school preventing them effectively accessing their education at that school; and
- (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to ensure that transport would be provided if found to be required in order for families to benefit from the intervention.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL - MUSIC SERVICE TRIP TO REGENSBURG - F&C/25/082

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning, which sought approval for travel to Regensburg by officers to support pupils in June 2025.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve travel for two officers to attend Regensburg in June 2025, and the estimated spend set out at section 4.1 of the report, with the purpose of the visit to support pupils to perform in Regensburg Citizen's Festival.

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The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

VICTORIAN SCHOOLS PROGRAMME: OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - F&C/25/080

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, which presented the completed Outline Business Case for the proposed Victorian Schools Programme, detailed options and estimated costs and timescales for improving the suitability of the city's Victorian school buildings.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) note the preferred option for taking forwards the Victorian Schools programme, as detailed within the Outline Business Case at Appendix A of this report; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to incorporate the preferred option and programming and cost implications for the Victorian Schools Programme into the development of the School Estate Plan annual update report, to be presented to this Committee in September 2025.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

That the Committee approve the recommendations in the report.

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

That the Committee –

- 1. Reaffirm the commitment to ensuring that the whole school estate, including Aberdeen's Victorian Schools, benefits from strategic investment and improved educational facilities;
- 2. Note that capacity issues had been prioritised in the methodology. Agree Hanover Street primary which according to the school roll forecast had the most significant capacity issues of the Victorian schools currently and by 2030 should be in scope;
- 3. Agrees that any decision to approve a preferred option without understanding its effect on the School Estate plan could have significant financial and practical implications for other vital projects contained within the plan; and
- 4. Agree not to approve a preferred option until such time as officers can set out clearly any potential implications and instructs officers to report to the September committee meeting to ensure that members have all of the information required to make a fully informed decision.

On a division, there voted – for the motion (11) – the Convener, the Vice Convener, Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost and Councillors Allard, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, MacGregor and Radley, Mr Murray, Mr Regmi and Mrs Smith – for the amendment (7) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Malik, McLeod and Mrs Stewart and Ms Barclay and Dr Murray – declined to vote (2) – Mr Haywood and Ms Munro.

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The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion and therefore approve the recommendations.

VICTORIAN SCHOOLS OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - EXEMPT APPENDICES

14. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix relating to the Victorian Schools Outline Business Case report. (Article 13 of this minute refers).

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information contained within the exempt appendix.

At this juncture, the External Members left the meeting.

CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT - F&C/25/083

15. With reference to article 16 of the minute of the meeting of 23 May 2023, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer - Children's Social Work and Family Support, which provided Committee with an overview of Corporate Parenting activity not reported previously and presented a High Level Promise Plan which took account of expectations within Plan 24-30, also reflected the voices of our care experienced children and young people.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the findings of the Bright Spots Report (October 2024);
- (b) approve the High Level Promise Plan in Appendix A; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to update Committee on progress against the High Level Promise Plan within one calendar year.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to a presentation by a care experienced young person, to request that the Chief Officer - Children's Social Work and Family Support share the link to the presentation with all Councillors;
- (ii) to note that the Chief Officer - Children's Social Work and Family Support would engage with the new Participation Officer regarding obtaining young people's views and details of experiences, and to investigate the possibility of engagement with elected members regarding their experiences;
- (iii) to note that the Chief Officer - Children's Social Work and Family Support would also investigate an approach for engagement with Elected Members and the Promise Scotland; and
- (iv) to approve the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**