

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

17 SEPTEMBER 2024

DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS – FEASIBILITY STUDY – F&C/24/264

The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided a summary of the outcomes of a recent feasibility study to assess the options for the long term future of denominational primary school provision in the city, and sought approval of the next steps. The report also detailed the findings of a stakeholder engagement exercise carried out to support the feasibility study.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the contents of the report, and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue to monitor forecast pupil numbers for the three denominational primary schools, and to include recommendations in next year's annual school estate plan update report on any required actions to be taken to ensure that the city's denominational primary school provision continued to be appropriate to meet the expected demand for pupil places.

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

Mr Murray, seconded by Councillor Blake, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the content of the report;
- (b) regrets the lack of a proper and open consultation with all the people of Aberdeen on the possibility of establishing a Catholic Secondary School in Aberdeen;
- (c) welcomes the pause in recommending any changes to the Roman Catholic school estate;
- (d) agrees to recommend to Full Council that it establish a working group consisting of representatives from Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, representatives from the Catholic Church, parent representatives and staff representatives. This group would work in a spirit of cooperation and partnership to explore what is an appropriate level of provision of Catholic schools in the city and produce a costed plan as to how this level of provision might be realised;
- (e) instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue to monitor pupil numbers at all three primary schools and report back on this and the findings of the above working group to the Education and Children's Services Committee in September 2025;
- (f) decides to take the opportunity provided by this pause to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to engage with all the people of Aberdeen on the possibility of establishing a Catholic secondary school in the city; and
- (g) agrees that the pause proposed in the paper will in no way delay the urgently needed work to provide for the refurbishment of St. Peter's School.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (8) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Hazel Cameron, Clark, Delaney, Hutchison, MacGregor and McLellan; for the amendment (9) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Grant, McLeod and Mrs Stewart; and Ms Barclay, Mr Haywood, Ms Munro and Mr Murray; absent from the division (3) – Dr Murray, Mr Regmi and Mrs Smith.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers circulate information to Members outwith the meeting on the list of projects in the Condition and Suitability programme which had led to improvements being made at St Joseph's RC School and Holy Family RC School since 2016; and
- (ii) to adopt the amendment.

At this juncture, the Convener advised that he wished to refer the matter to Council under Standing Order 34.1. He was supported in this regard by the Vice Convener and Councillors Hazel Cameron, Clark, Delaney, MacGregor and McLellan.