

Education and Children's Services Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 2023/2024



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1. Introduction from Convener

- 1.1 This is the third annual effectiveness report for Aberdeen City Council's Education and Children's Services Committee (ECS). These reports inform the review of the Council's Scheme of Governance. They enable officers to identify any changes that are required, for example, to the Committee Terms of Reference.
- 1.2 The ECS Terms of Reference were considered as part of the general Scheme of Governance review for 2024. No changes were made to the ECS Terms of Reference since the last report to Committee.
- 1.3 Over the reporting period, the committee has processed a significant amount of business. Reports have reflected the work of staff whose dedication and professionalism delivers educational and care services for the benefit of all children and young people in the city. It is appropriate to express appreciation and thanks to staff for the consistent, high quality commitment that they give each and every day.

Councillor Martin Greig

Convener – Education and Children's Services Committee

2. The Role of the Committee

PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE

To advise on and discharge the Council's functions as:

- an education authority as set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and all other relevant legislation and regulations where not otherwise delegated; and
- a social work authority as set out in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and all other relevant legislation and regulations where not otherwise delegated, in relation to children.

The Committee will also:

- monitor the delivery of educational services undertaken as education authority (including community learning and development) and children's services provided by Integrated Children's and Family Services;
- receive assurance on the statutory and regulatory duties placed on the Council for Child Protection and Corporate Parenting;
- make recommendations in respect of school property matters to the Finance and Resources Committee;
- scrutinise performance; and
- agree changes such as school zoning arrangements (within set budgets), or make recommendations to another committee, for improvements to functions related to education in order to ensure best value and delivery of the Council's agreed outcomes, commissioning intentions, service specifications and service standards.

REMIT OF COMMITTEE

1. Service Delivery and Performance

1.1 The Committee will, in respect of educational services (early years, schools and community learning and development) and children's services provided by Integrated Children's and Family Services and services delivered within the school estate:-

- 1.1.1 oversee, and make decisions relating to, service delivery (such decisions including those relating to population changes);
- 1.1.2 approve options to improve/transform service delivery relative to the functions of the Council as education authority and social work authority;
- 1.1.3 scrutinise operational performance and service standards in line with the Performance Management Frameworks and consider recommendations for improvements where required;
- 1.1.4 receive the cluster risk registers relative to its remit and scrutinise to ensure assurance of the controls in place;
- 1.1.5 approve all policies and strategies relative to its remit; and
- 1.1.6 receive reports on school inspections and peer reviews in order to ensure best practice and note any resultant improvement actions arising from those inspections and reviews.

- 1.2 In undertaking the aspects at 1.1, the Committee will ensure that it is acting within the budget set by Council and is supporting the delivery of the Council's agreed outcomes, commissioning intentions and service standards.
- 1.3 The Committee may make recommendations to the appropriate committee(s) or sub committee(s) on matters affecting its remit where the authority to approve sits within the remit of another committee or sub committee.

2. Child Protection

The Committee will receive assurance from the Child Protection Committee and the Children's Services Board on:

- 2.1 Services delivered to children and young people in need of care and protection including care experienced young people, including:
 - 2.1.1 delivery of national initiatives and local implications;
 - 2.1.2 learning from learning reviews;
 - 2.1.3 quality assurance;
 - 2.1.4 training and development; and
 - 2.1.5 local evidence-based initiatives;
- 2.2 effective working across child protection; and
- 2.3 statistics relating to the Child Protection Register and children and young people for whom the Council has Corporate Parenting responsibilities, whilst noting that it has no remit to challenge entries.

The Committee will also:

- 2.4 receive assurance on the Council's compliance with statutory duties in respect of child poverty; and
- 2.5 consider the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report.

EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIP

3. The Committee's membership will include seven persons who are not members of the Council but who have full membership of the Committee and voting rights in connection with advising on and discharging the functions of the Council as Education Authority only. The seven external members will be appointed by the Council at its statutory meeting (or other meeting as appropriate) as follows:-
 - 3.1 three persons representing religious bodies in accordance with the requirements of s124(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973; and
 - 3.2 in accordance with the discretion conferred by s124(3) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

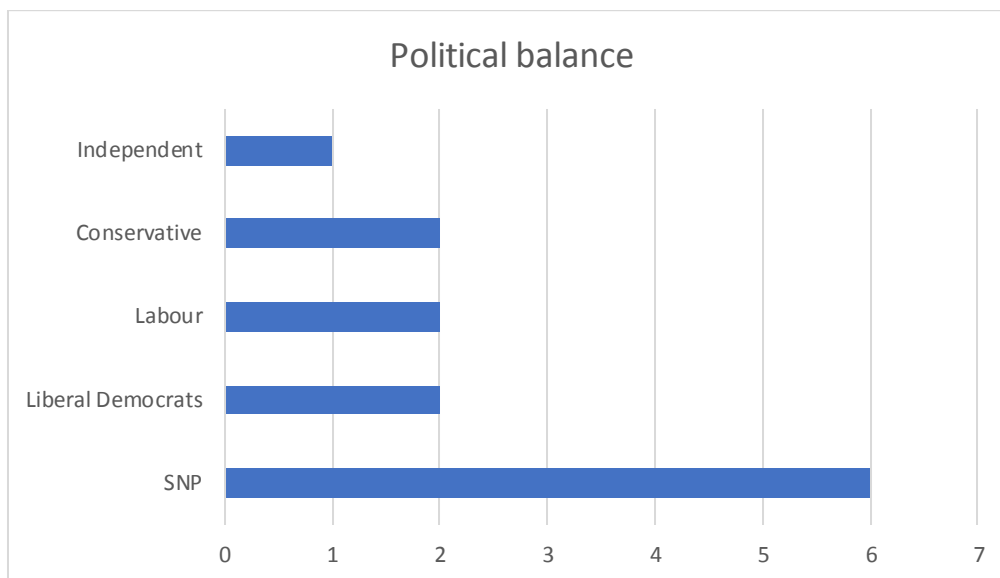
- 3.2.1 two teachers employed in educational establishments managed by the Council and nominated by the Teachers' Consultative Forum, comprising one representative from primary (including nursery) and one representative from secondary; and
- 3.2.2 two parent representatives, selected by the Aberdeen City Parent Council Forum from within its own membership, comprising one representative from primary (including nursery) and one representative from secondary.

Executive Lead: Executive Director – Families and Communities

3. Membership of the Committee during 2023/2024

3.1 The Education and Children’s Services Committee has 20 members - 13 Elected Members and 7 External Members.

3.2 The Committee composition is presented below:-



3.3 The Committee has seven External Members (who have full voting rights). The current External Members are as set out below:-

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Ms Danielle Barclay | Parent Representative (Primary / ASN) |
| Dr Alison Murray | Parent Representative (Secondary/ASN) |
| Mr John Murray | Roman Catholic Representative |
| Ms Jacqueline Munro | Teacher Representative (Secondary) |
| Mr Madhav Regmi | Third Religious Representative |
| Mr Doug Haywood | Teacher Representative (Primary) |
| Mrs Hilda Smith | Church of Scotland Representative |

4. Membership Changes

- 4.1 Councillors Al-Samarai, Boulton and McLellan were members for the November 2023 meeting, following which they stepped down from the Committee. Councillor Mrs Stewart and Councillor Fairfull joined the Committee from February 2024.
- 4.2 In respect of the External Members, this year Miss Pamela Scott stepped down as the primary teacher representative and Council appointed Mr Doug Haywood (previously Miss Scott's substitute representative on the Committee) as her replacement in August 2024. Mr Haywood joined the Committee as a full Member from the September 2024 meeting, having substituted for Miss Scott at earlier meetings. Miss Scott will continue as the substitute primary teacher representative.

Mrs Frances Cardno and Mr Michael Crawford, the parent representatives on the Committee, came to the end of their two year tenure, and were replaced from the July 2024 meeting of the Committee by Ms Danielle Barclay and Dr Alison Murray.

5. Member Attendance

| Member | Total Anticipated Attendances | Total Attendances | Substitutions |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Councillor Martin Greig | 5 | 5 | |
| Councillor Jessica Mennie | 5 | 4 | 1- Councillor Alex Nicoll |
| Councillor Gill Al-Samarai | 1 | 1 | |
| Councillor Christian Allard | 4 | 3 | 1 - Councillor Ciaran McRae |
| Councillor Kate Blake | 5 | 5 | |
| Councillor Marie Boulton | 1 | 0 | 1 - Councillor Mrs Jennifer Stewart |
| Councillor Desmond Bouse | 5 | 3 | 2 - Councillor Ian Yuill and Councillor Steve Delaney |
| Councillor Richard Brooks | 5 | 5 | |
| Councillor Hazel Cameron | 5 | 4 | 1 - Councillor Dell Henrickson |
| Councillor Lee Fairfull | 4 | 0 | 4 - Councillor Michael Hutchison |
| Councillor Ross Grant | 5 | 5 | |
| Councillor Neil MacGregor | 5 | 5 | |
| Councillor Alex McLellan | 1 | 1 | |
| Councillor Ken McLeod | 5 | 5 | |
| Councillor Miranda Radley | 5 | 4 | 1 - Councillor Neil Copland |
| Councillor Mrs Jennifer Stewart | 4 | 2 | 2 - Councillor Barney Crockett and Councillor Marie Boulton |
| Ms Danielle Barclay | 2 | 2 | |
| Mrs Frances Cardno | 3 | 3 | |

across the Terms of Reference for this year, compared to last year's report. Although there are some TOR which have not been utilised this year (TOR 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4), it is not anticipated that these require to be reviewed as they sit as sub-TOR under the main 2.1, which was utilised this year in a number of reports:-

- 2.1 *Services delivered to children and young people in need of care and protection including care experienced young people, including:*
 - 2.1.1 *delivery of national initiatives and local implications;*
 - 2.1.2 *learning from learning reviews;*
 - 2.1.3 *quality assurance;*
 - 2.1.4 *training and development; and*
 - 2.1.5 *local evidence-based initiatives;*

6.2.4 The Committee TOR were reviewed as part of the annual Scheme of Governance review, and no changes were made to the Education and Children's Services Committee TOR.

7. Reports and Decisions

7.1 The following information relates to the committee reports and Notices of Motion presented to Committee throughout the reporting period, as well as the use of Standing Orders and engagement with members of the public.

| | Total | Total Percentage of Reports |
|---|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Confidential Reports | 0 | 0% |
| Exempt Reports | 0* | 0% |
| Number of reports where the Committee amended officer recommendations | 0** | 0% |
| Number of reports approved unanimously | 44 | 85% |
| Number of reports or service updates requested during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in business planner | 5*** | N/A |
| Number of reports delayed for further information | 0 | 0 |
| Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour in terms of the Code of Conduct | 0 | N/A |
| Late reports received (i.e. reports not available for inspection at least 3 clear days before the meeting) | 0 | N/A |
| Number of referrals to Council under SO 34.1 | 1 | 2% |

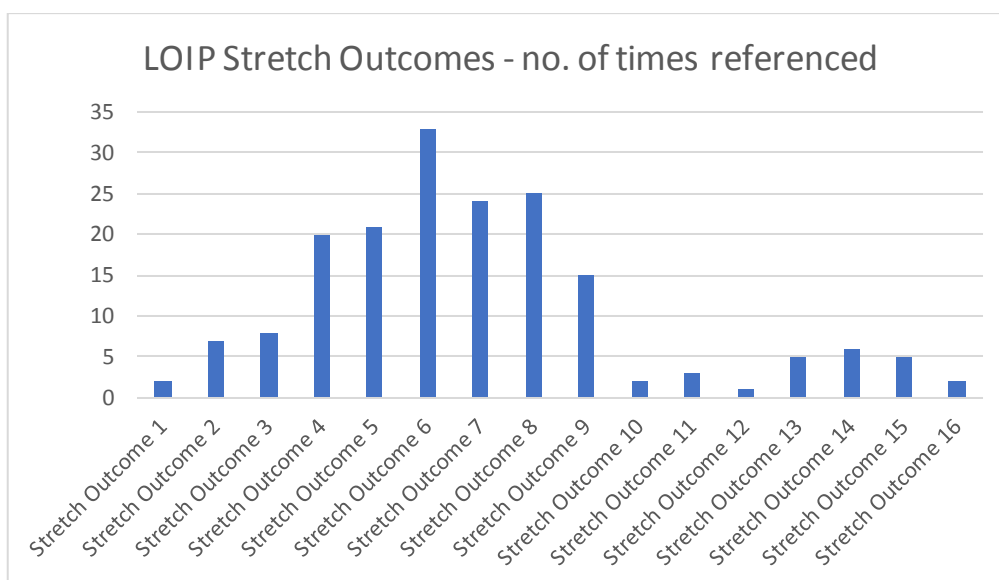
- * There were no exempt reports, however there were exempt appendices to two reports – the St Peter’s RC School Long Term Education Provision and Outline Business Case – New Secondary School Countesswells and Hazlehead. The reports themselves were however in the public part of the agenda.
- ** Although there were a number of occasions where additional recommendations were added by the Committee, the original recommendations from officers were all approved.
- *** The reports requested by Committee related to managing behaviour in city learning settings; consideration of options relating to the provision of supports for those with additional support needs including local organisations and the Northfield Advisors, to allow a continuous improvement journey in all schools and a review of the adequacy of the current allocation of pupil support staffing and provision of specialist placements across the city; a method for providing an overview of participation and achievements in ABZCampus; and an instruction to officers to provide the annual update on Education climate change work by committee report, rather than service update. There was also a service update requested in relation to the Healthy Weight event and ongoing work.

| Notices of Motion, Suspension of Standing Orders, Interface with the Public | |
|--|--------|
| Number of Notices of Motion to Committee | 2* |
| Number of times Standing Orders suspended | 1 |
| Specific Standing Orders suspended | 40.2** |
| Number of deputations requested | 4 |
| Number of deputations heard | 4*** |
| Number of petitions considered | 0 |

- * The two notices of motion to Committee during the reporting period were as follows:-
 - National Parent Forum – Notice of Motion by Councillor Kate Blake
 - Private School Fees - VAT – Notice of Motion by Councillor Ken McLeod
- ** Standing Order 40.2 was suspended at the September 2024 Committee to enable the meeting to continue past six hours.
- *** The four deputations made were in relation to the following items of business:-
 - Denominational Schools Feasibility Study – three requests made
 - Behaviour in Schools – one request made

8. Reports with links to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan

- 8.1 The following table details of the 52 reports how each report linked to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP Stretch Outcomes are appended to this report for reference at Appendix 1). As can be seen from the chart below, reports to the Education and Children’s Services Committee span across all of the Stretch Outcomes, although the greatest number of reports linked to Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9, which would be expected for the nature of the business, as those Stretch Outcomes relate to development, wellbeing and positive destinations for children and young people.
- 8.2 It is encouraging to see that the Stretch Outcomes have been used so frequently in reports presented, as it demonstrates that the reports are closely tied to meeting the objectives of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
- 8.3 Members should note that due to the refresh of the LOIP in April 2024, the numbering and wording of some of the Stretch Outcomes was altered halfway through the reporting period.



9. Training and Development

9.1 Opportunities for Members during the reporting period were as follows:-

A briefing session from the Educational Psychology team on Health and Wellbeing

A presentation to Committee on Maybo training at Bucksburn Academy

9.2 Service updates were also circulated to Members throughout the year to provide additional background and information in respect of matters considered at Committee, namely:-

- [Expansion of Free Schools Meals - Primary 6 and 7](#)
- [Expansion of Universal Free School Meals for Primary 6 and 7 pupils - update](#)
- [Guidance on Mobile Phones in Scotland's Schools](#)
- [Improving Relationships and Behaviour in Schools - Action Plan 2024-2027](#)
- [Lochside Academy Bus Services 2024-25](#) and [Appendix](#)
- [Non-statutory guidance on taking a children's human rights approach](#)
- [Northfield Advisory Group meeting June 2024](#)
- [Parent Information - Attendance](#)
- [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation - Numbers and Percentages](#)
- [Scottish Languages Bill](#)

9.3 As with previous years, officers have continued to support the Committee's External Members through hosting pre-Committee briefing sessions which enable them to ask officers questions about any aspect of education along with seeking clarity on reports within the committee business planner. This approach has strengthened the role of External Members and encouraged scrutiny through questioning at Committee. Training was also provided to the new External Members prior to them sitting on the Committee.

9.4 Further development opportunities will be considered for next year based on Committee business throughout the year, Executive Lead proposals and Member feedback on what may be required to assist them in performing their roles.

10. Code of Conduct Declarations and Transparency Statements

- 10.1 0 declarations of interest and 23 transparency statements were made by Members during the reporting period. Information in respect of declarations of interest and transparency statements is measured to evidence awareness of the requirements to adhere to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the responsibility to ensure fair decision-making. This figure is marginally down on last year's report, however there were two fewer meetings of the Committee in the reporting period than in 2022/2023.

11. Civic Engagement

- 11.1 During the reporting period, the Service has engaged in a wide variety of engagement and consultation. The following bullet points list some, but not all, of the engagement undertaken to give a flavour of the work throughout the year.

- Consultation with Parent Councils / Parent Forum on Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan
- A Citizen Space survey to Parent Councils regarding improving communication between schools and parents and how to improve parental engagement
- Consultation with Community Learning and Development staff on a refreshed vision for the new service
- Feedback surveys for the 'In the City' programmes
- Statutory Consultation with the public on proposals for a new campus at Hazlehead Academy and changes to the catchment area, as well as rezoning for Greenbrae and Scotstown Schools
- Various surveys in relation to Early Learning and Childcare to assist with the development of the ELC Delivery Plan 2024-2026 and the School Age Childcare Policy
- Consultation with Trade Unions on the production of the Behaviour Plan
- Consultation on the School Holiday dates for 2025-2030
- Stakeholder engagement in respect of denominational schools
- Ongoing engagement with young people, staff and the school community at Northfield Academy, as well as engagement with staff involved in other inspections
- Regular engagement between officers and the Aberdeen City Parent Forum

12. Executive Lead to the Committee - Commentary

- 12.1 Officers have presented a wide range of reports to the Education and Children's Services Committee over the year, highlighting the very broad range of work undertaken by Education, Children's Social Work and most recently by Community Learning and Development. Reports are now being presented that explore how different Council clusters and Community Planning Partners are working more closely together to improve outcomes for our children and families as we progress our model of Family Support.
- 12.2 It has been particularly pleasing to see how areas of work, such as the development of the Music Service, work to support mental health and wellbeing and on-going delivery of The Promise have progressed over successive reports to Committee demonstrating the clear and positive impact of the Education and Children's Services Committee. Work to address variation in education outcomes remains a key priority and the presentation of a refreshed quality improvement calendar on a yearly basis is thought to be a positive opportunity to continually strengthen arrangements, it is also thought helpful that Head Teachers continue to attend Committee to respond to questions from Members on published HMIE and Care Inspectorate Inspection reports.
- 12.3 Officers continue to respond to feedback from Members of Committee to ensure that reports presented provide information and analysis in a transparent and accessible format. Officers continue to appreciate both the scrutiny and high level of interest in our work with children and young people across the city.

13. The Year Ahead

- 13.1 Although there were no changes to the ECS Terms of Reference in 2024, in accordance with the usual practice of an annual review of the Scheme of Governance, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed and officers will reflect on whether any areas require further refinement moving forward to ensure the continued efficient operation of the Committee.
- 13.2 Aside from the regular annual reports and performance reports received for assurance, reports on progress towards delivery of our Family Support Model will be presented to Committee over the coming year and we may start to learn of changes being made nationally in light of the various education reform agendas. A selection of the planned business for the next year is listed below:-
- National Children with Disabilities Thematic Inspection
 - Behaviour Action Plan
 - Child Protection Committee Annual Report
 - Refreshed Local Authority Plan for implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Children's Services Plan - Annual Update

- Children's Care and Justice Bill
- ABZCampus
- Review of Spaces - Support for Pupils with Additional Support Needs
- Whole Systems Approach – Healthy Weight
- Various School Estate Plan projects, and the annual update
- Inspection Reporting

Appendix 1 – Local Outcome Improvement Plan Stretch Outcomes

| Economy | |
|---|--|
| 1. | No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026 |
| 2. | 400 unemployed people supported into fair work by 2026 |
| 3. | 500 people skilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026 |
| People (Children & Young People) | |
| 4. | 95% of children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026 |
| 5. | 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026 |
| 6. | By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026 |
| 7. | 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026 |
| 8. | 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026 |
| 9. | 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination |
| People (Adults) | |
| 10. | 25% fewer people receiving a first ever Court conviction and 2% fewer people reconvicted within one year by 2026 |
| 11. | Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026 |
| 12. | Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026 |
| Place | |
| 13. | Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate |
| 14. | Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026 |
| 15. | Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/ managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026 |
| Community Empowerment | |
| 16. | 100% increase in the proportion of citizens who feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026 |