

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 16 September 2025. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allard, Blake, Brooks, Buchanan, Clark, Crockett, Fairfull (for articles 9 to 13), Grant, Hutchison (as substitute for Councillor Hazel Cameron), MacGregor, McLeod and van Sweeden (as substitute for Councillor Fairfull for articles 1 to 8). External Members:- Ms Danielle Barclay (Parent Representative - Nursery / Primary) (for articles 1 to 12), Mr Doug Haywood (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools) (for articles 1 to 12), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools) (for articles 1 to 10), Dr Alison Murray (Parent Representative - Secondary) (for articles 1 to 12) and Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (for articles 1 to 12).

Also in attendance: Councillor Graham for article 10.

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 Convener proposed that the Committee consider item 11.1 (School Estate Plan Annual Update 2025 – Appendix C) 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 paragraph 8 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. The following transparency statements were intimated:-
 - Ms Munro made a transparency statement in respect of item 9.2 (Inspection Reporting) due to her employment as a teacher at Harlaw Academy which was mentioned in the report;
 - Councillor Blake made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.1 (Music Service Update) as her children took music lessons and her son had participated in one of the trips mentioned in the report. Dr Murray made a similar transparency statement as her child took music lessons;

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- Councillor McLeod also made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.1 due to his previous employment as Music Co-ordinator for Aberdeen City Council;
- Ms Barclay made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.2 (Northfield Area Asset Review), as she had two children who attended schools in Northfield;
- The Vice Convener made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 (School Estate Plan Annual Update 2025), as her daughter attended one of the Victorian primary schools;
- Dr Murray also made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as she had a child with a disability but advised that he would not be impacted by her proposed amendment on that item;
- Councillor Hutchison made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as he had a child who attended a Victorian primary school;
- Mr Haywood made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as he was employed at a Victorian primary school;
- Mr Murray made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as his daughter taught at St Joseph's RC School and he had two grandchildren who attended the school; and
- Councillor Grant made a general transparency statement that he had two children who attended Riverbank Primary School, one attended St Machar Academy; and he had a child who had been diagnosed with ADHD.

None of the above-mentioned Members considered that these amounted to interests which required declarations to be made and would prevent them from participating in the meeting for these items.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 24 JUNE 2025

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 24 June 2025 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the explanation notes at item 6 (Learning outcomes from Care Inspectorate Thematic Review) should read line 20, instead of line 22;

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- (ii) in relation to item 59 on the planner (Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill), to note that the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support would provide a service update to Members on the current position with the Bill; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the business planner.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT - CORS/25/214

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented the status of key quarterly performance and service standard measures (and annual Statutory Performance Indicators) relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work and Family Support Clusters.

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:-

to note the report.

INSPECTION REPORTING - F&C/25/215

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which detailed 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) note the content of the report; and
- (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.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would liaise with Mr McDermott to provide a future update to Members on any improvements identified as a result of the reconfiguration of the school day at Northfield Academy, noting that the project was still at an early stage; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

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ABERDEEN CITY NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - F&C/25/210

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which sought approval to implement the refreshed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2025/26 following submission of the Self-Evaluation and Plan to the Scottish Government.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the service Self-Evaluation and Plan contained in Appendix A;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to implement the proposed Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 25/26; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to maintain a review of the 25/26 Plan in light of any impacting national legislative or policy provisions and advise Committee of any required changes in due course.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that a report would be presented to a future meeting on the proposed secondary model, building on The Bridge project;
- (ii) to note that the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning had proposed that officers would attend a meeting of the Aberdeen City Parent Forum to discuss the reporting format; and
- (iii) to approve the recommendations.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CLD) PLAN 2025-30 - F&C/25/212

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2025-2030 for approval.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made towards delivery of the Interim Community Learning and Development Plan 2024/25;
- (b) approve the partnership CLD Plan 2025-2030; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to publish the plan, evaluate progress against the first year of the CLD Plan 2025/26 and present an evaluation of progress and updated CLD Delivery Plan for 2026/27 to Committee in September 2026.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers make the Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership Terms of Reference available to Members, noting that this would likely be shared alongside the CLD Plan on the Community Planning Aberdeen website;

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- (ii) to note that officers would liaise with the Communications Team and provide information to Members outwith the meeting on what made TikTok an ethical social media platform;
- (iii) to note the learner stories shared in the report and to request that officers discuss with partners how these could be shared more widely when the Plan was published; and
- (iv) to approve the recommendations.

MUSIC SERVICE UPDATE - F&C/25/125

9. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its previous meeting of 17 September 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an evaluative overview of the progress made in respect of the music service over the 2024/25 academic session; as well as including data about tuition at primary school level broken down by school, as requested at that meeting.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to extend opportunities for music making through partnership working between the Music Service and Aberdeen City Music School and others; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress in one calendar year.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would ascertain the approvals in place for attendance at the Regensburg visit and advise Councillor McLeod outwith the meeting;
- (ii) to note that the Music Service had identified within the report, that at primary school level the service could be in some ASGs “thinly spread in terms of choice available” and to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to determine if there were any changed patterns in uptake across secondary as a result of being thinly spread in some areas and include the findings in future annual updates; and
- (iii) to approve the recommendations.

NORTHFIELD AREA ASSET REVIEW - STRATEGIC OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - F&C/25/216

10. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its previous meeting of 20 February 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families and Communities which presented a Strategic Outline Case, which summarised the findings of the recent Northfield Area Asset Review, and included high level options for improving future primary and secondary education and potential consolidation of other assets in the

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Northfield area, to bring about improvements in the delivery of Council services to members of the Northfield community.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the findings of the Northfield Area Asset Review as set out within the Strategic Outline Case at Appendix A of this report, and refer the document to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to develop an Outline Business Case, to present detailed options and costings for the creation of new community campus facilities to serve the Northfield Area, which would support the delivery of the Family Support Model in Northfield, allow for the reduction of excess school capacity, and provide opportunities for the consolidation of existing Council buildings in Northfield; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to submit the completed Outline Business Case for approval to the budget setting process for 2026/27.

The Committee was then addressed by Councillor Graham, as a local Member.

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

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the findings of the Northfield Area Asset Review as set out within the Strategic Outline Case at Appendix A of this report, and refers the document to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval or otherwise;
- (b) notes with concern that in terms of location for a suitable development, a number of sites in ACC ownership have been explored for a potential community campus solution, to include the existing Northfield Academy site and surrounding Cummings Park area, together with the development land at Greenferns Farm;
- (c) notes that each of the sites is likely to have planning restrictions and will require a strategy to mitigate the loss of green space and / or future housing allocation, therefore calls on the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to consider deliverability in the outline business case;
- (d) notes there is currently no budget allocation within the Council's capital programme to support the construction of any new assets in Northfield. The identified options which involve new construction projects are therefore subject to the identification of appropriate funding sources to deliver them;
- (e) instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to develop an Outline Business Case, to present detailed options and costs for the creation of new community campus facilities to serve the Northfield Area, which would support the delivery of the Family Support Model in Northfield, allow for the reduction of excess school capacity, and provide opportunities for the consolidation of existing Council

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buildings in Northfield subject to their being no detriment to children's and young person's education in Northfield and safe active travel routes to school being identified;

- (f) instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to contact Mastrick, Summerhill and Sheddocksley Community Council to identify a suitable site for a men's shed as part of any business case being brought forward;
- (g) instructs officers to consult with all Community Councils, Parent teacher Groups in the Northfield ASG prior to finalising the Business case; and
- (h) instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to submit the completed Outline Business Case (OBC) to the Education and Children's Services Committee on 17 February 2026, seeking that Committee's referral of the OBC to the budget setting process for 2026/27.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (8) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors Allard, Buchanan, Clark, Fairfull, Hutchison and MacGregor; for the amendment (7) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Crockett, Grant and McLeod; and Dr Murray and Mr Murray; declined to vote (3) – Ms Barclay, Mr Haywood and Ms Munro.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would ensure that the sites mentioned during deliberation of the report, such as the new 4G park in Northfield, were included in the future outline business case;
- (ii) to note that officers would provide information to Members outwith the meeting on the overall situation city-wide in respect of under-occupancy, over-occupancy and capacity in schools; and
- (iii) to adopt the motion.

SCHOOL ESTATE PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE 2025 - F&C/25/213

11. With reference to article 12 of the minute of its meeting of 17 September 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented the 2025 annual update to the School Estate Plan, providing information on progress with implementation of the Plan, and highlighting new priorities which had emerged over the last year.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the updates to the Action Plan which were provided at Appendix A of the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue to implement the School Estate Action Plan in accordance with the updated Long Term Programme, presented within Appendix B of the report;

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- (c) refer the capital and revenue cost implications of the updated Action Plan and Programme, as shown at Appendix C of the report, to the budget setting process for 2026/27;
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out an options appraisal to determine any required interim arrangements for establishing the proposed new school at Bucksburn/Newhills, and to include the cost implications of any such arrangements in the budget setting process for 2026/27, with a view to the arrangements being included within the proposals for the forthcoming statutory public consultation on the new school;
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to undertake a feasibility study to investigate options for the establishment of a new primary school to serve Grandhome, including any required interim arrangements, and to report the findings of the feasibility study in an Outline Business Case, in line with the timescales outlined in the Long Term Programme at Appendix B of this report; and
- (f) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to further develop proposals and timescales for future ASG based asset reviews, and to build these in to future updates of the School Estate Plan.

An amendment by Dr Murray had been prepared and previously circulated to Members, and prior to moving of the motion and amendment, both the Convener and Councillor Blake accepted Dr Murray's amendment into their own proposals.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved:-

That Committee:-

- (a) approve the recommendations as set out in the report;
- (b) note that Victorian schools had been assessed for wheelchair accessibility; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that any future reviews of school buildings, including the planned ASG based asset reviews, include an assessment of accessibility, which gives consideration to all disabilities, in line with the Scottish Government's guidance on "Planning improvements for disabled pupils' access to education: guidance for education authorities, independent and grant-aided schools".

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

That Committee:-

- (a) note that Victorian schools had been assessed for wheelchair accessibility;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that any future reviews of school buildings, including the planned ASG based asset reviews, include an assessment of accessibility, which gives consideration to all disabilities, in line with the Scottish Government's guidance on "Planning improvements for disabled pupils' access to education: guidance for education authorities, independent and grant-aided schools";

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- (c) note the updates to the Action Plan which were provided at Appendix A of the report;
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out an options appraisal to determine any required interim arrangements for establishing the proposed new school at Bucksburn/Newhills, and to include the cost implications of any such arrangements in the budget setting process for 2026/27, with a view to the arrangements being included within the proposals for the forthcoming statutory public consultation on the new school;
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to undertake a feasibility study to investigate options for the establishment of a new primary school to serve Grandhome, including any required interim arrangements, and to report the findings of the feasibility study in an Outline Business Case, in line with the timescales outlined in the Long Term Programme at Appendix B of the report;
- (f) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to further develop proposals and timescales for future ASG based asset reviews, and to build these in to future updates of the School Estate Plan;
- (g) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to engage with the people of Aberdeen on the possibility of establishing a Catholic secondary school in the city; and
- (h) as per 4.2 of the report to Committee on 21 November 2023, the S75 agreement for Countesswells did not allow for the Council to use the Secondary School Contribution for a school on a different site, and to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to bring forward a report to the next Committee on the losses from developers' contributions collected, uncollected and no longer applicable by the decision not to proceed with a secondary school at Countesswells.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (8) - the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors Allard, Buchanan, Clark, Fairfull, Hutchison and MacGregor; for the amendment (9) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Crockett, Grant and McLeod; and Ms Barclay, Mr Haywood, Dr Murray and Mr Murray; absent from the division (1) – Ms Munro.

The Committee resolved:-
to adopt the amendment.

In terms of Standing Order 34.1, the Convener referred the matter to Full Council for a decision, stating that he wished to do so in order to give other Members an opportunity to take part in the discussion and to ensure there was a strong school estate plan for the budget process 2026/2027. The Convener was supported in this regard by the Vice Convener; and Councillors Allard, Buchanan, Clark, Fairfull, Hutchison and MacGregor.

In terms of Standing Order 32.8, Councillor Brooks requested to note his dissent with the aforementioned decision.

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SCHOOL ESTATE PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE 2025 APPENDIX C

12. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix in relation to item 10.3 (School Estate Plan Annual Update 2025).

The Committee resolved:-
to note the appendix.

At this juncture, the External Members left the meeting.

ADOPTION ALLOWANCE SCHEME - F&C/25/199

13. With reference to article 11 of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee of 8 May 2025, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented the updated Adoption Allowance Scheme for approval.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee approve the Adoption Allowance Scheme as set out in the report.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**