

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 8 October, 2009. - Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; and Councillors Adam (as substitute for Councillor Cooney), Allan, Boulton, Collie, Cooney, Cormie (as substitute for Councillor Corall), Cormack, Farquharson, Kiddie (as substitute for Councillor May), Laing, Leslie, McCaig, Reynolds, Robertson, Jennifer Stewart, Kevin Stewart, Wisely and Kirsty West. External Members:- Mrs. M. Abdullah, Mr. G. Bruce, Mr. P. Campbell, Mr. S. Duncan and Mr. M. Vicca.

REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION

1. The Committee had before it a request for a deputation from Mr. Ian Fryer of the Portal Community Centre in relation to article 13, which had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order 10. The Committee discussed the content of the report relating to the item with Mr. Fryer and noted that the report was requesting authorisation to undertake consultation and did not require any decisions on the future of any of the facilities to be made by the Committee today.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that following discussions, Mr. Fryer withdrew his request for a deputation.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 27 August, 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that Councillor Stewart and West's declarations in relation to article 2 were regarding the Northern Lights Project, and not Peacock Visual Arts;
- (ii) to note that Councillor Collie's declaration in relation to article 17 would be added; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the minute.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT AND MOTIONS LIST

3. The Committee had before it a statement of Committee Business and a Motions List prepared by the Head of Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that an additional seminar be held on the analysis of the SQA results which would allow all members of the Committee, including the external members, to attend;
- (ii) to note that a seminar on the Curriculum for Excellence was intended to be held in November;

- (iii) to note that a report on the 50 metre pool was due to be considered by the Council or an Urgent Business Committee, as appropriate;
- (iv) to remove item 1 on the Motions List (former Councillor Milne's motion);
- (v) to remove part of item 3 (Library Home Service Development), part of item 6 (Community Based Adult Learning Partnership – Aberdeen College) and item 16 (Culture and Leisure Monitoring Trust) from the Committee Business statement; and
- (vi) to otherwise note the statements.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Kevin Stewart declared an interest in the subject matter of the following article by virtue of having a family member who was a pupil at Northfield Academy. He did not consider the nature of his interest required him to leave the meeting during consideration of the matter.

PERFORMANCE REPORT – ECS/09/022

4. With reference to article 4 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, which provided an update on the performance of the service as at August, 2009. The report advised that confirmation was being sought on the performance measures and improvement targets which members wished to be reported to the Committee in relation to the functions of the Education, Culture and Sport service. Attached as an appendix to the report was a performance scorecard for the 23 key performance indicators, which had been agreed by the Policy and Strategy (Education) Committee on 9 June, 2009 (article 6 refers). Three additional measures of performance were also included in the report, which related to Looked After Children attainment in 2008/09 and the scorecard showed recent performance trends, targets where available and also utilised a traffic light system. Attached as a further appendix to the report was more detailed information in relation to the targets noted on the performance scorecard which showed a definition of each measure, graphical representation of the performance, longer term trends of performance, analysis of what each performance meant, and recommended actions to be taken for improvement.

The report also included detailed performance in relation to (a) the academic achievement of looked after children in 2008; (b) primary and secondary pupil attainment for reading, writing and mathematics in 2009; (c) cumulative attainment in National Qualifications by all pupils in publicly funded secondary schools for S4, S5 and S6 in 2009; (d) a summary of library and information service statistics up to July 2009; and (e) admissions to sports facilities up to July, 2009. The report also provided information on target setting and noted that a balance needed to be found between being realistic and being challenging when setting targets. It was noted that if targets were set at the right level, it could be a motivation to staff to improve performance.

The Director provided the Committee with a brief update on the progress of Northfield Academy and outlined the strengths of the school which had been highlighted in the inspection report, which included praise for the open and friendly manner of the pupils and praise for the staff's participation in inter-disciplinary and community projects. In terms of areas for improvement, the Director noted that raising the expectations of pupils, improving learning experiences and developing a new curriculum were all to be worked on in the future. The Committee were advised that since the HMIE inspection had been carried out, the school was working with officers on an action plan to address the issues which had been raised and that significant improvements were anticipated.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the trends in performance; and
- (b) instruct that quarterly reports are presented to Committee as part of the Education, Culture and Sport public performance reporting framework.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that a report on progress at Northfield Academy would be submitted, prior to the return visit by HMIE;
- (ii) to request attainment and achievement figures for each school and each year group to be submitted to the Committee individually;
- (iii) to request the breakdown of the educational budget, showing the separate spend on actual education and facilities;
- (iv) to note that the Ron Mueck exhibition at the Art Gallery had been supported by the Common Good Fund;
- (v) to request that a target be set in relation to the proportion of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations for both mainstream and special schools (item 12);
- (vi) to request that the planned Curriculum for Excellence seminar be expanded to include 5-14 attainment and that the report at (ii) above be submitted following the seminar;
- (vii) to request information on the impact of the opening of Aberdeen Sports Village in relation to the usage levels of indoor facilities to be included in the next performance report;
- (viii) to request officers to look into the re-opening of Tullos swimming pool, as a matter of urgency, and to note that a reply to Councillor Kiddie's inquiry to the Chief Executive would be sought;
- (ix) to request that future performance reports include clear links to the Single Outcome Agreement against each target;
- (x) to request that colour copies of the report be numbered in future; and
- (xii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – 2009/10 – ECS/09/046

5. With reference to article 5 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a joint report by the City Chamberlain and the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, which provided information on the current total service budget and the current year revenue budget performance to date and advised on areas of risk and management action.

The report advised that in overall terms, an analysis in Appendix A to the report which contained the service report and associated notes, noted that the service was currently looking at a potential overspend of £1,331,000. Details of the risks facing the service and management action being taken to mitigate these risks was also provided in the report. In relation to out of authority placements, the report noted that a report had been considered by the Budget Monitoring Board on 31 July, 2009, (article 3 refers) which requested that consideration be given to pooling the respective Social Work and Education budgets in order to strengthen budget oversight and control in this area. It was noted that a report was to be prepared for the next cycle to be submitted to the respective service committees. In relation to pupil support assistants, it was noted that a budget saving of £1.5 million had been agreed against the budget for 2009-10 which had now been put in place. The report further noted that benchmarking against other authorities had indicated that this particular area was one in which the Council was spending proportionately more than some other authorities, however it was also noted that the number of children being identified with additional support needs was increasing each year, and that it would therefore be necessary to keep the budget under regular review. With regards to free school meals, the report noted that recent changes in legislation meant that the education service was expected to fund the additional costs of providing free schools meals following changes in entitlements. No specific provision existed for this within the budget for 2009-10, however, additional grant income from the Scottish Government in respect of probationer teachers, which may not be required due to efficiencies in the allocating of probationers, was intended to be used to offset the additional expenditure. Pupil roll changes was a further area of risk, with the trends of this particular area being closely monitored. The report went on to note that sports services were scheduled to move to Sport Aberdeen in 2009, and that any delays in the project would have a knock on effect on the agreed savings, including the claim for rates relief. With regards to the transfer of budgets from other services, the report noted that as part of the restructuring of services across the Council, the Education service was now responsible for budgets which had previously been administered by other services and details of staffing and associated income were still being reviewed. Sports income was also noted as currently being an area of risk, due to the income being below the budget at the present time.

Details of the current year's savings were also noted in the report, with detailed information relating to the various budgets attached as appendices to the report.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) consider and note the report and the information on management action and risks contained within it; and
- (b) instruct officers to continue to review budget performance and report on service strategies as required to ensure a balanced budget.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request a report back to a future meeting in relation to Out of Authority placements, including an assessment of any estimated capital costs for providing facilities within Aberdeen and information regarding any possible costs reductions which could be gained by working in partnership with other local authorities;
- (ii) to note that the Children's Services Sub-Committee were also investigating the issue of Out of Authority placements;

- (iii) to request information relating to the comparison of the number of children and young people in Out of Authority placements from last year that were now placed within the Aberdeen area;
- (iv) to request a report back on the impact of a fall in the number of golf season tickets being purchased in relation to sports income as a whole; and
- (v) to approve the recommendations.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Kirsty West declared a personal interest in the subject matter of the following article due to being a regular user of hockey pitches around the city. Councillors Kirsty West and Jennifer Stewart also declared interests in the subject matter of the following article due to their appointment as the Council's representatives as Directors of Peacock Visual Arts. Neither of the Councillors referred to considered that the nature of their interests required them to leave the meeting during consideration of the matter.

CAPITAL BUDGET PROGRESS REPORT – ECS/009/045

6. The Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport and the City Chamberlain, which provided an update on the progress being made on the various projects within the non-housing capital programme, which were aligned to Education, Culture and Sports services. Attached as an appendix to the report was a detailed list of the non-housing capital programme projects which provided the spend to date to the end of August, 2009, including forecast outturn, for each project in the budget for 2009/10. It was noted that the budgeted figures included in the appendix included slippage from 2008/09.

The appendix contained information on projects which were divided into separate categories which were schools estate; schools – ICT; schools – other equipment; sports; culture and leisure; parks; and other.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee consider and note the content of the report in relation to the projects outlined in appendix A.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations and request that members of the Committee be provided with the following information –

- (i) detail of the works covered by the budget allocated to Skene Square School (759);
- (ii) clarification as to whether tenders were re-evaluated prior to being sent out for a second time, in order to ensure the return of more reasonable estimates (747);
- (iii) a completion date for works at Kingswells School (742 and 773); and
- (iv) a further explanation on monies spent relative to Rubislaw/Harlaw Playing Fields (556).

VIBRANT ABERDEEN DRAFT CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR ABERDEEN CITY 2010/2015 – ECS/09/030

7. With reference to article 12 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which sought the Committee's endorsement and approval to progress into public consultation in regard to the draft of "Vibrant Aberdeen" - The Draft Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen City 2010-2015.

The report highlighted that the overall aim of "Vibrant Aberdeen" was to provide strategic direction for the cultural community throughout Aberdeen, by providing a strategic and forward thinking direction. The draft strategy aimed to promote cultural partners to form a co-ordinated approach in order to maximise opportunities and ensure that Aberdeen realised its full cultural potential. The report went on to outline that the overarching vision of the Strategy was for Aberdeen to be a vibrant, cosmopolitan and internationally acclaimed creative city. This vision and ability to achieve this was to be broken down into a series of aims which were:- (1) improve the quality and impact of arts, culture and heritage provision across the city; (2) build a comprehensive evidence base which articulated the impact of culture on Aberdeen and its residents; (3) create a cultural identity which would be recognised locally, nationally and internationally; (4) increase the opportunities for all residents and visitors to engage in arts, culture and heritage activity; (5) increase support to the voluntary arts sector in order to grow opportunities to volunteer and establish pathways for sustainable participation; (6) prioritise existing financial resources for more effective investment in arts, culture and heritage; (7) conserve and develop the city's unique cultural resources and skills; (8) support and develop new and existing venues throughout the city in order to increase opportunities for cultural activity and engagement; and (9) attract and retain creative and cultural professionals across the sector.

The report further advised that in order to achieve these aims, the Cultural Forum has addressed several issues which were pertinent to the creation of any strategic document and the draft strategy had been placed in context considering the local, national and international issues which would impact during the timeline. In addition to this the draft strategy also identified the challenges and opportunities that were particular to Aberdeen.

The report concluded by outlining the main priorities for development in order to achieve the vision for Aberdeen, as (1) community and city regeneration; (2) resources and people; (3) artists, opportunities and development; (4) cultural tourism and promotion; (5) venues for investment; and (6) links and networks.

The full draft Strategy proposed for consultation was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –

- (a) approve and endorse the consultation draft of "Vibrant Aberdeen", the draft Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen City 2010-2015;
- (b) approve the commencement of public consultation on the draft document, in line with the process outlined within the report; and

- (c) instruct officers to report progress on the development of the draft final strategy and the outcomes of the public consultation to an appropriate committee.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that the list of consultees be circulated to members to allow them to add any additional relevant groups; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Kiddie declared a personal interest in the following article by virtue of his membership of Aberdeen Choral Society. He did not feel it necessary to leave the room during consideration of the item.

UK CITY OF CULTURE – ECS/09/029

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which provided a background to the bid process, and highlighted the potential benefits of developing a bid to become the UK City of Culture. In addition it provided an outline of the criteria, the bidding process and the potential resources required to develop any bid.

The report outlined that the Culture Secretary, Ben Bradshaw had launched a competition to find the United Kingdom's first 'City of Culture', and an award would run every four years with the first winning city becoming a focus for attention in 2013. Within this prize there was a potential to host high-profile media events including the Turner Prize, BBC Sports Personality of the Year, The Brits and the Stirling Prize as part of the winning city's year in the spotlight.

The report outlined that (1) bids must be made from a partnership representing the city or the area and that the partnership must include the relevant local authorities and for the purposes of communication the local authority should be the lead organisation, (2) the successful city would have the ability to host a substantial programme of cultural activity in 2013 as well appropriate activities in the years building up, (3) there would be a central focus to the area, however part of the programme would be delivered in surrounding areas, and (4) bids were open to any area in the United Kingdom outside London.

The report further outlined that the assessment criteria from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) highlighted the importance of the successful city's ability to (1) provide a high quality cultural programme that reached a wide variety of audiences, (2) provide a programme that used culture to lead to lasting social regeneration by engagement, widening participation and supporting cultural diversity, (3) demonstrate significant economic impact from the programme, (4) show credibility in their plans, and (5) display a clear approach to maximising legacy and being able to evaluate impact.

The report went on to advise that the DCMS would provide no additional funding and cities that entered the application process would be required to provide the resources from existing budgets, however, it was advised that an estimated £800m of an economic benefit was brought to the Liverpool city region following from their success as the European Capital of Culture.

The report indicated that in terms of the next stage of the bid process, cities were required to submit an outline proposal online by 15 October, 2009 with a more detailed 30 page proposal to be submitted by 11 December, 2009. Development of the proposal would require a dedicated staff resource which would be delivered within existing budgets and supplementary support would also be provided from within other areas of the Council workforce including the Events and Marketing Team. Following on from this, expert assessors would then look at bids and an independent advisory panel would recommend a short list to be announced early in 2010. Once the short list had been established cities would have until 28 May to submit their final bid.

In conclusion, the report outlined that an Officer's Working Group had been set up to develop an outline proposal. Membership of the group would include officers from the Council including representatives from culture, sport, corporate communications, economic development and marketing, and representation from a range of partners from within the cultural forum.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the opportunity and process involved;
- (b) note the plans to develop an outline proposal and draft initial bid; and
- (c) note that a draft initial bid with the resource implications would be presented to the appropriate committees in due course.

The Convener moved, seconded by Councillor Jennifer Stewart:-
that the recommendations in the report be approved.

Councillor Farquharson moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Boulton:-

that the Committee notes the opportunity and process involved but reluctantly feels that the likely cost, time and effort it would take to develop and or stage any bid is simply not a practical issue at this phase in the economic cycle of both our country and our city.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (12) – the Convener; and Councillors Cormack, Cormie, Kiddie, Leslie, McCaig, Reynolds, Robertson, Jennifer Stewart, Kevin Stewart, Kirsty West and Peter Campbell; for the amendment (10) – Councillors Adam, Allan, Boulton, Collie, Farquharson, Laing, Mumtaz Abdullah, Grant Bruce, Stewart Duncan and Mario Vicca; and declined to vote (1) – Councillor Wisely.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the terms of the motion.

Councillors Farquharson and Boulton intimated their dissent in respect of the foregoing resolution.

REVIEW OF SPORTS GRANT CRITERIA – ECS/09/033

9. With reference to article 15 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which brought forward proposals for new criteria for the Financial Assistance for Sports Organisations in line with the five key objectives of Fit for the Future, the Sport and Physical Activity for Aberdeen 2009-2015. The report outlined that at a previous meeting of the Committee, the principle of realigning the criteria for the sports grants against the objectives of Fit for the Future had been approved and officers had been instructed to develop the detail of the criteria and report back to a future meeting.

The report outlined the criteria for the sports grants as follows:- (1) Objective 1 – promote and increase the opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity for everyone in Aberdeen; (2) Objective 2 – provide a comprehensive and high quality range of sports facilities in Aberdeen City Council; (3) Objective 3 – maximise social, educational, health and economic benefits of sport and physical activity in Aberdeen City Council; (4) Objective 4 – develop and sustain pathways which nurture local, regional and national sporting people to reach their potential; and (5) raise the profile of sport in Aberdeen City Council.

The report went on to advise that (a) in line with related grant criteria a maximum contribution of 50% towards identified costs would be made from this Scheme, (b) the extent to which efforts have been made to maximise additional sponsorship and/or involve other appropriate agencies in gathering financial support would be considered in all applications, and (c) consideration of the level of existing financial support from the Council for any organisation or activity would also be taken into account when assessing applications.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) consider and approve the criteria proposal; and
- (b) approve the timescale of April, 2010 for implementation of the criteria against grant applications.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request officers to circulate information to the members of the Committee on the Shared Education Trust being run in Aberdeenshire and on issues surrounding the geographical boundaries for application; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – SPORTS – ECS/09/026

10. With reference to article 16 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which brought forward applications for financial assistance from sports organisations within the city.

The report advised that should the recommendations be approved, a balance of £39,426 would remain in the sports budget for the year 2009/10.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to award funding of £500 to Hazlehead Academy Climbing club to support the improvements to the climbing wall within the games hall of the school; and
- (ii) to award funding of £1,500 to Aberdeen Dolphin Swimming Club in order to help offset the cost of hosting the Mitchell Trophy event which was historically held at Bon Accord Baths.

GRANT SUPPORT APPLICATIONS FOR INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS – ECS/09/025

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which brought forward three applications from the Council's Grant Support for Interim Travel Arrangements, which were set out as follows:

<u>Activity/Applicant</u>	<u>Nature of Support</u>	<u>Amount requested</u>
Aberdeen Dolphin Swimming Club	Transport costs involved in re-location of Mitchell Trophy to Inverness.	£840
Shonaugh Farquhar – Ice Skating	Travel costs involved in attendance at supported coaching sessions in Dundee by a junior athlete.	£300
Gayle Stephen – Ice Skating	Travel costs involved in attendance at supported coaching sessions in Dundee by a junior athlete.	£300

The report outlined that should the applications be approved, a total of £12,440 from the annual travel grants budget would now be allocated.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the travel funding applications.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

SPORTS FACILITIES FOR INCLUSION IN SPORT ABERDEEN – ECS/09/044

12. With reference to article 17 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which sought approval for the final list of facilities and services which would transfer to Sport Aberdeen.

The report (1) advised that work had been on-going to transfer the sports function from the Council to Sports Aberdeen, and appended a list of the facilities that were recommended for transfer to Sport Aberdeen; (2) made reference to the minute of the Sports Trust Working Group of 22 September, 2009 (article 3 refers) presenting the views of the working group on the draft report which had been incorporated in the report now before Members, and to the minute of Council of 20 May, 2009 (article 20 refers) at which time it had been agreed that Hazlehead golf courses, sports pitches and changing rooms be transferred to Sport Aberdeen following the decision not to proceed with the proposals from the MacKenzie Club Ltd, with further clarification that this would include the Hazlehead No.1 course, No.2 course, 9 hole course, 9 hole pitch and putt and golf practice area, sports pitches, and sports pavilion; (3) advised that the Westburn Park sports facilities had previously been excluded from transfer as an options appraisal on a range of facilities within the Park which focused around the future of Westburn House was being undertaken; (4) explained that Linksfield Swimming Pool had also been excluded in the first instance as it was anticipated that the facility would be demolished in late 2010 to make way for the new 50 metre pool, however, it was considered that it would still be worth transferring the on-going operation of the pool to Sport Aberdeen on the basis that the Council would be unlikely to retain any expertise or resources to manage swimming pools following the transfer; (5) in respect of Linx Ice Arena, advised that this had been excluded to allow consideration to be given to user groups potentially managing the Arena themselves, and in view of the impending Curling Championships in December 2009, however, it was now recommended for immediate transfer; (6) indicated that St Machar Outdoor Sports Centre had been removed from the transfer list following its closure as part of the 2009/10 budget decisions and would not therefore transfer, and that Dyce Swimming Pool which would be transferred back to Dyce Academy who would operate the facility or make arrangements directly with Sports Aberdeen for appropriate technical and staffing support (7) noted that Beacon Community Centre would not be transferred under licence to Sport Aberdeen with the building responsibility resting with NYOP who would undertake building and facility management as part of the Bucksburn Campus 3R's arrangements, although Sport Aberdeen would however manage and develop the programme at the Beacon Centre following refurbishment of the building; and (8) further advised that the relationship between the Council and Sport Aberdeen would be governed by three key legal documentations; namely the Transfer Agreement, Funding and Service Provision Agreement and the Facilities Licence Agreement.

Appended to the report was an extract from the last meeting of the Sports Trust Working Group, in which the views of the group were recorded.

During the course of discussion, Councillor Farquharson made reference to a report to the Audit and Risk Committee on 8 September, 2009 (article 8 refers) which included information on the financial position of the Leaping Leopards crèche service, and sought clarification from officers as to the crossover between this information being made available and the decision to recommend that the facility transfer. Officers explained the rationale for including Leaping Leopards, advised that all the financial aspects relating to the transfer of facilities were clear to both the Council and Sport Aberdeen, and indicated that the report to the Audit and Risk Committee had not taken account of the inclusion of Leaping Leopards in sports facilities across the city, as a result of which the report had reflected a reduced subsidy per child.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) agree to the inclusion of the following facilities within the transfer to Sports Aberdeen; (1) Hazlehead Golf Courses, sports pitches and sports pavilions; (2) Westburn Park sports facilities including Westburn Tennis Centre, Westburn Outdoor Sports Centre, Westburn Lounge and sport pitches; (3) Linksfield Swimming Pool until it is required to be demolished to make way for the new 50 metre pool; and (4) Linx Ice Arena from the conclusion of the European Curling Championships;
- (b) agree that the following facilities and services transfer to Sport Aberdeen:- (1) St Machar Outdoor Sports Centre; and (2) Dyce Swimming Pool;
- (c) note that building responsibilities for the Beacon Community Centre would not transfer to Sport Aberdeen given that it was part of the Bucksburn Campus 3Rs facilities, but that Sports Aberdeen would manage and develop the programme at the Beacon Community Centre
- (d) agree the final list of facilities and services for transfer to Sport Aberdeen as set out in Appendix 2 to the report before the Committee; and
- (e) agree that the detailed arrangements for the transfer of each of these facilities be set out in the legal documentation between the City Council and Sport Aberdeen.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that the Audit and Risk Committee re-investigate the audit of the Leaping Leopards crèche service on the basis that figures relating to the use of crèche services at sports facilities had not been included in the financial information submitted as part of the audit;
- (ii) to request officers to ensure that consultation was undertaken with the bowling clubs using the facilities at Westburn Park in relation to the transfer of the Westburn Lounge, if this had not already been done; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

COMMUNITY LEARNING HUBS AND REVIEW OF COMMUNITY CENTRES AND COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY – ECS/09/032

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, which reported on progress within the development of community learning hubs and the review of community centres and community learning and development activity in Aberdeen. It was noted that this work linked with the on-going work on the draft Learning Estate Strategy and included consideration of all buildings in the Education, Culture and Sport portfolio and proposed sustainable options for the future by identifying best use of the estate and maximised opportunities for co-location and the optimum use of premises.

The report provided a background to the review of the community centres and community learning and development activity, and noted that this review had stemmed from a number of policies and initiatives. Details relating to the concept and definitions of learning communities and partnerships, community learning hubs, learning satellites and community hubs were provided in the report. The report advised that the aim of community learning hubs and learning satellites was to enhance learning opportunities and learning outcomes in the wider community by

co-ordinating and maximising the resources and capabilities of learning partners. The report advised that in Aberdeen there were currently 23 buildings supporting community learning and development activity and housing professional staff, five further properties which would in future house community learning activities, 23 community centres which were leased and 17 branch libraries.

The report went on to note that the importance of having fit for purpose and cost effective buildings was extremely high and that various pieces of work had been undertaken to inform options on all buildings. This included building condition surveys of all schools, libraries and community centres, the analysis of socio-economic data to evidence local community needs, and staff consultation sessions, as well as learning estate consultation sessions having taken place in a variety of locations. Details of the various management models which were under consideration were listed in the report as being community learning and development centres or community centres. The report went on to advise that officers had consulted and researched widely in order to ascertain the best model for management. Various issues had been identified and it had been concluded that:- it was not possible to estimate the social value of any centres to their local communities, however it was possible to quantify the actual costs of running them; the brokering of a procurement model for leased community centre ordering was seen as being beneficial to the centres as would a mechanism for bulk ordering and it had been confirmed that this was feasible and that information on this idea was currently being worked on; and that learning activity should be recognised as distinct from building management and that this should be planned and delivered through working partnerships.

The report went on to note that on the basis of the work which officers had undertaken, options for seven community learning hubs and learning satellites to support them were being put forward for consideration. The hubs were based on associated school groups or clusters and it was noted that delivery would need to be phased and synchronised with other development plans and timelines for implementation to be presented to the January 2010 committee cycle. Details on all the options being considered in the associated school groups were provided in the report. Attached as appendices to the report, were maps and information on the associated school groupings, along with a city-wide map which showed options for community learning hubs and learning satellites. A draft model lease and management agreement was also attached as an appendix to the report. Appendices to the report which contained exempt information in terms of Section 50(A) (iv) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as defined in paragraphs 6 and 9 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act, provided information relating to the condition surveys and information relating to the libraries and community centres in the associated school groups, and were listed as a separate item on the agenda.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the definitions of learning communities, learning partnership, community learning hubs and learning satellites as detailed within the report;
- (b) agree that consultation with stakeholders be reported back to the January 2010 Committee on the preferred options for –
 - (i) community learning hubs and learning satellites
 - (ii) a new model lease, management agreement and constitution for leased community centres
 - (iii) a new model of finance for leased community centres;

- (c) agree that further consultation with stakeholders about the development and operation of learning partnerships and learning communities be carried out;
- (d) instruct relevant officers to produce detailed costs in relation to implementation plans, including property evaluations, revenue savings and capital investment requirements;
- (e) note the intention to fill the vacant post of Community Centre Liaison Officer to support the management committees in the running of their centres, subject to the relevant approval by Committee; and
- (f) receive further reports on a revised staffing and operational structure for the Council's community learning and development service and the library service.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee providing an update on the consultation process;
- (ii) to request that members be advised of the dates of the consultation events; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

STRATEGIC MUSIC PARTNERSHIP AND POTENTIAL LINKS WITH SISTEMA SCOTLAND – ECS/09/031

14. With reference to article 11 of the minute of meeting of the Policy and Strategy (Education) Committee of 9 June, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, which provided an update on potential links between the Council and Sistema Scotland in the context of a strategic music partnership in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

The report provided background information in relation to Sistema Scotland, and advised that it was a charity set up to break the cycle of social blight, which saw children in many areas at risk of growing up to be involved in crime, substance abuse and anti social behaviour. It was noted that it was a social and artistic initiative and was aiming to have established three socially driven children's orchestra centres across Scotland by 2013. The report went on to advise that officers from the Council had met with the Director and Chief Executive of Sistema Scotland and had discussed the strategic music partnership and potential links between Sistema Scotland and Aberdeen. Early work had been undertaken by the Scottish Arts Council and Sistema Scotland which, based on a number of factors, had identified Aberdeen and Glasgow as potential future centres.

The report went on to note that in relation to the funding of the initiative, Sistema was currently working with the Scottish Government with the hope that a funding agreement for the next Sistema Centre would be split with the local authority providing 50% of the costs, Sistema Scotland providing 25% of the cost and the Scottish Government providing 25% of the cost during years 1 to 3 of the project. From year 4 onwards it was noted that the local authority would be expected to provide 75% of the cost with Sistema Scotland meeting the other 25%.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –

- (a) endorse the work done to date in exploring potential links with Sistema Scotland;
- (b) recognise the potential opportunities provided by Sistema as a socially driven initiative;
- (c) note the costs, timescale and actions involved in being a Sistema Scotland orchestra centre;
- (d) instruct relevant officers to consider feasibility of the development of the Sistema Children's orchestra centre in Aberdeen as part of an integrated approach to community regeneration and to report to future committees as appropriate; and
- (e) if the initiative is agreed, request a further report within 18 months, by which time the strategic music partnership would have been operational, on the feasibility of developing a Sistema Children's orchestra centre in Aberdeen as part of an integrated approach to community regeneration.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that regular progress reports be submitted to the Committee; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

LEARNING STRATEGY – UPDATE – ECS/09/043

15. With reference to article 8 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, which provided an update on the consultation being undertaken on the Aberdeen Learning Strategy. The report noted that as part of the process of consultation, stakeholders and members of the public had been invited to give their views on the draft strategy by way of a structured questionnaire and a series of listening meetings and events. The report noted that in total over 280 completed questionnaires and responses had been received, however it was felt that due to the far reaching nature of the strategy, fuller and more comprehensive responses and engagement were essential to ensure successful implementation. Various key themes had emerged from the responses which had been received and included a desire for more detail and information about each proposed priority and related objectives and how the Council intended to implement and deliver on these and a significant degree of concern over potential school closures. The report highlighted that more consultation and engagement with tertiary and higher education, as well as partners in the voluntary sector and with business and industry, was required in order to develop the strategy so that it could be better understood and more ambitious. In order to achieve this, the report noted that it was proposed that further work be undertaken by officers with all key stakeholders, to streamline the draft strategy, consult on medium and longer term objectives and to set out the economic advantages for people in Aberdeen. It was noted that a further report on progress, including a final proposed strategy, was intended to be submitted to the Committee by April, 2010, with interim reports being submitted to each meeting of the Committee. Attached as an appendix to the report, were details regarding the responses from the consultation.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report and its appendix;

- (b) agree the principles, vision and priorities which had already been consulted on and which had met with wide approval among stakeholders;
- (c) agree the short term objectives set out in the draft strategy and instruct officers to include these in future service plan objectives and to take forward work to see these objectives implemented;
- (d) instruct officers to carry out further work to widen out the strategy to better address learning to include school education and wider life long learnings;
- (e) to instruct officers to publish to stakeholders the consultation results to date and the arrangements for taking forward the learning strategy; and
- (f) to instruct officers to consult further on this and bring back a report to the Committee by April, 2010, a long term strategy for implementing the vision for Aberdeen: City of Learning, including medium and long term proposals for the learning estate.

In reference to recommendation (e), the Director of Education, Culture and Sport advised that it was not intended to publish the appendix to the report, but a leaflet setting out high level consultation outcomes.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

DRAFT LEARNING ESTATE STRATEGY 2009/2024 – ECS/09/042

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which outlined the need to develop and implement a sustainable strategy for the management of the learning estate in Aberdeen city. The learning estate included all schools (primary schools (denominational and non-denominational), secondary schools and provision for pupils with additional support needs), community learning centres, libraries and other establishments where learning took place.

The report advised that the implementation of the strategy would be over the short term, medium term and long term and would address sufficiency, condition, suitability, flexibility and limited budgets. It was noted that the strategy was to be linked to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the forthcoming proposals on the development and building of new homes in the city, to meet the requirements of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan which had been approved by Scottish Ministers in August, 2009. The report provided details of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan Housing Allowances and set out the Aberdeen Local Development Plan timetable. Details of the projected total roll in primary and secondary schools were also provided in the report and it was noted that any significant decisions on the closure or amalgamation within secondary school provision, particularly around the periphery of the city, would be highly likely to result in under capacity.

The report contained details of the consultation and engagement process on the learning strategy, including the learning estate, which had taken place between April and July, 2009 and provided a summary of the analysis of the consultation feedback, principles, criteria and vision.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report, appendices and background information;
- (b) instruct officers to produce recommendations on appropriate short term proposals to be considered by the Committee in November;
- (c) consider whether in the medium term (3 – 5 years) delineated areas should be amended to reduce the number of associated schools groups in line with projected school roles;
- (d) approve further development of a co-ordinated learning estate strategy, linked to the Council-wide asset management strategy, the requirements of community learning and development, social care and wellbeing and other services of the Council; that all factors impacting upon the learning estate should be taken into account, including the emerging new Aberdeen Local Development Plan, resulting in a sustainable and responsive strategy relating to developments in the medium (3 – 5 years) and long term (6 – 15 years and beyond); and that a workshop seminar visioning event for members and officers be held on Monday, 26 October, 2009;
- (e) that the Committee instruct officers to produce an additional set of data on schools' capacities and condition, based upon a set of criteria which reflect the demands of delivering a modern curriculum;
- (f) instruct officers to develop the concept of learning communities to facilitate delivery of learning opportunities to all learners; and
- (g) instruct officers to contribute to a policy on developer contributions by planning and infrastructure colleagues.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that all members of the Council be invited to the seminar being held on 26 October, 2009 and that the Housing Cases Review Sub-Committee meeting on that day be rescheduled if possible; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

READING BUS PROJECT – FUTURE PLANS – ECS/09/040

17. With reference to article 6 of the minute of meeting of the Policy and Strategy (Education) Committee of 28 April, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, which set out options for developing and sustaining the work of the reading bus.

The report advised that it was the intention to extend and financially support the Council's core reading bus programme by sustaining the work already developed in the St. Machar community as well as rolling the programme out to the regeneration areas of Northfield and Torry. The key areas for future development included expanding pioneering work with parents and families, core programmes in schools, after school and summer holiday programmes and staff training and tool kits. The potential development and extension of the entrepreneurial and self-funding strands of the project were also noted in the report and included the expansion of reading radio, the proposal to seek external funds to establish a high quality specialist film studio and the expansion of the reading bus press.

The report further noted that the outcomes from the research which had been carried out in January, 2009, related directly to the Curriculum for Excellence and had the potential to contribute significantly to the development and roll out of the

city's Learning Strategy. Details of the current funding and the future funding requirements of the reading bus project were also provided in the report.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) continue to support Aberdeen City Council's flagship reading bus by considering options that would sustain the work developed in the St. Machar community as well as the roll out of the core programme to the regeneration areas of Northfield and Torry, noting that the funding was subject to the budget review process that would follow this committee cycle;
- (b) consider the development and extension of the entrepreneurial and self-funding strands, which were dependent on the core programme being in place – (i) expansion of reading radio, the broadcasting programme developed in partnership with Station House Media Unit, (ii) establishment of a high quality specialist film studio, building on the pioneering film work already delivered, and (iii) expansion of the reading bus press, the in-house publishing company established by the reading bus as an income generating strand; and
- (c) recommend in principle that the reading bus project is mainstreamed with plans to expand, thus adding value to other communities, noting that the funding was subject to the budget review process that would follow this committee cycle.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the work which had been carried out on the project to date; and
- (ii) to refer the report to be considered as part of the budget process.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CONNECTIVITY FOR EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS – ECS/09/048

18. With reference to article 11 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, which provided the outcomes of the procurement of consultancy in relation to the ICT Connectivity project, which had been undertaken throughout February and March, 2009. The report also provided details of the findings and recommendations provided by the appointed consultancy firm upon completion of the review phase of the project.

Details of the recommended approach for project progression and the implementation of an upgraded Wide Area Network connectivity solution for schools were also provided in the report. It was noted that the advantage of a wireless system was that the Council already owned the kit, and so the only revenue cost to the Council would be for the support of the kit and licensing, if required. This would mean that the Council would have a far greater control over future revenue price increases than at present. The report further noted that the wireless solution would be less expensive than continuing with the current solution after only two years of being in place.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress to date;

- (b) note that the Finance and Resources Committee on 17 September, 2009, agreed that point to multi-point wireless would be progressed as the preferred approach for education WAN connectivity and that the formal procurement exercise should commence; and
- (c) that information be conveyed to city schools which outlined the recommended solution, the benefits and the health and safety statements as appended to the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

KAIMHILL SCHOOL TO BRAESIDE SCHOOL – DECANT

19. With reference to article 10 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee received an oral update from the Head of Service (City Wide Lead for Schools) on the decant from Kaimhill School to Braeside School which had taken place in the last few weeks. The Committee were advised that Kaimhill School had closed on 23 September, 2009, and that on 1 October, 2009, the new Braeside School had opened. It was noted that the staff had worked hard to ensure that the decant went smoothly and that the pupils had now settled in well to their new school. As had been requested at the previous meeting, all necessary amendments had been made to the walking route and the use of the buses was being monitored on a weekly basis. The Committee were advised that work was being undertaken to advise parents of any changes in locations for drop offs as and when these occurred but that any changes were being avoided if at all possible. Officers were working closely with the bus company to ensure that no late information or changes happen in the future, as had happened with the drop off points initially.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request officers to write to the staff at the school to express thanks for the hard work which been done during the decant; and
- (ii) to note the information.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A BOOKSTART COORDINATOR POST – ECS/09/028

20. The Committee had before it a business case prepared by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which proposed that a permanent BookStart co-ordinator post be established within the library staff structure.

The business case outlined that (1) BookStart was a national, Government funded, initiative which brought workers together from health visitors to early years professionals; (2) Surestart funding, which was specifically for 0-3 year olds had been used since 2002 to support this post; (3) Surestart funding for an 18 hour per week BookStart co-ordinator post had been allocated for April, 2009 to March, 2010; and (4) the fixed term contract for the BookStart co-ordinator terminated on 31st May, 2009 with the role currently being vacant.

The business case went on to advise that BookStart helped raise performance, reduced inequalities and would benefit the Council by promoting partnership working to raise attainment and achievement levels, ensuring children, parents and carers are well informed and actively supported to achieve their full potential, be socially inclusive, allowing children to share a better quality of life and increase opportunities for adults and their children and grandchildren to learn together through development of family learning initiatives.

The report further outlined that the BookStart co-ordinator position would be established on a part time basis of 18 hours per week on a permanent basis, on the salary scale G9.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the business case.

The Committee resolved:-

to defer consideration of consideration of the business case meantime.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the following paragraphs of Schedule 7(A) to the Act:- article 21 (paragraphs 6 and 9) and article 22 (paragraphs 6 and 9).

STATUS OF VACANT PROPERTIES HELD BY EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT – ECS/09/024

21. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which had been requested by the Corporate Asset Group meeting and which advised of the current status of properties held by the Education, Culture and Sport service, and where a change of status for properties was being proposed. The report provided a list of vacant properties and noted their current status.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the status of the vacant properties;
- (b) agree that, where indicated in the report, those properties formally be declared surplus to service requirements;
- (c) request the Asset Policy Manager to remove these properties from the Education, Culture and Sport account and dispose of the properties and site; and
- (d) to request the Head of Resources, Development and Delivery to obtain estimated costs for the demolition of Greenfern School for further consideration.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve recommendations (a) and (b) as above; and
- (ii) to remit recommendations (c) and (d) to the Finance and Resources Committee for determination.

EXTENSION OF READING BUS DRIVER POST – ECS/09/034

22. The Committee had before it a business case prepared by the Director for Education, Culture and Sport which sought to extend the fixed term contract of the post of reading bus driver until 31 March, 2010.

The report outlined that the fixed term post had been established as a result of it not being possible to meet the needs of the post from within existing staff resources and that the full year impact on revenue would be £3,650. It was noted that without the post extension, the city would lose the flagship initiative which had made such a significant contribution to expanding the horizon of staff, pupils and families.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the business case.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the business case.

- MARTIN GREIG, Convener.