

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 21 November 2023. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allard (as substitute for Councillor Radley for articles 11 to 18), Al-Samarai, Blake, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Grant, MacGregor, McLellan, McLeod, Radley (for articles 1 to 10) and Mrs Stewart (as substitute for Councillor Boulton). External Members:- Mrs Frances Cardno (Parent Representative - Primary Schools/ASN) (for articles 1 to 15), Mr Michael Crawford (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN) (for articles 1 to 15), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (for articles 1 to 11), Miss Pamela Scott (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools) (for articles 1 to 9) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (for articles 10 to 15).

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 (St Peter's RC School Long Term Education Provision - Exempt Appendices) and item 11.2 (Outline Business Case New Secondary School for Hazlehead and Countesswells – Exempt Appendices) 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 items 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 statements of transparency were noted:-

- in relation to item 10.1 (Inspection Reporting), Councillor Grant advised that he had a child who attended ELC provision at Riverbank Primary School, however he did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would require him to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item;
- in relation to items 10.2 (St Peter's RC School Long Term Education Provision) and 11.1 (the exempt appendices for that report), Mr Murray advised that his daughter was a teacher at St Peter's RC School, however he did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would require him to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of those items;

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- Mr Crawford advised for reasons of transparency that he had two children at Cults Academy and one at Airyhall Primary School but that he did not consider this amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the meeting.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 12 September 2023 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that Mr Doug Haywood had been in attendance on behalf of Miss Scott; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

4. The Committee had before it the planner of committee business as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal).

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Northfield Schools report was to be added to the business planner for the February 2024 meeting;
- (ii) to request that the formatting of the planner be reviewed to ensure there was no cut off text;
- (iii) to note the update provided by the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord on the situation with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC);
- (iv) to note that there would be further detail provided to Committee on any delays to the school estate reports listed in the planner via the report to be presented to the February 2024 meeting;
- (v) to agree to remove item 16 (Education and Children's Services reforms); and
- (vi) to otherwise note the planner.

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT - COM/23/348

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which set out the first annual effectiveness report for the Education and Children's Services Committee.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

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- (a) provide comments and observations on the data contained within the annual report; and
- (b) note the annual report of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT - CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY SERVICE/NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK PROGRESS UPDATE - COM/23/371

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which presented (a) the status of key performance measures relating to the Children's and Family Services function; (b) a progress update in relation to implementation of the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2023/24; and (c) an attainment and achievement data briefing summary relating to the August 2023 Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examination diet release.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and provide comments and observations on the information contained in the report appendices.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers include information in relation to long-term trends for looked after children in future reports; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

CLUSTER RISK REGISTERS - CFS/23/335

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which presented the cluster risk registers and assurance maps in accordance with the Education and Children's Services Committee Terms of Reference, to provide assurance that risks were being managed effectively within the Education and Integrated Children's Services Clusters.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps set out in appendices A, B, C and D.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would give consideration to whether the two week period for Senior Leadership applications could be reviewed;

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- (ii) to note that officers would share information with Members via service update on the ongoing work in relation to the desktop review of Pupil Equity Funding plans and sustainability of interventions, and
- (iii) to approve the recommendation.

INSPECTION REPORTING - CFS/23/369

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which detailed the outcome of inspection reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and The Care Inspectorate on the quality of Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings since the last meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of this report; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with the Quality Framework agreed at Committee in July 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that there was an error in section 3.8 of the report and Kingsford ELC was moving from intensive to targeted support;
- (ii) to request that officers include information on the location of settings in future reports to ensure Members were aware in which part of the city they were based;
- (iii) to note the improvement that had been achieved in the various settings, and to thank staff for their efforts; and
- (iv) to approve the recommendations.

ST PETER'S RC SCHOOL - LONG TERM EDUCATION PROVISION - RES/23/365

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which presented an updated Outline Business Case (OBC) for the long term education provision for St Peter's RC school, including the outcome of the Old Aberdeen House feasibility study as an alternative option to provide a two stream school.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the recommended option and associated costs to refurbish Old Aberdeen House with the addition of new build provision to deliver a 21st century learning environment for St Peter's RC School and recommend approval of this option at the meeting of Finance and Resources Committee on 22 November 2023; and

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- (b) subject to approval of recommendation 2.4 to the Finance and Resources Committee, note that a progress report would be presented to a future meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee in 2024.

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) note that St Peter's RC School was one of two schools in the city whose condition was currently rated lowest as "C", poor; and that the suitability of St Peter's was rated as "C" (poor); and
- (b) approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) note the contents of the options appraisal and the officer recommendation to proceed with Option C;
- (b) note the Education Scotland report, prepared in April 2019 by the HMIE, titled "Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to relocate St Peter's RC Primary School to the existing Riverbank school building..." concluded that the proposal to relocate St Peter's RC to a refurbished school at the current Riverbank school site, "has clear educational benefits for children who currently attend St Peter's RC Primary School and who would have access to a more flexible, modern and healthy living environment, with improved outdoor learning spaces and early learning and childcare facilities;
- (c) note that the same HMIE report stated, "There will also be improved outdoor learning spaces with opportunities for physical education. There is significantly more outdoor space available around the Riverbank building, with more than ten times the amount of hard landscaping and nearly 80 times more soft landscaping than is available at the St Peter's site.";
- (d) note that the Options Appraisal sets out the significant disparity in the "total site area" of each option where Riverbank is currently 15,816sqm compared with St Peter's RC which is only 7,940sqm and agrees that the additional open space in the former presents a significant opportunity for future generations of St Peter's RC pupils to benefit from significantly better outdoor space;
- (e) note that the Options Appraisal sets out a rationale to develop a school that will accommodate a school roll of up to 434 pupils to cope with possible increased demand and suggests the school roll could be double its current size;
- (f) agree that, if St Peter's RC were to double in size in the coming years, there is not nearly enough outside space on the existing St Peter's RC site in

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- order to create an outdoor learning environment that pupils and staff deserve and that therefore Option C does not offer maximum educational benefit for the school community;
- (g) agree that, in light of the above, Committee recommends to the Finance and Resources Committee that it agrees to continue to progress work on Option B with any remaining preparatory work outstanding to be programmed and progressed as much as practical prior to the decant of Riverbank Primary School into new build which is scheduled to open in summer 2024;
 - (h) recommend to the Finance and Resources Committee that it instructs the Chief Officer – Capital to refer the proposals for the project to the Budget process in 2024; and
 - (i) instruct the Chief Officer – Capital to report back to a future meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee in 2024 with a progress update report.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (15) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Al-Samarai, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, MacGregor, McLellan, McLeod, Radley and Mrs Stewart; and Mrs Cardno, Mr Crawford, Mr Murray and Miss Scott; for the amendment (2) – Councillors Blake and Grant; absent from the division (1) – Mrs Smith.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would provide an update to Members outwith the meeting on the current situation with the replacement Riverbank School project and the project completion date of Summer 2024; and
- (ii) to adopt the motion.

OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE: NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION FOR HAZLEHEAD AND COUNTESSWELLS - RES/23/366

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which presented an Outline Business Case (OBC), setting out the findings of a recent feasibility study, to identify options for delivering new secondary school provision within the Hazlehead and Countesswells Associated Schools Groups (ASGs).

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the recommended option within the OBC and instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new campus on the Hazlehead Academy playing fields and on proposed changes to the existing Countesswells and Hazlehead secondary school catchment areas, to create a new catchment area which would be served by the proposed new school provision; and

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- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the consultation at its next available meeting following the conclusion of the consultation process, in July 2024.

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) note that Hazlehead Academy was one of two schools in the city whose condition was currently rated lowest as "C", poor; and that the suitability of Hazlehead Academy was rated as "D" bad;
- (b) welcome the award of LEIP3 funding for the Hazlehead Academy rebuild project; and
- (c) approve the recommendations in the report.

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

That the Education and Children's Services Committee:-

- (a) note the recommended option within the OBC and instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out the statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new campus on the Hazlehead Academy playing field;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a separate statutory public consultation to specifically address the option of Kingswells primary remaining zoned for the Bucksburn Academy ASG;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to provide Members of the Education and Children's Services Committee with written confirmation of the terms and scope of the LEIP funding allocation which was confirmed on 30 October 2023;
- (d) note that Committee should maintain its commitment to the decision of Council on 8 October 2014 regarding primary education provision (one two stream and one three stream school) and provide a new secondary school at Countesswells;
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the consultation on the Hazlehead Academy proposal at its next available meeting following the conclusion of the consultation process, in July 2024, and to bring forward a report on the provision of a new Secondary School for Countesswells;
- (f) agree that Council must not make the same mistake as the SNP made with the 3Rs Bucksburn Secondary School which was built without taking into consideration the increased capacity required for the area, therefore there is a need for a separate Secondary school for Countesswells.

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That the Finance and Resources Committee:-

- (a) approve in principle the recommended option within the OBC to construct a new campus to provide secondary school provision for Hazlehead subject to the outcome of a statutory consultation and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to provide an OBC for a new Secondary School at Countesswells;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Capital to refer the proposals for the projects to the budget process in 2024/25;
- (c) note 4.2 of the report that states, “The S75 agreement currently does not allow for the Council to use the ‘Secondary School Contribution’ and agree that failure to build a new school at Countesswells may open up the Council to legal challenge as well as having to pay back developer’s contributions; and
- (d) subject to the outcomes of the statutory consultation and any decision taken at the budget meeting of March 2024 approves in principle the use of resources for the implementation of the project from 2024.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (12) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Al-Samarai, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, MacGregor, McLellan, Radley and Mrs Stewart; and Mrs Cardno, Mr Crawford and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (4) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Grant and McLeod; declined to vote (1) – Mr Murray; absent from the division (1) – Miss Scott.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Interim Director of Children’s and Family Services would liaise with the Chief Officer – Data and Insights to clarify when the updated school roll data would be available, and would share that information with Members outwith the meeting; and
- (ii) to adopt the motion.

OPTIONS TO RATIONALISE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE SETTINGS TO MATCH THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT GRANT - CFS/23/301

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children’s and Family Services which presented options to rationalise Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to match the Scottish Government Grant, as instructed by Council at the Budget meeting on 1 March 2023.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee consider the options presented and approve the amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, based on demand.

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

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That the Committee:-

- (a) welcome the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 funded hours since 2021 which had included eighteen new building projects for ELC provision around the city;
- (b) welcome the survey which had seen significantly increased engagement with parents, carers and families and which helped to ensure that ELC provision met the needs of young people and their families; and to give thanks all who took part;
- (c) note that ELC delivery would continue to be monitored to ensure it was adapted to meet local demand; and
- (d) approve the amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, based on demand.

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

That the Committee:-

- (a) consider the options presented and approve the amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, based on demand, subject to reinstating the 600 hours provision at Bramble Brae;
- (b) agree to refer this report to the next meeting of Finance & Resources Committee to seek approval to fund this decision in 2023/24 (£74,000) through the use uncommitted General Fund reserves, noting that this would reduce the value of uncommitted funds below the recommended minimum; and
- (c) agree to refer the need for continuing funding of £74,000 in 2024/25 (and full year effect of £118,000 in 2025/26) to the budget process as a cost pressure on the budget gap set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, in recognition of the commitment to maintain provision at Bramble Brae.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (15) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Allard, Al-Samarai, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, MacGregor, McLellan, McLeod and Mrs Stewart; and Mrs Cardno, Mr Crawford, Mr Murray and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (2) – Councillors Blake and Grant; absent from the division (1) – Miss Scott.

The Committee resolved:-
to adopt the motion.

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MCR PATHWAYS UPDATE - CFS/23/260

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the continuation of the MCR Pathways Programme in Aberdeen City Schools.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note that three schools (Northfield Academy, Lochside Academy and St Machar Academy) would continue with the MCR Pathways programme for the duration of academic year 2023/24 - Lochside Academy and St Machar Academy would fund the programme through their Pupil Equity fund and Northfield Academy would be supported to fund the programme through the Scottish Attainment challenge Care Experienced Fund.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS - AMENDMENT TO 2023/2024 PATTERN - CFS/23/367

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which sought authority for the Interim Chief Officer – Education to make an amendment to the 2023/24 school holiday pattern to ensure all staff received the Good Friday public holiday and children received their statutory entitlement of education.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve an amendment to the 2023/24 holiday pattern (set out at Option 1 in the report); and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Education to inform staff, parents and young people of the change to the holiday pattern

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

In line with the decision taken at article 1, the following two items were taken with the press and public excluded from the meeting.

ST PETER'S RC SCHOOL - LONG TERM EDUCATION PROVISION - EXEMPT APPENDICES

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14. The Committee had before it exempt appendices relating to the St Peter's RC School Long Term Education Provision report (article 9 of this minute refers).

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information contained within the exempt appendices.

OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE: NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION FOR HAZLEHEAD AND COUNTESSWELLS - EXEMPT APPENDICES

15. The Committee had before it exempt appendices relating to the Outline Business Case: New Secondary School Provision for Hazlehead and Countesswells report (article 10 of this minute refers).

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information contained within the exempt appendices.

At this juncture, the External Members departed the meeting. The public part of the meeting resumed.

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT - CFS/23/341

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Social Work Officer which presented the Annual Report for 2022/23. The report informed Members of the role and responsibilities exercised by the Chief Social Work Officer; provided information on the delivery of statutory social work services and decision making in the period; and gave a progress report on key areas of social work provision within Aberdeen City.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the content of the Annual Report, as attached at Appendix 1.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services would circulate information to Members outwith the meeting in relation to adoption placements;
- (ii) to note that officers would arrange a workshop and a site visit around the time of the Bairns Hoose report being presented to Committee in February 2024; and
- (iii) to note the report.

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**ABERDEEN CITY'S CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23
- CFS/23/370**

17. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which presented the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee (CPC) Annual Report 2022-23 to provide assurance that the work of the CPC was effectively helping reduce risks to children and young people.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the Child Protection Committee's Annual Report 2022-23, including the Child Protection Programme 2021-2024; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services to provide Committee with a further report in November 2024 detailing the continuing impact and effectiveness of partnership work in relation to child protection.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

KEEPING THE PROMISE - YEAR 2 EVALUATION REPORT - CFS/23/264

18. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which set out progress of the partnership implementation of the Scottish Government's Plan 2021-24 to keep The Promise. Members also received a short presentation from officers on progress made.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the local progress made in Year Two of Plan 21-24 as outlined in the report at Appendix 1; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services to provide a progress report in Autumn 2024 in relation to the partnership's implementation of Plan 21-24 and subsequent Promise plans.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to page 459 of the report and the statement around consideration being given as to how best to make clear the offer to families given the varied range of provisions available through the Pupil Equity Funding resource, to note that officers would provide an update on this in the Integrated Children's Services Plan - Annual Update report due to Committee in April 2024; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**