

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 24 June 2025. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allard, Blake, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, Farquhar (as substitute for Councillor Brooks) (articles 1 to 12), Grant, MacGregor, Malik (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Stewart), McLeod, McRae (as substitute for Councillor Buchanan) and Radley. External Members:- Ms Danielle Barclay (Parent Representative - Nursery / Primary) (articles 1 to 18), Mr Doug Haywood (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools) (articles 1 to 18), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools) (articles 1 to 18), Dr Alison Murray (Parent Representative - Secondary) (articles 1 to 18), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (articles 1 to 12), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative) (articles 1 to 13) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (articles 1 to 18).

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 items 11.1 (Bucksburn and Dyce Long Term Secondary School Provision: Outline Business Case – Exempt Appendix) and 11.2 (ABZ Campus – Exempt Appendix) 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 the following paragraphs of Schedule 7(A) to the Act – paragraph 8 (item 11.1) and 5 (item 11.2).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. The following transparency statements were intimated:-

- The Convener made a transparency statement in respect of item 9.3 (Inspection Reporting) as he was an elder at Fountainhall Church, which owned the building where Queens Cross ELC was based;
- Councillor Blake also made a transparency statement in respect of item 9.3 as both her children attended Broomhill Nursery at Cults which was part of the report before Committee;

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- Councillor Grant made a transparency statement in relation to item 10.2 (Free School Meals Annual Update) as he had children at primary and secondary school;
- In relation to item 10.6 (Review of Spaces for Additional Support Needs), the Vice Convener, Councillor Grant and Dr Murray all made transparency statements as they had children with additional support needs;
- Councillor Grant made a further transparency statement in relation to item 10.8 (ABZ Campus) as he had children at primary and secondary school.

None of the above-mentioned Members considered that these amounted to interests which required declarations to be made.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 29 APRIL 2025

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 29 April 2025 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that reasons given for the consideration of urgent items of business would be recorded in future minutes; and
- (ii) to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to items 22 (Northfield Asset Review) and 25 (Northfield Academy, Northfield Primary Schools and Wider Asset Review - approval of Outline Business Case and consultation proposal) to note that these had now been combined on the planner into one item;
- (ii) to agree to remove item 28 (School Age Childcare Policy) from the planner; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the business planner.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK/MARCH 2025 INSIGHT RELEASE SUMMARY REPORT - CORS/25/161

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which presented (a) the status of key annual/annualised performance and service standard measures relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work and Family Support Clusters, and (b) a summary analysis of school leaver attainment and achievement derived from the Insight release in March 2025.

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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 note that the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support had advised that officers would review the learning from the recent Scottish Government campaign to increase the number of foster carers and provide an update in Autumn to Committee on any work being undertaken locally as a result; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

APPROACHES TO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT - F&C/25/151

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which detailed how Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings would be supported to improve performance against the Core Quality Indicators used by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and The Care Inspectorate.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to immediately implement the approach detailed in the Aberdeen City Council Early Learning and Childcare Quality Improvement Framework;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to implement the approach detailed in the Aberdeen City Council Quality Improvement Framework across all schools from August 2025;
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to review the impact of arrangements on evaluations of core Quality Indicators over school session 2024/25, amending approaches as required, and report back to Committee with any proposed changes to arrangements in advance of the 2025/6 school session; and
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong learning to narrow the focus of the National Improvement Framework Plan for session 25/26 in order to focus more extensively on leading, learning, teaching and assessment in order to realise further improvement.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

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INSPECTION REPORTING - F&C/25/154

7. 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 the Quality Improvement Frameworks being considered by Committee today.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers review the formatting of the action plan appendices for future reports; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

2024/25 EDUCATION CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT - F&C/25/144

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an update on key events which had taken place within schools to educate children and young people about Climate Change, Biodiversity and the drive towards Net Zero during the school session 2024-25. The report also outlined work undertaken by the Youth Climate Change Group over the school session.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the summary of events that took place in schools to educate children and young people about Climate Change, Biodiversity and the drive towards Net Zero in session 2024-25;
- (b) note the work of the Youth Climate Change Group; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress through Service Update within one calendar year.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree recommendations (a) and (b);
- (ii) to thank the pupils for their significant efforts in promoting and actioning environmental work in schools and citywide;
- (iii) to agree that this important area of focused activity should continue;
- (iv) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to support the Youth Climate Change Group to collate and share a yearly summary of the most

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- impactful projects in our schools, through means to be determined by the group, to inspire other young people across the city;
- (v) to invite representatives from the Youth Climate Change Group to present the report to Committee in subsequent years; and
 - (vi) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress by committee report within one calendar year.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS ANNUAL UPDATE - F&C/25/092

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented an annual update on Free School Meals.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress in Free School Meal provision and actions to continue increasing uptakes;
- (b) note the Scottish Government's decision to stop data collection via the annual Healthy Living Survey, and the move to collecting data on school meal uptakes and free school meals registrations via the Local Financial Return;
- (c) note the successful implementation of the Pre-order app in Secondary Schools and the positive impact it has had on both customer numbers and Revenue; and
- (d) agree the pilot scheme to expand free school meals to pupils in S1 to S3 whose families were in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment was to be welcomed.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would share any update on discussions with the Scottish Government about the expansion of free school meals to eligible S1 to S3 pupils to Members via email outwith the meeting, and to request that officers discuss with the Scottish Government how to successfully follow on from the test of change to ensure there was no drop off once the test of change ended; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH TO HEALTHY WEIGHT - F&C/25/152

10. With reference to article 12 of the minute of its meeting of 2 July 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which set out progress on the work to increase the number of children and young people who were of a healthy weight by taking a Whole System Approach.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the work undertaken to date;
- (b) continue to endorse the Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight known as Healthy Weight Aberdeen; and

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- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to report progress on the service's delivery of the Whole Systems approach, Healthy Weight Aberdeen, through a Service Update within 12 calendar months.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers continue to review the language used in future reports to ensure appropriate terminology was used; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

INCIDENTS AND BEHAVIOUR ACTION PLAN PROGRESS - F&C/25/153

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an overview of the preventative work undertaken to tackle behaviour in school; progress made against the national behaviour plan; and a comparison of incidents reported across other local authorities.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of this report; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to plan preventative professional learning and report progress against the local Behaviour Plan through regular National Improvement Framework updates.

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) note the content of this report;
- (b) note the guidance issued by the Scottish Government on 17 June Schools: Fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment;
- (c) agree while any measures that can effectively tackle disruption in classrooms is welcome, parents will be sceptical of the approach being taken if this is the best that SNP ministers can come up with;
- (d) agree teachers and staff in schools will not feel reassured by a laminated list of bullet points when they are having to deal with violent incidents involving pupils;
- (e) agree Aberdeen Labour is serious about supporting teachers and staff in schools by tackling violence in our schools, and to repair the damage done by the SNP during their 18 years in power nationally and 3 years in power locally; and
- (f) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue working with trade union colleagues to plan preventative professional learning and report progress against the local Behaviour Plan through regular National Improvement Framework updates.

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On a division, there voted:- for the motion (11) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Allard, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, MacGregor, McRae and Radley; and Ms Barclay, Dr Murray and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (5) – Councillors Blake, Farquhar, Grant, Malik and McLeod; declined to vote (4) – Mr Haywood, Ms Munro, Mr Murray and Mr Regmi.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to the report recommendation to report back through National Improvement Framework updates, to note that the Executive Director and Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would liaise outwith the meeting in respect of whether a full report back on the behaviour plan was to be provided, and the timescales for this;
- (ii) in relation to the recently issued Scottish Government document on consequences in schools, to note that the Executive Director would look to share this more widely with staff;
- (iii) to note that the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would provide a service update to Members outwith the meeting in relation to how many schools had not used the incident reporting system and whether that number had declined since the previous year;
- (iv) to note that there was missing text at action 15 in the behaviour action plan appendix, and the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would provide the detail of this to Members; and
- (v) to adopt the motion.

HEALTH & WELLBEING REPORT - F&C/25/155

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which set out the findings of the Health and Wellbeing surveys undertaken within Aberdeen City Schools in December 2024.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report;
- (b) acknowledge the hard work of secondary schools, and the wider support staff in Education and Lifelong Learning in supporting S5 Girls to improve their mental health outcomes;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to consider the findings of the report and plan next steps as part of work being taken forward to develop the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan and associated National Improvement Framework Plan; and
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report the findings of the next Health and Wellbeing surveys to Committee following the next survey point.

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The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

REVIEW OF SPACES FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS - F&C/25/158

13. With reference to article 12 of its meeting of 17 September 2024, the Committee had before it a report which presented the findings of a recent review of the use of space in Aberdeen's schools for supporting pupils with additional support needs.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the findings of the review as outlined in this report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue providing support to head teachers and staff in schools to make best use of the space available to them for supporting pupils with additional support needs, to reflect existing and emerging policies and guidance in this area; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that the Council's specification of spaces for additional support needs in future new school buildings and school refurbishment projects continues to be regularly reviewed and updated, to reflect ongoing feedback received locally, and any relevant national and local guidance on the design of spaces for additional support needs.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations;
- (ii) to note the current provision of spaces offered across the whole school estate and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to (a) identify any opportunities for sharing good practice in order to develop support for ASN for the benefit of pupils and school communities and (b) to bring back a report as soon as possible based on the adequacy or otherwise of spaces for Additional Support Needs within each School within the city, in order to truly understand the actual requirements for each school; and
- (iii) to note that the Executive Director had undertaken that officers would provide an interim service update on the above in September.

**BUCKSBURN AND DYCE LONG TERM SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION:
OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - F&C/25/159**

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families and Communities which presented a completed Outline Business Case detailing options for ensuring appropriate long term secondary education provision to serve the communities of Dyce and Bucksburn and sought approval for discussions to be undertaken with Aberdeenshire Council on catchment area adjustments for Dyce Academy. The Outline Business Case was included in the papers to Committee in the exempt section of the agenda.

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The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the preferred option for ensuring appropriate future provision of secondary education at Dyce and Bucksburn, as detailed within the Outline Business Case at Appendix A of the report; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord in consultation with the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to consult with officers at Aberdeenshire Council on proposals for adjusting the Dyce Academy catchment area to align with the City boundary, therefore removing all areas of Aberdeenshire including Newmachar and Kingseat from the catchment area, and to report back to this Committee on the outcomes of these discussions and recommendations for next steps, within the next two committee cycles.

During questioning of officers, the Committee agreed to move briefly into private session to enable Members to ask questions on the exempt appendix (item 11.1 of the agenda)

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) agree that there was no preferred option at this stage for ensuring appropriate future provision of secondary education at Dyce and Bucksburn, as detailed within the Outline Business Case at Appendix A of this report at this stage; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord in consultation with the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to consult ON A WITHOUT PREJUDICE BASIS with officers at Aberdeenshire Council on the option to adjust the Dyce Academy catchment area to align with the City boundary, therefore removing all areas of Aberdeenshire including Newmachar and Kingseat from the catchment area, and to report back to this Committee on the outcomes of these discussions for next steps, in two cycles.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (11) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Allard, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, MacGregor, McRae and Radley; and Ms Barclay, Dr Murray and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (3) – Councillors Blake, Grant and Malik; declined to vote (3) – Councillor McLeod and Mr Haywood and Ms Munro; absent from the division (3) – Councillor Farquhar and Mr Murray and Mr Regmi.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

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ABZ CAMPUS - F&C/25/150

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an update on progress with ABZ Campus, with particular reference to levels and achievements of participants and of plans in place for 2025-26. The report also included a full review of the impact of the role of the Pathways Advocate.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made in delivering ABZ Campus which aimed to further broaden the curriculum offer for young people in the Senior Phase in Aberdeen City Council schools;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to support the roll out of Phase 3 ABZ Campus; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to report the progress of ABZ Campus to Members through a yearly service update.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

UKRAINIAN SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT - INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL - F&C/25/128

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which sought approval for a teacher from Ferryhill School to travel to Krakow in Poland as part of the British Council UK-Ukraine School Partnerships project on Reading for Pleasure.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve travel for a teacher to attend Krakow in September 2025, with the purpose of the visit being to help teachers from partnered schools to get to know each other and guide them along the journey of developing their partnership and project (travel funded by the British Council, with no cost to the local authority).

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

BUCKSBURN AND DYCE LONG TERM SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION: OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - F&C/25/159 - EXEMPT APPENDIX

17. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix relating to the Bucksburn and Dyce Long Term Secondary School Provision (Outline Business Case). (Article 14 of this minute refers).

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The Committee resolved:-

to note the information contained within the exempt appendix.

ABZ CAMPUS - F&C/25/150 - EXEMPT APPENDIX

18. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix relating to ABZ Campus. (Article 15 of this minute refers).

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information contained within the exempt appendix.

At this juncture, the External Members left the meeting.

BAIRNS HOOSE UPDATE - F&C/25/157

19. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an update on progress in relation to Aberdeen City's Pathfinder activity to develop the Bairns Hoose.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the update of progress made by the Aberdeen City Pathfinder to deliver a Bairns Hoose and the Scottish Government grant award for 2025/26 to support delivery of Aberdeen's Bairns Hoose;
- (b) note that an incremental approach to opening the Bairns Hoose would commence from the Summer of 2025;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support / Chief Social Work Officer to arrange a visit for Committee Members to the Bairns Hoose upon completion of the build; and
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support / Chief Social Work Officer to provide a service update in June 2026.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK STATISTICS, SCOTLAND 2023-24 - F&C/25/160

20. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which shared the Children's Social Work Statistics, Scotland 2023-24 report and provided commentary on the performance of Aberdeen City Council compared with the national position.

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The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note that care experienced children and those children who need protection in Aberdeen City, were, predominantly, receiving care and protection in line with national averages;
- (b) note that where performance differed from national averages, and it required it, there were improvement plans in place; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to update the Education and Children's Services Committee on the 2024/25 Statistical Report following its publication in Spring 2026.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**