

Minute of Meeting

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 24 August 2023	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jennifer Adam, Councillor Fiona Airlie-Nicolson, Provost Lorraine Cameron, Councillor Carolann Davidson, Councillor Audrey Doig, Councillor Edward Grady, Councillor Gillian Graham, Councillor Anne Hannigan, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Alec Leishman, Councillor David McGonigle, Councillor Iain McMillan, Mr Jack Nellaney, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Mr Ravinder Singh, Councillor Ben Smith

Chair

Councillor Rodden, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

A MacArthur, Director of Finance & Resources; J Calder, Head of Service (Early Years & Broad General Education), G Lyons, Interim Chief Education Officer, T McGillivray, Head of Schools (Senior Phase & Inclusion), J Trainer, Head of Childcare & Criminal Justice and L Johnston, Service Improvement Manager (all Children's Services); A Morrison, Head of Economy & Development Services and C Orr, Senior Communications Officer (Chief Executive's); M Conaghan, Head of Corporate Governance, R Conway, Finance Manager, P Shiach, Senior Committee Services Officer, J Barron, Committee Services Officer, D Cunningham, Committee & Licensing Services Officer, G Dickie, Partnering & Commissioning Manager and D Pole, End User Technician (all Finance & Resources).

Webcasting of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Board would be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site.

Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements

Councillor Davidson indicated that she had a connection to item 7- The Promise: Progress on delivering on Renfrewshire's Promise (#KeepThePromise) by reason of having signed up to undertake the role of Promise Keeper. However, she indicated that she had applied the objective test and did not consider she had an interest to declare.

1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a joint Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring report by the Director of Finance & Resources, Interim Chief Education Officer, and the Chief Social Work Officer for the period to 23 June 2023.

The report intimated that the projected Revenue outturn at 31 March 2024 for Children's Services was an overspend of £2.623 million against the revised budget for the year. The projected Capital outturn at 31 March 2024 for Children's Services was an underspend of £0.143 million.

DECIDED:

(a) That the projected Revenue outturn position for Children's Services detailed in Table 1 of the report be noted, and that it be further noted that the forecast position was based on best estimates and confirmed government support at this point in time;

(b) That the projected Capital outturn position for Children's Services detailed in Table 2 of the report be noted; and

(c) That the budget adjustments detailed in sections 4 and 6 of the report be noted.

2 Education Provision Dargavel

Under reference to item 1 of the Minute of the meeting of this Board held on 18 May 2023, there was submitted a report by the Interim Chief Education Officer relative to a further update on education provision in Dargavel.

The report advised that work had progressed to ensure the six new modular classrooms previously agreed were installed at Dargavel Primary School for the beginning of the new school session, meeting its immediate capacity needs.

The report intimated that discussions between BAE (Dargavel landowner) and Council officers to secure a site for the new primary school within the Dargavel masterplan development were at an advanced stage and would be subject to reports to both the Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board and the Planning & Climate Change Policy Board.

The report indicated that officers were developing options should additional future primary capacity be required over and above the second primary school in Dargavel. Such options would require to be flexible and able to respond to a range of potential scenarios in terms of peaks in potential demand versus that potential demand levelling off. As part of progressing options, it was intended to engage with families in the early part of this school session, and using feedback to inform what was presented to a future Board.

The report further intimated that the Board had previously agreed an extension to Park Mains High School to increase its capacity up to 2000 pupils, informed by a roll projection exercise which was supported by the Council's data analytics consultants. Since then, key stakeholders had continued to seek further clarity on the rationale for this decision. The report provided additional background information and data upon which the recommendations in the previous Board report were based, and which would be used to inform further ongoing engagement with key stakeholder groups.

DECIDED: That the content of the report be noted.

3 Education Scotland Inspection of West Primary School

There was submitted a report by the interim Chief Education Officer relative to the results of an inspection of West Primary School carried out by Education Scotland. A letter sent by Education Scotland to the parents and carers of pupils detailing the outcome of the inspection was appended to the report.

The report advised that an inspection of West Primary School had been carried out by Education Scotland in February 2023 with a focus on two quality indicators, learning, teaching and assessment and raising attainment and achievement. The inspection report was appended to the report and detailed four areas of key strength and three areas for further improvement.

DECIDED: That the key strengths be noted and celebrated and that the areas for further improvement in the Education Scotland report on West Primary School and the Gaelic Medium Education provision be recognised.

4 ADES/Education Scotland Collaborative Improvement Review

There was submitted a report by the Interim Chief Education Officer relative to Collaborative Improvement (CI) activity undertaken by Renfrewshire Children's Services in June 2023.

The report indicated that the focus had been on recent work undertaken to improve how the needs of children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) were met.

The report advised that the purpose of CI was to share what worked well at a local authority level and to support improvement in identified areas of local activity.

The report detailed the process undertaken and provided examples of identified strengths. A copy of the Renfrewshire Council Children's Services ADES Collaborative Report June 2023 was appended to the report.

DECIDED: That the key strengths be noted and celebrated and that the area for further improvement in the ADES Collaborative Report be recognised.

5 **Children's Services Health and Well Being Strategy Update 2022/2023 - Children's Services Well Being Strategy 2023/2024**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Chief Education Officer relative to the management of Children's Services Health and Well Being Strategy Update 2022/23 and the Children's Services Well Being Strategy 2023/24.

The report advised that the Council's Health and Safety strategy placed a responsibility on each service to prepare an annual report evaluating the management of health and safety within the service.

The Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy 2022/23, which formed Appendix 1 of the report, set out the arrangements for the management of health and safety within the service and demonstrated the service's commitment to continuous improvement in health and safety, summarising the achievements to March 2023 for Children's Services.

The Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy for 2023/24, detailing the key areas the plan will focus on, formed Appendix 2 to the report.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy completed actions for 2022/2023, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and

(b) That the Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy 2023/2024 attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

6 **Standard Circular 8 – Included, Engaged and Involved – A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Chief Education Officer seeking approval for the revised Standard Circular 8 – Included, Engaged and Involved – A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions, which would replace Standard Circular 8: Exclusion of Pupils from Schools.

The report advised that the overarching aim of Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions was to support schools, communities and their partners to keep all children and young people fully included, engaged and involved in their education; and, to improve outcomes for all Scotland's children and young people with a particular risk of exclusion.

The circular, appended to the report updated and refreshed the previous policy statement and included a refreshed focus on prevention, early intervention and response to individual need in line with the principles of GIRFEC.

DECIDED:

(a) That Standard Circular 8 be approved; and

(b) That the Director of Children's Services be instructed to take appropriate steps to ensure its implementation in all schools and early learning and childcare settings.

7 The Promise: Progress on delivering on Renfrewshire's Promise (#KeepThePromise)

There was submitted a report by the Chief Social Work Officer relative to progress in delivering Renfrewshire's Promise (#KeepThePromise) by Children's Services.

The report highlighted the publication of The Promise Scotland Second Oversight Board report, published on 22 June 2023 and the consultation work taking place in relation to The Promise Plan 2024/30.

The report indicated that the service was in year three of the 10-year programme of change and there was good evidence of progress in Renfrewshire to #KeepThePromise with significant developments underway and more planned.

The report intimated that delivery of The Promise in Renfrewshire required a strongly committed multi-agency partnership working approach and demonstration of a collective understanding, commitment, and activity in relation to The Promise across all the partners.

DECIDED:

(a) That the progress and update by Children's Services to #KeepThePromise be noted;

(b) That the publication and key messages contained in The Promise Scotland Second Oversight Board report and the consultation activity taking place for The Promise Plan 2024/30 be noted;

(c) That Board members consider becoming a "Promise Keeper" and joining Renfrewshire's network of champions and experts in their own field to #KeepThePromise; and

(d) That it be noted that regular update reports would be brought to Board to ensure elected members were sighted on implications for policy and practice as work related to The Promise progressed.

8 Children's Looked After Statistics - 2022

There was submitted a report by the Chief Social Work Officer relative to children's looked after statistics for 2022.

The report advised that each year on 31 July the Scottish Government conducted a census of the number of children who were looked after and the number of children on the child protection register. The information gathered during the census was analysed by the Scottish Government and an annual report published. A link to the data was detailed in the report.

The 2022 report provided information on the numbers of looked after children and the number of children on the child protection register on 31 July 2022. Whilst there was a census on 31 July 2023 the results from that would not be available until March 2024.

The report provided national and local statistics as of 31 July 2022 together with statistics on the number of children on the child protection register across Scotland, which indicated a reduction of 4% from the previous year. The report also highlighted the number of children on the Renfrewshire child protection register on 31 July 2022 which showed a 10% reduction from the previous year.

DECIDED: That the content of the report be noted and that it be agreed that a report on the 2023 census be presented to a future meeting.

9 **Interagency Child Protection Update**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Social Work Officer relative to an update of interagency child protection measures.

The report advised that the protection of vulnerable children was a key responsibility for Renfrewshire Council. The authority worked in partnership with the NHS, Police Scotland, and a range of other statutory and voluntary sector services to protect children identified at risk of significant harm. Locally the leadership for interagency child protection work was located within the Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee (RCPC) which drew membership from all of the partner agencies involved in protecting children in Renfrewshire and had an independent chairperson.

The report indicated that RCPC was accountable to the Renfrewshire Chief Officer Group and provided regular updates to the Public Protection Member/Officer Group.

The report intimated that the Scottish Government published new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland in September 2021 which set the timescale for implementing the guidance to October 2023, recognising that services were in recovery from the COVID pandemic.

Details in relation to Renfrewshire's position on implementing the 2021 national guidance were provided in the report.

DECIDED: That the content report be noted.

10 **Hearings Systems Working Group – Final Report**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Social Work Officer relative to the final report on the Hearings System Working Group (HSWG), established in August 2021, with Sheriff David Mackie as the chairperson to review and make recommendations in relation to the Children's Hearing System in Scotland.

The report advised that the Children's Hearing System was introduced under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and was a unique system with no other jurisdiction across the world having a similar model. Whilst there had been some changes in the legislative framework since 1968, the fundamental model of children's hearings had remained the same.

The report intimated that during the period of the Independent Care Review, many of those who participated shared their experience of involvement in the hearing system, and a consistent message was that the hearing system was complex and confusing, did not make sense to children and families and could be traumatic for those children and families involved with it.

The HSWG published its final report on 25 May 2023 and contained 97 recommendations for change and improvement to the current children's hearing system. The report advised that the Scottish Government was considering its response to the recommendations and highlighted the major thematic areas where major changes had been proposed by the HSWG.

DECIDED: That the content of the report be noted and that it be agreed that a further report be presented to the Board when the Scottish Government presented its response.