

Minute of Meeting

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 19 January 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 John Gray, Councillor Anne Hannigan, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Robert Innes, Councillor David McGonigle, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor Will Mylet, Mr Jack Nellaney, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Mr Ravinder Singh

Chair

Councillor Rodden, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

S Quinn, Director of Children's Services, J Calder, Head of Service (Early Years & Broad General Education), 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); J Connolly, Senior Communications Officer (Chief Executive's); J Lynch, Head of Property Services, R Conway, Finance Manager, E Gray and R Devine, both Senior Committee Services Officers, D Cunningham, Assistant Committee 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.

Apology

Councillor Ben Smith

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Transparency Statement

Councillor Davidson indicated that she had a connection to item 7, Inspections of Registered Children's Residential Houses by the Care Inspectorate by reason of her daughter being employed by one of the service providers who were inspected. 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

There was submitted a joint Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring report by the Directors of Children's Services and Finance & Resources for the period to 11 November 2022.

The projected Revenue outturn at 31 March 2023 for Children's Services was an overspend of £5.269 million (2.3%) against the revised budget for the year. The projected Capital outturn at 31 March 2023 for Children's Services was an underspend of £0.100 million (0.6%).

DECIDED:

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

(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 Paisley Grammar School Community Campus: Update Report

There was submitted a joint report by the Directors of Children's Services and Finance & Resources relative to progress made towards the progress of the construction of the new Paisley Grammar School Community Campus.

The report provided a background to the project and detailed the community consultation exercise which took place in 2020 and the decision taken at a meeting of this Policy Board held on 21 January 2021 to approve the building of the new campus. A Multi Disciplinary Design Team (MDDT) was appointed on 20 May 2022 and a principal contractor for delivery of the project was appointed thereafter.

Following a thorough review of the delivery programme it was determined that the targeted operation date of December 2025 would be extremely challenging due to global market conditions affecting the availability of materials and labour in the construction industry. It was noted that this operation date was a condition of the Scottish Futures Trust - Learning Estate Investment Programme funding which had been awarded for the project. Work had been undertaken to update the delivery programme which identified a new operation date of Summer 2026. Communication was undertaken with Scottish Futures Trust who advised that other funded projects were experiencing similar issues and that they felt the Council's approach was realistic in terms of the factors affecting the industry.

DECIDED: That the progress made to date, including the updated target completion date, be noted.

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Councillor Gray joined the meeting during consideration of the following item.

3 Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (CfE) Level Return 2022

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Curriculum for Excellence attainment for Primary 1, 4, and 7 and Secondary 3 pupils in Renfrewshire for the 2021/22 session.

The 2021/22 return demonstrated that there had been an increase in attainment across all curricular areas. This followed the 2020/21 data which saw decreases across all curricular areas as a result of pandemic related disruption. The report provided data and recent trends relating to attainment by stage in listening and talking; reading; writing; and numeracy and made comparisons to the national average. Information relating to the poverty-related attainment gap was provided along with the measures used to reduce the gap.

DECIDED:

(a) That the content of the report be noted; and

(b) That the efforts of the children and young people and the significant commitment of teachers and support staff be noted.

4 Education Scotland Inspection of Cochrane Castle Primary School

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the results of an inspection of Cochrane Castle 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.

An inspection of Cochrane Castle Primary School was carried out by Education Scotland over a period of three days in October 2022 with a focus on two quality indicators, which were: learning, teaching and assessment; and raising attainment and achievement. The results of the inspection were positive and evaluated learning, teaching and assessment as 'good' and raising attainment and achievement as 'satisfactory'. The inspection report was appended to the report and detailed four areas of strength and three areas for improvement.

DECIDED: That the key strengths and areas for further improvement identified in the Education Scotland inspection be noted.

5 Education Scotland Inspection of Barsail Primary School

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the results of an inspection of Barsail 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.

An inspection of Barsail Primary School was carried out by Education Scotland over a period of five days in September 2022 with a focus on four quality indicators, leadership of change; learning, teaching and assessment; ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion and; raising attainment and achievement. The results of the inspection were positive and evaluated all four quality indicators as 'very good'. The inspection report was appended to the report and detailed six areas of strength and one area for improvement.

DECIDED: That the key strengths and area for further improvement identified in the Education Scotland inspection be noted.

6 Annual report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 2021/22 Update on developments for Fostering Service

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the annual report of the Fostering and Adoption Service for 2021/22. The report was set in the context of the broader issues pertaining to Looked After and Accommodated Children. The annual report was attached in full at Appendix 1 of the report, the Fostering and Adoption Panel's constitution at Appendix 2 and the updated partnership agreement at Appendix 3.

The report covered the period 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022. During this period, 15 children and young people had a permanency plan considered by the panel and approved. It was noted that changes had been made to the Fostering and Adoption Panel's constitution and the partnership agreement which was signed by foster carers and Renfrewshire Council at the point that new foster carers were approved.

DECIDED:

(a) That the content of the Fostering and Adoption Annual Report 2021/22, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;

(b) That the updated Fostering and Adoption Panel constitution, as attached as Appendix 2 to the report, be approved; and

(c) That the updated partnership agreement, attached as Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

7 Inspections of registered children's residential houses by the Care Inspectorate

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to inspections which had been carried out at children's residential houses by the Care Inspectorate. Inspections were undertaken at Brediland, Beech Avenue, Arkleston and Barochan residential homes and the inspection reports were set out at Appendices 1-4 respectively.

The report provided details of the residential children's homes in Renfrewshire and set out the Care Inspectorate's proportionate risk model, the five key questions addressed in the inspections and the grading system used. Two of the houses received positive inspections, one had a grade of adequate and one graded as weak. Where a children's house received a grade of weak or adequate a formal support plan was put in place to address the areas identified as requiring improvement.

DECIDED:

(a) That the findings from the inspections of Renfrewshire's children's houses undertaken in 2021 and 2022 be noted; and

(b) That areas for service development and associated improvement actions be noted.