

Minute of Meeting

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 21 January 2021	13:00	Teams meeting,

Present

Councillor Derek Bibby, Ms Mary Jane Bird, Provost Lorraine Cameron, Councillor Carolann Davidson, Councillor Natalie Don, Councillor Edward Grady, Councillor Neill Graham, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Karen Kennedy, Councillor Scott Kerr, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Will Mylet, Mr Jack Nellaney, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor John Shaw, Mr Ravinder Singh, Councillor Jane Strang

Chair

Councillor Paterson, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

S Quinn, Director of Children's Services, J Calder, Head of Service (Curriculum and Quality), G McKinlay, Head of Schools and J Trainer, Head of Childcare & Criminal Justice (all Children's Services); J Connolly, Senior Communications Officer (Chief Executive's); G McLachlan, Senior Finance Manager, L Belshaw, Democratic Services Manager, G Dickie, Partnering & Commissioning Manager, R Devine, Senior Committee Services Officer and D Pole, End User Technician (all Finance & Resources).

Recording of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that the meeting of the Board would be recorded and that the recording would be available to watch on the Council's website.

Apology

Councillor Rodden

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Shaw declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda as his sister was a foster carer and indicated he would take no part in the discussion or decision on the matter.

Councillor Nicolson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda as he was a member of Renfrewshire Fostering and Adoption Panels and indicated he would take no part in the discussion or decision on the matter.

Councillor Kennedy declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda as she was a member of Renfrewshire Fostering and Adoption Panels and indicated she would take no part in the discussion or decision on the matter.

Councillor Kerr declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda as he was a member of Renfrewshire Fostering and Adoption Panels and indicated he would take no part in the discussion or decision on the matter.

Councillor Graham declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda as he was a member of Renfrewshire Fostering and Adoption Panels and indicated he would take no part in the discussion or decision on the matter.

1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 13 November 2020

There was submitted a joint Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring report by the Directors of Finance & Resources and Children's Services for the Service to 13 November 2020.

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. Forecasts were likely to be subject to considerable fluctuation as the full service implications and associated costs of the pandemic became clear. The Service would continue to mitigate as far as possible any overspend and would apply the flexibility within specific grant funding permitted by the Scottish Government in order to achieve a breakeven revenue outturn position;
- (b) That the projected capital outturn position for Children's Services as detailed in Table 2 of the report be noted; and
- (c) That the budget adjustments as detailed in sections 4 and 6 of the report be noted.

2 Service Update and Performance Scorecard

Under reference to item 2 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Board held on 29 October 2020 there was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services providing a further update on key areas within the Board's remit. In addition, the report outlined the

priorities through to Spring 2021, and highlighted key areas of focus and plans for the next steps to support the Council's recovery plans. It was noted that whilst developing these plans the local and national position remained fluid and services would remain flexible in order to be able to respond quickly in relation to changes in restrictions and local outbreaks of Covid-19.

Appended to the report was a performance update covering quarters 1 and 2 of 2020/21. It was noted that service improvement plans for 2020/21 had been developed for all Council Services. The majority of actions and activities did not proceed or were not undertaken in the same way due to Covid-19 and new service improvement plans for 2021/22 would reflect the greater focus on recovery and renewal rather than solely improvement activities. These plans would be linked to the recovery plans being developed and delivered by Council services. Draft service improvement plans would be submitted to the spring 2021 Board cycle and this would restart the normal scrutiny and governance activity associated with these plans.

It was proposed that members be provided with further information in relation to the number of children shielding, the number of positive cases and the number of key workers' children attending school in comparison to attendance during the earlier lockdown beginning in March 2020. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the performance information for quarters 1 and 2 of 2020/21 as appended to the report be noted; and
- (c) That members be provided with further information in relation to the number of children shielding, the number of positive cases and the number of key workers' children attending school in comparison to attendance during the earlier lockdown beginning in March 2020.

3 Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership Plan

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which required local authorities and health boards to produce three-yearly Children's Services Partnership Plans. In line with the statutory guidance a report on progress of the Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership Plan annual report was due on 1 April 2020. The report noted that in response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Scottish Government had relaxed the timescales for annual reports and required planning partnerships by 30 September 2020 to produce a timetable for publication of reports and plans. Renfrewshire's timetable had indicated that the Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership Plan annual review would be published by 31 January 2021 and the report intimated that a new three-year plan was being prepared for consultation by February 2021 and would be submitted to the meeting of this Board to be held on 18 March 2021 prior to publication in April 2021.

It was proposed that there be a report to members in relation to the work being done on the Plan and that members be provided with details in relation to waiting times for assessments by educational psychologists. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That it be noted that, in line with statutory requirements, an annual report on the 2018-21 Children's Services Partnership Plan would be submitted in January 2021;

- (b) That the timetable to publish a new three-year Children's Services Partnership Plan in April 2021 be noted; and
- (c) That there be a report to members in relation to work being undertaken on the Plan and that members be provided with details in relation to waiting times for assessments by educational psychologists.

4 Response to proposal to consult on the relocation of Paisley Grammar School to a new build Community Campus at Renfrew Road, Paisley

Under reference to item 8 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Board held on 20 August 2020 there was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the response to the consultation on the relocation of Paisley Grammar School to a new build Community Campus at Renfrew Road, Paisley.

The report provided details of the consultation that had been undertaken and intimated that the outcome demonstrated support for the proposal for the relocation of Paisley Grammar School. Appendix 1 to the report detailed issues raised and their consideration. Appendix 4 to the report contained the response to the consultation from Education Scotland which was supportive of the Council's proposal.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the issues raised through the formal consultation as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (b) That the comments made by Education Scotland be noted in relation to the educational benefits of the proposals detailed in Appendix 4 to the report; and
- (c) That the proposal to relocate Paisley Grammar School to a new build community campus at Renfrew Road, Paisley be approved.

5 Scottish Attainment Challenge End of Year Report

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Scottish Attainment Challenge End of Year Report and progress made as part of revised end of year reporting arrangements.

The report intimated that Renfrewshire became one of nine challenge authorities in 2016. The overall aim of the Attainment Challenge was to close the poverty-related attainment gap. Part of the requirements was a bi-annual report to the Scottish Government which outlined progress towards three long-term outcomes - improving learning and teaching; improving health and well-being; and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report noted that, despite the challenges of the pandemic which resulted in significant changes in working practices and routines, very good progress had been made and workstreams had adapted successfully and continued to deliver high-quality, evidence-based approaches which were having a positive impact on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the health and well-being of Renfrewshire children and young people.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

6 Additional Support Needs (ASN) Home to School Travel Assistance Policy

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to a review of the additional support needs (ASN) home to school travel assistance policy.

The report intimated that in line with legislative requirements, Renfrewshire Council's home to school transport policy ensured children and young people attending mainstream schools outwith walking distance were able to do so. However, this policy did not make provision for specific circumstances where a child or young person had additional support needs which prevented them from accessing learning. Following a review of current practice, a ASN home to school travel assistance policy, which formed the appendix to the report, had been developed which provided a framework for home to school travel assistance for eligible children and young people and which set out the criteria by which this would be agreed.

DECIDED: That the ASN home to school travel assistance policy, as appended to the report, be agreed.

7 Examinations Results 2020

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to attainment in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Qualifications in 2020, based on the key measures contained in the Insight benchmarking tool. The report provided data and commentary on the performance of the S4, S5 and S6 cohorts over the last three years.

The report intimated that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 exam diet could not take place. Results were awarded based on teacher estimates and were therefore not comparable with previous years. Insight, which was a Scottish Government performance evaluation tool to benchmark performance in four key measures: attainment in literacy and numeracy; improving attainment for all; attainment versus deprivation; and leavers' destinations, was normally updated in spring and a further report providing data on school leavers' attainment would be submitted to the Board when this data became available. It was noted that Skills Development Scotland was tracking school leavers' destinations.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the content of the report be noted with the caveat that the data was not directly comparable with previous years;
- (b) That the efforts of pupils and the school communities in bringing about these results be noted; and
- (c) That it be noted that a further report would be brought to the Board when leavers' data became available.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Graham, Kennedy, Kerr, Nicolson and Shaw having previously declared an interest in the following item of business took no part in the discussion or decision.

8 Annual report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 2019/20 Update on developments for Looked After Children and 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.

The annual report, which formed Appendix 1 to the report, set out the work undertaken by the Fostering and Adoption Panel and the Fostering and Adoption Service during 2019/20 and was set in the context of the broader issues pertaining to looked after and accommodated children. The report referenced how the service managed during the pandemic and considered the future work of the fostering and adoption service. The report noted that a review of the constitutions of the fostering and adoption panels had been carried out and that these had been updated and were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the contents of the Fostering and Adoption Annual Report 2019/20, as appended to the report, and the changed reporting period be noted;
- (b) That the continuing effort to secure foster carers and adoptive parents for Renfrewshire's children who required an alternative family placement be noted;
- (c) That it be noted how the service continued during the pandemic; and
- (d) That the updated constitution for the Fostering and Adoption Panels be agreed.

9 Renfrewshire's Promise: Our plan for the implementation of "The Promise" to Scotland's children

Under reference to item 22 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Council held on 24 September 2020, there was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the findings of the independent care review about the future of Scotland's Care system and the changes required to improve this. The findings centred on 'The Promise' that all children in Scotland would grow up 'loved, safe and respected'. The report intimated that since the publication of the review in February 2020, work had been undertaken to progress the commitment to 'The Promise' and provided an update on the national work and the local perspective, including the involvement of the Children's Champions Board.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the work being undertaken to develop Renfrewshire's response to 'The Promise' and commitment to developing a Renfrewshire Promise Plan be noted; and
- (b) That it be noted that a further report would be submitted to the Board which would update on implications for policy and practice in Renfrewshire.

