

## Minute of Meeting

### Education and Children's Services Policy Board

| Date                      | Time  | Venue  |
|---------------------------|-------|--|
| Thursday, 27 October 2022 | 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, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Councillor Ben Smith

### Chair

Councillor Rodden, Convener, presided.

### In Attendance

S Quinn, Director of Children's Services; J Connolly, Senior Communications Officer (Chief Executive's); J Calder, Head of Service (Curriculum & Quality), T McGillivray, Head of Education, J Trainer, Head of Childcare & Criminal Justice, K McDonagh, Education Manager and S Hughes, Early Years Education & Childcare Development Officer (all Children's Services); and M Conaghan, Head of Corporate Governance, R Conway, Finance Manager, E Gray, Senior Committee Services Officer, J Barron and D Cunningham, both Assistant Committee Services Officers and B Dalziel and D Pole, both End User Technicians (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.

### Apologies

Mary-Jane Bird, Jack Nellaney and Ravinder Singh.

## **Transparency Statement**

Councillor Paterson indicated that he had a connection to item 9 by reason of having a child who attended a funded nursery provider but was not in receipt of 1140 early learning and childcare funding. However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider he had an interest to declare.

Councillor Innes indicated that he had a connection to item 9 by reason of having a child who attended a funded nursery provider but was not in receipt of 1140 early learning and childcare funding. However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider he had an interest to declare.

Councillor Airlie-Nicolson indicated that she had a connection to item 7 by reason of being employed by Quarriers who provide residential childcare. 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 as at 16 September 2022**

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 16 September 2022.

The projected Revenue outturn at 31 March 2023 for Children's Services was an overspend of £5.434 million (2.4%) 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 note 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 Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2022/23 Mid-Year Monitoring Report**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2022/23 mid-report which provided an update on the performance of Children's Services for the 12-month period. The associated action plan was appended to the report.

The report intimated that while operating through different levels of Covid-19 restrictions the service was able to deliver on all of its priorities. A number of achievements attained throughout the year to date were also set out.

**DECIDED:**

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

(b) That the achievements of Children's Services during the first six months of 2022/23 which fell within the remit of this board be noted.

**3 Education Standards & Quality Report September 2022 Education Improvement Plan 2022/23**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Council's annual Education Standards & Quality Report (September 2022) and Education Improvement Plan (2022/23), which were both appended to the report.

The report advised that both the Education Standards & Quality Report and Education Improvement Plan aligned to the National Improvement Framework for Scottish education and set out the data inputs which were used to produce the content and assess progress of the priorities for 2021/22. It was noted that despite pandemic related challenges, such as pupil and staff absences, significant progress was made towards achieving these priorities.

The report made reference to the five priority areas for 2022/23 as well as setting out the portfolio planning approach which would be used to help achieve these. Full details on each were included in the appended Education Improvement Plan.

**DECIDED:** That the content of the Education Standards & Quality Report (September 2022) as set out at Appendix 1 to the report and Education Improvement Plan (2022/23) as set out at Appendix 2 be noted.

**4 National Qualifications Results 2022**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to attainment in the Scottish Qualification Authority National Qualifications in 2022 based on key measures contained within the Insight benchmarking tool.

The report detailed how the Insight benchmarking tool was used by schools and education authorities and the four key measures which were used to analyse attainment. A summary was provided for each key measure at S4, S5 and S6 along with comparisons to national averages.

**DECIDED:**

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

(b) That the efforts of pupils and the school communities in achieving these results be noted; and

(c) That it be noted that a further report would be brought to this Policy Board when leavers data became available.

**5 West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative: Evaluation Report 2021-2022 and Improvement Plan 2022- 2023**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the evaluation of work undertaken by the West Partnership (Glasgow Region Education Improvement Collaborative) in 2021/22 as well as details on the development of the Improvement Plan for 2022/23. Both the Evaluation Report and the Improvement Plan were appended to the report.

The report captured the progress made against the three main West Partnership workstreams for 2021/22: Wellbeing for Learning, Leadership, Empowerment & Improvement and Curriculum, Learning, Teaching & Assessment. The evaluation process was detailed as well as the process which was followed to develop the improvement plan for 2022/23.

**DECIDED:** That the content of the Evaluation Report, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, and Improvement Plan, as set out at Appendix 2, be approved.

**6 Standard Circular 3a - Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the review and proposed revision to Standard Circular 3a which detailed the Early Year's Admissions Policy and guidance on the implementation of the policy. The policy was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

This report advised of an amendment to the policy to reflect a change in the legislation on primary one deferral and early learning and childcare eligibility.

**DECIDED:** That the revised Standard Circular 3a: Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

**7 Looked After Children and Child Protection Update**

Under reference to item 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Board held on 9 June 2022, there was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to Renfrewshire's looked after children and child protection work.

At the meeting of this Policy Board held on 9 June 2022, members considered a report on the annual census of looked after children and child protection and agreed that information on Renfrewshire's looked after children and child protection work would be presented to Board on a regular basis.

The report provided information on the number of looked after children in Renfrewshire and on the number of children on the Renfrewshire Child Protection Register on 30 September 2022. Trend analysis of the previous three census periods was set out along with comments on the long-term trends in relation to looked after children and child protection in Renfrewshire since 2012 when the council adopted the following strategic aims: to reduce the number of looked after children; to reduce the number of children in external foster care; and to support kinship care where it was the best care option for children.

**DECIDED:**

- (a) That the number of looked after children in Renfrewshire on 30 September 2022 be noted;
- (b) That the number of children on the Renfrewshire child protection register on 30 September 2022 be noted: and
- (c) That the information relating to Renfrewshire's looked after children and child protection be presented to this Policy Board after 31 March 2023.

**8 Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together – Progress Report**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the steps being taken to ensure that children who were accommodated by the Council were not placed separately from their brothers and sisters.

The issue of siblings being placed in separate placements was highlighted by the Independent Care Review and was identified as a priority area by the Children's Champions Board in Renfrewshire. The Children's Champions Board produced a report, "Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together", which recommended practice improvements to keep more brothers and sisters together in care. This report was presented to this Policy Board held on 20 May 2021. After considering the report, the Policy Board approved the "Keeping brothers and sisters together policy". The report provided an overview of the first year of the implementation of the policy.

**DECIDED:** That the progress of the first year's implementation of the Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Policy be noted.

**9 Early Learning and Childcare – Sustainable Rates to Approved Funded Providers**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to a proposed increase in the hourly rate paid by the Council to Approved Funded Providers (AFPs) for early learning and childcare (ELC).

The report set out the Council's statutory duty to provide early learning and childcare places to all eligible children and gave a background to the Flexible Framework Agreement for Renfrewshire Council Early Learning and Childcare Places which allowed the Council to commission placements in private and voluntary sector nurseries and with childminders (AFPs). There was an expectation from the Scottish Government that the rate paid to AFPs for session 2022/23 be reflective of the cost to deliver and cognisant of inflation and payment of the real Living Wage.

The current rates paid to AFPs were noted as £8.50 for two to three year olds and £5.31 for three to five year olds and the process undertaken to determine a proposed increase in the rate was outlined. The proposed new hourly rate paid to AFPs for the provision of funded early learning and child care was £5.71 for three to five year olds. There was no proposal to increase the rate paid for eligible two to three year olds as Renfrewshire's rate for this age group was one of the highest in Scotland.

Councillor Rodden, seconded by Councillor Paterson, moved:

- (a) That an increase to the hourly rate paid to AFPs for the provision of funded ELC from £5.31 to £5.71 for children aged three to five years from 16 August 2022 be approved; and
- (b) That the continuation of the existing hourly rate of £8.50 paid for ELC to AFPs for eligible children aged two to three years be approved.

Councillor G Graham, seconded by Councillor Smith moved as an amendment that consideration of the report be continued to a future meeting of this Policy Board to allow further evaluation of the proposed rates, including further consultation with AFPs, to take place.

On the roll being called, the following members voted for the amendment: Councillors Davidson, Grady, G Graham, Gray, Hannigan, McGonigle, McMillan and Smith.

The following members voted for the motion: Councillors Adam, Airlie-Nicolson, Provost Cameron, Councillors Audrey Doig, Hughes, Innes, Mylet, Paterson, and Rodden.

8 members having voted for the amendment and 9 members having voted for the motion, the motion was accordingly declared carried.

**DECIDED:**

- (a) That an increase to the hourly rate paid to AFPs for the provision of funded ELC from £5.31 to £5.71 for children aged three to five years from 16 August 2022 be approved; and
- (b) That the continuation of the existing hourly rate of £8.50 paid for ELC to AFPs for eligible children aged two to three years be approved.