

Minute of Meeting

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 17 January 2019	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present

Councillor Derek Bibby, Councillor Bill Binks, Provost Lorraine Cameron, Councillor Carolann Davidson, Councillor Natalie Don, Councillor Edward Grady, Councillor Neill Graham, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Mr Iain Keith, Councillor Karen Kennedy, Councillor Scott Kerr, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Will Mylet, Mr Jack Nellaney, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Councillor John Shaw, Mr Ravinder Singh

Chair

Councillor Paterson, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

S Quinn, Acting Director of Children's Services; J Trainer, Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice, G McKinlay, Head of Schools, L McAllister, Acting Head of Early Years and Broad General Education and L Fingland, Service Planning and Policy Development Manager (all Children's Services); and G McLachlan, Senior Finance Manager, D Low, Senior Committee Services Officer and N O'Brien, Assistant Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

Apology

Councillor Mack.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Kennedy, Graham, Kerr, Nicolson and Shaw declared a non-financial interest in item 9 as they were all members of the Adoption and Fostering Panels. All intimated that they would remain in the meeting and not take part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Valedictory

The Convener advised that Peter MacLeod, Director of Children's Services, had left the Council to take up a new post as Chief Executive with the Care Inspectorate. He paid tribute to the exemplary professionalism he had displayed during his career with the Council and for the advice and assistance he had provided and wished him well in his new post. The Convener intimated that Steven Quinn had assumed the post of Acting Director of Children's Services.

1 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a joint revenue budget monitoring report by the Director of Finance & Resources and the Acting Director of Children's Services for the service to 9 November 2018.

The report advised that since the last report there had been budget adjustments resulting in a net decrease of £70,000, consisting of adjustments between departments totalling £61,000 and £9,000 allocated to the corporate landlord.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

2 Capital Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a capital budget monitoring report by the Director of Finance & Resources for the service to 9 November 2018.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 Proposal to Consult on a Catchment Review Affecting Bishopton Primary School and a New Primary School to be Built at Dargavel Village

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the proposal to consult on a catchment review affecting Bishopton Primary School and a new primary school to be built at Dargavel Village.

The report intimated that in November 2012 a Section 75 agreement between the Council and BAE systems made provision for the development of a new primary school within the Dargavel Village site. Any new primary school required a defined catchment area and in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) Scotland Act 2010, the report sought approval to revise the catchment arrangements between Bishopton Primary School and a new primary school at Dargavel Village. Subject to the necessary agreements it was anticipated that the new school would be constructed in 2021.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the consultation procedures detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be noted;
- (b) That the consultation document in Appendix 2 of the report be approved;
- (c) That it be agreed that the arrangements for denominational pupils within Dargavel Village would remain unchanged, within the St John Bosco Primary School catchment and;
- (d) That a report on the outcome of the consultation be submitted to the meeting of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board to be held on 22 August 2019.

Sederunt

Councillor Mylet entered the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

4 Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement - 1140 Expansion Plan

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of meeting of this Board held on 23 August 2018, there was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the detail of the infrastructure developments to support the expansion of early learning and childcare in Renfrewshire. These developments included the engagement of senior Children's Services officers with private and third sector providers to explore the options for allocating additional funding to support them in the transition towards 1140 expansion.

The report provided details on the infrastructure works to be undertaken, including refurbishments, extensions and new builds and a plan detailing the proposed 1140 expansion across Renfrewshire on an area-by-area basis was appended to the report.

Councillor Bibby proposed that a briefing note detailing further information on the progress of all the infrastructure works, including the management of the decant process, be issued to all members of this Policy Board by the end of February 2019. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the planned infrastructure developments outlined in Section 4 of the report be agreed;
- (b) That the further engagement of senior Children's Services officers with private and third sector providers to explore options for allocating additional funding to support them in the transition towards 1140 expansion be approved; and
- (c) That a briefing note detailing further information on the progress of all the infrastructure works, including the management of the decant process, be issued to all members of this Policy Board by the end of February 2019.

5 Childcare First - Hillview Nursery

Under reference to item 25 of the Minute of meeting of Renfrewshire Council held on 27 September 2018, there was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to an update on discussions between the Council and Childcare First on the transfer of Hillview Nursery to the Council.

The report highlighted the Council's obligations relative to the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours and set the nursery's current childcare provision against this. The Council had now formally written to Childcare First Limited, seeking to implement the Council's decision to transfer the nursery. It was proposed that the employees would transfer to Renfrewshire Council with effect from 1 April 2019 and at that time there would be an opportunity for staff to transfer to the Council's terms and conditions, failing which they would transfer under their existing terms and conditions.

DECIDED:

(a) That the transfer of Hillview Nursery from Childcare First Limited to the Council be agreed; and

(b) That authority be delegated to the Acting Director of Children's Services and Head of Corporate Governance, to complete the transfer subject to the satisfactory completion of legal negotiations.

6 Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (CfE) Return 2018

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) return of data on all Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3 pupils in terms of their performance in literary and numeracy.

The report intimated that the achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level return in 2017/18 demonstrated consistent improvement in literacy and numeracy across all stages. Attainment gaps across Renfrewshire had decreased for both individual and area-based deprivation indicators which demonstrated that while all performance had improved, the performance of the most deprived pupils had increased at a greater rate than the least deprived. Renfrewshire's pupils had performed at above the national average at all stages, in all curricular areas and across all Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles.

DECIDED:

(a) That 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.

7 Class Sizes in Primary School

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services in relation to the class size in Renfrewshire's primary schools.

The report intimated that the Council operated a model where the maximum class size in Primary 2 was 25 compared to the statutory limit of 30. However, this maximum class size could be challenged as a result of the level set down by statute. The report proposed that the local arrangement be replaced with those set out in national regulations. Changes would come into effect in August 2019 thus ensuring that all current classes were unaffected.

Councillor Paterson, seconded by Councillor Shaw moved that it be agreed that, with effect from August 2019 and in line with national regulations, all Renfrewshire Primary Schools would have maximum class sizes of 25 in primary 1, 30 in primary 2 and 3 and 33 in primary 4-7.

Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Grady, moved an amendment in the following terms:

“The Education and Children’s Services Policy Board is asked to conduct a full consultation with Teaching Unions, Parents and Parent Councils over proposed increases to class sizes in Renfrewshire. Education and Children’s Services will bring back a report on the consultation to the next Board Meeting”.

On the roll being called the following members voted for the amendment: Councillors Bibby, Binks, Davidson, Grady, Graham, Kennedy and Scott.

The following members voted for the motion: Provost Lorraine Cameron, Councillor Don, Hughes, McNaughtan, Mylet, Nicolson, Paterson, Rodden and Shaw and Mr Nellaney and Mr Singh.

The following member abstained: Mr Keith.

Seven members having voted for the amendment, 11 members having voted for the motion and one member having abstained, the motion was accordingly declared carried.

DECIDED: That it be agreed that, with effect from August 2019 and in line with national regulations, all Renfrewshire Primary Schools would have maximum class sizes of 25 in primary 1, 30 in primary 2 and 3 and 33 in primary 4-7.

8 Update on Progress of Inspection of a Registered Service - Throughcare

Under reference to item 15 of the Minute of the meeting of this Board held on 23 August 2018, there was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children’s Services relative to progress made on the recommendations arising from the registered Throughcare Service inspection in May 2018 by the Care Inspectorate.

The report highlighted the three quality indicators addressed during the inspection which were care and support, staffing and management and leadership. The Care Inspectorate had made seven requirements and six recommendations in relation to the service. Following the inspection Children’s Services had agreed an action plan which addressed all the requirements and recommendations, and which was subject to regular review. The report provided an update against the actions identified in the inspection.

DECIDED: That the progress made in relation to addressing the requirements and recommendations made by the Care Inspectorate following their inspection in May 2018 be noted.

9 Annual Report of the Adoption and Fostering Panel 2017/18 - Update on Developments for Looked After Children and Fostering Service

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the annual report of Renfrewshire Council's Adoption and Fostering Panels 2017/18.

The annual report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, detailed the work that had been dealt with by the Adoption and Fostering Panels between 1 October 2017 to 31 September 2018 and set it in the context of the broader issues pertaining to looked after and accommodated children. The report made reference to the progress being made regarding Renfrewshire's own foster carers with three new interim carer households being approved in 2017/18.

The report also detailed the future work of the panels, the continued work on improving timescales for adoptive placements and the outcome of the inspection of the Fostering and Adoption Service by the Care Inspectorate. The report also highlighted the impending commencement of the Best Services Trial in Renfrewshire. The trial would compare two approaches: service (i.e parenting capacity assessment undertaken by the Council's social work team); and an evidence-based infant mental health intervention called Glasgow Infant and Family Team (GIFT) which was being delivered by the NSPCC. Foster carers of children who were randomly selected for the GIFT assessment would require to be heavily involved in the assessment and treatment programme.

The report intimated that the partnership agreement which described the respective responsibilities and obligations placed upon the Council and its registered foster carers, and which the Council asked all new foster carers to sign, had been updated in response to new legislation and the introduction of an updated complaints process. A copy of the updated partnership agreement was attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the contents of the Fostering and Adoption Annual Report 2017/18 be noted;
- (b) That the continuous effort to secure foster carers and adoptive parents for Renfrewshire's children who required an alternative family placement be noted;
- (c) That the continued progress of the Best Services Trial in Renfrewshire be noted; and
- (d) That the implementation of a new partnership agreement between Renfrewshire Council and its foster carers be approved.