

Minute of Meeting

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 02 November 2017	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Derek Bibby, Councillor Bill Binks, 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, Mr Jack Nellaney, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Councillor John Shaw

Chair

Councillor Paterson, Convener, presided.

Apologies

Provost Cameron, Councillor Mylet and Mr Keith.

In Attendance

P MacLeod, Director of Children's Services, S Quinn, Assistant Director – Schools, D Hawthorn, Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice, G McKinlay, Head of Schools, J Trainer, Head of Early Years and Inclusion, A Conboy, Education Manager (Policy and Planning), L Fingland, Service Planning & Development Manager, L McAllister, Education Manager (Curriculum and Early Years), T McEwan, Education Manager (Planning and Performance), M Gill and S Hughes, both Early Years Education and Childcare Development Officers and K McDonagh, Education Officer (all Children's Services); and G McLachlan, Senior Finance Manager and D Low, Senior Committee Services Officer (both Finance & Resources).

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Graham declared a non-financial interest in respect of item 5 of the agenda – Renfrewshire Attainment Challenge Mid-year Report - as he was a volunteer with Barnardos. However as he considered the interest to be insignificant in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, he did not consider it necessary to leave the meeting during consideration of that item.

1 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a joint report by the Directors of Finance & Resources and Children's Services for the service for the period 1 April to 5 September 2017.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that since the budget was approved, there had been a number of budget adjustments resulting in a increase of £971,000. This was in the main due the transfer of budget relating to the pay award (£668,000), rates realignment (£471,000), tackling poverty (£206,000) being offset by an energy budget realignment (£293,000) in addition to other miscellaneous budget transfers (£81,000).

2 Capital Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources for the service for the period 1 April to 5 September 2017.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2017/18: 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 highlighting performance over the period 1 April to 30 September 2017. The report outlined the key achievements of the Service and Appendices 1 and 2 to the report provided an update on progress to implement the action plan together with an assessment of performance against key indicators.

DECIDED:

(a) That the progress that has been made on service performance be noted;

(b) That the progress made on actions and performance in the action plan be noted; and

(c) That it be noted that an out-turn report would be provided to this Board in spring 2018.

4 Examination Results 2017

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to Renfrewshire schools' attainment in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations in 2017.

The report intimated that since 2014 schools had been engaging with a performance evaluation tool known as Insight which was provided to schools and education authorities by the Scottish Government as a way of benchmarking performance in relation to four key measures: literacy and numeracy; improving attainment for the lowest achieving 20%, middle 60% and top 20% of achievers; attainment versus deprivation; and leavers' destinations. The report provided detailed data on the first three of these four measures for years S4, S5 and S6 for the last three years and set this data against Renfrewshire's comparator authorities. Leavers' destinations would become available in February 2018 and would form part of the report to this Board in spring 2018.

The Education Manager (Planning and Performance) gave a presentation which provided context to the data contained in the report.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the content of the report and presentation be noted;
- (b) That the efforts of pupils and the school communities in bringing about the results be noted; and
- (c) That it be agreed that a further report be brought to this policy board in spring 2018.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Graham having declared an interest in the following item of business remained in the meeting.

5 Renfrewshire Attainment Challenge - Mid-year Report

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to progress on the Renfrewshire Attainment Challenge.

The report provided information on the Council's progress in relation to the four main work-stream areas of data analysis; learning and teaching; families and communities; and leadership. The report highlighted a number of projects within each work-stream which aimed to achieve the Attainment Scotland Fund's three long-term outcomes of improving attainment in literacy and numeracy, improving health and wellbeing and closing the attainment gap between pupils from the most and least deprived areas. As part of the Fund's requirements, the Council was required to report quarterly to the Scottish Government on progress towards local and national outcomes and a copy of the mid-year return was appended to the report.

DECIDED: That the progress of the Renfrewshire Attainment Challenge work-streams and individual projects detailed in the report be noted.

6 Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 - Implementation of Young Carer Requirements

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the implementation of young carer requirements in terms of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

The report intimated that the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 recognised the role of young carers and it highlighted a number of duties the Act placed on local authorities and health boards to support them. A Young Carers Working Group had been established and was preparing for implementation of the Act in Renfrewshire. An evaluation of the Council's readiness in terms of the main provisions of the Act demonstrated that the Council was already compliant with most of the new requirements. A comprehensive implementation plan was in place to ensure readiness for the Act's commencement.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the implications of the new Act for Renfrewshire's Children's Services be noted; and
- (b) That an implementation plan be put in place to ensure compliance with the Act and the delivery of supports for local young carers.

7 Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement - 1140 Expansion Plan

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the submission to the Scottish Government of Renfrewshire's plan on how the increased entitlement for free early learning and childcare would be delivered.

The report intimated that the Renfrewshire draft implementation plan, which was appended to the report, had been submitted to the Scottish Government on 29 September 2017 with a caveat that the draft plan had to be considered at this meeting of the Board. The draft plan set out the various actions that the Council required to undertake to achieve the increase in the entitlement of free early learning and childcare to 1140 hours per annum for children aged three and four, and for eligible two year olds.

Councillor Grady, seconded by Councillor Bibby, moved that the Education and Children's Services Policy Board notes the contents of the draft implementation plan for the delivery of expanded early learning and child care and acknowledges the work of officers in producing the report.

Specifically the Board notes that the delivery of the expanded scheme is dependent on Renfrewshire Council receiving sufficient funding from the Scottish Government.

In view of the uncertain and fragile economic outlook and potential cuts to Council budgets the Board instructs its Convener to write to the Scottish Government seeking a guarantee that the proposals and any changes that arise from these proposals will be fully funded by the Scottish Government and that the Council will not shoulder the burden for any financial deficit from measures contained within the proposals.

The Convener will update Board members on the response from the Scottish Government at future Board meetings.

This was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED:

(a) That the contents of the draft implementation plan for the delivery of expanded early learning and child care and acknowledges the work of officers in producing the report be noted;

(b) That specifically it be noted that the delivery of the expanded scheme was dependent on Renfrewshire Council receiving sufficient funding from the Scottish Government;

(c) That in view of the uncertain and fragile economic outlook and potential cuts to Council budgets the Convener be instructed to write to the Scottish Government seeking a guarantee that the proposals and any changes that arose from these proposals would be fully funded by the Scottish Government and that the Council would not shoulder the burden for any financial deficit from measures contained within the proposals; and

(d) That it be agreed that the Convener update Board members on the response from the Scottish Government at future Board meetings.

8 Partnership with the Glasgow School of Art

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to work being undertaken in partnership with Glasgow School of Art to develop a specialist school of creative education that would become a centre of excellence based in Renfrewshire.

The report intimated that Castlehead High School, Paisley, had been identified as a suitable location for this partnership with the Glasgow School of Art. The development and implementation of this partnership to enable Castlehead High School to become a centre of excellence would be agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a copy of which was appended to the report.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That it be agreed that Renfrewshire Council continue to develop a partnership with the Glasgow School of Art in line with the MOU appended to the report.

9 School Holiday Arrangements School Session 2018/19

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the proposed local school holiday arrangements for the school session commencing in August, 2018.

The report intimated that in line with the normal consultation arrangements, three potential options had been circulated to staff, parent councils, pupil councils, teaching and other trade unions for consideration. These proposals were detailed in appendices to the report. The school holiday proposal preferred by the majority of those who had submitted responses to the consultation was detailed in appendix 3 to the report with appendices 1 and 2 showing the holiday patterns less favoured and appendix 4 providing an analysis of the responses.

DECIDED: That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to set local school holiday arrangements for academic year 2013/14 as detailed in appendix 3 to the report.