

Minute of Meeting

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 18 January 2024	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jennifer Adam, Councillor Fiona Airlie-Nicolson, Ms Mary Jane Bird, Provost Lorraine Cameron, Councillor Carolann Davidson, Councillor Audrey Doig, Councillor Edward Grady, Councillor Gillian Graham, Councillor Anne Hannigan, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Alec Leishman, Councillor David McGonigle, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Mr Ravinder Singh, Councillor Ben Smith

Chair

Councillor Rodden, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

J O'Neill, Director of Children's Services, J Calder, Head of Education, E Henry, Interim Head of Education, G Lyons, Interim Head of Service and J Trainer, Head of Child Care & Criminal Justice (all Children's Services); A Morrison, Head of Economy & Development Services (Chief Executive's); and M Conaghan, Head of Corporate Governance, N Young, Assistant Managing Solicitor (Litigation & Advice), R Conway, Finance Business Partner, E Gray, Senior Committee Services Officer and J Barron, Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

Apology

Jack Nellaney.

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 on the Council's internet site.

Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements

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

1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 10 November 2023

There was submitted a joint revenue & capital budget monitoring report by the Director of Finance & Resources and the Director of Children's Services for the period to 10 November 2023.

The report intimated that the projected revenue outturn at 31 March 2024 for Children's Services was an overspend of £2.074 million against the revised budget for the year. The projected capital outturn at 31 March 2024 for Children's Services was an underspend of £0.143 million.

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 the time;

(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 Roll Projection Update

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the progress made in respect of the roll projection exercise carried out to evaluate future non-denominational education provision in Dargavel.

The report provided detail around the 10-year roll projection carried out by Edge Analytics on behalf of the Council which predicted a year-on-year increase to the pupil roll. To allow options for future provision to be properly assessed, Edge Analytics were asked to carry out a further projection to 2038. The extended exercise predicted a peak in 2033/34 for primary provision but a year-on-year fall thereafter. In terms of secondary provision, the roll was expected to peak in 2034/35 and to fall thereafter. Tables setting out the findings of the projection exercises were set out in sections 3 and 4 of the report.

DECIDED:

(a) That it be noted that the 15-year roll projection exercise carried out by Edge Analytics illustrated that the demand for non-denominational primary provision would peak in 2033/34 and would fall year-on-year thereafter;

(b) That it be noted that the 15-year roll projection exercise carried out by Edge Analytics illustrated that the demand for non-denominational secondary provision would peak in 2034/35 and would fall year-on-year thereafter;

(c) That it be noted that all roll projection data with an extended timeline must be treated with a degree of caution and that the data would continue to be closely monitored; and

(d) That it be noted that a further update would be submitted to this Policy Board on the roll projection exercise for the whole learning estate.

3 Catchment Consultation Dargavel Primary School

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the proposed consultation on the establishment of a new primary school within Dargavel Village. The proposed consultation was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The report sought approval for to consult on the site of the new school, an 8.5 acre site at the north end of Craigton Drive and approval to consult on revised catchment areas for the existing Dargavel Primary School and the proposed new school. Subject to approval by this Policy Board to proceed with the consultation, and subject to the outcome of the consultation, it was anticipated the new school would be constructed by 2027. Revised catchment areas would take effect on completion of construction.

Councillor Rodden, seconded by Councillor Paterson, moved:

(a) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to undertake a consultation, in line with the procedure required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on the basis of the proposal paper set out in Appendix 1 to the report;

(b) That the Director of Children's Services, or another appropriate officer nominated by her, be authorised to take such action required to carry out that consultation through to completion, in accordance with the legal requirements;

(c) That it be noted that provision for denominational pupils within Dargavel Village would remain unchanged within the St John Bosco Primary School catchment;

(d) That it be noted that the catchment secondary school would be Park Mains High School; and

(e) That it be noted that it was anticipated that a report on the outcome of the consultation would be submitted to the meeting of this Policy Board to be held on 23 May 2024.

Councillor G Graham, seconded by Councillor McMillan, moved as an amendment that sections (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the motion be deleted and replaced with:

"Recognising the concerns of the Accounts Commission in its s102 report, and those of the wider community, as evident from the volume of correspondence received by elected members and the current online petition of over 500 signatures.

Alternative options appraisals will be carried out for additional Dargavel & Bishopton primary education provision before this Board further commits to the £millions being proposed. This will include a minimum of 3 alternative site locations and will include relevant figures and measurables including cost benefit analysis. These will be subject to a transparent public consultation prior to a decision being made at Education & Children's Services Board.

Options appraisals for Secondary education provision serving Dargavel & Bishopton will be carried out, an extension to Park Mains and a new build High School being at least 2 of those considered. Similarly these will include relevant figures and measurables including cost benefit analysis. These will be subject to a transparent public consultation prior to a decision being made at Education & Children's Services Board."

Adjournment

The Convener called for an adjournment to seek legal advice on the content of the amendment. The meeting adjourned at 1.23 pm and reconvened at 1.50 pm.

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

The following members voted for the motion: Councillors Adam, Airlie-Nicolson, Ms Bird, Provost Cameron, Councillors Audrey Doig, Hughes, Nicolson, Paterson, Rodden and Mr Singh.

The following member abstained: Councillor Hannigan.

10 members having voted for the motion, 7 members having voted for the amendment and 1 member having abstained, the motion was declared carried.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to undertake a consultation, in line with the procedure required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on the basis of the proposal paper set out in Appendix 1 to the report;

(b) That the Director of Children's Services, or another appropriate officer nominated by her, be authorised to take such action required to carry out that consultation through to completion, in accordance with the legal requirements;

(c) That it be noted that provision for denominational pupils within Dargavel Village would remain unchanged within the St John Bosco Primary School catchment;

(d) That it be noted that the catchment secondary school would be Park Mains High School; and

(e) That it be noted that it was anticipated that a report on the outcome of the consultation would be submitted to the meeting of this Policy Board to be held on 23 May 2024.

4 **Dargavel Non-Denomination Primary School Demand: Assessment of Options for Additional Future Capacity**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the assessment of options for future non-denominational primary school provision in Dargavel Village.

The report provided a background to education provision around the Dargavel development, the roll projection exercises carried out by Edge Analytics on behalf of the Council and the decision taken in terms of expansion of primary school capacity. The Edge Analytics core model projected a peak demand of 1,131 by 2033/34 and this fell within the operational primary capacity of 1,230. Additional projection models were run by Edge Analytics at the request of the Council to also include limited live registration data and these suggested the potential for a higher peak of up to circa 1,400 to 1,500 pupils could be possible if the current registration trend continued and was sustained over the long term.

As such, there remained a level of risk and uncertainty around the eventual demand for school places. It had therefore been deemed prudent to consider scenarios which could lead to higher than anticipated demand for places together with options which were available to the Council to ensure it retained flexibility to deliver a response aligned to the specific circumstances which emerged. Three different scenarios were set out in section 4.1 of the report together with the options available to the Council, including permanent and temporary measures to increase capacity which could be deployed in isolation or combination to meet the specific needs, in section 4.2.

DECIDED:

(a) That it be noted that the Edge Analytics tried and tested core model indicated a peak demand of 1,131 for planning purposes which was within the current planned operational primary capacity of 1,230;

(b) That it be noted that the current projection data also presented a number of potential upper scenarios that would require further intervention from the Council if they materialised;

(c) That it be noted that, as outlined in the report, the Council would be able to consider a number of options which could be deployed either in isolation or combined and had significant flexibility to respond appropriately at a future point in time should additional demand emerge, including a temporary peak in demand and or longer term

stabilised demand; and

(d) That it be noted that the roll projections were being continually monitored and updated and that regular updates would be provided to this Policy Board to enable timeous decisions to be made in future years as and when required.

5 **Education Scotland Inspection Bishopton Primary School**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the results of an inspection of Bishopton Primary School carried out by Education Scotland. The letter sent by Education Scotland to the parents and carers of pupils detailing the outcome of the inspection was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The report advised that an inspection of Bishopton Primary School had been carried out by Education Scotland in August 2023 with a focus on four quality indicators: leadership of change; learning, teaching and assessment; ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion; and raising attainment and achievement. The inspection report detailed four areas of key strength and two areas for further improvement.

DECIDED: That the key strengths in the Education Scotland report on Bishopton Primary School be noted and celebrated and the areas for further improvement be recognised.

6 **Whole Family Wellbeing Update**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to progress of the work by Renfrewshire's Children's Service Partnership (RCSP) to ensure that services and support were available to whole families at their time of need.

The report provided an overview of the RCSP, a group which was responsible for ensuring that services delivered to children, young people and their families in Renfrewshire were the best they could be. The progress made in terms of the three main aspects of the delivery plan for a whole family wellbeing approach, Family Wellbeing - Service Redesign; Request a Service Approach; and Building Capacity in Third Sector Organisations - was summarised in section 2 of the report.

DECIDED: That the content of the report be noted.

7 Annual Report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 2022/23

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the annual report of the Fostering and Adoption Service for 2022/23 which was set out in full at Appendix 1 to the report.

The report covered the period 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023. During this period, 13 children and young people had a permanency plan considered by the panel and approved and on 31 July 2023 there were 75 fostering households approved by Renfrewshire. It was noted that the Fostering and Adoption Service was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in January 2023 and that the inspectors reported strengths in the services and awarded grades of good or very good for the services provided.

DECIDED: That the contents of the Fostering and Adoption Annual Report 2022/23, set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

8 Scottish Child Interview Model and Bairns Hoose Pathfinder Update

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the work undertaken by the North Strathclyde Partnership to improve the way that investigations are carried out following a child reporting that they have been abused.

The report summarised the Bairns Hoose model of support and protection for children and detail was provided in terms of the Scottish Government's three-phase plan to support the development of the Bairns Hoose model. It was noted that, as part of phase one (Bairns Hoose Pathfinder Phase 2023-25), £6 million of funding had been allocated to support the establishment of six Bairns Hoose Pathfinder sites across Scotland. It was confirmed on 30 October 2023 that the North Strathclyde Partnership were successful in their application to become a Pathfinder and a summary of the work undertaken since and the next steps was provided in Section 4 of the report.

DECIDED: That the content of the report be noted.

9 Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together – Progress Report

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the progress made towards implementing Renfrewshire's Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Policy.

The report provided a background to the Policy, which was approved at the meeting of this Policy Board held on 20 May 2021, and summarised the activity to keep brothers and sisters together between June 2022 and May 2023. Of the 52 children and young people who were newly accommodated during this period and who had siblings, 26 were placed with at least one sibling and a review of the circumstances of the siblings placed separately showed that separation was necessary and appropriate.

DECIDED: That the progress of the second year of implementation of the Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Policy be noted.

10 **Acronyms Glossary**

There was submitted for information a glossary detailing the acronyms commonly found in reports submitted to this Policy Board.

DECIDED: That it be noted that the glossary of acronyms would continue to be circulated with the agendas for future meetings of this Policy Board.