

Minute of Meeting

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 23 August 2018	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 Neill Graham, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Mr Iain Keith, Councillor Karen Kennedy, Councillor Paul Mck, 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, D Hawthorn, Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice, G McKinlay, Head of Schools, J Trainer, Head of Early Years and Inclusion and L Fingland, Service Planning and Policy Development Manager (all Education & Children's Services); and G McLachlan, Senior Finance Manager and D Low, Senior Committee Services Officer (both Finance & Resources).

Apologies

Councillors Grady and Kerr.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Graham declared a non-financial interest in item 5 on the agenda as he was a volunteer with Barnardos and intimated his intention to take part in the discussion and voting thereon.

1 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a joint report by the Director of Finance & Resources and the Acting Director of Children's Services for the service for the period 1 April to 22 June 2018.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that since the last report there had been budget adjustments arising from additional funding for school clothing grants, the distribution of agreed corporate savings and the transfer of resources to the Corporate Landlord.

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 22 June 2018.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 Response to the Scottish Government Consultation Early Learning and Childcare Service Model for 2020

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the Scottish Government consultation paper on 'A blueprint for 2020: the expansion of early learning and childcare in Scotland - early learning and childcare service model for 2020' which sought views on the proposed 'funding follows the child' model.

The report intimated that the Scottish Government had outlined their proposal to introduce a new and more progressive service model by 2020 to ensure that funded early learning and childcare entitlement was delivered in high quality settings. The Government's intention was to develop a model where the 'funding followed the child', a key aspect of which would be a national standard that all providers wishing to deliver the funded entitlement would have to meet.

Responses to the consultation were required to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 29 June 2018 and the Acting Director of Children's Services had submitted the response appended to the report to meet the deadline.

DECIDED:

(a) That the response appended to the report be agreed; and

(b) That the submission by the Acting Director of Children's Services of Renfrewshire's response to the consultation relating to 'Early Learning and Childcare Service Model for 2020' to the Scottish Government by the due date of 29 June 2018 be homologated.

4 Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement 1140 Expansion Plan

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the Renfrewshire plan for delivering the expansion of funded early learning and childcare provision from 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020.

The Council had submitted projected revenue and capital costs to deliver the 1140 expansion to the Scottish Government in March 2018. These formed the basis of a multi-year revenue and capital funding agreement between the Scottish Government and CoSLA. The Council had been advised on 1 May 2018 that its allocation would be £14,013,000 of capital funding to deliver the infrastructure projects outlined in the report. The recurring revenue funding for Renfrewshire would rise to £22,528,000 from 2021/22. The funding available to Renfrewshire Council was being released on a phased basis to support the delivery of the expansion plan appended to the report.

The report detailed the Renfrewshire plan for delivering the expansion of funded early learning and childcare provision from the present 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020. The costs associated with the expansion in Renfrewshire would be contained within the funding allocated by the Scottish Government and the report intimated that the expansion plan would consider the way in which early learning and childcare providers were contracted to deliver the services. The report advised that there were a number of significant risks to achieving the expansion within the timescale set and that these risks would require to be proactively managed by the Council during the expansion period.

DECIDED:

(a) That it be noted that the Scottish Government had allocated Renfrewshire capital funding totalling £14,013,000 and annual revenue funding reaching £22,528,000 from 2021/22, to allow delivery of the increased entitlement of funded early learning and childcare;

(b) That the work which had already taken place and the further work planned to deliver the expansion of early learning and childcare in Renfrewshire be noted;

(c) That it be noted that the Acting Director of Children's Services was working with the Council's procurement section to enable provision to be in place with independent and third sector providers for the period August 2019 to July 2020; and

(d) That it be noted that a report on the procurement arrangements would be presented to a future meeting of the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Graham, having declared a non-financial interest in the following item of business, remained in the meeting.

5 Attainment Challenge Strategy 2018/19

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the Renfrewshire Attainment Challenge Strategy 2018/19 which required to be submitted along with associated funding requirements to the Scottish Government for approval. A copy of the Strategy document was appended to the report.

The report intimated that the strategy consisted of four main Attainment Challenge work-streams: learning and teaching; data analysis; families and communities; and leadership. The strategy had been developed through consultation with a range of key stakeholders and through drawing upon the growing positive evidence base that was being collated nationally and locally.

DECIDED: That the Renfrewshire Attainment Challenge Strategy 2018/19 be approved.

6 Care Experienced Fund - Attainment Challenge

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the care-experienced children attainment fund.

The report intimated that in June 2018, the Scottish Government announced it would invest £33 million to support the educational needs of care-experienced children and young people to the end of the current parliamentary term in 2022. Renfrewshire's allocation for 2018/19 had been calculated at £359,200 based on 449 looked-after children aged 5-15 on 31 July 2017 which was the equivalent of £800 for each child. For future years, the full-year allocation would be the equivalent of £1,200 per child. The funding should have a clear focus on delivering equity and improving educational outcomes for care-experienced children and young people.

DECIDED: That the planning for the care experienced children attainment fund as part of the Attainment Challenge be approved.

7 Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) Update

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to progress on the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) including the recruitment of a PEF co-ordinator, the impact of the PEF, highlighted challenges related to the PEF and set out the forward plans for 2018-19.

The report intimated that the PEF was being provided as part of the £270 million Attainment Scotland Fund which would be invested over the current Scottish parliamentary term. The fund was allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Renfrewshire's PEF allocation was £4,272,240 for 2018/19, based on the most recently available Healthy Living and Pupil Census data. In line with national guidance and with the Council's support, each school had devised a PEF plan which outlined their spending intentions and which had been incorporated into their own school improvement plan.

DECIDED: That the updates in relation to the Pupil Equity Fund be noted.

8 Progress Report: School Estate Management Plan 2014

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to progress made on the delivery of the School Estate Management Plan (SEMP) since its implementation in 2014.

The report set out the Council's vision for its school estate to promote learning and achievement, and to give Renfrewshire's children and young people the opportunity to learn in the best possible environment. The 2014 SEMP set out a strategy to address the challenges affecting the primary and early years sectors, allowing the service to focus available resources on the delivery of new and redesigned schools and early learning and childcare establishments.

The report provided updates on the delivery of the Council's school estate objectives including projects at Riverbrae School; Mossvale Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Centre and St James' Primary School; St Fergus' Primary School; Bargarran Primary School and St John Bosco Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Centre; St Paul's Primary School and Foxlea Early Learning and Childcare Centre; St Anthony's Primary School; and Spateston Early Learning and Childcare Centre.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

9 Renfrewshire Council Children's Services Anti-bullying Strategy

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the revised Renfrewshire Council Children's Services Anti-bullying Policy which brought the previous policy into line with recent guidance and the three-year review period recommended in the 2015 policy. The revised policy, which provided guidance to children and young people on the prevention, identification and management of bullying, was appended to the report.

The report intimated that the revised policy had been informed by the Scottish Government's publication of 'Respect for All: A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People'. The revised policy complemented other Renfrewshire Council policies such as Promoting Positive Relationships; and Protecting Children and Ensuring Their Wellbeing.

The revised policy would apply to all educational establishments and settings and to all practitioners, including community learning and development and out of school care services and partners in the private and third sector who worked in partnership with Renfrewshire Council.

In line with the guidance set out in Respect for All, each educational establishment was required to develop its own local anti-bullying policy that reflected the Renfrewshire Council policy as well as include the consultation which had been carried out with pupils, parents and staff locally. Establishments were expected to have produced a local policy within six months of the approval of the revised policy.

Councillor Paterson, seconded by Provost L. Cameron, moved that the policy appended to the report be approved.

Councillor Davidson, seconded by Councillor Graham, moved as an amendment that section 9.12 on page 109 of the agenda be changed from 'Schools may also choose to record incidents' to 'Schools should record these incidents'.

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

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

Five members having voted for the amendment and 13 members having voted for the motion, the motion was accordingly declared carried.

DECIDED: That the policy appended to the report be approved.

10 Land within the Grounds of Renfrew High School, Renfrew

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources seeking approval to declare an area of land at Renfrew High School, Haining Road, Renfrew as surplus to requirements. The area of land was detailed on plan E2604C, a copy of which was attached to the report.

The disposal of land at this location to Scottish Gas Networks for a proposed new gas governor had been agreed at the meeting of this Board held on 1 June 2017. However, essential sewer services had subsequently been identified within the grounds, which compromised that site as a location for the new gas governor. Accordingly, Scottish Gas Networks had asked if the disposal could be reviewed to “move” the land package five metres northwest to avoid these services.

DECIDED:

(a) That the land at Haining Road, Renfrew shown outlined and highlighted on the plan E2604C be declared surplus to the Council’s requirements;

(b) That the Head of Corporate Governance be authorised to dispose of the land to Scottish Gas Networks, and to allow a right of access over the secondary entry to the site; and

(c) That it be noted that as part of this transaction Scottish Gas Networks would return to the Council land originally disposed to them for this purpose, which was latterly found not to be suitable.

11 Inspection of St Anthony's Primary School, Johnstone

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children’s Services relative to the inspection of St Anthony’s Primary School, Johnstone by Education Scotland.

The report intimated that the purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the quality of education, with the assessment focussing on four quality indicators: leadership of change; learning, teaching and assessment; raising attainment and achievement; and ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

A letter to parents, appended to the report, identified four key strengths and one area for further improvement. Children’s Services would continue to monitor the improvement in the school and the inspection report would be used by the school and service to support and develop the quality of educational provision.

DECIDED: That the key strengths and the area for improvement in the Education Scotland report on St Anthony’s Primary School, Johnstone be noted.

12 Education Scotland Continuing Engagement Visit to Johnstone High School

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the most recent visit by Education Scotland to Johnstone High School in February 2018.

The report intimated that the purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the progress made with the recommendations for improvement set out in the 2016 inspection report. The areas of focus were learning; teaching and assessment; raising attainment; health and wellbeing; and the S1-S3 curriculum.

A letter to parents, appended to the report, identified four areas of positive improvement and four areas for further improvement. The letter advised parents that the school had made progress since the original inspection and intimated that Education Scotland would ask for a report on progress within one year of the inspection.

Children's Services would prepare an action plan which would be shared with parents, indicating how the recommendations for further improvement in the report would be addressed.

DECIDED: That the improvements and the areas for further improvement identified by Education Scotland be noted.

13 Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill Consultation

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the introduction of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament on 13 March 2018.

The Bill reflected the decriminalisation of children under 12, but also recognised that protection of the child was not the sole consideration when they had harmed others. The Bill would mean that the age of criminal responsibility would increase from 8 to 12 years old, and no child under 12 would accrue a criminal record for their behaviour. Harmful behaviour by children aged eight to 11 would never, following the Bill's implementation, be treated as commission of an offence, but would be responded to in a different way. This was already the case in relation to behaviour by children under the age of eight.

DECIDED: That the draft response appended to the report be homologated.

14 Social Work Complaints Handling

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to changes to the social work complaints process which came into force on 1 April 2017 and which now applied to all new complaints about social work services.

The report intimated that prior to 1 April 2017 there was a four-stage process for social work complaints, the final stage of which was a referral to the Social Work (Complaints Review) Appeal Panel, members of which were independent of the Council. This process was reviewed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and Renfrewshire Council's response to the consultation was approved by the Education and Children Policy Board in January 2016. The amended process brought social

work complaints procedures into line with processes for all other local authority services.

Complaints made about issues which occurred prior to 1 April 2017 continued to be dealt with under the previous process. As the cut-off for making a complaint was 12 months after the event, all social work complaints were now subject to the new process. New complaints about social work services were now dealt with in the same way as complaints about other Council services. A copy of the new Social Work Complaints Handling procedure was appended to the report.

DECIDED: That the changes to the process for complaints about social work services provided by the Council be noted.

15 Inspection of Registered Service - Throughcare

There was submitted a report by the Acting Director of Children's Services relative to the inspection of the Throughcare Housing Support Service in May 2018 by the Care Inspectorate. A copy of the inspection report was appended to the report.

The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the quality of care with a specific focus on three quality indicators: care and support; staffing; and management and leadership. The report identified areas for improvement, set out a number of recommendations and requirements and assessed the service as weak.

The report intimated that Children's Services had taken immediate action to address the issues highlighted in the inspection report and an action plan had been developed which would be kept under review. A report would be brought back to a future meeting of this Policy Board on the progress of the service in addressing the findings of the inspection report.

DECIDED:

(a) That the outcome of the inspection of the Throughcare Housing Support Service as appended to the report be noted;

(b) That it be noted that immediate action had been taken to address the requirements and recommendations within the report; and

(c) That it be noted that a report would be brought back to a future meeting on the progress of the service in addressing the findings of the inspection report.

Valedictory

The Convener advised that this was Dorothy Hawthorn's last Education & Children's Services Policy Board meeting before she retired from the Council. Members thanked her for her contribution to childcare and criminal justice in Renfrewshire and wished her a long and happy retirement.