

Minute of Meeting Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 23 May 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 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 Will Mylet, Mr Jack Nellaney, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Mr Ravinder Singh, Councillor Ben Smith

Chair

Councillor Rodden, Convener, presided.

Apology

Councillor Davidson.

In Attendance

J O'Neill, Director of Children's Services, 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); and M Conaghan, Head of Corporate Governance, N Young, Managing Solicitor (Litigation & Advice), R Conway, Finance Business Partner, E Gray, Senior Committee Services Officer and J Barron, Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

Webcasting of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Policy Board would be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast on the Council's internet site.

Declarations of Interest

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

Transparency Statements

Councillor McMillan indicated that he had a connection to item 13 by reason of his son being employed by BAE Systems. However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider he had an interest to declare.

1 Education Scotland Inspection of Brediland Primary School

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the results of an inspection of Brediland 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 Brediland Primary School had been carried out by Education Scotland in January 2024 with a focus on two quality indicators: learning, teaching and assessment; 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 identified in the Education Scotland report on Brediland Primary School be noted and celebrated and the areas for further improvement be recognised.

2 Education Scotland Inspection of Williamsburgh Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the results of an inspection of Williamsburgh Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class 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 Williamsburgh Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class had been carried out by Education Scotland in February 2024 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 three areas for further improvement.

DECIDED: That the key strengths identified in the Education Scotland report on Williamsburgh Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class be noted and celebrated and the areas for further improvement be recognised.

3 **Early Learning and Childcare – Payment of Sustainable Rates to Funded Providers**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the rates paid by the Council for early learning and childcare places with approved funded providers (AFP) including private and voluntary sector nurseries and childminders.

The report provided detail on the Council's statutory duty to provide early learning and childcare (ELC) places to all eligible children and how this had been met through the provision of places in local authority, private and voluntary sector nurseries and with childminders. The report sought to set a sustainable rate paid to AFPs for 2024/25 at a level which supported the delivery of ELC in accordance with the National Standard and Council's Framework while ensuring best value for the Council. Further detail was provided on the consultation which had taken place.

DECIDED:

(a) That the position of CoSLA and the Scottish Government with regards to the sustainable rate paid to Approved Funded Providers be noted;

(b) That an increase in the sustainable hourly rate paid to Renfrewshire Council's Approved Funded Providers for the provision of funded early learning and childcare from £5.97 to £6.45 effective from 1 April 2024 for any child aged 3 to 5 years accepted for funding under the Council's Framework be approved; and

(c) That the continuation of the existing hourly rate of £8.50 paid to Approved Funded Providers for early learning and childcare for any eligible child aged 2 to 3 years accepted for funding under the Council's Framework be approved.

4 **Duty of Candour – Annual Report**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the annual report on the Duty of Candour as required by the Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) (Scotland) Act 2016.

The report set out the number of incidents or events where the duty of candour was triggered for the period April 2023 to March 2024, how the policy was followed in these incidents and any learning from the incidents. Renfrewshire had no reportable duty of candour incidents during the period covered by the report.

DECIDED: That the annual duty of candour report for the period April 2023 to March 2024 be noted.

5 **Children's Services Reform Research: Learning and Implications for Scotland and Renfrewshire Service Reform**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the finding of the Children's Services Reform Research Study which proposed that children's social work and social care services should be included within the National Care Service.

The report provided a background to the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland and its recommendation that a National Care Service for adults, to be delivered locally through Integrated Joint Boards, be created. A consultation on the development of a National Care Service was carried out in 2021 which included a proposal that children's social work and social care services should be included within the National Care Service. Following analysis of the consultation exercise it was concluded that further evidence was required to inform future decisions around the inclusion or exclusion of children's social work and social care services.

The Children's Services Reform Research study, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, was commissioned to contribute to this evidence. The report provided an overview of the research study findings and provided information on changes which were being made locally to reform and improve Children's Social Work Services following service redesign work undertaken in 2023.

DECIDED:

(a) That the findings of the Children's Services Reform Research study undertaken by the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection be noted; and

(b) That the work being undertaken locally in Children's Social Work to ensure children, young people and their families get the right help at the right time be noted.

6 Joint inspection of services for children at risk of harm in Renfrewshire

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the scheduled Care Inspectorate led joint inspection of the services to protect children and young people at risk of harm in Renfrewshire.

The report noted that the Care Inspectorate had commenced the inspection process for Renfrewshire and provided members with information on the background to inspection, detailed key phases of the inspection and confirmed the local governance arrangements locally.

DECIDED:

(a) That it be noted that the joint inspection of services for children at risk of harm in Renfrewshire had been confirmed by the Care Inspectorate;

(b) That it be noted that the scrutiny activity started with a staff survey on 13 May 2024, would continue with file reading on 17 June and then engagement with children, young people and families on 19 August 2024; and

(c) That it be noted that the Strategic Manager Children and Justice/Depute Chief Social Work Officer would be the Renfrewshire inspection co-ordinator and the Children's and Justice Services Manager (Assurance and Change) would be the depute inspection co-ordinator.

7 **Inclusion Update**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to progress which had been made towards delivering improvements to support the wellbeing and learning of all children and young people with additional support needs in mainstream school and early years establishments.

The report provided a background to the Scottish Government's Staged Intervention Framework and the refreshed Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) policy and practice materials. The main area of progress against these policies since August 2023 were detailed in the report.

DECIDED: That the very positive progress the Inclusion Portfolio continued to make to improve outcomes for children and young people be noted.

8 **Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2023/24 Outturn Report**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to performance to deliver the Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2023/24 during the 12-month period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The report provided an update on changes made to the action plan and scorecard to reflect the new Council Plan themes; a progress update on implementing the action plan linked to the 2023/26 Service Improvement Plan; and an assessment of performance in relation to the service scorecard of core performance indicators.

DECIDED:

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

(b) That achievements of Children's Services during 2023/24 be noted.

9 **Children's Services 2024-2027 Service Improvement Plan**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Children's Services Service Improvement Plan 2024/27.

The Service Improvement Plan 2024/27, a copy of which was attached as Appendix 1 of the report, was designed to sit beneath the Council Plan, Community Plan, Risk Management Plan, and the Workforce Plan to form a suite of documents which provided the strategic direction for the service. The Plan identified the priorities being addressed, the key tasks to be implemented, the implementation timetable and the measures of success. A mid-year progress update on the Service Improvement Plan would be submitted to a meeting of this Policy Board in the autumn of 2024.

DECIDED:

(a) That the content of the Service Improvement Plan, attached as an appendix to the report, be noted;

(b) That the changes to the action plan and performance indicators outlined in Section 5 of the report be approved; and

(c) That it be noted that the mid-year progress of this Service Improvement Plan would be reported to this Policy Board in the Autumn of 2024, with updates to the Performance Indicators and Action Plan.

10 **Children's Services Health and Well Being Strategy Update 2023/2024**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Children's Services Annual Health & Safety report 2023/24 and the Children's Services Annual Health & Safety Plan 2024/25.

The Children's Services Annual Health & Safety report 2023/24 was attached as Appendix 1 of the report, while a copy of the Children's Services Annual Health & Safety Plan 2024/25 was attached as Appendix 2 of the report. The Council's Health & Wellbeing Plan promoted a positive health and safety culture to ensure compliance with relevant Health and Safety legislation and supported the Council Plan in working together to achieve a thriving and connected Renfrewshire, creating opportunities for all. The report summarised the approach within Children's Services to health and safety, with the Annual Health & Safety Report 2023/24 detailing activity during 2023/24 and the Annual Health & Safety Plan 2024/25 outlining arrangements in place for 2024/25 for the management of health and safety and continuous improvement in relation to health and safety.

DECIDED: That the Health, Safety & Well Being Strategy completed actions for 2023/2024, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

11 **West Partnership Improvement Collaborative Update Report for 2024-25 and beyond**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to plans for the West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) following the national review of RICs undertaken by the Scottish Government and the associated reduction in funding for 2024-25 onwards.

The report provided a background to RICs and advised that the Scottish Government announced a rapid review of the impact that RICs have had on supporting pupils and practitioners. The findings of the review, which were published in January 2024, were summarised and it was noted that there would be a 50 percent reduction in funding for 2024/25 compared to the previous 2023/24. A summary of the proposed next steps was also provided.

DECIDED: That the contents of the report be noted.

12 **Learning Estate Update**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the current capital projects to develop and improve the learning estate.

The report provided an update on a number of ongoing projects to enhance the school estate including: Paisley Grammar School Community Campus; Park Mains High School extension and alterations; new Dargavel Primary School; Dargavel Primary School internal alterations; Bishopton Primary School classroom block; Thorn Primary School new build; and Castlehead roof strengthening works.

DECIDED:

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

(b) That the intent to construct a new Thorn Primary School on the grounds of the current school, following final assessment of the business case, be noted.

13 **Consultation arrangements regarding the proposal to establish a new primary school in Dargavel Village and a Catchment Review Affecting Dargavel Primary School and a new primary school to be built at Dargavel Village**

Under reference to item 3 of the Minute of the meeting of this Policy Board held on 18 January 2024, there was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the consultation on a proposal to establish a new primary school in Dargavel village. The Statutory Consultation Final Report, together with a number of supporting documents, were attached as appendices to the report.

The report provided detail on the consultation exercise which sought views on a proposed site for the new primary school - an 8.5-acre site at the north end of Craighton Drive and revised catchment areas for the existing Dargavel primary school and the proposed new school. The statutory consultation started on 29 January 2024 and ended on 26 March 2024 and followed a period of pre-engagement space planning on a new primary school. The consultation was extensively promoted and provided a programme of information events and public meetings to enable people to speak to council officers, to seek further information and to participate in the consultation. Over 150 people attended consultation events, but many more completed the consultation survey.

The report provided a detailed summary of the consultation process and analysis of the online responses and the Education Scotland report which provided an independent and impartial consideration of the proposal to build a new primary school in Dargavel Village including the proposed site and proposed catchment review. The key concerns raised in the responses were addressed and the proposed next steps were set out.

DECIDED:

(a) That the findings of the Statutory Consultation on a new primary school in Dargavel and the proposed changes to catchment areas be noted;

(b) That the report by Education Scotland, prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, be noted;

(c) That the overwhelming support for a new school and HM Inspectors' view that the Proposal had the potential to provide education benefits and address the under-provision within Dargavel Village be noted;

(d) That the proposed statutory consultation final report, attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;

(e) That it be agreed that officers progress the procurement, design, and construction programme to deliver a new 800-capacity primary school, for opening in August 2027, on the proposed site 'Site 9 – E1', as denoted in the Statutory Consultation documentation and map;

(f) That it be agreed that officers progress planning for the implementation of the revised catchment arrangements within Dargavel Village to take effect from the operational opening of the new primary school; and

(g) That it be agreed that officers progress the following key areas of work:

(i) in conjunction with the Dargavel community, prepare and implement a comprehensive engagement plan to ensure ongoing community engagement through the school design and planning processes;

(ii) preparation of an integrated traffic and active travel plan as part of the design and delivery of the new school to alleviate community concerns relating to traffic congestion and safe active travel routes - such planning and preparation arrangements were a requirement to support the statutory planning application for the new school;

(iii) provide a report to a future Education & Children's Services Policy Board meeting on proposed contingency plans, should there be any delay to construction that would impact the anticipated August 2027 opening date;

(iv) provide a report to a future Education & Children's Policy Board meeting with detailed options and costs to deliver revised drop-off and pick-up area next to the current Dargavel Primary School; and

(v) continue to engage with the community and work in an open and responsive way to plan for future secondary school provision.

14 **Education Scotland Inspections of Renfrewshire Schools**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to school inspections carried out by Education Scotland since 2022.

The report confirmed that nine primary schools and three secondary schools were inspected in the reporting period and a summary of the gradings was provided together with an analysis of the inspection reports.

DECIDED: That the very positive outcomes in relation to inspections of Renfrewshire primary and secondary schools by HM Inspectors, Education Scotland, over the last 2 academic sessions be noted.