

Minute of Meeting Education and Children Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 10 March 2016	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

PRESENT

Councillors B Brown, Cameron, Glen, Henry, Lawson, Mack, M Macmillan, I McMillan, McQuade, Murrin, Perrie, J Sharkey, M Sharkey, Williams, Reverend Clark, I Keith and J Nellaney.

CHAIR

Councillor Henry, Convener, presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

P Macleod, Director of Children's Services, G McKinlay, Head of Schools, M Dewar, Acting Head of Service, D Hawthorn, Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice, J Trainer, Acting Head of Early Years and Inclusion and L McCrory, ASN Manager (all Children's Services); and K Graham, Head of Corporate Governance, M Conaghan, Legal & Democratic Services Manager, D Forbes, Finance Manager and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

APOLOGY

Councillor Clark.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cameron declared a non-financial interest in relation to item 4 of the agenda as she was a volunteer worker and member of the Board of Home-Start Renfrewshire.

1 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

There was submitted a joint report by the Directors of Finance & Resources and Children's Services for the service for the period 1 April 2015 to 8 January 2016.

DECIDED:

(a) That the budget position be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that there had been net budget realignments of £81,673 processed since the last report, primarily related to the drawdown of £130,000 from Invest in Renfrewshire funds in relation to youth employability, partly offset by transfers to the corporate landlord and business support.

2 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources for the service for the period 1 April 2015 to 8 January 2016.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 CHILDREN'S SERVICES SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016/19

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Service Improvement Plan 2016/19 for Children's Services which outlined what the service intended to achieve over the next three years based on the financial and employee resources likely to be available.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the service's key priorities for the next three years and Appendix 2 to the report detailed the balanced scorecard which would help measure progress towards achieving the desired outcomes for the service.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Children's Services Service Improvement Plan be approved; and

(b) That it be agreed that progress on service improvement plan implementation be reviewed in November 2016.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

4 DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING TO SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR 2016/17

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the distribution of funding to a range of private and voluntary sector organisations which delivered services for families and young children.

Appendix 1 to the report provided an overview of the proposed allocations for payments to other bodies and grants for out-of-school care and voluntary sector playgroups for 2016/17; Appendix 2 to the report detailed allocations to out-of-school care groups for 2016/17 on the basis of the criteria and related points applied to each group; and Appendix 3 to the report detailed the allocation to pre-five voluntary sector playgroups and toddler groups.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the resource allocation of £860,130 to support the delivery of services for children and young people, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (b) That the proposals for the allocation of grant funding for out-of-school care and pre-five voluntary sector, as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report, be approved; and
- (c) That the current points value of £200 for awarding grant assistance to out-of-school care providers be retained.

5 EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF INCHINNAN PRIMARY SCHOOL, INCHINNAN

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the inspection by Education Scotland of Inchinnan Primary School, Inchinnan, undertaken during November 2015, as part of a national sample of pre-5 education using a different inspection model. The inspection took place over two and a half days instead of the usual five days.

A copy of the letter to parents, published by Education Scotland on 19 January 2016, was appended to the report. The inspection report had identified five key strengths and three areas for further improvement. An action plan would be developed and shared with parents, indicating how the points for action of the inspection report would be addressed. The report stated that the school would be supported in its improvement and arrangements would be made to inform parents of the progress made by the school in addressing the main points identified for action within two years of the publication of the report.

Concern was expressed in relation to the inspection model used by Education Scotland and the Convener proposed that she write to the Scottish Government, on behalf of the Board, expressing the Board's concerns as to the shorter period of time taken to carry out the inspection and the lack of information contained in their revised format of inspection reports. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the key strengths and areas for further improvement identified in the Education Scotland report on Inchinnan Primary School, Inchinnan be noted; and

(b) That the Convener write to the Scottish Government, on behalf of the Board, expressing the Board's concerns as to the shorter period of time taken to carry out the inspection and the lack of information contained in their revised format of inspection reports.

6 EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF THORN PRIMARY SCHOOL, JOHNSTONE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the inspection by Education Scotland of Thorn Primary School, Johnstone, undertaken during October 2015, as part of a national sample of pre-5 education.

A copy of the letter to parents, published by Education Scotland on 19 January 2016, was appended to the report. The inspection report had identified four key strengths and three areas for further improvement. An action plan would be developed and shared with parents, indicating how the points for action of the inspection report would be addressed. The report stated that the school would be supported in its improvement and arrangements would be made to inform parents of the progress made by the school in addressing the main points identified for action within two years of the publication of the report.

DECIDED: That the key strengths and areas for further improvement identified in the Education Scotland report on Thorn Primary School, Johnstone be noted.

SEDERUNT

Councillor M Macmillan left the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

7 KINSHIP CARE AND FOSTER ALLOWANCES AND FEES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the proposed changes in the structure and level of kinship care allowances in order to address the current Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) challenge and achieve parity for kinship carers.

The report intimated that in 2014 seven local authorities in Scotland had been contacted by the EHRC to challenge the level of payment of allowances made to kinship carers. EHRC argued that kinship carers should receive parity in the level of allowance paid per child compared to that paid to foster carers. Local authorities had been working with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to agree a new national model which sought to ensure parity in the allowances paid to kinship carers.

It was noted that foster carers and kinship carers were given allowances by Renfrewshire Council to undertake the care of the children placed with them and at the current time there was a significant difference between the rates paid. Renfrewshire Council currently had 259 children in paid kinship care arrangements based on four age bands with allowances ranging from £70.51 per week for a child aged 0 to 4 years to £141.02 per week for a child aged 16 to 18 years. Renfrewshire Council currently paid foster carers £383.95 per child per week regardless of the age of the child.

The report proposed that Renfrewshire Council move to a position of paying kinship carers and foster carers the same allowance per child that they had placed with them and also that the Council return to paying foster carers an allowance for the child they cared for and a fee for their professional services. This was agreed.

The report detailed the new model for the payment of kinship care allowances. This would cost the Council an additional £184,875 per annum based on the current profile of the children in kinship care in Renfrewshire. The Scottish Government had provided additional funding to local authorities on a pro-rata basis depending on the numbers of kinship carers they had and the award to Renfrewshire Council would cover the costs associated with the changes to the payments.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the new model for the payment of kinship care allowances be approved;
- (b) That it be noted that this local model would be reviewed after the first 12 months of operation; and
- (c) That it be noted that the Scottish Government planned a national review of the arrangements in place for the payment of both foster and kinship care.

8 NAMING OF NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL IN LINWOOD

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to naming of the new special school in Linwood.

The report intimated that parents, pupils and staff from Clippens and Kersland Schools and Hollybush Pre-5 Centre had been asked to make suggestions for the name of the new school. They had been requested to consider their suggestions in the context of a Council provision to support children and young people with severe and complex additional support needs from across the council area. The responses made advised of the reasons for the suggested name and the relevance of it in relation to the amalgamation of the three establishments. A total of 146 ballot forms had been returned and the report detailed the scoring model used.

The name Riverbrae School received the highest cumulative score of 217 votes. This option related to the natural environment of Renfrewshire and referenced the convergence of rivers meeting at a central point and the hills of the surrounding area and symbolised the coming together of the three establishments in an environment which was free flowing and calm.

Names of the runners-up were Middleton School which received a cumulative score of 210 votes and Aranwood School which received a cumulative score of 179 votes.

DECIDED: That Riverbrae School be approved as the name of the new special school in Linwood.

9 SMOKE FREE CARE PLACEMENTS POLICY FOR RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL'S LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the implementation of the Smoke Free Care Placements Policy for Renfrewshire Council's Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People, which formed Appendix 1 to the report.

The report intimated that smoking and exposure to second hand smoke was a major issue affecting many young people within looked after and accommodated children settings across Scotland. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, in partnership with other local authorities, had identified a policy gap in relation to looked after and accommodated children and drafted proposals to provide children and young people with positive role models and smoke free environments in order to promote healthy lifestyles. A short life working group had developed the Smoke Free Care Placements Policy for Renfrewshire Council's Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People.

The Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EQHRIA) undertaken on the implementation of this policy formed Appendix 2 to the report. It was noted that this EQHRIA referred to the Social Work, Health and Well-being Policy Board when in fact it should refer to the Education & Children Policy Board.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Smoke Free Care Placements Policy for Renfrewshire Council's Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and

(b) That the content of the report be noted.

10 SCHOOL HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS SCHOOL SESSION 2017/18

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the school holiday arrangements for school session 2017/18.

The report intimated that, in line with normal consultation arrangements, three possible proposals had been circulated to staff, parent councils, pupil councils and teaching and other trade unions for consideration. In previous years each school, pupil council and parent council had each been allocated one vote. Following consultation with trade unions it was agreed, to allow parity within the various sectors, that a weighting system based on the numbers of pupils in each school be applied as a pilot for 2017/18. It had been agreed that for up to the first 100 pupils, one vote would be applied, thereafter one vote for every subsequent 100 pupils. Pupil councils and parent councils for each establishment would maintain their previous allocation as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.

The outcome of the consultation exercise was detailed in Appendix 4 to the report.

The school holiday proposal preferred by the majority of those consulted was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, with appendices 2 and 3 showing the holiday patterns less favoured.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to set school holiday arrangements for academic year 2017/18 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (b) That the implementation of the consultation weighting system as a pilot for the 2017/18 holiday arrangements be noted.

11 VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS 2016/17

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to applications received for grant support to voluntary and independent organisations for 2016/17. Recommendations for grant support allocations to specific voluntary sector organisations totalling £90,700 were detailed in the appendices to the report.

It was noted that information in relation to a number of the grants was not available at the time of publication of the report. The Director of Children's Services undertook to provide this information to members of the Board.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the recommendations for grant support to voluntary organisations, as detailed in the appendices to the report, be agreed;
- (b) That it be noted that all grants would be subject to the Council's conditions of grant; and
- (c) That the Director of Children's Services provide updated information on a number of the grants, detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, to members of the Board.

12 PRESENTATION - FURTH

The ASN Manager gave a presentation to the Board in connection with the visit to Furth in October 2015 by Provost Hall, Councillor Henry and two senior education officers to study their educational practices, in particular the steps being taken to tackle the adverse impact that living in poverty could have on educational attainment.

DECIDED: That the presentation be noted.