

Minute of Meeting

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 28 October 2021	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Provost Lorraine Cameron, Councillor Karen Devine-Kennedy, Councillor Audrey Doig, Councillor Edward Grady, Councillor Neill Graham, Councillor Jim Harte, Councillor John Hood, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Scott Kerr, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Will Mylet, Mr Jack Nellaney, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Jim Paterson, Councillor Emma Rodden, Councillor John Shaw, Mr Ravinder Singh, Councillor Jane Strang

Chair

Councillor Paterson, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

S Quinn, Director of Children's Services, J Calder, Head of Service (Curriculum & Quality), G McKinlay, Head of Schools, J Trainer, Head of Childcare & Criminal Justice (all Children's Services); J Connolly, Senior Communications Officer (Chief Executive's); and G McLachlan, Senior Finance Manager, G Dickie, Partnering & Commissioning Manager, R Devine, E Gray and C MacDonald, Senior Democratic Services Officers, J Barron, Assistant Committee Services Officer, and D Pole, End User Technician (all Finance & Resources).

Recording of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Board would be webcast live on the Council's website.

Thereafter the Clerk undertook a roll call of members in attendance at the meeting, indicating those in the Council Chamber and those participating remotely.

Apology

Ms Bird, Church of Scotland Representative.

Declarations of Interest

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

1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 17 September 2021

There was submitted a joint revenue and capital budget monitoring report by the Directors of Children's Services and Finance & Resources for the period to 17 September 2021.

The report projected a revenue overspend of £0.844 million and an underspend of £0.4 million in respect of capital as at 31 March 2022 for Children's Services. It was noted that for financial year 2021/22 the projected outturn position was split into core and Covid-19 related variances.

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 and that forecasts were likely to be subject to fluctuation as the year progressed. The service would continue to mitigate any overspend as far as possible;

(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 Children's Services Service Delivery Plan 2021/22 Mid Year Monitoring Report

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the Children's Services Service Delivery Plan 2021/22 Mid Year Monitoring Report.

The Children's Services Service Delivery Plan 2021/22 was approved at a meeting of this Board on 18 March 2021. This report set out the performance over the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 against the performance indicators and actions identified in the Service Delivery Plan.

The report highlighted a number of achievements for the service during the reporting period including adapting to changing guidance around the Covid-19 pandemic; work undertaken to reduced the poverty-related attainment gap; adoption of the Scottish Qualification Authority's alternative certification model in lieu of pupil examinations for the 2020/21 academic session; the full roll-out of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare across early years establishments; the publication of a Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy; and the delivery of a comprehensive programme of

staff training and development to support educational recovery for those most impacted by the pandemic, focussing on literacy and numeracy.

DECIDED:

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

(b) That the achievements of Children's Services during 2021/22 which fall within the remit of this Board be noted; and

(c) That it be noted that a mid-year report was presented to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 26 October 2021 in respect of service areas falling within the remit of that Board.

3 West Partnership Improvement Collaborative: Evaluation Report 2020-2021

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the evaluation of work undertaken by the West Partnership (Glasgow Region Education Improvement Collaborative) in 2020/2021.

The report captured progress of three main West Partnership workstreams: Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement; Curriculum, Learning and Teaching and Assessment; and Collaborative Learning Networks, and used case studies to showcase the work which was undertaken to support local authorities. The report was considered and endorsed at the last Glasgow City Region Education Committee on 24 August 2021 with the recommendation that each council area considered the report through its own local governance arrangements.

DECIDED: That the contents of the report be noted.

4 West Partnership Improvement Collaborative: Improvement Plan 2021-2022

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the content and process followed to develop the West Partnership Improvement Plan for 2021/2022.

The Partnership was required to produce an annual improvement plan linked to a three-year planning cycle which outlined the vision, purpose and key activities of the collaborative for the year ahead.

The report set out the three main workstreams which had been agreed to support the work of local authorities: Wellbeing for Learning; Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement; and Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment, and advised of a change to the format of a number of West Partnership networked groups. The plan was considered and endorsed at the last Glasgow City Region Education Committee on 24 August 2021 with the recommendation that each council area considered the plan through its own local governance arrangements.

DECIDED: That the content of the West Partnership Improvement Plan for 2021/2022 be noted.

5 **Education Update – Covid-19**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education provision in Renfrewshire.

The report provided information on updated risk assessments, mitigation measures which remained in place including physical distancing among staff, enhanced cleaning, restrictions on visitor numbers, the wearing of face coverings by secondary pupils, the use of CO2 monitors in schools to identify areas where there was a lack of ventilation, the encouragement of regular lateral flow testing among staff and secondary pupils and the roll out of vaccinations for 12-15 year-olds. Staff and pupil absence continued to be monitored on a school-by-school basis and an absence summary was provided in the report.

DECIDED: That the contents of the report be noted.

6 **SQA Alternative Certification Model**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the SQA's Alternative Certification Model (ACM).

The ACM was originally developed for National 5 courses, in response to the Deputy First Minister's announcement on 7 October 2020 of the cancellation of National 5 exams and expanded to cover Higher and Advanced Higher exams following their cancellation on 8 December 2020. The key difference from the traditional certification model was that schools were asked to take the lead on determining provisional grades based on assessment evidence.

The report provided a detailed summary of the ACM as well as information on its implementation and the attainment levels which were achieved while using it. It also set out the conclusions which could be drawn and the next steps including the resumption of SQA examinations in 2022 if safe to do so.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Board endorse the achievements of our young people during the 2020/21 session, noting the particular challenges posed by the changes to education and certification arising from the pandemic; and

(b) That the Board recognise the hard work and dedication of school staff in the implementation of the ACM.

7 **Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement - 1140 Expansion Update**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to delivery of the 1140 expansion programme in relation to early learning and childcare entitlement.

The report advised that in March 2020 the duty to deliver 1140 hours of ELC by August 2020 was removed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that in March 2021 a new order was placed making 1140 hours of ELC effective from 1 August 2021. It noted that during the school session 2020/21 1140 hours of ELC was implemented where possible, with 94% of children in Renfrewshire receiving the increased hours.

The report provided a progress update on the 1140 Expansion Plan in Renfrewshire including statistics relating to the implementation and details on the expansion of the workforce and infrastructure to accommodate the increased provision.

DECIDED: That the hugely successful implementation of the 1140 expansion in Renfrewshire, as outlined in section 4 of the report, be noted.

8 Amendment to School Holiday Arrangements School Session 2021/2022

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to an amendment to the pattern of school holiday arrangements for the school session 2021/2022 following the announcement by both the UK and Scottish Governments that an additional public holiday would be granted in 2022 to create a four-day weekend to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, in the first weekend of June 2022.

The proposed amendment was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

DECIDED: That the Director of Education and Children's Services be authorised to amend the school holiday arrangements for academic year 2021/2022 in line with Appendix 1 to the report.

9 School Holiday Arrangements School Session 2022/2023 - Amendment

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to an amendment to the pattern of school holiday arrangements for the school session beginning August 2022. The amendments were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report outlined the proposed amendment to the school holiday arrangements and noted that this would be required to align the dates with those of neighbouring councils.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to amend the school holiday arrangements for academic year 2022/2023 in line with Appendix 1 to the report; and

(b) That future school holiday dates would not be consulted upon until neighbouring local authorities confirm their arrangements.

10 Children's Social Work – COVID-19 Recovery Status Report

There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services relative to the implementation of the Children's Social Work – Covid -19 Recovery Status Report.

The report set out how services were impacted throughout the pandemic and advised that the majority of children's social work services continued to operate within the restrictions through the use of a range of tools including video and telephone calls and

in person contact. The service prioritised support to those most in need while continuing to deliver the statutory service and would continue to do so going forward.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the work undertaken by Children's Social Work throughout the past 19 months and the current state of operations be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that social work activities in Children's Services operated for most of the past 19 months with minimal disruption; and
- (c) That it be noted that the priority as recovery continued was to support additional capacity in buildings for the Whole Systems Team, the alcohol and drugs support team and Women and Children First Service.