

**MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE EDUCATION POLICY BOARD
HELD ON 15TH JANUARY, 2015**

PRESENT

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

Councillor Henry, Convener, presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

R Naylor, Director of Education & Leisure; P McLeod, Director of Social Work; G McKinlay, Head of Service and M Dewar, Acting Head of Service (both Education & Leisure); and D Forbes, Finance Manager, R Devine, Senior Committee Services Officer and K Druce, Assistant Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Corporate Services).

APOLOGY

Councillor Cameron.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors J Sharkey and M Sharkey declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 8 – Review of Renfrewshire Youth Voice - as parents of a member of Renfrewshire Youth Voice and intimated that it was their intention not to participate in consideration of the item or voting thereon.

WELCOME

Prior to the start of the meeting the Convener welcomed Mr J Nellaney, the representative of the Roman Catholic Church to the Education Policy Board, to his first meeting since his appointment. The Convener also took the opportunity to welcome Peter MacLeod to his first meeting of the Policy Board since his appointment as Director of Children's Services.

1. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

There was submitted a joint revenue budget monitoring report by the Acting Director of Finance & Corporate Services and Director of Education & Leisure for the period 1st April to 7th November, 2014.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the budget position be noted; and
- (b) That it be noted that there had been net budget realignments of £4,826 processed since the last report relating to transfers to the corporate landlord and holiday pay arrears.

2. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

There was submitted a capital budget monitoring report by the Acting Director of Finance & Corporate Services for the period 1st April to 7th November, 2014.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION REPORTS

(a) Arkleston Primary School, Renfrew

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education & Leisure relative to the inspection by Education Scotland of Arkleston Primary School, Renfrew, undertaken during October 2014, as part of a national sample of primary education.

A copy of the inspection report, together with the quality indicator evaluations, published by Education Scotland on 16th December, 2014, was appended to the report. The inspection report had identified four key strengths and four areas for further improvement. It was noted that Education Scotland would make no further visits in connection with the inspection. An improvement action plan had been developed, which would be shared with parents, indicating how the main findings of the inspection report would be addressed. The report stated that the school would be supported in its improvement by quarterly monitoring visits 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 Arkleston Primary School, Renfrew, be noted.

(b) Hillview Nursery, Paisley

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education & Leisure relative to the inspection by Education Scotland of Hillview Nursery, Paisley, undertaken during October 2014, as part of a national sample of pre-five education.

A copy of the inspection report, together with the quality indicator evaluations, published by Education Scotland on 25th November, 2014, was appended to the report. The inspection report had identified three key strengths and four areas for further improvement. It was noted that work would be undertaken to build capacity for improvement and that Education Scotland would maintain contact with Education & Leisure to monitor progress.

DECIDED: That the key strengths and areas for further improvement identified in the Education Scotland report on Hillview Nursery, Paisley, be noted.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF 600 HOURS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education & Leisure relative to the implementation of the provision of 600 hours of early learning and childcare. This was an increase from 475 hours in the school term 2013/14.

The report stated that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, which had received Royal Assent on 27th March, 2014, introduced a mandatory number of hours for early learning and childcare of 600 hours for eligible pre-school children per year. An eligible child was defined as (i) three years of age and over; (ii) two years of age and over who was or had been at any time since their second birthday looked after, subject of a kinship care order or had a parent appointed guardian; and (iii) two years old and over from households where a parent or carer was in receipt of certain qualifying benefits.

The Act also placed a duty on local authorities to consult with parents of children under school age on how early learning and childcare should be made available and for each local authority to publish a plan of intention. Thereafter, consultation required to be carried out every two years. The Council had consulted with parents of children under school age between July and December 2013 who used services in Renfrewshire on the method for delivering early learning and childcare and the outcome was detailed in the report. In addition a focus group comprising staff from local authority, approved partner nurseries and trade union representation had met to monitor and evaluate the 2014/15 delivery model and to plan a more flexible model for 2015/16 onwards.

A detailed plan outlining a range of models of early learning and childcare, which was flexible to ensure there was a degree of choice for parents, would be submitted to the Education Policy Board by May 2015.

DECIDED: That the plan for delivering a more flexible model of delivery of early learning and childcare, as detailed in the report, be noted.

5. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE FOR TWO YEAR OLD CHILDREN

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education & Leisure relative to the provision of additional places for early learning and childcare for two-year old children. The report intimated that at the meeting of this Board held on 8th May, 2014, authority had been delegated to the Director of Education & Leisure in consultation with the Convener of the Education Policy Board, to progress plans for adapting and/or extending existing premises to provide places for additional two-year old children from workless families. Reference was also made to the report submitted to the meeting of this Board held on 21st August, 2014 which advised of the adaptations proposed to premises to expand the service for two-year olds and sought approval to increase the number of commissioned places from the private and voluntary sector early learning and childcare providers.

The report stated that Scottish Government revenue funding allocated to Renfrewshire for implementing the additional provision of early learning and childcare for two year old children for 2015/16 was £1,537,011 while the allocation for capital funding for 2015/16 was £1,162,669. A summary of the proposed expansion plans for delivery from August 2015 of early learning and childcare places to all two year old children from families eligible for free school meals was provided and approval sought to increase the number of commissioned places from private and voluntary providers contracted to deliver early learning and childcare from 1205 to 1230.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the proposed draft plan, detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report, for expanding the service to deliver early learning and childcare places for additional two-year old children from August 2015 be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that the draft plan was subject to confirmation of proposed adaptations to premises;
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Director of Education & Leisure, in consultation with the Convener of the Education Policy Board, to progress the draft plan for expanding the service to deliver early learning and childcare places for additional two year olds, as required, from August 2015; and
- (d) That the increased number of commissioned early learning and childcare places as detailed in paragraph 4(iii) of the report be approved.

6. REVIEW OF YOUTH VOICE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education & Leisure relative to a review of programmes and opportunities to facilitate engagement with young people, to ensure that they reflected the needs and aspirations of young people and had the ability to grow as Renfrewshire's youth voice process developed.

The report advised that Youth Voice initiatives involved ascertaining, coordinating and expressing the views of young people and young people taking action to bring about change in their communities. This was achieved through activities undertaken by Youth Voice groups, such as pupil councils, youth forums and the participation of young people in decision making bodies. Youth Voice also contributed to the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

A summary of the review process was provided within the Appendix to the report. Throughout the review process young people's experiences, views and findings had been recorded on film. The findings and conclusions arising from the consultation activities undertaken had resulted in a proposal that a Renfrewshire Youth Voice Assembly be established to enable young people to work together to identify the most important issues, make decisions on what action to take and engage with decision makers. In addition it was proposed that Renfrewshire Youth Voice be the executive body of the Assembly, providing the position of chairperson and taking ownership of the planning of the annual conference. The organisation and support to the Assembly would be provided by Youth Services. Assembly members would be aged 12 to 25 years old and include members of the Scottish Youth Parliament; members of Renfrewshire Youth Voice; members of Community-based youth forums from across Renfrewshire; representatives of pupil councils from across Renfrewshire's schools; and young people representative of minorities, hard to reach or vulnerable groups of young people.

DECIDED: That the establishment of a Renfrewshire Youth Voice Assembly that enabled young people to work together to identify the most important issues, make decisions on what action to take and engage with decision makers, be agreed.