

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 29 January 2019 at 11.30 am.

Present: Councillors DEREK WANN, LOIS SPEED, JULIE BELL, KENNY BRAES, COLIN BROWN, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, BEN LAWRIE, ANGUS MACMILLIAN DOUGLAS OBE, MARK McDONALD, DAVID LUMGAIR, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, GAVIN NICOLL, RON STURROCK and BETH WHITESIDE.

Church

Representatives: Mrs LIZ HOWSON

Teacher

Representatives: Mr MIKE CALLAGHAN and Mrs ANNA CHEYNE.

Councillor WANN, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Bob Myles and Tommy Stewart, with Councillors David Lumgair and Gavin Nicoll substituting respectively. An apology for absence was also intimated on behalf of Miss Lesley Hood, Church Representative.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Nicoll declared a non-financial interest in Item 8 (Report No 32/19) in that he was the Convener of Tayside Contracts Joint Committee. He indicated that he would participate in any discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Whiteside declared a non-financial interest in Item 8 (Report No 32/19) in that she was a Board member of Tayside Contracts Joint Committee and that her daughter worked in a Perth and Kinross School meals service for Tayside Contracts. She indicated that she would participate in any discussion and voting on this item.

3. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 6 November 2018 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(b) Staffing Sub-Committee

The minute of meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee of 6 November 2018, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

4. PRESENTATION – YEAR OF YOUNG PEOPLE 2018

The Convener introduced Kaile and Josh to the meeting who each provided an overview of the Year of Young People 2018, from their own perspective. They along with other young people across Angus, had participated in a series of projects and activities, in accordance with the objectives and outcomes of the Year of Young People 2018.

Following questions and answers, members congratulated both Kaile and Josh and thanked them for their attendance and excellent presentations.

5. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 23 OCTOBER 2018 TO 15 JANUARY 2019

There was submitted Report No 34/19 by the Strategic Director – People providing key information to members with regard to services in the People Directorate for the period 23 October 2018 to 15 January 2019 relating to:-

- The Year of the Young People (Schedule 1)
- Education Scotland Inspection of Seaview Primary School & Nursery Class (Schedule 2)
- Education Scotland Inspection of Tealing Primary School (Schedule 3)
- Care Inspectorate Inspection of Supported Lodgings Scheme (Schedule 4)
- Care Inspectorate Inspection of Angus Council Adoption Services (Schedule 5)
- Care Inspectorate Inspection of Angus Council Fostering Service (Schedule 6)

Having heard from the Convener and a number of members, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

6. CONSULTATION REPORT ON STRACATHRO PRIMARY SCHOOL

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 10 May 2018, there was submitted Report No 35/19 by the Strategic Director – People seeking final endorsement of the decision not to close Stracathro Primary School and amend the catchment area of Edzell Primary School.

The Report indicated that on 10 May 2018, Angus Council agreed to stop the formal consultation on the proposed closure of Stracathro Primary School and its Early Learning and Childcare provision and noted that a consultation report would be produced and submitted to a future meeting of the Children and Learning Committee and full Council. Stracathro is a remote primary rural school as defined by the Scottish Government under Section 14 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The school roll had fallen steadily from a peak of thirty children in 2008 to sixteen in September 2018. The consultation period was scheduled to run from 26 February 2018 until 11 May 2018.

The feedback obtained during the consultation period had helped to inform the Council's decision not to proceed with the proposed closure of Stracathro Primary School. Section 2A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 allowed for such a decision to be made following the publication of a consultation report. The Stracathro Primary School Consultation Report which was attached as Appendix 1 to the Report had been prepared to enable the Council to formalise the decision not to close Stracathro (Sections 9 and 11 of the said Act).

Education Scotland undertook a review of the consultation to provide independent and impartial consideration of Angus Council's proposal to close Stracathro Primary School and to amend the Edzell Primary School catchment area. Their report formed part of the Stracathro Primary School Consultation Report which was included at Appendix 1 to the Report. In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Stracathro Primary School Consultation report was issued on 26 October 2018 and comments were invited from consultees by 19 November 2018. During the period to 19 November 2018 no submissions were received.

The Committee agreed to note that Angus Council would formalise the decision taken on 10 May 2018 not to close Stracathro Primary School.

7. COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO LEARNING ESTATE TRANSFORMATION ACROSS TAYSIDE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 14 June 2018, there was submitted Report No 36/19 by the Strategic Director – People detailing opportunities for Perth and Kinross Council, Dundee City Council and Angus Council to work in collaboration in the development of a combined school/learning estate.

The Report indicated that the appropriate Committees of Perth and Kinross, Dundee City and Angus Councils were asked to agree that the respective Executive/Strategic Directors commence informal consultation with stakeholders in conjunction with one another to determine the level of support for a new 3-18 joint integrated community learning campus which could accommodate pupils from all three Local Authorities.

The Report also detailed opportunities for Dundee City Council and Angus Council to collaborate in relation to learning estate matters pertaining in the West Broughty Ferry/Monifieth area. The appropriate committees of Dundee City and Angus Councils were asked to agree that the respective Executive/Strategic Directors commence informal consultation with stakeholders in conjunction with one another on related matters.

Early Tri-Council discussions indicated a shared aspiration to provide the best possible learning environment for delivering relevant twenty first century learning for Tayside's children and young people. The aspiration was consistent with the shared vision and priorities outlined within the Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2017-2020. It was envisaged that learning from the Scottish Schools for the Future Programme to date would inform the potential creation of a modern, vibrant, flexible, Tri-Council 3-18 joint integrated community learning campus. The creation of the school could be instrumental in effectively delivering the pupil entitlements outlined within the Curriculum for Excellence to raise attainment and achievement and meet the needs of all learners.

In order to progress further with the two potential projects, and having heard from the Convener and Councillor Whiteside in support of the Report, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve that Angus Council explored in more detail, working in collaboration with Dundee City Council and Perth and Kinross Council, the practicalities of developing a joint integrated community learning campus;
- (ii) to approve that Dundee City and Angus Councils work in collaboration regarding learning estate matters in the West Broughty Ferry/Monifieth areas;
- (iii) to approve that an informal consultation with the relevant communities in the potentially affected areas across Tayside, proceed; and
- (iv) to instruct the respective Executive/Strategic Directors to prepare a report on the results of the informal consultation and report back to their appropriate Committee on the outcome of the consultation at a future meeting; depending on the outcome of the informal consultation the respective Committees may at that stage be asked to instruct the relevant Executive/Strategic Director to consult formally under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

8. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TAYSIDE MEALS CENTRE (TAY CUISINE)

There was submitted Joint Report No 32/19 by the Head of Finance and Legal and the Head of Schools and Learning summarising the proposal to change and modernise the way primary school and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) meals were delivered across Tayside.

The Report indicated the rationale for the change was predominantly in relation to ongoing meal production capacity pressures arising from the expansion of ELC provision in August 2020. The change that was proposed would also benefit some meal production within secondary schools.

Tayside Contracts currently provided circa 3.5m school meals per year and 210,000 community meals per year. School meals were provided to 152 primary schools across Tayside. The meals in Tayside were produced in 70 production kitchens and transported to 82 schools with dining centres/finishing kitchens.

The current service delivery model has been deemed outdated. It was overly-labour intensive and does not exploit the opportunity now available through advances in food science over recent years which had led to frozen fresh meals now being equal in quality to freshly cooked meals. The cooking and freezing of meals in a facility would further enhance food safety through the greater food safety controls achievable in a single centre as opposed to over 70 kitchens across Tayside. These factors made a strong case for moving to a cook-freeze based centre.

Angus Council is working to deliver the Scottish Government's policy to expand early years provision by August 2020. There would be a requirement to provide a meal for children in early learning provision. The increase in funded provision from 600 hours to 1,140 hours per year was estimated to result in an additional 1.2 million meals per annum being required across Tayside.

An options appraisal exercise had been undertaken to explore how to develop the current provision.

The proposal was to prepare school and community meals through a single Tayside Meal Centre with meals being provided to pupils through the distribution model as outlined in Section 5 of the Report. This would involve providing early learning in primary school meals and elements of the secondary schools menu through this centre. The intention was to also provide the community meals (currently provided by Tay Cuisine) through the model for Dundee City Council only. In the proposed Tayside Meal Centre, there would be a mixture of four different types of school kitchens namely Distribution Hub; On-Site Hub; Mini-Hub and Dining Centre.

Councillor Bell welcomed the Report and highlighted that many more children through the Early Learning and Years would benefit from good nutritional food. In response to a question from Councillor Bell, the Head of Schools and Learning advised that should the Report be approved, that the next phase would include further consideration of the role that local producers could play in supporting school meal delivery.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the content of the Report and agree to proceed with the implementation of a cook-freeze centralised meals production facility at Tay Cuisine (the Tayside Meals Centre), for the delivery of the primary school and ELC meals service; and
- (ii) to note that Angus, Dundee City and Perth and Kinross Councils were progressing the Report within their Councils and would require to seek approval from their respective committees. The joint committee of Tayside Contracts also required to approve the proposal.

9. EARLY YEARS EXPANSION – NEW ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AND APPLICATION PROCESS

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 April 2018, there was submitted Report No 37/19 by the Head of Schools and Learning providing details of the proposed new admissions criteria and application process for early learning and childcare (ELC) placements, and seeking approval to implement the new process from April 2019.

The Report indicated that the local authority ELC settings admit new children, in four intake periods each year in January, April, August and October, with a paper-based application window several months in advance of each intake. Parents and carers had the right to request a place within any local authority or contracted partner ELC setting across Angus, however priority was currently given to children living within primary school catchment areas. Additional criteria currently used for prioritising applications included the child's age and whether or not they had siblings who attended the chosen nursery or primary school.

The Scottish Government's commitment to expand the provision of funded ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year by August 2020 included a number of additional requirements for local authorities, one of which was to ensure flexibility of choice for parents or carers in how they can access their funded entitlement.

The use of catchment areas may be considered a barrier to flexibility, therefore a review of the application and admission process had been undertaken. The proposal was to end the use of school catchment areas as a priority category for the allocation of ELC placements. Catchment areas for primary schools would remain in place. Local authority ELC applications would require to be prioritised on the basis of categories 1 to 7, as outlined in Section 5.2 of the Report, with effect from April 2019.

The new admissions criteria would not be applicable to ELC provision which was funded through contracts with private and voluntary partners, however these providers were contractually and legally obliged to comply with current equality legislation.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the background information and proposals for the implementation of new admissions criteria for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) placements; and
- (ii) to approve the proposals as set out in Section 5 of the Report.

10. PREVENTING AND MANAGING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS IN ANGUS

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of the Education Committee of 25 August 2011, there was submitted Report No 38/19 by the Head of Schools and Learning outlining Angus Council's policy for Head Teachers on Preventing and Managing School Exclusions.

The Report indicated that the policy had been revised following the refresh of the national guidance - Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: Preventing and Managing School Exclusions. The Schools and Learning service was committed to working with all parents/carers, children/young people and partner agencies to ensure that all children and young people receive an education that maximised the opportunity to achieve.

Existing guidance in Angus was contained in the document "Preventing and Managing School Exclusions in Angus – Guidance for Head Teachers", August 2011. Following the introduction of the previous guidance for managing exclusions in Angus, there was a decrease in exclusions in Angus. Exclusions were carefully monitored and over the last two school sessions there has been an increase in the number of exclusions in our secondary schools, the highest rate being 45 exclusions per 1000 young people in 2017/18. Exclusions in the primary sector were less common and last year the number dropped to 6 exclusions per 1000 children from a high of 9 per 1000 in 2015/16.

The Preventing and Managing School Exclusions in Angus policy was designed to ensure a consistent approach across Angus that was in line with the Scottish Government's guidance 'Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017)' and relevant legislation.

The Committee agreed to approve the policy for Head Teachers on Preventing and Managing School Exclusions in Angus, as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report.