

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 25 April 2019 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors DEREK WANN, LOIS SPEED, JULIE BELL, KENNY BRAES, COLIN BROWN, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, ANGUS MACMILLIAN DOUGLAS OBE, MARK McDONALD, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, IAN McLAREN, RON STURROCK and BETH WHITESIDE.

Church

Representatives: Miss LESLEY HOOD and Mr ERIC SUMMERS.

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, Ronnie Proctor MBE and Tommy Stewart, with Councillors David Fairweather, Craig Fotheringham and Ian McLaren substituting respectively. An apology for absence was also intimated on behalf of Mrs Liz Howson, Church Representative.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

The Committee were advised that following Mr David Adams resignation, Mr Eric Summers had been nominated as the Church of Scotland's representative.

The Committee agreed to note the nomination.

4. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 January 2019 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(b) Special Meeting

The minute of the Special meeting of this Committee of 21 February 2019 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(c) Special Appeal Sub-Committee

The minute of meeting of the Special Appeal Sub-Committee of 6 March 2019, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

At this stage in the meeting, the Convener advised that due to transport difficulties, the Angus, Think Before you Type presentation would be heard at the end of the meeting.

5. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 15 JANUARY TO 9 APRIL 2019

There was submitted Report No 124/19 by the Depute Chief Executive providing key information to members with regard to services in the People Directorate for the period 15 January to 9 April 2019 relating to:-

- Children, Families and Justice – Revised Service Model (Schedule 1)
- Education Scotland Inspection of Webster's High School, Kirriemuir (Schedule 2)

- Career Information, Advice and Guidance Services delivered by Skills Development Scotland in Angus; a Report by HM Inspectors dated 12 April 2019 (Schedule 3)

Having heard the Convener and a number of members welcome the positive inspection Reports, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

6. ANGUS SECONDARY SENIOR PHASE SCHOOL ATTAINMENT 2017-2018

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 April 2018, there was submitted Report No 125/19 by the Director of Schools and Learning providing members with a summary of the attainment outcomes in Angus Council Secondary Schools in the Senior Phase for academic session 2017-2018 following the release of the Insight data in February 2019.

The Report acknowledged the sustained attainment demonstrated across some measures and indicated that raising attainment and achievement in Angus could be attributed to the leadership in our schools; improvement in learning and teaching; the systems used for monitoring and tracking young people's progress; the considerable support from staff, parents and partners and the hard work of our young people.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the attainment results detailed in the Report following the February Insight update;
- (ii) to acknowledge the achievements of our young people and the support provided by staff, parents and partners; and
- (iii) to request further attainment Reports annually following the February Insight update.

7. PRIMARY SCHOOL CAPACITIES

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 April 2018, there was submitted Report No 126/19 by the Director of Schools and Learning providing details of the planning and working capacities, and the projected rolls of primary schools for 2019/2020, and seeking approval to extend or remove the caps on Ladyloan, Muirfield, Whitehills, Mattocks, Timmergreens, Warddykes and Woodlands Primary Schools.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the updated school capacities for Ladyloan and Muirfield Primary Schools;
- (ii) to instruct officers to undertake a review of the published capacities;
- (iii) to remove the roll cap from Whitehills Primary School;
- (iv) to approve the roll capping of Mattocks, Timmergreens, Warddykes and Woodlands Primary Schools.

8. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE RATES 2019-2020

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 20 February 2018, there was submitted Report 127/19 by the Director of Schools and Learning seeking approval to increase the hourly rate paid to contracted private and voluntary early learning and childcare providers and childminders for three and four year olds for the academic year 2019-2020, in line with the requirements of the Early Years Expansion Programme. The Report also sought approval to implement the same hourly rate as chargeable to parents or carers of children who were choosing to access an additional year of early learning and childcare without funding.

The Report indicated that a key element of the expansion of early years was the payment of a sustainable rate for funded early learning and childcare. The revenue grant allocated to Angus Council by the Scottish Government included provision for a significant increase to the rate for three and four year olds. The Angus rate for two year olds compared well to other local authorities so there were no plans to increase the rate at the present time.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the proposal to increase the hourly rate paid by the Council for funded early learning and childcare for three and four year olds in the academic year 2019-2020 to £4.92;
- (ii) to approve the implementation of a chargeable hourly rate of £4.92 for parents or carers who had chosen to defer their child's entry to primary schools without funding in academic year 2019-2020; and
- (iii) to note that the hourly rate paid by the Council for funded early learning and childcare for eligible two year olds in the academic year 2019-2020 would remain unchanged at £6.51.

9. EARLY YEARS EXPANSION PROGRAMME – UPDATE

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 January 2019, there was submitted Report No 128/19 by the Director of Schools and Learning providing an update on the progress towards the expansion of early learning and childcare provision in Angus from 600 hours to 1140 hours per annum by August 2020.

The expansion programme had been divided into three main workstreams, namely Capital Expansion, Workforce Expansion and Development, and Childminder Market Development and an update in terms of all three workstreams were provided within the Report.

Regular engagement with partner providers was taking place including detailed discussions regarding proposed delivery models from August 2020. These discussions were important in supporting the Council to finalise its own workforce plan, ensuring that a sufficient variety of provision was available in each Angus locality. The programme had received very positive feedback at both local and national level for its approach to working in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the current position with regards to progress on the Angus implementation of the national expansion of Early Learning and Childcare by August 2020; and
- (ii) to note that further updates, including the results of the grant application scheme and a further annual update, would be the subject of future Reports to this Committee.

10. REVIEW OF ALLOWANCES FOR CHILDREN UNDER TWO

There was submitted Report No 142/19 by the Director of Children, Families and Justice proposing changes to allowances payable to foster and kinship carers with children under two years old.

The current arrangement was that an additional holiday allowance was paid to foster and kinship carers at the start of the school summer holiday, regardless of a child's age. Consultation had taken place with carers on whether this arrangement best met the needs of the youngest children.

To ensure that funding was better targeted to improve children's experiences, it was proposed to stop automatic payment of holiday allowances at the start of the school summer holidays for children under the age of two and to introduce a scheme to enable approved foster carers and eligible kinship carers to apply to have specific additional costs paid during the school summer holiday period to a maximum of the equivalent of the two weeks holiday allowance. Carers making such an application would need to provide evidence that the additional expense was in relation to the child, which may include taking the child on holiday or admission to certain activities.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to cease the automatic payment of holiday allowances for children under the age of two with immediate effect;

(ii) to introduce discretionary payments for children under two years, with an implementation date of 1 July 2019; and

(iii) to amend the foster carers contracts accordingly.

11. PRESENTATION – YOUTH LED ANTI-BULLYING CAMPAIGN: ANGUS, THINK BEFORE YOU TYPE

Mrs Audrey Osborne introduced the staff and pupils involved in the ‘Angus, Think Before you Type’ campaign which was a joint anti-bullying campaign between Angus Council, Respectme, and NSPCC Scotland. She advised that Angus Council was the first local authority to work in partnership with the NSPCC and Respectme on the campaign.

Grace and Rachel, two pupils from the youth advisory group, provided an overview of the effects of online bullying, their research in this area and spoke about the significant impact bullying can have on the mental health and wellbeing of our young people. The campaign aimed to raise awareness of the issues faced by young people who received abusive messages. A series of workshops and focus groups, led by the pupils, had further explored the effects of online bullying and supported a better understanding of the issues faced and the role that young people, parents, school staff and the wider community could play in preventing and responding to online bullying.

Following questions and answers, the Convener and members of the Committee congratulated both Grace and Rachel for their excellent presentation and thanked all the pupils involved in the campaign for their attendance.