

# ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** hosted at Angus House, Orchardbank Business Park, Forfar and held remotely on Tuesday 16 February 2021 at 2.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillors DEREK WANN, LOIS SPEED, JULIE BELL, KENNY BRAES, COLIN BROWN BEM, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, ALEX KING, BEN LAWRIE, ANGUS MACMILLAN DOUGLAS OBE, BOB MYLES, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, GAVIN NICOL, RON STURROCK and BETH WHITESIDE.

## **Church**

**Representative:** Mr ERIC SUMMERS.

## **Teacher**

**Representatives:** Mr MIKE CALLAGHAN and Mrs ANNA CHEYNE.

Councillor WANN, Convener, in the Chair.

### **1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Tommy Stewart with Councillor Gavin Nicol substituting. An apology for absence was also intimated on behalf of Miss Lesley Hood, Church Representative.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 17 November 2020 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

### **4. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 22 DECEMBER TO 2 FEBRUARY 2021**

There was submitted Report No 38/21 by the Depute Chief Executive providing key information to members with regards to services in the Children, Families and Justice Service for the period 22 December 2020 to 2 February 2021 relating to:-

- Introduction of the Secure Base Model of Care (Schedule 1) and
- Renaming the Throughcare Aftercare Team to Horizon (Schedule 2).

Having heard Councillor Speed welcome the Introduction of the Secure Base Model of Care and Councillor Bell in relation to the measurable outcomes (Schedule 1), and Councillor Whiteside welcome the involvement of the young people in the renaming of the Throughcare Aftercare Team (Schedule 2), the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

### **5. REMOTE LEARNING GUIDANCE – JANUARY 2021**

There was submitted Report No 39/21 by the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning advising members of the production of remote learning guidance, in line with national guidance, following the decision of the Scottish Government that most school pupils would learn remotely.

The Angus Council Remote Learning guidance, a copy of which was provided in the Appendix to the Report, had been provided to support schools in making arrangements that ensured a level of consistency in the experience for all learners. The guidance accepted that each school context was unique in terms of the demand for key worker places and in-school learning, staff availability and digital expertise. The guidance contained links to enable staff to access online support with the delivery of remote learning, and a home learning portal had also been developed for parents.

Following questions, and having heard a number of members commend the Director, Head Teachers, Teachers and staff in terms of their work to assist remote learning, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the Angus Council Remote Learning Guidance, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (ii) to approve the Angus Council Remote Learning Guidance;
- (iii) to note that the Angus Council Remote Learning Guidance outlined key expectations for the duration of the school closure period; and
- (iv) to request the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to undertake an evaluation of remote learning and to present a Report of findings to a future meeting of this Committee once the schools had reopened.

## **6. TEMPORARY AMENDED OPERATING HOURS AT STRATHMORE CENTRE**

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 17 November 2020, there was submitted Report No 40/21 by the Director of Children, Families and Justice setting out proposals to continue the amended operating hours for Strathmore Centre.

The Report indicated that this was the second request to Committee following approval in November 2020 (Report No 278/20) to amend the operating hours until 31 January 2021. In order to continue to be able to offer residential respite to the maximum number of children and young people, whilst complying with the necessary infection control guidance, it was proposed that the Strathmore Centre continued to be open on a full-time basis for an indefinite period with the requirement that the Director of Children, Families and Justice keep the opening hours of the provision under review and to vary them in accordance with operational need.

Feedback from some of the families who used the centre had been extremely positive with a number of comments received as to how vital the ongoing service was to families.

Having heard from Councillors Speed and Whiteside welcome the Report, and further commend the staff and families, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the decision of the Director of Children, Families and Justice, using her delegated powers as Chief Social Work Officer, to continue to amend the operating hours and operate Strathmore Centre on a full-time basis from 31 January 2021 until the date of this Committee due to continued restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- (ii) to approve the continued full-time operation of the Strathmore Centre from the date of this Committee for an indefinite period;
- (iii) to require the Director of Children, Families and Justice to keep the opening hours of provision under review and to vary these in accordance with operational need; and
- (iv) to note the feedback from some of the children and families who had accessed the service during the Covid-19 pandemic.