

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 30 March 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, MARK SALMOND, BOB MYLES, DAVID LUMGAIR, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, RON STURROCK and BETH WHITESIDE.

Church

Representative: Mr ERIC SUMMERS.

Teacher

Representative: Mr MIKE CALLAGHAN.

Councillor WANN, Convener, in the Chair.

Prior to the commencement of the business, the Convener reminded members that it was currently the pre-election period in light of the forthcoming Scottish Parliament Elections on 6 May. All members had received a copy of the Council's pre-election guidance and particular reference was made to Section 5 of the guidance which covered publicity including online Council or Committee meetings. He reminded members to be mindful of the legal requirements in their discussion and debate during the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Angus MacMillan Douglas OBE, Ronnie Proctor MBE and Tommy Stewart, with Councillors Mark Salmond, David Lumgair and Craig Fotheringham substituting respectively. Apologies for absence were also intimated on behalf of Miss Lesley Hood, Church Representative and Mrs Anna Cheyne, Teacher Representative.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 16 February 2021 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(b) Special Meeting

The minute of Special meeting of this Committee of 4 March 2021 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(c) Staffing Sub-Committee

The minute of meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee of this Committee of 16 February 2021, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

4. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 2 FEBRUARY TO 16 MARCH 2021

There was submitted Report No 108/21 by the Depute Chief Executive providing key information to members with regards to services in the Education & Lifelong Learning and Communities Directorate for the period 2 February to 16 March 2021 relating to:-

- Access to Counselling in Schools (Schedule 1) and
- Communities Team Online Safety – Guide for Parents and Carers (Schedule 2).

Following questions from Councillors Speed, Lawrie, Bell and Devine in relation to the Access to Counselling in Schools (Schedule 1), and having heard Mrs Osbourne in response, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

5. LEARNING ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE – MONIFIETH HIGH SCHOOL

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 17 December 2020, there was submitted Report No 109/21 by the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning providing an update on the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme and the implications for the Council, and on progress more generally with the replacement of Monifieth High School.

The Report indicated that funding for a replacement Monifieth High School had been confirmed by the Scottish Government as part of Phase 2 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme.

A project board had since been established, a consultation plan developed, and engagement with key stakeholders was currently underway. The outcomes of the consultation would support the development of the detailed design brief and a further Report on the outcomes would be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

Having heard from a number of members, and following questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the inclusion of a replacement Monifieth High School in Phase 2 of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme;
- (ii) to note the progress update for the Monifieth High School project; and
- (iii) to note that further reports would be brought to a future meeting of this Committee prior to the summer recess.

At this stage in the meeting, the Convener intimated that Mrs Victoria Smith was leaving the post of Service Leader – Early Years & Early Intervention, and was today attending her last meeting of the Children and Learning Committee. He thanked Mrs Smith for her commitment to the children of Angus, and wished her every success for the future.

6. ADDITIONAL YEAR OF FUNDED EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE AND EARLY ENTRY TO PRIMARY ONE

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 January 2019, there was submitted Report No 110/21 by the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning providing information regarding changes to the entitlement for families who wished to access an additional year of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) and seeking approval for the implementation of a new policy regarding requests for early entry to primary one.

The Report indicated that on 7 December 2020, Scottish Government laid legislation before the Scottish Parliament which meant that, from August 2023, all children who deferred entry into Primary One would automatically be able to access funded ELC without the need to apply for funding.

From August 2021, five local authorities in Scotland would pilot the additional year of funded ELC for all children with a deferred school start date, with Angus being one of the five pilot areas in the first year. During the pilot scheme, the Scottish Government would provide funding for all of the additional ELC provided to children deferring their entry to primary one.

As a pilot local authority, Angus Council would have an opportunity to inform learning at national level and help to shape the wider roll-out of the new entitlement in 2023. The council would be involved in collecting and evaluating data on the impact of the pilot on ELC capacities and financial implications, and through local learning would contribute to the national communication strategy to support parental choice. As a result of the pilot, a change to the application categories was required, as detailed in Section 4.6 of the Report.

The Report also indicated that there was currently no agreed and published Angus policy for dealing with requests for early entry to primary one. In the absence of an agreed and published policy, the process of refusing such requests from parents and carers was complex.

The publication of Angus Council's position on early entry to primary one, along with clarification that all such requests would be refused, would simplify this process and provide a clearer context for any discussions with parents and carers on how their child's learning would be supported and extended within the ELC environment.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the national plan to broaden the criteria for eligibility for an additional year of funded ELC from August 2023, and Angus Council's role in the pilot scheme commencing in 2021;
- (ii) to note the change made to the ELC application categories as a result of the pilot scheme; and
- (iii) to confirm the Angus policy that all requests for early entry of children to primary one would be declined, with immediate effect.

7. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND PLACING REQUEST POLICY

There was submitted Report No 111/21 by the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning seeking approval to review existing procedures for admissions and placing requests to Angus Council schools, and to bring forward a consultation proposal in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

The Report indicated that the current published information in relation to Angus Council admissions and placing request procedures was lacking in detail and it was therefore proposed to undertake a comprehensive review of the admissions and placing requests procedures with a view to establishing a coherent admissions policy document which clearly set out all relevant information for parents and carers. This would enable informed choices to be made when choosing a school and the revised procedures would also afford the Council greater flexibility when considering placing requests.

Under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Act) Scotland 2010 a statutory consultation would be required as part of the development of a revised admissions policy. A formal proposal paper containing an Educational Benefits Statement would be prepared for consideration by this Committee and, if approved, for publication.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the proposal to undertake a comprehensive review of the current Angus Council admissions and placing requests procedures; and
- (ii) to note that the consultation proposals for a revised admissions policy would be brought before a future meeting of this Committee for approval.

8. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CAPACITIES

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of the Special Education Committee of 23 April 2020, there was submitted Report No 112/21 by the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning providing details on school capacities and the projected rolls for academic session 2021/22 as at 22 March 2021, and seeking approval for the application, extension or removal of roll caps on the identified schools and to amend the capacities for two schools, all as detailed in Section 5 of the Report.

Following a number of questions from members, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the roll capping of Glamis Primary School, Liff Primary School, Mattocks Primary School, Seaview Primary School and Woodlands Primary School;
- (ii) to approve the removal of the cap from Warddykes Primary School and Whitehills Primary School;
- (iii) to approve the revised capacities for Edzell Primary School and Liff Primary School; and

- (iv) to approve the continued temporary reduction of the S1 intake at Monifieth High School.

9. SCHOOL CONVEYANCE CONTRACTS

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 May 2019, there was submitted Joint Report No 113/21 by the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and the Director of Infrastructure seeking authority for the procurement of school conveyance contracts which were due for renewal and where the maximum value of the contract was above the Chief Officer's delegated authority limits.

The Report indicated that school conveyance contracts were generally tendered on a three-yearly basis with an option to extend on an annual basis for up to a maximum five years. Contracts in the Forfar and Kirriemuir catchment areas were due for renewal in the academic session beginning in August 2021 as were a number of contracts for children with additional support needs.

The estimated total cost for the provision of home to school conveyance contracts, as detailed in the Report, was in the region of £5million over the whole life of the contracts, including any option to extend based on the previous relevant expenditure.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to authorise the Director of Infrastructure to procure the school conveyance contracts due for renewal in July 2021 for a period of up to five years and indicative estimated value of £5,000,000, as detailed in the Report; and
- (ii) to note that subject to the above, the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Director of Legal & Democratic Services, would award the contracts on the terms and conditions deemed acceptable in accordance with Financial Regulations.