

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 18 May 2021 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors DEREK WANN, RON STURROCK, JULIE BELL, KENNY BRAES, COLIN BROWN BEM, LYNNE DEVINE, ALEX KING, BRIAN BOYD, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, ANGUS MACMILLAN DOUGLAS OBE, BOB MYLES, GAVIN NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, LOIS SPEED 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

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Ben Lawrie and David Lumgair, with Councillors Brian Boyd and Craig Fotheringham substituting respectively. 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 30 March 2021 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

4. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 16 MARCH TO 4 MAY 2021

There was submitted Report No 142/21 by the Depute Chief Executive providing key information to members with regards to services in the Children, Families and Justice Directorate for the period 16 March to 4 May 2021 in relation to The Promise Plan 21-24 and Corporate Parenting in Angus (Schedule 1).

Having heard from Councillor Bell in relation to seeking the views of young people and from Councillor Proctor who very much welcomed the information schedule, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

5. EDUCATION RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE UPDATE

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 17 November 2020, there was submitted Report No 143/21 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning providing an update on the response and recovery process for early learning and childcare settings and schools in Angus.

The Report provided detailed information in terms of early learning and childcare, primary and secondary schools, senior phase attainment, additional teachers and support staff, digital learning and teaching, support to children and families, and also provided information in terms of the way forward and future proposals.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to the counselling service, the employment of early years practitioners and play-based pedagogy, the increase in the number of children eligible for free school meals, staffing for additional roles, and the predominant issues reported by the psychology service.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the update as set out in Sections 4 and 5 of the Report, and requested that the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning prepare further updates as required;
- (ii) to approve the employment of circa 20FTE additional teachers and circa 10.5FTE additional support staff at an estimated cost of £1,171,000, and the delegation of education recovery annex A and B funding to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to meet the costs;
- (iii) to approve the delegation of up to £1,258,000 education recovery grant funding to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning for the planning of expenditure on additional staffing;
- (iv) to approve the delegation of up to £335,000 summer holiday activity grant funding to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning;
- (v) to request that the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning provide a further report to a future meeting of this Committee detailing how the above monies had been deployed;
- (vi) to approve the delegation of up to £2,151,000 education logistics grant funding to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning and to note the plans for expenditure, including the capitalisation of £35,000 to meet IT costs; and
- (vii) to approve the delegation of up to £300,000 education recovery annex A funding to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning and to note the capitalisation of the funding to purchase Chromebooks and iPads to meet an immediate need.

6. ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL 2021

There was submitted Report No 144/21 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning providing information regarding the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) and the arrangements for quality assurance that would support schools in awarding provisional grades for National Qualifications in session 2020-2021.

The Report indicated that in October 2020, following the publication of the Priestly Review and considering the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Deputy First Minister had announced the suspension of the National 5 examinations diet. An Alternative Certification Model for National 5 qualifications was outlined based on teacher and lecturer judgements supported by assessment resources and quality assurance. Further changes were made in December 2020 indicating that there would be no external assessments of Higher or Advanced Higher courses and as a result, the entire 2021 National Qualifications examination diet was cancelled and replaced by the ACM.

The SQA had published guidance for schools to support staff with awarding provisional grades for each learner and all Angus teachers delivering national qualifications had completed the relevant SQA subject-specific courses on assessment and moderation. They had worked collaboratively to ensure that assessment materials met the national standard and were internally verified before use.

Having noted that the ACM arrangements and guidance in Angus had been endorsed and commended by HMle during a national review, the Convener, on behalf of Committee, thanked the staff for all their hard work.

Thereafter, following questions from Councillors Whiteside and Bell in relation to the arrangements, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the Angus Alternative Certification Model Guidance as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (ii) to note the quality assurance process outlined in the Angus Alternative Certification Model.

7. GRANT FUNDING TO SUPPORT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

There was submitted Joint Report No 145/21 by the Director of Children, Families and Justice, and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning advising members that Scottish

Government had made grants available to support children, young people and families with the impact of Covid-19, and providing further information in relation to the spending of the 2 one-off grants (Winter Plan for Social Protection and Mental Health and Wellbeing Covid-19 impact). The Report also sought approval of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Initial Plan.

The Report indicated that monies had been allocated to plan and deliver a mental health and wellbeing programme for children and young people over the next 3 years. These short-term monies had been allocated to different departments of the Council and to ensure integrated planning and best use of the available resources, the Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Education Officer had collaborated to deliver spending plans to meet a range of needs.

Having heard from a number of members in relation to the support being offered to children, young people and families particularly in relation to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and those awaiting assessment, and having heard from Mrs Osborne, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the spending plan for Winter Plan for Social Protection – Funding for Vulnerable Children and to approve the carry forward;
- (ii) to note the spending plan for Mental Health and Wellbeing impacts of Covid-19;
- (iii) to approve the Angus Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Initial Plan; and
- (iv) that information to be sought from Tayside colleagues in CAMHS regarding developments to support children and young people, in light of the recent review, and additional funding to NHS and that this be provided to all elected members.

8. SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS 2022-25 – CONSULTATION OUTCOME

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 17 November 2020, there was submitted Report No 146/21 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning providing an overview of the outcomes of a consultation exercise with parents and carers, school staff and unions, and seeking approval for school holiday dates for 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025.

The Committee agreed to approve the school terms and holiday dates for 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

9. EARLY YEARS EXPANSION PROGRAMME UPDATE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of the Special Education Committee of 23 April 2020, there was submitted Report No 147/21 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning providing members with a final update on progress in the expansion of the early learning and childcare (ELC) entitlement in Angus, from 600 hours to 1140 hours per annum.

Scottish Government had confirmed in 2020 that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the legislative requirement on local authorities to offer up to 1140 hours of funded ELC to all eligible children by August 2020 had been temporarily withdrawn. Following a review of the status of the expansion programme across Angus, it was agreed that Angus Council would offer the new funded entitlement to all eligible children as planned. This commitment was fulfilled in August 2020, one year before the new national implementation date of August 2021.

The Report highlighted that the Angus programme was nationally considered to have used innovative practice in different areas of the expansion, and the team had been asked to present the Angus approach to other local authorities at a number of national events.

A final update on the financial activity within the programme for financial year 2020/21 was appended to the Report.

Having heard the Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thank the Project Manager and the Early Years Expansion team on the completion of the project, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and

- (ii) to note that as the most significant elements of the programme were now complete, this would be the final annual update on the early years expansion in Angus.

10. TAYSIDE PLAN FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES – ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 September 2020, there was submitted Report No 148/21 by the Depute Chief Executive seeking approval to submit the 2019-20 Annual Report to Scottish Government. The Committee were also asked to note the contents of the Tayside Children's Rights Summary Report 2017 – 2020.

The Report indicated that every local authority and its relevant health board was required to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority and to publish regular updates on the plan. The current plan was intended to run to March 2020 however due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, this Committee had approved continuation of the current plan to March 2021. A further Report on the Tayside plan covering the period up to end of March 2021 would be presented to a future meeting.

The annual report covered the period April 2019 to March 2020 and reported on collaborative work across the region. The report highlighted the work undertaken against the 5 strategic priorities identified in the plan and the progress of each of the priority groups who were charged with delivering improvements in the area.

Following approval of the Angus Children's Rights Report 2017-2020, in addition to the local report and as part of collaborative arrangements, a summary report for Tayside had been produced. The Children's Rights in Tayside summary report, as detailed in Appendix 2, covered the period April 2017 to March 2020 and highlighted some of the work that had been done across the Tayside Improvement Collaborative to further children's rights and give full effect to the United Nations on the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Having heard the Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thank Mrs Lee and her team for all their work on the preparation of the Plans, and from a number of members, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the annual report on Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2019-2020; and
- (ii) to note the Tayside Children's Rights Summary Report 2017 – 2020.