

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 13 June 2017 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors MARK SALMOND, DEREK WANN, JULIE BELL, KENNY BRAES, COLIN BROWN, LYNNE DEVINE, BEN LAWRIE, ANGUS MACMILLIAN DOUGLAS OBE, MARK MCDONALD, BOB MYLES, RICHARD MOORE, LOIS SPEED, TOMMY STEWART, RON STURROCK and BETH WHITESIDE.

Teacher

Representatives: Mrs ANNA CHEYNE.

Councillor SALMOND, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Ronnie Proctor MBE with Councillor Richard Moore substituting. Apologies for absence were also intimated on behalf of Mr Mike Callaghan and Miss Lesley Hood.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of Angus Council of 16 May 2017, the Committee agreed to note the members appointed to this Committee.

The Committee also noted that Mr David Adams and Miss Lesley Hood had been appointed as Church Representatives on behalf of the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church respectively.

4. CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE - REMIT

There was submitted and noted the remit of the Children and Learning Committee.

5. APPOINTMENTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES

There was submitted Report No 184/17 by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services dealing with the appointment of Sub-Committees of this Committee.

The Committee agreed:-

(i) to appoint, in terms of Standing Orders 32 and 33, the following members to the undernoted Sub-Committees:-

- School Attendance Sub-Committee – Councillor Salmond, Convener, Councillor Wann, Vice-Convener and one Parent Council representative;
- Special Cases Sub-Committee – Councillor Salmond, Convener, Councillor Wann, Vice-Convener and Councillor Braes;
- Staffing Sub-Committee - Councillor Salmond, Convener, Councillor Wann, Vice-Convener and Councillor Devine;
- Education Records Review Sub-Committee – Councillor Salmond, Convener, Councillor Wann, Vice-Convener and Councillor Whiteside in the first instance and thereafter three members of the Committee on a rotational basis;
- Executive Sub-Committee - Councillor Salmond, Convener, Councillor Wann, Vice-Convener and Councillor Devine;
- Special Appeals Sub-Committee - Convener and Councillors Bell, Devine, Myles and Speed.

- (ii) to note the remit of each of these Sub-Committees as detailed in the Report, and that they would act with full delegated powers;
- (iii) to note the membership of the Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers (under the current constitution);
- (iv) to note the statutory position in relation to the Education Appeal Committee and to confirm its composition, as detailed in the Report;
- (v) to note the statutory position in relation to the Social Work Complaints Review Committee and to confirm its composition, as detailed in the Report; and
- (vi) to note that Disclosure Scotland checks required to be undertaken on the members of the Education Appeal Committee, as detailed in Section 5 of the Report.

6. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 February 2017 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(b) Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

The minute of meeting of the Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers of 22 February 2017, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**);

7. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 6 FEBRUARY TO 30 MAY 2017

There was submitted Report No 185/17 by the Strategic Director – People providing key information to members with regard to services delivered in the Children and Learning Directorate for the period 6 February to 30 May 2017.

Having heard from a number of members in relation to Schedules 1-6, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

8. ANGUS SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTAINMENT 2015-2016

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 17 May 2016, there was submitted Report No 186/17 by the Strategic Director – People providing members with a summary of the attainment outcomes in Angus Secondary Schools in the Senior Phase for academic session 2015-2016 following the release of the final Insight data in February 2016.

The Report indicated that attainment had been maintained or improved across almost all indicators with attainment in S6 being the highest on record. Secondary Schools had set challenging targets for the 2016-17 exam diet and staff working with the schools would continue to track and monitor schools' progress towards achieving or improving upon these targets. Performance in literacy and numeracy in Angus continued to be better than the virtual comparators and national results.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the attainment results as 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 receive further updates on Insight data.

9. DIGITAL STRATEGY 2017-2020

There was submitted Report No 187/17 by the Strategic Director – People outlining a digital strategy for the Children and Learning Directorate to ensure that they were fully equipped to meet digital expectations.

The Report indicated that this was the first digital strategy that had been prepared for children and learning functions and it took account of the Council's digital strategy and the development of agile working arrangements. The Directorate had a range of systems, infrastructure and technology available however there was not a co-ordinated approach to the development of the digital infrastructure. Implementation of the strategy would be phased and the focus over the next two years would be to ensure that schools were connected to the Internet, based on the agreed standard, and to endeavour to have the appropriate wifi coverage to support the curriculum and new ways of working.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the digital strategy for 2017-2020, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the focus on enhancing connectivity and wifi provision during 2017-2019.

10. EARLY YEARS STRATEGY 2017-2020

There was submitted Report No 188/17 by the Strategic Director – People seeking approval of an Early Years Strategy which set out the vision for our youngest children and their families.

The Report indicated that the purpose of the strategy was to improve opportunities for our youngest citizens and in so doing, the Council was committed to making Angus the best place in Scotland for children to grow, learn and thrive.

The Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2017 – 2020 highlighted the importance of targeting support towards the early years and addressing the key issues that could act as barriers to children and young people achieving their full potential.

The Committee agreed to approve the Early Years Strategy 2017-2020, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

11. SCHOOL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 10 November 2015, there was submitted Report No 189/17 by the Strategic Director – People seeking approval of a School Investment Strategy which set out the vision for Angus' learning environments.

The purpose of the strategy was to consider the vision of our learning environment in the context of sustainability and future demands on the school estate and to develop a framework which would make the best use of resources. The current school estate would be reviewed against the approved strategy and a further Report brought back to this Committee which would identify a five year plan with indicative costs, a consultation plan, a 10-year programme and a 30-year strategic plan. This approach would ensure that there was a comprehensive and transparent strategy covering all schools in Angus.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the proposed School Investment Strategy, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (ii) that implementation plans covering a 5, 10 and 30 year period be brought back to this Committee; and
- (iii) to authorise the Strategic Director – People to make necessary minor amendments to the draft School Investment Strategy and associated documents arising from the Strategic Environmental Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Appraisal process.

12. CHANGES TO STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS ACT 2000

There was submitted Report No 190/17 by the Chief Education Officer providing details of changes to the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 and seeking approval for the development and implementation of new annual planning and reporting processes in order to comply with the new statutory guidance.

The Report indicated that the amendments to the Act placed three new requirements on Education authorities, namely, to reduce inequalities of educational outcomes experienced by pupils, to achieve the strategic priorities contained within the National Improvement Framework and the introduction of new annual and reporting duties.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to instruct the Chief Education Officer to ensure that an education authority Annual Plan, in line with statutory guidance contained within Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, as amended by the Education Scotland Act, 2016, was published annually;
- (ii) to request the Chief Education Officer to present the plan to this Committee for scrutiny prior to publication;
- (iii) that the first plan be presented to this Committee in August 2017;
- (iv) to instruct the Chief Education Officer to ensure that an evaluation report on progress with the education authority Annual Plan be published annually;
- (v) to request the Chief Education Officer to present the report to this Committee for scrutiny prior to publication; and
- (vi) that the first annual report be presented to this Committee in August 2018.

13. SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS 2019/2020, 2020/2021 AND 2021/2022

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 May 2015, there was submitted Report No 191/17 by the Head of Schools and Learning seeking approval for a consultation exercise on proposals for the 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 school terms and holiday dates.

The Report indicated that it was the duty of the Council to set a schedule of school terms and holiday dates. These dates must be set following consultation and had to comprise a total pupil school year of 190 days, unless exceptional circumstances applied. In addition, the Council had to set aside five days within the school year for the purposes of in-service training for staff.

It was therefore proposed that a consultation exercise be undertaken inviting comments on the specific issues detailed in paragraph 5 of the Report.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to authorise a consultation exercise on the draft schedule of school terms and holiday dates for sessions 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, as detailed in the Appendices to the Report; and
- (ii) to note that the outcomes of the consultation exercise would be the subject of a future report to this Committee.

14. CONTRACTS WITH VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND FOR THE PROVISION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE 2017/2018

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 12 April 2016, there was submitted Report No 192/17 by the Strategic Director – People seeking approval of the proposed contracts with voluntary sector providers for children's services and providing details of other third party agreements for information.

The Report indicated that entering into the contracts would help ensure the provision of a range of essential services through partnership working. Working in partnership with the voluntary sector was essential to the provision of effective and efficient services and brought a range of added benefits for the people of Angus in terms of sharing skills and experience, generating new insights and solutions, and attracting additional sources of revenue funding. In a number of instances, external funding from other agencies was obtained by the providers on the strength of the commitment shown by the Council.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the contracts for children's services with voluntary sector providers for 2017/18 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report, and to authorise the Head of Corporate Quality and Performance to enter into these contracts on behalf of Angus Council; and
- (ii) to approve the award of contracts to providers of Early Learning and Childcare services for 2017/18 as detailed in Appendix 2 to the Report, without a tendering exercise taking place on the grounds detailed in Financial Regulation 16.24, and to authorise the Head of Corporate Quality and Performance to enter into these contracts on behalf of Angus Council.

15. REPORT ON THE ANGUS ADOPTION AGENCY AND THE FOSTERING PANEL – ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 17 May 2016, there was submitted Report No 193/17 by the Strategic Director – People advising members of the production of the Angus Adoption Agency and Fostering Panel Annual Report.

The Report highlighted the Council's success over several years in providing an effective service for children, foster carers and adoptive parents and noted the demand on the resources as well as services provided.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to endorse the Angus Adoption Agency and Fostering Panel Annual Report as appended to the Report; and
- (ii) to support the future plans, as detailed within the Annual Report.

16. REVIEW OF FOSTER CARE SKILLS BASED SCHEME FEES

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 10 January 2017, there was submitted Report No 194/17 by the Strategic Director – People seeking approval of the implementation of a revised fee structure for foster carers.

The Report indicated that foster carers were paid a fee for caring for each child in their care with the level of fee dependent on where a foster carer was placed on the skills based scheme. The level reflected their skills, experience and ability to meet children's needs however, following consultation with carers during the skills based scheme review, an imbalance in fee levels was highlighted across the scheme. It was therefore proposed that the fees be increased. The revised fee structure provided uplift to fees payable at all levels of the skills based scheme which would help keep the Angus Fostering Service competitive and improve ability to attract and retain carers. The proposed changes to the fees payable where additional placements were offered would promote the placement of sibling groups where appropriate. The proposed changes would also align the Angus fee structure more closely with neighbouring authorities.

The Committee agreed to approve the revised fee structure from 1 July 2017, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

17. SHARED CARE MODEL WITH CHILDMINDERS PILOT – FORFAR 2017/2018

There was submitted Report No 195/17 by the Strategic Director – People seeking approval of the proposed piloting of a shared care model for childminders in the Forfar area and for the contracts for the service to be entered into without the public advertisement of the contract opportunity.

The Report indicated that the Scottish Government had made a commitment to deliver 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare to all three and four year olds, and eligible two year olds, by 2020. In response to this commitment, Angus Council were looking to offer parents flexible, affordable provision for children that best met the needs of the families and, as part of this provision, were working to develop a shared care model with childminders commencing

with a pilot in the Forfar area. The shared care model would add childminding to the range of ways in which childcare could be delivered and would allow parents to access care flexibly from a number of settings.

Currently there was no shared care model of service with childminders in Angus and it was proposed that Forfar would be the location for a pilot of a shared care model with childminders. As all childminders in Forfar had been consulted regarding the proposals it was proposed not to further advertise the contract opportunity on the basis that adequate market testing had already taken place.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the proposed piloting of a shared care model for childminders in the Forfar area and to authorise the Head of Corporate Quality and Performance to enter into contracts for the service;
- (ii) to approve an exemption in accordance with section 16.24.10(g) of the Financial Regulations to allow the entering into of these contracts without the contract opportunity being advertised on the basis that there had already been sufficient market testing of the proposal; and
- (iii) to authorise the Head of Corporate Quality and Performance to enter into contracts with individual childminders for the provision of this service following competitive process and on the basis as detailed in the Report.

18. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee resolved, in terms of Standing Order 28(2), that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item so as to avoid the disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Paragraph 1.

19. HOMOLOGATION OF A DECISION TO APPOINT THE RELATIVE OF A CHIEF OFFICER

There was submitted Report No 196/17 by the Head of Schools of Learning seeking homologation of the decision to appoint a candidate to the post of Teacher of Primary Classes on a permanent basis.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations, as detailed in the Report.