

## ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 10 January 2017 at 2.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillors SHEENA WELSH, LYNNE DEVINE, COLIN BROWN, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, MARTYN GEDDES, SHEILA HANDS, JIM HOUSTON, DAVID MAY, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, DONALD MORRISON, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, MARK SALMOND, EWAN SMITH, IAN MCLAREN and BRENDA DURNO.

**Church**

**Representatives:** Mr BILL SIMPSON.

**Teacher**

**Representatives:** Mrs ANNA CHEYNE and Mr JOHN PRATTI.

Councillor WELSH, Convener, in the Chair.

**1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Margaret Thomson and Paul Valentine with Councillors Ian McLaren and Brenda Durno substituting respectively.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**3. CHILDREN AND LEARNING – EXECUTIVE SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted that a number of Complaints had been lodged in terms of the Social Work (Representations Procedure) (Scotland) Directions 1996. As it may not be possible for the recommendations of the Complaints Review Committee (CRC) to be considered by this Committee in early 2017, it was recommended that delegated authority be given to the Executive Sub-Committee to consider the recommendations of the CRC, on this occasion only.

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Sub-Committee to consider the recommendations of the CRC on this occasion only.

**4. MINUTES**

**(a) Previous Meeting**

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 8 November 2016 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

**(b) Staffing Sub-Committee**

The minute of meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee of 8 November 2016, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**);

**(c) Special Appeal Sub-Committee**

The minute of meeting of the Special Appeal Sub-Committee of 14 November 2016, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX II**);

**(d) Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers**

The minute of meeting of the Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers of 23 November 2016, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX III**).

## **5. INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 24 OCTOBER TO 12 DECEMBER 2016**

There was submitted and noted Report No 4/17 by the Strategic Director – Children and Learning providing key information to members with regard to services delivered in the Children and Learning Directorate for the period 24 October to 12 December 2016.

## **6. CHANGES TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL WEEK**

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 8 November 2016, there was submitted Report No 5/17 by the Strategic Director – Children and Learning detailing the progress made in planning for the previously agreed changes to the secondary school week, summarising the work undertaken with all eight Angus secondary schools and seeking approval for the final arrangements in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new structure of the secondary school week in August 2017.

The Report indicated that a Schools and Learning Working Group had been established to undertake the detailed planning required to move to the agreed secondary school week. The Group had considered how best to deliver the optimum educational outcomes for young people and had carefully considered one feature of the new structure where they wanted to be clear that there was an educational benefit, the daily 10 minute check-in. The Group had concluded that there was no requirement for a 10 minute check-in, as the focus on pupil wellbeing in a 10 minute check-in was at odds with the Curriculum for Excellence principle that health and wellbeing was a responsibility for all. The Group had then considered an alternative option of one 50 minute personalised support session for each young person which it was felt best met the educational needs of the young people. This had been agreed by all eight secondary schools.

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

- (i) to note the progress on the detailed planning for successful implementation by August 2017; and
- (ii) to remove the 10 minute daily check-in and approve the preference of the eight secondary schools to establish a 33 period week of 50 minutes per period.

## **7. SCHOOL CONVEYANCE CONTRACTS – PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY REQUEST**

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 24 February 2015, there was submitted Joint Report No 6/17 by the Strategic Director – Children and Learning and the Head of Technical and Property Services seeking approval for the procurement of school conveyance contracts which were due for renewal and where the maximum value of the contract was above the Chief Officers' delegated authority limit.

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 Brechin, Montrose, Forfar and Kirriemuir areas were due for renewal in August 2017 as were a number of contracts for children with additional support needs. The new contracts would take account of the asymmetric day being introduced from August 2017.

The estimated total cost for the provision of home to school conveyance contracts as detailed in the Report was in the region of £10,000,000 over the whole life of the contracts, including any option to extend, based on the previous relevant expenditure.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the school conveyance contracts due for renewal in August 2017, at an indicative estimated value of £10,000,000 for a full five year period of operation from August 2017 to July 2022, the contracts being awarded initially for three years with an option to extend on an annual basis up to five years; and
- (ii) that the services be reviewed and that a contract renewal exercise be undertaken as appropriate to secure replacement service provision on the basis outlined in the Report, and in accordance with the process detailed in Section 16.8 of Financial Regulations.

## **8. SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS**

There was submitted Report No 7/17 by the Strategic Director – Children and Learning detailing changes to the social work complaints system from 1 April 2017.

The Report indicated that the Scottish Government had completed a review of the social work complaints system and as a result, the complaints system would change from 1 April 2017 in line with the Public Services Reform (Social Work Complaints Procedure) (Scotland) Order 2016. There would now be a new two stage model and the requirement for local authorities to set up a Complaints Review Committee would be removed. The new two stage model complaints handling procedure for social work services would closely align with the current Angus Council complaints handling procedure. Under both procedures, if a complainant remained unhappy with the response to their complaint after stage two they would be able to refer their complaint directly to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to align the complaint handling procedure in respect of social work services with Angus Council's Complaint Handling Procedures, with effect from 1 April 2017; and
- (ii) to request the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to write to the independent members of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee thanking them for their service once the need for this provision was no longer required.

## **9. REVIEW OF FOSTER CARER SKILLS BASED SCHEME**

There was submitted Report No 8/17 by the Strategic Director – Children and Learning detailing proposed changes to the Angus Fostering Service Skills Based Scheme.

The Report indicated that the scheme had been introduced in 2009 to develop and recompense foster carers in accordance with their skills. This was the first review of the scheme which had been undertaken following consultation with carers and other key stakeholders. The current scheme incorporated three tiers of fee designed to reflect the increasing skills, expertise and experience gained as carers developed their fostering skills. At the time the scheme had been introduced, the aim was to increase the skills of Angus Council's foster carers and reduce a reliance on external fostering agencies to source placements for children. This aim had been achieved, but there was a need to continue to develop and enhance the scheme in line with the needs of children. It was recognised that the scheme could be revised in order to better meet the needs of children in Angus and it was proposed that a revised Angus Council Fostering Skills based scheme be implemented from July 2017.

The Committee agreed to approve the implementation of the revised Angus Council Fostering Skills Based Scheme from July 2017, as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

## **10. REVIEW OF RESPITE PROVISION FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE**

There was submitted Report No 9/17 by the Strategic Director – Children and Learning seeking approval of changes to the respite provision for foster carers in Angus.

The Report indicated that currently, foster carers had been able to take up to 28 days paid respite per year as part of their contractual agreement with Angus Council. Direct feedback from children and young people was that this level of respite was disruptive and did not promote their sense of wellbeing and belonging.

It was therefore proposed that foster carers be entitled to receive 14 days of paid respite per calendar year and would continue to be paid their fee for this period. The proposed level of paid respite was consistent with the scheme operated in neighbouring authorities, although respite entitlements varied significantly across Scotland.

The Committee agreed to approve the implementation of the revised respite provision for foster carers, as detailed in the Report.

**11. CONSULTATION ON NATIONAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW: EMPOWERING TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

There was submitted Report No 30/17 by the Strategic Director – Children and Learning advising members of a consultation on national governance arrangements for Scottish education and providing an opportunity to contribute to the Council's response.

The Report indicated that the consultation was seeking views on how education in Scotland was run, including who should take decisions in relation to the education of children and young people, and how funding could be made fairer. Comments were also sought on the need for support teachers and practitioners to do their jobs well and how this could be improved. The Governance of the education system had not been reviewed since devolution and this current review was seeking views on how education, from early years to secondary schools, was run to ensure that it delivered excellence and equity for all children and young people. Comments on the consultation were required to be submitted by 6 January 2017 and given the timescales involved, the Council had submitted a response to the consultation.

The Committee agreed to endorse the Council's response to the consultation, as detailed in Section 5 of the Report.

