

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 14 June 2022 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors LYNNE DEVINE, MARTIN SHEPHERD, BILL DUFF, JULIE BELL, LINDA CLARK, IAIN GALL, ROSS GRIEG, MARK McDONALD, GEORGE MEECHAN, LLOYD MELVILLE, GAVIN NICOL, LOUISE NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, LOIS SPEED, DEREK WANN and BETH WHITESIDE.

Councillor DEVINE, Convener, in the Chair.

Prior to the commencement of business, the Convener welcomed all members and officers present to the meeting and paid tribute to her predecessors for all their contributions over the years, especially the introduction of presentations from young people which she hoped to continue in the future. She also made reference to the Information Reports relative to this Committee and took the opportunity to commend the staff of the Strathmore Centre for all the work they had done during the pandemic and on the recent excellent inspection report, following the update to members.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Chris Beattie with Councillor Bill Duff substituting. Apologies for absence were also intimated on behalf of Mrs Jackie Wilson, Church Representative and Mrs Anna Cheyne, Teacher Representative.

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 26 May 2022, the Committee agreed to note the members appointed to this Committee.

4. CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – REMIT

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

5. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 24 February 2022 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(b) Special Meeting

The minute of Special meeting of this Committee of 3 March 2022 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

6. APPOINTMENTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES

There was submitted Report No 142/22 by the Director 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 33 and 34, the following members to the undernoted Sub-Committees:-

- School Attendance Sub-Committee – Councillor Devine (Convener), Councillor Melville (Vice-Convener) and one Parent Council representative;

- Special Cases Sub-Committee – Councillor Lynne Devine (Convener), Councillor Martin Shepherd (Vice-Convener) and Councillor Louise Nicol;
 - Staffing Sub-Committee Councillor Lynne Devine (Convener), Councillor Martin Shepherd (Vice-Convener) and Councillor Ross Greig;
 - Education Records Review Sub-Committee – Councillor Lynne Devine (Convener), Councillor Lloyd Melville (Vice-Convener) and Councillor Louise Nicol in the first instance and thereafter three members of the Committee on a rotational basis;
 - Executive Sub-Committee - Councillors Lynne Devine (Convener), Councillor Martin Shepherd (Vice-Convener) and Councillor Ross Greig;
 - Special Appeals Sub-Committee – Councillor Lynne Devine (Convener), and Councillors Julie Bell, Ross Greig, George Meechan and Louise Nicol;
- (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 statutory position in relation to the Education Appeal Committee and to confirm its composition, as detailed in the Report; and
- (iv) 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.

7. EDUCATION RECOVERY UPDATE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 September 2021, there was submitted Report No 143/22 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning providing an update of how the expenditure of Covid-19 'recovery' funding for additional education staffing resource, which was delegated to the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate was utilised, providing an update on how funding for permanent staff had been utilised and updating members on the operational requirements as a result of Covid-19.

The Convener, on behalf of the Committee paid tribute to all school staff for keeping the schools open throughout the pandemic despite staff absence due to Covid-19 and to the secondary staff for supporting our young people through the latest SQA exams.

The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning provided an overview of the use of the funding which was also outlined in Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Report. A summary of cluster proposals was also detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

Having heard from a number of members who commended the exceptional work being carried out over the past three years, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the update in relation to the temporary education recovery funding as outlined in Section 4 of the Report;
- (ii) to note how the first allocation of permanent funding for school staff had been utilised, as outlined in Section 5 of the Report; and
- (iii) to note the updated operational requirements for schools as a result of Covid-19, as outlined in Section 6 of the Report.

8. OPEN FRAMEWORK (AUGUST 2020-JULY 2025) FOR FUNDED EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE – SUSTAINABLE HOURLY RATES

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 12 August 2021, there was submitted Report No 144/22 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning outlining the external factors influencing the sustainability of the hourly rates that were paid to contracted providers on the Open Framework for Funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), describing the financial environment in which they currently operated, and seeking delegation of authority to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to approve future rate increases shown to be necessary in order that the rates remained sustainable.

A detailed overview of the current position was provided in Section 4 of the Report.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the external factors influencing the sustainability of the hourly rates paid to contracted providers of funded ELC in Angus, including rising costs and wages;
- (ii) to approve the proposal by officers to bring forward and carry out now an in-depth review of sustainable hourly rates (which was planned August 2023), in response to the National Costs Collection exercise commissioned by Scottish Government in 2022, setting new increased rates back-dated to 30 April 2022 for the reasons outlined in Section 4 of the Report;
- (iii) to note that the 'Covid Costs Recovery' process was to end on 30 April 2022, which was the last day of the latest claim period;
- (iv) to approve the proposal to bring forward subsequent annual rate increases to April each year, applying the CPIH (12 months) rate for February and incorporating the latest real Living Wage rate (November) within six months of its announcement;
- (v) to delegate authority to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to approve all future rate increases within the lifetime of the Framework, provided that these were within budget when the evidence showed it was necessary in order that the Council paid rates remained sustainable, noting that such delegation would only be exercised following consultation with the Convener of the Children and Learning Committee and the Director of Finance; and
- (vi) to note that a follow up Report would be brought to a future Children and Learning Committee outlining the details in terms of any such delegation exercised under (v) above.