

## ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE** held remotely on Thursday 24 February 2022 at 2.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillors COLIN BROWN BEM, JULIE BELL, BRIAN BOYD, LYNNE DEVINE, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, ALEX KING, BEN LAWRIE, DAVID LUMGAIR, ANGUS MACMILLAN DOUGLAS OBE, IAN McLAREN, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, GAVIN NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, LOIS SPEED and BETH WHITESIDE.

### Church

**Representative:** Mr ERIC SUMMERS.

### Teacher

**Representative:** Mrs ANNA CHEYNE.

Councillor BROWN, Vice-Convener, in the Chair.

Prior to the commencement of the business, the Vice-Convener indicated that as this was the last meeting of the Children and Learning Committee prior to the local government elections he would like to take the opportunity to thank the Directors and staff, and the members of the Committee for all their input over the last term of this Council.

### 1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Ron Sturrock and Bob Myles, with Councillors Craig Fotheringham and David Fairweather substituting respectively. Apologies for absence were also intimated on behalf of Miss Lesley Hood, Church Representative and Mr Mike Callaghan, Teacher 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 11 January 2022 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

### 4. EXPANSION OF FREE SCHOOL MEAL SUPPORT

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 September 2021, there was submitted Report No 41/22 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning providing members with an update on the expansion of universal free school meals to all children in primary 4 to 7, outlining the steps taken to date and plans for the next phases of the roll out.

The Report indicated that free school meals were extended to P4s in August 2021 and to P5s in January 2022 and it had been proposed to extend free school meals to P6 and P7s in August 2022. However, in December 2021 local authorities had been advised that the Scottish Government were reviewing the timescale for delivery of phase four due to operational difficulties and currently a revised timetable was not available.

*Councillor Braes joined the meeting at this stage (2.04pm) following technical difficulties.*

Having heard from a number of members in relation to the further roll out and the use of local suppliers, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the completion of the first three phases of the expansion, which had extended universal free school meal provision to all children in primary 5;
- (ii) to note the delay to the rollout of phase four of the expansion, which would extend provision to all children in primary 6 and 7; and

- (iii) that the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning would bring a further Report to this Committee once further information was available regarding the rollout of phase four and any associated financial implications.

## **5. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CAPACITIES**

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 30 March 2021, there was submitted Report No 42/22 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning providing an update on school capacities and seeking approval for a change to the process for the administration of roll caps.

The Report indicated that the requirement to seek approval each year for school caps could result in delays to the determination of Placing Requests. This delay resulted in uncertainty for families awaiting the outcome of their requests and also had an impact on the appeal process. It was therefore proposed to streamline the process for both primary and secondary to make more appropriate use of reserved places to effectively manage school capacities.

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

- (i) to approve the updated intake limits for Brechin High School and Webster's High School;
- (ii) to approve the updated reserved places for Arbroath Academy, Arbroath High School, Brechin High School and Webster's High School; and
- (iii) to delegate authority to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to determine primary and secondary school capacities and reserved places on an annual basis prior to 31 March each year in respect of the following school session.

## **6. REVISED DEVOLVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SCHEME**

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 May 2019, there was submitted Report No 43/22 by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning advising members of proposed changes to Angus Council's Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme as a result of the new Scottish Government National Framework and Guidelines.

The Report indicated that the new guidelines required Councils to undertake a review of their current scheme and to produce a revised DSM scheme by April 2022. A short life working group had been established to review the current scheme and to recommend and agree changes in accordance with the Scottish Government National Framework and Guidance. The existing DSM scheme was found to be comprehensive and robust and therefore only minimal changes to the revised scheme were required.

*Councillor Boyd left the meeting at this stage (2.36pm).*

Following a number of questions in relation to the Scheme, and having heard from the Service Leader Broad General Education and Primary in response, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the revised DSM Scheme for implementation from April 2022; and
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to undertake a three-year review of the DSM Scheme as detailed in the National Framework and Guidelines and ensure that the scheme and associated documents reflected current policy and practice.

## **7. SCHOOL CONVEYANCE CONTRACTS**

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 30 March 2021, there was submitted Joint Report No 44/22 by the Director of Education and 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 2022 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 £6.5million 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 2022 for a period of up to five years and indicative estimated value of £6,500,000, as detailed in the Report; and
- (ii) to note that subject to the above, the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, would award the contracts on the terms and conditions deemed acceptable in accordance with Financial Regulations.