

# ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of HYBRID MEETING of the **FAMILY, EDUCATION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 20 February 2024 at 2.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillors LYNNE DEVINE, MARTIN SHEPHERD, CHRIS BEATTIE, JULIE BELL, KENNY BRAES, LINDA CLARK ROSS GREIG, MARK McDONALD, GEORGE MEECHAN, BILL DUFF, GAVIN NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, LOIS SPEED, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM and BETH WHITESIDE.

**Teacher**

**Representative:** Mrs ANNA CHEYNE.

Councillor DEVINE, Convener, in the Chair.

**1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Lloyd Melville with Bill Duff Substituting, Councillor Louise Nicol and Councillor Derek Wann with Craig Fotheringham Substituting. Apologies for absence were also intimated on behalf of Mrs Jackie Wilson and Rev. Christine Hay, Church Representatives.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY**

Councillor George Meechan declared an interest in Item 7, Report No 44/24, as he was a Kindship Carer. He indicated that he would not take part in any discussion and voting and would leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**(a) Previous Meeting**

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 9 January 2024 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 9 January 2024, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

**4. MOTION IN TERMS OF STANDING ORDER 24(1)**

**Recognition of Volunteers in Angus Area Support Team**

Councillor Meechan, seconded by Councillor Devine, moved the following motion:

'As part of Children's Hearing Reform, the model of support to Children's Hearing is changing. This means a move away from Area Support Teams who have been responsible for the coordination and delivery of Children's Hearings across the country and here in Angus. The Area Support Teams have been staffed by volunteers in local communities and without these volunteers, it would not have been possible to run such effective and efficient Panels to make decisions about children who are in need.

This Committee recognises the significant role our local volunteers have played in delivering this critical service. Some of these volunteers worked many hours and stepped up during covid to ensure that services to vulnerable children continued. Volunteer roles will still be critical to the effective functioning of Children's Hearings and we are grateful for the continued commitment. For those roles that will come to an end at the end of February 2024, we are grateful for their service.

I therefore ask that the Family, Education and Justice Committee, on behalf of Angus Council:-

- (i) acknowledge the dedication of volunteers who have served on the Area Support Team covering Angus; those who will end their tenure soon, those who remain and

those who have already left we recognise their significant contribution to the operation of Children's Hearings and decision making for vulnerable children and young people;

- (ii) requests the Chief Executive to write to the volunteers who will conclude their work at the end of February 2024 to express thanks for their service; and
- (iii) requests the Chief Executive to write to the volunteers who continue their service under the new model to thank them for their continued support.'

The Committee agreed to approve the motion.

## **5. ANGUS ADVOCACY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2023-2026**

There was submitted Report No 42/24 by the Chief Officer, Angus Health and Social Care Partnership updating the Committee on the first Framework outlining advocacy services available across Angus and which outlined priorities for 2023-2026 and associated actions in relation to those priorities.

The Head of Community Health and Care Services, AHSCP provided an overview of the Report.

The Report indicated that the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 imposed a duty on local authorities and health boards to collaborate to ensure the availability of independent advocacy services in their area for those with a mental disorder including children, young people and adults). As directed by The Mental Welfare Commission, each Health and Social Care Partnership and local authority were advised to have a plan outlining the available advocacy services as instructed through several pieces of legislation.

Separate to the requirements introduced by the 2003 Act, the local authority also had a duty as an Education Authority to provide advocacy services available for children subject to discussion in tribunal proceedings under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009. Advocacy services were commissioned by both Angus Health and Social Care Partnership and Angus Council for adults and children respectively.

Following questions, and having noted a request for an update to be brought back to this Committee in the future, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to acknowledge the publication of the Angus Advocacy Strategic Framework, in relation to children's services as the first edition for Angus; and
- (ii) to approve the priorities and actions outlined within the delivery plan of the framework for children's services.

## **6. TAYSIDE BAIRNS' HOOSE PATHFINDER PROGRAMME**

There was submitted Report No 43/24 by the Interim Director of Children, Families and Justice providing members with information relating to the planning and development of the Bairns House pathfinder programme in Tayside following a successful bid submitted to Scottish Government by Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Perth & Kinross Council, NHS Tayside, and Police Scotland.

On 24 October 2023, the Scottish Government had advised that the Tayside partnership bid had been successful and subsequently funding of £286,201 had been awarded for the financial year 2023/24. The Tayside Bairns' Hoose pathfinder was one of six areas selected in Scotland to pilot and test specific trauma responsive approaches to supporting children and families involved in the child protection system. The Tayside programme would explore specific Bairns' Hoose standards to inform the Bairns' Hoose Blueprint for Scotland with full national implementation from 2027 onwards.

Following questions and comments, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the progress towards designing and testing trauma informed supports and services for children, young people and families involved in child protection in line with the National Standards for Bairns' Hoose;
- (ii) to note the grant allocation for Tayside for 2023/24;

- (iii) to approve the Tayside Bairns' Hoose programme plan; and
- (iv) to direct that a Report be brought to the Family, Education and Justice Committee in August 2024 on the findings of the Tayside Pathfinder programme and the future delivery model for Angus.

*Having declared an interest at Article 2 above, Councillor Meechan left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item.*

**7. REVIEW OF ALLOWANCES FOR FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARERS, AND ADOPTERS, AND ANNUAL FEE UPLIFT FOR FOSTER CARERS**

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of the Children and Learning Committee of 19 September 2023, there was submitted Report No 44/24 by the Interim Director of Children, Families and Justice providing an update on the Angus implementation of the Scottish Recommended Allowance for eligible foster, adoptive and kinship carers and the backdated pay in respect of same. The Report also recommended an annual uplift of fees payable to Angus Council foster carers.

Following questions and comments and having heard the Convener and members thank all Foster and Kinship Carers and Adopters as well as all staff involved in this area, the Committee agreed: -

- (i) to approve the implementation of the revised allowances to eligible foster, adoption and kinship carers and to note that Angus Council were compliant with the Scottish Recommended Allowance;
- (ii) to noted that eligible carers would receive the payment backdated to 1 April 2023 as previously agreed by the Children and Learning Committee;
- (iii) to approve a 3% uplift of fees for foster carers for 2024/25; and
- (iv) to note that the respective costs will be met from the SRA funding received for 2023/24 and assured for 2024/25.