

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of HYBRID MEETING of the **FAMILY, EDUCATION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors LYNNE DEVINE, LLOYD MELVILLE, JULIE BELL, LINDA CLARK, HEATHER DORAN, IAIN GALL, ROSS GREIG, GEORGE MEECHAN, GAVIN NICOL, LOUISE NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR, JILL SCOTT, MARTIN SHEPHERD, LOIS SPEED, DEREK WANN, and KENNY BRAES.

Councillor DEVINE, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Beth Whiteside, with Councillor Kenny Braes substituting. Apologies for absence were also intimated on behalf of Mrs Christine Hay and Cannon Tom Shields, Church Representatives, and Mr Mike Callaghan and Mrs Anna Cheyne, Teacher Representatives.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY

There were no declarations of interest or statements of transparency made.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING.

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 14 January 2025 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

4. PRESENTATION BY FORFAR ACADEMY – ‘POWERING FORFAR THROUGH RENEWABLE ENERGY’

The Convener welcomed two pupils from Forfar Academy who provided an overview of how they had been exploring renewable energy through their project based learning, in particular how they had investigated powering their home town of Forfar. The presentation provided members with information as to how the project started, the research that they had undertaken and how they had taken responsibility for their learning. The pupils advised that their project work determined that they wished to place wind turbines around farms and sites just outside of Forfar and had explored how much energy this would produce and what this energy could be used for, whilst identifying any potential challenges that they may encounter. At the conclusion of their project, the pupils communicated with experts who had careers in renewable energy and were provided with useful feedback on their project and leadership.

Following questions and comments, the Convener and the Committee commended the pupils for their informative presentation and thanked them for their attendance.

5. ANGUS SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

There was submitted Report No 99/25 by the Acting Director of Education and Lifelong Learning updating the Committee on the recent inspection of Montrose Academy, which was published by Education Scotland in February 2025.

The Report advised that the inspection included areas of strength, areas for improvement, evaluations of the Quality Indicators and an expression of confidence in the school's capacity to improve as detailed within the Appendix to the Report. His Majesty's Inspectors confirmed that they would return to carry out a further inspection of Montrose Academy one year after the publication of the inspection findings.

The Acting Director of Education and Lifelong Learning introduced the Report and thereafter, together with the headteacher from Montrose Academy, answered members' questions.

Following comments, and having heard members commend the headteacher, staff and the wider school community on progress made since the inspection, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the areas of strength identified in the school inspection;
- (ii) to note the areas for improvement identified in the school inspection;

- (iii) to note the evaluation of the Quality Indicators in the school inspection;
- (iv) to note the expression of confidence for the school inspection; and
- (v) to request the Acting Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to submit a copy of the return visit report to a future meeting of this Committee.

6. OUTCOME OF ADES COLLABORATIVE IMPROVEMENT VISIT

There was submitted Report No 100/25 by the Acting Director of Education and Lifelong Learning updating the Committee on the outcome of the recent collaborative improvement work by Education and Lifelong Learning and representatives of the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES), in partnership with Education Scotland.

The Report advised that ADES had developed a programme of collaborative improvement to promote partnership working and collaboration to secure sustainable improvements for all children, young people and their families. The programme contributed towards a self-improving and empowered system for education, with a focus on working together to achieve the national vision of excellence and equity.

The collaborative improvement team included representatives from ADES, Angus Council and Education Scotland, the visit of which took place over two days, where a range of staff and young people were invited to participate in focus groups and explore specific challenge questions.

The Acting Director of Education and Lifelong Learning introduced the Report and thereafter responded to members' questions.

Following comments, the Committee agreed to note the outcome of the collaborative improvement visit, as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

7. CHARGING FOR ADDITIONAL HOURS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of this Committee of 30 May 2024, there was submitted Report No 101/25 by the Acting Director of Education and Lifelong Learning seeking approval from Committee to extend the opportunity for parents and carers to pay for additional sessions of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to create further flexibility in Local Authority settings.

The Report advised that in light of the increased parental demand for additional paid provision of ELC through the introduction of 1140 hours of delivery, it was proposed that the Committee approved a further extension of the opportunity for parents and carers to pay for additional ELC hours and sessions creating further flexibility in Local Authority settings. The proposal was limited to Delivery Model 3 settings; Carnoustie, Forfar ELC and Monifieth ELC, where staff were already in place to meet the required ratios for children attending.

The Acting Director of Education and Lifelong Learning introduced the Report and thereafter, together with the Service Leader, responded to members' questions.

Following comments, where members welcomed the further flexibility for parents, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to approve the proposal to enhance flexibility in the provision of Early Learning and Childcare in Local Authority settings by providing parents and carers the option to pay for additional provision, where operationally feasible, at no extra cost to the council; and
- (ii) to delegate authority to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to set the rate for additional provision, in line with local market rates and the sustainable rate.

8. TAYSIDE BAIRNS' HOOSE PATHFINDER PROGRAMME UPDATE

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 15 August 2024, there was submitted Report No 102/25 by the Interim Director of Children, Families and Justice updating members on the progress of the Tayside Bairns' Hoose Pathfinder Programme in Tayside following the successful bid submitted to Scottish Government by Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Perth & Kinross Council, NHS Tayside, and Police Scotland

The Report advised that Bairns' Hoose was a transformational, whole-system approach to delivering child protection, justice, health and recovery services to child victims and witnesses of abuse and harm. The Bairns' Hoose was there to uphold children's rights and ensure the best interests of the child was the primary consideration in all actions concerning them.

Between the partners, a leadership and governance structure had been established and embedded to support successful development, implementation and evaluation of the 3-year programme, including area specific subgroups, a Tayside wide Delivery Group and Strategic Oversight Group. Scottish Government had confirmed that the pathfinder had been extended for another two years, with the pilot concluding in April 2027. The Tayside bid for full year funding was submitted in February 2025 and an outcome was expected in early April. The bid had been jointly developed and agreed between partners and built on the Tayside programme that had been delivered over the last eighteen months. The Angus Bairns Hoose building was still under development but was fully operational.

The Interim Director of Children, Families and Justice introduced the Report and responded to members' questions.

Thereafter, 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; and
- (i) to note the confirmation of Scottish Government funding of up to £700,000 per annum for a further two years until March 31st 2027.

9. ANGUS CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of Scrutiny and Audit Committee of 7 March 2024, there was submitted Report No 103/25 by the by the Chief Executive presenting the Angus Child Protection Committee Annual Report for the period April 2023 to March 2024, which was submitted to provide assurance to elected members on the multi-agency child protection work in Angus and seeking approval for the annual report.

The Report highlighted the work undertaken across Angus by individual agencies and in partnership to deliver National, Tayside wide and local child protection outcomes to improve the lives of children at risk of harm along with key trends that demonstrated a continued increase in demand across frontline child protection services.

Mr West, Independent Chair of the Protecting People Angus Strategic Committee, introduced the Report and provided a detailed narrative of the ongoing work to improve child protection practice throughout Angus.

Following questions and comments by members, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the Angus Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2023 to 2024 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report;
- (ii) to note the key trends and areas for development emerging from the Report;
- (iii) to recognise the ongoing multi-agency endeavours to keep children within Angus safe; and
- (iv) to note the timeline for upcoming reports to Committee as detailed in the Report.