

**THE FIFE COUNCIL - EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE –
REMOTE MEETING**

11th May, 2021

10.05 a.m. – 12.35 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Craig Walker (Convener), Bobby Clelland, Dave Dempsey, Linda Erskine, Ian Ferguson, Rod Cavanagh (Substituting for Councillor Julie Ford), Gary Guichan, Helen Law, Kathleen Leslie, Rosemary Liewald, Dominic Nolan, Ross Paterson, Fay Sinclair, Alistair Suttie, Mr. George Haggarty and Mr. William Imlay.

ATTENDING: Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director, Education & Children's Services; Kathy Henwood, Head of Education & Children's Services (Children & Families & Criminal Justice Services); Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services (Early Years and Directorate Support); Angela Logue, Head of Education & Children's Services (Primary Schools & Improvement Support); Lynn Gillies, Service Manager (Operations Glenrothes/Family Support); Jackie Funnell, Education Manager; Rona Weir, Education Manager; Stuart Booker, Improvement Officer (Strategy & Knowledge Management); Clark Graham, Early Learning Officer; Gillian Johnston, Project Manager (Early Learning and Childcare), Education & Children's Services; Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services.

ALSO ATTENDING: Lee Cowie, Fife CAMHS, NHS Fife (for Para. No. 212).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor James Calder and Mr. Alastair Crockett.

Prior to the start of business, the Convener, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, extended congratulations to Councillor Calder and his wife on the birth of their baby.

209. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dominic Nolan declared an interest in Para. 216 – 'Support for Voluntary Organisations' – as he was a Council appointed member of an organisation from whom Families First, St Andrews had received funding.

210. MINUTE

The Sub-Committee considered the minute of the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee of 16th March, 2021.

Decision

The Sub-Committee agreed to approve the minute.

211./

211. MINUTE OF EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE

The Sub-Committee considered the minutes of meetings of the Education Appointment Committee of 10th March and 30th April, 2021.

Decision

The Sub-Committee noted the minutes.

212. OUR MINDS MATTER: SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING SERVICE UPDATE

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an update since the previous report considered by this Sub-Committee in November, 2020 on work to support young people's mental health.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the progress since November, 2020 in continued development of work to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing in Fife;
- (2) endorsed the proposed next steps to continue to evolve services and development work as an ongoing response to the impacts of the COVID-19 context, the strategic priorities of Belonging to Fife and the requirements of The Promise;
- (3) commended all stakeholders for their continued efforts in development of work to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing in Fife; and
- (4) accepted an invitation to join workshops across the course of the coming year, aimed at:-
 - (a) sharing additional information on strategic development work included within the report; and
 - (b) providing opportunities for discussion and feedback, recognising the key importance of mental health support for young people and families during recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

213. CLIMATE CHANGE AND LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Arising from a motion at the Fife Council meeting of 12th November, 2020 (Para. Ref. No. 204 of 2020.FC.233 refers) - 'Fife Council also calls for a paper on Climate Change education to be brought to the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee at some point in the near future, detailing what action is currently being taken' - the Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an overview of:

- National expectations on Climate Change and Learning for Sustainability; and
- Local/

- Local delivery of these aspects of the Curriculum within Fife educational settings.

Decision

The Sub-Committee considered and acknowledged the information detailed in the report.

214. DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PRIORITIES 2021/2023

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services outlining the draft improvement priorities for the Education and Children's Services Directorate Plan 2021-23, explaining the rationale for and inviting comments on the draft priorities detailed in the report.

Decision

The Sub-Committee acknowledged the Education and Children's Services Directorate draft improvement priorities for 2021-23.

215. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE – ADMISSIONS UPDATE

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services, providing the outcomes of the review, agreed at the Policy and Co-ordination Committee of 16th July, 2020, of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) admissions process, following the establishment of the member working group whose remit was to recommend improvement and address problems that had arisen during the 2020/21 admissions process; and to respond to the decision of Fife Council of 25th February, 2021 (Para. Ref. 214 of 2021.FC.249 - 'Childcare Services and Play Practice Development'), requesting a report to this Sub-Committee to advise on the possibility that all children under the age of five years old at the start of the school term automatically receive funding for an additional year of nursery – to begin this academic year.

The Sub-Committee then adjourned temporarily to consider the terms of a motion intimated by Councillor Law and seconded, in principle at this stage, by Councillor Guichan.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 a.m.

The meeting re-convened at 12 noon

Decision

The Sub-Committee, subject to the amendment of recommendations (4) and (5) of the report and including an additional recommendation:-

- (1) acknowledged the outcomes of the work undertaken to investigate areas of concern and the impact of any proposed amendments to the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy, as identified by the working group;
- (2)/

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- (2) in the context of the statutory requirement for a biennial review, agreed that the Education Service also undertook an annual review to consider the applications received during the previous admissions process and to determine whether any changes in capacity and/or operating model should be explored to better reflect demand;
- (3) agreed, in the future, should there be a need for a fundamental revision of the models of delivery of ELC across Fife, as happened for session 2020/21, at that point note would be taken of the issues highlighted regarding eligible children returning for their second year of funded ELC and options would be investigated to mitigate any impact on children already allocated placements having to reapply;
- (4) delegated to officers to progress with formal consultation regarding amending the priority criteria within the ELC Admissions Policy to consider whether there should be priority for siblings of children within a primary school where there was a nursery class (or classes);
- (5) agreed, from August 2022, that funding should be allocated to allow the Education Service to agree a discretionary deferral where it was agreed this was in the best interests of the child and was funded with a partner provider, where requested; and
- (6) requested a report to this Sub-Committee, within 6 months, detailing the deferral process - from the initial application through to decision.

Prior to consideration of the following item Councillor Nolan, having declared an interest, left the meeting at this point.

216. SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing a progress update on the re-modelling of Children and Families Commissioned Services and outlining proposals for the next stage of this programme of work for 2021-22.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the progress that had been achieved and plans for the next phase of activity;
- (2) approved the preferred option - Option 2 as outlined in section 3.4 of the report (a differential approach based on categories of organisation) and based on the progress made to date;
- (3) commended all stakeholders for their contribution to date toward the re-modelling of Children and Families Commissioned Services; and
- (4) agreed to consider a further report in September, 2021.

**217. EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD
WORK PROGRAMME 2021**

The Sub-Committee considered the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22.

Decision

The Sub-Committee noted the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22, subject to amendment as necessary.
