

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

26th January, 2021

10.00 a.m. – 12.20 p.m.

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

ATTENDING: Kathy Henwood, Head of Education & Children's Services; Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services (Early Years and Directorate Support); Lynn Gillies, Service Manager (Operations Glenrothes/Family Support); Jackie Funnell, Education Manager; Avril Graham, Sustainable Estate Officer; Alan Small, Independent Chair, Child Protection Committee; Education & Children's Services; Christine Moir, Senior Manager, Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services; Deborah Davidson, Education Manager (GIRFEC); Chris Campbell, Team Manager, Social Work Resources Service; Alison Binnie, Business Partner, Finance; and Diane Barnett, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Mr. Alastair Crockett and Mr. George Haggarty.

VALEDICTORY

Prior to consideration of formal Committee business, Councillor Craig Walker, incoming Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Councillor Fay Sinclair for her contribution to the Committee as Convener for over 3 years and her hard work in support of Education and Children's Services in Fife.

COVID-19 - UPDATE

Also prior to consideration of formal Committee business, Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director, Education and Children's Services, provided a brief update relating to the impact on education provision due to changing circumstances around COVID-19 regulations, including:

- School attendance - keeping attendance numbers to a minimum to help prevent transmission of the virus/new variant (vulnerable children/children of key workers);
- School bus/transport - number of buses now reduced, according to current demand;
- Remote learning - supporting schools to deliver learning in a variety of creative and innovative ways, including but not limited to online learning; and
- Qualifications – SQA to provide further guidance about the assessment process with coursework continuing meantime.

The Executive Director commended the dedication of teaching/support staff and expressed gratitude to all involved Council services for their continued support of the Education Service.

190. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Nolan declared an interest in Para. 192 - 'Support for Voluntary Organisations' - due to his involvement with Families First, a third sector organisation in receipt of funding from Fife Council.

191. MINUTES

- (a) Minute of Meeting of Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee of 3rd November, 2020

The Committee considered the minute of the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee of 3rd November, 2020.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) arising from the minute, with reference to Para. 183 - 'Building Fife's Future' - acknowledged an update on the progress of St. Columbas, Inverkeithing and Woodmill High Schools and Dunfermline Learning Campus projects;
 - (2) noted that a report on progress with the Dunfermline Learning Campus was expected to be available for consideration at the next meeting of this Sub-Committee on 16th March, 2021; and
 - (3) Otherwise agreed to approve the minute.
- (b) Minutes of Meeting of the Education Appointment Committee of 27th October, 17th November and 4th December, 2020

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the minutes.

Councillor Nolan, having earlier declared an interest, left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item.

192. SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services detailing progress on the re-modelling of Children and Families Services and providing options for the new recommissioning model for 2021-22.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) agreed to approve Option 3: recommissioning with a transition period - for implementation in 2021-22;
- (2)/

- (2) noted the grant application process that had been undertaken and was completed; and
- (3) agreed to receive 4-weekly update briefings on progress toward implementation.

Councillor Nolan re-entered the meeting following consideration of the above item.

193. PROPOSED MOTHBALLING OF MILTON OF BALGONIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services proposing the mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, with immediate effect, given the declining school roll at the School and the fact that no children enrolled for session 2019/20 or 2020/21.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) with the proposal to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School with immediate effect;
- (2) that, during the mothballing period, any children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they met the distance criteria;
- (3) that the resources and furniture within the school be offered to surrounding schools; and
- (4) that a further report reviewing this decision be considered by this Sub-Committee in September 2021.

194. CHILDREN'S SERVICES INSPECTION UPDATE

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an update on the Care Inspectorate Improvement Plan following the 2019 Children's Services Inspection.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the outcome of the update report and the progress made;
- (2) recognised that the work was progressing and was being reviewed within the Children in Fife group;
- (3) agreed to consider a further update report in 12 months on progress made as well as the three responsible strategic groups reporting on their ongoing activity to Children in Fife group; and
- (4)/

- (4) agreed that the update report at (3) above would include more detail on the 'Child Wellbeing Pathway' relating to early and effective intervention.

The meeting adjourned at 11.27 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 11.39 a.m.

195. INSPECTION OUTCOMES

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an overview of the outcomes and key messages from inspections of the following:-

- Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools undertaken by Education Scotland;
- Care Inspectorate within the Early Learning Centres;
- Care Inspectorate within Family Placement Service; and
- Care Inspectorate within Out of School/Creche Provision.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) scrutinised the report in detail and thereafter acknowledged the outcomes of the overview; and
- (2) noted areas of success and progress, as well as the actions being taken to ensure continued improvement.

Mr. William Imlay left the meeting during consideration of the above item and Councillor Leslie left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

196. EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE - REVENUE BUDGET 2020-21, PROJECTED OUTTURN

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the forecast financial position for the 2020-21 financial year, for the areas in scope of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) considered and noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report;
- (2) noted that officers would ensure that the risks associated with Looked After Children were appropriately managed whilst taking action to address the projected overspend in Children and Families Service; and
- (3)/

- (3) noted that the Education and Children's Services Directorate continued to implement the Children and Families Strategy to reduce the reliance on purchased care placements and increase the number of children who could be looked after safely at home or in kinship care.

197. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2020-2021: PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing information on the overall progress of the Education and Children's Services Directorate's capital programme for the current financial year 2020-21, as well as informing of progress on major projects.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the financial position as detailed in the report, and
- (2) noted that the budget had been revised to reflect the outcome of the Capital Plan review undertaken in February, 2019 and the subsequent re-phasing exercise carried out in July, 2020.

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

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

Decision

The Committee noted the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee Forward Work Programme 2021, subject to amendment to include the following reports:-

- progress update on the 'Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School' (Para. 193 (4) refers) - September 2021;
 - update on progress made in relation to 'Children's Services Inspection' (Para. 194 (3) refers) - January 2022; and
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