

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee

Wednesday, 02 November 2022

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Mrs Sheila Brumby, Councillor Neil Cameron, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor John Cowe, Mrs Anne Currie, Mr Alfie Harper, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Reverend Tembu Rongong, Councillor Derek Ross, Mrs Susan Slater, Mrs Emma Tunnard, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Ms Angela Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the meeting were the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Education, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager, Sport and Culture Service Manager, Early Years Service Manager, Principal Active Schools Officer, Susanne Campbell, Quality Improvement Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

Councillor Fernandes was in attendance for items 1 to 6 on the agenda.

1. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from Group Leaders or Spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

2. Order of Business

In terms of Standing Order 29, the Chair sought approval from the Committee to amend the order of business and take Item 11 on the agenda following Question Time as Councillor Ross had intimated he had some questions which would include commercially sensitive information and would allow discussion to take place in confidence.

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for part of Item 11 of business on

the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Para number of the minute	Para Number of Schedule 7a
17	8 & 9 Information on the proposed terms and or expenditure to be incurred by the Authority

3. Minute of meeting 24 August 2022

The minute of the meeting of the Education, Children’s and Leisure Service Committee dated 24 August 2022 was submitted and approved.

4. Written Question - Rowan Centre

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MUSTARD

Impact of Rowan Centre Assessment and Treatment Waiting Times

Four years ago, Scottish Government and NHSG provided £1m each to improve child and adolescent mental health services in Grampian. The proposals focused on improving these services across Grampian with the Rowan Centre being part of those planned improvements. The Rowan Centre is “A support service for all agencies working with children and young people around mental health issues and a multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment services for children and young people, their families and carers”.

According to Public Health Scotland who publish national figures on waiting times for these services:

For the quarter ending March 2022, across Scotland:

Seven out of ten (73.2%) of children and young people were seen within 18 weeks of referral.

The Scottish Government standard states that 90% of children and young people should start treatment within 18 weeks of referral to CAMHS [Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services].

In NHS Grampian 96.8% of children were seen within 18 weeks during March 2022. 13 children had to wait 18-35 weeks, and one child up to a year.

Despite the national and regional performance listed above, some families in Moray are reporting extremely long waiting time from referral to assessment and treatment from the Rowan Centre which they consider is impacting on their child or young person’s ability to cope with school and family life. Families believe that the assessment is crucial to supporting their child or young person because Moray Council’s access to “Universal Services with Support (stage 2)” or “Targeted Intervention (stage 3)” requires an assessment and therefore delays in assessment.

Are the performance statistics for the Rowan Centre showing delays in assessment and if so, what is the impact of the delays in assessment on the child or young person’s access to stage 2 or 3 level of Additional Support Needs support

RESPONSE

Waiting times for the Rowan Centre will be an NHS issue, however in terms of accessing Additional Support Needs support within schools there is no requirement for an assessment/diagnosis from the Rowan Centre. The allocation of resource is based on teacher assessment of additional support needs from a learning/teaching and wellbeing perspective in line with the ASN legislation. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2009) is structured around the concept of support being needed for any reason, and for short or long periods determined by the individual learning needs of the child or young person.

5. Written Question - Library Collections

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR FERNANDES

In the library collections, how many physical books and how many eBooks are accessible to people with sight loss?

How does the library ensure that the collections are accessible to people with sight loss?

RESPONSE

Large Print books (physical) available from Moray Libraries at last stock count March 2022 – 21,124

Spoken Word (on CD) at March 2022 – 6,291

All eBooks on eBook platform can be adjusted for print size for accessibility – current count:

Different individual titles available 1,355 – copies 34,745 (this is where the same title can be borrowed by more than 1 person at a time)

Also available eAudiobooks (spoken word) – titles 642 – copies 35,261

The library service endeavours to monitor demand and add physical stock as appropriate and all eStock is accessible.

The Council follow guidelines from appropriate organisations and will adhere to the Six Steps Visually Impaired Basic Framework as far as we can with the resources available to us.

6. Notice of Motion - Fit Life membership

In terms of Standing Order 34a, there was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Lawrence in the following terms:

FIT LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR CHILDREN FROM LOWER INCOME FAMILIES

Committee understands that one in five children in Moray lives in poverty.

Committee recognises that engagement in sports is associated that with increases in wellbeing, improvements in health, improved educational and economic prospects and higher levels of positive participation.

Committee acknowledges that poorer children are less active than those from wealthier backgrounds.

Committee instructs officers to bring forward a report on implementing free Fit Life membership for children living in poverty in Moray.

In agreeing with the content of the Notice of Motion, Councillor Mustard proposed referring the issue at the Poverty Working Group which is due to meet in the next couple of weeks rather than waiting for a report to come back to the next meeting of this Committee which is 25 January 2023.

Both Councillor Harris and Lawrence confirmed that they were happy with the proposal.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that whilst the issue could be referred to the Poverty Working Group any financial implications would need to be approved by Moray Council as the Poverty Working Group did not have the delegated authority to agree any finance implications.

Following further consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) To recognise that engagement in sports is associated with increases in wellbeing, improvements in health, improved education and economic prospects and higher levels of positive participation;
- ii) To acknowledge that poorer children are less active than those from wealthier backgrounds; and
- iii) The issue be referred to the Cost of Living Working Group for further discussion.

Councillor Colyer joined the meeting during the consideration of this item.

7. Notice of Motion - Library Penalties

In terms of Standing Order 34a, there was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillor Fernandes, seconded by Councillor Warren in the following terms:

Library Penalties

Committee recognises that most library services in Scotland have now removed library penalties for overdue items.

Committee understands that the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) recommends, in its Public Library Strategy 2021- 2025, that library services 'remove financial penalties for all borrowers'.

Committee recognises that financial penalties affect lower-income patrons disproportionately and are a barrier to universal access. Council also acknowledges that library fines are not cost effective as they discourage patrons from returning materials.

Committee understands that the loss of revenue can be offset by the reduced number of unreturned library items and the elimination of administration costs of the penalties.

Committee acknowledges that the removal of library fines can help tackle the poverty agenda, increase library usage, and reduce conflict within the library environment.

Committee instructs officers to bring forward a report on the removal of library penalties for all patrons at the earliest opportunity.

The Chair advised that young people and the elderly are already excluded from receiving library penalties and felt that the argument of the motion sits with the Cost of Living Working Group and as with the previous item, proposed referring the issue at the Cost of Living Working Group which is due to meet in the next couple of weeks rather than waiting for a report to come back to the next meeting of this Committee which is 25 January 2023.

Councillor Fernandes raised concerns that the issue was a change in policy and may fall outside the terms of reference for the group.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that it was for the members of the group to determine what is considered.

Councillor Mustard, as Chair of the group indicated that she felt it was exactly the type of conversation that should be had at the Cost of Living Working Group and would be happy to take it to the group for discussion.

Councillors Fernandes and Warren both agreed that they were happy with this approach if it was the fastest way to get a resolution.

Councillor Fernandes left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

8. Initial Analysis of Secondary School Attainment 2021-22

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) reported to Committee the attainment of secondary schools in Moray for session 2021/22 further to National Insight benchmarking toolkit update in September 2022 and central attainment data analysis and review.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the position in respect of attainment of the young people in Moray for session 2021/22;
- ii) note the initial discussions with Head Teachers have taken place during August and September 2022 where Head Teachers, Head of Education and Quality Improvement Manager (Performance Management) have developed actions for improvement at school and local authority level, which have informed the key interventions identified in this report and local school plans;
- iii) approve the key interventions set out in the report that are now planned and/or underway in support of raising attainment and achievement for young

people across all secondary schools through the iMpact Moray approaches and Stretch Aims setting; and

- iv) note that at a future meeting of this Committee, a follow up Insight report will be presented in consideration of school leaver data including post-school destinations following data publication in February/March 2023.

9. Supporting All Learners Strategy

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) requested that Committee approved the Supporting All Learners Strategy.

During consideration Councillor Mustard sought clarification on why the Strategy does not have an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

In response, the Head of Education confirmed that the Equalities Officer was included in the consultation of the strategy but no advice was given with regards to requiring an EIA.

The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance further added that the Council has a duty under the Act to have regard for the Equalities Act and in this instance the Equalities Officer had been included in the process.

Councillor Mustard moved to defer the report to allow consideration alongside the Additional Support Needs (ASN) Report which is being presented to the Committee in December. Councillor Warren seconded the motion.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that due regard had been taken in producing the Strategy and raised concerns with deferring the report. Paragraph 4(g) of the report detailed the 3 strands which are being rolled out at the forthcoming in-service days later in November.

The Head of Education confirmed that work had been planned for the in-service days on nurturing approach and by not approving today would mean the work would be delayed until the next in-service days in May 2023.

Councillor Warren sought clarification on whether there was a flexibility with when the in-service days are held.

The Head of Education confirmed that in-service days are scheduled and set in advance.

Councillor Warren suggested going ahead with the proposed in-service training and defer the report to the December meeting.

Following further consideration and as there was no one otherwise minded the Committee agreed to defer agreement of the Strategy to consider alongside the ASN Review in December however agreed in principle with the Nurturing Principles for All to allow the scheduled In-Service Training to go ahead.

10. Active Schools and Community Sport Update

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of progress made by the Active Schools and Community Sport team in Moray during the last academic year and to seek approval for the extension of this Service for a further four years.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the progress of Active Schools and Community Sport during the 2021-22 academic year; and
- ii) approve the extension of the Active Schools and Community Sport Hub programmes for existing budget for a further four years period from 1 April 2023 in partnership with sportscotland at a total cost of £979,077 for the four year period (year 1 £224,154, year 2 £237,626, year 3 £251,502 and year 4 £265,795) to secure an investment of £1,185,928 from sportscotland over the same period).

11. Early Learning and Childcare - Sustainable Rate Update

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the process followed to set the current Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sustainable rate for funded hours and the reason for maintaining the rate at current levels.

Councillor Warren moved to defer the report for consideration alongside the External Consultants report which is being presented to Committee in December. Councillor Mustard seconded the motion.

Following consideration and as there was no one otherwise minded the Committee agreed to defer the report until the meeting on 14 December 2022.

12. Early Learning and Childcare - Capacity and Demand for Funded Childcare Places

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the process followed to set the current Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sustainable rate for funded hours and the reason for maintaining the rate at current levels.

In terms of Standing Order 85 the Chair sought approval from the Committee to suspend standing order 77 to continue after 12.45pm to allow consideration of the next item and to then break for lunch and resume the meeting at 2.00pm.

This was unanimously agreed.

Following lengthy consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note how demand is met to provide ELC funded place in Moray; and
- ii) note the registration process for funded ELC places, the current demand for ELC places within each ASG area and the capacity for funded ELC places within Moray.

Reverend Rongong left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

13. Singleton Inspections of Early Learning and Childcare Centres - Published Reports March-June 2022

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the content of singleton reports of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) centres by Care Inspectorate which were published between March 2022 and June 2022. These were:

- Linkwood Nursery, Elgin
- Portgordon Nursery, Portgordon
- Rainbow Days Nursery, Buckie
- Aberlour and Craigellach Pre School, Aberlour
- Mosstodloch Nursery, Mosstodloch
- Pilmuir Nursery, Forres

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the findings and their effects on performance.

14. Resumption of Meeting

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Mrs Sheila Brumby, Councillor Neil Cameron, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor John Cowe, Mrs Anne Currie, Mr Alfie Harper, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Mrs Susan Slater, Mrs Emma Tunnard, Councillor Sonya Warren

APOLOGIES

Councillor Ben Williams, Reverend Tembu Rongong and Ms Angela Stuart

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the meeting were the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Education, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Early Years Service Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

15. Information Reports - if called in

The Committee noted that no information reports had been called in.

16. Question Time ***

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the minute of the meeting of Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 24 August 2022, Councillor Lawrence sought an update of the funding allocation for music instruction.

In response, the Head of Education Resources and Communities confirmed that a report will be presented to Committee on 25 January 2023.

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the minute of the meeting of Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 24 August 2022, Councillor Warren sought an update on the timing of the free school meals payment and asked why there had been such a delay in implementing the change.

In response the Chair advised that this action sits within the remit of Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) added that the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services had provided Councillor Warren with an update. She further added that the delay had been due to varying different pressures being added to already heavy workloads but assured Councillor Warren that a report had been requested and is planned for the January meeting of ECLS, however, clarification had been sought on whether it might be possible for it to be brought to the special meeting of the Committee on 14 December 2022 instead and confirmation was awaited.

The current uptake on free school meals at Buckie High School is currently sitting at 25% of those who are eligible and work could be undertaken to encourage those who are not yet taking up the free school meals to do so. She further added that a breakfast club is also in operation at Buckie High School, and whilst it does not offset the request that has been made, it does mean there is some mitigation there for those affected.

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the minute of the meeting of Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 24 August 2022, Councillor Harris sought an update on the Early Learning and Childcare Consultation.

In response, the Chair confirmed that a report will be presented to the special meeting of the Committee on 14 December 2022.

Under reference to paragraph 14 of the minute of the meeting of Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 24 August 2022, Councillor Cameron sought an update on the revised petitions process.

In response the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance confirmed that a report on the proposed new petitions process will be presented at the meeting of Moray Council on 7 December 2022.

Councillor Macrae sought clarification, following the reports of teachers in Aberdeenshire Council being balloted regarding violence in schools, on measures the Council have in place for dealing with violence in schools.

In response the Head of Education Resources and Communities confirmed that the Council have a Violence and Aggression Policy. Any incidents are reported centrally and it details the expectations of how staff are supported following any incidents and whether any additional support is required for the staff and children.

She further added that there is an increase in incidents, particularly in ASN sections and work is being carried out through the ASN Oversight Group to understand the additional support that can be put in place in particular settings where the biggest increases are being seen in terms of staff wellbeing and to reduce incidents occurring.

Councillor Mustard queried whether there was a more up to date version of the Devolved School Management policy than is currently published on the Council's website.

In response, the Head of Education Resources and Communities confirmed that the policy is regularly reviewed however there is no update to what is currently published on the website. She further added that a newly appointed Project Officer is currently reviewing the current scheme.

Councillor Warren sought clarification on whether hospitality classes are tailored to take into account dietary requirements.

In response, the Head of Education confirmed that adjustments are made to take into account dietary and food intolerance requirements.

Councillor Allan informed the Committee of a new initiative started in Moray called Mini Cooks, the new initiative is being trialled at Bishopmill Primary School and is the first in Scotland. All equipment is provided and the pupils visit local businesses once a month. The initiative is aimed at promoting the hospitality industry as a career path.

17. Early Learning and Childcare - Major and Minor Infrastructure Works Update

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the consequences of programme delays on the operation, costs and staffing of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings with planned major and minor infrastructure works.

The report also informed Committee of plans for ELC major and minor infrastructure works in 2022 and 2023 and of the capital spend budget plans approved by Council on 29 June 2022 which include completion of infrastructure works for identified local authority nursery settings.

Initial consideration of the report took place in the open section of the agenda before moving to the confidential section.

Councillor Harris sought clarification on why there had not been an Elected Members briefing held on the proposals for the Aberlour and Craigellachie Nurseries project.

Councillor Ross further added that he did not feel the Committee could make a decision when full details of the project had not been communicated with Members.

The Early Years Service Manager apologised for information not having been circulated to members and confirmed that it was not the intention to exclude members from the decision.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) added that she was not aware of concerns from Local Members and would take them on board.

Councillor Ross queried what consultation had taken place with service users.

The Early Years Service Manager confirmed that she had met with representatives of the service users and discussed the proposals. She further added that option appraisals had been carried out and that they would be circulated to Members to help answer any questions.

Councillor Macrae raised concerns around the location of the temporary outdoor nursery in Aberlour and the closeness to the River Spey.

The Early Years Service Manager confirmed that various options had been considered and the proposed location was deemed to be the safest location. She further added that a 1.8m fence would surround the nursery.

The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance added that Councillors have been presented with a report which they believe has raised project governance issues and suggested that Members may wish to request a further report with more information on the project.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) assured members that an options appraisal had been completed and confirmed that the project could be put on hold to allow members the opportunity to review the completed option appraisal.

Councillor Ross moved to defer the decision on the Aberlour and Craigellachie Nurseries Project and to request a further report be presented to the Committee in December. This was seconded by Councillor Warren.

As there was no one otherwise minded, the Committee agreed:

- i) to note the consequences of potential programme delays for planned major and minor infrastructure works at designated nursery settings;
- ii) to note the plans for outstanding major and minor ELC infrastructure works in 2022 and 2023;
- iii) to note the capital spend budget plans approved by Council on 29 June 2022 for completion of infrastructure works at identified local authority nursery settings, with the exception of the Aberlour and Craigellachie Nurseries projects; and
- iv) a further report to be presented to the next meeting providing more information on the Aberlour and Craigellachie Nurseries project and the decisions made to date.