

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Education, Communities and Organisational Development

Wednesday, 26 May 2021

remote locations via video conference,

PRESENT

Councillor George Alexander, Councillor James Allan, Councillor Frank Brown, Councillor Paula Coy, Councillor Lorna Creswell, Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Claire Feaver, Councillor Aaron McLean, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor Amy Taylor, Councillor Sonya Warren

APOLOGIES

Councillor Laura Powell, Councillor Walter Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Chief Officer Health and Social Care, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Education, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Acting Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Social Work, Acting Head of Housing and Property, Stewart McLauchlan and Karen Lees, Quality Improvement Managers, Donna Borek, Team Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

Also in attendance for items 1 - 13 and 24a were Susan Slater, Secondary Teaching Representative, Angela Stuart, Primary Teaching Representative, Anne Currie and John Morrison, Religious Representatives. Apologies were given by Nicola Belcher, Parent Representative.

1. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, Councillor McLean declared an interest in Item 25 on the agenda as a close relative would be affected by the paper so would leave the meeting at that juncture and take no part in the consideration of the report. There were no other 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. Goodbye and Thanks

The Committee joined Councillor Warren in thanking Mrs Nicola Belcher, who was resigning as parent representative on the Committee from August 2021, for her contributions since joining the Committee in November 2018.

The Committee also joined Councillor Warren in wishing all school leavers, good luck for their future after what has been a very difficult year.

3. Agenda Order

Councillor McLean sought agreement from the Committee to move item 24a on the agenda to follow Item 13 at the end of the Education Reports.

This was agreed by the Committee.

4. Resolution

The meeting resolved 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 during consideration of the items of business appearing at the relevant paragraphs of this minute as specified below, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the appropriate paragraphs of Part 1 Schedule 7a of the Act.

Para Number of the Minute	Para Number of Schedule 7a
16	1 Information relating to staffing matters
28	1 Information relating to staffing matters
29	5 Information relating to the adoption, care, fostering or education of any particular child or relating to the supervision of residence of any particular child in accordance with a supervision requirement

5. Minute of meeting of 31 March 2021

The minute of the meeting of the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee dated 31 March 2021 was submitted and approved.

6. Written Questions **

The Committee noted that a written question had been submitted by Councillor Eagle and the response by the Depute Chief Executive (Education Communities and Organisational Development) thereto:-

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR EAGLE

The Conservative group has serious concerns in regards the latest reports of the 2021 SQA examination process, in particular, its assessment and awards process, which has been reported as an 'unfolding debacle' by the author of the review into the 2020 SQA exam diet.

It has been widely reported that the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) unexpectedly announced a series of smaller exams for every subject, following the cancellation of exams in 2020-21;

We understand this has led to schools, including those in Moray having to create complex timetables to cover the smaller exam diet announced by the SQA; that there have been questions over the leaking of papers online and with schools operating differing timetables, exam content having been placed on social media such as TikTok;

Can officers confirm if there has been any such concerns about the leaking of exams online in Moray and detail how these exams have been set out across the Moray area.

Further can the council administration set out what action has been taken by them or the Council in response to these growing concerns and what reassurances have been sought that Moray pupils will not be disadvantaged as a result of the SQA requiring the completion of these exams, following the cancellation of the 2021 Higher level exam diet by the Deputy First Minister in December 2020?

RESPONSE

There has been no concern in Moray regarding the suggested leak of exams on social media such as Tik Tok. Therefore, there has been no action required to address such concerns.

National 5, Higher and Advanced higher exam diets have been cancelled and will have an Alternative Certification Model (ACM) approach.

Moray's approach to the ACM is set out in the Moray ACM Guidance. In Moray, there is no expectation that schools hold a formal diet of exams for National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher. In place of prelims, a selection of key tasks and/or questions were planned and carried out under appropriate conditions and with an appropriate level of demand to give a robust indication of performance in the final course assessment. This provided a firm foundation for the ACM, arrangements for which have been put in place across all schools to ensure a fair and equitable alternative certification model for pupils in Moray.

The ACM arrangements include:

replacing the final examination diet with flexible classroom-based assessment within schools and colleges to assess learning at key points, adapted as necessary with learners at the centre.

phased return in term 3 for practical subjects initially then others to complete learning formal assessments and evidence gathering in term 4 for all subjects reviewing a range of evidence to build up a picture of the candidate's performance as a whole, to decide on provisional grade focus on the quality of the pieces of evidence (two to four depending on subject requirements) in order to manage the assessment load for pupils and workload for teachers robust assessment and moderation arrangements within schools and across Moray – schools undertake quality assurance processes and local authority quality assurance meetings take place prior to final grade submission.

In addition arrangements are in place for:

Young people who receive Additional Assessment Arrangements to continue to do so – the Moray AAA Guidelines support with this.

Alternative arrangements where young people have been affected by Covid-19 to enable them to complete all formal assessments as part of the provisional grade decisions.

Assurances

Education Scotland have reviewed our processes as part of a national review and have given positive feedback and validated our approaches.

A further meeting with SQA took place last week to acknowledge the situation with Covid-19 cases and if any further support or mitigation was needed; it was agreed that Moray was in a strong position with their SQA and ACM processes.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Eagle sought confirmation from the Head of Education that support is available for all students during the assessment process and after should any appeals be required.

In response, the Head of Education confirmed that everything will be done to assist the students should they need it.

7. Education Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the budget position for Education as at 31 March 2021.

During consideration Councillor Brown requested more detail be added to the report in the future.

In response, the Head of Education stated that the reports follow a standard reporting format used by Accountancy but agreed to consider an alternative format to provide more detail.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget position at 31 March 2021.

8. Performance Report - Education - Period to March 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the performance of the Service for the period to 31 March 2021.

Following lengthy consideration the Committee agreed to note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

9. Moray Education Covid 19 Remote Learning School Survey Analysis and Recommendations

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the findings of the Moray Education Covid-19 2021 Remote Learning surveys completed by Moray Primary and Secondary schools and outline core recommendations moving forwards from survey findings and analysis, informing Education contingency planning and strategy.

The report also updated Committee on progress in meeting core recommendations resulting from Moray Education Covid-19 Remote Learning Surveys undertaken and analysed following previous lockdown in March to June 2020.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the report;
- ii) note the Digital Innovation Strategy for Education will be presented to Committee in August 2021; and
- iii) a further paper on Parental Engagement/Family Learning be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

10. Moray Scottish Attainment Challenge 2015 2020 Impact Report

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed Committee of the impact of Scottish Attainment Challenge (Pupil Equity) (SAC) funding for the children and young people of Moray, in particular, those affected by poverty as framed by our Education Scotland Scottish Attainment Challenge Impact Report for Moray 2020.

The report also reviewed the impact of SAC funding on closing the poverty related attainment gap and impact of Covid-19 on work by schools to address this.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap in Moray over the last 5 years; and
- ii) acknowledge the impact of Covid-19 on work to close the poverty related attainment and progress of schools despite this disruption.

11. Curriculum Development in the Senior Phase

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) updated the Committee on the current curriculum offer within the Senior Phase across all secondary schools in Moray, with particular reference to the S4 cohort and consideration given to next steps in extending and broadening the curriculum provision.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the current curriculum offer within the Senior Phase, with particular reference to S4 cohorts; and
- ii) support ongoing review and development of a responsive and agile curriculum provision.

12. Education Resources and Communities and Education Capital Budget Monitor Report

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of projects and proposed expenditure for Capital Budgets within Education Resources and Communities and Education for 2020/21.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the content of the report; and
- ii) approve expenditure to design a heating system replacement for Kinloss Primary School for inclusion in a 2022/23 programme of works as per paragraph 5.6

13. Suspension of Standing Orders

The Chair sought the agreement of the Committee to Suspend Standing Order 74 to allow the meeting to continue beyond 12.45pm. This was unanimously agreed.

14. Education Resources and Communities Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the budget position for Education Resources and Communities as at 31 March 2021.

Following consideration the Committee noted the budget position at 31 March 2021.

15. Performance Report - Education Resources and Communities - Period to March 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2021.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

16. Review of Additional Support Needs Services

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) updated the Committee on plans to review how children and young people with additional support needs are fully supported, included and involved in their learning, as part of the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

i)	note the progress achieved to date;

ii)	note that a further update on plans to progress the Review of Additional Support Needs (ASN) will be presented to the meeting of this Committee in August 2021; and
iii)	approve the creation of a post of Deputy Head Teacher (SEBN) for a temporary period of up to 2 years, subject to appropriate consultation.

17. Performance Report - Governance Strategy and Performance - Period to March 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2021.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

18. Complaints Annual Report 2019-20

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked Committee to consider the Complaints Annual Report 2019-20.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) welcome performance as indicated in the report; and
- ii) approve the report for submission to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO)

19. Corporate Risk Register Update

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided the Committee with the latest copy of the Corporate Risk Register for review and comment.

The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance asked the Committee to note that the Risk Rating on Page 263 of the papers should read Likelihood 4 and Impact 4 = 16 and not Impact 3 as stated in the papers.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve the updated Corporate Risk Register dated May 2021.

20. Performance Report - HR ICT and OD - Period to March 2021

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2021.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

21. Health and Safety Annual Report 2020

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to consider the annual Health and Safety report and approve the progress, proposed future actions and carry forward of outstanding actions for the next year.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the content of the annual health and safety report, as set out in Appendix 1, and the progress towards the outcomes established in the last report; and
- ii) approve the carry forward of outstanding actions and proposed future actions for 2021.

22. Children and Families Social Work Services Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2021

A report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care informed the Committee of the budget position for Children and Families Social Work Services as at 31 March 2021.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget position at 31 March 2021.

23. Performance Report - Children and Families and Criminal Justice Social Work - Period to March 2021

A report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care informed the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2021.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

24. Children and Families and Justice Services Social Work Services Plan 2020-23

Under reference to paragraph 18 of the minute of the meeting of Education, Communities and Organisational Development on 3 February 2021, a report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care invited the Committee to consider the Children and Families and Justice Social Work Service Plan for 2020-23.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve the Service Plan for children and families and justice social work.

25. Corporate Parenting

A report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care informed the Committee of data and service activities relating to corporate parenting in Moray.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

26. Fostering Scheme and Short Breaks

A report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care sought approval for proposed changes to short break entitlement for the fostering scheme and update Committee on the outcome of the consultation carried out with carers.

Following consideration the Committee approved the proposed the changes to the short break scheme for foster carers set out in Para 3.7 (a) to (d) on the basis that the required consultation with carers has been undertaken as set out in 3.8.

27. Question Time ***

Councillor Eagle sought clarification on whether there had been changes to the school lunch menus. He further added that he had received a number of comments from pupils and parents that the meals were not as good as they had been previously.

In response the Head of Education confirmed that there had been a change in nutritional standards and a lot of work had been carried out by the Catering section and that plans were in place to work with Parent Councils to look at the implications for the changes.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) further added that she had received the following response from the Catering Section who were unable to attend today's meeting.

There have been Changes to the Nutritional Standards for Food and Drink in Schools which we had to comply with as of April 2021. A letter went out along with a Nutritional standards booklet to all schools requesting that they forwarded this on to parents. The booklet explained the changes that are required to be made to comply with the new regulations. Other changes include a meat free day for climate change reasons and to meet dietary requests. Some of the meals have stayed the same but ingredients have been changed slightly to adhere to the new regulations.

The menu will be reviewed before the start of the next term to make any changes as there will be 12 weeks data on uptake and feedback to review .

Regular surveys are carried out with parents with the previous one in November 2020 and a further one planned in October 2021 which will be used to change menus. In addition, it is proposed to organise pupil groups to have an input to new menus.

Currently the uptake for all primary school meals is 44% which is an increase from the covid menu. However speaking with other local authorities most are experiencing a drop in uptake due to the new legislation which has been fed back to the Scottish Government and Cosla.

Councillor Warren had been contacted by a parent and sought clarification on the Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) coming to Moray after the summer as she was concerned that some NQTs were unable to complete their course as their teaching practice had been cut short due to Covid-19. She further asked what Moray's allocation of NQTs is this year.

In response the Head of Education confirmed that there are some current students who will not be able to complete their course because they have been unable to complete their practice work. These students will be allocated to Local Authorities on a super numerary basis and continue to be students working in the schools from August until October to allow them to complete their course. Following October they will then add to the complement of the school as NQTs.

The allocation of NQTs has been received and there is a huge increase in numbers but it is not possible to confirm that every place will be taken up. Once this confirmation has been received it will be circulated to members.

28. Elgin Community Centre

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided Committee with an update in relation to Elgin Community Centre (Elgin CC) and to agree an option in relation to the future operation of the facility.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) to note the information in relation to the operation and options for Elgin CC;
and
- ii) Option 1 detailed in the appendix with the addition of a review in 12 months time subject to there being confirmation of appropriate budget to continue the status quo.

29. Loan Request on Behalf of a Kinship Carer

A report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care sought approval to provide a kinship carer with a £10,000 loan from the kinship care budget to purchase a larger static caravan.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve a £10,000 interest free loan from the kinship budget to support a kinship carer to upgrade accommodation.