

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Education, Communities and Organisational Development

Wednesday, 23 September 2020

remote locations via video conference,

PRESENT

Councillor George Alexander, Councillor James Allan, Councillor Paula Coy, Councillor Lorna Creswell, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Tim Eagle, Councillor Claire Feaver, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Aaron McLean, Councillor Ray McLean, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Laura Powell, Councillor Derek Ross, Mrs Susan Slater, Councillor Sonya Warren

APOLOGIES

Ms Nicola Belcher, Ms Angela Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) Head of Education, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Transformation, Karen Lees, Quality Improvement Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Aaron McLean.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee.

2. 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.

3. Minute of Meeting of Children and Young Peoples Committee on 4 March 2020

The minute of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Committee dated 4 March 2020 was submitted by Councillor Warren, Chair of the Committee and approved.

Following the approval of the minute, the Chair gave a brief resume of the work which had been carried out within the Education Service since the start of lockdown on 23 March 2020. A full list of all work is available in meeting documents for this meeting.

4. Children's Services Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - July 2020

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the budget position for Children's Services as at 31 July 2020.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget position at 31 July 2020.

5. Education Resources and Communities Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - July 2020

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 July 2020.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget position at 31 July 2020.

6. Education Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - July 2020

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the budget position for Education as at 31 July 2020.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget position at 31 July 2020.

7. SQA and Estimate Processes for Exam Diet 2020

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisation Development) informed the Committee of the SQA estimate processes following school closures due the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent cancellation of the exam diet for session 2019/20.

Following consideration Committee agreed to:

- i) note the processes for the completion of SQA estimates as a contributing component of wider performance information; and

- ii) acknowledge the continuing uncertainty following school return and the potential disruption to learning during session 2020/21 as guidance and expectations is awaited regarding exam diet 2021.

8. Improvement and Modernisation Programme

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the progress made against the projects contained within the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP) and to consider the issues and opportunities arising from Covid-19.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the progress made against the projects within the IMP;
- ii) notes the impact of COVID-19 on the programme delivery timescales and the opportunities arising;

recommend to Moray Council the extension of the post of Head of Transformation for a period of 12 months at a cost of £107k and that this be funded from Capita Receipts; and
- iii) note that further update on the IMP will be reported to the Committee in November 2020.

9. Review of Community Council Scheme and Election Arrangements Report

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to consider and approve the arrangements for the review of the Moray Council Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils and the future Community Council elections.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve the:

- i) framework for the review of the Moray Council Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils; and
- ii) arrangements for the Community Council elections, noting financial implications, as detailed in the report.

10. Question Time ***

Councillor Feaver sought clarification on a number of points with regards to schools:

- i) the use of hand dryers instead of paper towels in schools;
- ii) the procedures in respect of hand sanitising for children travelling to school on school transport and those children who do not use transport; and

iii) the lack of soap and working dispensers in some schools.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) said she did not have the information at hand regarding the change in guidance on the use of hand towels and hand dryers but would provide further information following the meeting.

With regards to children who use school transport, following discussions with the bus companies, a risk assessment was completed and it was deemed a slip hazard to provide hand sanitiser for use on the buses so children are advised to wash their hands or sanitise them prior to getting on the bus. She further clarified that once children reach school, all children, regardless of how they got to school are asked to sanitise their hands on entering the school building.

In respect of the question regarding a shortage of soap, the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised Councillor Feaver that this should be discussed with the relevant Quality Improvement Manager within Education.

Councillor Alexander sought clarification on the procedure for Covid-19 testing in schools following the case in Lossiemouth where a pupil had received a positive test result and then on re-test the result was negative and no announcements in the press until the Council is sure what the result is.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that the testing in schools is the same as testing elsewhere. If a pupil or member of staff is symptomatic then they should arrange a test through the public health arrangements. There is not a separate procedure for testing in schools. What happens thereafter is in accordance with the public health guidance and any publicity is driven by public health and not the Council. She further clarified that this is what happened with the case in Lossiemouth.

Councillor Morrison sought an update on how the Scottish Welfare Fund and Food Fund has been used and will it be reported as a regular item to this Committee.

In response the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance said his understanding was that the Scottish Welfare Fund had not received a massive call on it over the summer and he felt that this was probably due to the availability of the food fund. The Food Fund has been used primarily in recent months to provide cash payments to families who have found themselves in food poverty.

The demand on the fund was overestimated and the Council have not been able to use the full allocation from the Scottish Government. The allocation runs out at the end of September and he had today, written to the Scottish Government to ask if they have any plans to extend the funding given that a number of families and business people's lives will still be in doubt given the end of the furlough scheme at the end of October and the continuing restrictions.

Councillor Creswell highlighted the issue of adult literacies and the resulting lack of uptake in seeking help from the likes of the Food Fund etc and sought clarification on where literacy help can be obtained.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that the Council are aware that there are a

number of people who are unable to make contact in the new world we are currently operating in and arrangements have been put in place for language as well as literacy. The Council's language service have been used to assist people where English is not their first language to enable them to access the free school meals vouchers. Staff have also supported clients on the telephone and taken them through processes that way where the clients are not able to use digital devices or literacy is an issue.

The Depute Chief Executive urged people to contact the Council's advice services to ensure that support can be provided.

Councillor Creswell further sought clarification on who to refer clients too as this would be useful information.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that referrals would go through the normal routes and additional support will be provided.

The Secondary Teacher Representative sought clarification on whether there would be a staffing update at the end of the meeting.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that a update would be circulated after the end of the meeting if there was a requirement to do so.

The Secondary Teacher Representative further asked whether an update could be provided on the impact of applications to Head Teacher posts as a result of the Into Headship Course not currently being available.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that the Services are currently looking into this issue and identifying any temporary arrangements that can be put in place and this can be included in the staffing update.