

MORAY COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 08 June 2022

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

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Sheila Brumby, Councillor Neil Cameron, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Mrs Anne Currie, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Mrs Susan Slater, Ms Angela Stuart, Emma Tunnard, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

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IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above 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, Head of Housing and Property, Acting Head of Children, Families and Justice Social Work, Sport and Culture Service Manager, Interim Service Manager - Children and Families and Criminal Justice Social Work, Stewart McLaughlin, Quality Improvement Manager, Early Years Service Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Kathleen Robertson, with the exception of Item 11 which was chaired by Councillor Neil McLennan.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, Councillors Robertson and Mustard declared an interest in Item 11 and would remove themselves from the meeting during the consideration of that item.

In respect of other items on the agenda 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 items on the agenda.

3. Welcome and Thanks

The Committee joined the Chair in welcoming the new religious representative, Mrs Sheila Brumby and the new parent representative, Mrs Emma Tunnard to their first meeting of the Committee.

She further thanked Mrs Susan Slater and Ms Angela Stuart, the teacher representatives as this would be their final meeting of their 5 year term sitting on the Committee. Elections are underway for the appointment of new reps.

4. Resolution

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 19973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Item 19 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
20	Para 9 Information relating to terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority

5. Minute of Meeting of 9 March 2022

The minute of the meeting of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee dated 9 March 2022 was submitted and approved.

The Committee joined the Chair in thanking Councillor Warren, the previous Chair of the Committee for her work over the last few years.

6. Written Questions **

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

7. Allocation of Education Funding Update

Under reference to paragraph 12 of the minute of the meeting of 9 March 2022 a report by the Depute Chief Executive updated the Committee on progress with regards to the Allocation of Education Funding.

Councillor Ross moved that any secondary subject vacancies arising due to NQT's not taking up a place in Moray, are advertised as main grade teaching posts on a permanent basis, as he felt that in advertising the vacancies as temporary it would deter potential applicants from applying. This was seconded by Councillor Keith.

Following consideration, during which the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that a suspension of standing orders would be required, he further added that if Councillor Ross was so minded, it would be prudent to add 'subject to any additional financial permission required from Moray Council in terms of potential budget pressures' to the end of his motion as a precaution.

Councillor Ross confirmed he was happy to include the additional wording.

Following further consideration in which Officers responded to Members' questions, the Committee unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Order 83,

given that the motion represented a relevant and material change in circumstances and agreed:

- i) to note the allocation of newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) to date including additional offer from the Scottish Government; and
- ii) that any secondary subject vacancies arising due to NQTs not taking up a place in Moray, are advertised as main grade teaching posts on a permanent basis, subject to any additional financial permission required from Moray Council in terms of potential future budget pressures.

8. Analysis of Secondary School Leavers Attainment 2020-2021

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the minute of the meeting of 24 November 2021 a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the SQA leaver attainment across the secondary schools and for this data to be fully scrutinised as part of the raising attainment and improvement strategy.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the Senior Phase Leaver Attainment across the Secondary Schools in Moray for session 2020/21 with specific regard to the National Measures for leavers published on Insight in February 2022;
- ii) note the actions for improvement arising from the 2020/21 attainment performance; and
- iii) acknowledge and commend practitioner commitment, extensive preparation and support of young people throughout the session as the return to an examination based model as well as young people's resilience and dedication throughout last session's Alternative Certification Model period.

9. Moray Education Early Learning and Childcare Income Generation

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the success of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) top up hours currently being offered at Linkwood Nursery and to seek approval to extend the ELC top up offer to all year round services in Moray.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the ongoing success of the ELC top up hours at Linkwood Nursery, Elgin;
- ii) the extension of the top up offer to include all year round settings. This would also extend to offering top up hours on the occasional day within each Associated School Group (ASG); and
- iii) note that the impact of the above offer will be assessed as part of the ongoing work to manage the cost of the ELC service downward to come

within budget and any future adjustments will be considered based on the operating experience and income generated.

10. Q4 2021-22 Performance Report - Education - Period to March 2022

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 2022.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2022; and
- ii) note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

11. Education Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2022

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 2022.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the budget position at 31 March 2022; and
- ii) the revised carry forwards on Appendix 2.

Councillors Mustard and Robertson left the meeting at the conclusion of this item. Councillor McLennan took over as Chair for the next item.

12. Instrumental Music Tuition Funding Allocation

Under reference to para 13 of the minute of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 24 November a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided the Committee with a further update on proposals regarding the expansion of the Moray Music Instruction Service.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) note the outcomes of the consultation with children and young people and their families and carers to determine demand across a number of different musical instruments;
- ii) recommend to Corporate Committee on 14 June 2022 to allocate the additional funding of £35,000 from the Scottish Government towards an expansion of music making opportunities across Moray for academic year 2022/23;
- iii) allocate the funding as per option B at para 3.9; and

- iv) defer any further decisions on the expansion of the Music Instruction Service until the long-term funding position is known.

Councillors Mustard and Robertson re-joined the meeting following the conclusion of this item and Councillor Robertson resumed the role of Chair

13. Education Resources and Communities and Education Capital Budget Monitoring Report

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of projects actual expenditure for Capital Budgets within Education, Children's and Leisure Services for 2021/22.

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

14. Education Resources and Communities Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2022

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 2022.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget position at 31 March 2022.

15. Q4 2021-22 Performance Report - Education Resources and Communities - Period to March 2022

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 2022.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2022; and
- ii) note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

16. Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

A report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray sought homologation of the decision made by the previous Chair and Council Leader on the spend of the money made available to families in Moray.

Councillor McLennan sought agreement to include an additional recommendation which stated that the Committee note the challenge of SIMD only as a means of distribution of funds, whilst also asking for consideration of other factors such as rurality to be discussed before distributing such funds.

As there was no one otherwise minded and following further consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) homologate the decision made by the previous Chair and Council Leader with regards to the spend on the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, within social work as Section 12 (Social Work Scotland) Act 1968 and Section 22 payments (Children (Scotland) Act 1995) for families in financial and immediate need;
- ii) note that a paper will be prepared for the Scottish Government on how the money has been distributed; and
- iii) note the challenge of SIMD only as a means of distribution of funds, whilst also asking for consideration of other factors such as rurality to be discussed before distributing such funds.

17. Children and Families Social Work Services Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2022

A report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray informed the Committee of the budget position for Children and Families Social Work Services as at 31 March 2022.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget position at 31 March 2022.

18. Q4 2021-22 Performance Report - Children and Families and Criminal Justice Social Work - Period to March 2022

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 2022.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2022; and
- ii) note the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

19. Question Time ***

Under reference to para 4 of the Minute of the meeting of 9 March 2022, Councillor Warren sought an update on the timing of the payment of the free school meal payments to senior pupils and the petition process to allow the Council to accept petitions from younger people.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance confirmed that the petition process is being reviewed during the summer recess.

In regards to the timing of the payment of free school meals, the Head of Education advised that work is ongoing with colleagues in catering but was unable to confirm a timeline for the conclusion of the work.

Under reference to para 14 of the minute of the meeting of 9 March 2022, Councillor Warren sought an update on the appointment of an external consultant to undertake a review of the Early Learning and Childcare Service.

In response the Continuous Improvement Officer (Early Years) confirmed that a consultant has now been appointed and it anticipated that an update will be provided to Committee in October.

Councillor McLennan sought clarification on how much value there is in comparing the Council schools against the artificial constructs of the Northern Alliance in which the other authorities are much larger than Moray.

He further sought clarification on what support do the Northern Alliance provide to assist the schools and what is the cost benefit analysis of both the inputs from the Northern Alliance and National Education Agencies who are tasked with supporting improvements in Education.

In response the Head of Education confirmed that the comparison with the Northern Alliance was done as part of developing and reviewing attainment papers and it was a request from the previous Council that the comparisons were made as this had not been done previously.

She further added that if these comparisons are not helpful, the comments made can be taken away and the information presented in a way that provides a better comparison.

With regards to the cost benefits, this would require further work a report back to Committee at a later date.

Councillor McLennan further sought clarification on whether there was a value in officer time in comparing Moray schools with the Northern Alliance and would the time be better spent comparing with national figures and the virtual comparator,

In response, the Head of Education confirmed that she would go away and look at the issue and consider the pros and cons of the current comparisons and discuss further with members at an attainment briefing.

Councillor Williams left the meeting during the discussion of this question.

Councillor Keith sought an update on what the Council is doing to encourage the young people in the area to take up the free bus travel passes as Moray has currently only issued to 26% of those eligible which is below the national average.

In response, the Head of Education confirmed that the Council has been very proactive in encouraging the uptake.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) further added that work is also being done via the Wellbeing Partnership to promote the scheme.

20. Early Learning and Childcare - Lease Update and Proposed Share Property Costs Methodology [Para 9]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the options for the proposed methodology for shared property costs related to lease agreements with private and third sector providers.

To also inform the Committee of plans for further consultation with private and third sector providers related to the proposed shared property costs methodology and to update the Committee on lease agreement progress for private and third sector Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) providers that currently operate from Moray Council premises.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) note the options highlighted in Appendix 1 for approaches to a proposed methodology for share property costs and that all options including yearly percentage increase increments be included in the consultation;
- ii) notes that further consultation exercises are required with private and third sector Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) providers regarding share property costs, following which an updated report will be submitted to Committee with recommendations to consider; and
- iii) note the updated status of lease agreements as outlined in Appendix 2.