

MORAY COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 25 January 2023

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, 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, Ms Angela Stuart, Mrs Emma Tunnard, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Mr Alfie Harper

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Education, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Head of Governance, Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Strategy and Performance, Quality Improvement Managers, Early Learning and Childcare Manager, Senior Project Manager (Learning Estate), Catering Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Kathleen Robertson.

2. Tribute

The Committee joined the Chair in paying tribute to Robbie Burns as the Committee was being held on the Bard's birthday.

3. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests

In terms of Standing Order 21 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, Councillors Robertson and Mustard declared an interest in the Music Tuition Information Report and confirmed that they would remain in the meeting and would review their decision depending on how the discussion of the item progressed.

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.

4. Resolution

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 Items 17-19 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
17	Para 4 Information relating to any applicant or recipient of any financial assistance provided by the Council
18	Para 8 and 9 Information on proposed terms and/or expenditure to be incurred by the Authority
19	Para 9 Information on proposed terms to be proposed by or to the Authority

5. Minutes of meeting of 2 November 2022

The minute of the meeting of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee dated 2 November 2022 was submitted and approved.

6. Minutes of special meeting of 7 November 2022

The minute of the Special meeting of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee dated 7 November 2022 was submitted and approved.

7. Minutes of special meeting of 14 December 2022

The minute of the Special meeting of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee dated 14 December 2022 was submitted and approved.

8. Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

9. Free School Meals Allowance Secondary Pupils

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the current process of when the free school meal allocation is added to pupil's accounts and approve the plan to alter the timing of the allocation.

In welcoming the report Councillor Warren, sought confirmation that when the contract is renewed Officers to take into consideration the flexibility of any new system purchased.

The Head of Environmental and Commercial Services confirmed that this would be taken into consideration when looking at new systems.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report;
- ii) approve the change to the timing of the allowance as set out in paragraph 7.3 Option 2; and
- iii) consider a more flexible system when the contract is being renewed.

10. Kings Coronation Bank Holiday May 2023

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to give authorisation to submit a request to the Scottish Government for permission for all schools across Moray to reduce teaching days by one from the requirement to provide 190 days schooling to 189 in order to recognise the additional bank holiday on Monday 8 May 2023 to the mark the celebration of His Majesty's Coronation.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) seek an exemption from the Scottish Government for the requirement to provide 190 days schooling and seek consent for the exceptional closure of all Moray schools on Monday 8 May 2023, under the terms of section 133 (4) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 in order to recognise the additional Bank Holiday on Monday 8 May 2023 to the mark the celebration of His Majesty's Coronation; and
- ii) note that this request will be triggered only if the Corporate Committee on 31 January 2023 determines that an additional day of service closure and annual leave be granted across the Council.

11. Initial Analysis of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2022

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided Committee with a summary of the Moray data collected in June 2022 and provided to the Scottish Government at the end of October 2022 regarding Teacher Professional Judgements (TPJ) on children Achieving Curriculum for Excellence levels (ACEL) at P1, P4, P7 and S3. This data appears in the Scottish Government report published in December 2022.

In introducing the report, Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager advised the Committee that recommendation (iv) should read 'a further paper to be presented to the next meeting of this Committee with further information on how

the direct allocation of additional Scottish Government funding for additional teachers, for the priority of raising attainment, could be allocated.'

Councillor Ross asked whether there was any evidence that would support the reduction in class sizes and improvements in attainment.

In response the Head of Education confirmed that this was not information that the Council held and that although maximum class sizes are set nationally there is no specific data.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) further added that any information on class sizes currently published is more general and the validity of the information available would need to be determined.

Councillor Macrae proposed adding a further recommendation in which the Chair of the Committee could write to the Secretary for Education to request information on the effects of class sizes on attainment that the Scottish Parliament Information Centre may hold.

The Chair confirmed that she was happy to write the letter.

Following further lengthy discussion and consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) scrutinises and notes the content of this report and acknowledges the lasting impact of Covid-19 and wider influencing factors on work of Moray schools to close the poverty related and wider attainment gaps
- ii) acknowledges work underway by Education using resources available to support in addressing identified areas of underperformance and improve outcomes for all children and young people
- iii) notes revised ACEL and wider Stretch Aims set using available data intelligence as part of the Scottish Government and Education Scotland Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress requirements;
- iv) a further paper would be presented to the next meeting of this Committee with further information on how the direct allocation of additional Scottish Government funding for additional teachers, for the priority of raising attainment, could be allocated; and
- v) the Chair to write to the Secretary for Education to request information on the effects of class sizes on attainment that the Scottish Parliament Information Centre may hold

12. Education Professional Leadership and Learning Strategy

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to agree the updated Professional Leadership and Learning Strategy.

Following consideration the Committee agreed the Professional Leadership and Learning Strategy.

13. Parental Involvement and Engagement

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to note the statutory requirement for local authorities to have a Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy and to request approval of the draft Moray Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2023-2025.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve the Moray Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2023-2025.

14. Information Report - Primary and Secondary School Functional Capacity 2022-23

Under reference to Standing Order 38 Councillor Lawrence seconded by Councillor Warren called the report in to ensure the Committee have evidence to make decisions around budget and are able to consider learning estate issues with full information.

Following consideration, the Committee noted the report.

15. Information Report - Music Instruction and Performance Update

Under reference to Standing Order 38 Councillor Warren seconded by Councillor Lawrence called in the report to get more information about music based work and more information about how this works going forward and budget issues.

Following consideration, the Committee noted the report.

16. Question Time

Under reference to paragraph 4 of the minute of the meeting of 7 November 2022, Councillor Warren sought an update on the funding bids to the Scottish Government and the timeline for parental consultation.

In response, the Head of Education Resources and Communities confirmed that a response from the Scottish Government is expected at the end of January 2023 and members will be notified in due course. With regards to the consultation, it will be carried out in line with the previously published timeline and it is anticipated to begin towards the end of the current quarter.

Under reference to paragraph 18 of the minute of the meeting of 14 December 2022 sought an update on the Service Level Agreement between Moray Leisure Centre and the Council.

In response, the Head of Education Resources and Communities stated that she did not have an update but would follow up on the issue following the meeting.

Under reference to paragraph 21 of the minute of the meeting of 14 December 2022 Councillor Warren sought an update on whether the costs for the January and April intake were now available.

In response the Early Learning and Childcare Manager confirmed that the information was included in a report going to Moray Council on 2 February 2023.

Under reference to paragraph 23 of the minute of the meeting of 14 December 2022 sought an update on the Aberlour Infrastructure Project.

In response the Early Learning and Childcare Manager confirmed that meetings had taken place with Ward members and parents had been written too. Other options are being investigated including, phasing the work and considering an alternative location for the outdoor nursery at Craigellachie Primary.

She further added that the project is still working within the original £900k budget.

Councillor Allan updated the meeting on a recent visit to Hersbruck in Germany. He had attended a Scottish evening at the weekend, where the young people from Hersbruck who had been involved in a visit to Lossiemouth celebrated their recent visit and thanked the pupils from Lossiemouth High School and Hythehill Primary for making them feel so welcome.

He further added that the Mini Cooks initiative, he had previously informed the Committee of, started on Monday 23 January 2023.

Councillor Warren requested an update on services provided for developmental nursery places particularly for children who progress to the bases at primary school and how is the Council supporting children and families with complex needs in the nurseries.

In response, the Early Learning and Childcare Manager confirmed that the Council currently has contracts with 2 developmental nurseries in Lossiemouth and Forres and work is being carried out with Teddy Bear nursery in Cullen to become a partner nursery.

She further added that a large number of the other nurseries do accommodate children with a high level of diverse need.

Councillor Warren further sought clarification on whether the services were available to all children until they reach the age of 5.

The Early Learning and Childcare Manager confirmed that if it is appropriate for the individual child to remain in the developmental nursery then the service is available.

She further added that the developmental nurseries work closely with the universal nurseries and if they see that a child can transition to a mainstream nursery that would then feed into a Primary School, the move would be supported as this then helps to alleviate the pressures on the developmental nursery and allows them to take children from a younger age.

17. Moray and Nairn Educational Trust - Disbursement 2022/23 [Para 4]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided information and sought approval for the

payment plan to be used to assess applications to the Moray and Nairn Educational Trust and to consider applications to the trust.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve the grants at the rates provided in the payment plan.

18. Learning Estate Strategy and Development Programme - Findrassie Primary School [Para 8 and 9]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided an update on the Findrassie Primary School new build project and seeks a decision from Committee on how to proceed based on the change in circumstances.

Councillor Mustard proposed deferring the report for 6 months and bring back a report to review the situation at that point.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that any decision to postpone or defer would result in the Council being unable to meet the timescale requirements of the LEIP2 funding and so unable to use that funding and confirmed that data will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis and reported to Committee on an annual basis as part of an annual review of the learning estate plan that is being developed.

Following the response from the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Councillor Mustard withdrew her amendment.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i) note the change in circumstances relating to projected pupil numbers and the challenges impacting on the affordability and delivery of the Findrassie Primary School new build project;
- ii) note the range of possible options to mitigate the impact of the capital cost increases to the Findrassie Primary School new build project;
- iii) approve a deferment in the Findrassie Primary School new build project for a up to 5 years, accepting that the project would no longer meet the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) Phase 2 qualifying criteria and so would not be eligible for Scottish Government future revenue funding;
- iv) instruct Council officers to take forward planning for the rezoning of Elgin Academy Associated School Group primary school catchment areas to utilise the existing and future school roll capacity;
- v) agree to seek the formal replacement of the Findrassie Primary School project with the Elgin High School project as a Learning Estate Investment Programme Phase 2 project and to continue negotiations with Scottish Futures Trust and the Scottish Government Learning Directorate to secure this; and

- vi) note that update reports on the Learning Estate Strategy and delivery programme will be brought to Education, Childcare and Leisure Services Committee every 12 months.

19. Early Learning and Childcare - Lease Agreement and Shared Property Costs Update

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the outcome of consultation with private and third sector providers related to the proposed shared property costs methodology and updated the Committee on lease agreement progress for private and third sector Early Learning and Childcare providers that currently operate from Moray Council premises.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i) to note the updated status of lease agreements as outlined in Appendix 3.
- ii) that any further partner nursery settings operating from council premises that are in contract with Moray Council to provide funded ELC hours only to children with Additional Support Needs (similar to Ladybird Development Group) be offered a lease at a nominal rent of £1 per annum and no share of property running costs;
- iii) to note the options highlighted in Appendix 1 for approaches to shared property costs and agrees that shared property costs be introduced through a gradual increase in these costs starting in Year 3 of the lease agreements (August 2023) and increasing by 25% increments throughout each remaining year of the lease agreements until 100% of the costs are reached based on benchmarking the costs against average commercial rates within Moray; and
- iv) to note the outcome following further consultation exercises with private and third sector Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) providers regarding shared property costs as outlined in Appendix 2.