

Committee Minutes

Education, Children and Families Committee

Edinburgh, 25 January 2011

Present:- Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Beckett (Vice-Convener), Balfour, Blacklock, Buchan, Cairns, Dawe, Day (substituting for Councillor Godzik), Edie, Henderson, Johnstone, Keir, Lang, G Mackenzie, Milligan, Morris, Munn and Rose.

Present for the Education Items:- T Brack, M Bryce-Stafford, A C Duncan, Rev Dr R Gould and R Simpson.

1 Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee of 9 November 2010 was approved as a correct record.

2 Community Access to Schools – The Way Forward

2.1 Deputation – SwimEasy Limited

The Committee heard a deputation from Ailien Pallot and Lara Kirkpatrick of SwimEasy Limited. SwimEasy Limited was a regular user of swimming facilities, encouraging children to remain in sport and continue to club level swimming. Details were provided of the successes of its pupils and the income generated by its hire of Council owned pools which was in the region of £65,000 per year confirming SwimEasy as a major stakeholder in this review of charges. The Committee's attention was drawn to appendix one of the report and the difference in the proposed pool hire charges compared to those for other facilities. SwimEasy offered a variety of programmes at different venues, some were more streamlined with no more than 16 swimmers in total and such sessions were quite often recommended for children with special needs. There could be an impact on these special programmes with them either being cancelled or moving to pools not owned by the Council.

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Standard charging was probably appropriate for some sports but swimming was outwith that category as any charging structure should reflect the different types and sizes of pools provided. Failure to recognise these differences could result in a loss of income to the Council as commercial users of the pools would probably choose to use non-Council owned facilities in the future.

Although SwimEasy welcomed the online booking system, because of continuity of lets it was necessary for them to confirm hires on an annual basis. They were also concerned about the possibility of Edinburgh Leisure operating the overall running of the system as this would be putting one commercial organisation versus others.

In conclusion, while SwimEasy supported many of the aims of the report, they opposed the blanket hire charges for swimming pools.

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation.

2.2 Report by the Director of Children and Families

The Committee was asked to approve proposals for improving community access to the sporting facilities available in secondary schools in Edinburgh including a new financial framework. This would increase community access to schools and eliminate pricing differentials between schools, making access fair and easier. For the first time, non-community high schools would have a dedicated budget to open outwith school hours, and charges would be standardised across the secondary school estate.

Motion

- 1) To approve the implementation of the new framework and recommend that as part of the budget setting process, Council authorises Head Teachers to apply the current average charges shown in appendix 1, column 1 of the joint report, for groups using secondary school sports facilities, with an implementation date of 1 April 2011.
- 2) That Head Teachers, provided they keep within the overall budget devolved to them, should retain discretion, in consultation with the Director of Children and Families, to vary charges where required.

In order to maximise community access, the Department would assist those few clubs who were in genuine financial difficulties, especially in the first year of the change.

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- 3) To note the intention to use PROSCI change management and other business processes and to report on the result of this by summer 2011.
- 4) To refer the report to the Culture and Leisure Committee for its information.
- 5) To approve the following adjustments to the joint report as outlined by the Director of Children and Families at the meeting:

Add "along with other business processes" after the word "approach".

Amend the first two sentences to read – "As explained above, in order to determine what Stage 2 should comprise, a small team of Council and Edinburgh Leisure staff will examine the possible options using PROSCI and other business processes. The PROSCI change management programme takes place over one or three days and is led by an external facilitator.

- moved by Councillor MacLaren, seconded by Councillor Beckett.

Amendment 1

Committee:

- 1) Notes the proposed new charging structure.
- 2) Agrees that as part of stage 1, four schools be identified to have their out of school hours facilities managed by Edinburgh Leisure. These pilot schools should be chosen on the basis that they represent a range of facility quality and existing level of access and that they are capable of being compared with schools that the Council continues to manage. This pilot to start in August 2011 and run for one academic year.
- 3) Agrees to further consideration of the charging structure within the context of setting up this pilot.

- moved by Councillor Rose, seconded by Councillor Balfour.

Amendment 2

Committee notes the positive progress achieved by work so far towards ensuring greater community access to school sports facilities.

Committee agrees to consult with sports clubs in the city who are current users of such facilities and report back to Committee within two cycles before a final decision on the charges framework.

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- moved by Councillor Blacklock, seconded by Councillor Henderson.

Voting

For the motion	-	14 votes
For amendment 1	-	3 votes
For amendment 2	-	6 votes

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor MacLaren.

(Reference – joint report by the Directors of Corporate Services and Children and Families 18 January 2011, submitted.)

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Cairns, as a Board member of Edinburgh Leisure, declared a non-financial interest in the above item.

3 Community Access to Schools – Sports Club Use of Council Owned Facilities

The Culture and Leisure Committee had considered a report on the findings of a survey on the use of Council owned facilities by sports clubs and as part of its decision, had referred the report to this Committee for its interest.

Decision

To note the report.

(Reference – report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services 25 January 2011, submitted.)

4 Child Protection Performance Improvement

An update was given on progress on the multi-agency child protection performance improvement plan.

Decision

- 1) To note the report and request further update reports on a twice-yearly cycle.

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- 2) The Director of Children and Families to provide a briefing note to members on progress with the issues detailed in Section 6.2 and 6.3 of the Child Protection Improvement Plan.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

5 Audit Scotland – “Getting It Right for Children in Residential Care”

Audit Scotland had published its national report on residential care in Scotland in September 2010. Details were provided of the recommendations of the Audit Scotland report, the recommendations already met by The City of Edinburgh Council and an action plan with timescales to address the recommendations that had not yet been met.

Decision

To approve the action plan outlined in Appendix 1 to the Director’s report.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

6 Children and Families Update on the Implementation of the Commissioning Strategy and Plan for Care and Support

Commissioning plans for the Children and Families Department were being developed and the proposed engagement, consultation and communication plan were detailed.

Decision

- 1) To approve the proposals for developing a Commissioning Plan for Children and Families and the consultation and engagement programme detailed in the report.
- 2) That a further progress report be provided in June 2011.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

7 Access to Employment Opportunities within the Council for Looked After Children

The Committee was provided with details on how the Council was fulfilling its corporate parenting responsibility to Looked After Children with regard to employment and preparation for employment. An analysis of school leaver destinations of Looked After Children was also provided.

Decision

- 1) To note the report and request a more detailed report on strategies to increase the number of Looked After Children who left school in to positive destinations from the Director of Children and Families and the Director of City Development.
- 2) That the Director of Children and Families provide members with comparative figures for 16+ year old children not looked after by the Council.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

8 Attainment Report

A summary was provided of the analysis of attainment in City of Edinburgh schools for the year 2009-2010.

Decision

- 1) To note the levels of attainment presented in the Director's report.
- 2) To note that attainment in examinations in authority schools, taking account of the key measures where meaningful comparison could be made, may be described overall as good.
- 3) To note that strategies deployed to raise attainment continued to show success.
- 4) To agree to the actions proposed to raise attainment.
- 5) To receive further reports on attainment.
- 6) To note the adjustments to the report outlined at the meeting.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

9 Attendance Policy and Procedure

Approval was sought for an attendance policy and procedure to promote school attendance and manage absence.

Decision

- 1) To approve the policy and that it be disseminated.
- 2) To receive a progress report in March 2011 on improving attendance in Edinburgh schools.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

10 Performance Report – Children and Families – October/November 2010

Performance management information for the Children and Families Department for the period October/November 2010 was presented.

Decision

To note the improved and maintained performance during the reporting period and the areas noted for further improvement.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

11 Review of Denominational (Roman Catholic) School Catchment Areas that Cross the Local Authority Boundary Between West Lothian Council and The City of Edinburgh Council

Committee approval was sought to commence a formal public consultation in February 2011 on a rationalisation of school catchment areas that cross the local authority boundary between West Lothian Council and The City of Edinburgh Council.

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Decision

- 1) That the Council, in partnership with West Lothian Council, undertakes a formal consultation on the proposals as set out in the Director's report.
- 2) That public consultation would commence on Wednesday 2 February 2011 and be concluded on Friday 25 March 2011.
- 3) To delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to agree a final version of the consultation documents with West Lothian Council. Draft consultation documents were attached as Appendix C to the Director's report.
- 4) To note that a joint report on the outcome of the consultation would be presented to The City of Edinburgh Council and to the West Lothian Education Executive in June 2011.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

12 Home to School Transport

The Director of Children and Families reported on a motion, by Councillor Godzik, on safety concerns relating to home to school transport between the Inch and Holyrood High School.

Decision

To note the report and discharge Councillor Godzik's motion.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 12 October 2010 (item 2); report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

**13 Children and Families Department – Revenue Budget
Monitoring 2010/11 – Month Eight Position to 30 November
2010**

Details were given of the month eight revenue monitoring position for the Children and Families Department.

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Decision

To note:

- 1) the content of the joint report and the projected underspend of £0.6m for the Children and Families Department revenue budget for 2010/11.
- 2) that the projected outturn position at month eight excluded a potential £0.1m of residual financial risks which have been classified as medium risks.

(Reference – joint report by the Director of Finance and the Director of Children and Families 13 January 2011, submitted.)

14 Gracemount Youth and Community Centre

An update was provided on discussions and agreements with the Board of Gracemount Youth and Community Centre (GYCC) aimed at maintaining a Community Centre with associated activities within the Gracemount area.

Decision

To approve:

- 1) the renunciation of the current lease agreement as the basis for maintaining the Gracemount Youth and Community Centre building as a community resource;
- 2) the continued use of Gracemount Youth and Community Centre by current community groups; and
- 3) the allocation of an additional £5,745 from within existing Children and Families budgets to run the building and operate a programme of activities.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

15 Social Work Complaints Review Committee

15.1 Report by the Social Work Complaints Review Committee

The Social Work Complaints Review Committee sought approval for its recommendations in relation to a complaint against the Children and

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Families Department. The complaint had been considered by a meeting of the Complaints Review Committee on 24 November 2010.

Decision

To approve the action taken by the Complaints Review Committee at its meeting of 24 November 2010.

(Reference – report by the Convener of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee 25 January 2011, submitted.)

15.2 Report by the Chief Social Worker

The action taken in response to the conclusion of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee held on 24 November 2010 was outlined.

Decision

To note the actions taken in relation to the decisions by the Complaints Review Committee on 24 November 2010.

(Reference – report by the Chief Social Work Officer 25 January 2011, submitted.)

16 Progress Report on the New Seaview Children's Respite Centre

The Policy and Strategy Committee at its meeting of 18 January 2011 had considered a progress report on the new Seaview Children's Respite Centre and had agreed, amongst other things, to refer the report to the Education, Children and Families Committee for information.

Decision

To note the report.

(Reference – joint report by the Directors of City Development and Children and Families 18 January 2011, submitted.)

17 Provision of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) at Secondary Level – Establishment of Short Life Cross-Party Working Group

The Convener ruled the following item, notice of which had been given at the start of the meeting, urgent in order that the proposed cross-party working group could meet as soon as possible.

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At its meeting of 16 December 2010, The City of Edinburgh Council had agreed that statutory consultation be carried out on the proposal to relocate GME provision for future S1 intakes from James Gillespie's High School to Tynecastle High School from August 2012 and that this consultation commence in January 2011.

In response to comments made by a number of deputations, Council agreed that, prior to the statutory consultation taking place, a short life cross-party working group with representatives from relevant stakeholders including Bord na Gaidhlig and Comann nam Parant be set up and report back within three months.

Details were given of the proposed membership of the GME Working Group, the officer support, working arrangements, remit, objective and approach.

Decision

- 1) To approve the membership and remit of the Gaelic Medium Education Working Group.
- 2) To nominate Raymond Simpson as the non-Councillor representative to join the Working Group.

(References – Act of Council No 4, 16 December 2010; report by the Director of Children and Families 25 January 2011, submitted.)

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Gordon Mackenzie, as a parent of a child attending Gaelic Medium Education, declared a non-financial interest in the above item.