

Committee Minutes

Education, Children and Families Committee

Edinburgh, 21 June 2011

Present:- Councillors, Balfour, Beckett, Blacklock, Buchan (for items 1-4), Burgess (substituting for Councillor Johnstone), Cairns, Cardownie, Day, Dawe, Edie, Godzik, Jackson (substituting for Councillor Buchan for items 5-23), Lang, MacLaren, Lowrie (substituting for Councillor G Mackenzie for items 10-23), G Mackenzie (for items 1-9), Milligan, Morris, Mowat (substituting for Councillor Rose), Munn and Tymkewicz (substituting for Councillor Keir).

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

1 Stenhouse Primary School - African Choir Performance

Councillor MacLaren welcomed Stenhouse Primary School African Choir and invited them to perform.

She thanked them on behalf of the Committee for their performance and complimented them on their hard work and enthusiasm.

2 Appointment of Convener and Vice-Convener

Decision

To appoint Councillor MacLaren as Convener and Councillor Beckett as Vice-Convener for 2011-2012.

3 Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee of 15 March 2011 was approved as a correct record.

4 Review of Secondary Schools Management Structures

4.1 Deputation – Joint Parent Councils

The Committee heard a joint deputation on behalf of the Parent Councils of Balerno, Boroughmuir, Craigmount, Drummond, Forrester, Gracemount, Holyrood, James Gillespie's, Liberton, Portobello, Royal High, St Thomas of Aquin's and Trinity Secondary Schools and Bonaly, Bruntsfield, Leith, South Morningside and Stockbridge Primary Schools.

The deputation expressed concern at the proposed timetable of the review and asked that implementation be delayed until August 2012 "to allow the authority and its schools more time to review, plan, consult on a cluster-by-cluster basis to consider the educational merits of each school's plan, recruit, train, counsel, job-size, write remits, realign support structures and so on".

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the report by the Director of Children and Families at item 4.3 below.

4.2 Motion by Councillor Godzik

The Committee had previously noted that the following motion by Councillor Godzik would be considered at this meeting:-

"That the Committee notes recent decisions to reduce management costs in secondary schools. Committee further notes concerns expressed by the Edinburgh Secondary Head Teachers' Association, EIS and others.

Therefore calls on the Committee to set aside time to scrutinise the implementation of these changes allowing for internal and external witnesses to appear before the Committee to provide a view on these proposals, their timescale, savings targets, and any educational benefit."

Decision

To note that Councillor Godzik had withdrawn his motion in light of the report by the Director of Children and Families at item 4.3 below.

(Reference – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 15 March 2011 (item 1)).

4.3 Report by the Director of Children and Families

An update was provided on the review and implementation of changes to the management structures in secondary schools in the City of Edinburgh.

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The report was prepared in response to the Council decision in February 2011 to reduce secondary school management costs by £2.4m.

Details were given of the principles for change, implementation of the new management model, Voluntary Early Release Arrangements (VERA) for Principal and Depute Head Teachers, implementation milestones and pupil support and guidance. Details were also provided of the continuing consultation process.

Motion

Committee notes that:

- 1) This budget reduction has been approved by Council and that good progress is being made by Children and Families officers and Head Teachers, in planning to implement the new management proposals.
- 2) These changes will have no detrimental impact on teaching and learning as confirmed by reports from other authorities which have made similar changes and from Head Teachers in Edinburgh who have already introduced such changes.
- 3) There will be no centrally-imposed changes in guidance arrangements in schools pending the outcome of the Authority's own review of guidance structures, though schools who wish to pilot new ways of working will be supported to do so.
- 4) There will be full and robust scrutiny of all aspects of each school's proposed management model.
- 5) The Director is committed to ensuring flexible implementation at individual school level in consultation with Head Teachers and that any resultant changes in the phasing of budget savings will be addressed through budgetary flexibility in the overall Children and Families budget as part of the approved monitoring process.
- 6) Progress in all areas will be reported back to this Committee within the academic year.

- moved by Councillor MacLaren, seconded by Councillor Beckett.

Amendment

Committee:-

- 1) Notes the report as well as ongoing concern about this issue by teaching unions, Parent Councils and the Edinburgh Head Teachers' Association.

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- 2) Believes that consultation on this issue has been deficient and must be dramatically improved to include all stakeholders.
- 3) Believes that the Committee should be provided with evidence regarding educational benefit.
- 4) Notes that negotiations under VERA are ongoing as outlined in paragraph 2.4 of the Director's report and recognises the need to move forward with applications already progressing.
- 5) Requests further detail on how the projected savings will be delivered, giving current commitments on conserved salaries.
- 6) Calls for a further report within one cycle on the issues outlined above.

- moved by Councillor Godzik, seconded by Councillor Balfour.

Voting

The voting was as follows:-

For the motion - 11 votes
For the amendment - 11 votes

There being an equal number of votes for the motion and the amendment, the Convener used her casting vote in favour of the motion.

Decision

- 1) To approve the motion by Councillor MacLaren.
- 2) In terms of Standing Order 53, the requisite number of members required that the decision be referred to the Council as a recommendation.

(References – Act of Council No 3, 10 February 2011; report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Raymond Simpson declared a financial interest in the foregoing item as a Principal Teacher potentially affected by the proposals and left the meeting room during the debate on the matter.

5 Community Access to Schools – The Way Forward

5.1 Deputation – Edinburgh Leisure

The Committee heard a deputation from John Comiskey, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Leisure, on community access to school facilities. Mr Comiskey made the following points:-

- School sports facilities were a huge resource and, if managed in a strategic way alongside other facilities, would provide a fantastic asset for the city.
- It was important that a suitable management structure was developed and Edinburgh Leisure was working hard to identify the most appropriate solution. He welcomed the commitment from the Children and Families Department to work with Edinburgh Leisure in this area.
- A joined-up management approach was necessary to maximise the full potential of the facilities and Edinburgh Leisure was fully committed to this approach.
- Edinburgh Leisure re-invested every penny of profit back into the facilities it managed.

Mr Comiskey concluded by requesting the following:-

- Clarification of Edinburgh Leisure's role in the management of school sports facilities.
- The re-instatement of the Project Board.
- That the Council select some schools and invite Edinburgh Leisure and the Children and Families Department to discuss how they could develop suitable management proposals.

The Convener thanked Mr Comiskey for his presentation and invited him to remain for the Committee's consideration of the report by the Director of Children and Families at item 5.2 below.

5.2 Report by the Director of Children and Families

An update was provided on action that had been taken to improve community access to school sports facilities.

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The report highlighted, in particular, the progress that had been made with the introduction of community-based sports hubs in three secondary schools, complementing the extensive sporting provision already available in eight community high schools.

The Department's future strategy for rolling out community sports hubs to other secondary schools across the city to increase participation in sports activities was detailed. Recommendations were made about how best to proceed with improving access to schools.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To agree to extend the community sports hub model to other schools.
- 3) To request further reports on any proposed changes to the management arrangements at Queensferry High School.
- 4) To request a further report on progress in improving community access to school sports facilities in due course.

(Reference – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 25 January 2011 (item 2.2); report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Cairns declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as a Board Member of Edinburgh Leisure.

6 Team Teaching at Trinity Primary School

6.1 Motion by Councillor Day

The following motion by Councillor Day had been remitted from Council in terms of Standing Order 28(3):-

“Council calls for a report from the Director of Children and Families on the practical arrangements being made to accommodate the proposed team teaching at Trinity Primary School, to include an update on what practical arrangements have been put in place in other schools where team teaching has become necessary.”

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Decision

To note the motion in light of the report by the Director of Children and Families at item 6.2 below.

(Reference – Act of Council No. 11 of 28 April 2011.)

6.2 Report by the Director Children and Families

Details were given of the Council's position on team teaching and how this arrangement would be organised and funded at Trinity Primary School.

Team teaching arrangements had become more common over the last five years, particularly as a result of the reduction in the maximum P1 class size from 30 to 25. Based on current roll projections, 16 schools currently had team teaching classes planned for August 2011 and it was anticipated that there would be an increase in this number. The logistics of organising team teaching at Trinity Primary School were outlined.

Motion

To note the report.

- moved by Councillor MacLaren, seconded by Councillor Beckett.

Amendment

Committee notes with great concern the possible impact on the quality of teaching and learning for pupils in class sizes of over 40.

Committee agrees that, in the event of similar arrangements being proposed in the future, a report would first come to Committee giving details of the arrangements.

- moved by Councillor Day, seconded by Councillor Godzik.

Voting

For the motion	-	15 votes
For the amendment	-	5 votes

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor MacLaren.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Blacklock declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as a parent of children attending Trinity Primary School.

7 Appointments to Sub-Committees, etc – 2011/2012

Decision

The Committee agreed to appoint members to its various Sub-Committees and Working Groups are detailed in the Appendix to this minute.

(Reference – report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services 21 June 2011, submitted.)

8 Capital Investment Programme – Update on Major Projects

An update was provided on the following projects within the Children and Families Capital Investment Programme that had an overall budget of more than £1m:-

- Corstorphine Primary School Extension
- Towerbank Primary School Extension
- Royston Wardieburn Community Centre
- Seaview Respite Centre
- Wave 3 Schools - Essential Improvement Works
- James Gillespie's High School
- Portobello High School
- Boroughmuir High School

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To note that the Director of Children and Families would provide Councillor Godzik with details of the Scottish Government's funding support for the new James Gillespie's High School Campus.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

9 Schools Energy Report

Following consideration of a motion by Councillor Johnstone, the Committee had asked for a progress report on measures to reduce energy consumption in schools.

Details were provided of works that had been undertaken, together with further planned works, to improve the energy efficiency of schools.

Information on the Children and Families school estate for electricity and gas usage over the periods 2007/08 to 2010/11 was summarised, together with details of energy performance certificates, energy investment programme, future asset management works, smart metering programme, voltage optimisers, central energy efficiency fund programme, building energy management systems, Wave 3 schools, energy contracts and feed-in tariffs.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To note the intention to submit a further report on feed-in tariffs and to request that this report also include details of any alternative financial mechanisms in relation to energy efficiency measures.

(Reference – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 15 March 2011 (item 5); joint report by the Director of Children and Families and the Director of City Development 21 June 2011, submitted.)

10 Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011

Details were given of the main provisions of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 following the grant of Royal Assent in January 2011. It was intended to rationalise and centralise 32 locally accountable panels into one national non-departmental public body, to be known as Children's Hearings Scotland, which would be responsible for the recruitment, training and support of Children's Panel members.

Full implementation was expected in the summer of 2012, subject to secondary legislation being in place. The recently-appointed National Convener would be responsible for setting up local Area Support Teams, on which local authorities would be represented. A proposal had been submitted that Edinburgh should have a stand-alone Area Support Team.

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Decision

- 1) To welcome the changes brought in by the legislation, placing the child at the centre of the Children's Hearing system in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights.
- 2) To support the proposal that Edinburgh should have a stand-alone Area Support Team.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

11 Family and Community Support Service – Update

Details were given of the services that comprised the Family and Community Support Division within the Children and Families Department.

Decision

To note the report.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

12 Child Protection Performance Improvement – Progress Report

The Committee had previously requested update reports on the Child Protection Improvement Plan.

A six month update report was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the improvements in performance indicators and to request future reports at annual intervals.
- 2) To note the priorities for the improvement, namely strengthening early support for children and families, ensuring effective engagement of children and families in the development of services, improving self-evaluation and strengthening joint agency assessment in planning for children.
- 3) That future reports include details of previous practices and the improvement measures implemented.

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- 4) To congratulate all staff in the Child Protection Team for their efforts in improving the service.

(References – minute of the Education Children and Families Committee 25 January 2011 (tem 4); report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

13 Psychological Services HMIE Inspection Report (Follow-Up Published February 2011) and Current Developments

Details were given of the progress made by Psychological Services from December 2009, when they were first inspected, to November 2010 when HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) undertook a follow-up inspection.

Decision

- 1) To note the outcome of the follow-up inspections and the ongoing improvement programme subsequent to inspection that addressed the identified areas for development.
- 2) That a further progress report be presented to Committee in 2011/2012.
- 3) That an update be provided for the next meeting of the Committee on staffing levels in Psychological Services.

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

14 Westfield Court Nursery – Proposals for Long-Term Use Following Health and Safety Recommendations

The Committee had previously approved the temporary decant of children and staff at Westfield Court Nursery School and had requested a detailed report on the long-term options for the Nursery.

Details were given of proposals for the future use of the Westfield Court building following concerns over health and safety issues during its use as a nursery.

Information was also provided on interim proposals to support affected staff and children and permission was sought to consult on a permanent closure of the nursery facility.

Decision

- 1) To agree that Westfield Court should no longer be used as a nursery school.

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- 2) To delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to develop a detailed consultation paper on the proposed closure of Westfield Court Nursery School.
- 3) To approve the steps in the consultation process as set out in Appendix 4 of the Director's report.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 12 October 2010 (item 7); report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

15 Early Years Strategy – Progress Report

Details were given of the key achievements since the launch of the Early Years Strategy in March 2010 and the priorities for the future development of the service.

Following the evaluation of the Early Years Staffing Pilot, it was intended that Early Years Worker and Senior Early Years Worker posts be introduced within local authority nurseries on a phased basis.

Decision

- 1) To note the report and the priorities for the next stage of development within the Early Years service.
- 2) To approve the phased introduction of Early Years Worker and Senior Early Years Worker posts within local authority nurseries.

(Reference – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 26 January 2010 (item 6); report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

16 Outdoor Learning Strategy 2011-2014

Details were given of the Children and Families Outdoor Learning Strategy for 2011-2014.

The Strategy outlined Edinburgh's response to the Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) document "Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning", which outlined the integral role that outdoor learning would play in the new curriculum.

During discussion, it was suggested that the facility at Ratho be considered for inclusion in the strategy.

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Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To note that there was potential for the use of the facility at Ratho for outdoor learning.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

17 Children and Families Residential Outdoor Centres – Property Progress Report

An update was provided on the Council's two outdoor residential centres at Benmore and Lagganlia.

Details were given of the progress on meeting health and safety requirements, accommodation standards, the improvement of the quality and range of facilities and the intention to sell Bernice Farmhouse, Benmore, to allow re-investment in similar accommodation next to or close by the main building.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress to date.
- 2) To note the key areas for development scoped to date, these to form the basis of the 2011-2014 Investment Strategy plans for both Centres.
- 3) To note the intention to sell Bernice Farmhouse with a view to re-investment in a similar self-catering facility either next to or close by the main Benmore building.
- 4) To congratulate the staff at the Benmore and Lagganlia Outdoor Centres for their work in making these centres inclusive and successful.
- 5) To call on the Children and Families Department to encourage Head Teachers to use the Centres for outdoor learning and report back on progress to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 8 March 2012.

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- 6) To instruct the Director of Children and Families to address the issue of how children from disadvantaged backgrounds could be assisted to participate in Centre activities.

(Reference – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 14 May 2009 (item 15); report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted).

18 Community-Based Adult Learning – Community Learning and Development (CLD) – Session 2011/2012

Details were given of the current arrangements and proposed developments for Community-Based Adult Learning in Community Learning and Development in Edinburgh. Details were also provided of the fee structure, term arrangements and enrolment procedures for the 2011/12 Adult Education Programme.

Decision

- 1) To note the arrangements for the 2011/2012 advertised programme in respect of fees, concessions, enrolment procedures and term arrangements.
- 2) To note the excellent progress in literacy and numeracy, family learning, English for speakers of other languages and other community-based adult learning.
- 3) To note the progress in developing an online enrolment system for Community Learning and Development and Community High Schools programmes.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

19 Implementation of the 21st Century Community Learning and Development Re-Design – Update

An update was provided on the progress made in implementing the 21st Century Re-Design for Community Learning and Development, as previously requested by this Committee.

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The Council had allowed the Management Committee of the Gorgie War Memorial Hall to explore a range of options to develop the hall as a community facility. One of the options considered was a full asset transfer, however, following an in-depth investigation and discussion with the Council, both parties concluded that this was not a viable alternative at this time.

The Management Committee was therefore requesting that the hall remain as a Council establishment and that its future management arrangements be taken forward within the CLD Consultative Group in common with other community groups in the city.

During discussion, an area breakdown of costs for the provision of language courses for those for whom English was not their first language was requested.

Decision

- 1) To note progress on the pilot projects and the implementation of the 21st Century Re-Design for Community Learning and Development.
- 2) To approve that the management arrangements for Gorgie War Memorial Hall be taken forward within the Community Learning and Development Consultative Group in common with other community centres in Edinburgh.
- 3) That the Director of Children and Families provide Councillor Day with an area breakdown of costs for the provision of language courses for those for whom English was not their first language.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 9 November 2010 (item 4); report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

20 Launch of Edinburgh – Africa Educational Trust

Details were given of a charitable trust that had been set up to support the development of partnerships between Edinburgh schools and schools on the African continent.

Decision

To note the establishment of the Trust and to request an annual report on its activity.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 21 June 2011, submitted.)

21 Children and Families Service Plan 2011-2014

The Policy and Strategy Committee had considered Departmental Service Plans for 2011-2014 and had referred individual plans to the relevant Committees.

The Children and Families Service Plan for 2011-2014 was presented.

Decision

To note the Service Plan 2011-2014 for the Children and Families Department.

(References – minute of the Policy and Strategy Committee 14 June 2011 (item 9); Children and Families Service Plan 2011-2014, submitted.)

22 Children and Families Performance Report – February/March 2011

Performance management information for the Children and Families Department for the period February/March 2011 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 21 June 2011, submitted.)

23 Placing in Schools Requests/Appeals – Emergency Motion

The Convener ruled that the following item, notice of which had been given at the start of the meeting, be considered as a matter of urgency in order that the matter be dealt with as soon as possible.

The following motion by Councillor MacLaren was submitted in terms of Standing Order 27:

“In light of the experience over the last two to three years with placing requests and appeals, and taking account of the change in legislation regarding P1 class sizes, Committee instructs the Director to bring forward a report on the future handling of placing requests and appeals within two cycles”.

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor MacLaren.

24 Valedictory – Councillor Beckett

The Convener thanked Councillor Beckett on behalf of the Committee for his contribution as Vice-Convener and wished him well in his studies at Harvard University.

APPENDIX

Item 7 – Appointments to Sub-Committee's etc – 2011/2012

Sub-Committees on Standards for Children and Families

East (five members – 2 SLD, 1 SNP, 1 Lab and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Bridgman (Convener), Blacklock, Hawkins and Peacock; and Mr Ted Brack.

North (six members – 1 SLD, 1 SNP, 1 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Green and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Beckett (Convener), Chapman, Day, Mowat and Thomas; and Mr Ted Brack.

South (six members – 1 SLD, 1 SNP, 1 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Green and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Buchanan, Johnstone, Milligan and Rose; and Dr R Gould.

South West (five members – 1 SLD, 1 SNP, 1 Lab, 1 Con and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Elaine Aitken (Convener), Burns, Coleman and Elliott-Cannon; and Mr A C Duncan.

West (five members – 2 SLD, 1 SNP, 1 Con and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Dawe (Convener), Keir, Kate MacKenzie and Wheeler, and Mr A C Duncan.

Consultative Committee with Parents – Current Membership

(One member from each political group and 1 Teacher representative) – Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Balfour, Beckett, Godzik and Johnstone; and Mr R Simpson.)

Forum on Children and Families Estate Evaluation – Current Membership

(Seven members – one member from each Group and 1 Religious Representative and 1 Teacher Representative) - Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Beckett, Godzik, Johnstone and Rose; M Bryce-Stafford (Teacher Representative) and Craig Duncan (Religious Representative).

Joint Officer/Member Group on Corporate Parenting of Looked After Children – Current Membership

(Fourteen members – Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee; two members from each Group, 1 Religious Representative and 1 Teacher Representative) – Councillors MacLaren, Balfour, Beckett, Blacklock, Cairns, Chapman, Godzik, Johnstone, Lang, Morris, Munn and Rose. M Bryce-Stafford (Teacher Representative); Dr Rev Gould (Religious Representative).