

Committee Minutes

Education, Children and Families Committee

Edinburgh, 21 June 2012

Present:- Councillors Godzik (Convener), Austin Hart, Brock, Child, N Cook, Corbett, Day, Dixon, Fullerton, Jackson, Keil, Lewis, Main, Redpath, Rose and Shields.

Present for Education Items:- Rev Thomas Coupar, Mr Allan Crosbie, Mr Craig Duncan and Mr Raymond Simpson.

1 Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee of 8 March 2012 was approved as a correct record.

2 Deputation Request – St Catherine’s Primary School Parent Council

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Richard Darke, Sarah Ross and Sarah Phelan, St Catherine’s Primary School Parent Council, on Primary 1 intakes at the school. The deputation made the following points:

- The school had employed a second P1 teacher for the last two years and this arrangement had been working very well. However, this additional teacher post was now being withdrawn.
- Increased housing developments in the area and the closure of Burdiehouse Primary School had not been taken into account by Children and Families, and this had impacted on the capacity at St Catherine’s.
- Some children that had siblings at the school had not been granted a place and a few parents had suggested they would rather home school than send their children to different schools.

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- Having a second P1 teacher at St Catherine's would also free up spaces at Gracemount Primary which was currently overcrowded.
- There were 32 children leaving the school in P7 so the school would be below capacity and could accommodate more pupils.
- A petition supporting the provision of a second teacher had been signed by 425 local people.

Decision

- 1) To thank the deputation for their presentation.
- 2) To note that a report on the discussions of the Forum on Children and Families Estate Evaluation on rising primary school rolls would be submitted to the Committee in October 2012.

(Reference – emails dated 19 and 20 June 2012 from St Catherine's Primary School Parent Council)

3 Motion by Councillor Hinds – Arboretum Playing Fields

The following motion by Councillor Hinds had been remitted from Council on 15 March 2012 in terms of Standing Order 28(3):

"Arboretum Playing Fields, currently on the Children and Families account, is well used by established clubs and schools for cricket, football and rugby.

Committee notes, however, the poor condition of the current temporary changing facilities (with portacabins costing £10,000 a year) and the derelict former changing rooms.

Committee therefore agrees that new changing facilities are required and calls for a report to address this. The report should cover the following:

- The possible sale or lease of the derelict building to fund future development.
- Finances which might be available, including prudential borrowing and other funding opportunities.
- Possible joint partnership working with the adjoining facilities run by Stewart Melville College.
- Discussions with the current users on their plans for the future use of the facilities and consideration of possible alternative models for the future management of the facilities."

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Decision

To approve the motion subject to the following amendment to paragraph 3:

Replace “Committee therefore agrees that new changing facilities are required...” with “Committee notes the desirability of new or refurbished changing facilities...”

(Reference – Act of Council No 20, 15 March 2012.)

4 Appointments to Sub-Committees etc – 2012-2013

The Committee was invited to appoint the membership of its Sub-Committees and Working Groups for 2012/13.

Decision

- 1) To agree that the political balance of the Sub-Committees on Standards for Children and Families should be as follows:

East – five members – 2 SNP, 2 Lab and 1 Religious Representative.

North – six members – 1 SNP, 2 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Green and 1 Religious Representative.

South – six members – 1 SNP, 2 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Green and 1 Religious Representative.

South West – five members – 1 SNP, 1 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Green and 1 Religious Representative.

West – five members – 1 SNP, 1 Lab, 1 SLD, 1 Con and 1 Religious Representative.

- 2) To appoint the following members as Conveners of the Standards Sub-Committees:

East – Councillor Child

North – Councillor Brock

South – Councillor Godzik

South West – Councillor Aitken

West – Councillor Ross

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- 3) To agree that the members of the Consultative Committee with Parents should be one member from each political group, one Teacher representative, as well as the Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children & Families.
- 4) To agree that the members of the Forum on Children and Families Estate Evaluation should be one member from each political group, one Religious representative, one Teacher representative and the Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children & Families.
- 5) To agree that the political balance of the Joint Officer/Member Group on Corporate Parenting of Looked After Children should be two members from each political group, one Religious representative, one Teacher representative, and the Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children & Families.
- 6) To agree that the political balance of the Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum should be one member of each political group, as well as the Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children and Families.
- 7) To agree that the Acting Head of Legal and Administrative Services make the appropriate arrangements to invite nominations from the political groups and religious and teacher representatives. Details of the nominations received have been appended to this minute.
- 8) To note that these will be interim appointments, pending the outcome of the governance review agreed at Council on 24 May 2012.

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

5 Early Years Strategy – Progress Report

Details were provided 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.

Decision

- 1) To note the report and the priorities for the next stage of development within the Early Years Service.
- 2) To approve the intention to reconfigure and invest in Early Years Services to enhance and develop new services including the expansion and relocation of provision and the change of name of Child and Family Centres to Early Years Centres to reflect the broader range of services to be provided.

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- 3) That the Director of Children and Families report further in Spring 2013. That report to include (i) further financial information, (ii) an update on the proposed location for the Early Years Centre in the Drum Brae/Clermiston/East Craigs area, and (iii) details of the increased number of local authority nursery places.

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

6 Early Years and Early Intervention Change Fund

The Early Years and Early Intervention Change Fund was a key component in improving outcomes for children and reducing upward pressure on budgets for Looked After Children.

Details were provided of how the fund would be used to effect a transformational change programme that delivered effective early intervention and strengthened support to children and families in Edinburgh.

Decision

- 1) To support the objectives of the Early Years and Early Intervention Change Fund to work in partnership to achieve a substantial shift in resource allocation to preventative spend.
- 2) To approve the investment in service developments as set out in Appendix 1 to the Director of Children and Families' report.
- 3) To agree the proposed performance framework and reporting arrangements as detailed in the Director's report.
- 4) That the Director of Children and Families report further in Spring 2013.

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

7 Annual Report on Child Protection Performance and Service Developments

Details were provided on progress with Child Protection Services within the City of Edinburgh Council. Key performance indicators, service developments and an action plan for further service improvements were also detailed.

Decision

To note the report.

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

8 Report on the Outcome of the Review of Guidance and Pupil Support

An update was provided on progress in implementing the revised management structures in secondary schools with specific focus on the outcome of the Review of Guidance and Pupil Support and the implementation of this in all 23 secondary schools in the city.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress that was being made with the implementation of Guidance and Pupil Support in secondary schools.
- 2) To note that, as detailed in the Coalition agreement, there was a strong commitment to ensuring that the management structures within the Council's secondary schools supported the smooth introduction of A Curriculum for Excellence.
- 3) To note that a further report would be submitted to the Committee on the implementation of secondary school management changes before the end of 2012.
- 4) That the Director of Children and Families report on arrangements to review pupil support in primary schools.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 8 March 2012 (item 8); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

9 Chair

Councillor Brock replaced Councillor Godzik in the Chair for the following item of business.

10 Community Learning and Development – Session 2012/2013

Details were given of progress in implementing the 21st Century Community Learning and Development Redesign. Details were also provided of the fee structure, terms arrangements and enrolment procedures for the 2012/2013 Adult Education Programme.

Decision

- 1) To note the overview and progress of CLD provision and consolidation of Community Learning and Development Redesign.
- 2) To note the arrangements made for the advertised programme for 2012/2013 in respect of fees, enrolment procedures and term arrangements as set out in Appendices 2 and 3 of the Director of Children and Families' report.
- 3) To note progress in developing an on-line enrolment system.
- 4) To note that the Director of Children and Families would arrange a briefing for Councillor Redpath, and any other members of the Committee, on (i) employability and Women only ESOL provision, (ii) the impact of the amalgamation of Edinburgh's colleges on ESOL provision, and, (iii) the number of courses which provide crèche facilities.

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

11 Chair

Councillor Godzik resumed the Chair for the remaining items of business.

12 International Unit – Annual Update

An overview of key areas of activity undertaken by the International Unit in the financial year 2011/2012 was detailed.

Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the Director of Children and Families' report and to request a further update in one year.
- 2) To commend the International Unit for the work carried out over the last year.

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

13 Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People in Craigoyston

The Committee had previously requested a progress report on initiatives to improve outcomes for children and young people in Craigoyston.

An update was provided on progress towards meeting the outcomes agreed in the initial work plan together with an updated timescale for the development of a longer term plan.

Decision

- 1) To note the approach to improving outcomes for children and young people in Craigoyston as set out in the Director of Children and Families' report.
- 2) To note the initial workplan for February to September 2012.
- 3) To seek a further progress report in October 2012.
- 4) To commend the work of the Project and the staff team.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 8 March 2012 (item 11); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

14 Children and Families Service Plan – 2012-15

The Children and Families Service Plan for 2012-15 was detailed.

Decision

- 1) To note the Children and Families Service Plan for 2012-15.
- 2) To note that the Director of Children and Families would include references in the Service Plan to Gaelic Medium education, improved parent participation and the school estate.

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

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Main declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as an employee of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

15 School Session Dates 2013/14

Approval was sought for the school session dates for 2013/14.

Decision

- 1) To approve the school session dates for 2013/14 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Director of Children and Families' report.
- 2) To note that the Director of Children and Families would hold discussions with officers regarding the possibility of schools being reconsidered for use as polling places when closed on polling days.

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

16 Commission on School Reform: Call for Evidence

The Commission on School Reform was set up to consider whether the school system in Scotland was meeting the present and future needs of young people and to make specific recommendations as to how things might be improved or areas that required further enquiry.

The Commission had called for written evidence covering three main questions and a copy of the Children and Families draft response was attached as Appendix 1 to the Director of Children and Families' report.

Motion

To approve the Children and Families response as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Director's report.

- moved by Councillor Godzik, seconded by Councillor Brock.

Amendment

To agree the response as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Director's report, subject to the inclusion of the following:

Identifies that the achievement and ambition of the current school system is inhibited by excessive bureaucracy and control. In order to address these inhibitors, two interlinked objectives require to be pursued:

- 1) An extensive slimming down and simplification of the legislative framework within which the current school system in Scotland operates.

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- 2) A reduction in the layers of governance which, operating together, have a tendency to :
 - a) discourage ambitious, innovative and demanding education;
 - b) disenfranchise parental influence; and
 - c) promote centralised control and bureaucracy.

- moved by Councillor Rose, seconded by Councillor N Cook.

In accordance with Standing Order 30 (7), the amendment was accepted as an addendum to the response, subject to the response clearly stating that it was the view of the Conservative Group.

Decision

- 1) To approve the Children and Families' response as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Director's report.
- 2) That the Conservative Group amendment be included as an addendum to the response clearly stating that it was the view of the Conservative group.
- 3) That the Director of Children and Families liaise with the Green Group with a view to including the issues they had identified in the proposed response.
- 4) That the Director of Children and Families re-circulate the revised response to all members of the Committee.
- 5) That the Director of Children and Families ask the Commission if the period to respond to the consultation could be extended, failing which, the revised response would be submitted to the Commission as the Council's response.

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

17 Social Work Complaints Review Committee

The recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee held on 14 March 2012 on a complaint against the Children and Families Department were presented.

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Decision

To approve the recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee.

(Reference – report by the Social Work Complaints Review Committee, submitted.)

18 Ted Brack – Valedictory

The Convener advised that Ted Brack was standing down from his role as Roman Catholic Church representative on the Committee with effect from 29 June 2012.

The Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Ted for his many years service to this and predecessor Committees and wished him well for the future.

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APPENDIX

Item 4 – Appointments to Sub-Committee's etc – 2012/2013

Sub-Committees on Standards for Children and Families

East (five members – 2 SNP, 2 Lab and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Child (Convener), Bridgman, Griffiths, Tymkewycz and Rev Thomas Coupar (Religious Representative).

North (six members – 1 SNP, 2 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Green and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Brock (Convener), Bagshaw, Gardner, Jackson, Redpath; (Religious vacancy to be filled by the Roman Catholic Church representative, once appointed).

South (six members – 1 SNP, 2 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Green and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Godzik (Convener), Bill Cook, Howat, Main, Rose; (Religious vacancy to be filled by the Roman Catholic Church representative, once appointed).

South West (five members – 1 SNP, 1 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Green and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Aitken (Convener), Corbett, Dixon, Milligan and Mr A C Duncan (Religious Representative).

West (five members – 1 SNP, 1 Lab, 1 SLD, 1 Con and 1 Religious Representative): Councillors Ross (Convener), Keil, Paterson, Shields and Mr A C Duncan (Religious Representative).

Consultative Committee with Parents

(Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee and one member from each political group and 1 Teacher Representative) – Councillors Godzik (Convener), Corbett, Dixon, Key, Redpath, Rose, Shields and Raymond Simpson (Teacher Representative)

Forum on Children and Families Estate Evaluation

(Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee and one member from each political group, 1 Religious Representative and 1 Teacher Representative) – Councillors Godzik, Keil, Key, Main, Rose, Ross, Shields, Raymond Simpson (Teacher Representative) and Mr A C Duncan (Religious Representative).

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

(Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee and two members from each political group, 1 Religious Representative and 1 Teacher Representative) – Councillors Child, Nick Cook, Corbett, Day, Edie, Godzik, Howat, Key, Fullerton, Main, Rose, Shields, Raymond Simpson (Teacher Representative) and Rev Thomas Coupar (Religious Representative).

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Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum

(Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee and one member from each political group – Councillors Nick Cook, Day, Godzik, Key, Main, McVey and Shields.