

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 4 March 2014

Present

Councillors Godzik (Convener), Fullerton (Vice-Convener), Aitken, Aldridge, Brock, Cardownie, Child, Nick Cook, Corbett, Dixon, Howat, Jackson, Keil (substituting for Councillor Austin Hart), Key, Lewis, Main, Milligan, Redpath, Robson and Rose (substituting for Councillor Rust).

Also present for Education items

Marie Allan, Allan Crosbie, Craig Duncan and Lindsay Law.

1. Order of business

The Convener agreed that the items of business be dealt with in the following order.

2. Religious Observance in Non-Denominational Schools

2.1 Deputation – Edinburgh Secular Society

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Colin Emerson and Norman Bonney on behalf of the Edinburgh Secular Society.

The deputation urged the Council to hold a referendum on religious observance and suggested that costs could be reduced if the referendum was held in conjunction with the Scottish Local Government Elections in 2017.

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report by the Director of Children and Families at item 2.3 below.

2.2 Deputation – The Church of Scotland

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Ewan Aitken and Dr Susan Leslie on behalf of the Church of Scotland.

The deputation raised the following points:

- There was a place for supporting spiritual development in non-denominational schools.
- The very best religious observance was often pupil led.
- Changing the name of Religious Observance to “time for reflection” often had a positive effect on the sense of inclusion and was to be encouraged.

- Religious Observance was not “show and tell” or worship and the element of reflection made it different.

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation and invited them to remain for the Committee’s consideration of the related report by the Director of Children and Families at item 2.3 below.

2.3 Report by the Director of Children and Families.

The Committee had previously considered two petitions on Religious Observance in Non-Denominational Schools which had been referred from the Petitions Committee.

As requested by the Committee, further information was provided on:

- The estimated cost of holding a referendum.
- The current position for religious observance in schools in Edinburgh.
- What constitutes religious observance?
- Details of the training that Head Teachers were provided on religious observance.
- Details of the organisations that visit schools in relation to religious observance and what activities they provide.
- Details of further discussions with both sets of petitioners, the deputation and other interested groups.

Decision

- 1) To note the information in the Director’s report regarding religious observance in non-denominational schools.
- 2) To agree to receive a future report on the outcomes of the second survey including details of the organisations that visit schools in relation to Religious Observance.
- 3) To note that revised Head Teacher guidelines will take account of any recommendations reached by the Scottish Parliament on Religious Observance and the recent 3-18 RME Impact report published by Education Scotland in February 2014.
- 4) To advise the Petitions Committee of the Committee’s decision and to request that an update be provided in the Petitions Committee Business Bulletin.

(References – Minute of the Petitions Committee 3 June 2013 (item 3); minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 8 October 2013 (item 20); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Howat declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as member of the Edinburgh Secular Society and Councillor Keil declared a non-financial interest as an Elder of the Church of Scotland.

3. Piping and Drumming Tuition

3.1 Deputation – Morningside Youth Pipe Band

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Fiona Maclean on behalf of the Morningside Youth Pipe Band.

The deputation welcomed the proposals contained in the Director of Children and Families' report but asked the Committee to give consideration to the following points:

- It would be more beneficial if the offer of free piping tuition to pupils studying the bagpipes as part of their SQA music exams was available at the pupils own school rather than Broughton High School.
- The Youth Pipe Band would welcome the opportunity to meet with Council officers to develop the proposal for a city-wide piping and drumming performance band.
- There appeared to be a gap in provision for chanter lessons between P7 and S3 and this required to be addressed.
- A full assessment should be carried out of all chanter, piping & drumming activity at primary and S1 and S2 level.
- The issue of drumming tuition appeared to have been overlooked in the report.
- The costs quoted in the report for introducing piping and drumming into the Instrumental Music Service seemed excessive and it would be helpful if the figures could be clarified.

The Convener thanked the deputation for her presentation and invited her to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report by the Director of Children and Families at item 3.2 below.

3.2 Report by the Director of Children and Families.

As previously requested by the Committee, an update on bagpipe and drumming tuition was presented. The report had been informed by the outcomes of the Council's budget conversation and the budget deliberations of 13 February 2014, including options for:

- External funding and Creative Scotland,
- Links with the independent sector, and
- Investigating the potential for school and community pipe bands.

Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the Director's report.
- 2) To note the progress of options to provide chanter, piping and drumming opportunities for pupils, funded by the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) and Creative Scotland, through links with the independent sector and with existing and emerging parent-led school and community pipe bands and tuition programmes.

- 3) To note the proposal to develop a city-wide piping and drumming performance band that rehearses and performs on the same basis as other centrally organised orchestras and ensembles.
- 4) To approve the proposal to offer free piping tuition to pupils studying the bagpipes as part of their SQA music exams at the City of Edinburgh Music School located at Broughton High School.
- 5) To call for a further report by the end of 2014 outlining progress and contained within a wider report on the Instrumental Music Service (IMS) and Youth Music Initiative (YMI) programmes.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 10 December 2013 (item 2); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

4. Primary School Capacity Pressure in South Edinburgh

4.1 Deputation – South Morningside Parent Council

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Howard Kippax and Anna Cuthbert on behalf of the South Morningside Parent Council.

The deputation raised the following points:

- Accommodation at the school was split over three sites which was far from ideal.
- The School was operating at full capacity, with the exception of primaries 5 and 6.
- Use of the gym hall and dining facilities had to be staggered and the dining hall could no longer accommodate all the children.
- The playground space at the school was around a third of the recommended size in the School Premises Regulations.
- The school was operating with two elderly temporary classroom units that were around 40 years old.
- In the short-term, the Parent Council's preferred option would be to replace the existing temporary classrooms with a new double-storey unit. This would free up playground space and provide better accommodation.
- In the longer-term, the Parent Council overwhelmingly supported the provision of a new school for the area.

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 7 below, which would be informed by the Committee's consideration of the related reports at items 5 and 6 below.

4.2 Deputation – James Gillespie's Primary School Parent Council

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from John Beattie and Christopher Cowdy on behalf of the James Gillespie's Primary School Parent Council.

The deputation raised the following points:

- Parents felt strongly about the shortage of primary school accommodation in the South of the city.
- It was important that consultation and engagement with the school and Parent Council on short and longer term options was carried out in an open and effective manner.
- The Council should consider how it could use the spare capacity at Tollcross Primary School, as well as the potential impact the plans for Sciennes Primary School would have on numbers attending James Gillespie's Primary and High schools.
- The Parent Council was concerned that the Director's report did not adequately reflect the restricting characteristics of the primary school site.
- The Parent Council fully supported the provision of a new school in South Edinburgh.

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 7 below, which would be informed by the Committee's consideration of the related reports at items 5 and 6 below.

5. Strategic Management of School Places: P1 and S1 Intakes for August 2014

Details were presented of the accommodation and placement issues for the anticipated P1 and S1 intakes for the 2014/15 school year.

Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the Director's report.
- 2) To delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to prioritise baptised Roman Catholics into the following schools for August 2014:-
 - St Catherine's RC Primary School
 - St Cuthbert's RC Primary School
 - St David's RC Primary School
 - St Francis' RC Primary School
 - St John Vianney RC Primary School
 - St Joseph's RC Primary School
 - St Mary's RC (Edinburgh) Primary School
 - St Mary's RC (Leith) Primary School
 - St Peter's RC Primary School

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

6. Primary School Estate Rising Rolls

Details were provided of the primary schools which had been identified as potentially facing accommodation pressures in August 2015 and beyond, together with a range of potential solutions which had been identified for each school to address this pressure.

Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the Director's report.
- 2) To note the intention to bring a further report to Committee on 20 May 2014 to identify the proposed solution (including delivery model) regarding each school which had been identified as potentially facing an accommodation pressure in August 2015 and beyond.

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

7. Primary School Capacity Pressures in South Edinburgh

An update was provided on a detailed analysis that had been undertaken regarding potential primary school capacity pressures in South Edinburgh. Three primary schools were predominantly affected (South Morningside, James Gillespie's and Bruntsfield) and a range of options had been considered to address future accommodation pressures in both the short and longer term.

Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the Director's report.
- 2) To note that solutions required to be found to address both the short and long term accommodation pressures in the South Edinburgh area.
- 3) To note that consultation and engagement would now be undertaken with the three school communities to consider options to address these pressures.
- 4) To note that a further report would be taken to Committee on 20 May 2014 to identify the proposed interim solutions to address the accommodation pressures each school is expected to face in August 2015.
- 5) To note that a further report would be taken to Committee in Autumn 2014 to identify the proposed long term solution to the accommodation pressure in the South Edinburgh area which will be supported by a full business case.
- 6) To note that details of the strategy for increasing uptake at Tollcross Primary school would be included in a future report.

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

8. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee of 10 December 2013 as a correct record.

9. Education, Children and Families Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan – May to October 2014

The Education, Children and Families Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan for the period May to October 2014 was presented.

Decision

To note the Key Decisions Forward Plan for May to October 2014.

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

10. Education, Children and Families Committee Business Bulletin

The Education, Children and Families Committee Business Bulletin for 4 March 2014 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

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

11. Implementation of New Higher Qualifications

The Committee had previously agreed to receive a further report on the implementation of the new Higher qualifications.

An update was provided on the additional support that had been put in place to assist with the on-going implementation of the new qualifications. Details were also provided of the agreement signed with the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) in January 2014.

Decision

- 1) To note the position with regard to the implementation of new Higher qualifications as outlined in the LNCT Agreement dated 22 January 2014.
- 2) To note that Children and Families would monitor the progress of the implementation of the new qualifications and that a further update would be provided within the Educational Attainment/Improvements in Performance report in December 2014.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 10 December 2013 (item 8); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

12. Castlebrae Community High School – Progress Report

An update was provided on progress towards improving outcomes for pupils attending Castlebrae Community High School.

Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the Director's report.

- 2) To note the progress of strategies within the school to deliver a high quality educational experience for learners.
- 3) To note the progress in management arrangements within the Castlebrae Learning Community.
- 4) To agree to receive a further progress report in October 2014.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 10 December 2013 (item 7); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

13. Children and Families Revenue Asset Management Priorities 2014-2019

Approval was sought for a recommended strategy of revenue prioritisation across the Children and Families estate in support of the capital asset management programme priorities 2014-2019, as considered by the Committee on 10 December 2013.

Decision

- 1) To note the previously approved prioritisation strategy for a £31.56m programme of capital investment in the Children and Families Estate over the next five years.
- 2) To note the annual Council-wide £6.7m revenue budget for statutory compliance and day-to-day reactive repairs, including immediate health and safety emergencies, and that this budget is spent annually for this purpose.
- 3) To note the additional £29.1m of revenue works identified as being necessary over the next five years in the Children and Families estate and that the annual reactive maintenance budget would have little impact on these required works.
- 4) To note the revenue strategy and priorities as outlined in the report and that these would be delivered to the extent possible.
- 5) To note that unforeseen issues may emerge over the term of the programme, particularly periods of severe weather, which would require the reprioritisation and programming of revenue works.
- 6) To refer the report to the Finance and Resources Committee for consideration.
- 7) To note that a report on capital investment strategy and priorities would be produced for the Committee on 20 May 2014.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 10 December 2013 (item 13); joint report by the Directors of Services for Communities and Children and Families, submitted.)

14. Looked After Children: Transformation Programme Progress Report

The Looked After Children Service had developed a transformation programme to shift the balance of care towards more preventative services that reduce the need for children to come into care.

An update was provided on progress against the targets set out in the transformation programme.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress made to date against targets.
- 2) To note the actions in progress to achieve the future targets to 2018.
- 3) To note that an update would be provided in March 2015.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 8 October 2013 (item 22); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

15. Integrated Children's Services

Details were provided of a proposal to take forward the development of Integrated Children's Services within the city of Edinburgh. Approval was being sought from the Council and NHS Lothian to take forward a consultation process and to develop a more extensive business case and firm proposals, including management structures.

The proposal would then be submitted to the Scottish Government alongside the proposed integrated adult health and social care arrangements within the city.

Decision

- 1) To agree the rationale for such an Integrated Service and the proposal to consult on a wide basis to further its development.
- 2) To request that a further report be submitted to the August Committee reporting on the consultation process and outlining the next stage of the development of an Integrated Service.
- 3) To refer the report to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee to approve the proposals.

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

16. Children and Families Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 – Month Nine Position

The month nine revenue budget monitoring position was outlined for the Children and Families Directorate.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the Director's report and the currently projected balanced budget position for 2013/14.

- 2) To note that at month nine the projected residual budget pressures for the Children and Families Department totalled £1.4m.
- 3) To note that the £1.4m position had since improved to £0.3m, based on management action taken to the end of January 2014.
- 4) To note that further management action would continue to be taken to offset the residual pressures and enable the delivery of a balanced budget.

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

17. Appointment to the Improving Community Access to Schools Working Group

A vacancy had arisen on the Improving Community Access to Schools Working Group due to the resignation of Councillor Lunn.

In order to maintain the political balance on the Working Group, the Committee was invited to appoint a Labour Group member as a replacement.

Decision

To appoint Councillor Child in place of Councillor Lunn.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

18. Social Work Complaints Review Committee

The recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee held on 19 December 2013 on a complaint against the Children and Families Department were detailed.

Decision

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

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