

Item 4.1 - Minutes

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 3 March 2015

Present

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

Added members for Education items

Marie Allan, Allan Crosbie, Lindsay Law and John Swinburne.

1. Order of business

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

2. Religious Observance in Schools

2.1 Deputation – Edinburgh Secular Society

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

The deputation welcomed the Director of Children and Families' report as it provided a much needed analysis into religious observance across the Council's school estate, however, the following concerns were highlighted:

- Organised worship, including prayer and church visits, were still included in head teacher guidance;
- The use of new terms such as 'time for reflection' and 'spiritual development' did not address the underlying core issues that Religious Observance was exclusive – this was a historical problem and would persist;
- The report offered no explanation for the rapid increase in primary school opt outs from religious observance.
- The Director's report did not include information relating to why senior staff in schools were dismissive with regard to religious observance.

- The report contained little or no guidance on what materials religious or belief groups could distribute to young people or use in delivering religious observance.
- The report did not provide a detailed enough understanding of what religious observance included or who it was delivered by.
- In the most recent census, a higher proportion of Edinburgh Citizens claimed to have no religion than those with a religion. It was therefore untenable that the status quo was maintained.

The deputation concluded by requesting that the Committee allow for a poll of the electors on the matter, as allowed by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

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 2.2 below.

2.2 Report by the Director of Children and Families

As previously requested by the Committee, an update was provided on Religious Observance in Schools, including details of the organisations that had visited schools in the Council estate, and the findings of a second survey of head teachers undertaken in June 2014.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the Director's Report.
- 2) To note the progress made to date.
- 3) To note the change of title from "Religious Observance" to "Time for Reflection".
- 4) To note the continuing Career Long Professional Learning opportunities and the range of support available for Headteachers in relation to "Time for Reflection".
- 5) That annually schools must inform their parent council about the composition of those delivering religious observance. Under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, parents / carers have the right to ask for their children to be withdrawn from religious observance. This information must be updated in the school handbook each year. This must be carried out by all schools for the start of this academic year.
- 6) That parents must be informed about the times and subject of planned activities which will be delivered through religious observance. This information must be shared through parent council meetings, news bulletins,

school newsletters or the school website. An outline of religious observance events will be made available on request.

- 7) That when a pupil is withdrawn, the school must make suitable arrangements for the pupil to participate in a worthwhile activity, in consultation with parents. If parents have any concern about religious observance they should approach the head teacher to discuss their concerns.
- 8) That publications must not be sold to pupils by either individuals or groups. Head teachers must consider carefully all materials that are used with children. If they think any materials are of a sensitive nature they must discuss them with their parent council prior to issue and must seek advice from Children and Families staff.
- 9) That all groups must have a teacher present when conducting religious observance. If there is something done under the auspices of the school and a teacher will not be present (i.e. extra-curricular activities) explicit parental consent must be given.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 4 March 2014 (item 2); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Howat declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as a member of the Edinburgh Secular Society.

3. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee of 9 December 2014 as a correct record.

4. Education, Children and Families Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan – May to October 2015

The Education, Children and Families Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan for the period May to October 2015 was presented.

Decision

To note the Key Decisions Forward Plan for May to October 2015.

(Reference – Key Decisions Forward Plan – May to October 2015, submitted.)

5. Education, Children and Families Committee Rolling Actions Log

The Education, Children and Families Committee Rolling Actions Log for 3 March 2015 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To approve the actions recommended for closure (actions 6, 7, 9, 13 and 18)
- 2) That a comment be included in the next Business Bulletin on why the expected completion date for action 35 (Castlebrae Community High School Progress Report) had changed.

(Reference - Rolling Actions Log – 3 March 2015, submitted.)

6. Education, Children and Families Committee Business Bulletin

The Education, Children and Families Committee Business Bulletin for 3 March 2015 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Business Bulletin.
- 2) To note that information on eye tests would be included in a future Early Years report, and to request that the NHS data on eye tests be circulated to Committee members.
- 3) To note that an update would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the ongoing dialogue with the Scottish Government regarding teacher numbers.
- 4) To thank Claire Nicol and Judith Brownlie for their fundraising work to purchase defibrillators for Forrester and St Augustine's High Schools, at a time of great personal tragedy.

(Reference – Business Bulletin – 3 March 2015, submitted.)

7. Educational Attainment 2014

A summary of key outcomes in relation to attainment/improvements in performance in City of Edinburgh Council Schools for the year 2013-14 was provided, together with an update on the introduction of the new national qualifications and the implementation of a revised benchmarking system.

Decision

- 1) To note the significant improvements in educational attainment in Edinburgh schools since 2009 with performance above the national average and comparators on most measures where data is available.
- 2) To note that the strategies which had been deployed continue to raise attainment.
- 3) To agree to the areas identified to raise attainment in session 2014/15 as outlined sections 3.13, 3.18, 3.24 and 3.37 of the Director's report.
- 4) To agree to receive further annual reports on attainment/improvements in performance.
- 5) To note the position with regard to the implementation of 'Achieving a level' to replace Developing, Consolidating and Secure in session 2015/16.
- 6) To note the continued hard work of pupils, staff and parents to support the ongoing implementation of the new qualifications.
- 7) To note the position with regard to the implementation of the new benchmarking measures which would be employed to report performance by the end of S6 from session 2015/16.
- 8) To request a further report in October 2015 on:
 - The performance of looked after children;
 - The performance in relation to wider achievements and how they could be measured;
 - Attainment of children in areas of deprivation.
- 9) To request that an update be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on the use of one-to-one devices in schools.

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

8. Response to 'School Education' – a report of an audit by the Accounts Commission, June 2014

The response of the Council to the recommendations contained within the June 2014 Accounts Commission report into how efficiently and effectively councils use their resources to maximise pupil achievement was detailed. The Accounts Commission had asked local authorities to address a range of issues, and examples of how the Council was currently addressing, or planned to address these issues, was outlined.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the Director's report, including the areas of progress and further improvement.
- 2) That in addition to the information in paragraph 3.11 of the Director's report regarding the biennial workforce survey, Committee seeks additional measures for effectively attracting teacher responses and further requests that officers work with teacher trade unions and senior staff to find improved ways of monitoring and responding to issues relating to teacher wellbeing.

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

9. Vision for Schools

As previously requested by the Committee, an update was provided on progress with implementing the Council's Vision for Schools.

Decision

- 1) To note the good progress which had been made in implementing the Council's Vision for Schools in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note the positive feedback from Education Scotland about Education Services in Edinburgh.
- 3) To note that the next action plan relating to the Vision for Schools would be integrated into the Children and Families Service Plan for 2015/16.
- 4) To request a further report on progress in March 2016 focussing on the areas listed in paragraph 3.43 of the Director's report.

(References –minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 8 October 2013 (item 4) - report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

10. Edinburgh Integrated Literacy Strategy Report

An overview was provided of progress with priorities within the Edinburgh Integrated Literacy Strategy (EILS) Action Plan for 2014/15.

Decision

- 1) To note the continued progress with priorities within the EILS action plan 2014-15.
- 2) To note the continuing progress in Service improvement in literacy.

- 3) To note the positive contribution the strategy makes to achieving Children and Families Service Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities.
- 4) To note the progress made in closing the attainment gap/improving outcomes for the most disadvantaged 20%.
- 5) To note the positive contribution the strategy makes to council outcomes and coalition pledges.
- 6) To note that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the provision of English as an Additional Language (EAL).

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

11. Strategic Management of School Places: P1 and S1 Intakes for August 2015

Details were presented of the accommodation and placement issues for the anticipated P1 and S1 intakes for the 2015/16 school year.

Priority would be given to baptised Roman Catholic (RC) catchment pupils in twelve RC primary schools, and specific solutions for potential accommodation issues at Liberton and Bruntsfield Primary Schools had been identified. Within the secondary sector, Boroughmuir High School had experienced an unexpectedly large number of catchment registrations, and approval was sought to prioritise placing requests out of the school.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the Director's report.
- 2) To agree to prioritise placing requests out of Boroughmuir High School

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 4 March 2014 (item 5); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

12. Primary School Estate Rising Rolls

Details were provided of potential accommodation pressures which may arise in August 2016 and beyond at Balgreen, East Craigs, Ferryhill, Fox Covert, Granton, Roseburn, St Mary's RC (Leith) and Towerbank Primary Schools, together with a range of potential solutions which had been identified for each school to address this pressure.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the Director's report and the intention to bring a further report to Committee on 19 May 2015 to identify the preferred solution (including delivery model) for each school facing a potential accommodation pressure in August 2016.
- 2) To approve that a statutory consultation be undertaken regarding proposals to alter catchment boundaries between Towerbank Primary School and the neighbouring primary schools together with any associated changes required to secondary school catchment boundaries.
- 3) To note that initial informal consultation would be undertaken with the affected schools regarding the proposals to alter catchment boundaries between Towerbank Primary School and the neighbouring primary schools to establish if there were any other feasible and more preferable alternative options for alterations to catchment boundaries which would still achieve the required outcome.
- 4) To delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to develop a detailed consultation paper on proposed changes to primary and secondary school catchment boundaries taking into consideration any alterations to the proposed changes set out in the Director's report which may arise as a result of the informal consultation to be undertaken with the affected schools.
- 5) To note that a report on the outcomes of the consultation would be submitted to a future Council meeting for consideration.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 9 December 2014 (item 10); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

13. Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy

Approval was sought for an Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy, the purpose of which was to ensure clarity and consistency in regard to the Council's duty to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare to eligible children, as required by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Decision

To approve the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy as detailed in appendix 1 to the Director's report.

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

14. Integrated Children's Services

An update was provided on progress with the development of Integrated Children's Services in Edinburgh. A proposed model of governance for the process from April 2015 onwards was outlined, including the establishment of an Integrated Children's Services Board.

Decision

- 1) To note the significant progress which had been made in the development of Integrated Children's Services in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note the proposed remit for the Integrated Children's Services Board and to request a review of its effectiveness in March 2016.
- 3) To refer the Director's report to Council for approval and for appointment of the elected members to the Integrated Children's Services Board, subject to minor amendments to the membership and structural arrangements detailed in appendix 1 to the report.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 11 September 2014 (item 15); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

15. School Based Sport Hubs

An update was provided on the development of school based Community Sport Hubs; a national initiative designed to improve school to club links and to develop partnerships with sports clubs and other community organisations. It was intended to expand the initiative to other schools following a new tranche of external funding from Sportscotland.

Decision

- 1) To note the successful impact of the existing school based sport hubs and the important role which schools play in the development of community sport.
- 2) To note the confirmation of a new tranche of external funding from Sportscotland as of April 2015 and the intention to expand the approach to other schools.
- 3) To agree that a further short report would be presented in May 2015 on the consultation, assessment and final recommendations of future school based Sports Hub locations.

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

16. Total Craigroyston

An update was provided on Total Craigroyston, an Edinburgh Partnership initiative charged with improving outcomes for children and families in and around Craigroyston Community High School. The previous year had seen work to progress a number of local changes and the initiative had contributed to a range of wider developments through the Better Outcomes Leaner Delivery (BOLD) project.

Decision

- 1) To note the scope of the work and the impact on key outcomes for children and families as well as the influence on wider strategic developments.
- 2) To commend the officers for their work on the Total Craigroyston Initiative.
- 3) To request a progress report within 12 months.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 21 June 2012 (item 13); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

17. Children and Families Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014-15 – Half Yearly Position

The month nine revenue budget monitoring position was outlined for the Children and Families Directorate. A balanced position was projected, however, this was subject to continued ongoing management of residual budget pressures.

Decision

- 1) To note that at month nine the projected residual budget pressures to be managed for Children and Families totalled £0.3m.
- 2) To note that in the last stages of the financial year, expenditure restrictions would continue to be tightly applied and there would be an ongoing review and updating of projections.
- 3) To note that a balanced budget position was projected although a small risk of overspend remained.

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

18. Looked After Children: Transformation Programme Progress Report

An update was provided on progress to the end of December 2014 against the targets set out in the Looked After Children Transformation Programme.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress made to date against the targets set out in appendix 1 to the Director's report.
- 2) To note the actions in progress to achieve the targets to March 2018.
- 3) To note that the next update would be provided in August 2015.
- 4) To note the annual update to Family & Community Support.

(References – minute of the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee 24 September 2014 (item 11); report by the Director Children and Families, submitted.)

19. Children and Families Grants to Third Parties 2015/16

Details were provided of third party grant awards through the Children and Families grants programme for 2015/16. A number of procedural changes were outlined to support the new Children and Families grants approach for 2016/17 onwards.

Decision

- 1) To note the 2015/16 budget approved by Council on 12 February 2015 which agreed an allocation of £2,437,426 for grants to third parties.
- 2) To note the awards to the organisations outlined in Appendix 1 of the Director's report.
- 3) To note the procedural changes outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the Director's report.
- 4) To note that a further report in May 2015 would outline the results of the coproduction process to redesign the approach to grants for 2016/17 onwards.

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

20. Children and Families Risk Register

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee had previously requested that an updated Children and Families Risk Register be submitted to the Education, Children and Families Committee, prior to being submitted to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.

An updated Children and Families Risk Register was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the Risk Register and to request that the Risk Register be presented to Committee on an annual basis.
- 2) To refer the Director's report to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in April 2015.

(References – minute of the Governance Risk and Best Value 18 December 2014 (item 12); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted)

21. Edinburgh Young People's Participation Strategy – Implementation Update: February 2015

The implementation of the Edinburgh Young People's Participation Strategy for the twelve months to February 2015 was outlined. The strategy aimed to facilitate young people's meaningful participation in partnership working and decision making in Council services and partner organisations.

Decision

- 1) To continue to support the Edinburgh Young People's Participation Strategy.
- 2) To invite young people to report on their work to the Education, Children and Families Committee on a yearly basis.
- 3) To advocate, when required, on behalf of young people and to support them to be heard within the full range of Council committees and structures.
- 4) To note that young people's participation was healthy, diverse and not limited to involvement in forums and other formal groups.
- 5) To note that although Council formal structures might be useful for some issues raised by young people, in general formal structures do not always meet the needs of young people and therefore alternative approaches and models to young people's involvement in decision making were required e.g. the 'Conversation for Action' model.

(References –minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 10 December 2013 (item 6); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)