

Item 4.1 - Minutes

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 19 May 2015

Present

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

Added members for Education items

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. Early Years Capital Investment

2.1 Deputation – Blackhall Nursery

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Tina Woolnough (Chair of Blackhall Nursery Board) Fiona Gilbert (Business Manager) and Lorraine Swan (Manager) on behalf of Blackhall Nursery.

The deputation explained that the Nursery was a charity and a community run facility which was dependent on parent and community volunteers. Council funding (£3.50 per hour, per child) was the main source of income and this was topped up with fundraising.

The higher expectations and greater emphasis on the importance of early learning and childcare had led to pressure points on services such as Blackhall Nursery. These included a lack of:

- Private space to meet with families and hold multi-agency meetings in line with the 'getting in right approach';
- Proper changing and toileting facilities;
- Space to accommodate additional eligible two year olds;
- Staff space for breaks, lunch and storage of personal belongings.

The Director's report was recommending increasing nursery provision at Ferryhill Primary School to meet the needs of the wider Blackhall and Ferryhill area. However, it was the view of local parents that using Ferryhill to meet the needs of the Blackhall area would bring with it additional issues. These related to the practicalities for local residents of travel to Ferryhill for drop off and pick up, and the crossing of Queensferry Road and Telford Road with young children.

The deputation therefore requested:

- Regular ongoing voluntary sector meetings with the Council;
- Additional funding; and
- A publically articulated commitment to the Blackhall community to meet the local need for pre-school provision.

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

The Scottish Government had provided the Council with £9.892m of additional capital funding to expand free nursery provision from 475 to 600 hour a years for all three and four year olds and for certain two year olds.

The Committee on 11 September 2014 had approved expenditure of £5.741m to progress priority early years projects at five key locations across the city.

Approval was now sought to utilise the remaining capital funding to provide improved, replacement or expanded early years facilities at a further four key locations across the city.

Decision

- 1) To approve the proposed projects identified in the Director's report to improve, replace or expand early years facilities at the following locations, with costs being met from the additional capital funding provided by the Scottish Government:
 - Leith Primary School.
 - Tynecastle Nursery.
 - Blackhall Nursery.
 - Ferryhill Primary School.
- 2) To request a further report on voluntary sector nurseries and any further action that could be taken to support their continued operation and valued contribution to the early years sector, including input from the Cooperative Development Unit on possible asset transfer.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 11 September 2014 (item 6); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

3. Deputation – Duncan Place Resource Centre Management Committee

The Committee agreed to hear deputation from Caroline Leslie on behalf of Duncan Place Resource Centre Management Committee.

The deputation noted that a full report on the closure of Duncan Place Resource Centre and the long term options had been deferred to October 2015 to allow for more discussions with the community and the Council's Planning Service. The deputation requested the following:

- An assurance that the Council would consult and engage with the wider community and not just the individuals and groups already involved;
- Clarification on whether an equalities impact assessment had been carried out on the closure of the building;
- To be provided with feedback from the Futures Committee Group regarding the number of rooms that would be required in the new facility.

The Convener thanked the deputation for her presentation and noted that a full report would be presented to Committee in October 2015.

4. Parent Councils – Motion by Councillor Main

4.1 Deputation

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Jane Ewins in regard to Councillor Main's motion on Parent Councils (see item 4.2 below).

The deputation referred to problems with a number of outdoor spaces and playgrounds across the Council school estate, including Bruntsfield Primary School. These included:

- Existing in a state of poor repair;
- Lack of play opportunity;
- Total absence of natural elements;
- No seating; and
- Nothing to indicate that these spaces were specific areas for children to play in.

To date the deputation had undertaken the following

- Fundraised approximately £120k for playground improvements at Bruntsfield Primary School;

- Worked with landscape designers and play design leaders to design a space appropriate for the school;
- Liaised with the Council's Planning Section to ensure that proposed playground designs did not impinge on any planning restrictions caused by its location in a conservation area; and
- Attempted to engage with Council staff to ensure the support required to deliver their project

The deputation sought formal support from the Council to address the real need to improve school playgrounds and a willingness to work with a wide range of individuals wanting to make improvements to school grounds.

The Convener thanked the deputation for her presentation and invited her to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related motion by Councillor Main at item 4.2 below.

4.2 Motion by Councillor Main

The following amended motion by Councillor Main, seconded by Lindsay Law, was submitted in terms of Standing Order 16.1

"This Committee notes

1. The extensive contribution of volunteer time and funds raised by parents and Parent Councils across the city for schools and education projects and that the funding and opportunities for pupils and schools afforded by Parent Councils are not quantified or the values known or reported city-wide.
2. £289,000 awarded to seven Edinburgh Parent Councils by the Legacy 2014 Active Play for capital projects for Edinburgh School Playgrounds and the additional match funding raised by the Parent Councils for these projects totalling around £580,000 is only one of many success stories this year.
3. The difficulties and delays in taking the Legacy 2014 projects forward experienced by some Parent Councils.

Therefore this Committee:

1. Records its thanks and appreciation on behalf of the city for the hard work and contributions of all Parents Councils to the education and school environment of pupils across Edinburgh.
2. Welcomes the additional officer support in the Children and Families Department for parent councils to coordinate dealings with CEC departments, to enable projects in schools and school grounds to proceed, as put in place by the Director.

3. Requests that a general partnership agreement is drawn up, reflecting effective and productive partnership between Edinburgh Council and Parent Councils, laying out clear guidance and information necessary for the delivery of partnership projects, ensuring grant and project requirements and assurances of all parties can be met timeously.
4. Requests support for Parent Councils to research charitable status for Parent Councils and a central Edinburgh charity to support education.
5. Agrees to receive an annual report to the Education, Children and Families Committee on partnership work with Parent Councils, highlighting the priorities and projects undertaken, celebrating the successes, and quantifying the funding and opportunities brought to the city by parents and Parent Councils.”

Decision

To approve the amended motion by Councillor Main.

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Godzik declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as a close relative of a pupil attending Bruntsfield Primary School.

Allan Crosbie declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as a parent of a pupil attending Bruntsfield Primary School.

5. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee of 3 March 2015 as a correct record.

6. Education, Children and Families Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan – October to December 2015

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

Decision

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

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

7. Education, Children and Families Committee Rolling Actions Log

The Education, Children and Families Committee Rolling Actions Log for 19 May 2015 was presented.

Decision

To note the Rolling Actions Log and to approve the closure of action 12.

(Reference - Rolling Actions Log – 19 May 2015, submitted.)

8. Education, Children and Families Committee Business Bulletin

The Education, Children and Families Committee Business Bulletin for 19 May 2015 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin – 19 May 2015, submitted.)

9. Standards and Quality Report 2015 and the Children and Families Service Plan 2015-18

Details were provided of the Standards and Quality Report 2015 and the Children and Families Service Plan 2015-18.

Decision

- 1) To note the Standards and Quality Report 2015.
- 2) To note the Children and Families Service Plan 2015-18.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 20 May 2014 (item 8); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

10. Edinburgh Children's Partnership – Integrated Plan for Children and Young People 2015 - 2018

A revised Integrated Plan for Children and Young People 2015-2018, produced by the Edinburgh Children's Partnership to guide and monitor the work of the Edinburgh Children's Partnership, was presented.

The Partnership's vision, strategic outcomes and priorities were outlined, together with an agreed range of performance indicators and measures to report on progress.

Decision

To note the Integrated Plan for Children and Young People 2015 - 2018

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

11. Early Years Strategy Report

Details were provided of national priorities in early years and progress towards the implementation of requirements in line with legislation; including the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Key achievements and future priorities for the early years service were also outlined.

Decision

To note the content of the Director's report and the priorities for the next stage of development within early years.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 20 May 2014 (item 6); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

12. New Early Years Provision at Fox Covert and Wardie – A Cooperative Approach

As previously requested by Council, a progress update was provided on new early years provision at Fox Covert and Wardie Primary Schools, including progress on moving towards new nursery provision in a cooperative way.

Decision

To note the progress of the new early years provision at Fox Covert and Wardie primary schools.

(References – Acts of Council No 4 and 5 of 1 May 2014; report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

13. Primary School Capacity Pressure in South Edinburgh

The Committee had previously noted that an update would be provided on proposed long-term solutions to primary school accommodation pressures in South Edinburgh.

Approval was sought to undertake a statutory consultation on a range of potential options to address the long-term accommodation issues in this area.

An information paper on behalf of James Gillespie's Primary School Parent Council and a response on behalf of the Director of Children and Families had been circulated to Committee Members.

Decision

- 1) To approve that a statutory consultation process be undertaken regarding proposals to address primary school capacity and accommodation pressures in South Edinburgh.
- 2) To delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to finalise the detailed consultation paper before the start date for the statutory consultation process.
- 3) To note that a report on the outcomes of the consultation would be submitted to a future Council meeting for consideration.
- 4) To note that the Finance and Resources Committee on 13 May 2015 had agreed to prioritise funding for the proposed site acquisitions as detailed at paragraph 6.2 of the Director's report.
- 5) To note the information paper submitted on behalf of James Gillespie's Primary School Parent Council and the response submitted on behalf of the Director of Children and Families.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 9 December 2015 (item 2); minute of the Finance and Resources Committee 13 May 2015 (item 4); information paper from James Gillespie's Parent Council and response from Director of Children and Families; report by the Director of Children and Families, both submitted.)

14. Children and Families Asset Management Plan 2014 - Update

The Committee had previously noted the intention to provide an update every six months on progress in delivering the Children and Families Asset Management Action Plan.

An update was provided on the delivery of the Children and Families Asset Management Action Plan, including details of progress on two key areas of work; the review of primary school capacities and rising rolls in the secondary sector.

Decision

- 1) To note the update on the action plan detailed in the Director's report.
- 2) To note the progress made to date on the review of primary school capacities based on the Scottish Government's new guidance and that further work would continue over the remainder of 2015.
- 3) To note the proposals for engagement with secondary school management teams related to the issue of rising rolls in the secondary sector, the outcomes of which would be reported to Committee at a future date.

(References –minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 9 December 2014 (item 11); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

15. Primary School Estate Rising Rolls

An update was 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.
- 2) To approve that new accommodation be provided at the following primary schools subject to the final decision regarding the necessity for such provision being delegated to the Director of Children and Families to be taken in January 2016 (or earlier if appropriate) upon assessment of pupil registration figures:
 - Balgreen Primary School.
 - East Craigs Primary School.
 - Fox Covert Primary School.
 - St Mary's (Leith) RC Primary School.
- 3) To approve that internal reconfiguration works be undertaken at Ferryhill, Granton and Roseburn Primary Schools to provide increased classroom provision for August 2016.
- 4) To note that a statutory consultation proposing a range of options for the realignment of Towerbank Primary School's catchment boundary is underway and that a report to Council on 22 October 2015 will provide the outcomes of this consultation.
- 5) To delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families to:
 - i. Agree what the most appropriate final solution for each school would be taking into consideration factors such as cost, deliverability and the impact on the school.
 - ii. To approve the final costs of the most appropriate final solution whilst always ensuring that value for money is achieved.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 3 March 2015 (item 12); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

16. Buckstone Primary School – Use of Developer Contributions

A significant residential development was being progressed on the former Fairmilehead Water Treatment Works site. In accordance with the related Section 75 agreement, the Council would receive education contributions to alleviate accommodation pressures at both Buckstone Primary School and Boroughmuir High School, the latter via the provision of a replacement High School.

Consultation had been undertaken with the Parent Council and School Management Team of Buckstone Primary School and approval was sought to progress a proposed new hall which had been identified as the preferred priority for investment.

Decision

To approve the project to deliver a new hall at Buckstone Primary School as detailed in the Director's report, the capital cost of which would be fully funded from developer contributions.

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

17. Free School Meals P1-P3 – Progress Report

As previously requested by the Committee, a progress report on the impact of the delivery of the free school meals policy on primary schools across the Council estate was submitted.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the Director's report and the successful implementation of the extended entitlement to free school meals to all P1 to P3 pupils from January 2015.
- 2) That the feasibility and associated timescales of implementing an on-line payments system for school meals be included in the annual progress report on the school meals service scheduled for October 2015.

(References – minutes of the Education, Children and Families Committee 11 September 2014 (item 10) and 9 December 2014 (item 9); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

18. Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice in City of Edinburgh Council Schools

An update was provided on a range of local and national measures to reduce bullying, prejudice and discrimination between pupils in schools. Good practice and progress within City of Edinburgh Schools was highlighted.

Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the Director's report.
- 2) To confirm approval of the Prevent and Respond to Bullying and Prejudice Policy.
- 3) That a briefing session be arranged for Committee members.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 8 October 2013 (item 11); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

19. Response to the Scottish Government's Education Bill

An update was provided on the Education Bill introduced by the Scottish Parliament on 23 March 2015. The Council's initial response to the proposals in the Bill was outlined.

Decision

- 1) To note that a new Education (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 23 March 2015. The Bill covered a large range of school policy issues, in particular school attainment and Gaelic Medium Education (GME).
- 2) To note the Council's initial response to key proposals in the Bill.
- 3) To note that the Council would continue to engage in national consultation through direct response to the Scottish Government as appropriate and through the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

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

20. Children and Families Grants to Third Parties 2015-16

Details were provided of the process for establishing a redesigned Children and Families grants programme from April 2016, which was in line with a previous decision by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee.

Decision

- 1) To note the process to date and to agree the workplan outlined in the Director's report to complete the development of the new grants approach for 2016 onwards.
- 2) To remit the work associated with defining and implementing the approach to the Third Party Payments Elected Member Working Group – in consultation with the Director of Children and Families and the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee.
- 3) To receive a further report on the application process in October 2015.

(References – minute of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee 11 February 2014 (item 1); minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 3 March 2015 (item 19); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

21. 1:1 Digital Learning Rollout

As previously requested by the Committee, an update was provided on the use of 1:1 devices in schools. Digital learning pilot projects had taken place in four schools across the Council's estate during session 2012/13, and a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach was also being considered.

Decision

- 1) To note the deployment of 1:1 devices as the most equitable and effective way to embed Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in learning and teaching.
- 2) To note the potential future role of a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach, to supplement and extend 1:1 provision where appropriate.
- 3) To note the comments detailed at paragraph 7.4 of the Director's report and that any BYOD approach being taken forward would need to first address equalities impact concerns and be reported to Committee before progression.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 3 March 2015 (item 7); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Main declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as a parent of a pupil who had taken part in a pilot project.

22. Progress on the Implementation of Self Directed Support in Children and Families

As previously requested by the Committee, an update was provided on progress made in implementing the requirements of the National Strategy for Self-directed Support and the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013, over the previous 12 month period.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress being made in implementing the requirements of the National Strategy for Self-directed Support and the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013, in respect of children and families.
- 2) That a briefing session be arranged for Committee members to assist in identifying issues to be included in future reports.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 20 May 2014 (item 16); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

23. Community Learning and Development Annual Report

A year end summary of Community Learning and Development (CLD) activities was submitted. Details were provided of developments and achievements over the previous year in relation to the Adult Education Programme, Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Family Learning and Work with Parents, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Community-based Adult Learning provision, and a range of youth work.

Decision

To note the developments and achievements detailed in the Director's report and to request that future reports include figures on adult learners.

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

24. Corporate Performance Framework: Performance from September 2014 to February 2015

An update was provided on Council performance against Children and Families strategic outcomes, covering the period from September 2014 to February 2015.

Decision

To note the performance for the period from September 2014 to February 2015 and to agree the actions for improvement.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 9 December 2014 (item 22); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

25. Recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee – 25 March 2015

The recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee held on 25 March 2015 to consider a complaint against the social work service within the Children and Families Directorate were detailed.

Decision

To approve the recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee of 25 March 2015

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

26. Policies – Assurance Statement

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee had previously agreed to strengthen governance arrangements and develop a framework relating to Council Policies.

Details were provided of the Children and Families Policies which had been reviewed and assessed as current, relevant and fit for purpose. Further policies, that were due to be presented to Committee for approval in October 2015, were also outlined.

Decision

To note that the policies detailed in appendix 1 to the Director's report had been reviewed and were considered as being current, relevant and fit for purpose.

(References – minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 3 September 2013 (item 4); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted)

27. School Session Dates 2016/2017, 2017/2018 and Consultation on Future Dates

Following consultation on the criteria for setting school session dates, approval was sought for proposed school session dates for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. Proposals on a wider consultation on dates for 2018/2019 and beyond were also outlined, including possible alternative models such as a four term pattern of roughly equal lengths, and later summer holidays to coincide with the Edinburgh Festival.

Decision

- 1) To approve the Session Dates for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 as detailed in appendices two and three of the Director's report.
- 2) To approve a wider consultation on dates for 2018/2019 and beyond.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 20 May 2014 (item 19); report by the Director of Children and Families, submitted.)

28. Lindsay Law – Parent Representative

The Convener advised that this would be Lindsay Law's final meeting as Parent Representative and thanked her for her valued contribution to the work of the Committee since her appointment in 2013. In reply, Lindsay thanked the Committee members and officers for making her feel very welcome.

A new parent representative had been nominated by the Consultative Committee with Parents and, subject to ratification by Full Council, would be able to attend the next meeting of the Committee.