

Minutes

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday 1 March 2022

Present:

Councillors Perry (Convener), Bird (Vice-Convener), Burgess, Griffiths, Douglas, Key, Laidlaw, Mary Campbell, Frank Ross, Rust and Louise Young.

Religious Representatives

Fiona Beveridge and Therese Laing

Parent Representative (non-voting)

Alexander Ramage

1. Gaelic Medium Education (GME) Update

(a) Deputation – Comann Nam Pàrant

The deputation raised the following key points:

- The deputation supported the cross-party amendment, specifically the continued engagement with parent councils and the additional detail on other potential sites. Concerns were noted on the level of detail that could be acquired in the proposed timeframes for the site reviews.
- The deputation did not agree that the best educational option was a dedicated GME school on a shared campus in Liberton.
- The staffing allocations in the current annex at James Gillespie's High School do not give confidence for the development of GME staffing will be sufficient to staff a full secondary school.
- The deputation supported continued talks with the Scottish Government on potential funding for GME in Edinburgh. The clarification on funding had the potential to open further site options.

(b) Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

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Further detail was provided on the potential sites for a GME secondary school in Edinburgh. The report also outlined the implications of the Committee decision in January 2022 to not proceed to statutory consultation at this time.

Decision

- 1) To recognise the potential impact of the decision not to proceed with the statutory consultation on the growth of GME in Edinburgh, as outlined in the report.
- 2) To note the Council's policy and responsibility to expand GME provision and the pressure of rising school rolls at James Gillespie's High School.
- 3) To note the previous officer recommendations of the educational benefits of a co-located school and that the option with the strongest rationale is currently a dedicated GME secondary school on a shared campus with the replacement Liberton High School.
- 4) Council to continue to engage with the GME community, including finding opportunities to gather information from beyond Comann nam Pàrant, along with Chairs of the parent councils from Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce and James Gillespie's High School.
- 5) To agree additional information is required to move forward to statutory consultation.
- 6) To request a revised report in one cycle that contains the following information:
 - i) To provide details of the proposal for a standalone school on the site of the former Castlebrae Community High School
 - ii) To provide details of mitigation measures to address concerns regarding Liberton High School including public transport routes, possible provision of CEC supported bus networks and immersion challenges
 - iii) To provide additional detail regarding the sites 1,2, 3, 4 and 7 listed in the paper, to enable clearer rule-in/rule-out to include:
 - a) the level of nearby public transport connections
 - b) the nearest secondary school and the number of metres to walk to that school
 - c) what scale of secondary school provision could be provided on sites that has been listed as too small, including pupil capacity and ability to access shared sports facilities e.g. other schools, Edinburgh leisure facilities
 - d) Information on whether discussions have been had with current stakeholders regarding medium-term future of the following sites:

- Russell Road depot
 - Royal Victoria Hospital Site
 - Drummond bus depot
 - Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion
 - Police Scotland Fettes (details of decommissioning and indicative land values)
- 7) The report to also include a timeline setting out key decision-making milestones.
- 8) To acknowledge that some information may not be able to be provided as the data doesn't sit within the Council and to agree that this will not hold up the decision on a statutory consultation but that explanation will be given to Committee on the reasons for this.
- 9) To agree that any alternatives that emerge as viable are discussed with affected parents and carers and stakeholders prior to committee consideration.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services and written deputation from Comann Nam Pàrant, submitted)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Burgess declared a non-financial interest in the above item as the parent of children who attend the Gaelic Primary School, left the meeting and took no part in consideration of the item.

Alex Ramage declared a non-financial interest as a parent of a child attending Liberton High School.

2. Minutes

Decision

- 1) To approve the minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee of 7 December 2021 as a correct record.
- 2) To approve the minute of the Education, Children and Families committee of 24 January 2022 as a correct record.

3. Work Programme

The Committee's Work Programme updated to March 2022 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Work Programme.

- 2) To confirm the approach implemented by other Executive Committees regarding the timeline for reporting the 'Implementing Programme for the Capital Coalition Commitments' prior to Local Government Elections in May 2022.

(Reference – Work Programme, 7 December 2021, submitted)

4. Rolling Actions Log

The rolling actions log updated to March 2022 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:
 - Action 2 – Community Access to Secondary School Sport Facilities
 - Action 3 – Edinburgh Learns
 - Action 6 – Update on Trinity Academy Wave 4 Project
 - Action 7A – Motion by Councillor Laidlaw – Curriculum Concerns
 - Action 15A & 15B – New Primary School Name
 - Action 17 – Pilot Scheme with Private and Voluntary Sector Childcare Providers.
- 2) To otherwise note the remaining outstanding actions.

5. Business Bulletin

The Business Bulletin for March 2022 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted)

6. Energy in Schools – Annual Report

The detail of energy consumption throughout schools in Edinburgh for 2020-2021 was presented for noting. The report highlighted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and provided key initiatives aimed at reducing energy use moving forward.

Decision

- 1) note the content of the report and the detail on current and historic energy use across the Council's learning estate.
- 2) To note the progress on initiatives focused on supporting net-zero carbon in the learning estate.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted)

7. Empowered Learning Programme

An update on the Empowered Learning programme was provided.

Decision

To note the report and the progress made to date.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

8. Learning Estate Update: School Roll Projections and West Edinburgh Engagement

The annual school roll projections up to January 2022 were presented for noting alongside further detail of the West Edinburgh engagement process, which included a programme of key events.

Decision

- 1) To note the latest school roll projections published in January 2022.
- 2) To note the briefing paper provided to Committee members in January 2022 and actions proposed for individual schools.
- 3) To note the strategy outlined in this paper to progress an engagement process in West Edinburgh.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

9. Early Years 1140 Capital Programme Update

An update on the detail of the Early Years expansion projects in delay were presented alongside the planned actions to mitigate their impact.

The report also highlighted the projects were still achievable under Scottish Government grant funding, but rising costs meant there was no flexibility in this budget to respond to future cost increases.

Decision

- 1) To note the contingency measures being put in place to mitigate further delays in the delivery of five new nurseries at Craigentenny, Granton, Nether Currie, St John Vianney RC and St Mark’s RC Primary Schools.
- 2) To note that the current Early Years expansion programme remains deliverable within the Scottish Government grant funding.
- 3) To note any additional costs incurred on individual projects will need to be considered in terms of their impact on the wider programme.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

10. Holiday Support for Children Affected by a Disability

An update on the holiday support provided for children affected by a disability was presented for noting. The report highlighted the ambition to return to pre-pandemic levels of support provision, as well as incorporating the lessons learned throughout Covid-19 to new holiday support practises.

Decision

- 1) To note that the Holiday Hub development worker is now in post.
- 2) To note that work is underway on progressing support for summer 2022.
- 3) To note that a report will be submitted to Committee in winter 2022 giving options for a sustainable and robust holiday support model going forward.
- 4) To note that the holiday support continues to be impacted on by Covid-19 and now a National social care crisis.
- 5) To note the work that Children and Families officers have undertaken over the period of the Covid Pandemic to support children with a disability.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

11. School Excursions – Equity (Further Update)

An update on the options for school excursions was presented for noting. The update followed from the request at the December Committee meeting to report back on the full scope of possible alternative and equitable options, including EPIC days. A general update on progress was also included in the report.

Decision

- 1) To note the options available to schools to achieve progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences and an expectation to ensure that every child can participate equally in school experiences.
- 2) To note the rationale for residential visits within a progressive approach, which also includes regular onsite and local beyond the classroom experiences.
- 3) To note the rationale and benefits of the Council operating its own centres.
- 4) To note the ongoing progress made since the December 2021 report.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

12. School Sports and Extracurricular Activities: Progress Update

A progress report on school sports and extracurricular activities was presented. The report was noted to be in response to a motion submitted at the previous Committee meeting which called for further information on the resumption of extracurricular activities post-Covid, the funding for these activities, and the use of school premises for these activities.

Decision

- 1) To note this update report and the progress made on the reintroduction of school sports & extracurricular activities.

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- 2) To note the issues and financial impact of the proposed introduction of free use of schools and to ask for a further report on this providing more detail on the significant budget implications for 2022/23 onwards.
- 3) To agree to receive a further update in June 2022 which provides detail on the extent of the continued reintroduction of extracurricular activity with focus on non-sport activity.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

13. Pathways

A summary of the approaches taken to improve employability skills and positive destinations for children and young people was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the achievements and next steps in DYW (Pathways) at City of Edinburgh schools.
- 2) To note the continued hard work of teams across departments within City of Edinburgh, our staff in schools, and partners to improve employability skills and positive destinations of our children and young people, in particular, as part of the Covid-19 response.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

14. Child Poverty Update – Schools and Lifelong Learning

The actions taken by Schools and Lifelong Learning to contribute to reducing child poverty were presented for information.

Decision

To note the progress and actions delivered by Schools and Lifelong Learning towards reducing child poverty.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

15. Promoting Equality

A summary of the progress in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan was presented to the Committee for information. The next steps of the plan were also detailed, which included the alignment of the Plan with Children’s Partnership members.

Decision

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- 1) To note the progress and work underway to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across City of Edinburgh schools and youth work, in all aspects of education and Lifelong Learning systems, procedures and practices.
- 2) To agree next steps at 5.1-5.2.
- 3) To agree that updates on the work detailed in this report and the Action Plan are presented at every Committee until further notice.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

16. Children and Young People’s Participation

Children and young people’s participation in activities throughout the pandemic was presented to the Committee. The report detailed the main problems raised by children and young people for participation and set out the next steps to address these concerns.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress with participation work during the pandemic.
- 2) To agree the next steps outlined in section 5.
- 3) To request a further progress report in March 2023.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

17. Early Years Session 2021-22 Parent Survey Findings

The findings of a parent survey into early years education were presented. The report outlined the issues raised and the actions to address them moving forward.

Decision

To note the findings of the parent survey and actions to address the issues raised.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

18. Supporting Teach the Future

A verbal update was provided on supporting the Teach the Future programme.

Decision

To note the update.

19. Attendance Thematic Review

An overview of the Attendance Thematic Review was presented which detailed the scoping, fieldwork, results and recommendations of the review into persistent poor attendance of many children across Edinburgh.

Decision

- 1) To note that an Integrated Attendance Strategy will follow.
- 2) To note the service wide actions to improve attendance in schools.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

20. Review Cuts to English as an Additional Language Provision for Dalry Primary School

An update on the implementation and approach of the ‘Language and Literacy Collaboration’ in Dalry Primary School was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the ongoing work to develop a sustainable, equitable and capacity-building approach to provision for English as an Additional Language learners across schools.
- 2) To note the ongoing work to support Dalry Primary School to adjust and engage with this approach.
- 3) To agree to the next steps proposed at section 5.
- 4) To agree that an update is presented in October 2022 to report on the overall evaluation of the implementation of Phases 1 and 2 of the Language and Literacy Collaboration at Dalry Primary School.
- 5) To agree that an update is presented in December 2022 to report on the recommendations and actions detailed in the Integrated Impact Assessment.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

21. Edinburgh Community Learning and Development Plan 2018-2021

The positive achievements of the Community Learning and Development Plan 2018-2021 was presented for noting. The report also noted the areas that have not fully progressed alongside the next steps of the Plan in the next academic year.

Decision

- 1) To note the outcomes achieved in the Plan and some of the areas which were not fully progressed.
- 2) To note the learning by the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership and how this informs the new CLD Plan 2021 – 2024
- 3) To agree to receive an annual progress update on the new Plan.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

22. Update on Devolved School Management Scheme

The Devolved School Management Scheme was presented for approval prior to publication.

Decision

To approve the updated Devolved School Management Scheme (Appendix 1).

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

23. Revenue Monitoring 2021-22 – Month Nine Position

The projected month nine revenue monitoring position for Education and Children’s Services was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note that a balanced overall monitoring position is forecast at month nine.
- 2) To note that the temporary accommodation monitoring position will be reported to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 24 March 2022, and is not reported in the forecast balanced budget for Education and Children’s Services.
- 3) To note that approved savings and operational efficiencies in 2021/22 total £2.584m. Further savings of £1.658m, relating to pressures from the delivery of prior year approved budget savings also require to be managed within the 2021/22 budget, resulting in a revised savings target of £4.242m. £3.195m on track to be delivered in full; £0.085m assessed as amber, and £0.962m assessed as being at risk of not being delivered.

(Reference – Report by the Executive Director of Education and Children’s Services, submitted)

24. Internal Audit: Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators as at 5 November 2021 – Referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee had referred the Internal Audit: Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators as at 5 November 2021 for scrutiny.

Decision

To note the status of the overdue Internal Audit findings as at 5 November 2021.

25. Motion by Councillor Laidlaw – Preparation of School Meals

The following motion was submitted by Councillor Laidlaw in terms of Standing Order 17:

“Committee

Notes that across the school estate there is a split between schools that produce their meals in on-site production kitchens and those with ‘dining centres’ that rely on re-heating facilities for meals produced in other schools.

Recognises that despite the best-efforts of catering staff, food served in dining centres can fall short of the quality standards of that produced on-site and that this is exacerbated by longer journeys.

Acknowledges that the ambition would be to have production facilities in all schools but that current resources do not allow for that ambition to be fulfilled in the short-term.

Notes that Scottish Government has committed to offering free school meals to all children in primaries one to five from January 2022 and recognises the additional pressure this puts on kitchens and dining centres.

Supports officers in their efforts to secure additional Scottish Government funding to help grow the number of production kitchens.

Asks officers to review the current relationships between Production Kitchens and Dining Centres with the aim to reduce the journey times and prepare food as close to the destination as possible, and to look to optimise menus for food items that both ‘travel’ well and appeal to young diners.”

Decision

- 1) To approve the motion.
- 2) To include in the report back, information on those schools where decisions had been taken to remove production kitchen facilities and any resulting impacts.

26. Motion by Councillor Laidlaw – Scottish Government Health and Wellbeing Census

The following motion was submitted by Councillor Laidlaw in terms of Standing Order 17:

“Committee

Notes the concerns that have been raised by pupils, parents and educationalists with regard to the Health and Wellbeing Census that is being asked of school pupils across Scotland and the decision of a number of local authorities to halt its rollout.

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Recognises that following debate, Council agreed to its implementation in CEC schools.

Notes that this decision was made without receipt of information about scope and scale of the Census and that concerns continue to be raised.

Asks that for a report detailing the roll-out in Edinburgh to be submitted to Full Council on March 24th 2022, to include:

- Questions being asked of pupils in each year group
- Number of pupils included (per schools and year group)
- Number of opt-outs (per school and year group)
- Number of completed questionnaires received
- Number of 'cause for concern' responses logged by CEC"

Decision

- 1) To approve the motion
- 2) To agree that the list of Scottish Government census questions is published on the Council's website by the end of this week (4 March 2022) and that this action is communicated to Head Teachers and Parent Councils; further, that each Head Teacher be requested to inform their specific school parent body if they plan to deviate from the core Scottish Government census questions.