

## The Highland Council and NHS Highland

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Joint Committee on Children and Young People** held in the Council Chamber, Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday, 2 October 2009 at 2.15 p.m.

### Present

#### Members

Ms P Courcha (in the Chair) )  
Mrs A Bethune )  
Mrs G McCreath ) NHS Highland  
Mr I Gibson )  
Mrs J Baird )  
  
Mrs M C Davidson )  
Mr W Fernie ) Highland Council  
Ms E McAllister )

Mr M Monahan, Youth Convener

#### Officers:

Mr I Mitchell, Children's Planning Officer, Social Work Services )  
Mrs L Jones, Health Promoting Schools Manager, Education, Culture ) HC  
and Sport Service )  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office )  
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office )  
  
Mr B Alexander, Head of Children's Services ) HC/NHS  
Ms J Nelson, Health Development Officer )

#### In attendance:

Mrs L Munro, Children's Champion  
Mr C Munro, Highland Children's Forum  
Mrs A Brady, Care and Learning Alliance  
Ms A Darlington, NCH  
Mr K Ross, Depute Chairman to the Children's Panel  
Ms R Sime, Highlands and Islands Enterprise

### Preliminaries

The Chairman welcomed Magnus Monahan, the new Youth Convener, to his first meeting of the Joint Committee. On behalf of Members she also congratulated Julia Nelson, Health Development Officer, who had won a NHS Highland Better Health Award for putting into practise the ethos and principles of Getting It Right For Every Child and Better Health, Better Care.

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr C Punler, Dr R Gibbons, Mr A S Park, Dr M E M Foxley, Ms L MacDonald, Mr A M Millar, Ms J Douglas, Mrs C MacLean, Mrs R Morrison and Ms J Veasey.

## 2. Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Committee held on 14 August 2009

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 14 August 2009 were circulated and **NOTED**.

Arising from the Minutes, also **NOTED**, in relation to the following:-

- i. Item 5, Health Outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC), that:-
  - Highland Council's Corporate Parenting Seminar was scheduled to take place on 30 October 2009;
  - a hard copy of the Scottish Government's letter to NHS Chief Executives, setting out specific goals in relation to LAC, would be circulated to Members of the Joint Committee; and
- ii. Item 8, For Highland's Children 3, the Youth Convener had tabled a timetable of Youth Voice events.

## 3. REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10 – MONITORING REPORT

Report No CYP/33/09 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services had been circulated detailing the position of the Joint Committee's budget as at 31 August 2009. A revised version, detailing NHS Highland's expenditure, was tabled.

At this stage of the financial year it was difficult to predict a meaningful year-end projection and a more accurate picture would be available at the Joint Committee's next meeting. A request had been made that phased variances be included in monitoring statements but this was inconsistent with Highland Council's agreed format. In seeking to address this, additional information had been provided on out of authority placements, with comparisons made to previous years, and where a provisional projection had been made that this element of the budget would come in on target.

Disappointment was expressed that detail on phased variances would not be provided bearing in mind the importance of applying good governance based on detailed information.

The Committee **NOTED** the current budget position as at 31 August 2009.

## 4. For Highland's Children 3

Report No CYP/34/09 by Innis Mitchell, Children's Planning Officer had been circulated providing Members with an opportunity to consider the outcome of the morning Seminar on the proposed new Integrated Children's Plan. A copy of the near final draft of For Highland Children's (FHC) 3 was also tabled.

Arising from discussion at the seminar was the place of play within the plan and the issue of strategic priorities, particularly in relation to Getting It Right for parents and carers. Some were of the view that, in recognising the importance of parents and carers, it would be more appropriately addressed within Adult Services and that if it was included in FHC3 as a strategic priority it might have a detrimental effect on how young carers were viewed and dealt with. The issue of parents and carers in this context could, however, be addressed by making a reference within the document to the Community Care plan, the comparator to FHC3 for the population of Highland. It was recognised further consideration of this subject would be required, taking into account the points raised in discussion

and the Scottish Government's proposal to publish a Carers Strategy in Spring 2010, followed by a separate Young Carers Strategy, which would certainly impact on the matter.

Also arising during discussion were the following issues:-

- a change in focus was required in regard to achievement so that it didn't relate solely to academic qualifications but was outcome centred on the individual young person;
- the layout and presentation of FHC3 document was praised;
- the retention of NHS HEAT targets in the Plan was welcomed;
- the transition arrangements for those young people self-harming needed to be flagged as a priority;
- the FHC3 document set out strategic priorities while more detailed data and information was provided on the website. It was accepted, however, that the website required to be redesigned to make this information more accessible;
- the importance of Learning Plans in identifying personal aspirations and recognising achievements which, in turn, could be integrated into the school "tool", was acknowledged; and
- in moving towards making FHC3 an outcome focused plan, the challenge would be how best to measure results.

**NOTED** the report and **AGREED:-**

- i. the current format of the plan with any further minor changes being delegated to the Head of Children's Services in consultation with the Joint Chairs; and
- ii. that a report be submitted to a future meeting exploring the merits of parents and carers as a strategic priority within the plan taking into account the forthcoming Scottish Government Carers Strategy and the issues raised in discussion.

## **5. Lifestyle Survey**

Report No CYP/35/09 by Louise Jones, Health Promoting Schools Manager had been circulated informing Members of the progress of the Highland Lifestyle survey undertaken across P7, S2 and S4 age groups and which had been designed to provide additional evidence to the For Highland's Children 3 improvement objectives. The report presented a summary of the findings, background and methodology and provided a "snapshot" of young people's lifestyles, enhancing existing information and benchmark data. The process and wording of questions had been developed by a multi-agency steering group, including the youth convener, with a pilot being issued prior to the final version being approved by the Council's Education, Culture and Sport Committee. In total, 3893 Surveys had been returned.

During discussion, comment was made on specific areas of the survey and it was the general consensus that it would be beneficial for Youth Voice to be contacted for their views on initial findings. In particular, assurances were given that the survey had been sent to special needs schools and intensive support units to ensure that young people with a disability and/or disadvantage were represented. However, to protect anonymity, it had not been possible to identify from which schools responses had been received. Comment on the wording of

the questions by the Joint Committee and other agencies was welcomed and would be taken into account for the future but the importance of keeping questions focused was emphasised.

**NOTED** that the survey was to be used as additional evidence to support the improvement objectives for 2009-12 that were to be included in For Highland's Children 3.

**AGREED** that Youth Voice be informed of the findings of the survey and be asked to report back to the Joint Committee with their views.

## **6. Youth Migration – Highlands and Islands Enterprise Study**

Report No CYP/36/09 by Ruth Sime, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) had been circulated introducing a presentation on the outcomes of the recent study into youth migration from Highland. It was explained that if the Highlands and Islands had the same age structure as elsewhere in Scotland, there would be 25% more young people in the 15-30 age group.

The study had explored attitudes to living, studying and working in the area and had identified specific areas for effective intervention. The key research findings were outlined and the perceptions of young people were reported. In particular, the insufficient opportunities to access further and higher education and the lack of economic opportunities were seen as contributory factors discouraging young people from either staying or returning to the Highlands. In seeking to address youth migration HIE would be implementing a number of measures such as a programme to encourage Graduate/Business placements, making the Highlands more attractive for graduates, and promoting awareness of self-employment and entrepreneurship, particularly through schools, the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust and the Business Gateway.

During discussion, a number of issues were raised, including the following:-

- the report would help the Council deliver on the issues surrounding transition namely, employment, education and housing;
- employment and job opportunities had a major role to play in retaining young people in Highland and the possibilities of various opportunities, particularly self-employment, should be actively promoted;
- lack of affordable and obtainable housing was often an obstacle in Highland;
- young people leaving to go to university should be seen as a positive step but Highland's position could be enhanced by further developing its own University campus;
- there was a perceived lack of opportunities for female apprentices; and
- many people chose to live in particular areas on the basis of the availability of good public services, particularly health.

**NOTED:-**

- i. the report and presentation;
- ii. the action proposed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in effectively targeting youth migration; and
- iii. the findings would be fed into For Highland's Children 3.

## 7. Northern Lights

Report No CYP/37/09 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services had been circulated updating Members further on the work being undertaken to establish an intensive care and learning resource in Highland to enable the return of children from out of authority placements and to help achieve identified efficiencies. While consultation continued, Barnardo's had drafted proposals and provided costings that confirmed that this was a viable proposition. The Position Statement on the Northern Lights Reintegration Service had been circulated separately.

The resource would accommodate five children with challenging behaviour and/or offending histories. Savings would be difficult to quantify as it would be dependent on the individuals concerned, their specific needs and the location of their current placement but it would, bearing in mind that Barnardo's were also through-care providers, ease the transition for these young people back into their communities.

Following discussion, during which confirmation was sought that there would be sufficient capacity in local health and community care facilities to meet the needs of such a facility, the Joint Committee **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that Barnardo's be given authority to acquire a property to proceed with Northern Lights.

## 8. Dundee Child Protection Committee - Significant Case Review

Report No CYP/38/09 by Harriet Dempster, Director of Social Work had been circulated informing Members of the significant case review findings into the circumstances surrounding the death of Brandon Lee Muir in Dundee.

The case review and independent report had already been considered by the Highland Council and the Child Protection Committee. Highland was generally meeting the recommendations arising from these documents. Nevertheless, continued monitoring and consideration was still required in the areas of Initial Referral Discussion, the identification of predatory males and how reports of domestic abuse were managed.

### **NOTED:-**

- i. the report;
- ii. the response of the Scottish Government;
- iii. the positive endorsement and support of the "Getting it Right for Every Child" approach; and
- iv. the comments from the Highland Child Protection Committee.

## 9. Supporting Parents in Highland

Report No CYP/39/09 by Julia Nelson, Health Development Officer had been circulated proposing the further development of a co-ordinated approach to support parenting across integrated children's services partners in Highland.

Considerable work was on-going with a variety of programmes, information and support available. However, at present, provision was inconsistent and some parents were not getting the help required. The new framework would provide

support at the correct level and would set clear standards and principles to enable training and funding to be clarified.

To continue to steer the creation of the project it was proposed to establish a multi-agency Reference Group and, in discussion, it was suggested that the membership of the Reference Group should include a young mother to help devise the framework and to feed in the views of parents themselves. The benefits the proposal, particularly in the better use of time and resources, were acknowledged and an update on progress was requested.

**NOTED** the report and **AGREED**:-

- i. the development of a Highland Parenting Support Framework, endorsing the process as set out in the report;
- ii. that a young mother be involved in the proposed Reference Group; and
- iii. that progress be fed back to a future meeting of the Joint Committee as part of the Early Years Framework report.

## 10. Children's Rights Services

Report No CYP/40/09 by Innis Mitchell, Children's Planning Officer had been circulated setting out proposals to establish a new Children's Rights Service for Highland's looked after children with *Who Cares? Scotland*. The benefits of the proposal were detailed and, in particular, it was pointed out that *Who Cares? Scotland* would be able to provide the management support for the strategic planning and development of the service within Highland.

**NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that:-

- i. *Who Cares? Scotland* be asked to provide a one-stop children's rights service for Highland's looked after children;
- ii. discussions be progressed to provide an outline contractual agreement; and
- iii. *Who Cares? Scotland* be requested to make a presentation at an appropriate meeting of the Joint Committee so that final approval could be considered.

## 11. Future Business of Joint Committee for Children and Young People

Report No CYP/41/09 by Bill Alexander, Head of Children's Services had been circulated setting out a proposed list of reports to be considered at future meetings of the Joint Committee on Children and Young People.

**NOTED** the proposed list of reports and also **AGREED** that:-

- i. reports also be considered on:-
  - the merits of including parents and carers as a strategic priority within the For Highland Children's 3 Plan taking into account the forthcoming Scottish Government Carers Strategy and the issues raised in discussion.
  - Youth Voice's views of the findings of the Lifestyle survey.
- ii. the report on the Actions arising from the Child Health Review be reported to the Joint Committee meeting scheduled for 15 January 2010 instead of 20 November 2009.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held on Friday 20 November 2009 at 10.30 am in the Boardroom, Assynt House, Beechwood Park, Inverness.

**13. Dates of Future Meetings**

**AGREED** the following dates for meetings of the Joint Committee during 2010:-

Friday 15 January 2010 at 2.15 pm  
Friday 12 March 2010 at 10.30 am  
Friday 4 June 2010 at 2.15 pm  
Friday 13 August 2010 at 10.30 am  
Friday 1 October 2010 at 2.15 pm  
Friday 12 November 2010 at 10.30 am

**NOTED** that:-

- i. those meetings scheduled for the afternoon would be preceded by a morning Seminar; and
- ii. venues would be confirmed nearer the time.

The meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.