

Mr T Boyd, Authority Reporter
Ms A Darlington, NCH
Ms C MacLean, CHIP+

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dr M E M Foxley (OCD), Mr A Anderson (OCD), Mr A M Millar, Mr D Flear, Miss J Fraser (OD), Dr R Gibbins, Ms S Amor, Mr A Dodds (OCD), Mr B Robertson and Mr S Iliffe.

2. Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Committee held on 6 October 2006

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Committee held on 6 October 2006 were circulated and **NOTED**.

Arising from the Minutes, also **NOTED** that:-

- (i) Mrs O J Macdonald's apologies be included (Item 1);
- (ii) a response had been received from Cathy Jamieson MSP, Minister for Justice which advised that as the Scottish Executive were reviewing funding for intensive support services there would be no indication as to future arrangements for Highland until the new financial year (Item 2);
- (iii) the importance of maternity services actively communicating with mothers and the monitoring of its effectiveness was emphasised (Item 4);
- (iv) the Chairman indicated that she would have discussions with officers about how progress made on issues discussed at the Joint Committee might best be reported back (Item 6); and
- (v) Highland Children's Forum was scanning the images collected from children and young people during their consultations and would make contact with the organisers of Highland 2007 with a view to them being incorporated into an exhibition (Item 6).

3. Revenue Budget - Monitoring 2006/07

Report No. CYP46/06 by Stephen Iliffe, Acting Head of Service (Children, Young People and Families) was circulated providing monitoring information to 31 October 2006 and the projected year-end position on those areas of expenditure that have been delegated to the Joint Committee. In particular, Out of Authority placements remained a main budget pressure. The monitoring statement to the next Joint Committee would give a clearer indication as to the exact position at the year end but meantime all areas of

expenditure continued to be reviewed and savings identified to offset overspends.

In discussion, the need to spend to save was emphasised to ensure adequate provision of accommodation for children was made in Highland, the Lochaber area being cited as an example. The detrimental effect of moving children away from their home area and the support network of family and friends was highlighted. It was explained that although funding had been earmarked to make such provision in Lochaber, no suitable property had been identified. However, a private contractor had indicated their willingness to become a provider and discussions were taking place with other neighbouring local authorities with a view to a joint approach being taken. Members were assured however that every effort was being made to ensure measures were put in place as soon as possible.

NOTED the report and **AGREED** to continue to support the management actions previously approved.

4. Highland Parenting Academy

Report No. CYP47/06 by Alan Richards, Highland Parenting Programme (Development Officer) was circulated describing the development of a bid to the Big Lottery Fund to support the further development of sustainable work to develop parenting skills in the form of an initiative entitled "The Highland Parenting Academy".

It was explained that although the outline had been agreed the lottery application was still at an early stage and that the project had still to agree terms of the partnership with relevant partners. The content of the proposal was detailed which included increasing the number of parents and carers entering parenting programmes. There were a number of challenges to be met such as targeting and assessing the effectiveness of training. Given the number of programmes which existed, a key element of the bid was providing a support network of these services. It also had to demonstrate uniqueness and the intention was, given the rural nature of the Highlands, to show how the Parenting Academy would relate to those living in isolated areas. In addition, the project had to be sustainable and although further consideration was required as to how this would be achieved, initial thoughts were to develop a programme specific to the Highlands. Although there were no budget implications for the Highland Council or NHS Highland with the Big Lottery Fund making a proposed investment of £850,000 over five years, partners would have to clarify their commitments to the project as many of these might be considered as match funding in the lottery application.

In discussion the following points were made:-

- the positive benefits that could be achieved through social enterprises was highlighted;
- given the number of initiatives already in existence, consideration be given to building on existing programmes, rather than creating new initiatives;
- careful consideration be given to the length of parenting sessions as indications were that a series of shorter periods of instruction could prove effective;
- the importance of ensuring programmes fitted client groups;
- health and nutrition advice and information should form part of courses;
- to ensure long term sustainability it was important that the bid was not overloaded with resources and staff;
- those living in rural communities should have a degree of personal contact during courses and this could be achieved by the use of video conferencing facilities, tutorials etc;
- there was particular potential in the various Information and Communication Technology aspects of the proposal;
- the use of local mentors for parents would be particularly beneficial;
- some parents would wish to use the programme on-line for reasons of anonymity;
- it was important to consider how the Highland Parenting Academy was marketed and contact should be made with Highlands and Islands Enterprise to explore how they could link up with this, and other Joint Committee initiatives, to empower communities;
- given the ambitious nature of the proposals of the Parenting Academy it was questioned if £850,000 would be sufficient;
- it was important to strengthen and support those volunteers from organisations such as Homestart and Family First who were already operating in communities; and
- if agencies were to sign up to the Highland Parent Academy then part of the agreement had to be that they used elements of the programme.

AGREED:-

- (i) to continue to endorse the existing partnership approaches to parenting programmes;
- (ii) to invite interested parties to engage with a working group to further develop the application and, in particular, to seek the forging of the partnership links required;

- (iii) to consider how the various points raised in discussion, such as the use of video conferencing for parents, be incorporated into the Lottery bid;
- (iv) to investigate the possibility of Highlands and Islands Enterprise attending future meetings of the Joint Committee; and
- (v) that an update report on progress with the Lottery bid be submitted to a future meeting.

5. Investing in Children's Futures Consultation

Report No. CYP48/06 by Sam Brogan, Senior Childcare & Family Resource Officer was circulated on the Investing in Children's Futures Consultation informing Members that, following the National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce, the Scottish Executive had issued a consultative document titled "Investing in Children's Futures". The consultation sought views as to how the conclusions of the Review should be taken forward with responses required by 22 December 2006.

Members were informed that the remit of the National Review was to improve employment opportunities for early years and childcare staff and to raise the status of the sector by, amongst other things, the examination and defining of the role and responsibilities of staff and the rationalisation and modernisation of early years/childcare qualifications. In relation to the consultation, 22 questions had been grouped under five main themes, the content of the Council's proposed response being detailed.

In discussion, it was pointed out the Care and Learning Alliance's response would be very similar to that proposed in the report. However, it was felt that there was an opportunity to emphasise the inequality which existed in how funding was allocated to local authorities on issues such as Continuing Professional Development. The Scottish Executive had argued that they did not want to penalise those authorities who had a high number of trained staff but this meant that resources were not allocated to those authorities in greater need of training. It was felt that there should also be a national pay scale and that it was important to ensure that children throughout Scotland accessed the same quality standard of care.

After discussion on specific question and the targeting of training, the Joint Committee **NOTED** the consultation document and **AGREED**:-

- (i) the content of the draft response;
- (ii) the process being used to compile the response by the Highland Council to the Scottish Executive; and
- (iii) that the Chairman write to Penny Curtis, Head of Workforce and Information Issues, Scottish Executive emphasising the additional

needs of Highland in relation to the funding for a qualified Early Years workforce.

6. Substances Misuse, Education and Prevention

Report No. CYP49/06 by Louise Thomas, Health Promoting Schools Development Manager was circulated informing Members of the work of the newly convened Substance Misuse, Prevention and Education group in Highland. The Report provided information from a national review and described how the Education and Prevention group were consulting all key partners to shape a strategy for Highland.

Scottish Executive research had shown that schools were using out of date material concentrating on what took place now and not promoting life long choices. Members were informed that the Highland Dugs and Alcohol Team (HDAAT) was developing, through consultation, a Substance Misuse Strategy and the Substance Misuse, Prevention and Education group had been convened to take that part of the consultation regarding prevention and education forward. The group had tried to come up with clear, consistent advice for schools together with a set of resources. It emphasised the importance of schools working with parents and adopting a whole school approach. The principles for the success of the strategy were detailed together with how it was proposed that it would be delivered. Consultation discussion questions had been put out to bodies such as schools, integration managers, Youth Voice etc and feedback had been positive.

Members congratulated the group on its work to date. It was important however to consult beyond Pupil Council level to include all pupils and this could be achieved through the Youth Voice website and making the issue part of a lesson. The positive effect Youth Street Workers had in relating to young people in an informal environment was recognised and disappointment was expressed that in some areas these posts had been lost. It was vital to engage with parents and it was suggested that the group's report would be particularly useful for consideration at Local Drug and Alcohol Forums. In some instances it was children and young people who had to act as carers for parents who had drug and alcohol problems and support for them was available at "drop-in zones" where a variety of issues could be raised in confidence. In addition, discussions were taking place with The Princess Royal Trust for Carers regarding the continuation of funding for initiatives focusing on young carers.

AGREED:-

- (i) the consultation process;

- (ii) that the report be sent to local Drugs and Alcohol forums; and
- (iii) a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Joint Committee on the proposed strategy following the completion of the consultation.

7. Getting It Right For Every Child - Update

Report No. CYP50/06 by Marj Stewart, Integrated Assessment Framework Coordinator was circulated updating Members on progress on the development and implementation on "Getting It Right for Every Child" (GIFREC).

Work had continued on the development of the Child's Record and Plan and progress had also been made in respect of embedding the vision for children in the analysis of a child's needs using the wellbeing wheel which allowed a child's progress to be measured and for the impact of intervention to be assessed. Furthermore, an implementation guide was being prepared and the rollout plan developed. However, an IT solution remained a challenge and the timing of training and communication to practitioners in GIFREC was seen as critical. Consequently, there was a proposal for the Joint Committee's next seminar to concentrate solely on the elements comprising GIFREC.

Having commended the work that had taken place, the Joint Committee **NOTED** progress.

8. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held on Friday, 26 January 2007 at 2.15 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness following a seminar to be held in the morning on "Getting It Right for Every Child".

At this juncture, the Chairman welcomed Ms Dempster back to the Joint Committee. She also referred to the recent resignation, on grounds of ill health, of Mr Peacock MSP as Minister for Education and Young People and undertook to write to him expressing the Joint Committee's good wishes.

The meeting ended at 12.05 p.m.