

## **The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Education, Children and Adult Services Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 11 November 2015 at 10.05 am.

### **Present:**

#### **Highland Council:**

Dr D Alston	Mr M Green
Mrs I Campbell (Vice Chair)	Mrs D Mackay
Miss J Campbell (Substitute)	Mr W Mackay
Mr A Christie	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr I Cockburn (Substitute)	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs M Davidson	Mr D Millar (Chair)
Mr M Finlayson	Mrs M Paterson
Mr S Fuller	Mr M Rattray
Mr K Gowans	Mrs F Robertson (Vice Chair)
Mr A Graham (Substitute)	Mr G Ross

#### **NHS Highland:**

Mrs M Duncan  
Dr H van Woerden

#### **Religious Representatives:**

Dr A Fraser  
Mr G Smith

#### **Non-Members also present:**

Mrs J Barclay	Mr A Mackinnon
Mr A Baxter	Mr T MacLennan
Mr B Clark	Mrs I McCallum
Mr G Farlow	Ms L Munro
Mr B Fernie	Mr A Rhind
Mr D Mackay	Mr R Saxon

#### **In attendance:**

Mr B Alexander, Director of Care and Learning  
Mrs B Cairns, Head of Additional Support Services, Care and Learning Service  
Ms S Campbell, Head of Children's Services, Care and Learning Service  
Ms S MacLeod, Head of Health, Care and Learning Service  
Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service  
Mr J Steven, Head of Education, Care and Learning Service  
Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Care and Learning Service  
Mr E Foster, Finance Manager, Finance Service  
Dr J Vance, Head Teacher, Culloden Academy  
Mr P Crossley, Head of Technical Education, Culloden Academy

Ms P Duncan, Birchwood Highland (Third Sector)  
Ms V Gale, Care and Learning Alliance (Third Sector)  
Ms G Newman, Highland Children's Forum (Third Sector)  
Miss J MacLennan, Democratic Services Manager, Corporate Development Service  
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service  
Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

**Also in attendance:**

Ms J Macdonald, Director of Adult Social Care, NHS Highland  
Mr I Murray, Chief Executive, High Life Highland

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.**

**Mr D Millar in the Chair**

**Business**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs C Caddick, Mr H Fraser, Mr B Gormley, Ms G Ross, Ms J Slater, Dr M Foxley, Mrs M McCulloch and Ms C Bateson.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

**Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 6 – Dr D Alston (Financial)

Item 7 – Dr D Alston (Financial)

Item 15 – Mr M Green, Mr G Ross (both Non-Financial), Mr K Gowans (Financial and Non-Financial) and Mr W Mackay (Financial)

**3. Outstanding Achievements**

**Coileanaidhean Air Leth**

There had been tabled a list of outstanding achievements by people and groups as follows:-

**Russell Knox** - former Culloden Academy pupil Russell Knox had become Scotland's highest ranked golfer and was now ranked number 31 in the world after winning the WGC Champions Tournament in Shanghai.

**George Evans** - 17 year old George Evans, also formerly of Culloden Academy, had won the bronze medal in the IAAF World Youth Championships in Columbia and had been selected to represent Team Scotland for both discus and shot putt at the Youth Commonwealth Games in Samoa where he had been a silver medallist.

**Dawn Cowie** - 17 year old Golspie High School pupil Dawn Cowie had experienced lifelong treatment at Raigmore and Aberdeen hospitals for a rare medical condition.

She was now working to raise funds for the Archie Foundation. She had already raised over £10,000 and had been recognised in winning a Saltire Award.

**Jonathon McDonald** - John Macdonald had recently received the BEM from the Lord Lieutenant of Nairnshire in recognition of his long and outstanding service to the ACF Nairn detachment. John had started as a cadet himself in 1982 and had returned as an adult volunteer in 1988. He had taken over control of the Nairn detachment in 2000.

John's volunteering over the past 27 years had ensured that a large number of young people in and around Nairn had been able to participate in activities that benefited them and greatly enhanced their community. John had been a role model for the cadets and had been particularly effective in supporting local youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Chantelle Lowther** - Chantelle Lowther, a Gypsy/Traveller, had completed two separate Vocational Pathways Courses over the last two years. During the first year she had been on the Cooking Course where she had been awarded Student of the Year in her class. She had gone on to do the Hairdressing Course and had then been accepted onto the full-time course. She had since decided to have a break from studying and had full-time employment in a local hotel but had said she would return to hairdressing at some point in the future.

**Sean Stewart** - Sean Stewart, a 16 year old Gypsy/Traveller, had successfully completed a PEO Fabrication and Welding Vocational Pathways Course at Inverness College. He had reapplied this school session for the Construction Course and had been accepted but had subsequently decided to take up full-time employment with a local business.

Both Sean and Chantelle had been supported by the Council's Interrupted Learning Development Officer and the Schools/College Liaison Officer.

**Lynda Banks** - Lynda Banks, Head Teacher of Strathdearn Primary School, had recently competed in the GB Women's Powerlifting Classic in Bournemouth. She had successfully managed to squat 100kg and bench 57.5kg. In the deadlift, she had lifted a huge 137.5kg and overall she broke 12 of her own Scottish records. Lynda had recently been selected to compete for Scotland in the Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships in Vancouver.

**122 Ashton Road** - the Children's Unit at 122 Ashton Road had been awarded exceptional grades in its recent inspection, which was great credit to Pamela Buchanan, Unit Manager, and the staff and young people who lived there:

- Quality of care and support – 6: Excellent
- Quality of environment – 5: Very Good
- Quality of staffing – 6: Excellent
- Quality of management and leadership – 5: Very Good

In addition, the Chair referred to the Highland Two-Piece Gymnastics Competition which had taken place at Inverness Leisure on Sunday 8 November 2015. 256 young gymnasts, ranging from age 6 to 18, had taken part and the event had been well attended. There had been stand-out performances from Inverness including a clean

sweep of the medals in the 12+ beginner girls category and three golds for Jack Finnigan in the 8 to 9 beginner boys category. It was the 12<sup>th</sup> year that Inverness Gymnastics Club had hosted the event, which was designed to give experience to local gymnasts before they moved on to national competitions. He commended all those involved in organising the event and congratulated the competitors.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the outstanding achievements and commended all those involved on their success.

#### **4. Care and Learning Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/16 Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach a' Chùrain agus an Ionnsachaidh 2015/16**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/92/15 dated 29 October 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update in relation to the revenue budget for Care and Learning and the monitoring position for the current year to 30 September 2015. The report also provided an update in relation to budget savings.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- information was sought on the steps being taken to return Looked After Children in out of authority placements to Highland; the reason for the projected underspend on school transport; and the impact, on service users, of the significant underspend on children's services, whether it was spread geographically and how it was proposed to address it;
- whilst welcoming the projected underspend, concern was expressed that the position had varied by approximately £600k in a matter of weeks and, as the next meeting of the Committee was not until January 2016, it was requested that a monitoring statement for the period to 31 October 2015 be circulated to Members when the figures were available; and
- in relation to the review of budget provision for teacher training and development, concern was expressed regarding the gap this would leave and how the authority would cope with any new developments that came on board.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the forecast outturn based upon the year to 30 September 2015;
- ii. **NOTED** the status of the agreed budget savings and the mitigating action being taken to address the forecast shortfall; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a revenue monitoring statement for the year to 31 October 2015 be circulated to Members of the Committee when the figures were available.

#### **5. Care and Learning Capital Programme – Monitoring Report Prògram Calpa a' Chùrain agus an Ionnsachaidh – Aithisg Sgrùdaidh**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/93/15 dated 2 November 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on the Care and Learning capital programme and set out the monitoring position for the current financial year to the end of September 2015.

In addition, there had been tabled a supplementary paper which explained that all schools had been surveyed to provide a baseline of the overall condition of the school estate. Ainess Academy had been resurveyed and it was clear that some of the

building elements had deteriorated at a faster rate than had been envisaged. In particular, there were concerns regarding the roof, windows, electrical and heating installations and some of the internal fabric. Further analysis and investigations were being undertaken and a full list of the work required to keep the building operational for the next five years was being compiled. The outcome of this would be reported to the Committee in January 2016 but it was apparent that some work would need to be undertaken as soon as possible.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Alness Academy was in extremely poor condition and Members supported the need for urgent works to bring it up to an acceptable standard. Concern was expressed that the Scottish Government had not released the funding for a new school and the pupils were suffering as a result of the delay. Firm action was necessary to impress upon the Scottish Government the urgency of the situation and it was suggested that Highland MSPs could take up the issue. It was requested that teachers, parents and pupils be kept informed, both in relation to the repairs and the funding bid. The Chair confirmed that would be the case and that every effort would be made to progress matters.
- in relation to Inverness Schools, the ongoing discussions with Local Members were welcomed and confirmation was sought, and received, that detailed proposals would be presented to Committee early in 2016. With regard to Charleston Academy in particular, addressing the issue with the science lab would be a quick solution to long terms problems. However, the need for a holistic city-wide solution was emphasised;
- a timescale was sought for the outcome of the Council's Appeal against the decision of the School Closure Review Panel in relation to the proposals for North West Skye;
- disappointment was expressed regarding the projected underspend on Free School Meals. In relation to Merkinch Primary School in particular, a significant amount of work was required. Physical activity was extremely important in areas of deprivation and concern was expressed that the games room was currently doubling up as a canteen. It having been confirmed that a feasibility study was underway, a timescale for the works was sought and the Head of Resources undertook to provide this to Councillor J Campbell;
- concern was expressed regarding the lack of maintenance in respect of the Highland Football Academy. In particular, the synthetic pitch at Charleston Academy was unfit for purpose and it was requested that its replacement be included in the capital programme. The Chair confirmed that this would be considered; and
- an update was sought in relation to Ullapool Nursery and The Toybox at Gairloch.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the capital monitoring position to the end of September 2015 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the current status of major projects as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
- iii. **APPROVED** the allocation of £250,000 from the Life Cycle Investment budget heading for additional works at the Caol Joint Campus project as outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report;

- iv. **AGREED** that design work should start as soon as possible on the proposed projects to provide additional accommodation at Cauldeen and Smithton Primary Schools as outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report;
- v. **NOTED** the position in relation to Alness Academy and **AGREED** that any immediate works required be progressed as a matter of urgency and funded from the Life Cycle Investment budget heading; and
- vi. **AGREED** that consideration be given to the request that the replacement of the outdoor synthetic football pitch at Charleston Academy be included in the capital programme.

## **6. Children's Services – Performance Report Seirbheisean Chloinne – Aithisg Choileanaidh**

**Declaration of Interest: Dr D Alston declared a financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the Specific Exclusion in Section 5.18(2)(i) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, remained to participate in discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/94/15 dated 30 October 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on the performance framework for Children's Services.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to Appendix 1, there were still a number of gaps in the information provided and an explanation was sought in that regard; and
- with regard to the number of gypsy and traveller children attending schools, information was requested on how records were kept and passed on between schools.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the performance information and the additional performance measures.

## **7. Children's Services – Assurance Report Seirbheisean Chloinne – Aithisg Barantais**

**Declaration of Interest: Dr D Alston declared a financial interest in this item as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the Specific Exclusion in Section 5.18(2)(i) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, remained to participate in discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/95/15 dated 2 November 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning, the purpose of which was to provide assurance to NHS Highland in relation to services commissioned and delivered through Highland Council. The content of each assurance report was agreed in advance with the Child Health Commissioner.

It was highlighted that background information had been omitted from Appendix 2 in error and an updated version had therefore been tabled.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to health visitor establishments, concern was expressed that Inverness West and Inverness Central, Badenoch and Strathspey, which contained areas of deprivation, comprised almost a third of the total vacancies and an assurance was sought that they would be prioritised. In addition, information was sought on the circumstances behind the significant shortfall in Inverness East and Nairn;
- the provision of breastfeeding rates over a six year period was welcomed. The rates had remained fairly static during that time and, in relation to the initiatives currently underway, Members questioned the robustness of the evidence and whether officers were confident that they would make a difference. With regard to mothers who stopped breastfeeding, it was questioned whether enough was known about the reasons. Support during the first month of breastfeeding was critical and the importance of listening to the views of mothers was emphasised. In addition, every child was different and it was important not to make women feel that they had failed if they did not breastfeed for a specified number of weeks. General health and nutrition was more important and it was suggested that that should be reflected in the target. Information was also sought on whether Infant Feeding Support Workers were solely dedicated to that task;
- with regard to the review of the role of Child Protection Advisers, confirmation of the process was sought in terms of the discussion that would take place with the commissioner of services;
- in relation to the financial report, information was requested on whether the projected outturn took into account the actions outlined by officers and the potential expenditure related to those actions; and whether the expected improvements in performance referred to in the assurance and exception reports had been factored in;
- there had been some success in filling vacancies in some areas and Members questioned what was being done to replicate it in other areas;
- the significant underspend on Speech and Language Therapists was concerning and information was sought on the impact on children waiting for services;
- the audit of health visitor records was welcomed and there might be a case for repeating it in 18 months to see what progress had been made;
- information was sought on the financial position in relation to commissioned children's services, particularly the variance of £770,386 as set out in the assurance report and how this was apportioned between the funding partners. An explanation having been provided, it was requested that this be emailed to Members of the Committee for clarity;
- from an NHS Highland perspective, concern was expressed at the potential impact on children's health if the projected underspend was repeated over a number of years;
- it was highlighted that Highland had maintained its Baby Friendly status following reassessment by the UNICEF accreditation team;
- with regard to the E-ksf review process, information was sought on the timeline for moving to a paper based system; and
- countries with strong, often independent, midwifery services had the best breastfeeding rates and it was suggested that previous discussions regarding midwifery services be revisited.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the issues raised in the report and that the format of the report remained under review; and

- ii. **AGREED** that an explanation of the financial position in relation to commissioned children's services, particularly the variance of £770,386 and how this was apportioned between the funding partners, be circulated to Members of the Committee.

## **8. Presentation: Progress and Future Development Review of the Broad General Education in S1-S3**

**Taisbeanadh: Adhartas agus Ath-sgrùdadh air Leasachadh san Àm ri Teachd airson Foghlam Coitcheann Farsaing ann an ÀS1-ÀS3**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/96/15 dated 3 November 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which set out the current implementation status and future development priorities of the Broad General Education (BGE) in secondary schools.

The report supported a presentation by Dr J Vance, Head Teacher, Culloden Academy, during which it was explained that attainment was an individual's passport to personal, social, cultural and economic opportunities. Raising attainment meant improving life chances and this did not mean just focusing on exam results but instead looking at attainment in its widest sense. Detailed information was provided on the changes in structure as a result of the BGE; the BGE priorities; key skills; employability skills; and the new S3 experience. Dr Vance then introduced pupils from Culloden Academy who described their experiences of the BGE using Design, Peer Mentoring and Languages for Work as examples.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- the content of the individual presentations by the pupils had been extremely impressive and the thanks of the Committee was conveyed to all those involved;
- the focus on modern languages was particularly important in terms of the work which was being done on identifying the aspirations of young people in the area;
- the team working, leadership and creativity which had been highlighted during the presentations was particularly encouraging;
- the summary of findings within the report in relation to the Broad General Education implementation in Secondary Schools was welcomed;
- in terms of tracking, monitoring and reporting, it had been noted that at the moment there was no suitable module within SEEMIS to allow Schools to track pupil progress and this needed to be addressed by Officials;
- there was a requirement to improve the position whereby literacy and numeracy were still being delivered by the English and Maths Departments in a significant number of Schools in order to ensure that they were embedded across all subjects;
- there was a concern that lack of resources would have an impact on the delivery of interdisciplinary learning in future and this had to be recognised as part of future budget considerations;
- most Schools provided a high standard of pastoral care to pupils in the transition phase from primary to secondary and it was vital that this was continued and improved where necessary in the future;
- there was a need to build on interdisciplinary and transferable skills wherever possible; and
- the genuine enjoyment and interest from the pupils had been inspiring, not least in relation to the examples of interaction through the use of British Sign Language



and this should be expanded within communities at an intergenerational level where feasible.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the progress made by Schools and the direction of travel for future development as detailed in the report.

## **9. Curriculum Delivery in the Senior School Libhrigeadh Curraicealaim san Àrd-sgoil Àird**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/97/15 dated 3 November 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update regarding the Highland Council approach to subject choice for pupils in S4 and the direction of travel on other structural issues which would enhance the provision for young people in the Senior School.

During discussion, reference was made to the contact which had been undertaken with those most closely involved and it was emphasised that this represented a fairly dramatic change which would need to be understood fully as it progressed.

As such, it was confirmed that meetings had been held and would continue to be held with Parent Councils as and when required and continual conversation/engagement would be instigated with Associated School Groups across all areas.

It was also suggested that the qualifications arrangements surrounding Medical School required to be clarified for pupils and parents.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the strategic approach which had been taken to the development of the curriculum in the Senior School; and
- ii. **NOTED** the other practical steps which would offer Schools greater opportunity to provide flexibility and options in the Senior School.

## **10. Expansion of Flexible Delivery of Early Learning and Childcare for 2016/17 Leudachadh Libhrigeadh Sùbailte Thràth-ionnsachaidh agus Chùrainm-chloinne airson 2016/17**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/98/15 dated 15 October 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which outlined proposals for further development and flexible delivery of Early Learning and Childcare from August 2016.

This was the first in a series of papers to be presented to the Committee as part of the process of establishing new management structures for Schools in Highland.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- there was a need for more information on how flexible delivery could be achieved in very rural Schools with low numbers and the confirmation that a dedicated piece of work was currently being undertaken on this which would come back to a future meeting was welcomed;
- the challenges faced by women in particular who could not afford to work in many instances had to be recognised as part of future discussions;

- there was a need for a specific definition of what was meant by a 'larger' School; and
- there was a need for assurance that a holistic approach would be taken to the whole workforce with involvement from the private and third sectors and also from transport providers in specific areas.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- AGREED** the proposals relating to the staged expansion of flexibility of early learning and childcare across Highland from August 2016; and
- APPROVED** the creation of the post of Childcare Manager in the largest Primary Schools.

In terms of Standing Order 18, the Committee **AGREED** to consider item 15 at this stage.

## **15. High Life Highland Progress Report Aithisg Adhartais High Life na Gàidhealtachd**

### **Declarations of Interest:**

**The following Members declared a non-financial interest in this item but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interest did not preclude their involvement in the discussion:-**

**Mr K Gowans – Director of High Life Highland  
Mr M Green – Director of High Life Highland  
Mr G Ross – Office Bearer, Highland Disability Sport**

**Mr K Gowans and Mr W Mackay declared a financial interest on the grounds that their wives were employees of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that their interest did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/103/15 dated 2 November 2015 by the Chief Executive, High Life Highland, which presented information on the performance of High Life Highland during the operating period April to October 2015 and an evaluation of the "You Time" programme of commissioned learning and leisure opportunities for older people, delivered as part of the Council's commitment to a preventative approach.

In presenting the report Mr I Murray, Chief Executive, High Life Highland gave a presentation during which he provided an update on the total users of High Life Highland's services and numbers of visits to attractions such as Inverness Botanic Gardens. He also provided information on the donations made to facilities specific reference being made to the Highland Folk Museum, and also the numbers of electronic engagements with the organisation's archive facilities. Finally he provided an update on library Wi-Fi, district partnerships, capital projects, youth work and ongoing budgets discussions.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- that the capital projects which had been progressed in Inverness and Caithness be welcomed;
- that further information be provided on how it was envisaged the library service would evolve in future in the view of the budget pressures the organisation faced;
- the opportunities to review the current charging model for on-line services to achieve a more competitive and sustainable and where possible inclusive policy;
- that High Life Highland be congratulated and commended on the quality of its facilities, and on the value and success of its front line services, initiatives, events and activities which were evident in communities across the Highlands;
- that the organisation also be commended in regard to the work it undertook in conjunction with communities particularly in regard to programmes for older adults and youth development;
- that the organisation's older adults programmes through initiatives such as 'You Time' were important in motivating older people to participate in social activities and in maintaining and improving their health and wellbeing; in this regard it was queried whether there was a programme listing classes and activities for older people in Inverness;
- the opportunities for further discussions to take place with High Life Highland on how to access funding to continue the role of Youth Link Officer which had proved extremely successful in Tain;
- there need as a 'spend to save' initiative to focus on the regular maintenance of 3G pitches on the basis the evidence showed that this significantly increased their life expectancy and also protected the Council against potential injury claims due to lack of maintenance;
- that the organisation's staff be commended on maintaining programmes in the face of continued budget challenges;
- that it was hoped that support for community centres could be maintained going forward; and
- the opportunities for High Life Highland to provide support to ensure that Safe Highlander events continued to be held across Highland and appreciation was expressed for the support the organisation had provided in this regard in Sutherland.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that High Life Highland had met or exceeded the outcomes expected in the Service Delivery Contract with the Council for the period April 2014 to March 2015;
- ii. **NOTED** note the outcomes delivered by High Life Highland through the "You Time" programme;
- iii. **NOTED** that the "You Time" programme was embedded in the Partnership Prevention Plan within the Highland Single Outcome Agreement 2013/14 – 2018/19;
- iv. **NOTED** the addition by High Life Highland at no extra cost of three new "You Time" locations from December 2015: Inverness, Wick and Kingussie; and
- v. **AGREED** that the Council work in partnership with High Life Highland to ensure that other organisations continued to be offered training and marketing support to deliver their local plans.

At this stage, the meeting adjourned for lunch and resumed at 2.00 pm.

## 11. Transition Planning for Young People Dealbhadh Eadar-ghluasaid do Dhaoine Òga

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/99/15 dated 29 October 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which set out a summary of the current action plan relating to Transition planning and highlighted areas of progress.

During discussion, Members raised the following issues:-

- that the Operational Transition Group be requested to consider how more detailed information in terms of follow up action and outcomes could be provided in the comments section of the Action Plan;
- it was noted that all Members had recently received an invitation to attend a briefing on Self Directed Support on 16 December 2015;
- it was important that transitions planning was progressed as a priority and in this regard clarification was provided on the timescales and proposals for implementing the new arrangements across Highland;
- in regard to the above it was welcomed that the Chief Executive's Joint Transitions Group had agreed that with effect from 1 October 2015 the transition point would change to the age of 18 years while also reinforcing the importance of joint planning from the age of 14 years and that this would be reviewed by the Group after a period of six months;
- a point in regard to the action being taken to ensure that the implementation of the transitions policy provided equal access for all across Highland;
- it was important there was a real emphasis on working with parents caring for young adults after the transition from Council services and it was requested that an update on this issue be provided to the next Committee; and
- it was suggested that the appointment of a transitions lead in Highland should be progressed as priority.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress made on transition planning and the action plan.

## 12. Review of the Provision of Education at Inverasdale Primary School Ath-sgrùdadh air Solar Foghlaim aig Bun-Sgoil Inbhir Àsdail

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/100/15 dated 29 October 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which, following conclusion of the statutory consultation process, set out a recommendation to discontinue the provision of education at Inverasdale Primary School and re-assign its catchment area to that of Poolewe Primary School. The proposal document and appendices had been circulated separately as Booklet A.

In discussion it was noted that the Ward 6 Members had discussed this item at a ward level and had unanimously supported the proposal.

- \* The Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council that education provision at Inverasdale Primary School be discontinued and its catchment area re-assigned to that of Poolewe Primary School.

### **13. Janitorial Services Seirbheisean Dorsair**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/101/15 dated 2 November 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which outlined principles for the introduction of a new Janitorial Service to replace both the current Facilities Management Service and school-managed Janitors.

In discussion the Chair thanked the Head of Resources and the Change Project Manager for their work in developing the proposal and for taking into account the views expressed by Members as part of the local consultation undertaken to date. He also welcomed the assurance provided in the report that the implementation of the new Janitorial Service would only take place following local discussions with Members, Head Teachers and staff.

The Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** the principles for the future of Janitorial Services as outlined in the report;
- ii. **NOTED** that the decision on resources would be as part of the budget setting process in February 2016; and
- iii. **NOTED** that implementation of Janitorial Services would only take place once the budget decision had been made and following local discussions with Elected Members, Head Teachers and Janitorial Services staff.

### **14. Bullying Prevention Update Cunntas às Ùr mu Chasg Bhurraidheachd**

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/102/15 dated 3 November 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which explained that, in November 2014, the Committee had agreed to the introduction of the Positive Relationships and Bullying Prevention Policy, Guidance and Toolkit to all Highland schools and that the Council sign up to participate in the Stonewall Education Champions Programme. The report provided information on implementation work undertaken during the first year.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- that it would be helpful if the tables in the report presented the information in numbers rather than in percentages;
- that the action outlined in the report and the focus on bullying prevention be welcomed given the serious impact bullying could have on children lives and the potential for there to be continuing effects into adulthood;
- that the information detailed in the report demonstrated that children felt more confident about discussing and reporting incidents of bullying;
- it was important to recognise that children may be more vulnerable to bullying when they were facing other difficulties in their lives and therefore the focus should be on ensuring they received the right support at that time;
- that it was not appropriate to identify individual organisations in the report on the basis that bullying was a generic issue and a problem across a range of organisations;

- a point in regard to whether the Broad Values Education which was part of the Curriculum for Excellence was being tailored in such a way so as to address the issues around bullying;
- concern that there were different thresholds operated by individuals in terms of what incidents were reported as bullying and therefore clarification was sought on the training and educational processes which had been put in place for staff to ensure the Council was comparing like with like in terms of incidents of alleged bullying across Highland;
- it was suggested that the electronic classroom survey which was attached as Appendix 1 be re-worded to remove reference to any particular nationality or ethnic group so that it did not give a misleading impression that these groups were being targeted; and
- it was suggested that consideration be given to a leaflet being circulated to parents providing factual information on the impacts of bullying.

Thereafter, the Director of Care and Learning thanked Members for their comments and advised that they would be taken into account as part of the implementation work going forward.

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the progress made in implementing the Positive Relationships and Bullying Prevention Policy, Guidance and Toolkit; and
- AGREED** that a progress report be submitted to the Committee in November 2016.

## 15. Employee Survey Action Plan Plana-gnìomh Suirbhidh Luchd-obrach

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/104/15 dated 3 November 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning which summarised the key findings from the 2015 Employee Survey and outlined proposals for addressing areas of further improvement for the Care and Learning Service.

During a summary of the report, it was confirmed that no specific actions had been attached to the report as it was intended to consult with staff across the Service to seek views on what should now be included in the Action Plan for the future, including the requirement for annual review.

In this regard, the Director paid tribute to the staff across the Care and Learning Service in terms of the excellent results which had been obtained during a difficult period of considerable change. However, he stressed that it was important not to become complacent and every effort would be made to maintain and improve upon this situation where possible in the coming months.

Thereafter, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the results of the survey for the Care and Learning Service and the timescale for the development of the Service Improvement Action Plan as detailed in the report.

## **16. Complaints Review Committee Outcomes** **Toraidhean Comataidh Ath-sgrùdaidh nan Gearanan**

There had been circulated Joint Report Nos ECAS/105/15 and ECAS/106/15 dated 30 October 2015 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development and the Director of Care and Learning which set out the findings and recommendations following Complaints Review Committee meetings held on 2 and 16 September 2015.

The Committee **NOTED** that the Complaints Review Committee had met to consider these cases and the findings and recommendations made in each case.

## **17. Minutes** **Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED**, and **APPROVED** where necessary, the following Minutes of Meetings:-

- i. Criminal Justice Sub-Committee – 8 September 2015;
- ii. Highland Strategic Commissioning Group – 28 September 2015; and
- iii. FHC4 Leadership Group – 21 October 2015.

The meeting ended at 2.25pm.