

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 Thursday 17 March 2016 at 10.05 am.

Present:

Highland Council:

Mrs C Caddick	Mr W Mackay
Mrs I Campbell (Vice Chair)	Mr G MacKenzie
Mr A Christie	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs M Davidson	Mr D Millar (Chair)
Mr D Fallows	Mrs M Paterson
Mr M Finlayson	Mr M Rattray
Mr S Fuller	Mrs F Robertson (Vice Chair)
Mr B Gormley	Mr G Ross
Mr K Gowans	Ms K Stephen
Mrs D Mackay	

NHS Highland:

Mrs M Duncan
Ms S Amor

Religious Representatives:

Dr A Fraser
Ms M McCulloch

Youth Convener:

Ms K Bateson

Non-Members also present:

Mr R Balfour	Mr B Lobban
Mrs J Barclay	Mr D Mackay
Mr B Clark	Mrs I McCallum
Ms J Douglas	Mr A Rhind
Mr G Farlow	Mr G Rimell
Mr R Laird	Mrs G Sinclair

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
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
Ms C Wood, Principal Officer – Allied Health Professionals, Care and Learning Service
Mr E Foster, Finance Manager, Finance Service

Ms V Gale, Care and Learning Alliance (Third Sector)
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Mr L Eaton, Highland Youth Voice

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 Mr H Fraser, Mr M Green, Ms G Ross, Dr M Foxley, Dr H van Woerden and Mr G Smith.

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Committee **NOTED** the following Declarations of Interest:-

Item 5 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial), Mr K Gowans (financial and non-financial), and Mr S Fuller (financial)

Item 6 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial and non-financial)

Item 12 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial) and Mr K Gowans (financial and non-financial)

Item 13 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)

Mr B Gormley declared a financial interest as his wife was employed by the Care and Learning Service and advised that, if there was any specific discussion in relation to the Family Team in Lochaber he would leave the room.

**3. Presentation: Youth Voice Priorities
Taisbeanadh: Prìomhachasan Guth na h-Òigridh**

Ms K Bateson, Youth Convener, and Mr L Eaton, Highland Youth Voice, gave a presentation on the role and priorities of the Highland Youth Parliament. In particular, information was provided on the main campaign for the following year, “The New Generation”, which aimed to increase voter turnout and candidate registration by 15% in 16-24 year olds and would involve events and lobbying throughout Highland. Other priorities included Personal and Social Education lessons; Mental Health; Transport; and Looked After Children. Information was also provided on the work of the Youth Convener, the next Highland Youth Voice Conference and how Members could get involved.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the enthusiasm, energy, commitment, knowledge and passion of the young people involved in Highland Youth Voice was commended;

- frustration was expressed that the same issues arose repeatedly and the Chair confirmed his commitment to trying to make some of the changes sought by Highland Youth Voice. In addition, Members emphasised the need for support from all Council Services and partner agencies;
- whilst the Youth Parliament structure was important, both at national and local level, many of the decisions that affected young people were made by the Council. The aim to increase voter participation and candidate registration was welcomed and information was sought on how it was intended to achieve this so there were more young Councillors in the future; and
- reference was made to Young Carers East Sutherland having been given a standing slot at the District Partnership. This was an effective way of ensuring that issues were addressed, with officers providing an update on action at each meeting, and it was suggested that discussions take place with a view to extending the arrangement to Highland Youth Voice.

The Youth Convener welcomed the opportunity to discuss Highland Youth Voice attendance at Sutherland District Partnership. In relation to increasing candidate registration, a number of different strategies were being explored and discussions would take place with the Council's Elections Office. In addition, it was intended to liaise with political group leaders within the Council with a view to ensuring that vetting procedures etc were as clear as possible and the necessary supports were in place for young candidates. The importance of encouraging young people to support their peers who wanted to run for candidacy was emphasised.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the presentation.

4. **Outstanding Achievements** **Coileanaidhean Air Leth**

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

Dingwall Academy - Dingwall Academy and Highland Deaf Education Service had been successful in The Scottish Sensory Awards. The school had been awarded runner up for the certificated staff sign classes in the "Personnel and Workforce" category. In the category "Engaging people with a sensory loss and information sharing across all our communities" the school had been awarded first place for the P7/S1 DVD made by the pupils and had been the runner up for the S1 IDL Deaf Studies course, which involved all S1 pupils learning basic BSL and about issues relating to deafness.

Melissa Robertson – Cradlehall Primary School pupil Melissa Robertson had held a coffee morning to raise funds for Motor Neurone Disease Scotland after a family member had been diagnosed with the condition. She had raised more than £3300 and now intended to run a marathon to keep the fund raising going.

Ruraidh Stewart - Ruraidh Stewart of Plockton High School was the Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch and had been elected Deputy Convener of the Youth Parliament's Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee. He was on the Highland Youth Parliament Executive Committee and was also a Saltire Awards Ambassador. He had recently met Prince Charles as one of 50 young people being honoured as ambassadors for the national #iwill campaign, which aimed to make social action a part of everyday life. He was a member of the Scottish Government's Junior Climate Challenge Fund Youth Panel which gave young people

funds and support to tackle climate change. He also volunteered with Plockton Small Boats Sailing Club as an assistant instructor.

Jonathan Tevendale - Jonathan Tevendale of Mallaig High School had won the Scottish Review's award of Scottish Schools' Young Writer of the Year 2016. Scottish Review had stated that Jonathan's "command of language – its confidence with metaphor, its descriptive power, its sheer panache – is exceptional."

Also commended in the Scottish Review awards were:

- Sam Appleby, Kingussie High School
- Thomas Harley, Portree High School
- Jasmine Humphrey, Mallaig High School

Wick High School - Pupils at Wick High School had created another award-winning app, designed to engage young people in politics. The One Click Politics app had won the information category at the national Apps for Good Awards. The students and their teachers had attended the awards ceremony at The Barbican in London in February 2016.

Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Learning and Science, had welcomed the award saying: "Taking part in a competition like this is an excellent way to show the real practical application of what is being learned in the classroom. I congratulate the pupils and staff of Wick High School for winning through and wish them all the best for the launch of their app."

Pipe Bands - Lochalsh Junior Pipe Band had won the Novice Juvenile B section of the Schools Pipe Band Competition in Edinburgh. There had been 13 bands in the section. Last year Lochalsh Junior Pipe Band had won the debut competition, which this year had been won by the Portree High School Band. Gairloch, Ullapool and Inverness schools had also competed in the various levels of competition.

During discussion, an update was sought and provided on engagement with Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority regarding the development of a deaf education qualification in the senior phase.

Thereafter, having congratulated all of the young people and groups, the Committee **NOTED** the outstanding achievements and **AGREED** that the Director write to all those involved in recognition of their success.

5. Revenue Budget – Monitoring 2015/16 Buidseat Teachd-a-steach – Sgrùdadh 2015/16

Declarations of Interest:

Ms J Douglas and Mr K Gowans declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors 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 interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

In addition, Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest on the basis that his wife was an employee 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 his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

Mr S Fuller declared a financial interest in this item on the grounds of having a child who received free school meals and elected to leave the room if there was any specific discussion in relation to school meals.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/18/16 dated 4 March 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update in relation to the Care and Learning revenue budget and gave the monitoring position for the current year as at 31 January 2016. It also provided information on actions being taken to deliver budget savings in secondary schools, approved in December 2014. Finally, the report sought approval to create staffing establishments in two new residential units that would provide alternatives to out of authority placements.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- whilst welcoming the return of two young people with disabilities from out of area placements, concern was expressed regarding the impact on respite provision of utilising The Orchard for residential care;
- the purchase of the property adjacent to The Orchard, which had been identified by Members in Ward 16, would save the Care and Learning Service approximately £150k per annum and provide better care than out of area placements. If other Members identified suitable properties in their Wards it could lead to considerable savings which would mitigate cuts elsewhere and it was suggested that the matter should be on all Ward Business Meeting agendas;
- concern was expressed regarding the impact of the vacant posts in Family Teams and other areas of Children's Services and a separate report, on a geographic basis, was sought in that regard;
- it was unclear how it was proposed to achieve the £500k energy savings target in relation to schools and a written briefing was requested in that regard. The Chair suggested that this be provided to Ward Business Meetings to allow Members to discuss how it affected local schools;
- the increase in school meal prices could have a significant impact on a large family over a number of years and an assurance was sought that uptake would be closely monitored as there was anecdotal evidence that parents were increasingly providing packed lunches because they were more affordable;
- whilst it was understood that the removal of over entitlement teaching posts related to formula, Members questioned whether it also included the removal of additional posts in schools that were agreed based on learners' needs;
- information was sought on what provision had been made in terms of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, therapy services, paediatrics etc to support children returning to Highland from out of area placements;
- Members had received complaints from parents that the choice of subjects was reducing and information was requested on the steps being taken to increase distance learning and what equipment and systems were in place to support it; and
- it would be helpful to compare distance learning and classroom learning exam results and, if distance learning results were poorer, provide information as to why it had not been as successful and what steps were being taken to improve it.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the forecast outturn position;
- ii. **APPROVED** the staffing establishments for the two new residential units; and

- iii. **AGREED** that a briefing on the proposed energy savings in schools be provided to Ward Business Meetings.

**6. Capital Expenditure - Monitoring 2015/16
Caiteachas Calpa – Sgrùdadh 2015/16**

Declarations of Interest:

Ms J Douglas and Mr K Gowans declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors 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 interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

In addition, Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest on the basis that his wife was an employee 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 his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/19/16 dated 8 March 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on the Care and Learning capital programme. The report detailed the monitoring position for the current financial year to the end of January 2016, the current status of the major projects that were underway and progress with the exercise to identify future capital investment priorities.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the Chair suggested that it would be helpful to have updates on the status of local projects at Ward Business Meetings;
- concern was expressed that the community of Dunvegan could suffer as a result of the decision to refuse consent to build a new community school in Dunvegan to replace the schools at Dunvegan, Edinbane, Knockbreck and Struan. It was hoped that discussions as to how to progress would take place at the Ward Business Meeting as soon as possible;
- in relation to Alness and Invergordon schools, the confirmation that funding would be made available for a new building to replace the existing Alness Academy was welcomed. The importance of robust community engagement was emphasised and it was suggested that consideration be given to a working group of Council and Parent Council representatives;
- north-west Sutherland had had a shortage of care home beds for a long time and the proposals for a new facility were welcomed. However, further information was sought on whether there would be a housing element, step up/step down care etc;
- with regard to Appendix 2, an explanation was sought in relation to projects where the total project spend to date was greater than the forecast total project spend;
- the proposed One-Stop-Shop Skills Academy was an innovative use of a building which had been vacant for some time and would make a significant difference to young people in through care and after care;
- in relation to likely priorities for 2017/18 onwards, Local Members requested an update on Lochcarron, Poolewe, Strathconon and Ullapool Primary Schools. The Chair confirmed that this would form part of the updates to Ward Business Meetings;

- clarification was sought and provided in relation to Merkinch Primary School and proposals for early years/community facilities in Merkinch;
- an update was requested on the timescale for the Dornoch Sports Centre project;
- thanks were expressed to the Estate Strategy Manager and his team for their efforts in progressing the significant number of feasibility studies;
- the progress in relation to the extension/refurbishment of Kiltearn Primary School was welcomed and the Members requested that the Community Council be kept informed; and
- whilst recognising the pressures on the Estates Team, concern was expressed at the lack of progress in relation to Inverness schools and that the funding of £48m which had been set aside would not be sufficient. A significant number of schools on one side of the city were at capacity and urgent action was called for, as well as a timeline and ragging process. One of the most stressful situations for parents was putting their children into stable education and a situation could arise where children could not get a place in their own catchment area, leading to numerous placing appeals. Concern was also expressed regarding the condition of Charleston Academy and the increasing roll at Kinmylies Primary School. The significant amount of development taking place would only compound the problem and information was sought on whether discussions had taken place with Planning officers and developers, both in terms of developing sustainable solutions and ensuring developer contributions. The Chair acknowledged Members' concerns and explained that briefings for Local Members were in the process of being arranged. It was suggested that Planning officers also be invited to attend.

Considerable discussion took place regarding the proposal to create a synthetic playing field at Culloden Academy during which some Members expressed concern that there was insufficient information to make a decision and that approving the recommendation to submit an application to **sportscotland** would cut across the community's aspirations to build a Multi-Use Games Arena (MUGA). Smithton and Culloden Community Council had developed the MUGA project over a number of years and it had been agreed that an area of land adjacent to the football pitches at Culloden would be transferred to the community. Plans had been produced which reflected the findings of the community consultation. The community had created a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), "East Inverness Sports", and had employed a professional fundraiser as well as a drainage specialist to work in tandem with the Council's flood alleviation team and create a sustainable drainage plan that would be submitted with an application for full planning permission. Applications had been submitted to several funding bodies and discussions had taken place with **sportscotland** who had been extremely supportive. However, they would not fund two projects in the same area. The MUGA project was localism in the ideal and Members were urged to support the local community to achieve their ambitions.

Other Members supported the provision of a synthetic pitch at Culloden Academy, which would benefit the whole of east Inverness as well as Inverness South Ward. The existing pitches were rarely used due to drainage issues and many local groups, football in particular, struggled to get a slot at Millburn Academy. Concern was expressed that if the opportunity was not grasped it may not arise again for a number of years. The proposal in relation to Culloden Academy was very straightforward whereas the MUGA project was much bigger and would take several years to obtain funding and prepare feasibility studies. There was no reason why one should preclude the other and it was suggested that the Culloden Academy project should not be delayed and that the Council work with the community to deliver the MUGA and

look for additional funding, not only from sports organisations but from other funding bodies.

Following discussion, the Chair, seconded by Mr A Christie, **MOVED** the recommendations as set out in report.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr B Gormley, seconded by Mr D Fallows, moved the recommendations subject to the removal of the reference to paragraph 3.3 in recommendation iii.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 13 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 5 votes, with 1 abstention, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mrs C Caddick, Mrs I Campbell, Mr A Christie, Mr M Finlayson, Dr A Fraser, Mr W Mackay, Mrs M McCulloch, Mr D Millar, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Rattray, Mrs F Robertson, Mr G Ross, Ms K Stephen

For the Amendment:

Mr D Fallows, Mr S Fuller, Mr B Gormley, Mr K Gowans, Mr G MacKenzie

Abstentions:

Mrs M Duncan

Decision

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the capital monitoring position to the end of January 2016 as set out in Appendix 1 and Section 1 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the current status of the major projects as set out in Appendix 2 and Section 2;
- iii. **NOTED** the progress on the projects detailed in Section 3 and **APPROVED** the specific recommendations contained in Paragraphs 3.3 and 3.6;
- iv. **NOTED** the progress in identifying future capital investment priorities as detailed in Section 4 and Appendices 3 to 5 and **APPROVED** the specific recommendations contained in Paragraphs 4.3 to 4.6, including the new projects listed in Appendix 4;
- v. **NOTED** the issues relating to resources in Section 5 and **APPROVED** the specific recommendation in Paragraph 5.1;
- vi. **AGREED** that updates on the status of local projects be provided to Ward Business Meetings;
- vii. **AGREED**, in relation to Alness and Invergordon schools, that consideration be given to a working group of Council and Parent Council representatives to ensure robust community engagement; and
- viii. **AGREED** that Planning officers be invited to attend the forthcoming briefings on Inverness schools.

7. Children's Services – Performance Report Seirbheisean Chloinne – Aithisg Coileanaidh

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/20/16 dated 2 March 2016 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 health assessments for Looked After Children who were accommodated, Members asked whether there was an expectation that performance would improve when the one stop shop was in place;
- with regard to the Highland Lifestyle Survey, information was sought on how many schools were expected to participate, what proportion of schools did not and the reasons for non-participation;
- in relation to 6-8 week child health surveillance contacts, concern was expressed that uptake was decreasing and information was sought on whether this related to Health Visitor numbers; and
- concern was expressed in relation to Indicator 74 (The percentage of schools awarded an evaluation of good or better for self-evaluation in Education Scotland inspections increases) and Indicator 78 (The percentage of schools evaluated as good or better for meeting learners' needs in Education Scotland inspections increases). In particular, Members questioned the targets, why it took an Education Scotland inspection to highlight performance issues and what was inhibiting improvement. Reference was made to an earlier question regarding additional staffing based on learners' needs and it was emphasised that the removal of such teaching posts would make the situation worse. In addition, a far more robust method of peer support in schools was called for.

The Committee otherwise scrutinised and **NOTED** the performance information.

8. Children's Services – Assurance Report Seirbheisean Chloinne – Aithisg Barantais

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/21/16 dated 4 March 2016 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 informed by the Highland Health and Social Care Committee and discussion with the Child Health Commissioner.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- to give assurance in terms of how services would be delivered and in what timeframe, it was requested that future reports include delivery plans and trajectories, particularly in relation to Allied Health Professional (AHP) waiting times; 27-30 month child health surveillance; Looked After Children health assessments; and 6-8 week child health surveillance;
- in relation to the AHP waiting times exception report, whilst it was understood that that telephone intervention met waiting time definitions, concern was expressed regarding the benefits and effectiveness of telephone support in comparison with face to face contact and information was sought on what was being done to monitor that;

- with regard to Looked After Children Health Assessments, Members asked whether performance would be on trajectory if the young people and parents who had refused contact/consent were removed from the figures; and
- concern was expressed regarding the deletion of two Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Social Worker posts, particularly in terms of the impact on preventative work, Primary Mental Health Workers and children and young people who needed support. Members questioned whether the work would no longer be carried out or would be done in a different way and requested sight of the impact assessment.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- scrutinised and **NOTED** the issues raised in the report; and
- AGREED** that future reports include delivery plans and trajectories, particularly in relation to Allied Health Professional waiting times; 27-30 month child health surveillance; Looked After Children health assessments; and 6-8 week child health surveillance.

9. Care and Learning Service Management Structure Structar Stiùiridh Seirbheis a' Chùrain agus an Ionnsachaidh

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/22/16 dated 3 March 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which set out proposals for the management of Care and Learning Services, further to a recent review and the savings measures contained in the 2016/17 budget.

During discussion, the importance of clearly communicating the management structure, particularly at local level, was emphasised. In relation to the internal review, reference was made to the finding that working from a single base contributed to a more integrated team. Due to the rural nature of Highland, staff were often dispersed and information was sought on what could be done to address that so that people felt much more part of a team.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- the replacement of the Head of Health post with a Senior Manager; and
- the replacement of a Head of Service post with an Area Care & Learning Manager.

10. Highland Practice Model – Further Evaluation Outcomes Modal Cleachdadh na Gàidhealtachd – Tuilleadh Thoraidhean Measaidh

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/23/16 dated 4 March 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided a further update on core findings which had emerged from an ongoing evaluation of the Highland Practice Model along with key areas for improvement and the actions proposed to take them forward. The report also provided a short update on the implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The Chair referred to a recent conference in Sweden, where the Director of Care and Learning and the Head of Children's Services had been invited to speak about the Highland Practice Model. The visit had been extremely successful and it was encouraging to see the high regard in which Highland was held in terms of the delivery of children's services.

During discussion, information was sought on whether a training programme was in place and how staff were targeted towards it. In response, the Director explained that training was now fully integrated and was available to all services and partner agencies such as NHS Highland and Police Scotland. The Highland Children's Forum report had indicated that further work was required to ensure that staff understood some aspects of the model and that would continue to be built in to the training. He referred to a previous briefing on the implementation of the Highland Practice Model and indicated that he would be keen to do a further briefing, including information on the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. scrutinised and **NOTED** the evaluation findings summarised in section 4 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the areas for improvement and actions detailed in section 5 of the report; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a Members' Briefing be arranged on the implementation of the Highland Practice Model and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

11. Achfary Primary School - Proposal to Proceed to Statutory Consultation for Formal Closure

Bun-Sgoil Ach Taigh Phàiridh – Moladh a Dhol air Adhart gu Co-chomhairle Reachdail airson Dùnadh Foirmeil

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/24/16 dated 3 March 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which explained that Achfary Primary School was currently mothballed and had been since the end of session 2011/12. The report sought agreement to proceed to a statutory consultation, under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, for formal closure of the school. The appendices to the report were circulated separately as Booklet A.

During discussion, Local Members commended the report and thanked officers for keeping them up-to-date. Achfary Primary School was one of seven schools mooted for closure over the past 20 years, with two others still mothballed in north-west Sutherland. However, as could be seen from the census figures, people were not moving to the area with families and, in this instance, Local Members could see no further reason to mothball and supported proceeding to the consultation process. In relation to the reassignment of the catchment area, the difference between Kinlochbervie and Scourie was marginal and it might be that parents should have a choice. The school rolls were such that it was not an issue at present although that could change in the future. The Chair confirmed that these issues would be explored as part of the consultation process.

Thereafter, having considered the report and the proposal contained in Booklet A, the Committee **AGREED** to proceed to statutory consultation, per the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, regarding the proposal for formal closure of Achfary Primary School and the re-assignment of its catchment area to that of Kinlochbervie Primary.

12. Management of Schools Update Fios às Ùr mu Stiùireadh Sgoiltean

Declarations of Interest:

Ms J Douglas and Mr K Gowans declared non-financial interests in this item as Directors 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 interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.

In addition, Mr K Gowans declared a financial interest on the basis that his wife was an employee 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 his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/25/16 dated 8 March 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on progress on the management of schools programme and sought approval for specific developments to support early learning and childcare and the development of a business plan for changes to the delivery of catering, cleaning and janitorial services.

Speaking to the report, the Director highlighted the significant amount of work taking place and that seminars on specific workstreams would take place at the appropriate stage. In relation to the proposal to develop a business case for the transfer of catering, cleaning and janitorial services to High Life Highland (HLH), he apologised for the wording at section 5.11 and confirmed that the recommendation was as set out in section 5.1(iii). He further suggested that it might be more appropriate for the full Council to consider the proposed business case.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- all of the workstreams were far-reaching and justified full reports in their own right;
- there was a real need for flexibility in rural schools and the proposed early level approach was a potential solution. However, concern was expressed that 3 year olds would enter a formal classroom setting and lose out on play. The Director having confirmed that the intention was to bring P1 back to 3/4 year old level with play very much at the forefront, the importance of ensuring that the workforce and parents were prepared for the culture change was emphasised;
- online learning made pupils more flexible and prepared them for the workplace but it was a significant culture change. It was important that it was done well and incorporated in teacher training to ensure that staff had the necessary skills. In addition, it would be helpful to hear pupils' experiences of online learning;
- it would be helpful to receive a list of outcomes from the stakeholder groups to ensure that the issues raised by Head Teachers were being addressed;
- it was essential to look at the business support provided to the Care and Learning Service. In particular, it was requested that the Talentlink system be re-examined as Members had received numerous complaints about its effectiveness;
- a number of workstreams were looking at the evolution of the learning experience in a broad and creative way and greater opportunities were sought for Members to engage in the process alongside the valued contributions from officers;

- HLH had the experience, knowledge and capability to manage school lets and it was suggested that this be extended to primary schools;
- in relation to the implementation of a 4.5 day week in primary schools, concern was expressed regarding the impact on working parents and information was sought on how and where after school care would be provided;
- information was requested on the findings of the pilot Early Level class operating in Lairg;
- partnership working between schools was to be encouraged and would provide a wider choice of subjects for pupils;
- in relation to the shape of the school week, it should be up to local areas to decide what worked for them;
- workforce planning and recruitment of teaching staff was extremely challenging in the current environment and officers were commended for their efforts;
- with regard to nursery provision, there were significant challenges to be addressed in terms of space and it would be necessary to explore partnership working with other organisations. However, there were also opportunities in terms of income generation;
- in relation to establishing revised school groupings, it was hoped that the proposed consultation would include Members; and
- with regard to staff development, the emphasis on mentoring was welcomed. Reference was made to a mindfulness programme for Head Teachers in Badenoch and Strathspey and it was hoped this could be rolled out elsewhere. In addition, the importance of peer support was emphasised.

Considerable discussion took place regarding the proposal to develop a full business case for the transfer of catering, cleaning and janitorial services to HLH, during which the following issues were raised:-

- the report referred to the deficit in relation to janitorial services but did not address the need for funding to provide janitorial support in schools that did not currently have it;
- the cost of providing janitorial services had previously been underestimated, the Facilities Management (FM) model having originally been intended to be cost neutral;
- the proposal was premature and it was suggested that a seminar take place so Members could hear the arguments for developing a business case;
- information was sought on the amount of funding and staff that would transfer to HLH; the cost of producing a business case; the risks and benefits to both parties; whether HLH had the necessary capacity and management skills to provide the services in question and, in relation to catering, whether produce would continue to be locally sourced;
- concern was expressed that the proposal could lead to job losses amongst some of the Council's lowest paid workers;
- there was a need to revisit the relationship with HLH so that Members were confident they retained sufficient influence to ensure that the qualities they valued were retained;
- there were a lot of gains to be made in terms of the making the fullest use of facilities beyond the school day;
- the decision was too important to be taken solely by the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee;
- concern was expressed regarding the proposed timescale for implementation;
- Head Teachers had complained of a lack of communication with the FM model and this could be exacerbated with an arm's length organisation; and

- HLH was wholly owned by the Council and delivered excellent services throughout Highland.

The Chair emphasised that the recommendation was simply that the Committee agree to the development of a business case. It was not about job cuts but about exploring whether services could be delivered in a better more efficient way. The business case would address Members' concerns and he intended to move that it be considered by the full Council. Clarification having been sought, it was confirmed a seminar would be arranged but first it was necessary to develop the business case.

Following discussion, the Chair, seconded by Mrs F Robertson, **MOVED** the recommendations in the report subject to recommendation iii. being amended to reflect that the full business case would be considered by the full Council on 12 May 2016.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr G Mackenzie, moved recommendations i. and ii. and that the Committee agree to a seminar to discuss the benefits and principles of transferring catering, cleaning and janitorial services to High Life Highland, involving the Chief Executives of the Council and High Life Highland.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 10 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 10 votes, with 1 abstention, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mrs I Campbell, Mrs M Davidson, Mr M Finlayson, Dr A Fraser, Mr W Mackay, Mrs M McCulloch, Mr D Millar, Mrs M Paterson, Mrs F Robertson, Mr G Ross

For the Amendment:

Mrs C Caddick, Mr A Christie, Mr D Fallows, Mr S Fuller, Mr B Gormley, Mr K Gowans, Mrs D Mackay, Mr G MacKenzie, Mrs B McAllister, Mr M Rattray

Abstentions:

Mrs M Duncan

On the casting vote of the Chair, the **MOTION** was carried.

Decision

The Committee **NOTED** the update on progress on the management of schools programme and **AGREED**:-

- i. the further establishment of early level classes where appropriate;
- ii. the proposed restructuring of curricula support to early learning and childcare; and
- iii. the development of a full business case for the transfer of catering, cleaning and janitorial services to High Life Highland, to be considered by the full Council on 12 May 2016.

13. Employment of Care Experienced Young People Clann ann an Cùram le Cosnadh

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item as General Manager of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/26/16 dated 7 March 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on the employment and training opportunities for care experienced young people.

The Committee scrutinised and **NOTED** progress on the issues raised in the report.

14. Brokerage Service for Children and Young People Seirbheis Gnothachais do Chloinn agus Dhaoine Òga

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/27/16 dated 29 February 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which set out options for taking forward the establishment of a brokerage service for children and young people who were in receipt of an Individual Budget through Self-Directed Support.

The Chairman having referred to the success of a recent Conference concerning brokerage, the following points were raised by Members:-

- it was disappointing that there was no community capacity built into any of the options. Local input could empower communities and many of the skills involved in brokerage were available at this level;
- given the huge divergence of both need and skills, a "one size" fix would not work and therefore it was important to support the Third Sector to provide services, especially in diverse rural areas;
- allocating funding to clients was welcomed given that they were best placed to decide how resources was used; and
- more information was sought as to what funding would be available in Highland for brokerage.

Having considered the options outlined, the Committee **AGREED** to a further period of consultation and options appraisal, with a report being brought to Committee in August 2016.

15. Children's Services Commissioning Strategy Ro-innleachd Barantachaidh Sheirbheisean Chloinne

There had been circulated Report No ECAS/28/16 dated 29 February 2016 by the Director of Care and Learning which described the development of a commissioning strategy for Children's Services.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- transition between children and adult services needed to be a key part of the strategy. In this regard, it might be beneficial for NHS Highland's Director of Adult Social Care to attend a future meeting of the Committee;

- the role of users in forming a commissioning strategy was paramount as their views might be different from that of the Council; and
- discussion of the strategy and delivery of services at District Partnership level would be beneficial.

The Committee **AGREED** the proposed Commissioning Strategy.

16. Complaints Review Committee Outcome **Toradh Comataidh Ath-sgrùdaidh nan Gearanan**

There had been circulated joint Report No ECAS/29/16 dated 3 March 2016 by the Depute Chief Executive and the Director of Care and Learning which set out the findings and recommendations following a Complaints Review Committee held on 18 January 2016. The report also provided an overview of the complaints process and highlighted the requirement for decisions of the Complaints Review Committee to be reported to the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee.

Although not directly relevant to the case in question, the importance of ensuring underlying issues were taken into account to smooth the transition process between Children and Adult Services was highlighted. In this regard, it was recognised that there needed to be closer partnership working and that this might involve the redesign of services.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- that the Complaints Review Committee met to consider the case, and the findings; and
- the recommendations made by the Complaints Review Committee.

17. Minutes **Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee:-

- NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group held on 19 November 2015;
- NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Child Protection Committee held on 8 December 2016;
- APPROVED** the Minutes of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 19 February 2016;
- NOTED** the Minutes of the FHC4 Leadership Group held on 24 February 2016; and
- APPROVED** the Minutes of the Criminal Justice Sub-Committee held on 3 March 2016.

The meeting concluded at 2.15 pm.