

# MINUTES

# A & B

**Education and Families Committee**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick**  
**Wednesday 9 November 2011 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

E L Fullerton	L Angus
L F Baisley	A J Cluness
F B Grains	T Macintyre
W H Manson	C H J Miller
R C Nickerson	

**Also:**

J H Henry

**Apologies:**

J G Simpson                      J W G Wills

**In Attendance:**

H Budge, Director of Children's Services  
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement  
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law  
S Thompson, Executive Manager – Schools  
K Johnston, Solicitor  
M Thomson, Senior Assistant Accountant  
L Geddes, Committee Officer

**Also:**

I Lochhead, Senior Auditor – Audit Scotland

**Chairperson**

Mrs E L Fullerton, Chair of the Committee, presided.

**Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

**Declarations of Interest**

None

11/11        **Minutes**

Except as undernoted, the minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2011 were confirmed on the motion of Mrs Miller, seconded by Mrs Fullerton.

**Sederunt**

Mrs Baisley advised that she had intimated her apologies.

12/11        **Autistic Spectrum Disorder Policy for Children and Young People**

A report by the Director of Children's Services (Report No: CS-15-F) presented a policy which gave detail of the definition of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and the

support available from Children's Services for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

In response to queries, the Executive Manager – Quality Improvement advised that whilst many children with conditions on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) could access mainstream schooling, there were approximately three children in each year group locally whose difficulties were so complex that they could not access mainstream provision. There were a number of policies in place that encompassed the kind of support required by children suffering from other types of disabilities, but this Policy recognised the particular needs of children and young people on the ASD, and the range of difficulties that they may face. It was noted that parents and children had been consulted and had taken part in some aspects of the Policy formulation.

It was questioned whether there were formal links in place for support once a child no longer received secondary school education. It was noted that the Council was obliged to consider the transition from secondary education under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009, and the Director of Children's Services advised that she would take this issue forward to the Resources Panel.

Some discussion took place with regard to the Council's decision to review Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision as part of the Blueprint for Education. It was noted that the report stated there would be no financial implications arising as a result of the Policy, but it was suggested that it was likely that there would be financial implications.

Mr R C Nickerson requested an assurance that efficiency savings being sought as part of the review of ASN provision being carried out under the Blueprint for Education would not be detrimental to ASN provision, and asked that it be recorded that he felt the Council should consider this as a priority.

The Chair advised that the Policy reflected what was already being carried out locally, and any significant changes would require to be considered by the Committee. It would not be possible to give such an assurance given that efficiencies were being sought across the Council, and that the Council would have to agree on its priorities. However she could give an assurance that the Council would seek to maintain the current standard and quality of service provided locally.

On the motion of Mr Cluness, seconded by Mrs Miller, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that Shetland Islands Council **RESOLVE** to:

1. Approve the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Policy for Children and Young People

13/11

#### **Policy on Attendance in School**

A report by the Director of Children's Services (Report No: CS-14-F) outlined the proposed Policy on Attendance in School, which broadly reflected current practice within the authority.

On the motion of Ms Baisley, seconded by Mr Nickerson, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

**Decision:**

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that Shetland Islands Council **RESOLVE** to:

1. adopt the Policy on Attendance in School

14/11

**Annual Report from Chief Social Work Officer**

A report by the Chief Social Work Officer (Report No: CC-07-11-F) introduced the fourth Annual Report to the Council which presented information regarding the role and responsibilities of the Council's Chief Social Work Officer, and is required to be considered by the Council on an annual basis as set out in Guidance published by the Scottish Government in February 2009.

Some discussion took place regarding the recent restructuring that had taken place in Social Work, and the redefining of the role of the Social Work Professional Team. Members queried if the fact that social work matters now reported to two different Directorates and Committees had any effect on services.

The Director of Children's Services advised that the restructuring was being used as an opportunity to reinforce the Social Work function, and that there was no suggestion of fragmentation or dilution of the social work function. The redefining of the role of the Social Work Professional Team would enable both sections of Social Work to come together to determine business, share ways of working and receive clear direction from the Chief Social Work Officer. However this would be closely monitored as things progressed.

Members noted from Care Inspectorate reports that there had been continuous improvement in the quality of services, and staff were congratulated on work in helping to achieve and maintain these standards.

On the motion of Mr Angus, seconded by Mr Manson, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

**Decision:**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. note the Annual Report

The meeting concluded at 10.45am.

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Chair