



MINUTES

Public

Special Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Friday 1 February 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:

Councillors:

V Wishart	G Smith
P Campbell	G Cleaver
B Fox	A Manson
F Robertson	G Robinson
D Sandison	M Stout

Religious Representatives:

T Macintyre	R MacKay
M Tregonning	

Also:

A Cooper	A Duncan
A Wishart	

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director of Children's Services
C Ferguson, Director of Corporate Services
N Grant, Director of Development Services
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement
K Fraser, Executive Manager – Shetland Library
J Gray, Executive Manager – Finance
H Leslie, Executive Manager – Children & Families
M Nicolson, Executive Manager – Children's Resources
I Peterson, Depute Principal – Shetland College
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
M Simpson, Vocational Training Manager
V Simpson, Executive Manager – Community Planning & Development
S Thompson, Executive Manager - Schools
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
B Leask, Team Leader – Youth Services
J Thomason, Management Accountant
A Cogle, Team Leader - Administration

Chairperson

Ms Wishart, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest

Mr D Sandison declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 [Review of SIC Childcare Provision in Lerwick]. His interest related to involvement in a childcare business in Shetland, but as this was not a direct interest, he would be remaining in the Chamber, and taking part in any debate.

Mr B Fox declared an interest in Agenda Item 5 [Review: Grant Per Place to Partners Providers] as he has a close family member involved in Lerwick Pre-School.

04/13 **Management Accounts for Education and Families Committee: 2012/13 – Quarter 3 (April – December 2012)**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (Report No: F-015-F), which enabled the Education and Families Committee to monitor the financial performance of services within its remit to ensure that expenditure incurred and income generated had been delivered within the approved budget, so that timely action could be taken when required to mitigate projected overspends.

In response to questions from Members, the Vocational Training Manager explained the recession would appear to have had a impact on the demand for modern apprenticeships across all areas, but also that a number of other issues had impacted on the budget this year, including apprenticeships finishing early and the cost of travel and subsistence. The Committee agreed that it would be useful to have a more detailed understanding of the Modern Apprenticeship schemes, and it was agreed that a comprehensive analytical report on apprenticeship schemes be provided to all Members, to provide a general understanding around apprenticeship schemes, including areas such as national funding and the Council's construction industry programme.

Mr G Smith moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained within the report, seconded by Mr G Robinson.

Decision:

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Review the Revenue Management Accounts, from 1 April 2012 – 31 December 2012, including the projected outturn;
- Instruct the Director of Children's Services and Director of Development to ensure that the projected outturn is achieved at the year-end or exceeded.

05/13 **Instrumental Instruction Review – Update Report**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Schools (Report No: CS-07-13-F), which provided an update regarding the work done thus far on the review of Instrumental Instruction.

Following presentation of the report, the Executive Manager – Schools answered Members questions in relation to a number of areas. In particular, she confirmed that comparisons between the level of provision between private and Council tuition would be considered as part of the review. It was noted that around 40 vacancies existed throughout the Schools Service, with around 84 pupils on waiting lists. The difficulty was that that some of the tuition available was in remoter locations, and travel to and from those locations would preclude many pupils from taking up those vacancies. The Executive Manager – Schools went on to confirm that the vacancies tended to be in the Primary Schools, whereas SQA provision in Secondary Schools was being fully met.

Regarding funding and costs, the Executive Manager – Schools confirmed that external funding options, including charitable and commercial funding, would be explored as part of the review, whilst noting that if external funding could not be sourced, then further savings would be required to fund the ongoing provision. Comparison figures with other local authorities was already held, and would form part of the review documentation, and it was noted that income was currently at around £77k, with an expected income at year end of £90k.

Reference was made to the ongoing Scottish Government review of instrumental tuition, but it was noted that this was likely to focus on the charging structure, rather than on the level of statutory provision. Members discussed the potential for exploring on-line music tuition, and it was noted that the views of tutors had been sought on this topic. It was agreed that this was an area that could be made to work well in some instances, and in this regard the Service would consider progressing further, although it would require not only some culture change, but also continuing improvements in technology.

Members noted that some tutor vacancies were not being filled until the outcome of the review was known, in order to ensure ongoing savings. However, it was also noted that any advertising was currently carried out in accordance with Council policy, but the Service would consider other options for advertising for the future.

Mr G Smith moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained within the report, seconded by Mr P Campbell.

Decision:

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve:

- The revised timetable for this review, which will now take into account the outcome of the Scottish Government's own review of instrumental instruction, due to report in the summer of 2013;
- That a recently constituted inter agency working group continue to consider alternative models of provision;
- That external funding options continue to be explored as a matter of some urgency.

06/13

Review: Provision for Pupils with Additional Support Needs

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Quality Improvement (Report No: CS-01-03-F), which presented a progress report on the review of additional support needs provision for pupils in Shetland's schools.

The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement introduced the report, and answered questions from Members. Referring to the deputation at the last Committee meeting from the Junior High Schools, Members agreed that the information they provided be shared with Professor Macleod as part of his review.

Regarding efficiency costs referred to in section 3.5 of the report, the Committee noted that this included staffing changes and reductions in general operating budgets, with the same level of percentage reductions being applied across all schools, and that this was the level of provision that the review would be based on. Regarding ASN Support staff, the Executive Manager – Quality Improvement

explained that staffing levels were a mixture of permanent, fixed term and temporary staff, which was based on assessed levels of need, and projected needs, taking account of factors such as the age profile of children.

The Committee noted that Professor Macleod had conducted a similar review in the Western isles, and was publicly available.

The Executive Manager went on to explain the issue regarding the responsibility of mainstream class teachers for all pupils within their class, versus the role of ASN Teachers, and the overarching role of the Head Teacher in each School. She explained that the outcome of the review would be to highlight those differences to ensure they were understood and provided clarity for all concerned regarding their responsibilities, including educational progression. With regard to comparisons with Orkney Islands Council, the Executive Manager said that it was not possible to do a like for like comparison, as the level of provision was very different, referring in particular to the number of establishments and that Orkney provided for complex needs off-island, rather than within the community, as was the case in Shetland.

In relation to performance monitoring, the Committee noted that there was an Individual Education Plan for all ASN pupils, and that through this, individual targets were set, monitored and measured against individual achievements and milestones, including Curriculum for Excellence.

It was confirmed that the savings being sought would be from the 2013/14 budget, so would not impact on any of the savings for 2014/15 as identified by the JHS deputation. It was also confirmed that the impacts of any proposals for changes in the schools estate on ASN provision, would form part of the formal consultation process under the Blueprint for Education project.

The Committee agreed that Professor Macleod be offered the opportunity to present his report to the Committee.

The Committee otherwise noted the report.

Decision:

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the progress made with the Review of Provision for Pupils with Additional Support Needs, and the substantial recurring and one-off savings already made by Schools/Quality Improvement in this area of spend.

07/13

Review of Shetland Islands Council Childcare Provision in Lerwick

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Children's Resources (Report No: CS-05-13-F), which provided an update on the progress of the Review of Shetland Islands Council Childcare Provision in Lerwick.

The Executive Manager – Children's Resources introduced the report, and proceeded to answer various questions from Members. In particular, it was noted that the 2012/13 budget for the service was around £280k, and the budget for 2013/14 was £120k and whilst this was a very reduced budget, detailed figures had yet to be developed.

Members agreed that the Childcare seminar had been extremely useful and provided enough information for Members to make an informed decision when the review is presented.

The Committee noted the report.

Decision:

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the progress made with the Review of Shetland Islands Council Childcare Provision in Lerwick.

[Mr B Fox referred to his declared interest in the following item and left the Chamber.]

08/13

Review: Grant Per Place to Partner Providers

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Quality Improvement (Report No: CS-04-13-F), which presented the findings of a review carried out on the grant per place provided to our Partner Provider nurseries who deliver pre-school education on behalf of the Council.

After hearing the Executive Manager – Quality Improvement summarise the terms of the report, Members sought clarification on a number of areas. It was confirmed that the intention of the Children's and Young People's Bill was to increase nursery hours from 600 per annum, from 475 per annum. Whilst the increased figure was nearly being met in some areas, and some flexibility could be considered in meeting those hours outwith term time, other providers would find it extremely challenging to adapt their hours. The Committee noted that the average cost of a nursery place is £7642 per annum, although this figure varied between nurseries depending on capacity, economies of scale and the time of year relating to intakes.

Members noted that there was a good ongoing relationship with partner providers, and that discussions regarding Service Level Agreements were ongoing, although it was accepted that there remained particular areas of concern regarding perceptions and general child care issues, and that the disparity in wages between Partner providers and Council employees remained a significant issue, and one that would have to be addressed.

After further discussion, Mr G Robinson moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report. Ms V Wishart seconded.

Mr D Sandison moved as an amendment that that the Committee recommends that the Council does not implement the freeze on the grants, and that given the need to do more to balance this the other way, that officers be asked to find the required £9k savings from within the Council's Nursery Education budget. Mrs A Manson seconded.

Mr G Cleaver gave notice of a further amendment. However, he later withdrew his notice of a further amendment.

Mr G Smith gave notice of a further amendment.

After summing up, voting took place by a show of hands and the result was as follows:

Amendment (D Sandison)	7
Motion (G Robinson)	5

Mr G moved as a further amendment that the Committee recommends that the Council accepts that the grant will not be frozen, but that this be considered again once there is clarity on statutory provision, specifically the increase to 600 hours. Mr G Cleaver seconded. However, the Committee noted that this would be done in any event, and therefore, with the consent of his seconder, withdrew the further amendment.

Decision:

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council resolve NOT to approve the proposed freeze on the grant per place, and that the required saving of £9k be found from within the Nursery Education budget.

09/13

Review: Provision of Youth Services in Shetland

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Schools (Report No: CS-08-13-F), which presented an update on work carried out thus far in respect of the review of the Youth Service.

After hearing the Team Leader Youth Services introduce the report, Members questioned the reduction in Part-time Youth Workers from 123 down to 20 and what impact this would have on service provision. The Team Leader Youth Services advised that the intention would be to consolidate a number of the very part-time posts to make the service more efficient. The proposal was to have locality-based posts, and to work with other partners in those areas to provide a more integrated service which would allow work with community groups to continue, and provide access to funding. She acknowledged that this would be a change in the current model of delivery, but would also allow improved support, supervision and training for staff.

It was suggested that a more comprehensive strategic look at youth service provision should be undertaken. The Team Leader - Youth Services confirmed that the current review was only in terms of the Council's service as part of the budget process, and the next piece of work was the development of a Youth Strategy. That would involve setting out what the Council's priorities and objectives were, and being able to bring that together with other services to young people in Shetland, such as the College, Schools, NHS and other community groups and organisations.

[Mr Robertson left the meeting.]

In response to further questions, the Team Leader – Youth Services said that the proposed restructuring of the service was intended to make better use of the staffing available within those reduced budgets, and then to measure outcomes against national standards, whilst working alongside partners with a view to making best use of the resources available as part of a wider Strategy.

Regarding the Bridges Project, the Team Leader – Youth Service confirmed that the service had 4 support staff, and had supported around 30 young people over the past year. She added that the success rate was around 85% of those young people moving on to a positive destination.

Mrs V Wishart moved that the Committee note the progress made. Mr B Fox seconded.

The Committee noted that a report on the Youth Strategy would be presented to a future meeting.

Decision:

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council resolve to note the progress made with the Review of Youth Services.

10/13

2013-14 Budget Proposals Education & Families Committee

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (Report No: F-008-F), which enabled the Education and Families Committee to consider the controllable budget proposals for the services within its remit, which will in turn contribute towards ensuring that the Children's Services and Development Directorates meet their Target Operating Budgets, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

[Mr Robertson returned to the meeting.]

During the discussion which followed, it was agreed to ensure that all Members of the Committee were provided with a copy of the Socio Economic Impact Study referred to in paragraph 5.5 of the report.

With regard to section 5.9 and the impact on staffing, the Director advised that, across the Children's Services Department, around 70 posts were being looked at to achieve savings, and that a planned approach to reducing staff was being adopted.

Regarding clothing grants, the Committee noted that the review would include benchmarking with other local authorities, particularly on the criteria used, the costs and level of provision across nursery, primary and secondary. In the meantime, the Director agreed to provide Members with information as to the uptake of clothing grants after the meeting.

In response to a further question, the Director advised that the uptake of free school meals was in the region of 8%, compared to 22% across Scotland, but that the figure would be confirmed to Members after the meeting.

Regarding the transfer of community minibus service, the Executive Manager Community Development confirmed that options for this review were still being explored.

Ms V Wishart moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained within the report, seconded by Mr Robinson.

Decision:

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the budget proposals and carryforwards for 2013-14 included within this report and set out in detail in the budget activity sheet and charging sheet to the Executive Committee.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.

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Chair

