



## **MINUTES**

## **A&B - Public**

**Education and Families Committee  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick  
Monday 18 August 2014 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

Councillors:

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

Religious Representatives:

T Macintyre	R MacKay
M Tregonning	

**Apologies:**

T Macintyre	F Robertson
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**In Attendance:**

H Budge, Director of Children's Services  
J Gray, Executive Manager – Finance  
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law  
V Simpson, Executive Manager – Community Planning & Development  
S Thompson, Executive Manager - Schools  
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer  
L Geddes, Committee Officer

**Chairperson**

Ms Wishart, Chair of the Committee, presided.

**Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

**Declarations of Interest**

None

23/14

**Management Accounts for Education and Families Committee:  
2014/15 – Projected Outturn at Quarter 1**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (Report No: F-042-F) which enabled the monitoring of the financial performance to ensure that Members were aware of the forecast income and expenditure, and the impact that this will have with regard to delivering the approved budget.

The Executive Manager – Finance summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the figures in the report were the best projections for the year-end at

this early stage. At the moment, the position was looking good and projections were better than they had been at this point the previous year. He agreed to provide further information to Members regarding the contribution from NHS Shetland and Police Scotland towards the Adult/Child Protection Service, and the reduction in energy costs in Quality Improvement/Schools.

The Executive Manager – Finance and the Director of Children's Services then responded to questions, and Members noted the following:

- Essential building maintenance was prioritised over other maintenance, and work in schools was prioritised over the school holiday period.
- It was difficult to tell at this point how much of the underspend would be recurring savings, and more detail would be available on this by the end of the year. There were areas within Children's Resources and Children and Families where the underspend related to vacancies in the services, and some of these would be filled. Recurring savings had been made in schools.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee reviewed the Management Accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 1.

24/14

**Children's Services Performance Report**  
**3 Month/1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (Report No: CS-19-14-F) which summarised the activity and performance of the Children's Services for Quarter 1 of 2014/15.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, and responded to questions. Members noted the following:

- It was proposed to achieve financial close in respect of the new Anderson High School project by March 2015. The first stage had been completed, and the planning application would be coming forward on 15 September. The project had been categorised as 'amber' until the outcome of the planning application was known. The programme would be discussed with Members over the next few weeks, but the final programme had not yet been agreed.
- The 'ongoing work to ensure positive National Inspections' in Children's Services had also been classed as 'amber' as an inspection would be carried out between January to March 2015. Self-evaluation was currently being carried out, and a report would be brought to the Committee in October.
- French had always been the most popular foreign language choice in schools. German and Spanish had been offered in the past, and Spanish was still taught at the intermediate stage. Efforts were made to utilise any additional foreign language skills that teachers may have.
- Work on creating a partnership between high schools and the further/higher education sector was on track, and there had been a positive response from young people regarding this. It was hoped to deliver two HNCs soon and consideration was being given to a further one. Discussions were also taking

place with the oil industry regarding training opportunities that they would like to see made available locally.

- The joint inspection of Children's Services planned for early next year was a wider inspection than those that had been carried out previously, but it would be possible to utilise a lot of the information available from previous inspections. The self evaluation currently being carried out would form the basis of the work that would be presented to the Shetland Partnership, and this would be presented to the Committee. At that point, it was likely that this action would be categorised as 'green' rather than 'amber'.
- The GIRFEC process had been revisited and it went live in April 2014. There had been an increase in the number of referrals and this was probably as a result of the training that had been carried, as staff across all agencies were now much more aware of the process. The "named person" for pre-school children was usually the Health Visitor, then their teacher when they started school. No formal evaluation process was yet available.
- An action plan would be prepared following the review of Children's Residential Services, and at that point Members would be asked to endorse the proposals.
- The review of catering and cleaning services had been a data gathering exercise in order to gather some baseline information. It had been considered by CMT and agreed to look at efficiencies, and this would be taken forward by Children's Services. The implementation of authority-wide school dinner menus had commenced, and this was aimed at reducing the number of different foodstuffs that were purchased from various different places so that efficiencies could be achieved.
- It was not possible to set targets in relation to teacher/pupil ratios and class sizes as national standards and guidance applied. The information produced in the report could be changed to state that national standards were being met, but this would not be possible in some of the remote islands where there were small class sizes. Information relating to secondary schools had not been included, but this could be done if Members would find it useful.
- The Scottish Government did recognise Shetland dialect as an additional language, and there were a number of pieces of work being carried out in schools in respect of this. There was a small amount of Government funding available to support additional languages in schools.
- There were some social care management posts that were proving difficult to recruit to, and acting-up arrangements had been put in place. Posts were backfilled so that cover was available, and sometimes using overtime was the most appropriate way to provide cover. There was an increase in the number of Child Protection investigations, but there was confidence that there were resources to deal with this as there was a full team of social workers. It tended to be management posts that were more difficult to fill, and some work had just commenced to look at the future management of social work.

Members suggested that additional foreign languages, such as Spanish and Scandinavian languages, could also be offered in schools, and that there would be

possible training opportunities via Shetland College and the UHI in respect of additional languages.

The Director of Children's Services advised that she would feed these suggestions back to the working group.

Mr Smith paid tribute to the three Shetland members of Scotland's Commonwealth Games team – Erraid Davies, Lynda Flaws and Andrea Strachan – and said that it was important to also recognise the contribution of the Schools Service and the Sport and Leisure Service in developing these competitors by supporting PE staff, out-of-school clubs and voluntary organisations.

The Committee unanimously agreed.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee discussed the contents of the report, and made relevant comments on progress against priorities to inform further activity within the remainder of this year, and the planning process for next and future years.

25/14

**Development Services Directorate Performance Report  
3 Month/1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (Report No: DV036-F), which summarised the activity and performance of the Development Services Directorate for the reporting period.

The Executive Manager – Community Planning and Development summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting in particular the areas which came under the remit of the Committee.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee discussed the contents of the report.

26/14

**Committee Business Programme 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report by the Team Leader – Administration (GL-13-14-E&F-F) which informed of the planned business to be presented to the Committee over the remaining quarters of the current financial year to 31 March 2015, and sought discussion with Officers regarding any changes or additions required to that programme.

The Executive Manager – Governance and Law summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Policy and Resources Committee would be considering a report regarding the presentation of audit reports and those from other external audit bodies, which proposed that these reports should be considered by the relevant committee within two cycles of publication. It was expected that, when appropriate, each report would result in an action plan dealing with the report's recommendations, and that the Audit Committee would consider the agreed action plan and monitor progress. These proposals were in response to concerns by Audit Scotland that reporting across Scotland was sporadic and that reports were not being brought to the attention of Members. If the recommendations were agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee, these reports would form part of the Committee's business.

In response to questions, he confirmed that only the service committees had delegated authority to take actions forward, and that the Audit Committee would have a monitoring role. It would only become involved should the service committee fail to undertake the actions in the action plan.

It was suggested that a pragmatic view should be taken, and that the service committees should deal only with relevant suggestions that come forward rather than every report produced.

It was noted that the review of catering and cleaning was no longer part of the Change Programme, and would not appear on the Committee's business programme as it was being dealt with as part of the daily business of Children's Services.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee considered its business planned for the remaining quarters of the current financial year to 31 March 2015 and **RESOLVED** to approve the changes discussed for amendment of the Business Programme.

The meeting concluded at 11.00am.

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Chair