



MINUTES

A&B - Public

Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 24 November 2014 at 11.00am

Present:

Councillors:

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

Also:

A Cooper	R Henderson
T Smith	

Religious Representatives:

R MacKay	M Tregonning
----------	--------------

Apologies:

T Macintyre

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children's Services
N Grant, Director – Development Services
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement
J Gray, Executive Manager - Finance
S Thompson, Executive Manager - Schools
S Brunton, Team Leader - Legal
B Kerr, Communications Officer
J Porter, Team Leader – Community Development
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

39/14

Children's Services Directorate Plan 2015-16

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-31-14-F) which presented the draft Children's Services Directorate Plan for 2015/16.

The Executive Manager – Schools summarised the main terms of the report, outlining the responsibilities of the service, the aims and objectives, key drivers for change, and funding and resources. She highlighted the actions that had been implemented since the last Plan had been presented, and the actions that were in progress.

The Director – Children's Services and Executive Manager – Schools then responded to queries, and the Committee noted the following:

- Children's residential services provided a range of support for young people who required it, including short-break services for young people with additional support needs, support for those who required to be cared for off-island and Looked-After Children who were cared for at home, and for young people with other support needs.
- The savings that had been made for the coming financial year were recurring savings. Advice had been taken from Finance regarding carrying less risk in Children's Services budgets, so some items had been transferred into contingencies.
- Government funding had been received to assist with delivering the additional hours for childcare, and some of this had been built into contingencies. The Council had received £278,881 to assist, and further information on the actual costs of provision could be supplied to the Committee. The bid for funding had been submitted based on an estimate of what the additional provision would cost.
- The revised ICT Strategy for Schools was being carried out with ICT staff. It would look at rationalising and considering what was appropriate for schools, and removing obsolete equipment. Equipment replacement had been done on a rolling programme in the past, but it had been found that sometimes equipment was not at the end of its useful life.
- It was planned to run two virtual academies in care and engineering in the next academic year, initially for pupils from S5 onwards before rolling out to others in the Senior Phase. Informal meetings would be held to update Members on developments in the Shetland Learning Partnership, and a briefing paper had been prepared. Pupils participating in the virtual academies would have the opportunity to undertake work experience, work placements, and summer work in their own area, where possible.

The Chair commended Children's Services for the actions undertaken since last year, and moved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

In seconding, Mr G Smith commented that huge demands had been placed on the staff in Children's Services by the Council over the last few years. The Council had a responsibility to ensure that staff were given reasonable and achievable targets, and were supported in achieving these. It was accepted that there was a need to reconfigure the school estate in order to achieve the best outcomes for children, and to work with parent councils to consider the best way forward. He proposed that a Policy Forum be held early in the new year in order to consider how to proceed with the reconfiguration of the school estate, and the Committee agreed.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee:

- Reviewed and discussed the contents of the draft Directorate Plan
- Approved the Directorate Plan.
- Delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services to make any necessary adjustments to the Plan to ensure it is fully aligned with the final version of the Corporate Plan approved by Council.

40/14

Development Services Directorate Plan 2015-16

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV047-F) which presented the Development Directorate Plan for 2015/16.

The Director of Development Services summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting the areas that came under the remit of the Committee. The priorities for next year included delivering a sustainable model of tertiary education, delivering successful learning academies, producing a local Skills Investment Plan, carrying out an audit of community learning and development, progressing work on the Employability Pipeline, and seeking community transport solutions. A performance indicator had been added in relation to the number of community groups accessing community guidance, as it was felt that this would help gain a better understanding.

The Director of Development Services and Team Leader – Community Development then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- A breakdown of Modern Apprentices by area could be circulated to the Committee, in order that comparisons could be made with previous years. There had been a significant drop in the numbers of Modern Apprentices employed by the Council. Until recently, Train Shetland had met the salary cost of apprentices but costs were now met by the employing department, and it was possible this had affected the numbers employed. There were indications that the numbers were now increasing. Train Shetland had delivered a presentation to Council managers regarding Modern Apprentice opportunities and processes, and it was important to keep promoting this.
- The funding arrangements in respect of the Employability Pipeline were changing, meaning that the third sector would no longer receive funding directly. It was proposed that a £50,000 contingency was included in the budget to assist with situations where the third sector had external funding issues. If further funding was required, this would have to come from other areas of the budget.
- Community learning and development partners were coming together to produce a plan to be presented to Education Scotland by September 2015, and this would be part of the audit that would be taking place. An action plan would be produced and priorities agreed. This process would involve consultation with community members through focus groups, in order to come up with something that all partners were comfortable with.
- The figure relating to those claiming Jobseekers Allowance was probably as low as it could be. It was subject to various factors, and it would be a challenge to keep it below 1%.

- Work was currently going on to look at the delivery and cost-effectiveness of the evening class programme. A consultation questionnaire had been delivered to the public, and information was being gathered from partners. Education Scotland expected resources to be targeted at those in greatest need in order to improve their life chances.
- A working group was being set up in partnership with HIE and BT in respect of the Digital Shetland Strategy, with the aim of getting digital links to every property in Shetland.

On the motion of Ms Wishart, seconded by Mr G Smith, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee:

- Reviewed and discussed the contents of the Directorate Plan
- Recommended the actions, risks and measures in the Plan to Council.
- Delegated authority to the Director of Development Services to make any necessary adjustments to the Plan to ensure it is fully aligned with the final version of the Corporate Plan approved by Council.

41/14

Management Accounts for Education and Families Committee: 2014/15 – Projected Outturn at Quarter 2

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (F-069-F) which enabled the monitoring of the financial performance of services within its remit.

The Executive Manager – Finance summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting that there was a projected underspend of £724,000 in revenue, and a projected overspend of £1.398million in capital. This overspend was largely due to a timing difference in respect of the new Anderson High School (AHS) project for the early payment of fees, and it would be deducted when the project came to financial closure. It would not impact on any other projects or overall funding.

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

- The additional funding that would be received from the Scottish Government in respect of additional pre-school provision had not been known when the budget was set, so it had been set with contingency money. By the end of the financial year, the Council would know how much to release from this contingency funding, and how much to build into the budget in future years. It was likely that the additional funding would come through GAE, which would probably reduce in future years.
- Stage 2 of the new AHS project involved working on the detailed plans for the building and the rooms inside. The reason for the early payment of fees was to assist with the cashflow for the project, and to pay fees on a monthly basis to those involved with Stage 2. Further information could be supplied to the

Committee as to the discount received by the Council as a result of the early release of money for Stage 1 and 2 payments.

- There were a number of ongoing vacancies in Children's Resources, and some posts had proved difficult to recruit to. Acting arrangements had been put in place, and some young people had been accommodated off-island.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee reviewed the Management Accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 2.

42/14

2015-16 Budget and Charging Proposals

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-070-F) which enabled consideration of the controllable budget proposals for the services within the Committee's remit.

The Executive Manager – Finance summarised the main terms of the report, advising that most of the Children's Services budgets were set using a zero-based approach, and that Development Services budgets were set using an incremental budgeting approach. Children's Services had made savings of £1.508million for 2015/16, against a target of £715,000, and this would go some way towards meeting the target of £1.72million in 2016/17. Additional funding had been included to help meet the increased entitlements following the implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Funding from the Scottish Government would be available for that purpose, but the figure had been based on estimates at the moment.

In response to a query, he advised that the £927,000 of savings that still required to be found by 2016/17 was part of the target that had been set in the original Medium Term Financial Plan. Since then there had been subsequent plans to meet a 2% efficiency target, so Children's Services would be subject to that target up to 2020.

Concern was expressed that the proposed charging structure may result in a loss of income to the Council, as the increased charges may prove to be too expensive for some groups. It was suggested that charges should remain affordable in order to maximise the usage of school facilities.

The Chair advised that the charges would be kept under review and usage would be monitored to see if there were any adverse effects. This could be reported back to the Committee prior to the setting of charges for the following year.

On the motion of Ms Wishart, seconded by Mr G Smith, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Policy and Resources Committee and Council resolve to approve the budget proposals for 2015-16 included within the report and set out in detail in the Budget Activity Sheet and Charging Sheet.

The meeting concluded at 12.25pm.

.....
Chair