



MINUTES

B - PUBLIC

**Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 27 April 2015 at 10.00am**

Present:

Councillors:

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

Religious Representatives:

R MacKay	M Tregonning
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Apologies:

T Macintyre

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children’s Services
N Grant, Director – Development Services
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
J Smith, Executive Manager - Change Programme
F Thomson, Management Accountant
K Johnston, Solicitor
L Gair, Committee Officer

Also:

S Renwick, Eforensic Consultants

Chairperson

Ms Wishart, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest

Mr Sandison declared an interest in items 5 “Review of Tertiary Education in Shetland – Aggregated Business Model”, and 6 “Review of tertiary Education in Shetland – Option Appraisal and Implementation Plan”.

Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of the meetings held on (i) 20 January on the motion of Mr Robertson seconded by Mr Cleaver and (ii) 23 February 2015 on the motion of Mr Fox seconded by Mr Campbell.

11/15 **School Term Dates, Occasional Holiday Dates and In-Service Dates for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-12-15-F) which sought agreement to the proposed term dates, occasional holidays and in-service training dates for the years 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement introduced the report and explained the financial implications surrounding the Council's Easter public holiday and the intention to use the Friday from the May long weekend for Easter Monday, as described in the report. The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement also described the financial implications surrounding the floating public holiday that currently allows all schools the choice whether to take the day after the Council's public holiday at the end of January for Lerwick Up-Helly-Aa (UHA) or another time of that school's choice. The cost last year from the schools that remained open was confirmed at £6411.

A Member questioned whether any thought had been given to not fixing the May holiday. He said that the May long weekend could be reduced by making the Monday a floating day and he suggested that this floating day could be used to get over the issues created by fixing the day after Lerwick UHA. The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement informed Members that there had been many different permutations discussed and dialogue and this seemed to be the best compromise. During discussions Members commented on the desire of other schools still to open on the day after Lerwick UHA and questioned whether there was a way out of the Council incurring the cost of opening the school. The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement advised that she could not answer this question but highlighted that this could lead to a situation where the schools remain open but the bulk of staff would be off. She added that it would have to be a Council decision to roll this holiday into staff annual entitlement. The Director of Children's Services advised that such a decision would fall within the remit of Policy and Resources Committee and cautioned that there was potentially greater cost to such a suggestion as there would be a need to pay for support staff to cover leave and that could cause more difficulty. She advised that some schools are used as venues for UHA.

A Member said that he recognised the concerns highlighted in the report, but as a parent he would rather the money was spent on books as opposed to staff overtime. Members discussed the point around using resources in the best way and that by having the May holiday as a floating day will give flexibility to schools, minimise costs and direct resources to meeting educational needs. The Committee concurred.

Mr G Smith moved that the Education and Families Committee approve an amended recommendation 2.1b, namely, "Agree the proposed term dates and in-service dates, but amend one day of the occasional May holiday, to a floating day to provide flexibility for schools, on the understanding that cluster schools agree to the same date in order to minimise costs". Mr Robinson seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee considered the content of the report, while reviewing the proposed dates for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19, and **RESOLVED** to agree the proposed term dates and in-service dates, but amend one day of the occasional May holiday, to a floating day to provide flexibility for schools, on the understanding that cluster schools agree to the same date in order to minimise costs.

12/15

Application for Financial Assistance – Open Peer Education Project

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-08-15-F) which concerned a request for grant assistance from Voluntary Action Shetland (VAS) towards its Open Peer Education Project (PEP).

The Director of Children's Services introduced the report and explained that there has never been a budget within Children's Service to provide funding for this project however funding was provided last year on the understanding that a contribution from Children's Services would not continue into future years. She advised that the Children's Services was to find 2% savings but this was not being done within the voluntary sector. The Director of Children's Services explained that VAS had been given the opportunity to seek external funding for this year therefore Members are being asked to consider approval of funding for this year only and then the funding will cease.

During discussions Members discussed the terms of funding already secured and noted that there was no continuity of funding for this project. In response to a question, the Director of Children's Services said that she had no knowledge of the Shetland Charitable Trust (SCT) being approach about funding.

A Member noted the information provided in terms of the services to be delivered and expressed concern that there would be a reduction in services delivered compared to the previous year. A further comment was made that there appeared to be focus on the service as opposed to the delivery of services and more needs to be done on developing strategies for the future at a time of cutting back.

In response to a comment on the proposal to be an integrated part of health and well being, the Director of Children's Services explained that Officers were working closely with Youth Services to remove duplication and achieve a coordinated situation where services are delivered to young individuals. A Member expressed concern that where there was a notable drop in output, there was an aspiration to double the young people trained to deliver the reduced services. Based on this project being a run by volunteers, a Member asked where the staff costs lay. The Director of Children's Services explained that staff costs relate mainly to coordinator staff with some cost attributed to travel and resources.

In response to a comment from a Member, the Vice-Chair advised that he had met with the Chief Executive of Youth Link Scotland and in terms of social return on investments there are measures that can be used but this would be if the Council was willing to spend money on it.

During further discussion Members noted how well Voluntary Action Shetland (VAS) were placed to access different sources of funding and that they help peer education with the processes. It was also suggested that NHS Shetland should be approached to avoid duplication in areas such as mental health. A Member also

recalled that after the close of Shetland Youth Information Services, an assurance was given from SCT on funding this area and it was important to establish whether that contract still remains. Members were in agreement that a decision should not be made until an approach has been made to SCT and NHS.

Mr Robinson moved that a decision be deferred for one cycle until engagement with SCT and NHS has been made, in particular to see if these organisation would be willing to contribute to a package of measures for another year and to look at the following year to provide continuity of future funding. Mr G Smith seconded and the Committee concurred.

Members agreed that a further report to Committee should inform on the decisions from SCT and NHS on their involvement and that the Open Peer Education Project to be asked to provide detail on how they will spend the funding received.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RESOLVED** to defer a decision for one cycle to allow engagement with SCT and NHS in particular to see if they are willing to contribute to a package of measures for another year and to look at the following year.

13/15

Developing Scotland's Young Workforce – Shetland

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-09-15-F) which provided information about Developing Scotland's Young Workforce.

The Director of Children's Services introduced the report.

During discussion the Director of Development Services advised that although the level of youth unemployment in Shetland was less than the rest of the country, it was still 4%. He said that the biggest issue locally for employers was employability skills.

A Member commented on the need to provide support to care givers whose access to employment can be impeded by their care roles at home. The Director of Children's Services confirmed that this point would be brought back to the steering group for consideration. The Chair commented on the work being done to help young people to understand the working environment, through virtual courses at school, before they go into employment. She confirmed that there is a lot of positive actions taking place to develop the workforce. The Chair gave credit to the employers willingness to be part of this initiative and their desire for young people to be educated and to work in the real environment.

Concern was expressed that there were groups of young people that were on their way to permanent exclusion. It was explained that were individuals who are enthusiastic but are unemployable due to their lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills. A Member said that there initiatives such as the Bridges Project had turned some young people's lives around but he would support anything that could reach this group and early intervention should begin as soon as they leave the school to avoid them becoming unemployable. In referring to paragraph 4.9 a Member commented that more effort was needed in succession planning by the Council as well as the public and private sectors.

Members welcomed this report and Mr Campbell moved that the Committee RESOLVE to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services, as set out in paragraph 2.1. Mr Robinson seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RESOLVED** that authority is delegated to the Director of Children's Services to oversee a local implementation plan and effective allocation of funding from the Scottish Government to deliver the 39 recommendations.

14/15

Review of Transport for Children with Additional Support Needs and also Social Care Service Users

The Committee considered a joint report by the Director of Development Services, the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Community Health and Social Care (TP-07-15-F) which provided a summary of the key findings of the work undertaken and makes recommendations as to how to improve the current arrangements.

The Director of Development Services introduced the report and explained that the review had been undertaken in partnership with the Children's Services and Care Services and advised that Mr Renwick, Consultant was present to answer any questions. The Director of Development Services advised that key to what is achieved are the identification of need to travel and definition of that need and how provision is delivered in a cost effective way. He advised that the detail of the report had been through consultation with Community Health and Social Care department where the Executive Manager – Early Years & ASN had been very useful and very involved in the assisted travel policy.

A Member highlighted a formatting error in the text of the report and went on to note the desire to withdraw from private taxi hire as a solution to provision in some cases and asked how these services would be delivered if taxis are removed. Mr Renwick, E-Forensics advised that the Corporate Plan objectives had been considered when developing policy and the recommendation is suggesting a starting target of 10% repatriated and in discussions with VAS, VAS are willing and keen to get involved. He added that the action group were looking at the practicalities.

A Member commented that when the community buses were transferred to VAS they were kept in Lerwick and questioned whether Lerwick would be the only place that VAS will deliver assisted travel. He said that the most expensive part of the provision was the rural services and taxis are used to get clients to central parts to access services. He questioned whether 10% could cover rural areas and cost be borne elsewhere. The Director of Development Services advised that in three locations communities have set up their own community transport services and this seems to be working well. He added that this was an opportunity to see how it works but there was a lot of work to be done to make it a reality.

A Member noted that there were national schemes that provide cars or allowances to those in need and questioned whether any checks had been undertaken to avoid duplication. Mr Renwick explained that there are two databases, SEAMIS for pupil records and SWIFT for social care. Neither database flags up whether an individual is in receipt of benefit or other service provisions, however a system is being put in place to ensure that duplication does not occur. It was suggested that a question

could be included on forms asking individuals to declare whether they receive any other allowances.

Mr Stout moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report, seconded by Mr G Cleaver.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council resolve to:

- Note that no service withdrawal is planned for current service users as a result of this report;
- Note that the key recommendations are not designed to deny services to potential service users but to ensure that a disciplined, equitable and consistent approach is taken to offering travel assistance and to avoid duplication of publically funded travel assistance;
- Note that a key underpinning recommendation is that the Council and health partners is to actively promote independence rather than dependence;
- Note that there are no operational cost implications arising from the proposals within the Consultancy Report, which seeks to achieve modest savings over time, by reducing the Council's reliance on the private sector and increasing the use of the Community Transport sector;
- Approve the new Assisted to Travel Policy (contained in Appendix 5 of the consultant's report attached as Appendix One to the report) under which service professionals assess eligibility to travel assistance and Transport Planning puts into place a cost effective transport solution.

(Mr Sandison left the Chamber)

15/15 **Review of Tertiary Education in Shetland – Aggregated Business Model**

The Committee considered a joint report by the Director of Development Services and the Executive Manager – Change Programme (DV-25-15-F) which described the business model, setting out the requirements for increased income and cost reduction for it, or any other structures, to be viable.

The Executive Manager – Change Programme introduced the report.

Members spoke in support of the recommendations and acknowledged and thanked the Executive Manager – Change Programme for his contribution to the project.

Mr G Smith said that the proposals in this report would take the Council to the next stage of the process where due diligence would be carried out to establish whether the single organisation is the best way forward. Mr G Smith moved that the Committee approve the recommendations with an amendment to the wording in paragraph 2.2 "... intention to move towards a single governance delivery...". Ms Wishart seconded.

In response to a query regarding the rent for the Shetland College within the 2017/18 budget, it was explained that the cost assumptions was an Estate Operations issue but if there is a move to a single external organisation, decisions would be taken by the Council in regard to the buildings. The Executive Manager – Change Programme advised that there are examples in other areas where incorporated colleges had the assets endowed to them together with the staff transfer.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RESOLVED** to note the information contained in the report, concerning the viability of a single governance and delivery model, and comment on those areas within their specific remit and inform Council of their views; and

Recommend that the Shetland Islands Council **RESOLVES**, having taking account of the views of Committees, to confirm the intention to move towards a single governance delivery model for Tertiary Education in Shetland.

16/15

Review of Tertiary Education in Shetland – Option Appraisal and Implementation Plan

The Committee considered a joint report by the Director of Development Services and the Executive Manager – Change Programme (DV-26-15-F) which set out the implementation plan for that integrated model, and the decisions required to take that forward to the next stage.

The Executive Manager – Change Programme introduced the report and commented on the next steps, the importance of involving the Shetland Partnership in the investigation of the options in order to satisfy the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government. Should the parties involved agree to merge the Colleges the financial scoping can be done. He said that there was a lot of work to be done but he anticipated that final projections would be presented in October/November to allow the next decision to be made that will provide the potential for a new body to be in place at the start of the 2016/17 academic year. In conclusion the Executive Manager – Change Programme stated that a challenge is to ensure that staff and students are engaged.

A Member commented that he was pleased that this piece of work was being carried out in house and that a clear report had been presented by the author. He said that the appointment of a Chair of Creative Studies, here in Shetland was of national importance and to have the advantage of the professorship in Shetland is important for Shetland and Scotland as a whole. The Member said that this model could be developed to a stage that would attract students to Shetland rather than students leaving to study in Scotland.

On the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Smith the Committee approved the recommendations contained in the report.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee considered and commented upon the proposals in the report in relation to their functional areas or remit and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council resolves, having taking account of the comments and views of Committees, to:

- Establish a Partnership Board, with a membership, role and remit as set out in the Partnership Agreement [which is Appendix C to the report] as amended to reflect local circumstances under authority delegated to the Director of Development Services; and
- Instruct the Partnership Board to present a Merger Proposals Report to a future meeting of the Council for approval.

Ms Wishart moved that in order to avoid the disclosure of exempt information, the Committee resolve to exclude the public in terms of the relevant legislation during consideration of the following items of business. Mr Robertson seconded.

(Members of the public and the media left the meeting.)

(Mr Tregonning left the meeting)

(Mr Sandison returned to the meeting)

17/15 Review of Social Work Services: Update

The Committee considered a joint report by the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Community Health and Social Care, which informed of the progress made on the recommendations contained in the external review of Social Work Services.

The Chair moved that the Committee approve the recommendations contained in the report, seconded by Mr Robertson.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Note and be reassured by the actions being taken in respect of the original recommendations; and
- Agree to receive a further report in July 2015 at the end of the project.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.

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Chair