



MINUTES

AB - Public

**Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 17 August 2015 at 10.30am**

Present:

Councillors:

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

Religious Representatives:

T Macintyre	R MacKay
M Tregonning	

Apologies:

F Robertson	D Sandison
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In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children's Services
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance
C McIntyre, Executive Manager – Audit, Risk and Improvement
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
T Coutts, Business Development and Training Manager
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

32/15 Development Services Directorate – Performance Overview – Quarter 1

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV-43-15-F) which summarised the activity and performance of the Development Services Directorate for the reporting period above.

In response to a query as to whether it was expected that the predicted level of Modern Apprentices would be reached, the Business Development and Training

Manager advised that it was expected that all 49 contracts that had been agreed for this year would be filled.

Decision:

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

33/15

Children's Services Performance Report Three Month/First Quarter 2015/16

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-28-15-F) which summarised the activity and performance of the Children's Services for Quarter 1 of 2015/16.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting the progress made against the priorities and advising that the new Childcare Strategy would be delayed until the government agreed its timescale for increasing the entitlement for Early Years Learning and Childcare. She advised that the attainment rates from this year were not yet included, as the final results would not be available until later in the year when the appeals process had been completed. However generally the results continued to be slightly better. As this was the first year of the new Highers, there would not be a comparator figure for a few years.

In response to a query, she advised that the numbers claiming free school meals, clothing grants and Education Maintenance Allowances continued to go down, although figures were not yet available for the new school year. This had been explored and it was felt that because of the employment situation locally, fewer households were claiming. Every effort had been made to advertise and contact those who could claim, but the figures continued to fall.

It was suggested that consideration should be given to including the local MSYPs in the work to help publicise and increase uptake of clothing grants and Education Maintenance Allowances, and the Director of Children's Services agreed to give this some consideration. It was noted that the allowances had not increased over the last few years, and the Director of Children's Services undertook to supply information regarding when the allowances had last been increased, pointing out that the Council had agreed not to reduce the allowances payable when this had last been considered.

It was commented that there had been a relatively smooth transition to delivery of the new Highers and it was questioned if there was confidence that this would continue to be the case.

The Director of Children's Services advised that the new Highers had not been implemented in some subjects this year, and there had been additional work involved in those that had been implemented. The new Highers would be offered across all subject areas next year, and it had been recognised by the Scottish Government that this would create an additional workload. In-service training and additional training had been delivered locally to help schools deal with this.

Decision:

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

34/15

Management Accounts for Environment and Families Committee: 2015/16 – Projected Outturn at Quarter One

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (F-041-F) which enabled monitoring of the financial performance within its remit to ensure that Members are 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 at this stage the projected outturn position was that there would be an underspend of £304,000 on revenue, and that the capital outturn position would be on target.

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

- The recruitment process for foster carers had been unsuccessful despite a high profile campaign, so consideration was being given to employing foster carers. This process should be completed by the end of the year, and Members would be able to monitor this in the next quarter as there would be an increase in budget. If foster carers were employed, this meant that the Council could use them as required, and this would be particularly useful in emergency situations.
- There had been an underspend in Quality Improvement/Schools due to staffing reductions and operational efficiencies. Consideration had been given as to how better to share staff across secondary schools, and a number of other strategies had been employed to enable savings to be found, and these should be recurring. It should be possible to meet the savings target this year, but next year would prove more difficult and some of the savings would be banked to help meet those targets.

Disappointment was expressed that it had not been possible to recruit additional foster carers, and it was suggested that the current economic climate may have had an impact on the campaign, as fostering may not be as attractive as paid employment.

Decision:

The Committee **RESOLVED** to review the Management accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 1.

35/15

Education and Families Committee Business Programme 2015/16

The Committee considered a report by the Team Leader – Administration (GL-36-15-F) which informed of the planned business to be presented to Committee over the remaining quarters of the current financial year to 31 March 2016.

It was noted that Pre-school Provision would actually be discussed at the September meeting of the Committee, and it was suggested that consideration to be given to including the STERT project in the business of the meeting to be held on 19 January 2016.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee noted its business planned for the remaining quarters of the current financial year to 31 March 2016.

The meeting concluded at 11.00am.

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Chair