



## MINUTES

## AB - Public

**Education and Families Committee**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick**  
**Monday 5 October 2015 at 10.00am**

### **Present:**

#### Councillors:

P Campbell	G Cleaver
A Manson	G Smith
M Stout	V Wishart

### **Apologies:**

B Fox	T Macintyre
R MacKay	F Robertson
G Robinson	D Sandison
M Tregonning	

### **In Attendance:**

H Budge, Director – Children's Services  
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance  
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement  
S Thompson, Executive Manager – Schools  
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer  
R Calder, Quality Improvement Officer  
J Edwards, Quality Improvement Officer  
K Johnston, Solicitor  
J Thomason, Management Accountant  
M Thomson, Senior Assistant Accountant  
L Geddes, Committee Officer

### **Also:**

S Maxwell, Education Scotland

## **Chairperson**

Ms Wishart, Chair of the Committee, presided.

## **Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

The Chair welcomed Mr Maxwell, Education Scotland, who was attending today's meeting as an observer.

### **Declarations of Interest**

None

## **Minutes**

The Committee approved the minutes of the following meetings:

- (i) 25 May 2015, on the motion of Mr Smith, seconded by Mr Campbell
- (ii) 16 June 2015, on the motion of Mr Smith, seconded by Mr Campbell
- (iii) 17 August 2015 (special meeting), on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Smith
- (iv) 17 August 2015, on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Smith.

### **36/15      Zetland Educational Trust**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-052-F) which enabled review of the investment position of the Zetland Educational Trust (ZET).

The Executive Manager – Finance summarised the main terms of the report, advising the report had been prepared following earlier discussions relating to the ZET in respect of investments and expenses, and it was being recommended that Finance work with the Council's Fund Managers to explore alternative investments. With regard to the audit fee, it was in the Council's gift to fund this fee on behalf of the ZET, and this was being recommended while the investment returns were poor.

In response to queries, the Executive Manager – Finance advised that the current account balance of £7,548 was allowed as working capital for the ZET to make disbursements. The audit fee of £1,200 was a notional amount that was estimated to be the appropriate fee. The Council was allocated auditors, so there was limited scope to change auditors. However it was coming towards the end of the five-year cycle on which this operated, and a national exercise would soon be taking place to look at a new range of audit providers. Each Council would be given a range within which the audit fee should be agreed and having had a number of very favourable audit reports, it was hoped that the Council's fee would be moving lower down in that range.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that a further report be prepared for Policy and Resources Committee recommending an investment strategy for the Zetland Educational Trust.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that Policy and Resources Committee resolve to approve that the audit fee for the Zetland Educational Trust be met by Shetland Islands Council, with effect from the financial year 2015/16 and going forward, until such time as rates of return on investment improve.

### **37/15      School Comparison Project**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-30-15-F) which informed of the key findings and further actions emerging from the School Comparison Project.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that communication had taken place with a large number of people and their views, which were outlined in the report, were mixed and varied.

The Director of Childrens Services, the Executive Manager – Quality Improvement and Quality Improvement Officer (R Calder) then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- It was being recommended that the School Comparison Project be rebranded in order to provide clarity in moving forward in developing a policy that would improve attainment, delivery and sustainability.
- Consideration was being given to the resource implications that would be required to support central staff in taking the Quality Improvement Framework forward, and there were a number of different options being considered. As resources had been reduced and account had to be taken of the current workload of staff, a report may be brought forward in future with regard to this.
- Education Scotland was currently employing attainment advisors for Scotland, and the Council had submitted an inter-authority for support with other local authorities. Consideration would be given as to how to make the best use of that share of the support by planning together with the other local authorities on quality assurance and attainment.
- An attainment action plan was being proposed, with more rigorous reviewing of results each year. This would include performance in relation to each school and within different subjects across the school estate in order to identify trends. The action plan committed central officers, in discussion with Head Teachers, to evaluate national qualifications using the new benchmarking tool.
- A cohort of staff had participated in the Into Headship Programme, and there were a number of opportunities to undertake Masters Level programmes, which some staff had taken up.
- In line with the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the savings required of Children's Services, each department had been asked to make a percentage cut. A large percentage of these cuts would come from Schools and Quality Improvement as they were the areas of biggest spend. As this progressed, the Service would get a better understanding of the impact on services.
- After the implementation of the McCrone Agreement, a post of CPD Co-ordinator had been created. This had originally been a seconded post but had ended up becoming an administrative post due to the costs involved. The corporate management team and the training function had been centralised, and the post now sat within Human Resources. The postholder was experienced and worked closely with Head Teachers and a wide range of staff.
- There were a number of ways it was proposed to take forward the Raising Attainment For All programme, and they were included in the attainment action plan. Family learning and support was at the heart of this, and there were a number of ideas as to how best to engage with parents and parent councils and build on the good practice that was already in place. There was an important role for Head Teachers in taking parental involvement forward, and there was evidence of existing good practice.

- The review of promoted posts and management structures in secondary schools would be looking for greater parity between smaller sized schools, and there would be further consideration of the role of Depute Head Teachers. A local agreement was being developed for primary schools with five to seven classes, and this was being worked on with the LNCT. The implications for each school were being carefully considered. Schools had evolved considerably since the implementation of the McCrone Agreement and the needs of the schools had changed, so this would be considered carefully when looking to develop greater parity.
- The way rural deprivation was measured, and the associated funding arrangements in respect of the Raising Attainment for All programme was something that would be discussed with the Education Scotland adviser. Education Scotland recognised that rural poverty was something that would have to be considered differently from inner-city poverty, and a bid for funding would be put forward with the other local authorities involved.
- There had been some confusion between the Shetland Learning Partnership, the tertiary education review, and the School Comparison Project. All had started at different times but did cross over. It was hoped that things would be clarified as the projects moved forward, and with the rebranding of the School Comparison Project. Consideration would be given as to the actions required in respect of the Shetland Learning Partnership and how this would interact with the tertiary education project, and this should make things clearer.
- The report set out the percentage spend on education across local authorities in Scotland. The geographical spread across Shetland added to the cost of delivery locally but the school estate was also a factor, and these would have to be balanced and taken account of in policies. The Service was in a position of having to reduce its budgets, and it had got to the stage where there would have to be some difficult decisions made around quality. Whilst it was appreciated that the school estate locally was not the sole factor adding to the cost of delivery, if it was retained and the Service had to make its budget savings, there would have to be some changes to the quality of education delivered locally.
- It was a statutory requirement for schools to produce improvement plans. It was proposed to streamline the approach so that there was more focus on pupil impact, and there would be more advice and guidance made available to schools as to how these plans should be constructed. Shared practice and local and national initiatives would be looked at, and greater collaboration between Head Teachers and central staff would be established. It was felt that visits from Quality Improvement Officers to schools was putting too much pressure on staff time, and it was suggested that there should be a reduced number of visits but that they would be themed to make better use of resources.
- The creation of a longer-term plan to create the conditions for improved pupil motivation and engagement would be led from within the central service, and there were a number of people involved in the working group that had generated the key priorities who would be able to assist on this matter. It would not require a post to be backfilled while the work was being carried out, and the terminology would be corrected so that this was clear.

- Remote teaching was something that would be closely evaluated and monitored. Remote delivery of maths in the Western Isles was something the Council was following closely, in addition to work happening locally.

The Chair commended staff involved for their hard work on this project.

It was commented that this was a very important piece of work that would assist the Council greatly in developing policy and attaching resources in the future, and that it was likely to change the way that resources were allocated in future.

It was commented that it had always been understood that Shetland had an expensive model of delivery and was amongst the highest spenders in the country, yet the information contained in the report illustrated that Shetland was the third lowest in terms of the percentage of its budget spent on education. It was questioned if this was where Shetland wanted to be, and whether the Council should in fact be reconsidering its budgetary allocations and allocating more of its resources in future to education rather than making budgetary cuts in this area. There had already been many cuts made in education, and it would not be possible to make many more without affecting the delivery of education.

Ms Wishart moved that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report, and Mr Smith seconded.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- note the content of Appendix A: The School Comparison Project Report, which outlined the progress of the project to date and the further actions required in moving forward;
- note the content of Appendix B: The School Comparison Project: A Summary of Further Actions and Projected Savings and Costs;
- note that a further update on the progress of the project will be provided;
- agree that the School Comparison Project is re-branded and is referred to as a "Quality Improvement Framework".

38/15

#### **Services for Children and Young People in Shetland: Care Inspectorate Report on a Joint Inspection**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-27-15-F) which presented the findings of a joint inspection which took place between January and March 2015 of services for children and young people in Shetland.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that it had been agreed at the Shetland Partnership Board meeting on 17 September that Councillor Gary Cleaver be nominated to join the Integrated Children and Young People's Strategic Planning Group who would monitor the action plan. A new Quality Assurance Sub-Committee had been established, and it would be considering the timescales produced and how the actions were being progressed. This would be reported back through the Shetland Partnership, and to the Committee via the quarterly performance reports.

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

- It was hoped to build up a bank of foster carers in addition to expanding the number of fee paid foster carers. Work was ongoing to try and attract more foster carers, as there was not an ideal number locally.
- The house at Windybrae had not been staffed fully for a period of time but it was used when required, using staff for these emergency situations. A second phase of staff recruitment was being considered, as the equivalent of four full-time staff were still required. Workforce planning for staff was being considered so that staff could undertake other duties.
- Some of the quality indicators had been classed as "weak" and "adequate" and they were being looked at in more detail, and improvements would be made to the systems. Progress would be reported back to the Shetland Partnership Board.

It was commented that it was good to see that early intervention work had been highlighted and recognised, and that overall it had been a good report.

**Decision:**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the action plan following the report on the joint inspection of services for children and young people in Shetland, as part of its scrutiny role under the approve Planning and Performance Management Framework.

39/15

**Child Protection Referrals**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-31-15-F) which provided detail of the increase in Child Protection referrals requested at a previous meeting.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Children and Families Social Work Team were taking forward the points that had been identified as requiring improvement, alongside NHS Shetland and the overall social work teams.

It was commented that the increase in partnership working was something to be welcomed.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee noted the detail for the increase in Child Protection referrals and the actions being taken by the Children and Families Social Work Team.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am.

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Chair