



MINUTES

AB - Public

Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 29 February 2016 at 10.00am

Present:

Councillors:

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

Religious Representatives:

R MacKay	M Tregonning
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Apologies:

T Macintyre	M Stout
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In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children’s Services
N Grant, Director – Development Services
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance
S Hunter, Executive Manager – Children’s Resources
S Brunton, Team Leader - Legal
T Coutts, Business Development and Training Manager
B Kerr, Communications Officer
M Mullay, Performance and Improvement Officer
I Peterson, Acting Principal – Shetland College
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

04/16

Short Breaks for Children – Inspection Reports

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Children’s Resources (CS-05-16-F) which presented the Short Breaks for Children Support Service and Care Home Service Care Inspectorate Reports from August 2015.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that all the recommendations were being addressed. She then went on to respond to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- The Team Leader (Short Breaks) post was currently the subject of a recruitment process, the previous attempt having been unsuccessful. The post was currently being filled by acting up arrangements and duties were being shared by a number of people. There was some difficulty in recruiting to posts in this area and there had been some staff turnover, but this had now settled down.
- The quality of management and leadership had received an adequate grading. This could partly be attributed to there being no Team Leader in place, but it also related to the wider quality policies and procedures. New policies and procedures had been put in place, but there was a need to keep refreshing them to ensure standards were being maintained.
- The involvement of young people and their parents in recruitment processes was something that was being considered across the directorate. This did not necessarily relate to having them on recruitment panels, but was instead about having them feed into the interview questions and areas that they thought should be looked at or where more information should be sought.

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

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RESOLVED** to approve both the Short Breaks for Children Support Service and the Care Home Service Action Plans.

05/16

Development Services Directorate Performance Report
9 Month/3rd Quarter 2015/16

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV-09-16-F) which summarised the activity and performance of the Development Services Directorate for the reporting period above.

The Director of Development Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the areas that came within the Committee's remit related to Shetland College, Train Shetland, and community and adult learning. A key action point was to progress the Shetland Tertiary Education Research and Training (STERT) Project, and the Council had made a key decision in this respect the previous week. The figures in relation to Modern Apprentices were very good, work was ongoing to increase the number of short courses provided, and student enrolments were around the same as they had been these past couple of years. However this required to be higher from a sustainability point of view, and work was going on to increase all activity.

The Director of Development Services, the Acting Principal – Shetland College and the Business Development and Training Manager then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- It was hoped to have a report ready for the April cycle of meetings regarding new governance arrangements in respect of the STERT review proposals. This would be a challenging timescale, and it may require the purchase of some

short-term services to assist. However it had been emphasised that this was one of the biggest priorities for the Council.

- Credits were the new Scottish Funding Council (SFC) measurement for student activity, and the SFC were currently considering the values that would be attached to them. This would not be in place until the 2017/18 academic year. Information was still awaited regarding remoteness and rurality payments that would be applied, and allocations in respect of full-time and part-time courses would also be revised. Once further information was available, an exercise would be carried out to see how this may translate locally.
- The indicators in respect of Modern Apprentices did not lend themselves to being measured quarterly, however the figures were generally on target. Those who did not complete their apprenticeships generally left to take up employment elsewhere. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) did carry out surveys relating to the destination of Modern Apprentices following the completion of apprenticeships, so information should be available and could be supplied to the Committee. Figures kept by SDS related to the total number of modern apprentices locally, whereas those in the report related to those managed by Train Shetland only. Discussions did take place with local industry as to which apprenticeships may be required.

(Mr Robinson left the meeting)

Decision:

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

06/16

Children's Services Performance Report
9 Month/3rd Quarter 2015/16

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-04-16-F) which summarised the activity and performance of the Children's Services for Quarter 3 of 2015/16.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that progress to date was as had been hoped for. With regard to the new Anderson High School project, both buildings were progressing within the timescale and there would be a further opportunity soon for members of the Committee to carry out a site visit. In respect of the Schools Reconfiguration Project, the Consultation Reports would be presented to the Committee following their publication. The new Childcare Strategy was being delayed until more information was available regarding increased entitlement for Early Years Learning and Childcare. This would require more resources and it was hoped to come with a report before the summer. In respect of risk, one issue that remained an issue was the recruitment of specialist secondary school staff.

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

- The figures in respect of free school meals did not define separately the P1-3 entitlement to free school meals, so this could be defined separately in future.

- The new Childcare Strategy would take into account provision by private or non-Council providers, and consideration would be given to how provision could be increased across all providers.
- The recent campaign to recruit more foster carers had not been particularly successful, and this was something that would have to be progressed as a matter of urgency. However there had been some enquiries over the last few weeks, so it was hoped that these would produce results.
- A briefing note would be provided in respect of destinations of school leavers, and whether this was into further or higher education or employment.
- Eleven students were currently undertaking the engineering academy, and three were doing the care academy. The uptake rate had not been as high as hoped, but the academies were in their first year and the students that were participating were finding them beneficial. A further academy – the built environment – was being added, and the academy programme had been reported on nationally.

Decision:

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

07/16

**Management Accounts for Education and Families Committee:
2015/16 – Projected Outturn at Quarter 3**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Finance (F-011-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 it was a positive report. Cost pressures in respect of the increased entitlement to free school meals and off-island placements were currently being absorbed by overall underspends, and this position would continue to be monitored. The overspend in relation to capital was as a result of a timing issue with the new Anderson High School project, and funding would be realigned in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

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

- The reduction in fostering allowances brought Shetland into line with other local authorities. Work was ongoing to look at the development of a professional foster care service in Shetland in the future.
- The introduction of school meals for P1-3 had meant that there had been a small increase in staffing.
- Supply staff budgets had been removed from the Directorate area, and now sat within contingency budgets. This protected service budgets from a risk perspective and provided a more balanced approach.

- The underspend in relation to Train Shetland would not be a long-term position, and this had been recognised as part of the STERT project.

Some discussion took place in relation to the implementation of political initiatives such as free school meals for P1-3 and the increase in early years entitlements. It was felt that there was a need to continue to impress upon the government that sufficient resources had to be made available to fund these initiatives, and to highlight that it may be more expensive to implement these initiatives locally. It was noted that the free school meals initiative had been fully funded but concern was expressed that ring fencing for these initiatives would end up being removed, and funding would be included in the general grant received by Councils.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee reviewed the Management accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 3.

08/16

Education and Families Committee Business Programme 2016/17

The Committee considered a report by the Team Leader – Administration (GL-03-16-F) which informed of the planned business to be presented to Committee for the financial year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

The Committee noted the report.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee noted its planned business for the financial year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

The meeting concluded at 11.10am.

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Chair