



MINUTES

A&B - Public

Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Tuesday 19 January 2016 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:

T Macintyre	R MacKay
M Tregonning	

Apologies:

None

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children's Services
S Thompson, Executive Manager – Schools
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
E Park, Transport Strategy Officer
K Simmons, Solicitor
M Thomson, Management Accountant
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

Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of the meetings held on (i) 5 October 2015 on the motion of Mr Smith, seconded by Mr Campbell, and (ii) 23 November 2015 on the motion of Mr Robertson, seconded by Mr Sandison.

The Chair advised that before consideration of the agenda items, she would give an update on current issues within the Schools Service, and the Director of Children's Services would provide an update on the new Anderson High School (AHS) and Halls of Residence.

Firstly, following Lesley Simpson's appointment to the Quality Improvement Officer role for children with Additional Support Needs, Andrea Henderson had been appointed as Head Teacher of Dunrossness Primary School. Melvyn Clark, Depute Head Teacher at Bells Brae Primary School, had agreed to assist centrally with the pre-school registration week which runs from 8-12 February, and would be undertaking some other pre-school duties part-time for the next two months. Kate Grieve would be retiring from Sound Primary School at the end of the month, and Anne-Marie Angus had been appointed to the Head Teacher role there. Julie Thomson had been appointed as interim joint Head Teacher for the Sandness and Happyhansel Primary Schools following the resignation of Ian Perry, and there was currently an ongoing recruitment process to replace the Principal Teacher post for Fetlar following the resignation of Paul Gill.

She went on to say that the annual local opportunity event for young people would be taking place on 25 February. She was pleased to say that three academies were being promoted for next year's cohort of Secondary Five pupils – engineering, care, and a new one called "the built environment" which involved aspects of construction, and that local industries were continuing to support this for the senior phase.

The Burravoe Primary School inspection report had been published last week, and it showed that the pupils there were making good progress and the standards of attainment were very good. This was a reflection of the hard work put in by the Head Teacher, school staff, parents and pupils. The Aith Junior High School inspection report was published today, and she was pleased that this reflected the hard work of school staff and pupils. These two reports had been published too late to be discussed at today's meeting, but would be on the agenda for the next one.

The Director of Children's Services advised that the concrete was currently being poured for the first half of the first floor level of the new AHS. The remaining half would be poured in the next couple of weeks, then the pillars for the remaining floors could commence. Some of the concrete for the ground floor of the Halls of Residence had been poured, with the steel frame due to arrive in February.

01/16 **External Audit Reports – Care Inspectorate**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-01-16-F) which highlighted three reports from the Care Inspectorate, and any actions to be taken as a result of the reports.

The Executive Manager – Schools summarised the main terms of the report, advising that all three inspections had been unannounced inspections. The recommendations in respect of the Ness Out of School Care Service and the Happyhansel Primary School Nursery had been taken care of. The inspection of Scalloway Primary School Early Years was the first following the substantial refurbishment that had taken place there. The recommendation in respect of the door - which had resulted in the "adequate" grade – would be completed by Easter. The remaining recommendations had already been addressed.

Responding to queries, the Executive Manager – Schools advised that an assurance had been received from Building Services that the recommendation in respect of the door would be completed within the relevant deadline. With regard to the inclusion of the child's view in their care plans, it was not the intention that only the child would be involved, and that parents too would be included.

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

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee noted the reports on Ness Out of School Care Service for Children, Happyhansel Primary School Nursery and Scalloway Primary School Early Years.

02/16

Review: School Transport Policy 2016

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Schools (CS-02-16-F) which presented a reviewed and updated School Transport Policy.

The Executive Manager – Schools summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Policy had not been reviewed since 2007. The new Policy was a product of the collaboration between a number of Council services, and it sought to address issues that had arisen following the redesign of the transport network. She clarified that the budget sat within the Development Service, but policy matters relating to provision were referred to the Education and Families Committee.

She went on to highlight the changes that were proposed to the current policy, advising that they were intended to align with the Council's Admissions Policy and to clarify a number of areas which were not clear in the current policy. There were no changes proposed to entitlement.

The Executive Manager – Schools and Transport Strategy Officer then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- The new Policy would apply once it had been agreed by the Council.
- The guidance relating to the promotion of walking and cycling to school should not be compromised by the offering of vacant seats on school transport vehicles to children. Following the redesign of the transport network, it was now the case that more children were walking to pick up points.
- If new pick up points were required as a result of new houses being built, there was no budget in place to cover the extra costs this would entail. It would be necessary to try and meet the costs within existing resources.
- There was a requirement for parents to lodge a single primary address with the Council for their child, and transport entitlement related to that primary address. There was no entitlement to school transport from more than one address, and this had been agreed by the Ombudsman following a case which had been raised last year. However if a request was received, the Council did what it could to assist and parents could apply to use vacant seats, but there was no legal responsibility to provide transport from more than one address. To amend the policy to increase entitlement to more than one address would mean that more vehicles would be required in areas where capacity had been reached, and there would be increased costs.
- School transport had been maintained in the East Voe, Scalloway area following the transport network redesign due to the inadequacy of the footpaths in the area.

- Road safety audits and assessments were based on children being accompanied by an adult, and no age was specified when the child could be unaccompanied. It was the responsibility of parents to accompany children to pick up points.
- The responsibilities of contractors/transport operators and vehicle operators were provided to all bidders for contracts. Within the contract documents, it was the responsibility of contractors to ensure that drivers were adequately trained to meet the requirements of the Policy.

Concern was expressed at the entitlement relating to one primary address only, as there would be a number of children who split their time between parents. Whilst these numbers were relatively small at the moment, it was acknowledged that this could be a growing issue which may have to be looked at in the future.

On the motion of Mr Robertson, seconded by Mr Robinson, the Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Council resolves to approve the proposed updated School Transport Policy.

The meeting concluded at 10.30am.

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Chair