



MINUTES

A&B - Public

Special Education and Families Committee

Auditorium, Shetland Museum and Archives, Hay's Dock, Lerwick

Thursday 26 January 2017 at 2.00pm

Present:

Councillors:

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| P Campbell | B Fox |
| A Manson | F Robertson |
| G Smith | M Tregonning |
| V Wishart | |

Apologies:

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| T Macintyre | G Cleaver |
| R Mackay | G Robinson |
| D Sandison | M Stout |

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children's Services
S Hunter, Executive Manager – Children's Resources
M Nicolson, Chief Social Work Officer
R Calder, Quality Improvement Officer
K Johnston, Solicitor
B Kerr, Communications Officer
L Adamson, Committee Officer

Chairperson

Ms Wishart, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest

None

01/17

The Quality Improvement Framework Project Update Report

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-03-17-F) which outlined the progress of the Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) project.

The Quality Improvement Officer summarised the main terms of the report, and he outlined the key developments during the first year of the project. He advised on

the link between this project and the national education agenda, and the emphasis on tackling bureaucracy in schools. He concluded by advising that a meeting of the Project Board will take place in early February to reflect on developments to date, and plan for further progress in the work-streams.

In response to a question, the Quality Improvement Officer reported that the sharing of secondary teaching staff between school settings was now becoming the increasingly accepted recruitment approach. He advised that when a secondary teaching post becomes vacant within the school estate an initial review takes place to determine whether there is capacity to fill the post internally. In recognising that working between schools can be challenging and demanding, a guidance document has been produced to provide clarity to teachers and senior managers to ensure support mechanisms are in place. It is also accepted that every shared teaching arrangement is different, and issues that have arisen have been reflected in the development of the guidance.

In response to questions relating to the national targets set in the 3 Stretch Aims within the QIF, the Committee was advised on the detailed work being done to analyse national data on attainment. Teachers will also be reflecting on a range of evidence to make annual judgements on the performance of pupils in literacy and numeracy in the Broad General Education that links to the Attainment Action Plan to establish Shetland's current attainment levels. Shetland's actual performance will then be reported to a future meeting, with any proposals required to modify the stretch aims.

During the discussion, concern was expressed at the lack of Scottish Government attainment gap funding to Shetland. Comment was made on the need for further work to be done in terms of comparisons with other Local Authorities, and analysis of the implications from an island perspective to further Shetland's case to the Scottish Government to access a greater proportion of the funding to influence, maintain and improve attainment levels locally. The Quality Improvement Officer advised on the work being done locally with the Attainment Adviser to help close the attainment gap in schools through the establishment of vulnerability criteria. The Committee was also informed that this would be discussed at meetings of the Northern Alliance, which provides opportunities to highlight issues with all local authorities. In response to further comments on the need for specific representation to be made, the Director of Children's Services undertook to provide further information on the attainment gap funding and the vulnerability criteria in a briefing paper to Members.

Reference was made to the table at Section 9.2 of the Update Report at Appendix A, and to the proposals for the 33 period Common Curriculum Structure for pupils personalising their learning in up to 9 subjects in Secondary 3. In response to questions, the Quality Improvement Officer advised that the 3 periods allocated to 'flexibility' allowed for the timetable to be developed to suit the individual requirements of each learner, which he advised is an important element of the Curriculum for Excellence. In response to a suggestion that learners be given the option to use these 3 periods within the curriculum structure for independent learning and for the subject to be renamed "Flexibility/Independent Learning", the Quality Improvement Officer said that the detail on the Common Curriculum Structure was currently being agreed, and he would take on board the suggestions made.

A request was made for an update report to Committee in March on progress with the QIF Project, and that the report informs on how Shetland compares to the national targets set in the 3 Stretch Aims.

Decision:

The Education and Families noted the content of Appendix A: The Quality Improvement Framework Project Update Report, which outlined the progress of the project to date within the five work streams.

02/17

Social Work in Scotland: Audit Scotland Report, September 2016

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Social Work Officer CS-01-17-F) which noted and discussed the recommendations of the Audit Scotland Report.

The Chief Social Work Officer outlined to Committee the key messages and recommendations from Audit Scotland to the Council and the Integration Joint Board (IJB). The Chief Social Work Officer advised on the importance to have a national response to the Audit Scotland report, and for decision makers locally to be made aware of the findings and on how the recommendations relate in a local context. She advised that the Seminar on Monday next week will allow for a structured discussion with representatives of Audit Scotland, however she acknowledged that it would have been beneficial for the Seminar to precede reporting to Committee, however timescales had not allowed.

During the discussion, Members commented that they found the recommendations in the report depressing, and that many of the comments made were statements of the obvious and not particularly helpful. Concern was also expressed that the responsibility to face up to the challenges rests with Elected Members, the Council and the IJB, rather than any solutions being put forward or any indication how a sustainable situation can be achieved. It was also suggested that the Council make clear representation to the Scottish Government that in order for services to be provided at the existing levels, appropriate funding levels will be required to Local Authorities.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee considered the Audit Scotland report, Social Work in Scotland, and noted its key messages and recommendations.

03/17

Residential Child Care Capacity (Care & Additional Support Needs) 2017-25

The Committee considered a report by Executive Manager – Children's Resources (CS-02-17-F) which proposed the development of a Strategic Outline Case for the provision of residential child care in Shetland from 2017-25 for submission through the Council's Gateway Process for the management of Capital Projects.

In introducing the report, the Executive Manager – Children's Resources advised on the range of provision to children and families in Shetland. He outlined the key challenges faced by the Residential Care Service and advised on the need to modernise the residential estate to meet the needs of children and young people.

During the discussion, the Chair referred to the duty on the Council to provide care for the most vulnerable people in Shetland, and as more young people are requiring permanent care this influences the need for additional residential accommodation.

In response to comments regarding the statement at Section 2.7 of the report, in that the prevalence of substance misuse in Shetland is 10 times that in Orkney, it was acknowledged that the figures will include alcohol consumption where statistics show that there are issues of excessive drinking in Shetland.

The Chair referred to the need for additional residential accommodation to be investigated further, and she moved the recommendation in the report. Mr Campbell seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee **RESOLVED** to approve that the Executive Manager – Children’s Resources develops a Strategic Outline Case for the provision of residential child care in Shetland from 2017-25 for submission through the Council’s Gateway Process for the Management of Capital Projects.

The meeting concluded at 3.00pm.

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Chair