

**Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 28 August 2017 at 9.30am**

Present:

Councillors:

P Campbell	J Fraser
C Hughson	R McGregor
D Sandison	C Smith
G Smith	T Smith
R Thomson	B Wishart

Religious Representatives:

T Macintyre	M Tregonning
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Apologies:

E Macdonald

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children’s Services
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement
M Nicolson, Executive Manager – Children and Families
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
K Johnston, Solicitor
J Macleod, Performance and Improvement Adviser
J Sutherland, Team Leader – Family Services
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Chairperson

Mr G Smith, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

The Chair welcomed back religious representatives, Reverend Macintyre and Mr Tregonning, who would be serving another term on the Education and Families Committee, and it was noted that there was still one religious representative vacancy on the Committee. He went on to say that he was in early discussions regarding the Shetland Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament attending Committee meetings as observers.

Declarations of Interest

Mr Sandison declared an interest in Agenda Item 8 “Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare” as a director of a childcare provider.

Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2017 on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr T Smith.

Children's Services Performance Report – Three Month/First Quarter 2017/18

The Committee considered a report by the Director – Children's Services (CS-16-17-F) which summarised the activity and performance of the Children's Services Directorate for the first quarter of 2017/18.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, outlining the progress that had been made over the last three months. Referring in particular to the new Anderson High School project, she advised that the buildings were due to be handed over on 7 September. External works, landscaping, and final preparations were now being carried out, and the project was very close to being finished. There would be some ongoing snagging works to be carried out, but the contractor had advised that the handover date was achievable. Staff were closely monitoring the project. In respect of the Northern Alliance, one of the current project areas was regionalisation, and a working group had been set up to look at this. She went on to highlight that a risk that had been identified, and was currently being experienced in Children's Services, was the loss of key staff. This was particularly relevant in respect of specialist teaching posts and social work, and it was an area of concern.

The Chair referred to the regionalisation approach that was currently being taken forward by the Scottish Government's, and said that the Northern Alliance was keen that the Scottish Government recognised the importance of its work which demonstrated the value of retaining democratic accountability and decision-making at a local level, whilst working together so that there was a co-ordinated approach in some areas. He was included in, and attended meetings of, the Convention of Education Committee Conveners, and this link was very important in terms of democratic accountability.

It was noted that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney, was intending to visit Shetland soon, and he had indicated his willingness to meet with officials. Therefore this would be a good opportunity to put forward concerns regarding proposed changes in governance, and to highlight the value of retention of democratic accountability at a local level.

In response to a query regarding concerns that had been expressed that the new Anderson High School and halls of residence projects were falling behind schedule, and that extra holidays had been granted to pupils as a result, the Director of Children's Services confirmed that the five additional days holidays granted by the Scottish Government was normal practice for new school builds, and similar arrangements were applied throughout the country. The additional days had been granted for the purpose of moving everything from the old school, and to allow for everything to be unpacked and set up at the new building. The handover date was 7 September, but pupils would not be moving in until after the October holidays, so there would be a degree of flexibility between these two dates.

Responding to queries regarding the increase in sickness and overtime levels, she went on to confirm that there were policies in place to monitor sickness levels and return to work very closely, and action was taken where appropriate. The figures in the report related just to the first quarter, and would be monitored closely throughout the year. The increase in janitors' overtime was as a result of the increase in the number of school lets, and there were a number of areas within Children's Services where overtime would always be required. Again, this was

something that would be monitored closely, and she confirmed that the booking fees did not cover the overhead costs of school lets.

It was questioned if counselling was available to school pupils locally, and the Director of Children's Services advised that counsellors were not available in-school for pupils. However there was access to counselling services via the NHS mental health service.

Decision:

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

16/17 Management Accounts for Education and Families Committee: Projected Draft Outturn at Quarter 1

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (F-064-F) which monitored the financial performance of services within its remit for Quarter 1 of the 2017/18 financial year.

The Executive Manager – Finance summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the figures for Quarter 1 were forecasting an overspend of £473,000. £100,000 had been allocated from cost pressures into the directorate in order to support known cost pressures.

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

- Due to an increase in school rolls, an additional six primary teachers had been required this year. When budgets had been set, it had been known that between four and six posts would be required, and an allocation had been made to cover some of these posts. The Council was aware from nursery/pre-school projections, and from staff in the local schools, how many pupils were likely to be attending each school. However, in a small local authority area with small schools, many schools were on the cusp of the staffing level requirements, and even one family moving into or out of an area would affect this. Therefore it was not possible to tell exactly what the requirements for each school would be at the time of budget setting.
- It was becoming more challenging to deliver statutory services within budget. There were areas of pressure relating to increased requirements for teaching staff and ASN support this year, and for young people requiring specialist support as part of the Council's corporate parenting role.
- The cost of janitor overtime was not covered by the income received from school lets. In respect of lets for the Anderson High School games hall, this was something that would cease when the school moved to the new site. The use of the games hall on the current site was something that would have to be taken into account in the overall masterplan for the site in the future.

The Chair said that it was apparent that there was little room left in the budget for manoeuvre, and that it was not always possible to be certain about requirements when budgets were set, although he was reassured that the budget allowed for cost pressures that arose. However the reality was that although it had been possible in the past for the budget to be balanced, this was now getting increasingly difficult. Children's Services had no option but to increase teacher numbers when this was

required, and to keep young people safe and avoid sending them off-island wherever possible. However there were costs attached that required to be met and if the budget was not sufficient, these costs would have to be met from elsewhere.

It was commented that as the projected overspend just constituted 1% of the overall budget, it should not been seen as something that was insurmountable at this stage, and the fact that school rolls were increasing was something that should be welcomed.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee reviewed the Management Accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 1, and agreed the actions set out by the Director of Children's Services to mitigate the estimated overspend.

17/17 **Corporate Parenting Strategy**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Children's Resources (CS-13-17-F).

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that appointments were sought for the Corporate Parenting Board. The Strategy contained a number of priorities, with a lead officer appointed to deal with each, and small working groups being formed to take them forward.

Responding to a question, she advised that the increase in age range to 25 should not have a major impact on resources available. Although locally the through care and aftercare service provided services until the age of 21, it was not the case that services stopped completely at the age of 21, and they continued to be involved with the young person.

It was suggested that Job Centre Plus advisors would be useful in assisting the working group dealing with ensuring that care leavers would have access to a range of employment opportunities, and the Director of Children's Services advised that she would pass this on to the Lead Officer.

The Chair commented that training on corporate parenting would be taking place later in the week, and he hoped that there would be a good turnout from the Committee.

Mr C Smith moved that the Education and Families Committee recommend that the Council appoint Mr G Smith, Chair of the Education and Families Committee, as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, and Mr T Smith seconded.

Nominations were sought for a further two elected members to be appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board by the Council.

Mr C Smith moved that Mr T Smith be nominated, and Mr Campbell seconded.

Ms Hughson moved that Mr J Fraser be nominated, and Reverend Macintyre seconded.

Both Members accepted their nomination.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee recommended approval of the Corporate Parenting Strategy to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Education and Families Committee recommended that the Council appoints the Chair of the Education and Families Committee, Councillor George Smith, as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, and nominated the following two elected members to be appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board:

Councillor Theo Smith
Councillor John Fraser

18/17

Shetland's Autism Spectrum Disorder Strategy 2016-21: Action Plan Update

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Adult Services (CC-38-17-F).

The Team Leader – Family Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that a strategic group had been established to oversee the implementation of the Strategy, and a focus group would be responsible for the operational delivery. Delegated authority was being sought to provide future updates on an annual basis via the Children's Services Directorate Plan.

On the motion of Mr Sandison, seconded by Mr Tregonning, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee noted the progress made in taking forward Shetland's Autism Spectrum Disorder Strategy 2016-2021 Action Plan, and delegated authority to provide future updates on an annual basis through the Children's Services Directorate Plan.

19/17

Shetland Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2016/17

The Committee considered a report by the Lead Officer for Adult and Child Protection (CS-17-17-F).

Ms Hughson declared an interest as a partner of the Shetland Child Protection Committee.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Shetland Child Protection Committee (CPC) reported to a number of committees on an annual basis. The Shetland CPC had focused its activity in a number of areas for 2016/17, as outlined in Section 4.1 of the report, and an action plan had been developed and implemented following on from the inspection of Children's Services by the Care Commission.

Responding to questions, she advised that a Mobile Phone and Internet Safety Sub-Committee had been formed, and various event and activities had been organised around this. Some events had been well-attended, but it had sometimes been difficult to engage with parents and parent councils to ensure that the message was being passed on. Efforts were being made to highlight the importance to parents of attending some of these events. The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement added that it had been useful that those involved in the parent involvement evening at Hamnavoe School had attended a parent council chairs meeting to advise how to structure such an event, and it was hoped that this would assist other parent councils to deliver such events in future.

It was suggested that any Members attending Parent Council meetings could highlight this to the Parent Councils.

It was questioned if it would be useful to have member representation on partnerships the CPC was involved with, such as the Shetland Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Shetland Alcohol and Drug Partners.

The Director of Children's Services advised that this was not something that was within the CPC's remit to recommend, but the question could be put to the Chairs of these groups.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee noted the Shetland Child Protection Committee Annual Report for 2016/17, as part of its scrutiny role under the approved Planning and Performance Management Framework.

20/17

Shetland's Integrated Children and Young People's Services Plan

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-19-17-F).

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Plan was presented on an annual basis, and it illustrated how well the agencies were working together in producing the Plan and delivering on it. Three priority areas had been developed, and there had been a lot of discussion around how to deliver on these priorities, with areas of good practice illustrated in the report.

It was questioned if there should be more specific inclusion in the Plan relating to counselling services for school pupils and young people.

The Director of Children's Services advised that she would take this back to the Chair of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing group to consider as mental health had been recognised as an area that required to be developed, alongside early intervention.

It was commented that there were a number of factors that contributed to childhood inequality, and that these could not be tackled in isolation. There were a number of reports that had illustrated the value of early intervention, but the results of this intervention tended to be longer-term, and often not enough time was allowed to see the results. As resources available for preventative work had reduced, this had often resulted in the symptoms having to be addressed rather than the causes. As a Committee, it was important to reflect on this when considering reports, and give consideration to the resources required to support early preventative work. This would be a challenge, given the statutory services that required to be supported, but the long-term benefits should reduce that statutory spend in future.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee approved the Integrated Children's Services Plan.

21/17

Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Quality Improvement (CS-18-17-F).

The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement summarised the main terms of the report, advising that it was now a statutory requirement for local authorities to produce an annual plan setting out how they would be tackling priorities within their improvement framework. Because of the timing requirements, it had not been possible to carry out full consultation with key staff in schools, pupils and parents. Therefore the Plan would be submitted to the Scottish Government on the proviso that this consultation had yet to be undertaken. The work being carried out within the Plan connected with work being carried out through the Northern Alliance, and some local schools were participating in a number of projects.

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

- It was intended that standardised assessments would be used alongside the professional judgements that teachers already used to evaluate the level that children had achieved, but it was not possible at this stage to judge how this would evolve over time. It was understood that there were no proposals to create league tables. Local authorities would submit information, and would use the information received back to see how their schools were comparing nationally.
- The Northern Alliance was working alongside the Association of Directors of Education to look at other areas that should be taken into account, other than free school meals uptake, when considering the distribution of funding. It was difficult as there was little other information pulled together nationally other than free school meals uptake, but there was "Fairer Funding" consultation ongoing at the moment which the Council could feed into.
- Pupil Equity funding had been awarded to some schools in Shetland, and work that had been done locally would support the identification of vulnerability criteria. This had been sent out to schools to take into consideration when considering improvement planning, and it included things like social inclusion, access to technology, access to transport and family circumstances. Appropriate information had been supplied to schools around vulnerability criteria and, alongside teacher judgement, this would support schools in identifying how to use this funding. Work was also being done locally to build up a picture of how these issues were impacting on children in schools and their achievements, and this would support Head Teachers in identifying how to use the funding they had been awarded. Head Teachers were also being provided with the opportunity to have training regarding how to measure improvement, and they were keen to be supported in this.

In response to a query regarding whether there should be urgent political representations regarding 'island proofing' to ensure equitable distribution of funding, the Chair advised that this was a political matter that had already been flagged up, and he assured members it was going to be raised with the Cabinet Secretary – Education and Skills. He was hopeful that his response would be available in time for the next Committee meeting, and the work that was being undertaken locally would assist in putting forward the case that there were other factors that required to be taken into consideration, such as the cost of living in parts of Shetland. Discussions would also take place with him regarding the

proposals to give head teachers more autonomy, and the potential impact this may have on small communities like Shetland, where head teachers often also had teaching roles.

It was noted that a number of these issues had already been raised with the Scottish Government by local authorities through CoSLA, and the Leader advised that he would be willing to take forward any points made by the Committee to the CoSLA Leaders meeting.

It was pointed out that civil servants had been instructed to work on reducing the administrative workload of head teachers, and it was important that the Scottish Government was informed of all the issues that had been raised locally. It was also noted that funding applied to colleges in Scotland did take rurality factors into account.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee noted the key steps being taken to address the national Excellence and Equity agenda, and approved the draft National Improvement Framework Plan due for publication on 1 September 2017, following completion of consultation with stakeholders.

(Mr Sandison left the meeting)

22/17

Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Quality Improvement (CS-14-17-F).

The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the first draft of the strategic delivery plan had to be submitted by 29 September. The Committee was being asked to consider and approve the strategic direction for the expansion. There were three main areas to consider – the delivery model, workforce planning, and infrastructure planning. Three types of setting had been identified, and there was a commitment to grow and sustain a qualified workforce. It was proposed that there would be a change to teacher input, with a focus on targeting children with identified early needs to support their achievement. A project management approach was being taken, and a project board was in place and a risk register was being developed. The Scottish Government continued to inform local authorities that it was intended that the expansion would be fully funded.

The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- The information received by the Council was that both capital and revenue funding would be allocated. Once every local authority had submitted its plan, the level of funding required would be assessed by the Scottish Government, so it was vital to include everything in the Strategic Delivery Plan.
- Partner providers and the private sector were very much included in the Plan. As long as providers were meeting quality standards, it would be possible for local authorities to buy provision from them. The Council was already in partnership with a number of providers in respect of provision for entitled two-year olds, and they would be included in plans for developing the service. Staff, including those

in partner providers, would be supported in their training to undertake qualifications, and a formal partnership would be set up to support training.

- The Council was aware that concerns had been expressed that the private sector could end up being driven out of business. However, locally, blended provision – a mixture of nursery and childminder provision - was already being trialled. Quality Improvement Officers were also supporting child minders, as they were very much part of the picture for accessing entitlement.
- Provision had been made for a ‘Centre Manager’ post, as the hub model would be open 50 weeks per year, so there was a range of provision outwith school term.
- Access to transport was something that was currently being discussed as there was an awareness that some people could not access nursery provision because of a lack of transport. This was something that would be incorporated into the Plan.
- The Scottish Government had been put under a lot of pressure to describe the impact of this extended provision on the children themselves, and this was still work in progress. This was something that was being considered locally as part of the Urafirth Primary School trial.

It was commented that there would be additional challenges locally in implementing the expansion in Shetland given its geography, and it was therefore vital that this was stressed to the Scottish Government, and that the Scottish Government honoured its commitment to fully fund the expansion.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee considered the first draft of the Strategic Delivery Plan, approved the initial Strategic Delivery Plan in order to meet the timescale for submission to the Scottish Government by 29 September 2017, and noted that a finalised version of the Strategic Delivery Plan would be submitted to the Education and Families Committee for final approval, including estimated costings in capital and revenue for the expansion.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am.

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Chair