

MINUTES

A&B - Public

**Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 5 February 2018 at 10:00am**

Present:

Councillors:

P Campbell	C Hughson
E Macdonald	R McGregor
C Smith	G Smith
T Smith	R Thomson
B Wishart	

Religious Representatives:

T Macintyre	H Rankine
M Tregonning	

Apologies:

J Fraser	D Sandison
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In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children’s Services
J Belford, Executive Manager - Finance
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement
J Sutherland, Executive Manager – Children’s Resources
S Thompson, Executive Manager - Schools
N Watt, Executive Manager – Sport and Leisure
R Calder, Quality Improvement Officer
K Johnston, Solicitor
B Kerr, Communications Officer
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 those present to the first meeting of 2018. He noted that there were a number of important reports for consideration on today’s agenda, and he thanked officers involved for their work in producing them. He went on to say that the Council had submitted a detailed response to the Scottish Government’s consultation on Empowering Schools, which had been circulated to members of the Committee last week following the outcome of the COSLA meeting. The Council was endorsing the position taken by COSLA, and the relevant link from the COSLA website would be forwarded on to members of the Committee.

He went on to advise the Committee that the Scottish Government and **sportscotland** had recently launched a sports travel fund for island athletes, and he thanked Tavish Scott MSP for his assistance in this matter. He also noted that there had been some media attention

recently regarding the school meals situation at Happyhansel and Walls Primary Schools, and he invited the Director of Children's Services to update the Committee on this matter.

The Director of Children's Services advised that following a recent resignation, the Council had been unable to recruit to the post of cook at Happyhansel School, which also supplied school lunches to Sandness Primary School. In the interim period, parents of children at these schools had been asked to supply packed lunches for their children. Staff had been exploring a number of options to try and resolve the situation, but had been unable to provide cover for the post. The post was currently being readvertised, and it was hoped that the situation would be resolved soon.

Declarations of Interest

None

Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2017 on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Tregonning.

01/18 2018-19 Budget and Charging Proposals for Education and Families Committee

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (F-009-F) outlining the budget and charging proposals for 2018/19.

The Executive Manager - Finance summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the assumptions used to build the overall budget were based on the Medium Term Financial Plan. The original budget estimates had been revised to take account of the removal of the public sector pay cap and the pay award for teachers. There were a number of significant growth items and rising costs, as outlined in Section 4.2 of the report. Children's Services had identified efficiency savings, but these would have a limited impact given the additional costs that were being faced. A key element in balancing the books would be to move forward with the redesign programme in 2018/19. Charging remained a vital element of the budget, and fees and charges had been increased by 2.5% in most areas to reflect rising costs. In concluding, he advised that the overall proposed budget for 2018/19 was £42.5million, and this was an increase of 6.3% on the current year.

The Executive Manager – Finance, the Director of Children's Services, Executive Manager – Sport and Leisure, and Executive Manager - Schools then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- Usage of out-of-school clubs was monitored each year, and the numbers using some of these had dropped. Charges would be increasing, as it was important that the clubs remained sustainable. If any of the clubs became unsustainable, consideration would have to be given as to their future.
- A weekend flat was provided in the new halls of residence for the use of parents. It had not been widely advertised and promoted to date, as it was only recently that it had started to be used. However it was intended to promote it more widely in future.
- Concession rates for games hall use related to under-18s. For outdoor education, VAT applied to the published rates when it was considered that the booking had a commercial element rather than an educational one, and there were bookings of this nature that occurred during the year.

- For school lunches, most schools operated an opt-in system, whereby pupils opted in for school lunches a term at a time. An online payments system had been piloted for some time, and it was planned to roll this out further soon.
- Assumptions had been made at a particular point in time regarding the school rolls for 2018/19. The service itself would receive the budget based on current estimates as part of this process, rather than it being held in contingencies.
- The reduction of a 0.5FTE post at Sandwick Junior High School related to the more efficient use of staff. It had been possible to cover the timetable without this particular post, and there had been no effect on the options offered.

The Chair commented that the budget had a number of growth items in it, although they were known areas of growth and related to the types of service being delivered. There were also constraints relating to pupil/teacher ratios and the school estate, and it was difficult for officers to find more efficiencies. He thanked officers for the work carried out in preparing the budget, and went on to move that the Committee approve the recommendations in the report.

Mr McGregor seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Resources Committee and Council that they approve the budget proposals for 2018/19 included in this report, and set out in detail in the Budget Activity Summary (Appendix 2) and Schedule of Charges (Appendix 3).

02/18

Commonwealth Games 2014: A Legacy for Shetland – 2016/17 Update

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Sport and Leisure (CS-06-F) which outlined the main areas of work undertaken by the Sport and Leisure Service during the academic year 2016-17 to meet the Commonwealth Games 2014 legacy outcomes for Shetland, and highlighted performance in relation to the national key performance indicators that are collated annually by **sportscotland**.

The Executive Manager – Sport and Leisure summarised the main terms of the report, advising that there had been a steady improvement in the key performance indicators, with distinct participant and gender balance figures being above the national average.

The Executive Manager – Sport and Leisure then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- The overall budget for this area of the Council was in the region of £330-340,000, with the Council element being £160,000. The rest was met by **sportscotland**.
- The reference to “invited pupils” related to young people who had been identified as requiring additional support to participate in physical activity.

- Participation figures varied across schools as in smaller schools, it was often possible to work with the whole school group in sessions. In larger groups this was not possible due to the numbers involved and the space required.
- There was not a scheme in place to assist with travel to the hockey pitch in Brae. Sport and Leisure was aware that there were issues and would be happy to meet with the relevant associations to discuss these.
- The Dropbox for Sportswear scheme aimed to reduce barriers to participation for people on low incomes, however there was no information currently available regarding whether period poverty was also a barrier to participation locally.

Members complimented staff for the work that had been carried out, and commented on the positive contribution to the wellbeing of the people of Shetland. It was commented that it was important that efforts continued to maximise opportunities for young people who were less able to engage in order that they could reach their full potential.

The Chair commented that it was important that the information in the report was brought to the attention of a wider audience, given the participation success rates and the contribution to key indicators around healthy lifestyles and areas related to work being carried out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and by the Shetland Partnership.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee NOTED the contents of the report and its appendix.

03/18

Shetland's Social Work and Social Care Governance Framework

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Social Work Officer (CS-04-F) which presented Shetland's Social Work and Social Care Professional Governance Framework.

The Executive Manager – Children's Resources summarised the main terms of the report, advising that fundamental to the framework were professional ethics and values, codes of conduct, standards of practice, policies and procedures, evidence based practice, and quality and performance improvement. The appendices of the report gave a detailed description of the governance frameworks involved, and the diagram at Appendix 3 outlined the reporting structure of the Social Work Governance Group.

The Chair commented that the report was being presented in order that the Committee had a full understanding and knowledge of the mechanisms in place for staff to be able to carry out their roles. The report would also be presented to the Joint Staff Forum and the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration and approval.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on Shetland's Social Work and Social Care Professional Governance Framework.

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Decision:

The Education and Families Committee CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on Shetland's Social Work and Social Care Professional Governance Framework.

05/18

Children's Services: Quality Improvement Framework – Common Timetable Structure

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-02-F) updating the Committee on progress towards the implementation of the new secondary education asymmetric common timetable structure, due to be in operation from the next Shetland wide secondary school timetable change on Tuesday 29 May 2018.

The Quality Improvement Officer summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the asymmetric timetable structure already operated successfully in Aith and Whalsay Junior High Schools, and it was proposed to move the other five secondary settings in Shetland to the same structure, as had been agreed by the Shetland Learning Partnership in 2015. Work had progressed since then, but as transport implications and cost implications had been identified in 2017, the project board had agreed to seek formal ratification of the new structure.

He outlined the learning, teaching and efficiency benefits of the new timetable structure, which would help promote unity, cohesion and consistency across settings, and highlighted the potential risks in not adopting the new timetable structure. The earlier finish on Fridays would also mean that pupils in the halls of residence could travel home earlier at the weekends, and there was potential for this time to be used for collegiate activities for teaching staff.

He went on to say that the proposed timetable structure was an increasingly common arrangement across Scotland, and it was seen as an example of good practice. Significant work had taken place to develop this structure, and it involved schools working closely with parent councils. If the Council approved the proposals in the report, there would be significant engagement with parents, employers and childcare providers to raise awareness, and further discussions with teachers and teaching unions.

The Quality Improvement Officer then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- There were implications for working parents, and the proposals had been discussed with parent councils. There would need to be further engagement with parents, and work was also taking place to look at the potential for providing activities on Friday afternoons for pupils. It was not expected that there would be a charge for activities taking place in schools.
- One of the advantages of a common timetable structure was that it would allow maximum class contact time to be captured. Currently there were a range of timetables in operation and an asymmetric week would help ensure that any unused secondary class contact time that currently existed would be reduced. It was a small amount in each setting, but cumulatively it accounted for an equivalent of approximately 400 hours.
- The Shetland Learning Partnership had considered a number of timetable models and had shared these with schools. The model which included an earlier closure on Friday had been most well-received, partly because it already operated successfully in two settings and it also enabled pupils to travel home earlier at the weekend. A number of other local authorities also used this model.
- Press releases had been issued in 2015 and 2016 to raise the profile of the proposals and, if approved, another would be issued at the end of February. Children's Services planned to write to all parents, and information would also be made available at forthcoming parents' evenings. More engagement would take place with parents, teachers, employers, childcare providers and other local partners.
- The anticipated overall reduction in secondary teaching staff of 2.78FTE would be achieved without impacting on service delivery. It was something that would happen over time via natural wastage.
- Transport Planning had spent a significant amount of time discussing the proposals with transport operators. Once a final decision had been made, it would be possible to clarify exactly what would be required quite quickly.

During the discussion that followed, members of the Committee commented positively on the asymmetric timetable structure and the potential co-ordination benefits for staff required to travel between schools, the potential opportunities in relation to the delivery of lessons electronically, and the reduced disruption for pupils moving from junior high schools to the Anderson High School. However it was also noted that there would be childcare implications for some families, and potential costs to the Council for transport.

The Chair commented he was confident that the work carried out over the last three to four years would help ensure that the common timetable structure was a step forward in terms of equality of provision, education benefit of teaching and learnings, and maximising resources. However it was acknowledged that there would be implications from some parents, and it was therefore important that there continued to be engagement with parents. He went on to move that the recommendations in the report be approved, and Ms Wishart seconded.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee:

- NOTED the progress to date towards the implementation of a common timetable structure across all of Shetland's secondary settings from Tuesday 29 May 2018;
- AGREED to Children's Services continuing to proceed towards implementation of the common timetable structure in May 2018, taking into account the school transport costs and future secondary teaching staffing efficiencies related to the move to this timetable structure.

06/18

Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Service Delivery Plan

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager, Quality Improvement (CS-01-F) which set out the Strategic Delivery Plan for the further expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Shetland, following presentation of the first draft of the Plan to the Committee in August 2017.

The Executive Manager - Quality Improvement summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Scottish Government had committed to fully funding the extension of the entitlement. Following submission of initial financial plans, the Scottish Government had requested that the 32 local authorities resubmit financial projections by 2 March. It had been expected that there would be notification of a multi-year funding package, but it now seemed that this was not going to be the case, as local authorities would now be receiving one capital grant and one revenue grant for the period 2018-19. There was an expectation that following resubmission of the financial information, there would be a need to revisit the Plan to reconsider how best to programme the capital aspirations and the revenue plans, and this was incorporated into the report.

In response to a question, she advised that local authorities had initially been asked to prepare service delivery plans which detailed how they planned to deliver the best possible service to eligible children, and that the First Minister had announced the total funding package before the financial estimates had been submitted.

Concern was expressed regarding raising the expectation of parents if it was ultimately not going to be possible to deliver what was proposed.

The Chair commented that once the funding had been announced, there may be a need to reconsider what could actually be delivered. He went on to say that while the Scottish Government was right to place an emphasis on its aspirations to ensure all children get the best start in life and the educational benefits, it was also part of its vision that the proposals would support the development of the economy by supporting parents to access employment and training. As such, there were implications for other areas of work that were ongoing in the Council outwith the Committee's remit, such as the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the ten-year plan which was looking at increasing the working population. It was therefore vital to continue to press the Scottish Government to fully fund its commitment, and to explore with partners how the proposals would also help them meet their aspirations.

On the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr G Smith, the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee:

- CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on the Children's Service's Strategic Delivery Plan for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (Appendix A);
- APPROVED Children's Services Strategic Delivery Plan for the Expansion of Early Learning Childcare.
- NOTED that the Strategic Delivery Plan for the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare will be subject to further revision, when funding allocations for 2018/19 are confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 11.40am.

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Chair