

# MINUTES

## A&B - Public

**Education and Families Committee**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick**  
**Tuesday 12 June 2018 at 10.00am**

### **Present:**

#### Councillors:

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

#### Religious Representatives:

H Rankine	M Tregonning
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### **Apologies:**

T Macintyre

### **In Attendance:**

M Sandison, Chief Executive  
H Budge, Director – Children’s Services  
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement  
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law  
J Sutherland, Executive Manager – Children’s Resources  
S Thompson, Executive Manager - Schools  
C Gair, Traffic Engineer  
K Johnston, Solicitor  
E Park, Transport Contracts & Operations Officer  
M Summers, Youth Development Worker – Lerwick and Whalsay  
M Thomson, Management Accountant  
L Geddes, Committee Officer

### **Also:**

D Morrish, Member – Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP)  
S Thomason, Member – Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP)

### **Chairperson**

Mr G Smith, Chair of the Committee, presided.

### **Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

The Chair extended a welcome to the two MSYPs in attendance, advising that Dylan Morrish had just been elected the week previously. The presentation being given today would be filmed so that it could be relayed to young people via social media.

## **Declarations of Interest**

Mrs Hughson declared an interest in Agenda Item 1 “Year of Young People – Update Report and Presentation” as Voluntary Action Shetland was a partner.

Mr Sandison declared an interest in the following items as his wife ran a private childcare business, and he advised that he would leave the Chamber during the discussion:

Agenda Item 3: Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Service Delivery Plan: Update 2018/19

Agenda Item 4: Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Strategic Delivery Plan: Staffing Implications

Agenda Item 5: Early Learning and Childcare Service Model for 2020: Draft Consultation Response

## **Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2018 on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Fraser.

### **22/18      Year of Young People – Update Report and Presentation**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children’s Services (CS-24 - 18-F) presenting information on the programme for the Year of Young People and the Big Takeover event.

The Director of Children’s Services introduced the two MSYPs who gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee entitled “The Year of Young People”. The presentation outlined the themes of the Year of Young People 2018, and the national and local partners involved in promoting it. Fifty young people locally had been appointed as Ambassadors, and they would be involved in a number of projects including “The Big Takeover 2018”. This was a three-day programme promoting various events relating to the arts, culture and sports. There were 80 activities planned, and young people across Shetland would have free access to transport to enable them to attend these events. The presentation concluded by posing three questions to the Committee:

- What advice would you give young people?
- What young person has inspired you, and what makes them so inspiring?
- What are your hopes and aspirations for young people growing up in Scotland?

Responding to questions, the MSYPs advised that members of the Committee could assist them by ensuring that they promoted the Year of Young People and, in particular, the events that would be taking place during “The Big Takeover”. While it would be good if an event of this nature could take place each year, it would require a lot of resources. Efforts had been made to involve communities and groups in “The Big Takeover”, and the organisers would be happy to extend invitations to others that may wish to get involved.

The Chair commented that it was important to note that every year should be a 'year of young people', and Members should take this into account when considering budgets relating to youth work. The value of youth work should not be underestimated, as it could be demonstrated that the costs of preventative work were far outweighed by the future benefits. He went on to pay tribute to the number of volunteers in Shetland who were working to provide opportunities for young people.

During the discussion that followed, Members endorsed these sentiments, and highlighted the valuable contributions that young people made locally. It was noted that there was a high number of young volunteers locally, and commented that as well as improving young people's self-esteem, it also made a valuable contribution to the Shetland economy.

Responding to the questions posed in the presentation, the Leader commented on his own positive experiences from his Shetland upbringing, and said it was important to continue to support young people in Shetland so that they too could continue to have these positive experiences and maintain a positive outlook on life. Resources would always be a challenge, but it was important to build them up and to listen and respond to young people.

The Chair referred to the positive discussions that had taken place the day before with the members of the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee who were visiting Shetland, and said that the work taking place to develop the young workforce would be critical. The Committee had had the chance to meet those locally who were supporting young people making the transition into work, and he felt that they had got a good understanding of what was on offer locally and the challenges that were experienced. Updates on the work that was taking place would be presented to this Committee through the quarterly performance reports.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee NOTED the presentation, and the programme for the Year of Young People and the Big Takeover.

23/18

**Proposed New Build Residential Children's Home**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Children's Resources (CS-30-18-F) providing an update on the proposal to increase residential childcare capacity in Shetland.

The Executive Manager - Children's Resources summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the current capacity for placements for children requiring to be accommodated by the local authority was seven. All of these places were occupied and the Council currently commissioned four placements outwith Shetland, and it is necessary to increase provision locally to meet demand. Since the last report to the Committee in January 2017, work had taken place to develop plans for a new residential children's home, and the proposal is to broaden this work project to consider both residential accommodation and short breaks services for children. A Strategic Outline Case will be developed. Information was also included in the report regarding approaches being developed locally to strengthen early intervention and prevention, with a view to shifting resources from crisis intervention to preventative work. This was a long-term goal which should reduce the need for specialist and residential placements in the future.

Responding to questions, he confirmed that three of the four young people currently accommodated off-island could have been accommodated locally if there had been space. There would, however, always be a requirement for specialist interventions which could not be offered locally, such as secure units. Consideration would also have to be given to models which included things like supported accommodation to assist those transitioning out of care. Consultation would take place with the various partners involved for all proposals, and an appraisal of all options would take place with regard to location.

Members commented that they were pleased to see that further consideration was being given as to how best meet needs locally, and to adopting a more holistic approach.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee considered and commented on the report, NOTED that the project is now being progressed through the Council's Gateway Process for the Management of Capital Projects, and that a Strategic Outline Case will be taken to the first ordinary business cycle after the summer recess for decision.

*(Mr Sandison left the meeting)*

24/18

**Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Service Delivery Plan - Update 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Quality Improvement (CS-25-18-F) providing an update on the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Service Delivery Plan.

The Executive Manager - Quality Improvement summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Council required to reprogramme some of the planned expansion work following the announcement of the multi-year funding package by the Scottish Government. The work outlined in Section 4.7 of the report would continue as per the Strategic Delivery Plan, and the areas of work which now required to be reprogrammed into 2019/20 - when funding increased significantly - were outlined in Section 4.8. All planned capital projects in the Strategic Delivery Plan would go forward as currently prioritised.

The Chair commented that the funding model that had been agreed – whereby the Scottish Government would be fully funding the expansion of early learning and childcare - was as a result of COSLA and the Scottish Government working together. Locally it would now be difficult to meet the public expectation that the 1140 hours would be in place by 2020, as the profiling of the funding meant that the final revenue funding would not be available until 2021-22. The consequences of this were clearly outlined in Section 4.8 of the report and while there would be disappointment that things were not moving ahead quicker, it was important to move ahead in a planned fashion using the financial resources available.

Some discussion took place regarding the capital works that would be required to facilitate the expansion, and it was questioned if the Council had the in-house capacity available to handle the various aspects related to these capital works - such as design, costing and tendering - and if the local construction industry had the capacity to carry out the works. It was requested that a further report be

presented to the Committee detailing the work required to deliver on the infrastructure requirements.

The Chief Executive explained that a combination of internal and external contractors would be used to deliver the requirements, and work was currently taking place with the Asset and Property Service to look at what was required and what was deliverable. A further report detailing this would be presented to both the Education and Families Committee and the Environment and Transport Committee.

It was noted that there had been concern nationally that private providers would not be able to fulfil the expectation to provide 1140 hours, and it was questioned if this would be an issue locally. It was also questioned if communication had taken place with parents to explain that it would not be possible to fully implement the expansion by 2020.

The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement explained that there were not many private providers in Shetland, but the Council had a good relationship with private and partner providers locally, and some work had already taken place to expand their provision. Many of them only delivered childcare in the morning and while it was technically feasible to expand this provision into the afternoon, there would be an issue relating to the numbers of qualified staff. This was something that the Council would be watching closely. Consideration was being given as to how to support partner providers in relation to the infrastructure and training they would require to expand their provision, so that the local authority would not be the sole provider.

She went on to say that more communication would take place with parents, but that the plan had already been shared with all setting managers, partner providers, schools and nurseries, and it had also been shared at a meeting of Parent Council chairs.

In response to a question regarding whether the pool of potential applicants would be large enough to sustain the proposed Modern Apprenticeship programme, she confirmed that there had been more applications than places available in 2018-19, and she was hopeful this would continue to be the case in future. There would also be other apprenticeships and training opportunities that would become available. Skills Development Scotland had made funding available for existing staff in early years to undertake qualifications, and eleven students would be graduating from Shetland College with an HNC in Childcare Practice. The jobs in the current model of provision tended to be smaller part-time posts, and it was felt that a number of potential qualified applicants were therefore lost due to the number of contracted hours available. The expansion of early learning and childcare would mean that there were more contracted hours, and there would therefore be more opportunities to attract these people back into the sector.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendation in the report.

#### **Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee considered and commented on the Children's Service's Strategic Delivery Plan Update for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare, and NOTED that the Strategic Delivery Plan for the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare will be subject to further revision as implementation progresses. Any further proposed changes to the Strategic Delivery Plan will be reported to the Committee for a decision.

25/18

**Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Strategic Delivery Plan – Staffing Implications**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager, Quality Improvement (CS-21-18-F) presenting an overview of the staffing implications resulting from the further expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Shetland.

The Executive Manager - Quality Improvement summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the staffing implications were being reported separately in order that a report could be presented to the Employees' Joint Consultative Committee and the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers. The key proposals were set out in Section 4 of the report, and there had been no significant issues raised at the aforementioned meetings.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendation in the report.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee RECOMMENDED that Policy and Resources Committee RESOLVES to approve the staffing implications in the Strategic Delivery Plan Update for the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare.

26/18

**Early Learning and Childcare Service Model for 2020: Draft Consultation Response**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-26-18-F) presenting key issues for consideration, and seeking delegated authority to finalise the consultation response.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the proposals were based on a 'funding following the child' approach, within which there was a National Standard that all providers wishing to deliver the entitlement would have to meet. There were a number of concerns that had been set out in the draft consultation response, and these were summarised in Section 4.2 of the report.

The Chair highlighted the need for 'island proofing' the proposals, and advised that this had been discussed with members of the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee during their visit. It was important to ensure that island proofing became understood practically by MSPs and officials, and did not simply become a rhetorical response.

The Leader added that it was important that the Council continued to take the opportunity to illustrate the potential impacts locally, but to also outline how things could be done differently from an island perspective and articulate exactly what was required by providing examples of alternatives.

Members commented that with regard to outdoor play, greater use could be made of the outdoor environment if children were appropriately clothed, and this was something that may have to be provided. This would be a good example of the Council suggesting how things could be done differently locally, if the appropriate funding was provided.

It was questioned if the concerns expressed in the response regarding qualification requirements for the childminding sector may impact negatively on people wishing to move to Shetland, as they may feel that childminders locally were not up to standard.

The Executive Manager – Quality Improvement explained that while it was important to encourage everyone to achieve qualifications to support the quality of provision, the concern locally was about the ability of childminders to physically access the qualifications, given that they would be minding children when a lot of the training would be offered. It was important to highlight this, as it had not been taken into account.

It was commented that it was more likely that lack of childminder availability locally would discourage people from settling in Shetland, rather than qualifications. It was pointed out that when there had previously been a push for childminders to achieve qualifications, many had given up childminding as no account was taken of their previous experience. This was something that also applied in other sectors – such as the care sector – and it was something that should be taken into account of when considering island proofing. It was also commented that inspection programmes guaranteed the quality of the service provided, so there was concern about the proposal to move away from external quality assurance inspections and placing the responsibility on the local authority.

The Committee otherwise agreed the recommendations in the report.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee NOTED the draft consultation response to the Early Learning and Childcare Service Model for 2020 Consultation Paper, provided additional comments to be incorporated into the draft response, and AGREED that delegated authority be given to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Education and Families Committee to finalise the consultation response.

*(Mr Sandison returned to the meeting)*

**The Committee adjourned at 11.50am and reconvened at 12noon.**

**27/18      Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager, Quality Improvement (CS-03-18-F) outlining the draft Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Alliance sought to achieve on the four high level improvement policies outlined in Section 2.3 of the report, and that these priorities were reflected throughout the Plan. The final version of the Plan would be prepared by the members of the Northern Alliance following the consultation period, and submitted to the Scottish Government by 3 September.

The Chair added that he had chaired the meeting of the Northern Alliance Chairs' Group the week previously. There had been discussion around additionality, and the need for scrutiny and support at local authority level to pool resources to add value. The role of regional improvement collaboratives had also been discussed.

There was recognition that as the Northern Alliance had been around longer than other collaboratives, its work plan was more ambitious. But there was a commitment to deliver on it and a need to ensure that staff had the capacity to do so. There had been some concern expressed regarding the future resourcing of collaboratives, which would have to be addressed by the Scottish Government. There was a financial cost to collaboratives as well as a benefit, and other local authorities did not have to bear the additional travel costs that applied to the island areas.

The Director of Children's Services added that the sub-group of island areas within the Northern Alliance had made good progress on work in a number of areas. The Western Isles and Orkney would be visiting later in the month for an islands summit to discuss the development of further work.

It was questioned if any progress had been made on the need for better indicators when considering the attainment gap locally, and the Director of Children's Services advised that this had been discussed during the visit by the Scottish Government Education and Skills Committee. Staff from Economic Development had outlined the work they had carried out on inequality in Shetland, and the Committee had also heard about the work being carried out in Baltasound Junior High School to identify and close the attainment gap. Funding had been identified locally to look at new indicators, as it could be demonstrated that entitlement to free school meals did not work well as an indicator. Consideration would be given to income standards, housing benefit, rural poverty and deprivation, and access to services, in order to try to achieve better indicators.

The Chair added that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills had indicated that he was willing to consider any appropriate suggestions that the Council put forward. It was therefore important that this work was resourced, and it would be of benefit to other rural areas in Scotland.

In response to questions, the Director of Children's Services advised that the Lead who was responsible for around half the projects had been seconded out of his post to work full-time on these work streams. However as he had recently been appointed to a new post, he would be relinquishing the responsibility, but plans were already in place to recruit. The provision of school meals during holiday periods locally was not something that was currently being considered, and there would be further transport and access issues.

The Chair added that it had been an agenda item at the COSLA Children and Young People's Forum, as there was growing demand for this across the central belt. It was something that would be more difficult to provide in rural and island settings.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee considered and commented on the draft Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan.

**Review of School Transport Policy**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Schools CS-17-18-F) presenting a reviewed and updated School Transport Policy.



The Executive Manager - Schools summarised the main terms of the report, advising that while the budget for school transport sat within the Development Service, policy matters came under the remit of the Education and Families Committee. She went on to outline the key changes to the Policy, advising that it was proposed to revert to the previous position whereby the granting of placing requests required parents to provide the necessary transport. This was consistent with practice across Scotland. The Policy also clarified the position where a pupil's home was accessed via a private road, whereby school transport would only be considered from a suitable location on the public road. It also clarified the process to be followed where a Road Safety Audit may be required, and this amendment resulted from a recent complaint to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman. It was also proposed that the Council should explore the possibility of charging for vacant seats on transport. This was something that was done in some other areas and the local authority had the discretion to do so.

The Chair commented that the report highlighted the dilemma the Council faced in terms of trying to maintain the school estate across the islands, and offering pupils flexibility of choice. The additional travel costs that had arisen as a result of the number of placing requests was something that the Council could not afford to bear. Shetland communities had made it very clear in the past that they wished to maintain secondary provision in their communities, but it had always been recognised that there was likely to be an increase in placing requests for the new Anderson High School (AHS).

The Executive Manager – Schools, the Executive Manager – Quality Improvement, and the Transport Contracts & Operations Officer then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- There had been a fairly significant increase in the total number of placing requests over the last three academic years, with more coming from S1 than ever before. Placing requests were received for schools other than the AHS, but there had been 69 placing requests for the AHS in this period, with 16 of these for S4 onwards.
- The majority of placing requests for the AHS came from the South and West Mainland. The AHS did become part of the catchment area for these pupils in S5 and S6, but it was not part of the catchment area for the North Mainland. Historically there had always been a number of placing requests from the South and West Mainland for the AHS, but placing requests from the North Mainland were relatively new. There were currently 11 placing requests from the North Mainland, with eight of these relating to S4-S6 pupils.
- Pupils requiring transport currently accessed public service buses. Where no public service transport was available, the Council had to provide additional vehicles - usually taxis - to transport pupils. These arrangements made up the additional £83,000 per annum referred to in the report.
- Only one address could be used to identify the appropriate catchment area, and this was something that was consistent with other areas across Scotland. The Council did recognise that there were situations where parents shared custody of children, and tried to access vacant seats on alternative buses wherever possible in this situation. Work had also gone on to better align bus timetables so that pupils could access public service transport, and this should help parents.

However if one child was to be allocated a seat on two buses, this would be duplicate provision that would come at a cost to the Council.

- There had always been a fuller range of subjects available at the AHS than junior high schools. Sometimes there were vacancies at schools which made it more difficult to deliver particular subjects in certain areas, and the Council had to manage supply staff in order to do so.
- The proposal to explore charging for vacant seats would result in additional income to the Council. There were a range of ways which other local authorities applied these charges, and prices ranged from 60p to £2.20 per trip. If, for example, the charge was fixed at £1 per trip, this would result in an income of around £20,000 per annum to the Council.
- No record was kept of children with alternative addresses, so it would not be possible to ascertain transport costs to all these addresses. Any vacant seats were allocated on an annual basis, before the new academic year commenced.
- Transport contracts were based on the number of vehicles required to cover the entitled pupils, but the route and the size of vehicle required was also taken into account. If pupils had more than one address, this would result in additional seats being required on particular routes. This may result in additional costs, depending on the type of vehicle required to cover the number of seats.
- All S1-3 pupils in Shetland experienced a common curriculum structure until the end of S3.

The Committee sought the views of the MSYP (D Morrish), and he spoke about the new transport campaign that the Scottish Youth Parliament had just commenced. He went on to express concern at the fact that only one address was taken into account for catchment areas, and the potential impact on the child if they effectively had to choose between parents if the family could not afford alternative transport arrangements.

During the discussion that followed, members expressed concern at charging for transport when placing requests had been submitted purely on the basis of subject choice, and the potential financial impact this may have on some families. It was recognised that while there may be potential for abuse of a system whereby transport costs were covered in this particular instance, it was felt that this would be minimal, and that the Policy should cover placing requests on the basis of subject choice as this would help provide equality of education across Shetland.

However it was also noted that Shetland communities had expressed their very strong feelings about retaining junior high schools in their areas, in the knowledge that subject choice would not be as wide, and that such an amendment to the Policy may end up jeopardising their position in future.

It was suggested that the charging for vacant seats may result in administration costs exceeding the amount that would be collected.

It was also suggested that there was a strong case to be made for amending the Policy to recognise the fact that many families shared custody of their children would therefore would have more than one address. They should not be financially

penalised due to their domestic circumstances. Even though attempts were made to accommodate this situation through the use of vacant seats, the Policy did not recognise this or state that priority would be given to these pupils.

However other members expressed the concern at the practicalities that would arise as a result of such an amendment, and the potential number of alternative arrangements that the Council would require to put in place. The Council was sympathetic to these families and tried to accommodate them within the current Policy, but it was felt that the practicalities of such an amendment would be impossible to implement.

In response to questions, the Solicitor pointed out that the Executive Manager – Schools had already explained how the Council tried to support families with more than one address in different catchment areas. If the Policy was amended so that parents could supply more than one address to identify appropriate catchment areas - and thereby entitlement to school transport - this could create any number of permutations which could not be planned for and provided for in one policy. It would effectively put in place a bespoke system which would come at quite a cost to the Council.

The Chief Executive added that the Policy stated in Section 4.7 how priority was given in terms of allocating vacant seats, with priority firstly given to children referred by Social Work or Health professionals. She was of the view that this priority should not change. Families with more than one address could be added as a point to consider, but the Council should continue to prioritise the most vulnerable.

Mr G Smith said that he was not convinced that the Council should be considering charging for vacant seats, and he would therefore move that recommendation 1.2 in the report be deleted. However he was also moving that recommendations 1.1 and 1.3 in the report be approved, with the phasing out of the current policy being that free school transport would be continued for those pupils already in receipt of it under the terms of the current policy.

Mr T Smith seconded.

In response to a question, Mr G Smith clarified that this would mean that those pupils in S4-6 applying from session 2018/19 onwards would not receive the entitlement to free transport, but that it would not be taken away from those pupils already in receipt of it.

Mr Campbell moved, as an amendment, that any placing requests received relating to lack of subject choice in the catchment area should have transport costs met to enable pupils to attend the school offering the subjects they desired from S4.

Mr Tregonning seconded.

Mr Campbell confirmed that his amendment otherwise included the terms of Mr Smith's motion.

Further discussion took place as to how such a Policy amendment could be administered and implemented, as it could end up in situations where the Council had to, for example, transport pupils from Sumburgh to Brae.

The Solicitor explained that there could be unintended consequences as there could be any number of permutations that could arise. The Council could end up having to provide a transport service on demand all over Shetland. It would also be difficult for staff to evidence that placing requests were being made purely for reasons of subject choice.

It was commented that while the concerns about creating a bespoke transport service were understood, it was important that all pupils had the same opportunities and should be enabled to attend the school which was offering the subjects they wished to study.

However concern was also expressed that provision of free transport on demand could ultimately jeopardise the future of junior high schools across Shetland. Communities had very much expressed their desire to retain schools in their communities, as they had served their pupils well, even though it was accepted by parents that they did not offer the same range of subjects as the AHS or Brae High School. If the Policy was approved, it would be reverting back to the position that existed prior to 2016, and it provided a consistent position in terms of transport.

With the consent of his seconder, Mr Campbell agreed to revise his amendment so that transport costs would be met to enable pupils to attend Brae High School or the AHS only.

Mr Fraser gave notice of further amendment.

After summing up, voting took place by show of hands, and the result was as follows:

Amendment (Mr Campbell)	2
Motion (Mr G Smith)	11

Mr Fraser moved, as an amendment, that the Policy be amended at Section 4.7 to read “....To those children referred by Social Work or Health professionals or *Family Mediation...*”.

However his amendment did not receive a seconder.

#### **Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee RECOMMENDED that the Policy and Resources Committee recommends that the Council approves the proposed updated School Transport Policy, and the request to phase out the provision of free school transport for pupils attending a school other than their designated school through a Placing Request, with free school transport being continued for those already in receipt of it under the terms of the current policy.

29/18

#### **Managing Exclusions in Shetland Schools Policy**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children’s Services (CS-27-18-F) seeking approval for an updated Managing Exclusions in Shetland Schools Policy.

The Director of Children’s Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Policy had been updated to take account of recent changes in guidance and best practice. There was now a stronger focus on the prevention of

exclusion and early intervention and support, and more detailed guidance around physical intervention and managing incidents involving weapons. She went on to say that incidents of exclusion were very low in Shetland, and the new Policy recognised the importance of a whole-school approach to developing positive relationships.

The Chair added that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills and the Children's Commissioner were particularly keen to see that exclusions were well-managed, so he was pleased to see that the Policy had been based around national guidelines.

It was noted that the second bullet point of Section 3.2 of the Policy would be amended to read "Is of the opinion that the parent of the pupil refuses or fails to comply, fails to allow the pupil to comply, with the rules, regulations of disciplinary requirement of the school".

The Committee otherwise approved the recommendation in the report.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee RECOMMENDED that the Policy and Resources Committee recommend that Shetland Islands Council approves the Managing Exclusions in Shetland Schools Policy.

30/18

**Anti-Bullying in Shetland Schools Policy**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-28-18-F) seeking approval for an updated Anti-Bullying in Shetland Schools Policy.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the Policy had been updated to take account of considerable legislative and policy changes, and had been developed through extensive consultation with all stakeholders. It provided an overarching framework for all Shetland schools and was welcomed by Head Teachers.

It was commented that the information outlined in Section 11.4 of the Policy could be seen to contradict with that in Section 11.5. There had also been a shift in focus to a restorative process and less emphasis on discipline, which may not be supportive to the individual actually being bullied.

The Director of Children's Services and Executive Manager – Quality Improvement advised that it was intended that there would be opportunities for dialogue with parents throughout the process. During the consultation process, opportunities had been taken to speak to young people who had experienced bullying. This information, and the further procedures and appendices related to the Policy, could be shared with members outwith the meeting.

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report.

**Decision:**

The Education and Families Committee RECOMMENDED that the Policy and Resources Committee recommend that Shetland Islands Council approves the Anti-Bullying in Shetland Schools Policy.

The meeting concluded at 1.45pm.

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Chair