

# MINUTES

## A&B - Public

**Education and Families Committee**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick**  
**Monday 27 August 2018 at 10:00am**

**Present:**

Councillors:

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

Religious Representatives:

T Macintyre	M Tregonning
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**Apologies:**

H Rankine

**In Attendance:**

H Budge, Director – Children’s Services  
J Sutherland, Executive Manager – Children’s Resources  
J Macleod, Performance and Improvement Adviser  
A Ross, Solicitor  
M Summers, Youth Development Worker  
H Tait, Team Leader - Accountancy  
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Also:

D Morrish, MSYP

**Chairperson**

Mr G Smith, Chair of the Committee, presided.

**Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

**Declarations of Interest**

None

31/18     **Children's Services Performance Report - Three Month/First Quarter 2018/19**  
The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children’s Services (CS-32-18-F) summarising the activity and performance of Children’s Services Directorate for the first quarter of 2018/19.

The Director of Children’s Service summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting the Directorate’s achievements and progress on projects. She referred

in particular to the programme of events that would be taking place over the “Big Takeover” weekend, the high library issue figures, and also advised that the Improvement Plan and Workforce Development Plan being worked on by the Northern Alliance Leads was nearly ready to be submitted and would be presented to the Committee. A report would also be brought to the next Committee regarding the Education Reform – Joint Agreement. She went on to say that sickness levels in the Directorate were slightly above target - though down on the previous quarter - and that overtime figures were slightly up again, so this would be looked at in more detail.

The Director of Children’s Services then responded to questions from Members, and the Committee noted the following:

- Exam results could be regarded as one indicator as to whether efforts to close the attainment gap locally were being successful, and they would be looked at in more detail. However exam results just related to secondary schools, and there was a broader set of indicators that should be used for evidence. Information was being gathered from primary schools regarding how they were using their pupil equity funding, and some targeted intervention was taking place. Statistical information was being gathered from schools, and further benchmarking information would shortly be released which would provide more information to schools.
- There were issues with recruiting to teacher and social work posts across the Children’s Services Directorate. This was also likely to be an issue when the early learning and childcare sector was expanded, and broader pathways into this profession were being considered. A number of avenues were being explored to try and attract people into these posts. These included attending college fairs to encourage newly qualified students to apply for jobs in Shetland, and developing distance learning opportunities and pathways into teaching. Recruitment issues were not unique to Shetland, and work was ongoing within the Northern Alliance to look at this. Pathways into management was also something that was being considered, and workforce planning was taking place to ensure that existing staff could access broader training locally to give them the confidence, knowledge and skills required for management posts.
- Home Economics and Technical subjects were particularly difficult teaching areas to recruit in, and there had been conversations about whether providing these subjects at qualification level could be continued in some schools. There were areas in Scotland where recruitment difficulties meant that schools could not recruit the staff they required, and e-schooling was used to provide education. This worked well in some subject areas, but was not particularly good for practical subjects. There was a need to explore how more subjects could be delivered through e-learning, and a conference taking place shortly would be looking at the broader general picture in the Northern Alliance area. However the Council was not yet at a stage where it would have to stop delivering some subjects, but was having to consider how to continue delivery if there were no staff available. The expansion of e-learning was being explored by the Northern Alliance, as it was recognised that the sustainability of education in rural areas was fragile.
- A number of teaching posts had been advertised over the summer, and it had been possible to provide teachers to cover all core subjects, though some of this

was being provided by supply staff or through temporary posts. Posts would become vacant over the year, and it may be more difficult to get supply cover as the year went on. However the subjects that were on the curriculum in each school were currently being covered.

- The pattern of mileage claims was something that varied each quarter, depending on school holidays. For example, there would be fewer mileage claims during Quarter 2, when schools had summer holidays. The number of mileage claims was high as staff were shared between schools to make the best use of their time, and there were a number of peripatetic staff. Mileage was something that was closely monitored, and it would also be examined to see if recent changes to the system had had an effect.
- There were pathways available for instructors to study for a teaching qualification. However the instructors would require to have a degree in the first instance.
- The inspection grading of “adequate” in relation to school inspections was a national benchmark. Consideration could be given to presenting more localised information in respect of inspections.
- A report on the capital works required for the expansion of early learning and childcare would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

In response to a query, the Executive Manager – Children’s Resources confirmed that recruitment had recently been completed in respect of a reviewing officer post in Children’s Services. This should help alleviate some of the pressures on staff and enable more Looked After Children reviews to be completed within timescale.

During the discussion that followed, it was commented that more thought would have to be given to innovative ways of recruiting and retaining staff locally. It was acknowledged that the Council’s attempts to ‘grow its own’ staff were commendable, but noted that it was difficult for the Council to compete for staff given its geographical location and the fact that there were usually posts available closer to home. Other local authorities offered incentives in relation to recruitment and retention, and it may be the case that the benefits would outweigh the costs should the Council also choose to do so. It was something that would have to be explored in the workforce development strategy for all established posts.

The Chair commented that the Northern Alliance was particularly looking at sustaining education in rural communities, and this would be a particularly important agenda in terms of engagement with the Scottish Government. He went on to say that the Education Reform – Joint Agreement would require a lot of changes to be made locally, and he had requested the Director of Children’s Services and her staff to do a comprehensive analysis of what would be required, and the resources required to do so as there may be capacity issues locally. He advised that Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, had recently visited Shetland regarding the Developing Young Workforce agenda. He had seen the value of the work going on locally with young people, and the Council had stressed the importance of continuing the funding packages to rural areas to sustain this work.

Some discussion took place regarding the fact that shortage of accommodation was a key factor in attracting people to come and work in Shetland. It was requested

that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee meet with the Leader and Chair and Vice Chair of the Development Committee to explore innovative solutions for providing accommodation for key worker posts, particularly those in the Children's Services directorate.

The Leader advised that there had been positive engagement with MSPs, and the Scottish Government would be open to discussions if the Council found ways of moving more quickly on this. However the Council was constrained by resources, and would require to ensure that adequate resources were made available to address this. It was a key part of the wider issue of sustaining the community, the Council would need to take a more holistic approach to promoting Shetland, and attracting people to come and live and work.

The potential opportunities for the private sector were also highlighted, and it was suggested that the Council should be having conversations with other large employers, such as the NHS, to develop a joint approach. It was essential for the sustainability of Shetland that accommodation was available for key workers, and everything should be done to support that.

**Decision:**

The Committee discussed the contents of the report and made relevant comments on progress against priorities to inform further activity and the planning process for next and future years.

32/18

**Management Accounts for Education and Families Committee: 2018/19 - Projected Outturn at Quarter 1**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (F-057-F) which presented the management accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 1.

The Team Leader - Accountancy summarised the main terms of the report, advising that an overspend of £695,000 was projected as the revenue outturn position, and that the projected capital outturn position was an underspend of £945,000, with a slippage requirement for 2019/20 of the full amount.

**Decision:**

The Committee reviewed the Management Accounts showing the projected outturn position at Quarter 1.

33/18

**External Audit Report (Care Inspectorate) - Isles Haven Nursery**

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Children's Resources (CS-31-18-F) presenting the findings of a recent inspection carried out by the Care Inspectorate.

The Executive Manager – Children's Resources summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the inspection quality grades achieved were all "very good". There had been one recommendation which had immediately been addressed by the service.

The Committee requested that their congratulations be passed on to the staff involved.

**Decision:**

The Committee NOTED the content of the report.

The meeting concluded at 11.10am.

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Chair