



MINUTES

A&B - Public

Education and Families Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 18 November 2019 at 10.00am

Present:

Councillors:

P Campbell	S Coutts
J Fraser	C Hughson
E Macdonald	D Sandison
G Smith	T Smith

Also:

S Flaws	M Lyall
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Apologies:

T Macintyre	R Thomson
M Tregonning	

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children’s Services
R Calder, Acting Executive Manager – Quality Improvement
D Morgan, Interim Chief Social Work Officer
N Watt, Executive Manager – Sport and Leisure
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
L Johnson, Active Schools Manager
K Johnston, Solicitor
J Johnston, Quality Improvement Officer
M Thomson, Management Accountant
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Also:

L Anderson, Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP)
J Dorrat, Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP)
S Horal, Youth Development Worker

Chairperson

Mr G Smith, Chair of the Committee, presided.

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

The Chair welcomed the two newly-elected Councillors - Mr Flaws and Mrs Lyall - to the meeting.

He also extended a welcome to the two MSYPs, and advised that it had been intended that they would speak about the “Make Your Mark” ballot at today’s meeting. However due to the General Election announcement, it had been deemed that it would not be possible to have this discussion during the pre-election period, so this would now take place at the January meeting.

Ruling to Permit Participation by Telephone

The Chair ruled that in accordance with Section 43(2) of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the attendance of Councillor John Fraser during the Committee proceedings was permitted by remote telephone link.

Declarations of Interest

Mr T Smith declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 “External Audit Report – Education Scotland Report on Nesting Primary School” as his niece was the Head Teacher, and advised that he would leave the room during the discussion.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2019 were confirmed on the motion of Mr T Smith, seconded by Mr Sandison.

30/19 Commonwealth Games 2014 - A Legacy for Shetland 2018-19 Update

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager – Sport and Leisure (CS-38-19-F) providing information on national key performance indicators and areas of work undertaken by the Sport and Leisure Service during the academic year 2018/19, and monitoring the legacy outcomes for Shetland from the Commonwealth Games 2014.

The Executive Manager – Sport and Leisure summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting the information that had been collected in relation to national key performance indicators for the academic year 2018/19, and the broad range of services and activities that had been provided and made a positive contribution to the community.

It was noted that this was the last year in terms of reporting on the Commonwealth Games legacy outcomes. However it was felt that there was value in continuing to have a report providing information on the range and quality of services being delivered, so future reports would focus on monitoring against national performance indicators.

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

- Three monitoring reports were prepared during the year and the information was fed into the SportScotland system, which generated the data.
- The role of the Active Schools staff was both as organisers and leaders, though the majority were organisers who worked with volunteers and sports clubs to help them run activities.

- A very diverse range of activities was offered in an attempt to try and engage young people who otherwise would not be interested in taking part. In order to ascertain what should be delivered, dialogue took place with young people to find out the types of activities they would be interested in.
- There were activities that took place during curriculum time that were not reported – the activities in the report related to extra-curricular activities.
- Funding continued to be received through SportScotland as part of the Commonwealth Games legacy. This was in the order of £226,000 for the Active Schools programme, the Community Sports Hub, and the travel award scheme. Legacy outcomes would no longer be reported, but some monitoring would still take place.
- Shetland was in early discussions with the Island Games Association regarding hosting the Island Games again in future – probably around 2029-31, but possibly before.

It was commented that the achievements were attributable to the hard work and dedication of staff, and that it would be desirable for the Council to support the bid to host the Island Games so that it could take possession of its own legacy.

Decision:

The Committee NOTED the contents of the report and its appendix, and made relevant comments on the Sport and Leisure Service's progress on the national key performance indicators highlighted.

31/19

Chief Social Work Officer Report

The Committee considered the Annual Report from the Interim Chief Social Work Officer (CS-30-19-F).

The Interim Chief Social Work Officer summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting in particular the achievements, challenges, opportunities and key priorities. She advised that there was now a more integrated approach in Children's Services and while there had been some recruitment difficulties, it was hoped to get key posts established and use agency staff only as a last resort. She went on to speak about the Council's own investment in social work staff which would help ensure that there were enough social workers coming through in future, and suitably qualified staff to undertake management posts.

The Interim Chief Social Work Officer and the Director of Children's Services then responded to questions, and the Committee noted the following:

- Systems would be streamlined so that the paperwork and records staff were required to complete was less onerous, and they could spend more time supporting individuals.
- Co-morbidity referred to when a person had different illnesses that affected the way they lived, and it mainly related to the older population.
- There were different pay scales and roles and responsibilities across social work that had resulted from Single Status, and it was hoped to review this. The

Council also had to compete with other local authorities in Scotland to secure staff, and was in a difficult position due to the travel costs involved in getting to and from Shetland. Some local authorities offered 'golden handshakes' and other incentives. Unlike teaching, there was no national pay scale for social workers. Locally social worker pay was at the lower end when compared with other areas, and this exacerbated the recruitment difficulties experienced as a result of location. Human Resources was currently looking at pay scales for social workers as part of the Workforce Development Strategy.

- One of the main reasons for child protection numbers increasing was due to a change in the recording criteria. However the numbers could be affected if a large family group came on to the register.
- There had been changes to criminal justice systems to extend the Whole System Approach to Care Experienced Young People up to the age of 21, and there would be a staged approach to increase it up to the age of 26 in line with national legislation. This would not make much difference to the way services were delivered locally, as additional support was provided if required.
- The IJBs Joint Governance Group and Clinical Care and Professional Governance Committee was responsible for mental health activity and the duty to employ a sufficient number of Mental Health Officers. The Chief Social Work Officer provided updates to these groups, but could update members of this Committee by email. The Annual Report presented today related to how the Council was performing in relation to statutory functions, so only touched on the work carried out by the Shetland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. However more detail on the Partnership's work was available in its annual plan.

It was suggested that a detailed report outlining the systems and interventions in place to assist those affected by alcohol or substance misuse could be presented to a future meeting.

It was commented that it was important that the Council review pay scales for social workers if this was having an impact on recruitment, particularly for key posts.

It was further commented that early intervention projects - such as the Anchor Project and Emotional Wellbeing Project - illustrated how participation, partnership and collaboration could make a huge impact on families. It was hoped that this work could continue into the future.

Staff were commended for the positive inspection grades that had been received over the last year.

Decision:

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the Annual Report from the Chief Social Work Officer.

32/19

Children's Services Directorate Performance Report: Quarter 2 - 2019/20 - Period to 30 September 2019

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-33-19-F) presenting the activity and performance of the Children's Services Directorate for the second quarter of 2019/20.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting in particular the difficulties in recruiting to some vacant teaching posts, the ongoing work in relation to the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare, the work of the Northern Alliance, and the Audit Scotland visit to schools in Shetland. She went on to advise that the progress with the Developing Young Workforce project should now read 75%, and that the very high risk rating in respect of economic and financial risks in the Risk Register was being monitored.

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

- Children's Resources and Children's Services social work teams had now both been integrated into one team, and work was now focusing on pulling the management structure together. This would mean there would be a reduced need to employ agency staff, as an established team would be in place.
- Construction of the new residential children's home would be ready to commence once the building warrant had been received, and she would keep the Committee informed if there were any further delays.
- The Scottish Government required information on the condition and suitability of school buildings on an annual basis, and had issued new guidance this year. As a result, it had been agreed to undertake detailed assessments of all schools in Shetland, working alongside the Northern Alliance. Information would be fed back to members at the Committee's 'away day'.

The Chair added that both himself and the Vice Chair had taken part in these school visits. He had been heartened with the findings and hoped that when the report came forward, there would be due recognition of the work that had gone on. There appeared to be a change in the agenda for supporting schools, and a move away from the difficult agenda of looking at the schools estate to focusing on improving quality.

Responding to a question regarding the progress with establishing island-proofing for education funding, the Chair advised that there was currently work ongoing to establish a protocol with the Department of Work and Pensions in terms of data sharing. This would be important in terms of targeting people to ensure that they were taking up their entitlements.

It was commented that it was encouraging to see that at the half-year point, an underspend was predicted, but it was prudent to maintain a very high rating on the Risk Register.

Decision:

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

(Mr T Smith left the meeting)

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-28-19-F) presenting a report from HM Inspectorate of Education Scotland in relation to the Nesting Primary School.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the actions for the school would be conducted within the normal school improvement planning approach, and the inspectors would not be returning.

Decision:

The Committee NOTED the content of the Education Scotland report on Nesting Primary School.

(Mr T Smith returned to the meeting)

34/19

External Audit Report - Care Inspectorate Report on Baltasound Junior High School Nursery and Fetlar Primary School Nursery

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-32-19-F) presenting the Care Inspectorate Reports on Baltasound Junior High School Nursery and Fetlar Primary School Nursery.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that there were no recommendations in respect of Baltasound Junior High School Nursery, and one recommendation for Fetlar Primary School Nursery.

Concern was expressed that it was possible to identify individuals in reports relating to very small schools, and the Committee agreed that representations should be made to the Care Inspectorate regarding the need to maintain confidentiality in reports relating to schools where there were a small number of pupils.

The Solicitor advised that she would raise this with the Council's Data Protection Officer.

Decision:

The Committee NOTED the content of the Care Inspectorate Reports on Baltasound Junior High School Nursery and Fetlar Primary School Nursery.

35/19

External Audit Report - Education Scotland Report on Sandwich Junior High School

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services (CS-29-19-F) presenting a report from HM Inspectorate of Education Scotland in relation to Sandwich Junior High School.

The Chair advised that he had asked the Director of Children's Services to present a report to the next meeting outlining the background resulting in the outcome of the Education Scotland report. The focus of the report being presented today was on moving forward.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the inspectors had acknowledged the considerable challenges experienced by the school around staff changes and recruitment, and had recognised that the school was now in a more stable position. The areas identified

for improvement were being taken forward principally through the school's normal improvement processes. A copy of the most up-to-date action plan was available on the school's website, and it was updated on a monthly basis. Additional resources had been allocated to the school to allow the leadership team to make the required improvements, and the Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) had been visiting the school on a weekly basis. The school would receive a Team Improvement Visit in term three, ahead of the return visit by the inspectors in June 2020.

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

- The temporary QIO allocated to the school would remain in post until the end of the academic year. There will be a wider review of the QIO structure would be reviewed to consider whether there should be separation in roles for QIOs between primary and secondary.
- The recruitment situation had improved nationally, and it was not taking as long to get new teaching staff into posts in the school. There have been no particular issues regarding the retention of staff in Sandwick, and some staff were supported to develop their skills to enable them to undertake temporary promoted posts.
- Sandwick was one of the few schools in Shetland that had pupils from nursery right through to secondary four, and the Head Teacher is responsible for all areas. It was possible to pick out the points that were relevant to each separate department in the detailed report, and consider how these should be taken forward. It was important to note that although some of the overall grades were "weak", this did not mean that all learning, teaching and attainment in the school was weak. Areas of strength in the school have also been identified.
- In order to ensure that the report did not have a negative impact on staff, the QIO, along with the school management team, were spending time with staff to reassure them and check on their wellbeing. Staff were very committed to moving forward with the improvement plan despite the challenges and difficulties that had been experienced.

The Chair commented that the report had been disappointing for all involved, but the community had rallied round and the Parent Council was very motivated to be part of the school improvement plan. He was confident questions and concerns would be picked up in the action plan, and additional resources had been put in to help make the improvements. There was a need to reconsider the QIO structure in future so that the Council could continue to support schools fully.

Decision:

The Committee NOTED the Education Scotland report on Sandwick Junior High School.

(Mr Fraser left the meeting)

The Committee considered a report by the Quality Improvement Officer (CS-37-19-F) presenting information on the Shetland Islands Council's National Improvement Framework Report for 2018/19 and forward plan for 2019/20.

The Quality Improvement Officer summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the evaluation of progress was based on both qualitative and quantitative evidence. The data illustrated that attainment over time was a stable and improving picture, and there had been progress in closing the attainment gap. All indicators relating to safeguarding and child protection had shown improvement, and there had been good progress in relation to employability skills and positive destinations.

In response to a question, he advised that the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators were a key tool in helping measure progress in the health and wellbeing of young people, and for designing individual interventions for pupils.

Decision:

The Committee NOTED the key steps being taken to address the national Excellence and Equity agenda and the National Improvement Report and Forward Plan for 2019/20 in Appendix 1.

37/19

Education Reform - Joint Agreement Progress in Shetland Islands Council

The Committee considered a report by the Acting Executive Manager – Quality Improvement (CS-35-19-F) presenting information on the Education Reform – Joint Agreement and an update on progress in Shetland Islands Council.

The Acting Executive Manager – Quality Improvement summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the report set out progress in relation to meeting the Scottish Government's empowerment agenda. Two thematic inspections by Education Scotland had taken place in 2019, and a lot of time had been spent discussing the empowerment agenda with schools and carrying out self-evaluations and identifying developmental areas.

Some discussion took place regarding the proposal to make the "Into Headship" qualification mandatory from next August for Head Teacher posts, and the pressures this may put on staff in a new role due to the limited time they had to complete it (20 months).

The Acting Executive Manager – Quality Improvement said that these concerns were shared, and attempts were currently being made to try to increase uptake amongst teachers for the Into Headship qualification so that they would be in a position to apply for leadership posts that became vacant in the future. The "Into Headship" qualification was designed to ensure that the right people were in senior management posts. However locally it may make recruitment into some posts more challenging due to the number of very small schools.

It was questioned if empowerment agenda would increase the workload and pressure on Head Teachers.

The Acting Executive Manager – Quality Improvement advised that current dialogue with Head Teachers illustrated that they felt quite empowered within the current system, but there were concerns regarding more responsibility in terms of budgets and some other aspects. Care would have to be taken when looking at devolved

school management to ensure that the Shetland model reflected the fact that there were a number of teaching Head Teachers. The national review of devolved school management should allow for an element of flexibility, and there was some reassurance that a 'one size fits all' model for devolved school management would not be enforced.

Responding to a further question, he advised that a plan was in place in respect of streamlining recruitment and selection paperwork and other forms of bureaucracy. Some of this was within the gift of Children's Services, but some related to corporate policy. Some of the in-service days focused on tackling bureaucracy and workloads, and some improvements had already been made including revised, streamlined local authority school improvement plan templates.

The Chair commented that this was something which should be aimed for across the Council. In respect of the "Into Headship" qualification, it was likely that representations would have to be made nearer the time, as there were concerns locally around sustainability and the increasing expectations and requirements on staff, both in schools and supporting schools.

Decision:

The Committee NOTED Appendix A: Education Reform – Joint Agreement, Update on Progress in Shetland Islands Council, October 2019.

The meeting concluded at 12.05pm.

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Chair