

Education and Families Committee

Auditorium, Shetland Museum and Archives, Hays Dock, Lerwick

Monday 12 June 2017 at 10.00am

Present:

Councillors:

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

Also:

I Scott

Apologies:

None

In Attendance:

H Budge, Director – Children’s Services
J Belford, Executive Manager – Finance
A Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement
C Anderson, Senior Communications Officer
J Best, Solicitor
J Macleod, Performance and Improvement Adviser
M Thomson, Management Accountant
W Shannon, Interim Joint Principal
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 extended a welcome to members of the Committee, particularly to the new members, and advised that the Committee’s religious representatives would be appointed at the Council meeting on 28 June.

He went on to say that the Education and Families Committee was a very important committee, with a remit to develop service objectives, policies and plans for the following functional areas:

- Children and families
- Pre-school education
- School education
- Tertiary education
- Child protection

- Young people
- Leisure and sport
- Library
- Community learning and development
- Lifelong learning

The Committee had the largest budget in the Council, and responsibility for some of the most important services for the people of Shetland, including young people. He would give leadership to the Committee, but was looking for a collective approach whereby everyone on the Committee should feel able to participate, contribute, ask questions and debate matters in hand.

Declarations of Interest

None

Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the special meeting held on 26 January 2017 on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr G Smith.

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2017 on the motion of Mr Sandison, seconded by Mr Campbell.

12/17 Children's Services Directorate Performance Report 2016/17

The Committee considered a report by the Director – Children's Services (CS-09-17-F) which summarised the activity and performance of the Children's Services Directorate for 2016/17.

The Committee noted that there had been a change to Appendix A of the report – the figure relating to schools had been amended to reflect that there were 28 primary school settings altogether, with seven establishments that included both primary and secondary education. One of these – the Anderson High School – was exclusively secondary education.

The Director of Children's Services summarised the main terms of the report, drawing attention in particular to the Directorate's aims to address inequality over the coming year, and the key achievements during 2016/17. She went on to highlight the key areas where work was continuing, referring in particular to the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare which would require provision to almost double by 2020, and the need to further develop Children's Services residential capacity.

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

- The Scottish Government had indicated that £400million would be made available over the next three years to fund the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare. For 2017/18, Shetland had been allocated £188,000 revenue funding, and £132,000 capital funding. Work was ongoing regarding how this expansion would be phased in over Shetland, and a strategic plan had to be submitted by 29 September. This was being prepared in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, and would be presented to the Committee in August. A lot of work had been done to look at additional staff and changes to properties that would be required, but the financial implications had yet to be completed.

- Partner providers had a huge role to play in the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare, and their services were very much valued. Childminders and the private sector would also have a role to play.

The Chair advised the Committee that the Northern Alliance – the partnership between seven education authorities across the North of Scotland – was now moving into another phase, and would be looking at governance. He would be attending the meeting of the Northern Alliance on 15 June, and would report back to the Committee. It was expected that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills would be making an announcement that day regarding the future governance of education in Scotland.

Some discussion took place regarding the uptake of free school meals - which was 6.5% locally compared to a national average of 17.9% - and the implications this sometimes had in securing additional funding from the Scottish Government. It was noted that the low uptake had affected the funding made available via the Pupil Equity Fund, with one-third of schools in Shetland not receiving any funding. It was therefore important to maximise the uptake of free school meals, and ensure that there was no stigma attached to claiming them.

It was noted that there had been a project which had considered introducing a card system for school pupils which would include transport, but also things like school meals. This would mean that those who claimed free school meals would not be easily identified, and the Director of Children's Services agreed to find out if there had been any further developments with this project.

The Committee commented that it was a positive and encouraging report, and commended staff for their efforts.

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.

13/17

Management Accounts for Education and Families Committee: 2016/17 – Draft Outturn at Quarter 4

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Manager - Finance (F-050-F) which noted the financial performance of services within its remit for the 2016/17 financial year.

The Executive Manager - Finance summarised the main terms of the report, advising that the financial position had been as expected at the end of Quarter 4, and the draft outturn revenue position was an underspend of £204,000. There had been some challenges, particularly relating to the costs for Children's Residential Services which had been rising. This was something the Committee needed to be aware of, and additional costs had been built into the budget for 2017/18. Although there had been some cost pressures, there had also been some beneficial savings generated. The proposed carry forwards would be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

Members commended officers for managing to achieve this positive outcome, noting that the Council was likely to face further financial pressures in the year ahead.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee noted the Management Accounts showing the draft outturn position at Quarter 4, and noted the proposed budget carry forwards which will be included in the overall Draft Outturn report to be presented for approval at Policy and Resources Committee on 19 June 2017.

14/17

Shetland College Term Dates

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Joint Principal (SCB128-F) advising of the proposed term dates for Shetland College for the academic session 2017/18.

The Interim Joint Principal summarised the main terms of the report, advising that there was a typographical error in the appendix of the report, and that the date for the public holiday in January 2018 should instead read Wednesday 31 January.

Decision:

The Education and Families Committee approved the College Term Dates for the Academic Year 2017/18, and granted delegated authority to the Interim Joint Principal to align the term dates with school term dates in the future.

The meeting concluded at 10.40am.

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Chair