

**MINUTES of MEETING of COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL
CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on THURSDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2015**

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor George Freeman	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor Isobel Strong
Councillor Iain Angus MacDonald	William Crossan
Councillor Neil MacIntyre	William Marshall
Councillor John McAlpine	Alison Palmer

Attending: Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director – Community Services
Ann Marie Knowles, Head of Education
Anne Paterson, Education Manager – Learning and Achievement
Kathleen Johnston, Education Officer – Early Years
Tricia O'Neill, Central Governance Manager
Pat McCann, Culture and Services Manager
Christina West, Chief Officer, Argyll and Bute Health & Social Care Partnership
Allen Stevenson, Head of Adult Services
Mark Lines, Locality Manager – Children's Services

The Chair ruled, and the Committee agreed, to vary the order of business and consider the report on the Integration of Health and Social Care after the Minutes.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillors Mary-Jean Devon, Donald Kelly, Robert E Macintyre and James McQueen.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Aileen Morton declared a non financial interest in respect of the report on the Hermitage Academy Curriculum Review. She stated that her interest was insignificant and she remained in the room during consideration of the report which is dealt with at item 11 of this Minute.

3. MINUTES

The Minute of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 10 September 2015 was approved as a correct record.

The Committee heard an update from the Executive Director – Community Services on progress with the resettlement of the refugees on Bute.

4. INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

A report providing the Committee with an update on the progress of integration of Health and Social Care in Argyll and Bute was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. to note progress towards the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) establishment and that the Integration Joint Board (IJB) would become fully operational on 1 April 2016;
2. to note the draft Strategic Plan and consultation process which the Council as a parent body is invited to respond to, and agreed the terms of the draft response to the questions raised in the Strategic Plan at Appendix C subject to the addition of reference to Housing Aids and Adaptations;
3. that it is aware of the crucial nature of Locality Planning Groups and to monitor development of these groups;
4. to note the financial constraints in which the HSCP/IJB has to deliver and transform services; and
5. to continue to monitor progress and influence the development of the Strategic Plan.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer, Argyll and Bute Health & Social Care Partnership dated 18 November 2015, submitted)

Councillors Anne Horn and Elaine Robertson left the meeting at this point.

5. EARLY YEARS COLLABORATIVE

The Committee heard a presentation on the Argyll and Bute Family Pathway and developmental milestones toolkit which is a joint initiative between the Council and its Partners giving support in the Kintyre area to families with children from early pregnancy until Primary one. Each developmental stage and milestone records the developmental progress of each child and identifies at an early stage any additional developmental needs required. The project has been introduced in the first instance to Kintyre and is in the process of being extended to Cowal area.

Decision

Noted and thanked the Education Officer (Early Years) for her very informative presentation.

6. PERFORMANCE REPORT FQ2 - 2015-2016

Consideration was given to a report on the Community Services financial quarter two performance scorecard.

Decision

The Committee noted the performance for the quarter.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 19 November 2015, submitted)

7. EDUCATION DIGITAL LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report informing the Committee of the current consultation taking place in regard to the development of a Digital Learning Strategy for Scotland.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:-

1. note that the Argyll and Bute Education Service currently utilise learning technologies in a range of ways to deliver the curriculum across all of the Council's educational establishments;
2. note the consultation taking place which will inform the development of a final National Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland to be published Spring 2016 as described in section 1.1 of the Executive Summary; and
3. note that Argyll and Bute Education Service will undertake a full review along with partners of the current strategy to produce a Digital Learning Strategy for Argyll and Bute in line with the National Strategy and that this Strategy will be developed in Autumn 2016.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 10 December 2015, submitted)

8. SQA SCHOOL EXAMINATION RESULTS 2015

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the outcome of the 2015 examination diet, outlined the results for pupils entered for formal examinations and shared the successes of Argyll and Bute pupils across wider achievement.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:-

1. note the outcome of the examination results for pupils in academic year 2014/15;
2. note the strategic programme of performance review between schools and education development and improvement staff as noted at section 7.1 of the report;
3. continue to support the work of the Education Service in supporting schools to secure continuous improvement in outcomes for Argyll and Bute Learners; and
4. request a further report at the June Community Services Committee considering the national position arising from information released by Insight (anticipated release date in March 2016).

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 10 December 2015, submitted)

9. EDUCATION STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014/15

A report updating the Committee on the major achievements made within Education in Argyll and Bute across the session 2014/15 including the SQA examination results for pupils who sat examinations in May/June 2015 was considered.

Decision

The Committee noted the continuing progress made in relation to Education within Argyll and Bute and noted the commitment of staff and the success and achievements of the children and young people.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 10 November 2015, submitted)

10. DEVELOPING SCOTLAND'S YOUNG WORKFORCE (DYW)

A report giving an overview of the proposed spend for the funding received by Argyll and Bute Council from the Scottish Government to deliver the Youth Employment Strategy 'Developing the Young Workforce' was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:-

1. note the Scottish Government Youth Employment Strategy and support the proposed approach to Developing Argyll and Bute's Young Workforce;
2. endorse and support the continued utilisation of the Youth Employment Opportunities Fund to support vulnerable young people to access and sustain positive destinations;
3. continue to support work placements within Argyll and Bute Council and the ABC Modern Apprenticeship programme;
4. support the setting up of an Argyll and Bute Regional Group; and
5. to instruct the Executive Director – Community Services to invite a representative from Skills Development Scotland to give a presentation to the Committee at its meeting in March 2016 or the next suitable date thereafter.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 3 November 2015, submitted)

The Chair ruled, and the Committee agreed, to adjourn the meeting at 1.05 pm for lunch.

The Committee reconvened at 1.30 pm.

Councillor Iain Angus MacDonald did not return to the meeting.

11. HERMITAGE ACADEMY CURRICULUM REVIEW

A report providing an update to the Committee of the progress in taking forward an internal review of the senior phase curriculum at Hermitage Academy was considered.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the progress in taking forward the current internal review of the senior phase curriculum at Hermitage Academy;
2. noted the outcomes of the individual aspects of the internal review, including areas of strength and further development;
3. noted the engagement of Education Scotland in working with the local authority and Hermitage Academy to contribute challenge, knowledge and advice to the Council's internal review of the senior phase curriculum at Hermitage Academy;
4. agreed the recommendations contained within paragraph 4.7 of the report; and
5. noted that a further progress report will be presented to a future Community Services Committee meeting.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 10 December 2015, submitted)

Councillors Gordon Blair, John McAlpine, Neil MacIntyre and Aileen Morton returned to the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

12. SCHOOL EXPENDITURE PROFILE REPORT

School education accounts for a significant proportion of local authority expenditure. Audit Scotland published a report in June 2014 analysing education expenditure together with detail and commentary on the attainment and wider outcomes achieved. The key findings of this report were presented to the Community Services Committee in December 2014. Following the presentation, the Committee requested that a paper, detailing Argyll and Bute school expenditure, be presented at a future Committee once the relevant information was available. Consideration was given to this further report which provided an overview of Argyll and Bute Council's 2014-15 primary and secondary school expenditure, categorised at subjective level. The report also provided some further detail on the allocation of the related elements of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) and a comparison with the grant received by the three island authorities.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the expenditure profile of Argyll and Bute schools;

2. noted the analysis of GAE education related income received by Argyll and Bute Council from the Scottish Government; and
3. noted how the benchmarking information supports the future scrutiny of Council expenditure on Education Services.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 4 November 2015, submitted)

* **13. COMPLIANCE WITH TEACHER NUMBERS COMMITMENT**

A report providing an update of the Council's position in relation to the teacher numbers commitment made as part of the financial settlement for 2015/16 with the Scottish Government was considered. The report outlined the exceptional efforts made by the Council to try to meet the commitment, a range of other issues which have impacted on the ability of the council to recruit and retain teaching staff and the extraordinary measures used to improve teacher recruitment.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the commitment to maintain overall teacher numbers and pupil : teacher ratio at 2014/15 levels as part of the 2015/16 budget settlement;
2. noted the level of supernumerary teaching posts above the staffing entitlement model that the Council require to retain to meet this commitment;
3. noted the efforts made by the Council to recruit sufficient teachers to meet the commitment on the date of the census in September 2015 whilst addressing additional national policy ambitions (eg Raising attainment for all);
4. noted the other factors which impacted on the Council's ability to meet the teacher number commitment;
5. noted that the Council was unable to recruit sufficient teaching staff despite considerable efforts to meet the commitment which potentially will result in the loss of some or all of the share of the Scottish Government's additional £51m resources to maintain teacher numbers;
6. noted that this potential loss of additional grant may be mitigated by deleting supplementary teacher posts with a resultant full year saving of c. £1.57m;
7. noted that no class in any Argyll and Bute school could not be staffed despite the national shortage of teachers due to the application of an efficient and equal staffing model at the commencement of session 2015/2016; and
8. agreed that the issue of teacher numbers commitment be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration of the financial implications arising from the position represented in this report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 12 November 2015, submitted)

Councillor George Freeman left during consideration of the foregoing item.
William Crossan left the meeting at this point.

14. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS REVIEW UPDATE

A report confirming the Council decision in relation to the operational review of Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision by Education Services was considered.

Decision

The Committee:-

1. noted the ongoing operational review of ASN provision by the Education Service, Community Services;
2. noted the decision by the Council at its meeting of 26 November 2015 in relation to operational efficiency savings and the service choices programme; and
3. agreed that further updates on the progress of the ASN review will be reported to the Community Services Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 30 November 2015, submitted)

William Marshall and Alison Palmer left the meeting at this point.

Councillor Rory Colville left the meeting at this point.

15. MACMILLAN @ ARGYLL AND BUTE LIBRARIES

A report providing the Committee with information of the excellent work and achievements of the Macmillan @ Argyll and Bute Libraries service across Argyll and Bute was considered.

Decision

The Committee noted the achievements and excellent provision being provided by the Macmillan @ Argyll and Bute Libraries service.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 10 December 2015, submitted)

Councillor Isobel Strong left the meeting at this point.

The Chair ruled, and the Committee agreed, to vary the order of business as follows.

16. COMMUNITY SERVICES WORK PLAN 2015-2016

Consideration was given to the outline work plan to facilitate forward planning of reports to the Community Services Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted the outline work plan including the addition of reports as detailed at items 8, 10, 11 and 14 of this Minute.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated December 2015, submitted)

Councillor Rory Colville returned to the meeting at this point.

17. WITH SCOTLAND REPORT ON CHILD PROTECTION REGISTRATIONS

In 2015 the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee commissioned WithScotland to undertake an independent review to consider if the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) practice model and early intervention was impacting on child protection registration. The results of this review which were considered and ratified by the Child Protection Committee on 5 November 2015 were now before the Committee for consideration.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

1. to note the findings of WithScotland's study of child protection activity in Argyll and Bute Partnership;
2. that WithScotland's report be disseminated across the partnership; and
3. that the key areas of improvement are taken forward by the Child Protection Committee and Argyll and Bute's Children.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 11 November 2015, submitted)

18. KINSHIP CARER ALLOWANCES

Consideration was given to a report informing the Committee of the recent discussions that have taken place between the Scottish Government, Social Work Scotland (SWS), the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish local authorities following the legal intervention of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in support of financial parity between foster and kinship carers through the threat of Judicial Review.

Decision

The Committee agreed that:-

1. the Local Parity Model is adopted for the payment of allowances to foster and kinship carers of Looked After Children as an interim solution to the issue of parity;
2. provision is made to backdate any unpaid allowances to 1 October 2015 in accordance with the letter from Scottish Government dated 5 October 2015; and

3. Officers continue to work with Scottish Government, Social Work Scotland, COSLA and the 32 Scottish local authorities in developing a longer term solution to the issue of parity.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 1 November 2015, submitted)