

MINUTES of MEETING of COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS BY ATTENDANCE IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD OR REMOTELY BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 8 JUNE 2023

Present:

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess	Councillor Dougie McFadzean
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor Julie McKenzie
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Gemma Penfold
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Graham Hardie	Margaret Anderson, Church Rep
Councillor Andrew Kain	Reverend Sandy MacPherson, Church Rep
Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy	

Attending:

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Jennifer Crocket, Head of Education: Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement
Wendy Brownlie, Head of Education: Performance and Manager
Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Simon Easton, Education Manager
Graeme McMillan, Transformation Programme Manager
John Blake, Fleet Waste & Transport Manager
Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff, Police Scotland
Chief Inspector Samantha Glasgow, Police Scotland
Chief Inspector Simon Shanks, Police Scotland
Group Commander Fraser Grant, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Charlotte Craig, Business Improvement Manager, Argyll & Bute HSCP
Raymond Porter, National Partnership Director, MCR Pathways

The Chair intimated that Councillor Kieron Green had notified the Executive Director that he wished, in terms of Standing Order 22.1 to speak but not vote on item 10a of the Agenda.

The Chair also intimated that Councillors Luna Martin and Andrew Vennard, who were not members of the Community Services Committee, had notified the Executive Director that they wished, in terms of Standing Order 22.1 to speak and vote on items 10a and 16 of the Agenda.

The Chair confirmed that she would exercise her discretion to allow Councillors Green, Martin and Vennard to speak but not vote on item 10a of this Minute.

The Chair also confirmed that she would exercise her discretion to allow Councillors Martin and Vennard to speak but not vote on item 16 of this Minute.

The Chair then took the opportunity to advise that Alison Palmer, who was appointed to the Committee as one of the teacher representatives, was retiring in the summer after 30 years with the Education Service.

Unfortunately, due to other commitments Alison was not in attendance today but, on behalf of the Community Services Committee, the Chair thanked Alison for her contribution to this Committee and wished her all the best for a long and happy retirement.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Palmer (Teacher Representative) and Lorna Stewart (Teacher Representative).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTE

The Minute of the Community Services Committee held on 9 March 2023 was approved as a correct record.

4. ARGYLL & BUTE LOCAL POLICING PLAN 2020-2023) - QUARTERLY REPORT (QTR4 - 2022/23)

Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff presented the Quarter 4 – 2022/23 update in relation to the Argyll and Bute Local Policing Plan 2020 – 2023.

Thereafter, she, along with Chief Inspector Simon Shanks, Area Commander for Oban, Lorn, the Isles, Mid Argyll and Kintyre, and Chief Inspector Samantha Glasgow, Area Commander for Bute, Cowal and Helensburgh, responded to a number of questions asked.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report for Quarter 4 2022/23 by Divisional Commander for Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Division, Police Scotland, submitted)

5. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - ARGYLL & BUTE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 - 1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2023

With the aid of power point slides, Group Commander Fraser Grant presented a report highlighting Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's review of local performance within Argyll and Bute for Q4 2022-2023 and responded to a number of questions asked.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Q4 2022-2023 Report by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, submitted)

Margaret Anderson, Church Representative, joined the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23

Consideration was given to a report detailing the annual performance of the Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership during 2022-23.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the report which was approved by the Argyll and Bute Integration Joint Board on 31 May 2023.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer, Argyll & Bute HSCP dated 1 June 2023 and Argyll and Bute IJB Annual Performance Report 2022-23, submitted)

7. MCR PATHWAYS SECONDARY SCHOOL PILOT - SESSION 2023-24

Founded in 2007, MCR Pathways is a third sector, national mentoring programme for young people, engaged with 19 separate local authorities.

A report setting out the rationale for the planning relating to a pilot of the MCR Pathways Programme in three Argyll and Bute secondary schools in school session 2023-24 was considered along with a presentation given by Raymond Porter, National Partnership Director for MCR Pathways.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. endorse the engagement and planning between MCR Pathways and Argyll and Bute Council Education Service to establish the vision and implementation plan for the MCR Pathways Programme; and
2. note both the potential input to the programme of members of the Argyll and Bute community, and the anticipated positive outcomes for young people, the council and the wider Argyll and Bute community.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 8 June 2023, submitted)

At this point, due to technical difficulties, the Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to vary the order of business and take Agenda item 9 (Education (Scotland) Act 2016 – Learning Hours Consultation) before Agenda item 8 (Developing the Young Workforce – 2022-2023)

8. EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2016 - LEARNING HOURS CONSULTATION

The Scottish Government are consulting on their plans to set a legal minimum number of hours of school education school pupils should receive each year. Consideration was given to a report setting out a draft response to this consultation.

Decision

The Committee:

1. noted the terms of the draft consultation response, as prepared by Officers and set out in full at Appendix 1 of the report; and
2. agreed that Officers now formally submit that response to the Scottish Government, on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 5 May 2023, submitted)

9. DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE - 2022-2023

Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy was published by the Scottish Government in December 2014 and sets out the plans to implement the 39 recommendations as set out by the report Education for All.

A report summarising work and progress across Argyll and Bute Council relating to Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. note the scope and variety of DYW initiatives and activities across Argyll and Bute;
2. acknowledge the importance of the Scottish Government’s continued policy commitment to DYW, and associated funding for regional DYW Groups; and
3. note the contribution of the DYW team and its work towards securing Argyll and Bute a position in the upper quartile of Scottish Local Authorities with regards to the Annual Participation Measure, in which the council was placed 5th out of 32 local authorities in the period April 2021 to March 2022.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 8 June 2023, submitted)

At this point the Chair ruled, and the Committee agreed, to take a short comfort break.

The Committee reconvened at 1.10 pm.

Due to technical difficulties, Councillor Dougie Philand did not return to the meeting.

10. SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

(a) Luing Primary School

A report providing details of a draft proposal for Luing Primary School formulated in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended (the 2010 Act) was considered.

Motion

To agree to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in Appendix A, as a “relevant proposal” that is now to proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

Moved by Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, seconded by Councillor Daniel Hampsey

Amendment

The Community Services Committee acknowledges the work of officers in preparing the report set before us today.

We support Option (b) as identified by officers-

“The continued mothballing of Luing Primary School with the pupils zoned to Easdale Primary School”, with the addition of “to be reviewed in one year.”

The reasons for this are:

- I. After a long decline, Luing’s population is rising. From 220 residents, it dropped to 163 in 2020 and has since increased to 179.
- II. There are initiatives currently in progress on the island which have the potential to encourage regeneration of the area and which will create jobs.
- III. The availability of a local primary school will enhance the chances of people coming to “A place where people want to come to live, work and do business as a result of action to combat and reverse decline.” (Priorities for Argyll and Bute Council 2022-2027, Our Vision.)

Moved by Councillor Audrey Forrest, seconded by Councillor Dougie McFadzean

As the meeting was being held on a hybrid basis, vote was required to be taken by calling the roll and Members voted as follows:

Motion

Councillor G Corner
Councillor A Hampsey
Councillor D Hampsey
Councillor G Hardie
Councillor A Kain
Councillor P Kennedy
Councillor L McCabe
Councillor Y McNeilly
Councillor G Penfold
M Anderson
Reverend S MacPherson

Amendment

Councillor G Blair
Councillor M Campbell-Sturgess
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor D McFadzean
Councillor J McKenzie
Councillor I Paterson

The Motion was carried by 11 votes to 6 and the Committee resolved accordingly.

Decision

The Committee agreed to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in Appendix A of the

report, as a “relevant proposal” that would now proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 16 May 2023 and Proposal Paper – Luing Primary School dated June 2023, submitted)

Margaret Anderson, Church Representative, left the meeting at this point.

(b) Minard Primary School

A report providing details of a draft proposal for Minard Primary School formulated in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended (the 2010 Act) was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in Appendix A of the report, as a “relevant proposal” that would now proceed to statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 16 May 2023 and Proposal Paper – Minard Primary School dated June 2023, submitted)

11. ROTHESAY JOINT CAMPUS ELC DELIVERY

A report providing details of a planned change to the current Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) delivery model within Rothesay Joint Campus was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. the work of the early years team in identifying a solution to the childcare issue on Bute; and
2. the plan to deliver non-statutory childcare from within existing revenue.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 24 April 2023, submitted)

12. DALINTOBER AND CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOLS, CAMPBELTOWN

Following on from the motion tabled at the Community Services Committee on 9 March 2023 in respect of Dalintober and Castlehill Primary Schools, a report providing an update on progress that has been made in the interim period was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. that initial steps had been taken to progress this work with colleagues in both Education and Commercial Services; and
2. that a further report would be tabled at the Community Services Committee prior to the end of the current year.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education and Commercial Services dated 25 May 2023, submitted)

13. EXTERNAL EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENT INSPECTION REPORT

A report providing details of all external establishment inspections reports received across Argyll and Bute Education Service during the period January to May 2023 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. the contents of this report;
2. this quarterly report would be presented on an ongoing basis to the Community Services Committee detailing all establishment inspections conducted and published by Education Scotland within that period; and
3. that Ward Members would receive copies of school inspection reports for schools within their area as published by Education Scotland.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated May 2023, submitted)

14. GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN UPDATE

A report providing an update on progress in delivering the actions in the approved Argyll and Bute Council Gaelic Language Plan following the changes made as a result of the letter from Scottish Ministers, was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

1. the approval of the plan and that dates would be rolled forward;
2. that progress being made in delivering the Council's Gaelic Language Plan would be reported as normal in August 2023; and
3. the timescale for the production of a new National Gaelic Language Plan.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated June 2023, submitted)

15. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023 - 2024

The Community Services Committee work plan for 2023-2024 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the work plan.

(Reference: Community Services Committee Work Plan 2023-2024, submitted)

16. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The following Notice of Motion under Standing Order 13 was before the Community Services Committee for consideration –

The Seat Belts on School Transport (Scotland) Act 2017 requires that each passenger seat in vehicles used for dedicated school transportation must be equipped with a seatbelt. Public service buses that also provide school transport require seatbelts, dependent on age, with vehicles designed for urban use (urban buses) exempt from this.

This motion is made in light of the unique hazards of rural roads and the need to ensure the safety and well-being of schoolchildren, and to fulfil the council's responsibility to ensure safe routes to school in Argyll and Bute.

Advice from the School and Public Transport Team, as the Council's professional advisors in relation to matters of this nature, is that the current arrangements are legally compliant and safe and that Argyll and Bute Council are compliant with all relevant legislation relating to the transporting of school children and the travelling public throughout Argyll and Bute with seatbelts fitted to all dedicated school transport vehicles.

Notwithstanding that advice, we believe that urban buses are not suitable for rural routes due to the unique characteristics of rural roads (winding bends, bumpy or uneven surfaces, poor lighting, often high speed limits and lack of seat belts and accessibility to medical care in case of an accident. These characteristics can become particularly challenging in poor weather conditions.

For example, as it currently stands, children as young as 4 on the Isle of Seil may be expected to travel on an urban bus with no seatbelts for over three miles from Cuan to get to school in Easdale. The windy island road is poorly lit and uneven, and the speed limit for this journey is the national speed limit 60mph.

The use of seat belts on all school transportation is crucial for the safety of children and ensuring safe routes to school.

The Committee is therefore asked to agree officers are requested to submit a paper to them which will identify and detail the costs associated with ensuring all buses commissioned by Argyll and Bute Council for the purposes of transporting children to and from school in Argyll and Bute are required to have seatbelts, and advising how such a requirement could be introduced.

Moved by Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess, seconded by Councillor Dougie McFadzean

Amendment

To agree to take no action.

Moved by Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, seconded by Councillor Julie McKenzie

As the meeting was being held on a hybrid basis the vote was required to be taken by taken by calling the roll and Members voted as follows -

Motion

Councillor G Blair
Councillor M Campbell-Sturgess
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor D McFadzean
Councillor I Paterson

Amendment

Councillor G Corner
Councillor A Hampsey
Councillor D Hampsey
Councillor G Hardie
Councillor A Kain
Councillor P Kennedy
Councillor L McCabe
Councillor J McKenzie
Councillor Y McNeilly
Councillor G Penfold
Reverend S MacPherson

The Amendment was carried by 11 votes to 5 and the Committee resolved accordingly.

Decision

The Committee agreed to take no action.