THE MORAY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICES COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2013
COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN

Present
Councillors A Skene (Chair), A McKay (Depute), G Alexander, J Allan, M Howe, E McGillivray, A McLean, S Morton, M Shand and C Tuke, Reverend S Dicks, Mrs E Hewitt (Religious Representatives), Kirsty McCalman (Primary Representative), Susan Slater (Secondary Representative) and Michael Rhind (Pupil Representative).

Apologies
Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors G Coull, A Wright and Reverend C Ketley (Religious Representative).

In Attendance
The Corporate Director (Education and Social Care), the Head of Schools & Curriculum Development, the Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services, the Head of Integrated Children’s Services, Mr P Watson, Continuous Improvement Manager, the Placement Services Manager (Integrated Children’s Services), the Administrative Officer (Education Support Services), and Mrs S Kennedy, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Meeting.

1. DECLARATION OF GROUP INTERESTS

In terms of Standing Order 20, Councillor G Alexander declared a personal interest in Agenda item 17 “Forres House Out of School Club” and Councillors J Allan and M Shand declared an interest as members of the Moray Leisure Centre Board, in respect of Confidential item 21 “Moray Leisure Centre: Management Fee 2013/14.

The meeting noted that there were no other declarations from group leaders or spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how members will vote on any item on the Agenda or any declarations of Members Interest in respect of any Item on the Agenda.

2. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items of business appearing at the relevant paragraphs of this minute as specified below, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the appropriate paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.
3. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The meeting noted the following written question submitted by Councillor Morton and the response thereto:

Recent reports in the national media have suggested that inadequate schools funding has resulted in parents having to purchase items like textbooks and teachers having to buy basic classroom items like jotters and pencils themselves. Has there been any cause for similar incidents to have occurred in Moray?

RESPONSE

Each school receives a per capita allocation to be used for classroom supplies and materials. This will be managed by the Head Teacher to ensure there are appropriate resources in place for each individual child and for each class teacher to use. The allocation is made on a formula basis based on school roll. Head Teachers will regularly monitor their spending. Some Head Teachers use their DSM flexibility to allow them to “save” for larger items which they could not afford in a given year. Teachers should not be using their own money to purchase classroom supplies and no incidents of this nature have been reported.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Morton referred to an article in the Daily Record newspaper and advised that he had heard from a number of teachers in Moray that they were having to buy these items and he asked that the Administration in Moray sends a clear message to teaching staff and educational workers that there is not some sort of belief that education is an easy target with classroom assistant cuts in schools and that they were still focussing on Education as a priority.

The Head of Schools and Curriculum Development advised that in his opinion that school fund raising was for extras and that there was no expectation on teachers to use their own money to carry out their jobs and equally there was no expectations on parents to use their own money to fund basic classroom supplies such as jotters, text books, pencils and pens. He further advised that he was very aware that some parents choose to buy their child a text book; however he reiterated that there was no expectation on parents or staff to purchase any core items.

4. WELCOME

The Chair on behalf of the Committee welcomed Michael Rhind, Forres Academy to his first meeting of the Children and Young People’s Services Committee in his capacity as pupil representative.

The Chair also welcomed Mrs Susan McLaren to her first meeting following her recent appointment as Head of Integrated Children’s Services.
5. APPOINTMENT OF A PARENT REPRESENTATIVE

The Head of Schools and Curriculum Development advised that a letter had been sent to all parent council chairs in Moray schools seeking nominations for the appointment of a parent representative on the Children and Young People’s Services Committee. At the close of nominations on 14 February 2013 two names had been received.

The Chair drew the name from the hat and Mrs Susan Newlands, the Chair of Cluny Primary School, Parent Council was duly appointed as the parent representative on the Children and Young People’s Services Committee.

6. FURTHER EMBEDDING INTEGRATION IN CHILDREN’S SERVICES

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) inviting the Committee to consider and approve proposals to further embed integration across Children Services in Moray.

During discussion the Continuous Improvement Manager responded to members concerns in respect of the pilot survey being carried out and intimated that 500 responses had been received to date.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to approve the detail of the action plan contained in Appendix 1 of the report and to task the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) to provide Committee with an update in October 2013.

7. AMENDMENT TO THE APPROVED KINSHIP CARE SCHEME

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) seeking Committee approval for proposed changes to approve Kinship care allowances and to ask committee to homologate past payments.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to:

(i) delegate to the Head of Integrated Children’s Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Children and Young People’s Services Committee and the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, the power to vary kinship allowances in exceptional circumstances; and

(ii) homologate the decision of the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care), in consultation with the Chair of the Children and Young People’s Services Committee, in respect of one specific circumstance relevant to (i) above.

8. CURATORS AD LITEM AND REPORTING OFFICERS

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) asking Committee to approve a number of recommendations relating to the arrangements for fees relative to the Joint Curators ad Litem and Reporting Officers Panel.
During discussion Councillor Tuke moved that the mileage be retained at 40p per mile which is in line with the 1% staff increase as he could see no need for an increase at this time. Failing to find a seconder the motion fell.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to:-

(i) approve the fee proposals for Curators ad Litem and Reporting Officers as laid out in Section 4(c) of the report;

(ii) delegate authority to the Placement Services Manager in consultation with the Legal Services Manager (Litigation and Licensing) to agree additional fees of up to 80% of the original fee if a Curator ad Litem and Reporting Officer is asked by the Sheriff to carry out additional work; and

(iii) homologate the actions of the Placement Services Manager in agreeing additional fees in two cases.

9. EARLY YEARS CHANGE FUND

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) advising the Committee of the Early Years Change Fund and seeking permission to utilise a Scottish Government Allocation within the Fund.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

(i) to note the information provided on the Early Years Change Fund; and

(ii) the proposal to utilise the Early Years Change Fund Allocation as described in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.7 of the report.

10. MORAY PERMANENCE PANEL REVIEW 2012

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) informing Committee of the work undertaken by the Moray Permanence Panel during the period January to December 2012 and seeking agreement to amend existing panel procedures.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

(i) note the work of the Moray Permanence Panel in the period January to December 2012;

(ii) homologate the decision taken to enter into an agreement with an external fostering agency regarding the suitability of a foster carer;

(iii) delegate to the Moray Council Decision Maker to enter into similar arrangements in the future if external fostering agencies should require such assistance; and

(iv) that the updates to the panel procedures as described in Appendix 4 to the report, one of which will be put into operation should delegated authority be granted as above.
11. EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE CAPITAL BUDGETS 2012/13

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) informing Committee of the projects and patterns of expenditure projected for Capital Budgets within Education and Social Care for 2012/13.

In response to a question from Councillor Alexander in respect of the delays in the Hutted Accommodation project in Forres the Head of Schools and Curriculum Development agreed to seek clarification and respond to Councillor Alexander following the meeting.

In response to a further question form Councillor McGillivray in respect of the Capital Monitoring report the Chair clarified that when the capital plan is agreed by the Council all capital project allocations are subject to detailed reports being submitted to the appropriate Service Committee for approval.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to:

(i) note the report; and
(ii) approve the expenditure on the project detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report

12. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN & FAMILIES REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) informing the Children and Young People’s Services Committee of the budget position for Education and Children & Families Services at 31 December 2012.

During discussion and in response to a question from Councillor Howe regarding the possible duplication in accounting the Chair clarified that paragraph 3.3 of the report is describing the variance to 31 December 2012 and paragraph 3.5 relates to the possible outturn variance at 31 December 2013.

In response to a question from Councillor Morton re the affordability for members of the public in accessing leisure services because of the Council’s payment plans, the Corporate Director (Education and Social) advised that this required to feature as part of a wider leisure review for Moray to see if it addresses the needs of the people of Moray and whether it is flexible in terms of supporting access to services.

Thereafter, the Committee noted the report.

13. PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS – SCHOOL SESSION 2011/12

There was submitted and noted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) providing the Committee with the Public Performance Report for Primary and Secondary Schools for school session 2011/12.

The Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) joined the Chair and the Committee in thanking all staff and non-teaching staff for all their hard work and achievements.

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) asking the Committee to scrutinise and note the most recent reports published by Moray Council’s Education and Social Care department following earlier school inspections by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report in respect of the undernoted:

(i) Aberlour Primary School
(ii) Elgin High School

The Chair on behalf of the Committee congratulated all staff involved in the inspection process.

15. SINGLETON INSPECTIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES – PUBLISHED REPORTS FROM OCTOBER 2012 TO JANUARY 2013

There was submitted and noted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) asking Committee to scrutinise the singleton inspections of pre-school centres by Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) which were published between October 2012 and January 2013 as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report in respect of the undernoted:

Millbank Primary School Nursery, Buckie
Mortlach Primary School Nursery, Dufftown
Pilmuir Primary School Nursery, Forres
V.I.P. Childcare – Moray, Elgin

The Chair on behalf of the Committee congratulated all Providers involved in the inspections process.


There was submitted and noted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) asking the Committee to scrutinise and note the integrated inspections of pre-school centres by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and School Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) formerly the Care Commission (CC) which were published in December 2012 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report in respect of Aberlour and Craigellachie Playgroup, Aberlour.

17. ESTABLISHING A CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE’S PARTNERSHIP

There was submitted and noted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) seeking Committee’s views on draft proposals for a Children & Young People’s Partnership within Moray’s Community Planning Partnership.

During discussion the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) clarified that the Community Planning Partnership will be held primarily to account for delivering Integrated Children’s Services and not this Committee, although obviously in terms of
Governance and Leadership this Committee will be part of the scrutiny hence the need for establishing an Integrated Children’s Services.

Following further discussion, Councillor Morton stated that due to the concerns of the Labour Group on the impact of the removal of Class Room Assitants and Principal Teachers for GIRFEC that the Labour Group had requested a full impact assessment to be carried out prior to any cuts. In noting that impact assessment work was ongoing in schools he asked that a written response be provided to him in due course. This was noted by the Chair.

Thereafter, the Committee noted the aim, responsibilities and membership of the proposed Children and Young People’s Partnership which will be tabled at the Community Planning Board on Thursday 21 March 2013.

**18. FORRES HOUSE OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB**

Councillor G Alexander declared an interest in this item and left the meeting taking no part in the relevant discussion or decision.

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) asking Committee to note the current situation regarding the operation of Forres House Out of School Club and come to a decision on which option(s), or alternative, to proceed to consultation on.

Councillor McGillivray, seconded by Councillor A McKay moved that the Forres Out of School Club be given an extension of 3 months only to rectify the management and fiscal problems and come back with a sustainable Business Plan.

The Committee noted that to withdraw a service like this would have a social and economic impact on parents and children.

Councillor Morton seconded by Councillor Allan moved that the Forres out of School Club be given a final warning and that they be given 3 months to come up with a sustainable business plan and review at this stage.

During discussion, the pupil representative suggested that some of the senior pupils currently undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Awards may be able to assist the club.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed that the Forres House Out of School Club be given a strong message they would have 3 months only from the date of this meeting to produce a Business Plan and then the Committee would review the options thereafter. It was also agreed that the Officers follow this up as a matter of urgency.

**19. OUT OF AREA PLACEMENTS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCE PACKAGES**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) providing Committee with background information on out of area placements and additional resources packages for children and young people with exceptional needs as part of a regular reporting programme.
Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

(i) to note the information provided within the report on out of area placements and additional resources packages; and

(ii) that a further copy of the report is set out in the confidential section of the agenda, which invites the Committee to note information provided on out of area placements and additional resource packages.

20. QUESTION TIME

In response to a question from Councillor M Howe asking if there was an embargo on promoted post appointments and if there was, what affect will this have on others in the pipeline, when was it put in place, how long will it last, how did members not know about it and where was the transparency within schools, the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) gave an assurance that this was not true and any vacant posts would be overviewed by CMT and Human Resources.

In response to a question from Councillor S Morton asking for clarity on the filling of senior vacant posts the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) advised that each post would be considered at the time they were submitted.

Councillor Alexander took the opportunity to congratulate all the staff for all the unseen work that they carry out in the background.

21. TRIBUTE TO MR JOHN CARNEY

The Meeting, in noting that this would be the last meeting of the Children and Young People’s Services Committee attended by the Head of Children, Families and Criminal Justice, the Committee joined the Chairman and the Corporate Director (Education and Social care) in paying tribute to Mr Carney for his contribution to the delivery of Council Services in Moray and wished him a happy and active retirement.

22. OUT OF AREA PLACEMENTS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCE PACKAGES (PARAS 5 & 8)

There was submitted and noted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) providing Committee with background information on out of area placements and additional resources packages for children and young people with exceptional needs as part of a regular reporting programme.

23. MORAY LEISURE CENTRE: MANAGEMENT FEE 2013/14 (PARA 6)

Councillors Allan and Shand declared an interest in this item as members of the Moray Leisure Board and left the meeting taking no part in the relevant discussion or decision.

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) asking Committee to give early consideration to the management fee proposed by Moray Leisure Limited in order to given them time to prepare their operation for financial year 2013/14.
Following lengthy discussion, Councillor Alexander seconded by Councillor A McKay moved that this committee do not agree the allocation of additional budget of £18,000 to fund the increase in Moray Leisure Limited’s Management fee for 2013/14 and in light of the budget implications that the matter be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

As an Amendment, Councillor Tuke moved that there be a 1% increase in fees, bringing this into line with staff wages. Failing to find a seconder the amendment fell.

As an Amendment, Councillor Morton, seconded by Councillor McGillivray supported the recommendation as submitted in the report.

On a division there voted:

For the Motion: - Councillors Alexander, McKay, Skene and Tuke

For the Amendment: - Councillors Morton, McGillivray and McLean

Abstentions: - Councillor M Howe

Accordingly the Motion became the finding of the meeting and it was agreed not to award the allocation of the additional budget of £18,000 to fund the increase in Moray Leisure Limited’s Management fee for 2013/14 and in light of the budget implications to refer the matter to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.