

**THE MORAY COUNCIL**  
**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2008**

**COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN**

**PRESENT**

Councillors J. Hamilton (Chair), A. McKay (Deputy), G. Coull, J. Divers, J. Hogg M. McConnachie, A. McDonald, E. McGillivray, I. Ogilvie, D. Ross, J. Russell, M. Shand, I. Young, Reverend C.M. Stewart (Religious Representative), Frances Wardhaugh (Primary School Representative) and Susan Slater (Secondary School Representative).

**IN ATTENDANCE**

The Director of Community Services, the Director of Educational Services, the Head of Children, Families and Criminal Justice, the Head of Educational Resources Service, the Head of Educational Development Services, Mrs V Cross, Mrs S Duffus, Mr J Gibson and Mr D MacDonald (Quality Improvement Officers), the PPP Project Manager, the Leisure and Healthy Living Project Officer, Mrs D Brands, Principal Accountant, the Principal Solicitor (Litigation & Licensing), the Public Relations Co-ordinator and Mrs S Kennedy, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Meeting.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs A R McLennan and Rev G Swanson (Religious Representatives) and Miss Laura Young (Pupil Representative).

**1. DECLARATION OF GROUP DECISIONS**

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct the meeting noted that Councillor Divers declared a personal interest in items 4 and 5, 'Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) Performance Inspection Progress Report and Action Plan' and 'Current Status of Care Service Contracts' respectively.

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 nor any declarations of Members' Interest in respect of any Item on the Agenda.

**2. WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Members' to their first meeting of the Children & Young People's Services Committee and welcomed Councillor A McKay in her role as the Deputy Chairman of the Committee.

### **3. WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

In response to the written question submitted by Councillor Hogg seeking information in regard to the current total unit catering service costs of providing a school meal at Cabrach Primary School and the average cost per meal in Moray the Meeting noted that the cost for Cabrach is currently £20.28 per meal with the average cost per meal across other Moray schools being £3.68.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Hogg asking if there was an unequivocal statutory duty placed upon education authorities to provide hot school meals to all pupils in all circumstances, the Head of Educational Resource Services advised that there was no duty placed upon the Education Authority to provide school meals for all pupils. He further advised that the only requirement was that meals are provided for those pupils entitled to free school meals however. there was no requirement to provide hot meals.

The meeting noted a written question submitted by Councillor Ross seeking clarification as to the current service provided to football teams who pay for grass cutting and lining of pitches, and what improvements could be made to this service.

In response the Director of Educational Services advised that no football teams currently pay solely for grass cutting and lining of pitches. Teams pay a facility hire fee which includes the hire of pavilion/changing rooms as well as the pitch which is cut and lined as per the agreed cutting and lining schedule. Any improvement of the current service, such as greater frequency of cutting and lining, would incur increased costs which would require need to be funded either by increasing the budget or increasing the charges.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Ross requesting that the pitch be cut, then lined, all grass removed from the pitch and that all staff are made aware of the laws of the game in regard to the lining of penalty areas, the Head of Educational Resources Services advised that the majority of these issues related to Environmental Services and he would bring these to their attention.

### **4. SOCIAL WORK INSPECTION AGENCY (SWIA) PERFORMANCE INSPECTION – PROGRESS REPORT AND ACTION PLAN**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services advising the Committee on the progress in relation to the Action Plan developed following the Performance Inspection of Social Work Services in Moray during 2007.

Following consideration the Committee noted:

- (i) the progress relating to the Action Plan to address policy and practice issues requiring improvement; and
- (ii) that the Director of Community Services would continue to submit reports to Service Committees and the Audit & Performance Review Committee, as required, on progress outlined in relation to the Action Plan.

## **5. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2008-09**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services presenting to the Committee the annual Community Services Department's Development and Improvement Plan for 2008-09.

The Director of Community Services advised the meeting that the plan was not free standing and aspects of it linked into the Single Outcome Agreement and some issues echoed some of the points raised by SWIA inspectors. He further advised that pages 23, 37 to 40 inclusive related to the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Shand regarding page 23 of the report in relation to the delays in progressing tasks, the Director of Community Services advised that he was working with colleagues to progress the work and expected a delay of about 6 to 8 weeks, however a new member of staff had been appointed which would assist with the catch-up process.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed :

- (i) the Community Services Department's Service Development and Improvement Plan for 2008-09; and
- (ii) that monitoring reports be presented in the future to the Children & Young People's Services Committee and the Audit & Performance Review Committee as required.

## **6. CURRENT STATUS OF CARE SERVICE CONTRACTS**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services informing the Committee of the current contracting status of the contracts.

Following consideration the Committee approved the contracts and their funding levels which had been negotiated and detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

## **7. REVISED OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MORAY FOSTERING AND ADOPTION PANELS**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services seeking the Committee's approval in updating the operational arrangements for the Moray Adoption and Fostering Panels.

Following consideration the Committee agreed the revised operational arrangements for the operation of the Moray Fostering and Adoption Panels.

## **8. ADMISSIONS TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services seeking the Committee's approval to reserve places in certain Moray Primary Schools for Session 2008/09.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to reserve:

- (i) two places at every stage of education in Bishopmill Primary School (14 spaces) ; and
- (ii) two places at every stage of education in West End Primary School (14 spaces).

## **9. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES – SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to agree the Educational Services – Service Improvement Plan.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- (i) the Educational Services – Service Improvement Plan; and
- (ii) that copies of the plan be made available electronically on the Intranet and Internet and that a number of copies are printed for establishments, public access via Public Libraries and Access Points and for other interested parties such as the Scottish Government and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE).

## **10. ACTIVITY ANALYSIS /SERVICE STANDARDS – REVISIONS TO PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE 2008/09 REPORTING PERIOD**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to approve revisions to Activity Analysis and Service Standard performance indicators and targets submitted to the Audit and Performance Review Committee.

In response to an issue raised by Councillor Ross regarding the coding of indicators, the Head of Educational Development Services advised that he would look into this issue and advise Councillor Ross following the meeting.

Thereafter, the Committee approved the revisions to Activity Analysis and Service Standard performance indicators and targets submitted, for the 2008/09 reporting period, to the Audit and Performance Review Committee as noted in Appendix 1 of the report.

## **11. REDUCTION IN PRIMARY 1-3 CLASS SIZE**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services advising the Committee of the approach being taken over the next 2 years to address the

reduction in class sizes for Primaries 1-3 as expressed in the recently published Concordat between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

Councillor Ross expressed concern in regard to this report and in particular to the recent announcement by a neighbouring authority to release a teacher when class numbers fell. In his opinion he felt that the Head Teacher should be deciding on the best approach in the interests of the pupils and wondered what else this money would be spent on.

The Head of Educational Resource Services advised that Moray also reduces the number of teachers if the roll drops and this did not mean necessarily that there would be a reduction in class sizes. He further advised that the Council agreed to the Concordat which agreed to make year on year progress in reducing class sizes in primaries 1-3. In regard to the financial aspects he advised that as rolls reduce funding is removed. In Moray the Council look at the detail in specific circumstances at each school and as the roll reduces the number of teachers may be reduced or utilised in other schools.

Councillor McConachie commended officers on the report and referred to section 4(c) of the report relating to the financial implications of reducing class sizes and wondered if additional space would be required and whether any new classes were to be built. In response the Head of Educational Resources Services advised that in terms of this report no additional space was required, however, if class sizes were to be reduced to 18 then significant cash investment would be required both in regard to additional staff and classrooms.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the contents of the report;
- (ii) to receive regular updates on progress; and
- (iii) that the changes in budget retention within Educational Services be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

## **12. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGETS 2008/09**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services informing the Committee of the projects and patterns of expenditure projected for Capital Budgets within Educational Services for 2008/09.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- (i) note the current position regarding the Educational Services' Capital Programme; and
- (ii) approve the implementation of the school projects as identified in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of the report.

### **13. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services providing a summary statement for the Educational Services Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2008.

In response to Members' concerns regarding free school meals and transportation costs, the Head of Educational Resource Services advised that in regard to free school meals there had been a smaller uptake than usual and significant steps had been taken to remove the stigma surrounding free school meals and he was hopeful that there would be an improvement in next years' figures. In regard to the overspend in transportation costs he advised that this had arisen due to the need for transport for children with additional supports needs which was not possible to predict.

Thereafter, the Committee noted the content of the report.

### **14. SINGLETON INSPECTIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES – PUBLISHED REPORTS FROM MARCH 2008 – APRIL 2008**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to scrutinise and note the singleton inspections of pre-school centres by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the Care Commission which were published between March 2008 and April 2008.

### **15. INTEGRATED INSPECTIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES – PUBLISHED REPORTS FROM MARCH 2008 – APRIL 2008**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to scrutinise and note the integrated inspections of pre-school centres by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the Care Commission which were published between March 2008 and April 2008.

### **16. SCHOOL INSPECTIONS – MORAY COUNCIL FOLLOW THROUGH REPORTS MARCH – MAY 2008**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to scrutinise and note the most recent report published by Moray Council Educational Services following an earlier school inspection by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) of Applegrove Primary School.

The Chair referred Members' to the conclusion at Appendix 1 of the report and commended all staff involved on the very good progress they had achieved in addressing the main points for action.

Thereafter, the Committee noted the report.

## **17. HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS – PUBLISHED REPORTS FEBRUARY – MAY 2008**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to scrutinise and note the most recent report published following the inspection by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) of Crossroads Primary School in Moray.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee congratulated the Acting Head Teacher and the contribution made by the new Head Teacher on the very good work that they had achieved in addressing the main points for action.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

## **18. PROGRESS REPORT – PORTESSIE PRIMARY SCHOOL HMIE ACTION PLAN**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to scrutinise and note the progress made in addressing the main points for action identified in the HMIE Report on Portessie Primary School, published in October 2007.

The Chair advised the meeting that good progress had been made and, in particular noted that a parent-friendly version of the action plan to address the main points for action had been produced.

In response to a query from Councillor Shand regarding the substantive post of Head Teacher the Head of Educational Development Services advised the meeting that the Acting Head Teacher would remain in post until the end of the current session and the post would be advertised in August/September 08.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

## **19. PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING – TEACHERS IN SCOTLAND 2007**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services notifying the Committee of information with regard to Teachers in Scotland, mainly derived from the latest annual staff census, which took place in September 2007.

In response to a query from Councillor Shand in regard to the age of the majority of teaching staff in Moray, the Head of Educational Resources Services advised that he was more concerned about quality of teachers rather than age. However, a more serious point was the workforce planning issue and the difficulty in getting matching vacancies to recruitment and training.

Thereafter, the Committee noted the information contained in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

## **20. PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING – PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND PLACING REQUESTS 2006/07**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services notifying the Committee of performance information with regard to pre-school education and placing requests.

The Director of Educational Services referred Members' to page 3 of the report and clarified the reason for the target of 103% which was due to young people living outwith Moray attending Moray schools.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the report.

## **21. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE FOR PERIOD FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2008**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services updating the Committee on progress against the Educational Services, Service Improvement Plan 2005-2008 (Revised April 2007).

In response to Members' concerns regarding completion dates and targets the Director of Educational Services and the Head of Educational Resource Services advised that this related to the distillation of the Action Plan which sat below the Service Improvement Plan, which will be finalised shortly and completion dates will be added to the Plan and then passed to the Research and Information Officer to update. In relation to falling targets the Meeting was advised that this was due to staff shortages and that there had been a review of the support staff structures in terms of additional support needs which included discussions with trade unions and this has resulted in the need for a significant piece of work which would be led later in the year by the Head of Educational Resource Services.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the progress made against the Service Improvement Plan as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

## **22. MONITORING REPORT: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to consider the details of complaints received during the period 1 March to 30 April 2008.

During discussion concerns were expressed regarding the dating of reports and the Director of Educational Services agreed to raise this issue with the Chief Executive.

Thereafter, the Committee noted the Complaints Procedure Monitoring Report for the period 1 March to 30 April 2008.

### **23. EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT MONITORING 2007/08**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services providing an update on progress in respect of the Council's Efficient Government agenda as it affects Educational Services for the period to 31 March 2008.

### **24. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PPP BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services providing a summary statement for the PPP Budget as at 31 March 2008.

### **25. CHILDREN & FAMILIES REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2007/8**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services informing the Committee of the position at 31 March 2008 regarding the Children & Families Revenue budget as detailed in the report and Appendix 1.

### **26. COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT, FOURTH QUARTER, JANUARY – MARCH 2008**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services inviting the Committee to scrutinise the Complaints Monitoring information for Children and Families Services, for the quarter, 1 January to 31 March 2008, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

### **27. CHILDREN & FAMILIES PERFORMANCE REPORT, FOURTH QUARTER, JANUARY – MARCH 2008**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services inviting the Committee to scrutinise the Performance Indicators for Children & Families for the quarter 1 January to 31 March 2008 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

### **28. COMMUNITY SERVICES SERVICE DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2007-08, MONITORING REPORT, FOURTH QUARTER, JANUARY – MARCH 2008**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services inviting the Committee to scrutinise the Department's performance against the Service Development & Improvement Plan 2007-08 for the quarter 1 January to 31 March 2008 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

### **29. ONGOING INCREASED DEMAND ON THE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES BUDGET**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services informing the Committee of the ongoing increased demand on the Educational Support Services budget in relation to resources required to support pupils with Level 5 Additional Support Needs for financial year 2007-2008. A report in relation to this subject was

considered by the Educational and Social Services Committee on 28 November 2007 (para 25 of the minute refers) and again on 19 December 2007 (para 27 of the minute refers).

In response to Members' concerns regarding the continuing financial impact on the divisional sports services the Director of Educational Services agreed to submit a comprehensive report on the full range of options available under the Standards and Schools Act 2000 to the October meeting of this committee.

Thereafter, the Committee noted the content of the report.

### **30. CELEBRATING SUCCESS**

Mrs Slater, Secondary School Representative joined the meeting at this juncture.

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services sharing with the Committee some of the successes which schools and services within Educational Services have achieved in recent months.

The Chair congratulated everyone involved in producing this report and was of the opinion that it was important that the Committee are made aware of all the excellent work going on.

### **31. CELEBRATING SUCCESS**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services which shared with the Committee some of the successes and positive developments within Children & Families Services in recent months.

### **32. NORTH EAST WORK SKILLS PROJECT**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services seeking the Committee's approval to participate in the North East Work Skills Project.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to :

- (i) note the potential for the Council to receive £40,000 from the Scottish Government to support provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Moray;
- (ii) Subject to receipt of this funding agreed to the Council participating as a partner with Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils in the North East Work Skills Project (NEWS Project); and
- (iii) a contribution of £72,000, split equally over three financial years, towards the costs of the North East Work Skills

### **33. DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTBALL FACILITIES: COULARDBANK PLAYING FIELDS, LOSSIEMOUTH**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services informing the Committee of the progress made to date in relation to the development of football facilities at Coularbank Playing Fields by Lossiemouth United FC. The proposed development of this facility has been sought by the Club to meet more stringent ground and facility requirements imposed on them by the Scottish Junior Football Association (SJFA).

The Leisure and Healthy Living Project Officer outlined the background to the report and advised of the SJFA guidelines affecting football clubs and the requirement to enclose football pitches with a fence and the penalties for failing to meet these guidelines. Thereafter he responded to Members queries.

The Chairman joined Members' in congratulating Lossie United Football Club on their recent success and their efforts in fund raising.

On the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Stewart addressed the meeting and advised that he welcomed the report and thanked the Officer involved. He updated Members' on Lossiemouth United's recent success and their fund raising efforts.

In response to Members' request for a comprehensive report to the next Committee with suggestions on how all clubs could meet the SJFA requirements, the Director of Educational Services advised that he could not guarantee a report to the next meeting of this Committee, however he gave an assurance to the meeting, that no work would commence until the SJFA had agreed the proposals outlined in the report. He further advised that the Healthy Living Project Officer was leaving to take up another post with the Moray Community Health & Social Care Partnership and thanked him for his contribution to the work of the Service.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee also extended their thanks to Healthy Living Project Officer and wished him well in his new post.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) support the provision of a perimeter fence and handrail around the main pitch at Coularbank Playing Fields, Lossiemouth up to a maximum of £4,300 with this funding being met from Educational Services Budgets for Grounds Maintenance of Sports Facilities and Planned Maintenance;
- (ii) approve the main terms of an agreement with Lossiemouth United for the provision of a fence being those as detailed in Appendix 4; and
- (iii) a report on future suggestions for other clubs in this position being submitted to a future meeting of this Committee

### 34. QUESTION TIME

In response to a question from Councillor Ross regarding the current state of play at Deanshaugh Playing Fields, Elgin and the issues surrounding Bishopmill United football pitch facilities, the Director of Educational Services advised that Environmental Services were working on the issue surrounding Deanshaugh Playing Fields and that he would ask them to update Councillor Ross on the current position. In regard to the issues surrounding Bishopmill United football pitch facilities for this season he further advised that the Leisure and Healthy Project Officer had alluded to this issue earlier in the meeting and that he would ask him to update Councillor Ross on this issue following the meeting.

In response to a second question from Councillor Ross about whether the Council could look at reviewing the current cut off figures for a non teaching Deputy Head Teacher post, the Director of Educational Services advised that they could review the policy but any improvements would have budgetary implications for the Council. The Head of Educational Resource Services, urged caution and advised that the Council never appoint a non-teaching depute head teacher to any school and only appoint a Deputy Headteacher and it would be up to the Head Teacher to arrange classes.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Ross stated there were certain instances in Moray where the cut off numbers affected a small number of rural schools and requested that a detailed report be submitted to a future meeting of this committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg asking for an update on the advances being made towards harmonisation of the school day in individual schools, the Head of Educational Resource Services advised that very little progress had been made due to workload pressures and whilst it may seem a straight forward issue this could have a knock on effect on the school transport contract. He also advised that they were currently working on some proposals with Secondary Head Teachers and the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers with a view to moving to a 33 week period and if this was implemented it would also have an impact on primary schools.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Hogg asking how many schools so far had achieved harmony and when 100% could be expected with no additional costs, the Head of Educational Services advised that 6 primary schools close at the same time at present, leaving 40 schools and that harmony would not happen during session 08/09 and this would also be dependant on whether this involved changes to the transport contract.

In response to a question from Councillor Russell asking if the Council had a policy to cover electrical equipment that was privately purchased for schools, the Head of Educational Resource Services advised that anything purchased or donated to a school goes on the school inventory and would be subject to electrical testing.

In response to a question from Councillor Shand regarding the name of the Committee the Chairman advised that the Children and Young People's Strategic

Group had been renamed the 'Smarter Strategic Group' thus removing any confusion for the future.

In response to a question from Councillor Divers regarding the current position of the PPP Project relating to Elgin Academy, the PPP Project Manager advised that the intention was that construction would commence in Easter 2010.