

THE MORAY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2009
COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillors J Hamilton (Chairman), A McKay (Depute), G Coull, J Divers, J Hogg, M McConachie, A McDonald, E McGillivray, I Ogilvie, D Ross, M Shand, Mrs A R MacLennan, Mrs F Wardhaugh (Primary Representative), Mrs S Slater (Secondary Representative) and Miss F Jagger (Pupil Representative).

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor F Murdoch.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Director of Community Services, the Director of Educational Services, the Head of Educational Resource Services, the Head of Educational Development Services, the Educational Resource Manager, Team Manager, the Community Learning and Development and Manager (Operations), Ms K Delaney, the Community Learning & Development, Team leader, (Youth Work), Mrs S Duffus, Quality Improvement Officer, Ms A Hannah, Project Officer, Mr A Oliver, PPP Project Officer, Mrs D Brands, Principal Accountant, Mr R D Burns, Chief Legal Officer, Mr D Westmacott, Apprentice Committee Services Officer, and Mrs S Kennedy, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Meeting.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors J Russell, I Young, Rev C M Stewart and Rev G Swanson (Religious Representatives), and Councillors G McIntyre and A Wright Ex-Officio).

1. PUPIL REPRESENTATIVE

The Chair on behalf of the Committee welcomed Fiona Jagger of Buckie High School, to her first meeting of the Children & Young People's Services Committee in her capacity as pupil representative for session 2009/10.

2. DECLARATION OF GROUP DECISIONS

In terms of Standing Order 20, Councillor Shand confirmed that the SNP Group had discussed Item 6 on the Agenda, "Draft Policy on Paired Headteacher for Primary Schools" as a group but it should, however, be appreciated that the SNP Group Members are free to vote as they see fit. There was no whip on the decision of the SNP Members and no sanctions in place to encourage them to vote in any particular way.

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.

3. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

In response to the written question submitted by Councillor Ross asking if the Education Department had received any information from the Scottish Government suggesting that the SNP Government will drop any more manifesto commitments such as their pledge to reduce class sizes in P1-3 to 18, the Director of Educational Services advised that he had not received any information.

As a supplementary question Councillor Ross asked, with regard to the SNP's manifesto and policies in respect of young people's health and well being which were to provide two years of PE and swimming for each child and more centres for sporting excellence, that as the SNP was not going to act on these policies and in light of the tough financial times ahead, how was Moray as an authority going to act on this information.

In response the Head of Educational Development Services advised that in terms of class sizes he had not received any information. He further advised that the intention of the Scottish Government was to have a maximum of 25 pupils in primary 1 by August 2010, however this would not stop the Council's commitment year on year on to reduce class sizes to 18.

4. SCHOOL ATTAINMENT 2008/09

Councillor Murdoch joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

The meeting noted the presentation on attainment levels in Moray for 2008/09 by the Head of Educational Development Services.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked the Head of Educational Development Services for his excellent presentation. He also extended congratulations to pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, carers and quality improvement officers for their input in respect of the achievement being made in attainment in Moray schools for 2009 - 2010.

5. PROPOSALS FOR A 32 WEEK PERIOD IN MORAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services asking the Committee to note the results of the consultation on the proposals for a 32 week in secondary schools and to agree discussions with secondary headteachers on a co-ordinated school day.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- (i) note the results of the consultation on the proposals for a 32 week period in secondary schools;
- (ii) officers discussing with secondary headteachers the move to a co-ordinated school day; and
- (iii) a report on the topic being brought to a future meeting of this Committee for a decision.

6. DRAFT POLICY ON PAIRED HEADTEACHERS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Educational Services inviting the Committee to consider key principles on paired headteachers and seeking agreement to consult on these principles.

In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Shand with regard to the draft policy where he advised that he had difficulty with the bullet points at paragraph 3.7 of the report referring to suitability, flexibility and costs for filling a vacancy and could not support the proposals, the Head of Educational Development Services clarified the position and advised that the report was only seeking permission to go out to consultation on the key principles which would provide flexibility when posts become vacant.

The Head of Educational Resource Services advised that under national guidelines, any headteacher who refused an interview or was unsuccessful would be demoted to a normal teaching role, but would continue to be paid a headteacher's salary for three years. With regard to the costs referred to in paragraph 4 (c) of the report he advised that these costs referred to the previous pilot and should any additional costs be incurred these would be contained within the existing overall budget.

The Director of Educational Services endorsed the comments of the Head of Educational Services and the Head of Educational Resource Services.

Thereafter, Councillor Shand, seconded by Councillor Coull, moved that recommendations (i) and (ii) of the report be deleted and replaced with a new recommendation "to retain current policy".

As an Amendment, Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Hogg moved approval of the recommendations as written.

On a division there voted:

For the Motion (7) - Councillors Shand, Coull, McConachie,
A McDonald, Ogilvie, and Ms F Wardhaugh and
Mrs S Slater

For the Amendment (7) - Councillors Hamilton, Hogg, Divers, McGillivray,
A McKay, Ross and Mrs A McLennan

Abstention (0) - -

There being an equality of votes, the Chairman, in terms of Standing Order 55(e), cast his casting vote in favour of the Amendment which became the finding of the meeting and agreed:

- (i) to the principles for a policy on paired headteachers in primary schools;
- (ii) to consultation on these principles; and
- (iii) that a draft policy based on these principles be brought back to Committee for approval.

7. EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGETS 2009/10

There was submitted a joint report by the Director of Educational Services and the Director of Community Services informing the Committee of the projects and patterns of expenditure projected for Capital Budgets within Educational and Community Services for 2009/10.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the current position regarding the Educational and Community Services Capital Programme;
- (ii) to approve the implementation of the capital projects as identified in Paragraph 4.4 of the report;
- (iii) that there would be elected member representation on the project group; and
- (iv) that the project be referred to as Moray Sports Facilities and Elgin High School Arts Provision'.

8. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services providing the Committee with a summary statement for the Educational Services Revenue Budget as at 31 August 2009 as detailed in appendix 1 of the report.

9. SINGLETON INSPECTIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES - PUBLISHED REPORTS FROM AUGUST TO SEPTEMBER 2009

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services advising the Committee of the singleton inspections of pre-school centres by the Care Commission published between August 2009 and September 2009 in respect of:

Ark Childcare Ltd - Cherry Tree Nursery, Elgin
Cullen Primary School Nursery, Cullen
Dyke Pre-school Centre, Dyke
Elgin Childcare Centre, Elgin
Little Acorns Childcare Centre, Kinloss
Moray College Nursery, Elgin
Mortlach Primary School Nursery, Dufftown
Noah's Ark Day Care, Forres
RAF Lossiemouth Childcare Centre, Lossiemouth
Torridon, Pre-school Nursery & Out of School Care, Lossiemouth

10. HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS - PUBLISHED REPORTS JULY - AUGUST 2009

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services with regard to the most recent reports published following inspections by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) of schools and nursery classes in Moray in respect of:

- (i) Inspection of Forres Academy
- (ii) Inspection of Anderson's Primary School
- (iii) Inspection of Knockando Primary School

11. HMIE INSPECTION OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES SURROUNDING SECONDARY SCHOOLS - FORRES ACADEMY, AUGUST 2009

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services advising the Committee of the recent report published following the inspection of the Learning Community surrounding Forres Academy.

12. HMIE INSPECTIONS OF COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT - MORAY COUNCIL FOLLOW-THROUGH REPORT AUGUST 2009

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services advising the Committee of the recent HMIE follow through report on Community Learning and Development in Bishopmill East and East New Elgin, published in August 2009.

In respect of Items 10 -13 above, the Chair on behalf of the Committee congratulated all staff at all levels for their hard work and dedication in giving children in Moray an excellent start in life.

13. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE FOR PERIOD FROM APRIL TO JUNE 2009

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services updating the Committee on progress against the Educational Services, Service Improvement Plan 2009-10.

14. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PPP BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Educational Services providing the Committee with a summary statement for the PPP Budget as at 31 August 2009 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

15. CELEBRATING SUCCESS

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

16. COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT, FIRST QUARTER, APRIL - JUNE 2009

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services inviting the Committee to note the Complaints Monitoring information for Children and Families Services for the quarter, 1 April to 30 June 2009, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

17. COMMUNITY SERVICES SERVICE DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2009-10, MONITORING REPORT, FIRST QUARTER, APRIL - JUNE 2009

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services advising the Committee of the Department's performance against the Service Development & Improvement Plan 2009-10 for the quarter, 1 April to 30 June 2009, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

18. CHILDREN & FAMILIES REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2009/10

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services informing the Committee of the provisional revenue budget position at 31 August 2009 for Children and Families as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

19. SPEYSIDE BIOMASS PROJECT - SPEYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

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 the Speyside Biomass Project at Speyside Community High School, Aberlour.

During discussions members expressed concerns with regard to the need for a back up heating system and agreed that further information was required before this project is progressed any further.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to note the progress being made to date in relation to the development of the Speyside Biomass Project; and
- (ii) that in light of Members' concerns regarding a back up heating system that a presentation involving property, the forestry commission and any other relevant parties be arranged to include all members of the Council.

20. JOINT INTERIM FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION OF SERVICES TO PROTECT CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE MORAY AREA

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services updating the Committee on the joint-interim follow-through inspection of child protection services in Moray.

21. QUESTION TIME

In response to a question from Councillor Hogg seeking an assurance that his previous request for an action plan to improve attainment at highers be included in the December agenda of this Committee, the Chair advised that this was a difficult question however, he would endeavour to comply and made a commitment that he would take this question to the Administration Group to make a decision.