

24 November 2020 at 2 pm

A Remote Meeting of the **EDUCATION AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE**

PRESENT

Councillor McNally, Convener; Councillor Quigley, Vice-Convener; Councillors J. Ashraf, Barclay, Brannan-McVey, Burgess, Burrows, Campbell, Carragher, Castles, Douglas, Fisher, Fotheringham, Gallacher, Goldie, C. Johnston, T. Johnston, Jones, Kelly, Larson, Lennon, Linden, Logue, Magowan, Masterton, McKendrick, McManus, McPake, McVey, Mooney, Shevlin, Stephen and Wilson; Mr. D. Hannan, Ms. L. McBride and Mr. I. Scott.

CHAIR

Councillor McNally (Convener) presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Executive Director (Education and Families); Head of Education (North); Head of Education (Central); Head of Education (South); Head of Children, Families and Justice Social Work Services; Head of Asset and Procurement Solutions; Forward Planning and Specification Manager; Manager, Children and Families; Senior Manager, Education and Families, and Democratic Services Manager.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Feeney, Stocks and Woods.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN TERMS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE ETC. (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000

1. Councillor Brannan-McVey declared an interest in paragraph 3 by virtue of a family relationship with a previously looked after and accommodated child and did not participate in consideration of that item.

KEEPING THE PROMISE IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE

2. There was submitted a presentation by the Head of Children, Families and Justice Social Work Services in relation to the Promise in North Lanarkshire which is a commitment to realise Scotland's ambition to be the best place in the world to grow up together with a further ambition to enable loving, supporting and nurturing relationships as a basis for children to thrive and a rebalancing of interventions in order to provide safe and loving relationships.

There was provided a presentation by the Manager, Education and Families and Senior Manager, Education and Families together with a video of interviews with young people.

The Convener thanked the officers for the presentation.

Councillor Brannan-McVey, prior to consideration of the following item of business, having declared an interest by virtue of a family relationship with a previously looked after and accommodated child, did not participate in its consideration.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER 2019/20

3. There was submitted a report by the Head of Children, Families and Justice Social Work Services/Chief Social Work Officer (1) advising that the Chief Social Work Officer of each local authority is required to provide an annual report; (2) attaching, as an Appendix to the report, the North Lanarkshire Chief Social Work Officer Report 2019/20 which provides information on the delivery of statutory functions and performance and improvement activity across the range of social work services over that year; (3) explaining that the report also provides information on the wider governance and planning of social work provision within North Lanarkshire, including its key role in local partnerships and on both the national and local challenges impacting on the delivery of social work services, and (4) highlighting that the report reflects the progression of some key structural changes from "We Aspire – A Shared Ambition" and embedding of Children, Families and Justice Social Work Services within the Education and Families directorate with this position fully formalised following Scottish Ministerial approval of the revised Integration Scheme in April 2019.

Decided:

- (1) that the report by the Chief Social Work Officer be approved, and
- (2) that it be noted that approval of the report had also been sought through the Adult Health and Social Care Committee.

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2019/20

4. There was submitted a report by the Head of Education (Central) which covered the period August 2019 to August 2020 and brought together, in one document, some of the key highlights in respect of improving life chances for the children, young people and communities of North Lanarkshire (1) reflecting on the challenges presented during 2020 due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic to ensure that all learners could achieve their full potential regardless of where they came from, being a key driver for improvement in North Lanarkshire; (2) advising that digital learning has taken on an increased focus as a result of the pandemic and reducing the digital divide has become an essential part of the Council's response; (3) setting out a number of achievements delivered within the context of a global pandemic for the later part of the school year, and (4) attaching, as an Appendix to the report, the Standards and Quality 2019/20 report.

Decided: that the contents of the Standards and Quality report be noted.

LEARNING ESTATE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (LEIP) - PHASE TWO: PROJECT BID TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

5. There was submitted a report by the Head of Asset and Procurement Solutions reporting that the Council had the opportunity to bid for Scottish Government funding linked to the Learning Estate Strategy (ie. the new school build programme) via the Learning Estate Improvement Programme (LEIP) (1) reporting that timescales associated with the bid have been extremely tight, and as a result, a bid was required to be submitted ahead of Committee consideration; (2) explaining that, following receipt of the letter on 15 September 2020, and following a desktop appraisal of the various projects which potentially met the criteria, and subsequent consideration by the Council's Corporate Management Team, a bid for funding linked to the proposed Wishaw Town Hub was put forward which was chosen as the only Town Hub where potential sites sit within Council ownership; (3) confirming that the bid paperwork had been submitted to the Scottish Government on 13 October 2020; (4) informing the Committee that the Scottish Government requires Councils to demonstrate that they have both financial and political approval for a project as part of the bid process and that evidence had been provided on the Community Investment Fund (CIF) funding approval of elected Members (financial) and that it had been advised that specific approval for this project would be requested via this Committee with approval or otherwise, to be reported back to the Scottish Government following

the meeting, and (5) intimating that should the Committee decide not to approve the recommendations outlined within the report, the Council would withdraw the bid from the process and that the project would return to "pre bid status" where it would again be considered and assessed against all other schools which share the same "pre-1996 build status".

Decided:

- (1) that the decision to request funding from the Scottish Government to support the delivery of a Town Hub in Wishaw be approved;
- (2) that it be noted that the Council would prioritise the delivery of a new Town Hub in the Wishaw locality, alongside other approved projects, should funding be granted by the Scottish Government, and
- (3) that it be noted that should the funding not be successful, the project would return to the "unapproved" list of projects and be subject to the prioritisation assessment along with all other projects in this position.

HUB DELIVERY PROGRAMME: PROGRESS UPDATE

6. There was submitted a report by the Head of Asset and Procurement Solutions providing an update on the Town and Community Hub Delivery Programme, highlighting the status of each project (1) explaining that the Schools and Centres Modernisation Programme consists of Phase 2 and Phase 3 projects which had been approved through previous Committee decisions and that, in addition, at the Special North Lanarkshire Council meeting of 21 February 2019, a further commitment had been given to replace all pre-1996 schools and establishments to be funded as part of the newly established Community Investment Fund (CIF), which was also agreed at that meeting; (2) outlining the guiding principles that have been adopted to inform the programme to ensure that each project delivers facilities through which new ways of working can be promoted; (3) intimating that following its approval at the meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee in March 2020, work on a prioritisation matrix was progressing; (4) advising that projects already in the programme for delivery, which have been included in previous updates to the Committee, have, where feasible, been subject to assessment against the guiding principles; (5) explaining that available resources were being assessed against the requirements of the programme and, if required, there would be a request to fund these from the Hub Development and Delivery Capital Programme and taken forward in line with Council HR Policies and Procedures, and (6) attaching, as Appendices to the report, further information regarding progress on projects and of the programme overall.

Decided:

- (1) that the position of each of the projects in the current Hub Delivery Programme be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that a report on the Strategy and Prioritisation Programme for the Community Hub was approved at the Policy and Strategy Committee on 19 March 2020;
- (3) that it be noted that colleagues across the Education and Families Service were reviewing how the associated leadership model would operate in the new Town and Community Hub Programme, and
- (4) that the impact of Covid-19 on the delivery of the Town and Community Hub Programme be noted.

POW 30.1 1140 EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE EXPANSION PROGRAMME UPDATE

7. There was submitted a report by the Head of Education (North) providing a progress update on the 1140 Hours Early Learning and Child Care Expansion Programme within North Lanarkshire (1) reporting that North Lanarkshire had achieved the delivery of the 1140 Hours Programme in all Early Learning and Child Care settings, including private providers, in accordance and compliance with Scottish Government and Public Health Guidance; (2) recalling that the Scottish Government, in conjunction with COSLA, had advised that the statutory duty to delivery 1140 hours was suspended due to the Coronavirus pandemic with a new deadline to be determined but that in line with previously advised timescales, the Council, after extensive work over the previous months, was now successfully delivering 1140 hours across all settings within the authority; (3) advising that, due to the ongoing current pandemic, contingency arrangements were in place to support service delivery at individual setting level in the event of a reduction of staff and that a cluster contingency plan to support critical child care had also been developed; (4) providing an update on infrastructure, new build and also extensions and adaptations projects together with project timelines and estimated dates of completion; (5) outlining actions taken to recruit for a number of posts required for delivery of the programme; (6) explaining that the Council's Quality Team assists and supports in the delivery of the strategic vision to provide high quality Early Learning and Child Care Services and outlining the characteristics of what is considered high quality; (7) advising that Facility Support Services continues to deliver nutritional hot meals to all Family Learning Centres and nursery classes, as per the Service Delivery Model pre-Covid-19 in March 2020 and that, additionally, the Service supplies healthy packed lunches to all nursery classes and new Family Learning Centres where hot meals had not yet been implemented; (8) providing an update on procurement work and recalling that a flexible Framework Agreement had been set in place with external funded providers for the delivery of 1140 hours from 1 August 2020 until 31 July 2023 with that framework providing an opportunity for providers to submit an application on an annual basis to join with the procurement exercise being required to be fully completed prior to admissions for session 2021/22; (9) highlighting that the procurement process which had been undertaken in 2019 to deliver a flexible framework for the delivery of 1140 Early Learning and Child Care Hours had recently been successful in winning a "Go Best Procurement Leadership Award"; (10) confirming the value of external funded provider commission payments which had been made during the period 16 March to 25 September 2020; (11) updating the Committee on work in relation to the cross boundary protocol which was in regard to the number of hours being delivered from each authority within the West Partnership; (12) providing some clarity on data relating to admissions against applications received by parents; (13) reporting on the financial position of the programme in terms of both capital and revenue and on future savings which have been identified, and (14) attaching, as Appendices to the report, a number of supporting documents.

Decided:

- (1) that the progress of the 1140 Hours Early Learning and Child Care Expansion Programme be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that Heathy Park Family Learning Centre has been withdrawn from the infrastructure programme and design proposals and costings for alternatives were being delivered, and
- (3) that the current financial position of the programme be noted.

A PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE REVISION OF THE NORTH LANARKSHIRE CURRICULUM OFFERING

8. There was submitted a report by the Head of Education (Central) reminding the Committee that in May 2020 a review of curriculum arrangements in North Lanarkshire schools had been conducted by staff across the Service which undertook to ensure that all the children and young people benefited from coherent curriculum planning and high quality learning experiences embodying the key entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence and that the review focussed on the themes of Pathways, Packages and Partnerships and reminding the Committee that during the budget setting process for 2020/2023, the

Council had decided to implement a revised school week commencing August 2021 with the report describing progress made, and future plans to consult with stakeholders and to progress implementation of the outcomes of the review (1) reporting on the ambitions the Service has to raise levels of attainment and achievement; (2) advising that the Virtual School Team has redesigned its offering to ensure that all learning experiences for young people are now Covid-19 compliant; (3) providing a narrative on curriculum development and leadership within schools; (4) reporting on the progress towards the establishment of the Digital School and Digital Classroom which has set a bold strategic direction for all the digital learning in all schools; (5) informing the Committee that in relation to Active Schools, the work and focus has been centred around the areas of outdoor activity, leadership, virtual challenge, targeted work and continuous professional development and that within the outdoor activity remit, the team was piloting a programme for local primary outdoor physical activity, as well as active health to include a provision at Strathclyde Park working with the Active Schools Team and Park Rangers, and (6) outlining the next steps in the curriculum review together with details of the implementation of the reconfigured school week in secondary schools which involved moving the core curriculum into 32 periods and four and a half days of delivery thereby creating an "enrichment afternoon" for personal enrichment and achievement.

Decided:

- (1) that the planning so far for the re-alignment of primary and secondary curriculum, in line with the planning outlined in the report, be noted;
- (2) that the revised timeline for consultation with stakeholders regarding the reconfigured week, based on the indicative date for implementation of August 2021, be noted, and
- (3) that a report on the progress of consultation be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

(PO35.1) RECONFIGURING INTENSIVE ASN SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

9. There was submitted a joint report by the Head of Education (South) and the Head of Education (North) providing an update on the progress towards implementing the approved recommendations arising from the extensive Additional Support Needs (ASN) review, agreed by the Committee in September 2019 and commenting on the multi partner approach taken to this (1) providing details on the review which had established 12 key recommendations for action; (2) establishing the methodology by which the Service's redesign was envisioned by officers in response to the Council's priorities; (3) outlining the proposal to create a "We Aspire College" for North Lanarkshire; (4) setting out the proposals to relocate existing establishments; (5) reporting on the revised Head Teachers leadership model; (6) providing an update on the ways in which the career pathway for learning assistance was to be strengthened; (7) confirming that the three Culture and Leisure North Lanarkshire (CLNL) managed centres mentioned within the report were not being considered for closure or service cessation at this time, and (8) attaching, as an Appendix to the report, the final ASN review outcome report.

Decided:

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) that the consultation on the proposed changes to locations for ASN schools be approved;
- (3) that a consultation on the proposed establishment of the We Aspire College be approved;
- (4) that a consultation on the proposed changes to school management arrangements be approved;
- (5) that the establishment of 80 Modern Apprenticeship posts for the Integrated Cluster Wellbeing Teams be noted, and
- (6) that a further report be submitted to the Committee in May 2021 following conclusion of the consultation process.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

10. There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Families) providing a summary of the financial performance of the Education and Families Service for the period 1 April to 16 October 2020 (Period 7) illustrating the projected outturn position as at 31 March 2021, with major outturn variances highlighted and explained as per the Council's approved Financial Regulations.

Decided:

- (1) that the financial position of the Education and Families Revenue Budget be noted, and
(2) that the contents of the report be noted.

NOTIFICATION OF BEFRIENDING SUPPORT INTERIM CONTRACTS

11. There was submitted a report by the Head of Children, Families and Justice Social Work Services/Chief Social Work Officer notifying the Committee of the award of interim contracts for Befriending Support Services, which had been used to provide a continuation of the service delivery for individual service users and advising that the awards had been made using the Council's Negotiated Tender Procedure (NTP) and were being placed on an interim basis to be used while a new contract award procedure was undertaken to secure longer term arrangements for existing and new service users.

Decided: that the action taken to award the interim contracts for Befriending Support Services be noted.

CONTRACTS AWARDED BELOW COMMITTEE APPROVAL THRESHOLD

12. There was submitted a report by the Head of Asset and Procurement Solutions notifying the Committee of contracts awarded between 1 July and 30 September 2020 with a value below the financial threshold requiring Committee approval.

Decided: that the content of the report, and the accompanying Appendix, be noted.