

THE FIFE COUNCIL - EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

5 March 2024

10.00 am - 11.20 am

PRESENT: Councillors Kathleen Leslie (Convener), Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Auxi Barrera (substituting for Councillor Lynn Mowatt), Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, Eugene Clarke, Sean Dillon, Linda Erskine, Alycia Hayes, Louise Kennedy-Dalby, James Leslie, Sarah Neal, Alistair Suttie and Daniel Wilson.

ATTENDING: Angela Logue, Head of Education - Primary Schools & Improvement Support, Maria Lloyd, Head of Education - Secondary Schools & Specialist Support, Shelagh McLean, Head of Education - Early Years and Directorate Support and Pamela Colburn, Quality Improvement Officer (PE Physical Activity & Sports), Education Service; Alison Binnie, Finance Business Partner and Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Finance & Corporate Services.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Ian Cameron, Colin Davidson and Lynn Mowatt.

78. CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

The committee noted that Councillor James Leslie had replaced Councillor Dave Dempsey and Councillor Eugene Clarke had replaced Councillor John Caffrey as members of this committee and welcomed them to their first meeting.

The committee thanked Councillor Dempsey and Councillor Caffrey for their contribution to the work of the committee during their membership.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

80. MINUTE

The committee considered the minute of meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee of 9 January 2024.

Decision

The committee agreed to approve the minute.

81. SWIMMING LESSONS AS INTEGRATED PART OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION COURSES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education Services, detailing the current position and future options for supporting swimming for children and young people, including school swimming lessons and consideration of Scottish Government funding which was in response to a Motion agreed at a meeting of Fife Council on 16 March 2023 (Motion 3, Minute Reference Paragraph 60 of 2023.FC.71 refers).

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) considered the current swimming offer for children and young people in Fife;
- (2) acknowledged the national pilot approaches to school swimming lessons, including funding;
- (3) considered the next steps outlined in the report, providing feedback; and
- (4) agreed, as an additional recommendation, to request a further, detailed report for its consideration at its meeting on 17 September, providing a detailed breakdown of school numbers and associated costs, including: time cost (impact on learning time); centre availability/hire; and funds available for swimming equipment – for the provision of swimming lessons for all across a specific (one) year group over a period of a year and comparative costs for the same provision across three year groups over a shorter period of time.

Councillor Neal left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

82. EDUCATION SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET 2023-24 PROJECTED OUTTURN

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the forecast financial position for the 2023-24 financial year, for the areas in scope of the Education Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report; and
- (2) noted the projected outturn position and the relevant areas of projected over and under spend within the service.

83. EDUCATION SERVICE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-24 : PROGRESS REPORT

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Education and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing information on the overall progress of the Education Service capital programme, for the current financial year, 2023-24, as well as informing on progress on major projects.

Decision

The committee noted:-

- (1) the financial position as detailed in the report; and
- (2) that the budget had been revised to reflect the outcome of the Capital Plan review and the annual re-phasing exercise undertaken in June 2023.

84. EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services supporting the committee's consideration of the workplan for future meetings of the committee.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) reviewed the workplan and suggestions were invited from members of the committee for future areas of scrutiny;
- (2) agreed that the following reports were added to the workplan for the meeting on 17 September 2024:
 - As outlined at Para. No. 81 (4) above – Swimming Lessons as Integrated Part of Physical Education Courses in Primary Schools – further, detailed report;
 - Cost of school transport (current), including cost of provision for pupils with additional support needs;
 - Childcare Inspectorate Reports for council run nurseries; and
 - Childcare services update – provision for nine-month-old and above and pre and after school childcare.