

THE FIFE COUNCIL - EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

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

17 September 2024

10.00 am – 12.20 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Kathleen Leslie (Convener), Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Aude Boubaker-Calder, John Caffrey, Ian Cameron, Eugene Clarke, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Linda Erskine, Julie Ford, Alycia Hayes, Louise Kennedy-Dalby, James Leslie, Lynn Mowatt, Alistair Suttie, Daniel Wilson and Alastair Crockett and Ian Macaulay, Religious Interest representatives.

ATTENDING: Donnie MacLeod, Executive Director, Maria Lloyd, Head of Service, Angela Logue, Head of Service, Shelagh McLean, Head of Service, Gary Peattie, Service Manager, Craig Martin, Quality Improvement Officer, Jacqueline Crawford, Quality Improvement Officer, Stuart Booker, Quality Improvement Officer and Pamela Colburn, Quality Improvement Officer, Education Service; Alison Binnie, Finance Business Partner and Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Finance and Corporate Services.

ALSO ATTENDING: Emma Walker, Chief Executive, Fife Sports and Leisure Trust; and Errin Cummins, Aquatics Development Manager and Sophie McCall, Director of Aquatics Development, Scottish Swimming (for para. 97 only).

Councillor Kathleen Leslie, Convener, on behalf of the committee, welcomed the recently appointed Executive Director, Education, Donnie MacLeod, to his first meeting.

93. CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

Decision

The committee noted that Councillor Caffrey had replaced Councillor Dillon and Councillor Ford had replaced Councillor Neal as members of this committee and welcomed them to their first meeting.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

95. MINUTE

The committee considered the minute of meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee of 7 May 2024.

Decision

The committee approved the minute.

96. EDUCATION DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE FOR 2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service presenting – for scrutiny and comment – the Education Directorate Improvement Plan update for 2024/25 and the Directorate Annual Report 2023/24.

Decision

The committee scrutinised the Directorate Improvement Plan update for 2024/25 and the Directorate Annual Report 2023/24 - which outlined the Education Directorate's approach to improvement of outcomes for children and young people in Fife, within its current budget.

97. SWIMMING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service detailing the current position and future options for supporting swimming for children and young people across Fife, including school swimming lessons and consideration of Scottish Government funding - in response to a motion agreed at a meeting of Fife Council on 16 March 2023.

The committee also considered a short presentation by the Aquatics Development Manager, Scottish Swimming on their role in supporting delivery partners at a local level to plan, organise and prioritise the delivery of school swimming through water safety and basic aquatic skills; and the four levels of the Primary School Swimming Framework, in partnership with Scottish Water, which outlined the varied approaches to implementing school swimming based on local authority needs.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) examined the current swimming offer for children and young people in Fife;
- (2) reviewed the national pilot approaches to school swimming lessons, including funding;
- (3) considered the detailed breakdown of school pupil numbers and associated costs for the provision of swimming lessons across a specific (one) year group over a period of one academic session and comparative costs for the same provision across three-year groups over a shorter period of time. This breakdown included: time cost (impact on learning time); centre availability/hire; and funds available for swimming equipment;
- (4) considered the proposed next steps outlined in the report;
- (5) agreed that an elected member/officer working group be set up to consider, in more detail, the available options and methods of implementing swimming lessons for identified non-swimmers that were accessible and inclusive for all young people – convener to be advised of one nominee from each political group and relevant officers invited to participate; and

2024 ES 48

- (6) agreed that an outcome report from the working group be submitted for the committee's consideration at a future date with a view to making recommendations on swimming lesson provision to the Cabinet Committee.

98. **CHILDCARE SERVICES - EARLY ADOPTER COMMUNITY WORK**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education Service providing an update on the work carried out within the Childcare Services Team as part of the Early Adopter Community work in the Levenmouth Area.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) considered the information provided and the progress made to date;
- (2) scrutinised the plans to expand the Early Adopter work to other communities in Fife;
- (3) requested an update report on the Early Adopter Community work for consideration at its meeting on 18 March 2025; and
- (4) requested an elected member briefing, in the interim, on the delivery phase of the Levenmouth project and plans to expand the Project Team's learning and research into other areas of Fife and the Cowdenbeath area in particular.

The committee adjourned at 11.35 am and reconvened at 11.45 am.

99. **EDUCATION DIRECTORATE: REVENUE BUDGET 2023-24 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services advising members of the provisional outturn for the 2023-24 Education Service Revenue Budget for the areas in scope of the Education Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The committee noted the provisional outturn position (subject to audit) for 2023-24 as detailed in the report and the reasons for the main variances.

100. **EDUCATION DIRECTORATE : CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-24 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing information on the provisional outturn for the Education Directorate capital programme for the financial year 2023-24 as well as providing information on the progress on major projects.

Decision

The committee noted the financial position as detailed in the report.

Councillor Caffrey left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

101. 2024-25 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN - EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the projected outturn financial position for the 2024-25 financial year for the Education Directorate as at 30 June 2024.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

102. 2024-25 CAPITAL MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT - EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the projected financial position for the 2024-25 financial year for the Education Directorate.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

103. 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) noted the workplan and suggestions were invited from members of the committee for future areas of scrutiny;
- (2) agreed, as referenced at Paragraph 97 (6) above, to add an update report on swimming for children and young people; and
- (3) agreed, as referenced at Paragraph 98 (3) above, to add an update report on childcare services - early adopter community work to the workplan for the meeting on 18 March 2025.

CONVENER'S VALEDICTORY COMMENTS

Councillor Kathleen Leslie, Convener, on behalf of the committee, thanked Maria Lloyd, Head of Education Service for her support to the committee as lead officer while the Executive Director, Education post remained vacant.