

Committee Minutes

Education, Children and Families Committee

Edinburgh, 9 November 2010

Present:- Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Beckett (Vice-Convener), Balfour, Blacklock, Buchan, Cairns, Dawe (ex-officio), Godzik, Henderson, Johnstone, Keir, G Mackenzie, Milligan, Morris, Munn, Peacock (substituting for Councillor Edie), Rose, and Thomas (substituting for Councillor Lang).

Present for the Education Items:- M Bryce-Stafford, A C Duncan, Rev Dr R Gould and R Simpson.

1 Minutes

1.1 Minute of meeting of 7 September 2010

Decision

Approved as a correct record.

1.2 Minute of meeting of 12 October 2010

Decision

Approved as a correct record.

2 Proposal to Decant James Gillespie's High School

2.1 Deputation – James Gillespie's High School Parent Council

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Ann Henderson, Chair, James Gillespie's High School Parents' Council. She said the Parent Council welcomed the proposal to build a replacement school on the existing site, understood the unknowns in the whole project and the constraints on the Council's revenue budget.

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The parents were keen to keep a whole school approach, to make a good start and wanted to be very clear that it was their opinion that the decant should take place over the summer as a mid-term decant would be disruptive to the pupils.

Ann Henderson made the following points:

- This was not a simple exercise, but involved relocating staff and students and maintaining a whole school feel over two sites.
- The HMI report made it very clear that all stakeholders had raised concerns about the timing of the proposed decant, not just parents.
- That learning and teaching were a priority.
- The additional costs associated with the decant taking place over the summer may be too high and could be balanced by the likely additional costs of moving over the Christmas period.

It was her view that the points raised about the timing of the decant had not been addressed in the papers before the Committee members at today's meeting. None of the issues raised by parents about learning and teaching had been addressed.

She concluded by saying that this was a great opportunity for the school and she wanted everyone to work together and get the best start for the project and not manage an unsatisfactory decant.

The Convener thanked the deputation and invited them to remain for consideration of the report by the Director of Children and Families (see item 2.2 below).

2.2 Consultation Report

The Committee was informed of the outcome of the statutory consultation exercise in respect of proposals to decant James Gillespie's High School during the construction phase of the school rebuild, including the main issues raised during the public consultation and the comments by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education on the proposals.

Motion

- 1) To adopt the decant strategy for James Gillespie's High School as proposed in the consultation paper, with S1-S3 remaining on the main site and S4-S6 decanted to Darroch for the duration of the construction period.
- 2) To note that the precise details of the decant may be subject to further refinement as the project evolved, which would be discussed in full with the school community.

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- 3) To note the intention to report to Council on the overall project status early in 2011.

- moved by Councillor MacLaren, seconded by Councillor Beckett.

Amendment

- 1) That the Director of Children and Families to bring forward a further report to the next meeting of the Committee, with full details of the financial and educational impact of bringing forward the decant to summer 2012 instead of winter 2012/13.
- 2) To note that the precise details of the decant may be subject to further refinement as the project evolves, which would be discussed in full with the school community.
- 3) To note the intention to report to Council on the overall project status early in 2011.

- moved by Councillor Godzik, seconded by Councillor Rose.

Voting

For the motion - 12 votes
For the amendment - 9 votes

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor MacLaren.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 9 November 2010, submitted.)

3 Liberton High School and Gracemount High School – Consultation Report on Catchment Review

Details were provided of the outcome of the statutory consultation exercise on revised proposals for catchment changes to Liberton High School and Gracemount High School.

Decision

To approve the following:

- 1) The boundary of the existing Gracemount High School catchment area to remain unchanged (apart from a minor modification within Midlothian).

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- 2) The part of the Gracemount High School catchment area extending into Gilmerton Primary School catchment area to be given “dual feeder status”.
- 3) Liberton High School catchment area to be extended to incorporate the full extent of the new Gilmerton Primary School catchment, the extension to be given dual feeder status.
- 4) Within the proposed dual feeder catchment area, pupils would have the option of attending either catchment high school.
- 5) Catchment boundaries for Gracemount High School and Liberton High School to be aligned to follow the City Council boundary.
- 6) To note that a further small modification had been made along the proposed dual catchment boundary between Gracemount and Liberton High Schools so that the boundary followed Lasswade Road rather than run through an area of countryside.
- 7) The proposed secondary school catchment changes would take effect from November 2010 and would apply for the S1 intake process for 2011-2012.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 9 November 2010, submitted.)

4 CLD Re-design: 21st Century Community Learning and Development in Edinburgh

The Committee at its meeting of 18 May 2010 had requested a report following the further consultation on the Community Learning and Development (CLD) service.

Details were provided of the outcome of the consultation, progress towards previously agreed recommendations and further recommendations for the future priorities of the CLD service in Edinburgh.

Decision

- 1) To note the changes recommended to the Community Learning and Development service.
- 2) To approve the recommendations outlined in Section 5 of the Director’s report.

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- 3) To request a report on the outcome of the pilot projects by June 2011.

(References – minute of the Education, Children and Families Committee 18 May 2010 (item 5); report by the Director of Children and Families 9 November 2010, submitted.)

5 Sporting Excellence

The Council on 25 June 2009 had noted that a further report would be submitted to the Education, Children and Families Committee on how independent and state schools could work more closely together to meet the common objectives of developing sporting excellence.

An update was provided on progress with sporting excellence initiatives led by the Children and Families Sports and Outdoor Education Unit and examples were given of the collaboration with independent schools that had increased sporting opportunities for children and young people from both sectors.

Motion

To note:

- 1) The continuing success of the City of Edinburgh Schools Sports Academy.
- 2) The very positive examples of collaboration being developed with the independent schools sector in Edinburgh.

- moved by Councillor MacLaren, seconded by Councillor Beckett.

Amendment

- 1) To note the continuing success of the City of Edinburgh Schools Sports Academy.
- 2) To note the very positive examples of collaboration being developed with the independent schools sector in Edinburgh.
- 3) To allow all children educated in Edinburgh, whatever school they attended, to be able to apply to the Schools Sports Academy.
- 4) To refer the Director's report to the Culture and Leisure Committee for information.

- moved by Councillor Balfour, seconded by Councillor Buchan.

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Voting

For the motion - 15 votes
For the amendment - 5 votes

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor MacLaren.

(References – Act of Council No 18 of 25 June 2009; report by the Director of Children and Families 9 November 2010, submitted.)

6 Additional Support Needs – Progress Report

The Committee was provided with an update on the progress in provision for additional support needs within Edinburgh for session 2009/10. The following areas were highlighted in the report:

- Key issues and trends affecting current and future provision and priorities for service planning.
- The implications of the 2009 Additional Support for Learning Act.
- Priorities for improvement.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To commend the progress achieved in improving provision within the Council and with NHS Lothian to enable continued progress in implementing the Act and note the significant reduction in the reliance on Out of Authority special school placements.
- 3) To agree that integrated budget planning be taken forward to support sustainable future provision for additional support needs.
- 4) To agree the continued reinvestment of savings from Out of Authority placements where required to support improved effectiveness and efficiencies of reliable alternative services within the City.
- 5) To note the implications of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 and the need for this to be taken into account in planning and budget processes for 2010/11 onwards.
- 6) To agree that the identified priorities for improvement in service and revenue and capital planning be taken forward.

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- 7) To request that a further report be presented within 12 months to update progress and report on the outcome of the reviews directed towards ensuring effectiveness of Additional Support for Learning provision with regard to statutory requirements, policy imperatives and overall financial sustainability. The report also to include an overview of the appeals mechanism and process and on what grounds appeals are undertaken by the Council.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 9 November 2010, submitted.)

7 Children and Families Standards and Quality Report April 2009-March 2010

Decision

- 1) To note the Children and Families Standards and Quality report April 2009-March 2010.
- 2) To note that the Director of Children and Families would provide Committee members with details of attainment levels for S4, S5 and S6 pupils individually.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 9 November 2010, submitted.)

8 Children and Families Department Performance Report – August/September 2010

Performance management information for the Children and Families Department for the reporting period August/September 2010 was presented.

Decision

To note the improved and maintained performance during the reporting period and the areas noted for further improvement.

(Reference – report by the Director of Children and Families 9 November 2010, submitted.)

9 Children and Families Department – Revenue Budget Monitoring 2010/11 – Month Six Position – 30 September 2010

Details were provided of the month six revenue monitoring position for the Children and Families Department.

Decision

To note:

- 1) The content of the report and that the Children and Families Department continued to project the delivery of a balanced budget for 2010/11.
- 2) That the projected outturn position at month six excluded a potential £0.2m of residual financial risk which had been classified as medium risk.

(Reference – joint report by the Director of Finance and the Director of Children and Families 28 October 2010, submitted.)

10 Block Contract and Framework Agreement for Fostering Placements

The Finance and Resources Committee had referred a report on a Block Contract and Framework Agreement for Fostering Placements to the Committee for information.

Decision

To note the report.

(Reference – report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services 9 November 2010, submitted.)

11 Gaelic Medium Education – Motion by Councillor Rose

The following motion by Councillor Rose was submitted in terms of Standing Order 28:

“Committee instructs the Director of Education, Children and Families, in her report to Full Council of 16 December, to include consideration of facilitating expansion of the Gaelic Unit at Tollcross through relocating community centre activities to alternative local premises as a short to medium term measure to respond to the growing parental demand for places.”

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At the meeting, Councillor Rose advised that he wished to adjust the wording of the motion by deleting the word “relocation” in line 3 and replacing it with the words “early relocation of”.

Motion

To approve the terms of the motion, as adjusted.

- moved by Councillor Rose, seconded by Councillor Buchan.

Amendment

To take no action because all options, including the one outlined in the motion, were being explored and a full report, prior to a public consultation exercise, would be considered by the Council at its meeting on 16 December 2010.

- moved by Councillor MacLaren, seconded by Councillor Beckett.

Voting

For the motion - 3 votes
For the amendment - 11 votes

Decision

To approve the amendment by Councillor MacLaren.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Gordon Mackenzie as a parent of a child attending Gaelic Medium Education, declared a non-financial interest in the above item.