

## **The Highland Council**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Education, Children and Adult Services Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 21 May 2014 at 10.05 am.

### **Present:**

#### **Highland Council:**

Dr D Alston	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs J Barclay	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs I Campbell	Ms L Munro
Mr A Christie (Chair)	Mrs M Paterson
Mrs M Davidson	Mr M Rattray
Ms J Douglas	Mrs F Robertson
Mr B Fernie	Ms G Ross (Vice Chair)
Mr B Gormley	Mr G Ross
Mr K Gowans	Ms J Slater
Mr D Hendry	Ms M Smith
Mrs D Mackay	Ms K Stephen

#### **NHS Highland:**

Mrs M Duncan  
Mrs G McCreath  
Dr M Somerville

#### **Religious Representatives:**

Rev C Mayo  
Ms M McCulloch  
Mr G Smith

#### **Non-Members also present:**

Mr B Clark	Mrs A MacLean
Mr J Gordon	Mr T MacLennan
Mr R Greene	Mr D Millar
Mr B Lobban	Mr A Rhind
Mr C Macaulay	Dr A Sinclair
Mr A Mackinnon	Mr J Stone

#### **In attendance:**

Mr S Barron, Chief Executive  
Mr B Alexander, Director of Care and Learning  
Mr H Fraser, Director of Education, Culture and Sport  
Mrs B Cairns, Head of Additional Support Services, Care and Learning Service  
Mr R MacKenzie, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service  
Ms S MacLeod, Head of Health, Care and Learning Service  
Ms F Palin, Head of Adult Services, Care and Learning Service

Ms K Murray, Speech and Language Therapy Mainstream Paediatric Lead, Care and Learning Service  
Mr E Foster, Finance Manager, Finance Service  
Ms A Darlington, Action for Children (Third Sector)  
Ms V Gale, Care and Learning Alliance (Third Sector)  
Ms M Wylie, Highland Third Sector Interface (Third Sector)  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service  
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service  
Mrs R Daly, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

**Also in attendance:**

Chief Superintendent J Innes, Highland and Island Divisional Commander, Police Scotland  
Ms E Mead, Chief Executive, NHS Highland  
Mrs J Baird, Director of Adult Care, NHS Highland

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.**

**Mr A Christie in the Chair**

**Business**

**1. Apologies for Absence  
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr M Green, Mr W Mackay and Miss A Taylor.

**2. Declarations of Interest  
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 4 - Mr G Ross and Mr T MacLennan (non-financial)  
Item 6 - Mrs G McCreath (financial)  
Item 7 - Mrs F Robertson (non-financial)  
Item 14 - Mrs M Davidson (non-financial)  
Item 17 - Ms J Douglas (non-financial)

Ms G Ross declared a financial interest in those items which might raise discussion on Thurso High School, as her husband was a teacher at the school, and advised that if there was any specific discussion in relation to Thurso High School she would leave the room.

Dr D Alston declared a non-financial interest in those items relating to integrated health and social care services as a Board Member of NHS Highland but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in discussion.

### **3. The Draft Highland Local Policing Plan 2014-17 Dreachd Phlana Obair-Phoileas Ionadail na Gàidhealtachd 2014-17**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/01/14 dated 5 May 2014 by the Highland Local Policing Commander which presented the proposed Highland Local Policing Plan 2014-17 for scrutiny and comment.

The report explained that the priorities and objectives within the Plan had been identified by examining national and local intelligence and community safety trends as well as the views and concerns of the public, Elected Members and community planning partners. The Plan supported the overall objectives within the Single Outcome Agreement and, in addition, would be supported by 22 Multi Member Ward Policing Plans which outlined policing priorities at ward level. It had been reviewed by the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities (CPE) Committee on 26 March 2014 and amended accordingly. Following consideration by the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee it would be presented to the Council on 26 June 2014 for ratification.

Prior to commenting on the Plan, Members expressed concern that Police officers would routinely be carrying firearms and expressed concern that this had not been subject to scrutiny or community engagement. Whilst recognising that it was an operational matter, there was little evidence to support such a move and the public were concerned. Armed Police were required to deal with armed criminals but, despite having one of the highest proportions per head of licensed firearms in the UK, Highland had the lowest number of offences. In 2012, only 1% of incidents in Highland involved a firearm. The training and integrity of officers was not in doubt but it was felt that the policy had no place in Highland, where there was an excellent reputation in terms of community policing. It was suggested that the matter be brought to the full Council where the facts could be debated by all Members.

The following comments were then made:-

- it was important to be able to scrutinise the Plan and thanks were expressed to the Highland Local Policing Commander for the reports that had been presented to the CPE Committee;
- the significant improvements in reports of disorder and serious assault were welcomed. If sustained, this would assist in creating communities where older people could be looked after and younger people could flourish;
- the inclusion of a “slightly injured” category in road safety targets was welcomed and would improve analysis of accident hotspots such as Tomich junction;
- in relation to section 3.2.1 of the Plan – Long Term Outcomes - the wording of the second bullet point should be amended to “reduce the community impacts and *address* the costs of alcohol and drug misuse and abuse within Highland.”;
- it was hoped that the Highland Licensing Board’s overprovision policy, which limited retailers to four square metres of alcohol display, would help to address alcohol misuse;
- the opportunities for communities to feed in to the Plan and the increased Police presence at community meetings were welcomed. There had been a lot of change and it was suggested that, possibly at the end of the financial year, communities be consulted on the success or otherwise of the new ways of working and the figures in their areas;

- with regard to Priority 5 – Protecting People – an assurance was sought that this remained a priority and that staffing and resources would stay the same or improve;
- thanks were expressed in relation to the role of the Police in improving outcomes for children and families and the positive inspection of children’s services that was the subject of item 8 on the agenda;
- the inclusion of issues such as honour based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and human trafficking was welcomed. It was important to recognise that they did occur in Highland and to establish the extent and formulate a response;
- appreciation was expressed for the contribution of the Police to partnership working in Lochaber, including the recent Community Safety Partnership. The positive collaboration with health, social care and ambulance staff on a range of issues including child protection, mental health and places of safety was welcomed and it was important to strengthen the public’s understanding of that aspect of Police work;
- Highland had very low crime figures and was one of the safest places to live in the UK;
- links with community groups were vitally important in terms of informing people of what was going on in their area and giving assurance that their needs were being addressed; and
- information was sought on how the Police intended to engage with hard to reach young people, particularly those affected by domestic violence.

\* Thereafter, the Highland Local Policing Commander having responded to the issues raised, the Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that Members’ comments be incorporated in the draft Highland Local Policing Plan 2014-17.

#### 4. Reshaping Care for Older People Ag Ath-chumadh Cùram do Dhaoine nas Sine

##### Declarations of Interest:

**Mr G Ross and Mr T MacLennan declared non-financial interests in this item as a family member was a recipient of home care services and as Chair of Lochaber Care and Repair respectively but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/02/14 dated 12 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which introduced the Audit Scotland Report, “Reshaping Care for Older People (2014)” and a presentation by NHS Highland on the draft Change and Improvement Plan (CIP).

The Director of Care and Learning explained that the Committee had been at the forefront of addressing the challenges that required care for older people to be reshaped and had taken the necessary action to give Highland the best possible platform to meet needs in the years to come. The Scottish Government had been supportive of the work undertaken and had encouraged other local authorities to do the same. The key messages in the Audit Scotland report were summarised. In particular, it stated that NHS Boards, Councils and their partners must plan more effectively and better understand the needs of older people and the costs associated

with providing services. The CIP therefore had to be an effective management tool that made links between costs, resources and outcomes and had tangible and timely actions that drove forward strategic planning to meet health and care needs for the people of Highland in the future. It highlighted the need to focus on the enhancement of community based and preventative services to delay and prevent the need for reactive or institutional services.

This meant radical change and the Council and NHS Highland had committed to that change by establishing single governance, single management and a single budget. Both agencies had also committed to new investment. Combined, this created the foundation for better joined up processes and services. Whilst it could not be expected that transformational change would be achieved in the short term, it was necessary to have early indicators and milestones to confirm that matters were on track and to be able to manage, monitor and evaluate progress.

The Director of Adult Care, NHS Highland, then undertook a presentation during which it was explained that the CIP was a high level planning tool that covered all adult services, including reshaping care for older people. The CIP formed part three of the Strategic Commissioning Plan, a requirement of the Scottish Government, and would inform district operational plans. The first part of the document summarised the local and national policy context and the outcomes to be achieved across services for adults as set out in the Highland Joint Community Care Plan 2010/13.

The CIP set out the expectations over the next three years of the Partnership Agreement and sought to capture the links between the resources being put in to create services and the impact on outcomes. It also referred to the performance framework, which was integral in terms of scrutiny and assurance, and the finance and demand it was necessary to consider. In that regard, a Resourcing and Commissioning Group had been established, led by the Council and NHS Highland's Directors of Finance, which would help to plot investment and manage demand and risks as they occurred, both at a district level and strategically.

The activity within the CIP could be broken down in to three main areas, namely, Implementation of Strategy; Management and Governance; and New Models of Care; and a summary of each was provided. She explained that she had been specifically tasked by the Chief Executive of NHS Highland with developing the detail, including driving change locally, and operational plans would be firmed up on the basis of feedback from Members and officers. The importance of Members' support and influence, not just at Council Committees but at District Partnerships, was emphasised. It was also necessary to remember that District Partnerships were at different stages in their development.

In conclusion, there were many accounts of staff and local managers grasping opportunities and driving changes in models and better use of facilities. These would continue to be gathered throughout Highland and the information would add to the performance indicators, which would be continually reviewed to ensure they provided the necessary evidence and performance management information. Altogether, this would demonstrate that the partnership was achieving the vision set out in 2010.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- the challenge and complexity of shifting the balance of care could not be underestimated. Whilst there were many accounts of positive change, there was a lot of work to be done and Members looked forward to seeing the aspirations in the report being put in to practice;
- the CIP was a hugely important document and, in its present form, there was a lack of urgency and this was not what had been anticipated. Reference was made to discussions regarding the budget quantum at the full Council when it had been indicated that the CIP would provide detailed evidence and disappointment was expressed that this was not included;
- page 20 – an update was requested on the activity scheduled to take place by April 2014 as much of it appeared not to have taken place;
- page 22 – although reference was made to supporting the Independent Sector to grow, there was no mention of what would happen if that did not work. Rural areas might not have much Independent Sector provision and it was suggested that urgency and innovation were required now in terms of growing community based solutions. With regard to the financial implications, more clarity was required in terms of need and the resources necessary to achieve the desired outcomes;
- page 24 – reference was made to improving efficiency with reduced length of stay and increased age of admission. However, clarity was required as to how it was expected that would be achieved;
- page 25 – reference was made to a financial saving by reducing the use of locums. However, there was no information on how this would be achieved and whether it would impact on local services;
- page 26 – in relation to establishing a single point of access, the CIP indicated that the timeline and recruitment had been agreed but there was insufficient information on roles and costs. With regard to the financial implications, it was necessary to know how much resources were being put in to demonstrate whether there was a saving in three years;
- page 27 – in relation to enhancing the review team to conclude work as quickly as possible, further information was sought on the financial implications;
- page 28 – in relation to improving admission and discharge planning, further information was sought on the current costs;
- page 29 – reference was made to transport proposals and solutions. It was hoped that discussions were taking place with the Council and other groups in this regard and information was sought on whether there was a shared workplan;
- page 31 – in relation to the proposal to increase day care charges by 2% in three consecutive years, concern was expressed that this would not be affordable and information was sought on whether discussions had taken place with local communities and stakeholders with a view to starting to deliver services at a community level;
- page 34 – in relation to the continued focus on the preventative outcomes defined in the partnership agreement, further information was required on the financial implications. While integration with Housing was welcomed, adaptations were an issue and a greater sense of urgency was required in terms of encouraging innovation at a local level;
- page 35 – in relation to the effective transitioning of young people into Adult Services, the financial information was welcomed and this was sought throughout the plan;
- the CIP was a joint vision to benefit Highland communities and constituents and the opportunity to shape it was welcomed. Information was sought on where,

when today's comments had been incorporated, Members would have another opportunity to consider it;

- it was essential that the CIP was not signed off until both partner agencies were content with it and information was sought on the process for approval by NHS Highland;
- integration was a way of providing operational management but good planning and delivery were required to shift the balance of care. It was suggested that this had been lacking and a change in focus was required;
- the Audit Scotland report was welcomed and it was helpful to see some of the issues articulated;
- the additional money allocated by the Council to fund the budget deficit in Adult Services would compromise what services the Council could deliver and it was therefore vital, in the CIP, to show the links between inputs, outputs and outcomes. It was hoped that the Resourcing Commissioning Group would facilitate that and an update on progress was sought at an early stage;
- the changing demographics of Highland was the biggest issue facing both partner agencies and Member involvement, on a planned and monitored basis, was vital;
- Service Plans, such as For Highland's Children 4 or the former Joint Community Care Plan, had people centred outcomes and these were lacking in the CIP;
- shifting the balance of care would not happen until communities were supported to take ownership of their older people and get involved in delivering services. This was starting to happen in places and it was essential to acknowledge the significance and encourage it at a strategic level;
- reference was made to comments and questions raised at the Council's Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee and concern was expressed that these appeared not to have been taken into account in the CIP. The Sub-Committee was building up knowledge of Adult Services and it was suggested that it should be involved in detailed discussions regarding the draft CIP;
- a seminar on spreading the good practice happening in communities was sought in early course;
- it was essential to move money out of acute services and in to communities;
- the Council should consider a mid-term review of the Partnership Agreement;
- it was essential that both the Council and NHS Highland strove to ensure that every older person was a valued member of society and that their care needs were met;
- the recommendation in the Audit Scotland report in relation to the production of integrated workforce plans to ensure staff with the right skills and experience were in place to deliver the care needed in each local area was welcomed;
- in relation to the Audit Scotland recommendation regarding monitoring and spreading successful projects, innovative thinking was required and it was necessary to involve the Third Sector and stakeholders;
- in the past, services had been reactive and there was now a shift from responding to crisis to empowering people to be more aware of how to look after themselves and remain independent as long as possible;
- reshaping care was about shifting the location of care from institutions to communities and this was embedded as a principle in the CIP. It was necessary to draw that out and evidence, through inputs, outputs and measurable outcomes, that it was being achieved;
- it was necessary to show how services could be sustainable;

- combining the budget for hospital and community based services would allow greater focus on meeting outcomes by determining where best to spend money;
- although the CIP did provide some timescales, more defined dates and targets were sought;
- as some of the concerns raised would be addressed in the District Operational Plans it would be helpful to have sight of them;
- Members, particularly District Partnership Chairs, would have to justify the CIP and an improvement in the relationship between inputs, outputs and actions was sought;
- producing a strategic plan for such significant change was a complex and evolving process;
- if the aim was to enable people to live independently in their own homes for longer, it was essential to provide adequate care and repair and handy person services;
- housing was a key factor and it was necessary, in development planning, to consider what was required for the future;
- the biggest challenge was the cultural change from people being provided with services by organisations to having their needs met in a way that suited them. It was important that local communities understood this change and it was suggested that people in caring role could play a part in communicating that message;
- it would be helpful to have presentations on good practice projects at Committee so that Members understood what was happening in other areas;
- concern was expressed regarding the cost of locum doctors being brought in at weekends in rural areas;
- organisations such as Lochaber Care and Repair had seen a significant increase in the number of calls received but their budgets remained the same. These groups were vital in terms of enabling people to return to their own home and it was essential they were properly funded;
- in relation to small scale initiatives, it was vital that groups were given confidence in their future and, if necessary, support to develop their skills and evidence their work so they could continue to make a difference to people's lives; and
- people would not recover if they were distressed and the most important thing was what was right for the individual.

The Chairman emphasised that the CIP was a draft document and would return to the Committee, and possibly the full Council, for further debate. In the meantime, it was suggested that he and the Vice Chair meet with Independent Group Members with a view to reaching a consensus on some of the issues raised. In addition, the CIP also had to go through NHS Highland's governance structure.

The Depute Leader, the Council's representative on the NHS Highland Board, emphasised the importance of Members using all routes of communication available to them. District Partnerships had been established to consider local issues and solutions and it was essential that Members felt comfortable raising issues there and with local NHS managers. Milestones were vital in terms of monitoring progress and the comments made regarding areas for improvement were helpful. In relation to shifting the balance of care, he assured Members that there was a sense of urgency. Reablement was a key issue and it was essential to make the links between investment and outcomes.



Thereafter, the Chief Executive and Director of Adult Care, NHS Highland, having responded to the issues raised and confirmed that they were happy to meet with Members to discuss them in more detail, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the issues raised in the report and the Change and Improvement Plan, which would require to be considered and agreed by NHS Highland; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee meet with Independent Group Members to discuss the Change and Improvement Plan.

## **5. Membership of Sub-Committees Ballrachd Fho-chomataidhean**

The Committee **AGREED** the following:-

- Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee – Ms J Douglas to replace Mr E Hunter;
- Culture and Leisure Contracts Scrutiny Sub-Committee – Mrs M Paterson to replace Mr E Hunter; and

- \* The Committee also **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that Ms J Slater be appointed to the Local Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff to replace Ms G Ross.

## **6. Revenue Budget 2014/15 – Care and Learning Service Buidseat Teachd-a-steach 2014/15 – Seirbheis a' Chùrain agus an Ionnsachaidh**

**Declaration of Interest: Mrs G McCreath declared a financial interest in this item as a foster carer and advised that if there was any specific discussion in relation to fostering she would leave the room.**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/03/14 dated 8 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which set out the 2014/15 Care and Learning Service Revenue Budget and the projected year-end position.

It was explained that, at this stage in the financial year, efforts were focused on finalising the 2013/14 accounts. As a result, detailed monitoring of the 2014/15 budget would not commence until the end of May and there were no projected variances against budget headings. The most significant pressures reported to the Adult and Children's Services Committee on 19 February 2014 included Additional Support Needs; School Transport; Catering, Cleaning and Facilities Management; and Out of Authority Placements. Management action was being taken to identify how these pressures could be addressed and the outcome would be reported to the Committee on 28 August 2014. The savings target for 2014/15 was £4.308m and it was assumed, at this stage, that appropriate management action would ensure it was achieved in full.

During discussion, Members welcomed the report and commented as follows:-

- the report contained less detail on the commissioned children's services budget than before and, while it was acknowledged that outturn figures for 2013/14 were not yet available, clarification would have been helpful on how the 2013/14 underspend had affected the current budget and how this would relate to For

Highland's Children 4. This was particularly pertinent as this situation had been questioned at previous Committee meetings; and

- it was queried what the budgetary principles would be in relation to young people returning to Highland from out of authority placements and who were being assessed for early entry into adult accommodation. It was unclear whether the budget resources attached to that individual would follow them.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the current financial position.

## **7. Report on the Status of the Care and Learning Service Capital Programme and Estate Management Issues**

**Aithisg mu Inbhe Prògram Calpa Seirbheis a' Chùraim agus an Ionnsachaidh agus Ceistean mu Rianachd Seilbh**

### **Declaration of Interest:**

**Mrs F Robertson declared a non-financial interest in this item as Vice Chair of Tain Royal Academy Parent Council but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/04/14 dated 13 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on progress with the Capital Programme and sought approval for the following:-

- several proposed new projects from approved allocations and other specific approvals;
- to provide additional funding from within the existing approved Capital Programme to meet the movements in the index-linked affordability caps for the Wick Schools and new Inverness Royal Academy projects; and
- the preferred site for the proposed 3 to 18 campus in Tain.

The reports also identified a range of potential priorities for future capital investment in the school estate, the results of the recently completed school building condition surveys and a proposal to bring a report on a revised methodology for calculating primary schools capacities to a future meeting of the Committee. There was also an update on progress with the Sustainable School Estate Review.

In relation to the Adult and Children's Services Capital Programme, the approved budget for 2014/15 was £2.179m. A programme of work for the next four years had been produced in consultation with colleagues from NHS Highland, details of which were provided in the report. With regard to the Education/Community and Leisure Facilities Capital Programme, the approved budget for 2014/15 was £56.004m and detailed information was provided on specific projects. In both cases, the approved budgets did not include the amounts carried forward from 2013/14.

During discussion, Members commented as follows:-

- the proposal to declare surplus to requirements the old stables building at Viewfield, Nairn was supported and it was confirmed that the future of this historic building would be considered carefully and brought before the Ward Business meeting for Member input;

- although there were many budget challenges to address, much had been achieved within the resources available and, in particular, the progress made in managing and improving school buildings conditions was welcome with all buildings now being graded “C” and above;
- selection of a preferred site for the proposed 3-18 campus in Tain had been a very positive development which had increased public confidence in the Council and particularly the Education Service. It was worthwhile noting that the Knockbreck and Craighill Primary School buildings had low condition scores but were very high performing schools and had received good inspection outcomes. It was confirmed that arrangements for how the ASN would work on this campus would be part of the consultation process and this would be shared with the Ward Business meeting;
- the report made no reference to the new class room facility at Auchtertyre;
- in relation to the condition of Charleston Academy building, the School Estates Review process provided a structured approach that assessed feasibility issues and which shaped the capital programme’s priority order;
- the Council’s decision to increase funding for capital development had been prudent but the bureaucracy involved in working with HubCo was often responsible for delays and higher spending against the capital programme and this view should be communicated to the Scottish Government;
- frustration had been expressed locally in response to delays in the Wick community campus. The programme start date had been subject to many revisions and had now been postponed to July 2014. It was proving difficult to attract bids for some of the packages on account of geography and the current economic climate. HubCo should be invited to find a solution to this situation and it was confirmed that meetings were currently being held with the Scottish Government and HubCo to progress the development and recover lost time;
- in comparison, the Inverness Royal Academy project had not experienced the same amount of delay. However it was a less complex project than the Wick campus development and would not incorporate community uses; and
- the strenuous efforts had been made by officers to address the work on the school north of the river in Wick was acknowledged and the project was now progressing well.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the status of the 2014/15 Capital Programme as detailed in Section 2 of the report and the major projects listed in Appendix 1;
- ii. **AGREED** to the proposal to contribute £100,000 from the Adult Services budget to a housing development in Conon Bridge;
- iii. **AGREED** that an additional £550,000 be drawn from the 2014/15 Life Cycle Investment budget heading for stage 2 of the project to create a wireless environment in each Highland School;
- iv. **AGREED** that the old stables building at Viewfield, Nairn, be declared surplus and disposed of in accordance with current Council policy;
- v. **NOTED** the results of the condition surveys of school buildings as listed in Appendix 2 of the report;
- vi. **NOTED** that a report would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee outlining the implications for Highland Primary Schools once the Scottish Government had published guidance on determining Primary School capacities;

- vii. **APPROVED** the recommended approach as highlighted in Section 3.6 of the report with regard to identifying future capital investment priorities in the school estate;
- viii. **AGREED** that the affordability cap for the Wick Community Campus be increased to £43.681M to reflect the movement in the Building Cost Information Service index per the Northern Territory Partnering Agreement for the delivery of the Schools for the Future programme;
- ix. **AGREED** that the affordability cap for the replacement Inverness Royal Academy be increased to £35.299M to reflect the movement in the Building Cost Information Service index and also to fund abnormal costs relating to flood mitigation and mains gas supply which were not known at the time the original affordability cap was agreed;
- x. **NOTED** that the Wick Community Campus project handover date had been delayed by a further three months as a result of ongoing attempts to close the gap between the tendered costs and the affordability cap;
- xi. **AGREED** that the sites at Craighill Primary School, the existing Tain Royal Academy campus and Kirksheaf Road, Tain be considered for the proposed 3 to 18 campus in Tain and that there be engagement with the local community to inform the site selection process;
- xii. **NOTED** progress to date with the various phases of the Sustainable School Estate Review that were currently underway; and
- xiii. **NOTED** that a separate briefing be provided to Mrs I Campbell regarding provision at Auchtertyre.

## **8. Joint Children's Services Inspection Co-Sgrùdadh Seirbheis na Cloinne**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/05/14 dated 2 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning introducing the report of the joint inspection of children's services in Highland, which took place in October/November 2013.

The report explained that the inspection team had comprised inspectors from the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland. The process had involved a range of activities and five weeks of fieldwork. The inspection report commended strengths in services for children across the authority and identified examples of good practice. It focused on nine quality indicators and evaluated seven as "very good" and two as "good". The Care Inspectorate had indicated it was confident that effective partnership in Highland would continue to improve in three areas of practice, details of which were provided. The Highland Community Planning Partnership was required to publish an action plan detailing how it would make these improvements. The action plan would take account of further detailed findings from the inspection and would be incorporated in the Children's Service Plan, For Highland's Children's 4.

During discussion, Members welcomed the report and congratulated Directors, staff, partner agencies and the Youth Convener on the well-deserved outcome of the Inspection which was the best in Scotland and made the following comments:-

- the Council had been advised that the inspection would take place approximately one year ago and the inspection itself had been a huge undertaking involving the collaboration of staff, partners and a wide range of Inspectors;

- the report highlighted areas of priority for For Highland Children's 5 in terms of work required to address transitions, breastfeeding targets etc and it was now clear that there was a need for a step-change in kinship care;
- it was suggested that the same excellent working arrangements between the Council and NHS Highland to plan and work together should be applied to community care services; and
- it was highlighted that a score of "very good" would only be awarded when a high standard was evidenced throughout the whole organisation. It was a remarkable achievement and a corporate success that this grade had been awarded for seven of the nine quality indicators.

The Committee **NOTED** the report of the joint inspection of Children's Services in Highland.

## 9. For Highland's Children 4 Do Chloinn na Gàidhealtachd 4

There had been circulated Report No ECA/06/14 dated 9 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on progress made in developing the integrated Children's Service Plan.

For Highland's Children 4 (FHC4) would be the Children's Service Plan for the Care and Learning Service and would identify improvement priorities and outcomes for children and their families for the next five years. It would incorporate, as far as possible, the contribution of children's services delivered by NHS Highland. Publication of FHC4 had been delayed to take account of the report of the joint inspection of children's services in Highland and the final Plan would now be presented to the Committee on 28 August 2014. Detailed information was provided on the planning and operational structure; self-evaluation; the improvement framework; improvement planning; and the performance management framework.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- it was queried what performance monitoring and governance arrangements were in place and what the frequency of reporting on indicators would be to provide assurance on delivery;
- benchmarking with other Scottish Authorities would enable the Council's performance to be assessed against a nationally acceptable level and should be included either online or in regular monitoring reports to Committee;
- a more ambitious target should be set regarding children and young people's physical activity as it was felt that children should be involved in physical education every day. FHC4 should include statements about how frequently children should be outdoors for physical activity. It was suggested that this be delivered in Highland without waiting for national announcements;
- outcomes 8 and 9 relating to nurturing relationships and matching support to families appropriate to their needs were particularly welcome and would be crucial in eliminating stigma for many children and families;
- there had been good working relations between the Council and NHS Highland in preparing FHC4 and developing indicators to demonstrate achievement of high level statements would be vitally important and it was particularly encouraging that there were inequalities measures included in the document; and

- it would be important to ensure that feedback from young people made a difference to what was measured and how services were delivered and there was still a need to seek the opinions of Highland Youth Voice in preparing FHC4.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the report, including the proposed performance management framework; and
- ii. that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on benchmarking with other Scottish Local Authorities, including how stretch targets could be built in to the Council's provision of physical education and on capturing Highland Youth Voice's opinions in preparing FHC4.

**10. A Statutory Consultation on the Future Education Provision to serve the Strontian Primary School Catchment Area**  
**Co-chomhairle Reachdail mu Sholar Foghlaim san Àm ri Teachd gus Sgìre Bun-sgoil Sròn an t-Sìthein a fhrithealadh**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/07/14 dated 12 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which set out a proposal for the future education provision to serve the existing Strontian Primary School catchment area

It was explained that extensive engagement had taken place with the local community, including Local Members, to identify and agree the options for future pre-school and primary school provision in the Strontian Primary School catchment area. As the resulting proposal involved relocating school provision, the Council was required to undertake a statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The proposal document was set out in Appendix 1 of the report and included information on existing school details; options under consideration; educational benefits; transport implications; staffing and management implications; community impact; and financial implications. The outcome of the proposed statutory consultation would be reported to Committee on 12 November 2014. During the consultation period, the opportunity existed for consultees to suggest options for future education provision not included in the proposal document.

The Chairman confirmed that Councillor Baxter had advised that an additional proposal had been received which suggested that a new primary school should be built adjacent to the nursery building. This proposal had been received prior to the start of the consultation period and the Chairman was content to include it as an additional option to be consulted on and invited the Committee to agree this as an additional recommendation.

During discussion, Members expressed differing opinions and commented as follows:-

- many local residents, teachers and Parent Council representatives had expressed significant concerns on the grounds of insufficient communication with them prior to moving to statutory consultation. Since the decision to decamp from the existing primary school building had been taken two years ago, there had been no progress information presented to the Parent Council apart from details on the current proposals provided very recently. The Parent Council had not had sufficient time to consider these and at their most recent meeting their questions could not be answered. There had also been serious concerns expressed at the prospect of building a facility adjacent to the fire station. In

principle, siting the Primary School near to the High School might be acceptable but this, and all other options, needed to be progressed in a way that did not disempower those that would use the building. It was hoped that discussions could remain open and that effective early stakeholder involvement could be put in place for future similar exercises;

- on account of the concerns expressed by the Parent Council, rather than moving straight to statutory consultation, the Council should enter into proper dialogue with them to explore concerns and find solutions that everyone could agree on. Only once this had taken place should the Council move to formal consultation; and
- the additional proposal from parents that the new primary school be built adjacent to the nursery building was proposed for inclusion in the statutory consultation. As there was a pressing need to move pupils out of the current inadequate accommodation, the statutory process should be commenced as a matter of priority. All views expressed during the process would be taken into account and there would be a further report to the Committee later in the year.

Following discussion, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr K Gowans, **MOVED** approval of the recommendations, subject to the inclusion of a proposal that a new primary school be built adjacent to the nursery building as an additional option to be consulted on during the statutory consultation period.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr W Fernie, seconded by Mrs M Paterson, moved that the Committee should not proceed to statutory consultation until a further meeting had been held with the Parent Council.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 15 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 6 votes, with 3 abstentions, and the **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED** - the votes having been cast as follows:-

#### **For the Motion:**

Alston, D; Barclay, J; Campbell, I; Christie, A; Gormley, B; Gowans, K; MacKenzie, G; Smith, G; McCulloch, M; Munro, L; Rattray, M; Mayo, C; Robertson, F; Ross, G (Ward 3); Slater, J.

#### **For the Amendment:**

Davidson, M; Douglas, J; Fernie, B; Paterson, M; Ross, G (Ward 14); Stephen, K.

#### **Abstentions**

Somerville, M; McCreath G; Duncan, M.

The Committee **AGREED** that a statutory consultation be carried out in relation to the following proposals in accordance with the updated requirements of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010:-

i. to:-

- place a single classroom modular accommodation with office accommodation adjacent to the existing community/nursery wing of Ardnamurchan High School;

- convert the existing Pre-school/mother and toddler accommodation within Ardnamurchan High School into a Primary classroom and Pre-school accommodation; and
  - create an appropriate safe and secure play area for the Primary-age and Pre-school pupils adjacent to this wing.
- ii. that a new primary school be built adjacent to the nursery building.

**11. Sustainable School Estate Review – Initial Proposals for a Statutory Consultation arising from the Skye and Lochalsh Review**  
**Ath-bhreithneachadh air Seilbh Sgoile Seasmhach – Molaidhean Tùsail airson Co-chomhairle Reachdail ag èirigh bho Ath-bhreithneachadh an Eilein Sgitheanaich agus Loch Aillse**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/08/14 dated 13 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which set out the recommendations arising from the option appraisal exercise carried out into future pre-school and primary school provision in North West Skye.

The report summarised the background to the Sustainable School Estate Review (SSER), the option appraisal process, the dialogue and engagement to date and the initial options considered. The review of education provision in Skye and Lochalsh had introduced a dimension not previously encountered in the SSER, namely the consideration of “rural” schools in terms of the Scottish Government’s classification of schools.

Following an assessment of the initial options, the idea of creating a new school to serve North West Skye had emerged as the most viable and been subjected to more detailed scrutiny in a professional workshop, followed by wider community engagement. The subsequent option appraisal report had recommended that this option should be taken forward and a statutory consultation carried out. A proposal document had therefore been produced, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, which included information on building condition; building suitability; occupancy; class structures, sizes and management arrangements; roll projections; community use of the school building; educational benefits; community impact; transport implications; proposed campus; and financial implications. The outcome of the proposed statutory consultation would be reported to Committee on 12 November 2014.

During discussion, Members welcomed the proposed consultation and commented as follows:-

- there had been good consultation with parents and local stakeholders. Local Members had also been kept informed and supported all proposals. The Parent Council in Edinbane had expressed their concerns and they had been advised that the consultation process would provide a formal means through which to voice these issues for Members’ consideration;
- the closure of rural primary schools was a very emotive issue, especially when parents and pupils were happy and local provision had been good. However educational benefits should be emphasised and made clearer;
- NHS Highland was currently considering the future of the two hospitals in Skye and had approached the matter with an open mind and without a preferred option. Very often, when consultations included a preferred option, this was perceived as a fait accompli and disillusioned members of the public;



- as a desktop exercise, Dunvegan might appear to make geographical sense as the location for a new school. However, some considerations had not been taken into account such as the impact on travel routes;
- the consultation could present an opportunity to consider alternative approaches to service delivery and funding;
- it was felt that many considerations would emerge from the consultation exercise, an essential component of which was to identify a preferred option and to prioritise educational benefits; and
- an update was requested on what progress had been made in identifying a site for the new school in Kyle/Kyleakin.

The Committee **AGREED** that a statutory consultation be carried out in relation to the following proposals in accordance with the updated requirements of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010:-

- Discontinue education provision at the existing Dunvegan, Struan, Knockbreck and Edinbane Primary Schools;
- Establish a new amalgamated community Primary School for North West Skye, on a new site in the village of Dunvegan; and
- Combine the existing school catchments of Dunvegan, Struan, Knockbreck and Edinbane Schools to serve the new amalgamated Primary School.

The Committee further **AGREED** that a separate briefing be provided to Mrs I Campbell on the site for a new school in Kyle/Kyleakin.

## **12. Performance Report – Children’s Services Aithisg Dèanadais – Seirbheisean Chloinne**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/09/14 dated 12 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on the performance framework for Children’s Services.

The report explained that the performance framework had been agreed by the Council and NHS Highland as part of the lead agency arrangements and was presented to both organisations. Commentary was provided on a number of measures where performance was not broadly on target or was otherwise of note. Particular reference was made to Indicator 7 which showed significant reduction in the rate of new born babies who were reported to be exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks. It was now becoming clear that rates of breastfeeding dropped at the time of hospital discharge and it was difficult to reverse this at the 6-8 weeks review. This situation was being investigated further.

During discussion, it was confirmed that a briefing note would be presented to Members when investigations on the drop in breastfeeding numbers were complete so as to fully understand the situation and to take corrective action together with NHS partners. Member raised a range of comments, including the following:-

- there was a need for a step-change in the support offered to encourage breastfeeding after birth and it was suggested that peer support for this could be beneficial in changing mind-sets. It was requested that the proposed report also include an assessment of breastfeeding practices from places such as Orkney

where breastfeeding levels were high and what effort was being made to consider peer support work;

- improvements to reporting provided more accurate data which suggested that the genuine rate of breastfeeding might always have been lower than thought and that there might not have been any change in trends. Peer supporters were now working in maternity units and it would be important to look more closely at local examples of good practice and at wider cultural influences. Members of the Early Years Collaborative were urged to investigate what national initiatives could be adopted to support a breastfeeding environment. It was welcomed that NHS Highland had ceased the Bounty contract for new parents and this should produce more positive results;
- it was possible that partial statistical returns on breastfeeding relied on in the past had presented more of an optimistic picture than an accurate one;
- it was queried whether there were enough staff resources available to address this issue;
- it was queried whether there was any information available on the numbers of children admitted to hospital with feeding problems;
- promotional stickers used in some restaurants/cafes to encourage breastfeeding were unattractive and this should be given a better profile; and
- there were still concerns regarding the 26 week timeframe within which access to a Primary Mental Health Worker should take place and it was confirmed that a presentation regarding Primary Mental Health Workers would be made to a future meeting of the Committee addressing pressures and stretch targets.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the performance information;
- ii. **AGREED** that a report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee in relation to the current situation with breastfeeding and that a briefing note be circulated to Members on this; and
- iii. **NOTED** that a presentation regarding Primary Mental Health Workers would be made to a future meeting of the Committee addressing pressures and stretch targets.

### **13. Additional Support Needs Review**

#### **Ath-bhreithneachadh air Feumalachdan Taice a Bharrachd**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/10/14 dated 9 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which explained that a review of Additional Support Needs (ASN) in Highland had been undertaken over the past year. The report provided a summary of the work of the review and recommendations regarding proposed changes in structures and strategic developments that would improve outcomes for children and young people with additional support needs.

Given the timing of the review, it was able to take cognisance of the wider structural changes within the Council as well as providing a framework in which to sit previously agreed systemic changes that were ongoing. It had begun with a period of consultation, between April and August 2013, with a large number of children, parents, organisations and individual professionals being asked to contribute their views and experiences. An analysis of the information received during the consultation phase was undertaken and it fell into eight main themes as detailed in the report.

During discussion, Members welcomed the report, extended their thanks to staff, the third sector partners and the Youth Convener, and commented as follows:-

- the review was an outstanding piece of work which represented a root and branch analysis of provisions for children with additional support needs. There had been wide-ranging dialogue with stakeholders and all responses had been taken into account. It was clear that the area of transitions represented the most difficult time for a child with additional needs and, while it was important for the Council establish strong and robust policies, it was essential to apply policies consistently;
- it was welcomed that the report set out to tackle the need for professional staff to respect the role of parents and to listen to their input when considering services for their children;
- the proposal to include a wide range of specialisms in the ASN Teams was a prime example of integrated services in operation and it was hoped that this would present an opportunity to address specific areas such as the rise in numbers of children with eating disorders;
- coordinating holistic support through children's plans was welcomed but it was acknowledged that parents could often feel intimidated because of the number of professionals involved in meetings to address the needs of their child. Parents needed support before, during and after such meetings and communication with them about the outcomes of the meetings needed to be clear and open; and
- it would be important to review the situation after one year and maintain an evaluation of the service by seeking the views of families and schools.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the detailed work undertaken within the ASN Review; and
- ii. **AGREED** the recommendations from the ASN Review.

#### **14. 16+ Transitions Plan Plana Eadar-ghluasadan 16+**

**Declaration of Interest:**

**Mrs M Davidson declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Board Member of DAY1 but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/11/14 dated 6 May 2014 by the Chief Executive which provided an update on the plan to better manage the transitions of young people into services for adults.

The Partnership Agreement between the Council and NHS Highland stated that the agencies would ensure that "clear partnership policies and appropriate procedures were in place to effectively manage transitions into adult services for young people who had care, health and support needs." A Joint Transitions Policy and associated procedure document were in place but, although both documents had been reviewed in March 2012, it had been recognised that they required further updating to take account of the lead agency and broader partnership arrangements. Accordingly, in November 2012, the Adult and Children's Services Committee had agreed to endorse

a joint improvement group to address 16+ transitions, led by the Chief Executive, and to appoint a Lead Member for Transitions. Similarly, NHS Highland had agreed to give high priority to transitions and the group had been jointly chaired by both Chief Executives. Detailed information was provided on the work of the group and a résumé of the current action plan was set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

During discussion, Members welcomed the report and the Action Plan which sought to address a range of issues and commented as follows:-

- the report and Action Plan successfully created coherence between the agencies involved in managing transitions and the report would be submitted to the NHS Highland Health and Social Care Committee;
- while the Action Plan sought to improve processes, it was unclear how the improvements addressed needs identified by young people, their families and carers;
- there was no reference to the results of consultation with Highland Youth Voice or how their comments might be addressed;
- there was no reference to where the physical health needs of young people were being assessed as they moved into adult services or how they were being taken forward;
- the Action Plan did not refer to timescales nor identify responsibilities for taking forward its recommendations;
- parents had commented that there was now less of a need for consultation and more of a need for delivery, action and feedback and it was queried if the potential for feedback to communities could be worked on in partnership through Local Members;
- local implementation was crucial to support people in communities around transitions and it was important to ensure that transitions work started well before age 16;
- the report made reference to recruitment and employment fairs and it was suggested that these be supplemented by open day visits to make transitions easier;
- there were many local tradesmen who employed young people with disabilities and Highland Council too should employ more people with a disability;
- vocational pathways courses were useful but there was no information recorded about whether they led to employment; and
- in terms of community sustainability, it was queried whether the Council could support employers more to make jobs available for transition into adult services. The Council needed to raise its expectations to meet the aspirations of young people and their parents and it was requested that details of the outcomes of young people moving into services for adults over the last decade be provided.

Following discussion, Mr A Christie, seconded by Mr G MacKenzie, nominated Mrs L Munro as Lead Member for Transitions.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the issues raised in the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that Mrs L Munro be appointed as Lead Member for Transitions.

**The Committee adjourned at 1.20 pm and resumed at 1.50 pm**

## 15. Family Firm Family Firm

There had been circulated Report No ECA/12/14 dated 12 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on the work progressing as part of the Corporate Parenting responsibilities of the Council for Looked After Children through the Family Firm scheme.

The Family Firm scheme had been set up by the Council, as the largest employer in Highland, to provide workplace experiences for Looked After Children. Family Firm placements were intended to be supportive, flexible and of longer duration than traditional work experience. Service staff worked with young people in a mentoring role and were provided with training and ongoing support to maximise the potential benefits of the scheme. There was close liaison with the young person's lead professional to ensure any issues were addressed at an early stage. A case study was appended to the report and detailed information was provided on the number of referrals and placements to April 2014.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- it was disappointing that the number of placements was not higher;
- information was sought on barriers to young people taking up work placements and it was suggested that an Action Plan be produced to address them;
- a more detailed breakdown of the figures was requested, including information on why, of the 34 referrals on hold or closed, 21 young people had been offered a placement that they had not taken up and the outcomes in respect of the remaining 13;
- the wide range of Council Services and external employers offering placements was welcomed;
- it had long been an aspiration to involve NHS Highland in offering family firm placements and information was sought in that regard; and
- the importance of staff training, particularly in relation to additional support needs, was emphasised.

The Chairman commented that he would like to see more long term sustainable work placements leading to paid employment. Intensive support was required at the early stages and, given the small beneficiary group, it should not be difficult to provide targeted intervention. In response to the issues raised, it was suggested that a matrix, identifying the most common challenges and barriers, be circulated to Members of the Committee. In addition, it was proposed that consideration be given to including Family Firm as a workstream within the Transitions Plan.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress being made regarding Family Firm placements;
- ii. **AGREED** that a matrix of Family Firm placements, identifying the most common challenges and barriers, be circulated to Members of the Committee; and
- iii. **AGREED** that consideration be given to the inclusion of Family Firm in the Transitions Plan.

## 16. Facilities Management – Evaluation Report Rianachd Ghoireasan – Aithisg Mheasaidh

There had been circulated Report No ECA/13/14 dated 13 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which set out an evaluation of the Facilities Management (FM) model that had been operational in Highland since August 2011. The report also outlined proposals for implementing the remaining phases, which would include sparsely populated areas which historically had had little or no janitorial provision.

In summarising the background to the FM model, it was explained that, as it was now operational in 50% of primary schools in Highland, the Association for Public Sector Excellence (APSE) had been commissioned to carry out an independent evaluation exercise. The key recommendations in the evaluation report related to consultation process; establishment audits; communications and IT; service scheduling; and skills. In terms of further analysis, the evaluation report emphasised the requirement to review the initial budgets and underlying costs of service delivery with a view to establishing a business case to support the FM model going forward. The remaining phases were Phase 6 - Skye and Lochalsh; Phase 7 - Wester Ross and West Sutherland; Phase 8 - North Sutherland and Caithness; and Phase 9 - Lochaber. To date, each phase had presented unique challenges and it was proposed to implement phases 6 and 7 on an iterative basis, details of which were provided. Planning for the implementation of phases 8 and 9 would be progressed in the near future to identify what resources would be required to support the schools in those areas.

During discussion, concern was expressed that the FM model was being evaluated at this stage, when it had already been rolled out to a considerable number of schools, rather than following the initial pilot. Members had originally been informed that implementation of the model would be cost neutral or there would be savings but it had now transpired that there were costs involved. Reference was made to issues that had arisen in the Dingwall and Seaforth Ward in particular and a request was made that the situation be re-examined.

There being no further comments, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the recommendations contained within the APSE Facilities Management evaluation report as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report and **AGREED** that these be taken forward;
- ii. **AGREED** that APSE be appointed to facilitate the detailed analysis required to inform an updated business case and support the Service to take this forward; and
- iii. **AGREED** that, upon completion of the business case, consideration be given to providing additional funding to achieve full implementation of the Facilities Management model in remote rural areas where there were insufficient resources to ensure universal implementation.

## **17. Community Use of School Facilities Coimhearsnachdan a' Cleachdadh Ghoireasan Sgoile**

### **Declaration of Interest:**

**Ms J Douglas declared a non-financial interest in this item as a user of local schools for community groups but, having applied the test outlined in**

**Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/14/14 dated 13 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which set out the current position in relation to community facilities in schools and recommended that further work was due to ensure consistency in their availability to communities.

The report explained that, at present, there was no consistent mechanism for the planned use of facilities, particularly sports pitches. A survey of sports facilities had previously been carried out and it was proposed that this be updated to provide an up-to-date picture of the facilities available locally and to allow for a strategic approach to their use, particularly external pitches in areas where there was multiple provision. In addition, it was proposed that work be undertaken to identify a consistent approach to the accessing of community facilities, particularly sports facilities, and that a detailed report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

During discussion, while welcoming the report, the following comments were made:-

- to develop community use of school facilities, the costs and the processes needed to be considered simultaneously and it was felt that the issue of school lets should have been incorporated. In response, the Chairman confirmed that a report on school lets would be presented to the Committee in the autumn at the same time as a further report on community facilities in schools;
- the importance of consultation with local communities and stakeholders was emphasised and it was proposed that this be incorporated in the recommendation. In particular, it would be helpful to ask those who weren't using community facilities at present what the barriers were;
- a single point of contact would make it easier for people to book facilities and for the Council to monitor usage and condition. In response, the Chairman confirmed that this was the intention;
- in relation to Ben Wyvis Primary School, whilst there were some issues to be resolved, particularly regarding clarification of responsibilities, High Life Highland had improved letting procedures and having a new school with modern facilities and a multi-use gaming area had significantly benefited the local community. Thanks were expressed to the Chair and the Director for agreeing to meet with Local Members to discuss the issues that were outstanding; and
- with regard to pitches, practical details in relation to maintenance and responsibility required to be addressed as soon as possible.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that:-

- i. the sports facilities survey be updated and submitted to Members at Ward Meetings; and
- ii. officers develop proposals, in consultation with local communities and stakeholders, for the management of access to community facilities as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

## **18. Early Years Collaborative in Highland - Update Co-obrachadh nan Tràth-bhliadhnachan sa Ghàidhealtachd – Fios às Ùr**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/15/14 dated 9 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on the work progressing as part of the Early Years Collaborative (EYC).

The EYC was a national multi-agency initiative, being delivered locally, that was driving forward real and lasting improvements to children's outcomes and life chances. This was being achieved by the use of a structured approach to introducing and embedding new ways of working that delivered successful results. Sharing and learning from others was a key feature and it helped to close the gap between knowledge of what worked and practice. Activities were focused on achieving four "stretch aims" and detailed information was provided on the work being undertaken to deliver change and improvement and create the conditions to support continuous improvement. Particular reference was made to the Highland Information Trail Magazine Bag, developed in collaboration with NHS Highland, Everything Baby and the Real Nappy Network, which would be gifted to all pregnant women in Highland at their booking appointment with their midwife. It had been designed using the key messages of Before Words, a pictorial resource which aimed to promote the importance of positive relationships with babies and children even before birth.

During discussion, the improvement activities relating to tackling poverty were welcomed. Income maximisation and reducing poverty were key goals in terms of addressing inequalities and information was sought on whether work was being done to ensure there were no zero hours contracts or below minimum wage posts and to examine what might be recommended, given the remote and rural environment, as a living wage for Highland. Emerging evidence indicated that inequality was more of an issue for people in low paid, seasonal or part-time work than those who were out of work. It was important to offer strong support and have measures of poverty and child poverty in performance frameworks.

In addition, the Highland Information Trail Magazine Bag, which had been provided to Members for information, was welcomed and would be a great asset for new parents.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the report.

## **19. Implementation of 600 Hours Early Learning and Childcare – Update on Progress**

### **Buileachadh 600 Uair a Thìde de Thràth-ionnsachadh agus Cùram-chloinne – Fios às Ùr mu Adhartas**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/16/14 dated 12 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which was part of the regular reporting on progress with the implementation plan for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare and sought homologation of the funding settlement for partner providers.

The background to the requirement to deliver 600 hours of free early learning and childcare was summarised and Members provided with information on implementation of the new local authority staffing structure; nursery enrolment and clearing; expansion of wraparound care; partner centre funding; and provision for eligible two year olds. In relation to the new staffing structure, following approval by the Committee on 19 February 2014, consultation meetings had been carried out with all full-time nursery staff in Highland. Meetings were also offered to part-time staff and, by the end of March, 250 of the total staff of 350 had been involved in individual meetings. Although



there were still some issues to be resolved for a small number of staff, the majority remained positive about the changes and acknowledged that they would address many long-standing issues as well as provide a platform to deliver Early Learning and Childcare in the future. The Implementation Plan was set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- with regard to the applicants for the 140 new posts, clarification was sought as to how those who had not completed their childcare qualification, if appointed, would be supported to work towards it. In addition, information was requested on whether those who had just completed their qualification would receive additional support and training to ensure they continued to develop;
- in relation to the Implementation Plan, there was no reference to the timing of the improvement works required in some centres and information was sought as to when they would be carried out;
- it was felt that staff and contracts should be in place before the start of the new term and an assurance was sought that the proposed timescale of August 2014 for contract variations was feasible; and
- the additional hours of free early learning and childcare would benefit children and their families. However, there were local challenges to be addressed and it was suggested that further work was required to provide solutions for children enrolled in nurseries outwith their catchment area where demand exceeded the number of places available;

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress to date with the implementation plan for the delivery of 600 hours early learning and childcare; and
- ii. **AGREED** to homologate the decision of the Director of Care and Learning to increase commissioning rates for Partner Centre providers.

## **20. Early Literacy and Before Words Initiative Litearras Tràth agus Iomairt Before Words**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/17/14 dated 28 April 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which outlined some of the current research guiding the evidence based practice within early years in Highland with a particular focus on the Before Words programme that had significantly enhanced the support provided in the very early stages of a child's development.

The report explained that there were significant inequalities in emergent literacy skills at school entry that had detrimental effects on the wider academic and social success of children and young people as they moved through the education system. Studies showed that children with poor literacy skills by the end of P4 had significant difficulty catching up and that they often did not attain even average literacy skills by the end of primary school. There was a range of activities being undertaken to address these inequalities and to provide appropriate support and interventions to enhance language and literacy skills in the early years. Links into the formal support structures were available once a child entered school to ensure continuing support for this critical area of child development.

Ms Kayrin Murray, Speech and Language Therapist/Before Words Project Lead, undertook a presentation on the Before Words Project which was based on the rationale that the experiences a baby had before birth and in its very early weeks of life formed the foundations of its later learning. The project sought to enable more children to reach their full potential with fewer children needing support in school. The aim was to encourage parents to talk to their baby before birth and to continue this with face to face communication after birth. Promotional literature was presently being issued to GP surgeries and this would be supplemented with information given to parents at the 12 week scan and, once the baby was born, at the 4-8 weeks visit. Additional visits by a Speech and Language Therapist would be arranged if necessary.

Interactions with the child encourage good communication and built positive relationships, an increased ability to cope with emotional experiences and improved communication and interaction skills. The project also enabled closer monitoring of a baby's progress, earlier identification of difficulties and provision of support. The complete programme was currently being used in Moray and evaluation had indicated that this had been successful. This project was now planned to be piloted in Highland. The information was going out to the whole of the Highlands straightaway at the midwife stage and Family Teams were working on which area of the Highlands would be piloted to receive the full package of support.

During discussion, Members welcomed the project and expressed their support. Such a simple activity could have far-reaching and positive outcomes and this was an area where deprivation was not a barrier to creating change. Reference was made to the presentation given to the Committee by Dr Suzanne Zeedyk which had influenced the Council's decision to invest in early years and it was hoped that this formative learning provision would continue and expand.

The Committee thanked Ms Murray for her informative presentation and **NOTED** the:-

- focused work within universal early years services to enhance language and pre-literacy skills in young children;
- enhancement of this work by the introduction of the Before Words programme;
- steps being taken to identify, at an early stage, those families where additional support might be required to develop positive relationships between parents and their children and/or to develop key language and emergent literacy skills in children; and
- importance of the focus on language and relationship development as key determinants of wellbeing and later success in education achievement and attainment.

## **21. Family Nurse Partnership Programme Update**

### **Fios às Ùr mu Phrògram Com-pàirteachas nan Nursaichean Teaghlaich**

There had been circulated Report No ECA/18/14 dated 8 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning which provided an update on the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) in Highland and proposed the mainstreaming of the programme.

The FNP provided an intensive home visiting service to women who became pregnant at 19 years old or younger until their child was two years old. The programme, licensed to the Scottish Government, was based on the highly researched work

undertaken by Dr David Olds, University of Colorado, which demonstrated that inputs provided to this client group achieved significant short and long term benefits to both the mother and child. The Highland team, based at the Kinmylies building, Inverness, comprised one Supervisor, four Family Nurses and a Data Administrator and had undergone a full year of training programmes. Detailed information was provided on Cohort One, which had run from February 2013-February 2014, and plans for Cohort 2, including mainstreaming the programme and moving the team to permanent contracts.

During discussion, Members welcomed the report and it was clarified that the proposals provided more sustainability for the FNP and that it was being rolled out according to identified needs. In addition, every other young mother had been identified that would have benefited from the programme had it been rolled out throughout the Highlands. This had provided accurate data for future expansion and development.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Family Nurse Partnership programme should be mainstreamed in Highland, involving 50% funding from early years preventative spend from 2015/16.

## **22. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED**, and **APPROVED** where necessary, the following Minutes of Meetings:-

- i. Highland Strategic Commissioning Group of 10 March 2014;
- ii. Criminal Justice Sub-Committee of 11 March 2014;
- iii. Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee of 23 April 2014; and
- iv. Culture and Leisure Contracts Scrutiny Sub-Committee of 1 May 2014.

## **23. Exclusion of Public Às-dùnadh a' Phobail**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

## **24. Internal Audit Report: System Weaknesses Aithisg In-sgrùdaidh: Laigsean Siostaim**

There had been circulated to Members only Report No ECA/19/14 dated 8 May 2014 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **NOTED** the recommendations in the report.

The meeting concluded at 2.35 pm.