

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Adult and Children's Services Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 15 January 2014 at 10.05 am.

Present:

Highland Council:

Dr D Alston	Mr W Mackay (Substitute) (Video Conferencing)
Mrs I Campbell	Mr G MacKenzie (Vice Chair)
Mr A Christie (Chair)	Mrs B McAllister
Mrs M Davidson	Ms L Munro
Ms J Douglas	Mrs M Paterson
Mr B Fernie	Mr M Rattray
Mr K Gowans	Ms G Ross
Mr J Gray (Substitute)	Mr G Ross
Mr M Green	Ms J Slater
Mr D Hendry	Ms M Smith
Mr E Hunter	Ms K Stephen
Mrs D Mackay	

NHS Highland:

Mrs M Duncan
Mrs G McCreath
Dr M Somerville

Religious Representatives:

Ms M McCulloch

Youth Convener:

Miss A Taylor

Non-Members also present:

Mr A Baxter	Mrs L MacDonald
Mr B Clark	Mr B Murphy
Mr B Lobban	Mr G Rimell
Mr C Macaulay	

In attendance:

Mr H Fraser, Director of Education, Culture and Sport
Mr B Alexander, Director of Health and Social Care
Mr R MacKenzie, Head of Support Services, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Mr J Steven, Head of Education, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Ms S MacLeod, Head of Health, Health and Social Care Service
Ms F Palin, Head of Social Care, Health and Social Care Service

Ms S Brogan, Resource Manager - Early Years, Health and Social Care Service
Ms K Beaton, Project Manager (Family Teams), Health and Social Care Service
Ms M Kinsella, District Manager - Health & Social Care, South Area, Health and Social Care Service
Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Mr B Irwin, Curriculum for Excellence Development Officer and Senior Phase 16+ Lead, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Ms M Stewart, Education Officer, Education, Culture and Sport Service
Mr E Foster, Finance Manager, Finance Service
Mr C Munro, Highland Children's Forum (Third Sector)
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, Chief Executive's Office
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs R Daly, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

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 B Gormley, Mr N MacDonald, Mrs F Robertson, Rev C Mayo and Mr G Smith.

2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following Declarations of Interest:-

Item 3 – Ms J Douglas (non-financial)
Item 4i – Ms J Douglas and Mr K Gowans (non-financial)
Item 4ii – Mrs G McCreath (financial)
Item 5 - Ms J Douglas and Mr K Gowans (non-financial)
Item 5a - 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.

Mr C Macaulay declared a financial interest in those items which might raise discussion relative to the employment of his partner as an employee of the Education, Culture and Sport Service and advised that if there was any specific discussion in relation to their employment he 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. Presentation: Director of Public Health's Annual Report and Lifestyle Survey
Taisbeanadh: Aithisg Bhliadhnail agus Suirbhidh Dòigh-beatha Stiùiriche Slàinte a' Phobail

Declaration of Interest: Ms J Douglas declared non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being a Director of both High Life Highland and the Partnership for Wellbeing but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interests did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

The Director of Public Health, NHS Highland, undertook a presentation on her Annual Report 2013, which had been circulated separately as Booklet A. In addition, there had been circulated joint Report No ACS/01/14 by the Directors of Education, Culture and Sport and Health and Social Care which explained that the Highland Lifestyle Survey had been carried out with P7, S2 and S4 pupils in 2009, 2011 and 2013. The report summarised the key findings of the 2013 survey and longitudinal comparison across all three surveys. It also contained proposals for future surveys.

Referring to the Public Health Annual Report, Dr Somerville highlighted the slight diminishment in the percentage of children and young people in the NHS Highland population, although attributed this in part to the increasing population of older people. 39% of children lived in remote areas, which compared to only 6% across Scotland. Achievements included fewer children in Highland living in poverty compared to Scotland as a whole and a higher number of young people leaving school to a positive destination. However there were clear trends showing that children from poorer backgrounds did less well than those from more affluent households and early years intervention had been proven to be the most cost-effective way of tackling this. Health issues were summarised, with a need to manage long-term conditions, to reduce hospitalisation rates for unintentional injuries and alcohol-related diagnoses and to provide complex care packages for children with exceptional needs. Good news encompassed the improvement in the management of diabetes, including increased use of insulin pumps, and there were decreasing levels of teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug use and smoking among young people. Work was required to increase the amount of physical activity undertaken, especially among teenage girls, and to reduce levels of obesity, with figures showing that 24% of Primary 1 children in Highland were overweight or obese.

With regard to Looked-After Children and Young People there was a need to address evidence showing that their health status, risk-taking behaviour and achievements was consistently poorer than those of other children. The aim to reduce the number of people in residential care was ongoing.

Dr Somerville summarised the improvement activities that were being undertaken in Children's Services Inspections, the Children 4 initiative, the High 5 programme and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Ongoing consultation was

being undertaken through Highland Youth Voice to ensure services were user-friendly for young people.

In relation to older people, progress was being made to reduce falls in homes and hospitals. Other initiatives outlined included the Butterfly Scheme and post-diagnostic support for dementia sufferers, Anticipatory Care Plans and Self-management schemes such as 'Let's Get On With It Together.' She concluded by outlining recommendations for the future.

Dr Somerville then summarised the Highland Lifestyle Survey 2013. With an overall response rate of 66.2%, this was the third biennial survey of P7, S2 and S4 pupils, the results of which were fully detailed in the report. Notable outcomes included the high percentage of respondents who visited a dentist at least once a year and decreasing trends in those drinking alcohol or taking drugs. Of particular concern was the number who reported being bullied, especially for reasons of disability. Conclusions included the need for more detailed analysis with results to be discussed by For Highland's Children 4 and Children's Commissioning Groups and the need for a multi-agency group to undertake a review prior to the 2015 Lifestyle Survey.

During discussion, Members commented as follows:-

- rates for the uptake of the human papilloma virus vaccination which protected against cervical cancer required ongoing monitoring. Mention was made of including boys in the programme, although there were no immediate plans to do so;
- much work was required to increase the level of breastfeeding which, although improving, was still a long way off the World Health organisation's recommendations. Statistics for child obesity were shocking and required focussed attention and early intervention;
- the level of gypsy travellers reported by young people in the survey was significantly higher than that suggested by official statistics;
- reflection on the wide gap between the richest and poorest in society was important;
- early long-term planning for the transition from children to adult services should be undertaken and encompass all relevant Services such as Housing and Employment Services;
- the reduction in waiting times for CAMHS was welcomed;
- it was important that actions arising from the Lifestyle Survey, especially longer-term actions, were linked into the appropriate Service Plans;
- the number of television adverts for follow-on formula milk was disappointing given the need to encourage breastfeeding. Tactics to combat this could include local and social media campaigns, and national lobbying; and
- encouraging progress was being made to increase the uptake of school meals, especially in secondary schools. High Life Highland was closely involved in the High 5 programme.

In response to questions from Members, it was explained that:-

- detailed information on the uptake of immunisations by area would be provided to Ms D MacKay. The uptake of immunisation against measles for teenagers who had missed out as babies as a result of the MMR vaccine scare ten years ago had been poor and work was ongoing to rectify this;

- District Partnerships were working on solutions to address gaps in ambulance provision in the North West Highlands and NHS Highland could provide any specific information required to progress the matter;
- the issue of sexual exploitation of young people would be discussed by the Chair, Vice Chair and the Chair of the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee with a view to preparing an appropriate report. Members were asked if they wished consideration to be given to reports on any of the issues mentioned during the presentation or in the survey, with questions having been raised about the Family Firm and Corporate Parenting approaches. Related to this, it was clarified that the annual Child Protection Report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee;
- any progress reports arising from the lifestyle survey should ideally also be submitted to the NHS Highland's Health and Social Care Committee;
- a structure and framework were in place for long-term planning for transition from children to adult services for looked-after young people but this required to be explored further across all relevant Services;
- a multi-agency report was planned for the end of the year on the equalities agenda and this would include sexual health. The provision of confidential sexual health advice in remote and rural areas was problematic and this issue would be discussed with Highland Youth Voice over the coming year;
- programmes to tackle childhood obesity were more sustainable if aimed at families rather than just children;
- information having been sought on the roll-out of the intergenerational approach to falls prevention, it was confirmed that work was ongoing to reduce the number of unintentional hospitalisations including falls;
- there was evidence that teenage alcohol consumption mainly took place in the home with alcohol purchased for them by older young people and this required to be addressed rather than further campaigning against retailers;
- there was a need to correlate data where there were discrepancies between figures from the census and those gathered from young people in the lifestyle survey; and
- feedback from the survey on bullying, especially for young carers and those with a disability, was deeply worrying. However it provided a framework for implementation of actions to be tackled as part of the equalities agenda in conjunction with the Education Service and For Highland's Children 4. The impact of any bullying intervention should be evaluated.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the interim findings of the 2013 Highland Lifestyle Survey;
- ii. **NOTED** that the survey results would be subject to further scrutiny;
- iii. **AGREED** that a multi-agency officer working group be introduced in early 2014 to take forward a review of the process, questions and resources required to improve future Highland Lifestyle Surveys;
- iv. **AGREED** that the next Highland Lifestyle Survey be carried out in 2015;
- v. **AGREED** to provide detailed information on the uptake of immunisations by area to Ms D MacKay;
- vi. **AGREED** to explore how issues of sexual health and exploitation could be best tackled, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and the Chair of the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee; and
- vii. **AGREED** that the Annual Child Protection Report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

4. Revenue Budget 2013/14 – Monitoring Buidseat Teachd-a-steach 2013/14 – Sgrùdadh

i. Education, Culture and Sport Foghlam, Cultar agus Spòrs

Declarations of Interest:

Ms J Douglas and Mr K Gowans declared non-financial interests in this item on the grounds of being Directors of High Life Highland 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.

In addition, Mr K Gowans also declared non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being a Director of Eden Court but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ACS/02/14 dated 3 January 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which set out the Revenue Budget monitoring position for the eight months to 30 November 2013 and the year-end outlook position.

The current estimated year-end position was an overspend of £0.681M, an improvement on the figure reported to the Committee on 13 November 2013. The main budget pressures, details of which were provided in the report, related to Additional Support Needs (ASN); School Transport; and Catering, Cleaning and Facilities Management. A range of short term actions, amounting to approximately £1.8M, had already been implemented to offset these budget pressures and the immediate priority was to identify what further mitigating action could be taken during the remainder of the financial year.

The Chairman informed Members there was no indication at this stage that the devolved budget refresh would vary from budgeted expectations but further details would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee. Also, regarding supply cover, a recruitment campaign had been undertaken during December through editorial sections of the press which had resulted in over 20 responses. A repeat of the campaign was planned during January and a full report on the outcome, together with an assessment of the supply cover situation throughout the month, would be presented to the February meeting of the Committee.

During discussion, Members raised a range of issues, including the following:-

- referring to the pressures on the Additional Support Needs (ASN) budget, clarification was requested as to what actions were proposed to address this for financial year 2014/15. It was still unclear whether additional provision would be incorporated into the budget or if funds would be moved from elsewhere within the budget to address the pressures. The report suggested that a balanced budget would require to be delivered within existing resources. However, the report to the December Council meeting

stated that any changes in circumstance that would result in a change to underlying budget assumptions would be reported back to the March Council meeting;

- the school transport project undertaken by Kinlochleven High School had generated considerable savings for the Council which had not been referred to in the report and there was potential for this to be rolled-out throughout the Council area; and
- in the current economic environment good quality school meals were vital for families struggling with financial pressures. It was queried whether the Council's financial constraints meant the use of cheaper frozen products rather than fresh local products. Also, it was unclear why an advertisement for the school meals service had appeared in the local press and if this had been best use of resources.

Responding to these and other comments, it was confirmed that:-

- the ASN Allocation Model was designed to address demand and to determine appropriate budgetary provisions. In December, the Council had agreed strategic reviews for longer-term financial planning. This would be a lengthy and detailed process which would result in recommendations being made to Committee throughout the year. There was currently an overspend on this budget which was recognised as a pressure – this budget line had been based on a historical level of funding which would be refined to reflect the actual level for the provision of the service;
- the realignment of the Skye Handyman scheme budget with the current level of service provision had been agreed as part of the current year's budget. This budget had previously been underspent and a copy of the report explaining the rationale behind the budget reduction could be provided to interested Members;
- relating to school meals, the Council had a policy of sourcing as much of its meat products locally as possible to provide the necessary high nutritional requirements to meet health objectives. Further, an investigation into the costs and benefits of advertising the school meals service in the local press would be undertaken;
- charges for school transport were currently underway and a fuller report detailing progress could be submitted to a future meeting;
- the Kinlochleven High School transport project would be replicated elsewhere in rural areas once a full evaluation of it would be made. It was confirmed also that work was currently underway to continue achieving savings targets; and
- lengthy discussions had taken place to assess how best to keep in touch with supply teachers and to keep them informed and engaged in the supply process.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the monitoring statement and the current year-end position;
- ii. **NOTED** the commitment to identify further compensatory savings in order to further improve upon the reported position;
- iii. **NOTED** the commitment to identify measures on a collaborative basis that would contribute towards the achievement of a balanced budget going forward into financial year 2014/15;

- iv. **NOTED** the progress being made with the achievement of budget savings in the current financial year; and
- v. **AGREED** that a report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee on progress with charging for school transport and what the outcomes were on this.

ii. **Health and Social Care**
Slàinte agus Cùram Sòisealta

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 ACS/03/14 dated 27 December 2013 by the Director of Health and Social Care which set out the revenue monitoring statement for the eight months to 30 November 2013.

The current estimated year-end position was an underspend of £0.236M, an improvement on the September monitoring position. The changed position was largely due to a reduction in the out of authority placements projection; firmer projections for vacancies for Principal Teachers of Early Education and Child Health Services; an increase in Fostering and Adoption Services overspend; and acknowledgement of bad debts against the Directorate budget. All savings measures had been accounted for although vacancy management was being used to achieve £0.025M of savings that were not possible through charging for Mental Health Officer Services. It was highlighted that the overall Health and Social Care budget had increased by £0.127M since September, reflecting a budget transfer for personnel and occupational health staff who transferred to NHS Highland and external funding, received in 2012/13, which had been brought forward to the current financial year.

During discussion, the view was expressed that the Committee should not be content to note the budget underspend.

Responding to comments on vacancies it was confirmed:-

- recruiting to the north and west coasts was often more difficult and this had an impact on services. Operational decisions had to be made to take this into account; and
- that there were currently fewer Health Visitor vacancies than at this time last year and fewer than at the time of integration. The Council was continuing to look at innovative ways of advertising and recruiting to Health Visitor positions that had been intended as part of the preventative spend agenda.

The Committee **APPROVED** the budget monitoring statement.

5. **Capital Expenditure 2013/14**
Caiteachas Calpa 2013/14 - Sgrùdadh

Declarations of Interest:

Mr K Gowans declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of being a Director of High Life Highland but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

Ms J Douglas also declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland and, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, elected to leave the room as discussion of item 5a, following on from this item, related to a direct capital benefit to High Life Highland.

There had been circulated joint Report No ACS/04/14 dated 7 January 2014 by the Directors of Education, Culture and Sport and Health and Social Care which updated Members on progress to date with the Education, Culture & Sport (ECS) and Health and Social Care (HSC) Capital programmes and provided monitoring reports on expenditure as at 30 November 2013 along with an update on work being undertaken on fire safety and other health and safety Capital works within the HSC Programme and the major projects underway within the ECS Programme.

In addition, the report outlined some of the issues relating to future capital investment priorities and sought approval to increase the budget for the new Portree Gaelic Primary School. It also sought approval to draw down the final tranche of funding to complete the project that would result in each school in Highland having a wireless-enabled environment which would result in a more flexible approach to the use of mobile ICT devices to supplement and enhance curriculum delivery.

The report also provided an update on the Sustainable School Estate Review, including indicative dates of when related reports would be brought to this Committee during 2014. In this connection, the Chairman confirmed that Planning Permission had been granted for the Wick High School and Primary Schools Project on 14 January 2014. Finally, there was an update on ongoing improvement measures in relation to the management of the ECS estate including residential properties.

In relation to Health and Social Care, the budget for 2013/14 was £3.914M and expenditure as at 30 November 2013 was £1.897M, representing 48% of the budget. At this stage in the financial year, it was anticipated that the budget would show an underspend of £0.060M, further details of which were provided in the report.

With regard to ECS, details of expenditure to the end of November 2013 were provided in the report. The estimated final year end position was an underspend of £0.900M, largely due to delays on the Invergordon Leisure Centre, Thurso Primary School, Central Primary, Cromarty Primary, Wick Joint Campus and Black Isle Education Centre projects. This had been offset to some extent by good progress on the Inverness Royal Academy and Lochaber High School Phase 3 projects and additional expenditure from the Roll Pressures budget due to the increased number of projects relating to provision for pupils with Additional Support Needs.

During discussion, Members raised a range of issues, including the following:-

- regarding the Caol joint campus project, there had been a previous decision that the community facility at Caol would not be decanted and it was hoped that this decision would be honoured. There had been savings made in the Gaelic and

Lundavra projects in Fort William which would offset the budget shortfall for the Portree Gaelic School. It was unclear why the Caol joint campus project was now out to re-tender as the original tenders had come in under budget and negotiation for further savings could possibly have taken place. The current re-tendering exercise could be a false economy as delays could lead to savings being overtaken by inflation on the costs of materials etc;

- the additional £3m funding provided to Portree Gaelic School from the Scottish Government was welcomed together with the further Capital grant of £250k for Early Years at the school, highlighting the value placed on Gaelic;
- the Council's contribution of £500k to the new Gaelic school in Portree was to be funded from underspends in the funding approved for the greater Fort William schools project. The budget for the Caol joint campus had been revised down by some £400k and assurances were, therefore, sought that this would not result in a dilution in the original project in terms of quality and specifications, the agreed way forward regarding phasing and timescales for the project considering the re-tendering exercise;
- the work underway at Alness Academy and Invergordon ASGs was acknowledged and progress welcomed at Inverness Royal Academy; and
- it was encouraging that there was widespread political support and funding available for early years services and it was vital that the Council planned for this in terms of the sizes of building needed and infrastructure requirements as well as in terms of services for the future – there was a need to assess and predict birth rates more fully.

Responding to these and other comments, it was confirmed that:-

- an announcement of the successful tenderers of the Gaelic and Lundavra projects would be made next week;
- regarding the Caol joint campus project, a number of companies had identified savings in their tender returns, particularly relating to the design and phasing. Having considered the situation and taken advice from Housing and Property Services, a decision was made to re-tender. The project would be delivered within existing timescales and revisions to the design had been received which would achieve savings. At the end of the project the buildings would be of good quality and achieve better value for the Council. Assurances previously given regarding the decant at Caol community facility would be honoured. The lesson learned from this exercise was the benefit in going out to tender at an earlier stage in the design process;
- regarding the Plockton High School ASG, consultants intended meeting with Elected Members at the end of January and the mounting of a plaque in the new extension to Plockton High School to commemorate the bequest by the Hamilton family would be pursued as soon as possible;
- the Sustainable School Estate Review was predicated on statutory consultation when there were changes to education provision. In advance of this, there was engagement with local stakeholders to inform this process, particularly in relation to education benefits and community impacts which was a requirement of legislation. In relation to the Plockton and Portree ASGs this would be progressed within the next 3-4 months;
- a report would be submitted to a future meeting on innovative ways to deliver more community access to existing buildings as part of the schools estate review;

- with reference to the fourth classroom at Milton of Leys Primary School, the report to the next meeting of the Committee would take into account the predicted 15% increase in housing in this area from 6900 to 8000 houses;
- the Caithness Early Years Autism Centre would be located at the Primary School north of the river as this was considered a more appropriate location for this client group than the more busy environment of the community campus;
- relating to the Primary School for north Wick, information on discussions with the two private nurseries to address their provision after the new school was built would be provided directly to interested Members;
- local ward Members had been involved in discussions relating to the review of residential properties, given that some of these were still occupied; and
- regarding the need for better joined-up work at a community planning level, the Highland Public Partnership Performance Board was the top level forum for these discussions. There had been an attempt to pull together capital planning across the Partners but this had not addressed consultation issues. This was an overarching theme that should be picked up at this level.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the status of the 2013/14 HSC capital programme at the end of November 2013 as detailed in Section 2 and Appendix 1 of the report;
- NOTED** the status of the 2013/14 ECS capital programme at the end of November 2013 and the ECS major capital projects all as detailed in Section 3, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the report;
- NOTED** the issues surrounding future ECS capital investment priorities and the additional capital grant funding related to the Children and Young People Bill as detailed in Section 4 of the report;
- AGREED** the amendments to existing budget allocations as detailed in Section 5 of the report;
- NOTED** the status of the Sustainable School Estate Review as detailed in Section 6 of the report;
- NOTED** the progress in developing Ward Reports on ECS Estates issues and **AGREED** the staffing proposals outlined in Section 7 of the report; and
- NOTED** the measures underway in relation to the management of ECS residential properties as detailed in Section 8 of the report;
- AGREED** that a report be submitted to a future meeting on innovative ways to deliver more community access to existing buildings as part of the review of the schools estate; and
- AGREED** that, with reference to the fourth classroom at Milton of Leys Primary School, the report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee would take into account the predicted 15% increase in housing in this area.

5a. Capital Programme – Floral Hall, Inverness Prògram Calpa – Talla nam Flùr, Inbhir Nis

Declaration of Interest: Following on from Item 5, Ms J Douglas declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Director of High Life Highland and, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, elected to leave the room as discussion related to a direct capital benefit to High Life Highland.

The Committee **NOTED** that in terms of Standing Order 17.2, the Chairman had agreed that this additional item of business, not specified on the agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency to safeguard the remaining funding involved and to allow the project to be completed with the minimal disruption during the peak tourist season.

There had been circulated Report No ACS/15/14 dated 13 January 2014 which sought approval to draw down £39K of funding from the Community and Leisure Facilities generic budget heading as a contribution towards a £111K investment to re-brand and re-launch facilities at the Floral Hall, Inverness.

The report explained that High Life Highland (HLH) had developed a Business Case to clarify the identity of Inverness Floral Hall and support its development as a key visitor attraction in Inverness whilst improving its operational deficit over the next three years. The proposal centred around the extension of the café area and improving the kitchen facilities to increase the number of covers and enable the introduction of an expanded range of goods. The aim was to re-brand and re-launch the facility as “Inverness Botanic Gardens” and a new programme of horticultural events and activities would be designed to encourage repeat visits by those living in and around Inverness. HLH had secured funding of £33K from the private sector and the Inverness Common Good Fund had agreed to allocate £39K on condition that the remaining £39K was provided by the Education, Culture and Sport Service. In addition, HLH would invest £16K to develop the associated marketing and promotional material.

The Committee **AGREED** that £39K be drawn down from the Community and Leisure Facilities generic budget heading as a contribution towards the overall £111K investment package to re-brand and re-launch Inverness Floral Hall as “Inverness Botanic Gardens”.

6. Integrated Family Teams in Children’s Services Sgiobaidhean Teaghlaich Amalaichte ann an Seirbheisean Chloinne

There had been circulated Report No ACS/05/14 dated 6 January 2014 by the Director of Health and Social Care which confirmed the recommendations for enhanced early years services as part of the Council’s commitment to preventative spend and the implementation of Integrated Family Teams.

As previously reported, and set out in detail in Appendix 1 of the report, the proposals involved the creation of a single integrated team in each District with specialisms in three functions, namely Universal Services and Early Intervention in Early Years; Universal Services and Early Intervention in School Age Children; and Care and Protection. There was some crossing of District boundaries in the South Area to reflect operational requirements as well as a dedicated team to address the level and complexity of work with children with disabilities.

The report also detailed the proposed staffing of the new teams as well as the Health and Social Care staff who would be managed at Area Level rather than within each District. As indicated previously, the forthcoming integration of Education, Health and Social Care facilitated the creation of a team of Additional Support Needs staff in an Area, which would complement the establishment of the Family Teams. In addition, the report provided details of support work and a proposed partnership agreement to

provide opportunities for staff to move from a third sector organisation to new roles within the Council as a result of changes to the nature of outsourced provision.

During discussion, Members welcomed the report and commended the Council's preparedness to enter into a budgetary process to fund this area. Members looked forward to the publication of the Children's Services Inspection Report and commended staff who had progressed the implementation of Integrated Family Teams so willingly.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. to support the proposals for the enhancement of Early Years services and the establishment of Family Teams, which would require to be presented to the Finance, Housing and Resources Committee; and
- ii. that the process of implementation should involve minimal disruption to service delivery and include a partnership arrangement with a third sector organisation.

7. Performance Report – Children's Services Aithisg Dèanadais – Seirbheisean Chloinne

There had been circulated Report No ACS/06/14 dated 7 January 2014 by the Director of Health and Social Care which provided an update on the performance framework for Children's Services.

The performance framework had been agreed by the Council and NHS Highland as part of the lead agency arrangements and the performance report 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 and new performance data was set out in Appendix 1 of the report. Appendix 2 contained an exception report relating to health assessments for Looked After Children.

During discussion, Members raised a range of issues:-

- in relation to access to Primary Mental Health Worker, Members welcomed that in September and October 2013 all children had been seen within the 26 week timeframe and that all but one had been seen within the forthcoming 18 week target. However, the 18 week target still appeared too long for children to wait;
- reporting on Performance Indicator 16 (Looked After Children health assessments being included in the Child's Plan within 6 weeks) – this actually represented a decline in performance as compliance with the target in October 2013 was at 66.7% whereas, in January 2013, it was at 72.7%. This differed from the interpretation of Table 3 in Appendix 2 and it was hoped that the steps put in place to address this would be successful;
- there appeared to be a high reliance on one staff member to carry out health assessments in some areas and it would be beneficial to consider back-up arrangements, particularly for remote areas; and
- while the Service had performed well on meeting targets over the last year, a review of performance targets, involving Elected Member input, should be considered. The Council would soon receive Inspection reports and would launch For Highland's Children 4, both of which presented a suitable opportunity and catalyst for performance reviews.

Responding to these comments it was explained that:-

- the theme of improving and refining targets would emerge during the seminar planned for the launch of For Highland's Children 4. It was intended to move towards stretch targets as a vision to drive forward continuous improvement;
- in relation to health assessments, much of the preparatory work was carried out by administrative staff. It was accepted that in remote areas where there might be a staff absence this would create unnecessary delays and investigations were underway to improve efficiency and to train a wider cohort of professional health staff to carry out assessments; and
- meeting the 18 week target for access to a Primary Mental Health Worker had complex impacts on a range of professional health staff and more detail on these impacts and associated activity would be included in future reporting.

The Committee **NOTED** the performance information.

8. Highland Parenting Framework Frèam Pàrantachd na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No ACS/07/14 dated 27 December 2013 by the Director of Health and Social Care which sought approval for the Highland Parent Support Framework.

The Council's commitment to work together for children and young people involved a range of commitments to support parents and families. These commitments reflected the Scottish Government's National Parenting Strategy (2012) and aimed to value and support parents as one of the single biggest ways of giving children the best start in life. A multi-agency reference group had developed the Highland Parent Support Framework for which approval was sought. Responsibility for implementing the actions would lie with the Supporting Parents Improvement Group, one of the thirteen groups tasked with delivering service improvements within For Highland's Children 4.

During discussion, Members welcomed the proposals and expressed their thanks to officers for progressing this area of work through the Parent Implementation Group. Members made a range of comments, including:-

- there were many different ways in which parents could access relevant information and while the internet was a highly useful resource, this was not universally available to all and it should not be assumed that it was a source of information for everyone;
- there was a variety of parenting programmes proposed for implementation and it was important to monitor their effectiveness, agree what goals could be achieved by them and ensure that resources were best placed;
- For Highland's Children 4 presented an opportunity to assess what areas were being measured;
- the visibility and public profile of children's services, including support and preventative work, was low in some communities. By way of comparison, Police Scotland had successfully drawn attention to child protection issues and conveyed the message that this was everyone's business. Integrated services should ensure that the whole area of raising children benefited from the same high profile;

- in terms of community sustainability, professional jobs should be located in fragile communities where they were needed. There should be consideration given to what services were being offered and how they impacted on communities. Peer support work, such as Home Start in Caithness, had been very impressive and such models were likely to sustain themselves into the future. It would be helpful if parenting programmes could be reported through District Partnerships;
- while information was crucial to assisting in the task of raising a child, many single parents did not have a secure home in which to do this. This could create a significant barrier for the work and support offered to these individuals;
- the proposed Framework cited the example of parents in Solihull being asked to contribute or bring their own refreshments with a nominal £7 being included in the sample information. It was queried if this was an obstacle to participation; and
- a query was raised as to the accuracy of the details listed on estimated child populations by Area, Associated School Group and age-band. A request was made that this information be checked and a revised table circulated to Members if it contained errors.

Responding to these comments, it was explained:-

- the proposals needed to be discussed in local communities, the District Partnerships and satellite childcare partnerships. The service was now moving to a different way of working in childcare and in support for parents. Family teams would involve peer support and community capacity building services. Discussions were currently underway with third sector partners and the Committee would be provided with more information on this in the future. This area of work would raise the profile of these issues;
- the Chairman would write to the Chairs of the District Partnerships inviting them to place this item on their agendas together with other related topics in order to raise the profile of parenting programmes currently being implemented; and
- it was accepted that charging for activities and events could act as a barrier to involvement and this would be taken into consideration in applying the Parent Support Framework in the Highlands.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Highland Parent Support Framework;
- ii. **AGREED** that the Chairman write to the Chairs of the District Partnerships inviting them to place this item on their agendas together with other related topics in order to raise the profile of parenting programmes currently being implemented; and
- iii. **AGREED** that Table 1, P94, detailing estimated child populations by Area, Associated School Group and age-band, be checked and a revised table circulated to Members if it contained errors.

9. Implementation of 600 hours Early Learning and Childcare Buileachadh de 600 uair a thìde Ionnsachadh Tràth is Cùram-chloinne

There had been circulated joint Report No ACS/08/14 dated 30 December 2013 by the Directors of Education, Culture and Sport and Health and Social Care which sought to update Members on the progress, since the last Committee, in meeting the requirement to deliver 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare across Highland from August 2014.

The report detailed progress in the work underway to ensure an effective, affordable and “fit for purpose” platform was established across the authority in August 2014. Details were offered of progress made with voluntary partner centres, private day care centres and local authority centres together with the staffing issues associated with the proposed model in terms of both single session and double session nurseries.

During discussion Members welcomed the Scottish Government’s commitment to both 600 hours early learning and free school meals for children in Primary 1-3. The following additional comments were made:-

- many nurseries’ concerns had been allayed and Members welcomed the in-depth consultation that had already taken place and that was on-going and looked forward to the report coming back in February;
- in relation to the seminar planned for For Highland’s Children 4, a request was made for inclusion of a section to bring together all the work currently underway in early years and work likely to take place over the next few years;
- it was hoped that staff could be kept informed of these changes and reassured that this would likely create significant employment opportunities for the Highlands. It would be important to ensure that job opportunities could be realised in local settings;
- these proposals would create an extremely strong public sector provision for childcare and it was hoped also that consideration be given to how this would impact on third and private sectors; and
- it was recognised that this was a complex process, involving many stakeholders, but it was unclear what consultation had taken place with parents.

In response, it was confirmed that this would require to be considered innovatively in rural areas. In terms of timings, there was a need to talk to the parents of children who were toddlers right now so as to plan for the longer-term. Funding for August was for the basic model and the Scottish Government anticipated doubling funding over the next 40 years so as to provide greater flexibility and choice. The report to the February Committee meeting would address how choice could be provided and recognise that this was the first step in longer-term change to provisions. Currently only term-time provision was being considered; it was likely that in future provision would extend beyond term-time.

The Committee **NOTED** the progress being made with regard to the delivery of 600 hours Early Learning and Childcare by August 2014 and that a recommendation for implementation would be presented to the February Committee.

10. Bridge to Employment Drochaid gu Cosnadh

There had been circulated Report No ACS/09/14 dated 7 January 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which explained that Bridge to Employment (BtE) had been run successfully for pupils in S4-S6 in a small number of schools within travelling distance of Inverness, largely on an extra-curricular basis, over the last four and a half years. The core aims of the Highland Model were to increase the number of pupils who enrolled in Further or Higher Education and, secondly, the number of pupils pursuing careers in Health, Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths. It was particularly aimed at young people with potential who needed that little

bit of extra support to achieve. LifeScan Scotland had sought to engage a small number of other businesses to lead BtE programmes across a wider geographical area of Highland. The Highland Council was aiming to extend the scheme with those partners, one of whom would be LifeScan itself, by taking on a co-ordinating role.

The report explained that the main input would continue to be by partner companies so that the model was business led, with input by Highland and Islands Enterprise and UHI. Subject to formal agreement in January, three companies would take part from 2014 in addition to Lifescan Scotland, namely, Scottish and Southern Energy, Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd and Cap Gemini. It was envisaged that over half of Highland secondary schools would take part in the scheme. Information on costs and the Council's co-ordinating role was provided. In particular, it was proposed to create a temporary post, for a one-year period, within the Senior Phase 16+ Team to take forward the planning and development of the wider roll-out of BtE in Highland.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- more skilled workers were required in the oil and renewables industries and it was suggested that discussions take place with organisations such as Global Energy;
- universities and colleges were providing courses in fields such as forensic science, behavioural analysis, counselling and psychology and it would be useful to examine whether the subjects necessary for entry were being offered in schools;
- concern was expressed regarding the lack of employment opportunities in remote rural areas and it was important to consider how this could be addressed so that young people could remain in their local communities;
- the importance of equity of access to skills and support throughout Highland was emphasised;
- "opt in" schemes widened inequalities and it was hoped that the temporary post referred to in section 3.2 of the report would specifically encourage not only the more difficult to access communities and schools but the individuals within them who didn't engage;
- reference was made to the 2011 Census which indicated that Highland had an increasing population with growth in some unexpected areas and it was emphasised that remoteness and rurality were not insurmountable barriers to local population and economic growth;
- childcare and employability initiatives that met local needs were vital;
- the BtE programme run by Lifescan had been an outstanding success and it was important to learn from that and roll it out to other areas. However, in addition to larger employers, it was essential to work with local tradesmen and small businesses;
- resources were limited and it was important to concentrate on areas of poverty and remote and rural communities that had difficulties sustaining employment;
- the forthcoming increase in funded childcare, that was the subject of the previous item, would make more women available for the workforce and it was necessary to consider how to support them in to training and employment and encourage them to make the best use of the opportunities available;
- people wanted to live in remote rural communities despite difficulties such as the high cost of living and transport and, with advice and support in terms of coordination, communities would help themselves;

- a progress report was sought on the implementation of the Family Firm approach;
- employment did not necessarily have to be local for economic growth in a remote rural community e.g. many people worked away from home in well paid jobs in the oil and gas industry;
- work experience promoted good citizenship, self-direction and social responsibility and it was important that pupils were encouraged to take part;
- it was important to remember that there was a difference between being remote and being rural; and
- there were some vacancies within NHS Highland that could not be filled and were jeopardising future service provision and the need for a “grow our own” approach was emphasised.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that work was ongoing in conjunction with the Convention of the Highlands and Islands, Skills Development Scotland and a range of other organisations in terms of taking forward the various strands of employability. It was necessary to take advantage of opportunities in growth sectors such as oil and gas and renewables as well as fields such as life sciences, future care provision and tourism. In addition, skills such as hairdressing remained important employability factors in Highland. It was important to support all opportunities to ensure that wellbeing was increased within households by the provision of employment.

Women in work was a theme that required development and there were challenges to be addressed in terms of encouraging women to take up positions that were traditionally male roles. There was a low take up of apprenticeships by women, often because they were not given access to information.

In relation to remote and rural communities, there were challenges to be addressed but there were also opportunities. By harnessing the latest technology, such as superfast broadband and 3D printing, there was no reason why such communities could not have brand new manufacturing industries.

“Science Academy”, which was a collaboration of public bodies and major employers, the aim of which was to ensure that children had access to science and engineering subjects from pre-school onwards, was gathering momentum and further information would be provided as it developed.

In response to questions, it was explained that BtE formed part of a range of work that involved changing how things were done in schools in terms of developing employability skills. For example, the next report on the agenda related to work experience and how it could be built in to the curriculum rather than being seen as a one-off occurrence. The BtE partner organisations had been very keen to work with the Council and, when the extended scheme was up and running, discussions could take place with other organisations such as Global Energy. The need for equity of access to services for young people throughout Highland was recognised. However, it was important to recognise the work already being undertaken by Head Teachers in rural areas in terms of developing partnerships with local employers outwith the BtE framework and utilising the flexibility afforded by Curriculum for Excellence to tailor the curriculum to suit local circumstances.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the development of the Bridge to Employment model in secondary schools in Highland as one strand of developing employability skills in partnership with the business and Higher Education sectors; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a progress report on the implementation of the Family Firm approach be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

11. Work Experience Eòlas Obrach

There had been circulated Report No ACS/10/14 dated 7 January 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which set out a revised work experience policy document that would meet the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence.

The report explained that “work experience” was now being used to describe much more than a work placement towards the end of secondary education. It involved learning about work at all ages from 3 to 18. With Curriculum for Excellence, the introduction to the world of work could start in the early years with, for example, visits to work environments or from employers.

The policy document set out the context for a revised approach and sought to build on the positive aspects of the previous approach while addressing the weaknesses. It detailed the relevant roles and responsibilities of Council staff and highlighted the importance of ensuring that appropriate procedures were in place to prepare young people for their work-related experiences. It also emphasised the requirement for appropriate arrangements in terms of health and safety of young people and employers, taking account of advice and guidance from Health and Safety staff within the Council and the Health and Safety Executive.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- schools, young people and parents would welcome the revised approach which reflected changes brought about by Curriculum for Excellence in terms of flexibility and individualisation;
- previously, young people had undergone a week of work experience and this had been valuable to some. However, many others did not get their first, second or even third choice and had gained nothing that would help them in their future careers;
- the opportunity for extended placements was welcomed. In particular, this would benefit young people for whom school was not a motivating factor by providing a transition to a career beyond school. In addition, it would provide a solution for school leavers whose birthday meant they had to stay on until Christmas of S5. There was also an opportunity to do something creative in terms of developing a package for those young people at the end of S4 who were no longer sitting any external examinations;
- some businesses had stopped providing work experience placements and it was suggested that the paperwork in terms of health and safety certificates, risk assessments etc be examined with a view to making it less onerous;
- taking on a young person for a week at a time was not always practical as they required a degree of supervision. The opportunity for extended placements of, for example, one day per week over a period of time was therefore welcomed;

- undergoing work experience at a young age equipped pupils with a realistic view of the workplace and allowed employers to spot potential and possibly offer apprenticeships;
- referring to the earlier presentation by the Director of Public Health, it would be interesting to examine whether the revised approach to work experience had any impact on the statistics relating to positive destinations;
- the limited role of the public sector as an employer had been identified within the policy as a weakness but there was a lack of suggestions as to how to address it;
- the section within the policy on Family Firm and the Council's role as Corporate Parent for Looked After Children was welcomed. However, it was emphasised that community planning partners, collectively, had a role to play and that needed to be explicit in the policy;
- the statement "schools should ensure that potential school leavers who would benefit from a placement in S4 have been offered the opportunity" was not proactive enough. It was necessary to support young people and ensure that those who would benefit from a placement took up the offer; and
- it was essential that the tourist industry and small businesses, as the main industry in Highland and the biggest growth sector in the economy respectively, were fully involved in Bridge to Employment and work experience.

In response to points raised, the Chairman confirmed that he would arrange for a Briefing Note to be circulated to Members of the Committee on the role of the public sector as an employer and what could be done to improve the situation. It had previously been agreed that a report on the Family Firm would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee and this could include an update on progress in terms of embedding the approach with community planning partners.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the work experience policy; and
- ii. that a Briefing Note on the role of the public sector as an employer be circulated to Members of the Committee.

12. Professional Update for Teachers Fios Às Ùr Proifeiseanta Do Luchd-teagaisg

There had been circulated Report No ACS/11/14 dated 3 January 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which provided an update on progress with the implementation of Professional Update, the new scheme of re-accreditation for teachers registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)

The report explained that the purpose of Professional Update for Teachers was to maintain and improve the quality of teachers in Scotland as outlined in the relevant Professional Standards; to enhance the impact that teachers had on children's learning; and to support, maintain and enhance teachers' continued professionalism and the reputation of teaching professionals in Scotland. All teachers registered with the GTCS would be required to participate and it had previously been agreed that the Council would participate in Phase 2 of the GTCS Pilot during the course of the current school session.

A Validation Event had taken place in Inverness on 3 December 2013, prior to which extensive discussion and consultation had been carried out on a number of issues

including the development of a new Professional Review and Development Policy and related staff guidelines for Highland Teachers. The event was held by a GTCS panel of four and comprised discussion between panel members and specific groups of education and teaching staff. It concluded with a feedback session with senior management and, although the final report had not yet been provided, it had been confirmed that the Council's Professional Update Scheme had been approved by the GTCS. Professional Update would be implemented incrementally over a five year period, commencing in school session 2014/15, and information was provided on the implications in terms of resources and failure to roll out Professional Update appropriately.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the successful General Teaching Council for Scotland validation of Professional Update for Highland Council; and
- ii. the continued implications for Highland Council.

13. 1+2 Languages – Update 1+2 Cànanain – Aithisg Adhartais

There had been circulated Report No ACS/12/14 dated 7 January 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which provided an update on the National and Highland progress being made in moving forward with the 1+2 Languages development.

The report explained that the Scottish Government had made a commitment that, by 2020, children would learn a modern language from P1 and a second modern language from P5 at the latest. Young people would continue with their first modern language to the end of their Broad General Education and learn an additional modern language during S1 to S3. Pilot projects had taken place in some primary and secondary schools, including Lochside RC Primary School, and the findings were summarised.

Progress in Highland included the establishment of a 1+2 Language Strategy Group, an audit of primary school language provision and the forthcoming appointment of a Development Officer. Initial discussions regarding resources had raised the importance of the development of ICT resources and a long term training strategy for teachers. The Scottish Government had allocated £4M nationally in 2013/14 of which Highland would receive £181K.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- thanks were expressed to Mr D Simpson, officers and teaching staff on the 1+2 Language Strategy Group for their enthusiasm and hard work over the past few months;
- the funding from the Scottish Government was welcomed;
- the world had changed dramatically to one where people travelled widely for business and pleasure and the Council had a duty to ensure that young people in Highland were equipped to compete with their peers on the global multilingual stage;

- evidence showed that the Scottish economy was losing millions of pounds annually as a result of young people not having the necessary language skills and it was essential that was reversed;
- the 1+2 Languages development was challenging but it also presented opportunities and Members looked forward to seeing the work develop;
- it was important to give clear guidance to young people in terms of the languages required for the world of work and the benefits to be gained from being able to communicate in another language;
- learning a language was easier if it was taught in a way that was relevant and enjoyable;
- it was necessary to be ambitious in terms of ideas – for example, the provision of a dedicated school in Highland where young people could be immersed in Mandarin or another modern language;
- regular progress reports were important and, to raise the awareness of the significance of modern languages, it was requested that information also be presented to Area Committees;
- the importance of utilising modern technology such as apps was emphasised;
- people were programmed to learn language but it fundamentally took place in the early years. It was important to start with toddler groups and ensure that language learning was not seen as something that happened in secondary school or even primary school;
- there were challenges to be addressed in terms of aligning local resources to maintain continuity between primary and secondary schools;
- the importance of flexibility was emphasised and modern technology could be utilised to give children the opportunity to learn languages of their choice; and
- practising language skills with native speakers was a great advantage and more emphasis should be placed on links with communities throughout the world.

In response to points raised, the Director explained that the timescale for implementation of 2020 was necessary, not only because of the training required but because the 1+2 Languages development was a complete change in the way the learning of modern languages was facilitated in schools. Currently, many schools did not have teachers who could speak more than one modern language and the use of the workforce would have to change. Technology was key and there were already good examples of young people in Spain being supported to learn Gaelic and primary and secondary schools linking with countries in Europe and further afield. It was essential that children understood, from the earliest possible stage, that they could acquire more than their native language with ease. Flexibility was essential because of the links to employability and to keep the language learning experience enjoyable.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress being made in moving forward with the 1+2 Languages development; and
- ii. **AGREED** that information on progress with the implementation of the 1+2 Languages development be reported to Area Committees.

14. Management Action Plans – Internal Audit Reports on Curriculum – Internet Use and Schools – Financial Procedures
Planaichean-gnìomha Rianachd – Aithisgean In-sgrùdaidh mun Churraicealam – Cleachdadh Eadar-lìn agus Sgoiltean – Modhan Ionmhasail

There had been circulated Report No ACS/13/14 dated 6 January 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport which provided an overview of the Internal Audit reports relating to Education, Culture and Sport considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and progress with the related management actions agreed at that Committee.

The report explained that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, at its meetings on 26 September and 20 November 2013, had considered reports on Financial Procedures in Schools and Internet Usage in the Curriculum. A number of management actions had been agreed and these were set out in detail in the Action Plans appended to the report. In relation to Financial Procedures in Schools, the audit had been based on a sample of four schools and a follow-up audit would be carried out, based on a further sample of schools, to ensure that the management actions identified had been implemented across all schools.

During discussion in relation to Financial Procedures in Schools, the Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee indicated her intention, in addition to the follow-up audit and with the agreement of the Chair, to ask the Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management to revisit the four schools that were the subject of the original audit to ascertain whether the management actions were working effectively. The Chair concurred that this was an appropriate course of action following a suitable period of time for implementation.

Thereafter, having commended the Director and his staff for the prompt report and meeting the requirements of the Internal Audit reports, the Committee **NOTED** the management actions taken to address the issues identified in the Internal Audit reports.

15. Complaints Review Committee Outcome Toradh Comataidh Ath-sgrùdaidh Gheairinean

There had been circulated joint Report No ACS/14/14 dated 16 December 2013 by the Depute Chief Executive and the Director of Health and Social Care which set out the findings and recommendations following a Complaints Review Committee held on 20 August 2013. The report also provided an overview of the complaints process and highlighted the requirement for decisions of the Complaints Review Committee to be reported to the Adult and Children's Services Committee.

It was explained that there was a three stage process whereby complainants could request that their complaint be reviewed by the Complaints Review Committee should they be unhappy with the outcome of the formal response to their complaint at stage two of the process. The Committee was an independent panel consisting of two lay members and a lay Chairperson.

The background to the complaint in question was summarised and it was explained that the Complaints Review Committee had not upheld any aspect. The Committee had made one recommendation, namely that "it should be made clear to complainants at all stages whether what they hope to achieve when making a complaint is realistic or attainable. For example, it is unlikely that pursuing a complaint will result in financial compensation or will directly impact on the outcome of disciplinary investigations."

The Committee **NOTED** that the Complaints Review Committee met to consider the case, the findings and the recommendation.

16. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

There had been circulated various Minutes of Meetings for noting or approval as appropriate.

In relation to item 7(ii) of the Minutes of the Strategic Commissioning Group (Adult Services Commission), Members of the Opposition indicated that they did not agree with the statement that Members felt assured in respect of finance and officer engagement.

In response to questions, it was explained that:-

- with regard to item 5 of the Minutes of Local Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff (Travel and Subsistence), it had been proposed that the Council's Policy on Travel and Subsistence be implemented for teachers and associated professionals, thereby replacing the current terms and conditions and the relative mileage rates which dated back to 1999. However, the Joint Union Side considered the proposal to be detrimental to some members of staff and had not agreed to it. The matter had therefore been referred back to the Joint Secretaries and would be submitted to the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers for consideration; and
- in relation to item 8 of the Minutes of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee (Strategic Commissioning Plan Update), a presentation on the draft Strategic Commissioning Plan had been undertaken at NHS Highland's Health and Social Care Committee on 9 January 2014 and the final plan would be considered in March 2014. Thereafter, it would be presented to the Adult and Children's Services Committee.

During further discussion, it was suggested that consideration be given to presenting the draft Strategic Commissioning Plan to the February Adult and Children's Services Committee to allow Members the opportunity to think about where they might wish to feed in to it as it developed.

In addition, in relation to item 3 of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee (Adult Social Care Summary), it was requested that information on the process being developed in relation to care homes where admissions had been suspended be circulated to Members to ensure it was adequate and was being used.

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

- i. Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group of 22 August 2013;
- ii. Highland Strategic Commissioning Group of 23 August 2013;
- iii. Annual General Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff of 8 November 2013;
- iv. Ordinary Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff of 8 November 2013;
- v. Criminal Justice Sub-Committee of 12 November 2013;

- vi. Culture and Leisure Contracts Scrutiny Sub-Committee of 21 November 2013;
and
- vii. Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee of 28 November 2013.

The Committee also **AGREED**, with regard to the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee, that information on the process in relation to Care Homes where admissions had been suspended be circulated to Members of the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 1.20 pm.