

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **People Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 23 August 2017 at 10.05 am.

Present:

Mr B Boyd	Mr R MacDonald (video conferencing)
Mr R Bremner (video conferencing)	Mr G MacKenzie
Mrs I Campbell	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr A Christie (Chair)	Mr D Macpherson
Mrs M Cockburn	Mrs B McAllister
Ms K Currie	Mrs P Munro
Mrs M Davidson (Substitute)	Mrs M Paterson
Mr J Finlayson (Vice Chair)	Mrs F Robertson
Mr A Graham	Mr G Ross
Mr T Heggie	Ms N Sinclair (video conferencing)
Mr A Jarvie	Mr C Smith
Ms E Knox	Ms K Stephen (Vice Chair)
Mr R Laird (Substitute)	

NHS Highland:

Ms J Macdonald
Prof H van Woerden

Religious Representatives:

Ms S Lamont
Mr A MacLean

Youth Convener:

Mr C Maclennan

Non-Members also present:

Mrs J Barclay	Mrs T Robertson
Mrs D Mackay	Mr P Saggars
Ms L Munro	

In attendance:

Mr B Alexander, Director of Care and Learning
Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Mrs B Cairns, Head of Additional Support Services, Care and Learning Service
Ms S Campbell, Head of Children's Services, Care and Learning Service
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance, Community Services
Mr A Gunn, Head of Revenues and Business Support, Finance Service
Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service
Mr J Steven, Head of Education, Care and Learning Service
Ms S Harrington, Senior Manager – Early Years, Care and Learning Service

Mr R Campbell, Estate Strategy Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mr G MacLachlan, Children's Service Manager (North), Care and Learning Service
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Finance Service
Mr P Shannon, Consultancy Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr M Cooper, Transport Officer, Community Services
Ms S McKandie, Benefits and Welfare Officer, Finance Service
Ms J Douglas, Care and Learning Alliance (Third Sector)
Ms P Duncan, Birchwood Highland (Third Sector)
Ms G Newman, Highland Children's Forum (Third Sector)
Mr F Weir, Highland Parent Council Partnership
Miss J MacIannan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Ms M Roberts, Youth Convener Designate
Ms R Avery, Roots and Shoots
Ms R Cowper, Board Member, Stramash
Mr C Sprague, Team Leader, Stramash
Mr I Murray, Chief Executive, High Life 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

Preliminaries

Prior to commencement of business, the Chairman thanked Mr MacIannan for his contribution as Youth Convener and welcomed Ms Roberts, Youth Convener Designate. In addition, he also welcomed the three NHS Board members appointed to the Committee.

A school transport contractor had ceased trading late the previous evening. The Chairman thanked staff for their hard work over night to ensure that all 13 school routes affected were covered.

The Chairman then, on behalf of the Council and Play Highland, awarded a Certificate to Roots and Shoots in recognition of their commitment to Self-Directed free and daily access to play in the outdoors.

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr W MacKay, Mr R MacWilliam, Ms M Newdick and Mr K Weidner.

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

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

Item 4 – Mr A Christie and Mr A Jarvie (both non-financial)

Item 9 – Mr T Heggie, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Macpherson and Ms L Munro (all non-financial)

Item 10 – Mrs M Paterson (non-financial)

Item 11 – Mr A Graham (financial)

Item 15 - Mr T Heggie, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Macpherson and Ms L Munro (all non-financial)

Item 19 – Mr A Christie (non-financial)

Item 21 – Mr G MacKenzie (non-financial)

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 29 June 2017 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Committee.

4. Advice and Information Services: End of Year Monitoring 2016/17 Comhairle agus Fiosrachadh – Aithisg Bhliadhnail

Declarations of Interest: Mr A Christie and Mr A Jarvie declared non-financial interests in this item as General Manager and a Director, respectively, of Inverness and Badenoch and Strathspey Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) 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.

Mr A Christie advised that if there was any specific discussion in relation to CAB funding he would amend his declaration to financial and leave the room.

There had been circulated Report No PEO/07/17 dated 15 August 2017 by the Director of Finance.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the Chair of the Inverness Community Partnership praised the work undertaken to combat the negative impact of Universal Credit by the Head of Revenues and Business Support's team;
- reference was made to the distress caused by the prospect of some of the projects listed in the report being stopped at the end of the financial year due to budgetary constraints and it was hoped that the report that was due to be presented to the Committee in October 2017 would address this;
- prior to presentation of the final report in October 2017, the Welfare Reform Group would meet to consider the issues and information would be circulated to all Members in due course. It was suggested that the final report should also be presented to Area Committees, which would fit with Community Partnership initiatives; and
- the impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears and increased levels of debt was of concern and ongoing work to implement early intervention measures in this regard was welcomed.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report, including the progress on the review of debt advice and related services.

5. Housing Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017
Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No PEO/08/17 dated 17 July 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- information on progress with the review of private sector rental contracts was sought;
- funding of additional single bed homeless accommodation would be beneficial;
- robust measures were required to bring temporary accommodation in-house where possible and to reduce the costs to the clients, especially those who were in work and might have reduced benefits though still on a low income and with a high chance of getting into debt;
- progress was required to reduce the amount of time clients spent in temporary accommodation and to increase the amount of temporary accommodation that was available;
- the Chair clarified that the first meeting of the Policy Development Review Group, due in September 2017, would address many of the comments made. He emphasised that all options would be considered by the Group. Examples of good practice from other Local Authorities would be sought, with visits to speak to people with direct experience of homelessness if possible, to fully understand their issues; and
- the Chair, the Head of Housing and Building Maintenance and the Benefits and Welfare Manager would discuss individual cases with Members outwith the meeting.

The Committee **APPROVED** the housing revenue budget position for 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017.

6. Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais

There had been circulated Report No PEO/09/17 dated 10 August 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the current structure for charging rents for temporary accommodation to match the private sector required revision and should be considered by the Policy Development Group;
- the use of mobile technology was urged with regard to signing off emergency repairs, especially in remoter areas, to ensure the reported timescales were accurate;
- an example was provided of homeless clients who were not receiving adequate housing support in the Easter Ross area and this would be investigated outwith the meeting;

- communication, including briefings, with the Scottish Government, the UK Government, other Local Authorities and Academic bodies undertaking research into the effects of Universal Credit was urged;
- housing rent should be removed from Universal Credit;
- the Council should consider purchasing buildings that could be converted into Houses of Multiple Occupancy;
- information was sought on the various Council-owned houses which were out of use, including janitor's houses and police houses and a brief summary was provided of recent reviews of those properties;
- concern was expressed about where alternative savings would be made to compensate high levels of rent arrears;
- the approach to void properties was being discussed at various Ward meetings; and
- the Chair emphasised that all options would be consulted on with tenants through a variety of measures including the annual tenants' conference and newsletters. The impact of Universal Credit was unacceptable and feedback would be provided to this effect through various professional networks, in addition to lobbying MPs and MSPs with case studies and evidence of detriment. All issues would be considered in more detail by the Welfare Reform Group in the near future.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017 and **AGREED** that a meeting of the Welfare Reform Working Group be convened as soon as possible.

7. Presentation: Stramash Outdoor Nursery Taisbeanadh: Sgoil-àraich A-muigh Stramash

Cameron Sprague, Team Leader, and Rachel Cowper, Board Member, Stramash, gave a presentation on the philosophy and value of outdoor nurseries and their experience to date of the operation of Stramash Outdoor Nursery in Fort William.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- in response to an enquiry about the policy on midges and ticks, it was explained that NHS guidance was provided in the welcome pack and that parental permission was sought to apply midge-repellent and sun cream;
- while outdoor nursery provision was not of interest to all parents, the methods used to explain the ethos and benefits to parents were highlighted, with parental preparation prior to enrolment being particularly useful. A wide range of families were now using the service;
- the higher percentage of male staff in outdoor nurseries was welcomed, as it was considered beneficial for children to have a balance of male and female carers, and it was explained that the policy to recruit suitable male staff and provide the necessary training had been a key element of this;
- in terms of attendance, the most common schedule was for children to attend the nursery for 2-3 full days but anything was possible from one day to five, and the Council-funded free nursery provision was included; and
- information was sought and received about the nursery's ability to cater for children with additional support needs.

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

8. Outstanding Achievements Coileanaidhean Air Leth

There had been tabled a list of outstanding achievements by people and groups, with attention drawn to:-

- Invergordon Academy Rock Challenge being invited to perform on the main stage at the Belladrum tartan Heart Festival in August. Farr High School had also been selected to perform but it had proved too difficult to organise attendance from the school during the holiday period;
- Oakwood Children's House in Dingwall had received 'Very Good' grades from the care Inspectorate for Quality of care and support and Quality of environment;
- Ross and Cromarty Pipes & Drums School and Lochalsh Junior Pipe Band had achieved the ultimate accolade by becoming World Pipe Band Champions in their respective grades at this summer's competition in Glasgow;
- school meals across the authority had been awarded prestigious awards for their quality and freshness; and
- 61 athletes and 23 coaches had represented Highland at the Special Olympics National Summer Games in Sheffield in August, participating in 6 sports – athletics, boccia, bowls, football, golf and swimming - with the numerous medals received detailed in the report. A full list of competitors and their achievements was requested for Committee Members.

During discussion, Members praised the tremendous achievements detailed in the report. Staff, including the Council's Music Tutors, were also commended.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the outstanding achievements;
- ii. **AGREED** that the Director of Care and Learning write to all those involved in recognition of their success; and
- iii. **AGREED**, in relation to the Special Olympics National Summer Games, that a list of Highland competitors and their achievements be provided to Members of the Committee.

9. Care and Learning Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/18 Sgrùdadh Buidseat Teachd-a-steach Cùrain agus Ionnsachaidh 2017/18

Declarations of Interest: Mr T Heggie, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Macpherson and Ms L Munro declared non-financial interests in this item as 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.

There had been circulated Report No PEO/10/17 dated 14 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Chair having drawn Members attention to the revised annex that had been circulated the previous day and also tabled at the meeting (the 'total' columns remaining unchanged), the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the forecast budget outturn for 2017/18;
- ii. **AGREED** the RAG (Red-Amber-Green) status of the 2017/18 budget savings;
- iii. **AGREED** to transfer the budget of £39,309 for Tongue and Farr Sports Association (North Coast Leisure Centre, Bettyhill) from the Council's 3rd sector grants budget to the budget for services commissioned from High Life Highland, and that the Service Delivery Contract with High Life Highland be amended accordingly.

10. Care and Learning Capital Programme Prògram Calpa Cùrain agus Ionnsachaidh

Declaration of Interest: Mrs M Paterson declared a non-financial interest in this item as 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 her interest did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No PEO/11/17 dated 15 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- the Chair asked that the installation of modular units at Inverness schools be expedited and that schools be informed of installation dates as a matter of urgency;
- information was sought for Ward Members on the amended timetable for the Craighill Primary School project, which had been scheduled for completion during the summer, with attention being drawn to the urgency of the situation given the lack of alternative toilet facilities and poor condition of the existing facilities;
- information was sought on the use of modular toilets that could be redeployed from school to school;
- the investment in Inverness High School was welcomed and the Chair requested a briefing for relevant Inverness West and Central Ward Members on the detail of the amended project, including assurance that the additional structural work now required would not affect the original programme of work;
- the upgrade of the catering facilities at Dalneigh Primary was welcomed, given it was the largest primary school in the Highlands without its own catering facilities;
- it was important that support continued, despite budgetary pressures, for young people in Children's Services residential care with additional support needs, noting that young people placed outwith the Local Authority area were less likely to return;
- Merkinch Primary School's redevelopment was welcomed and reference was made to the recent 1942 reunion that had taken place and the achievement of many former pupils of the school;
- regular updates for Ward Members on projects being undertaken in their wards were urged; and
- information was sought for local Members on the reasons for the increase in the scope of works at Brora Primary School from £180k to £250k and on the decision making process for the specification of the works.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the current position in relation to Inverness Schools as set out in section 4 of the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the granting of delegated powers in relation to the award of an early works contract and approval of the Stage 1 report for the Alness Academy project, as detailed in paragraph 5.1 of the report;
- iii. **NOTED** the current position in relation to the additional works that would be required as part of the refurbishment of Inverness High School as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the report;
- iv. **APPROVED** the allocation of £1.3M from the Free School Meals Programme for the project at Dalneigh Primary School as set out in paragraph 6.2 of the report;
- v. **APPROVED** the inclusion of Grantown Primary School in the list of priorities for the next three financial years, to be considered as part of the review of the Council's capital programme as set out in paragraph 6.3 of the report;
- vi. **APPROVED** an increased budget of £250,000 for the re-roofing and replacement windows project at Brora Primary School as set out in paragraph 7.1 of the report;
- vii. **APPROVED** an increased budget of £100,000 for the toilet refurbishment project at Craighill Primary School as set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report;
- viii. **NOTED** the current position in relation to Roll Pressures as set out in paragraph 7.3 of the report;
- ix. **AGREED** that the installation of modular units at Inverness schools be expedited and that schools be informed of installation dates as a matter of urgency;
- x. **AGREED** that further information on the Brora Primary School project, including the reasons for increasing the scope/budget and who set the specification, be provided to Ward Members;
- xi. **AGREED** that further information on the Craighill Primary School project, including the reasons for increasing the scope/budget and the proposed timetable for the works, be provided to Ward Members; and
- xii. **AGREED** that a detailed briefing be provided to Inverness West and Inverness Central Ward Members on the extent of the additional works required at Inverness High School and the effect on the programme/budget.

11. Statutory Consultation – Gaelic Medium Catchment Proposals for the Portree Associated School Group
Co-chomhairle Reachdail – Molaidhean Sgìrean-sgoile Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig airson Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Phort Rìgh

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared a financial interest in this item as an employee of Bord na Gàidhlig (BnG) and advised that if there was any specific discussion in relation to BnG he would leave the room.

There had been circulated Report No PEO/12/17 dated 14 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **AGREED** to proceed to a statutory consultation on the establishment of Gaelic Medium catchment areas for the Portree Associated School Group on the basis of the proposal appended to the report.

**12. Review of Statutory Consultation Exercise into Changing the Catchment Boundary between Inverloch Primary School and Lundavra Primary School
Ath-sgrùdadh air Co-chomhairleachadh Reachdail a Thaobh a Bhith ag Atharrachadh Crìoch na Sgìre-sgoile eadar Bun-Sgoil Inbhir Lòchaidh agus Bun-Sgoil Lunn Dà Bhrà**

There had been circulated Report No PEO/13/17 dated 14 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

- * The Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the catchment boundary between Lundavra Primary School and Inverloch Primary School be changed, as set out in Annex 1 of the report.

**13. Performance Report – Children’s Services
Aithisg Coileanaidh – Seirbheisean Chloinne**

There had been circulated Report No PEO/14/17 dated 14 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the Council had endeavoured to promote breastfeeding for a number of years and, in that regard, it was suggested that a request be made to the Scottish Government that breast pumps, the cost of which was prohibitive to some mothers, be included in Baby Boxes. In response, the Chair suggested that the proposal be discussed with NHS Highland in the first instance;
- Looked After Children, even those who had only been in the care system for a brief time, experienced poorer outcomes than their peers and information was sought on the reason for the significant underspend on this vital area, as reported under item 9. It having been explained that the underspend related to vacancies in Family Teams, the Chair requested that information on the number of vacant posts be included in the next Performance Report; and
- reference was made to the earlier presentation on Stramash Outdoor Nursery and it was suggested that the possibility of supporting Looked After Children in an outdoor environment as an alternative to exclusion be explored.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. scrutinised and **NOTED** the performance information;
- ii. **NOTED** the contents of the Highland Health and Social Care partnership annual performance report and scrutinised and **NOTED** the performance information;
- iii. **AGREED** that discussions take place with NHS Highland regarding the possibility of requesting that the Scottish Government include breast pumps in Baby Boxes to promote breastfeeding;
- iv. **AGREED** that information on Family Team vacancies be included in the next Performance Report; and
- v. **AGREED** that the possibility of supporting Looked After Children in an outdoor environment as an alternative to exclusion be explored.

**14. NHS Highland Assurance Report
Aithisg Barantais NHS na Gàidhealtachd**

There had been circulated Report No PEO/15/17 dated 7 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- concern was expressed regarding Occupational Therapy staffing levels and waiting times, and information was sought on how patients were being prioritised. The importance of early intervention in improving outcomes and reducing the impact of more complex cases was emphasised, as was the need to attract Occupational Therapists to Highland and implement succession planning. The Chair concurred with the points raised and suggested that a report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on the steps being taken to recruit, retain and train Allied Health Professionals, as well as the anticipated timescale for improvements and how the position would be monitored;
- in relation to the Family Nurse Partnership, disappointment was expressed that there were young women in Highland who were not able to access the service and the Scottish Government's interest in exploring new delivery models was welcomed. It was suggested that the Scottish Government be encouraged to take rurality into account when rolling out future programmes and that consideration be given to supporting Health Visitors to provide specialist roles in rural areas;
- whilst supportive of exploring alternative respite solutions for children who were technology dependent, it was important to be clear about what was health care and what was social care;
- in relation to the review of arrangements for children who exhibited significant self-harming behaviour, whilst it was acknowledged that admission to Raigmore children's ward was not appropriate, the importance of an acute setting was emphasised and information was sought on the intended alternative arrangement;
- information was sought, and provided, on the role and recruitment of Speech and Language Therapy Support Workers and Health Visitor funding in 2016/17 and 2017/18;
- a "grow your own" approach was necessary to meet the increasing need for staff and it would be helpful to know what was being done in that regard. Upskilled, well-supported Support Workers did an excellent job and led to greater equity as services became available in remote and rural areas; and
- imaginative thinking was needed to create solutions to the challenges associated with the rural nature of Highland.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. scrutinised and **NOTED** the data and issues raised in the report;
- ii. **NOTED** that Members' comments would be incorporated into a report to NHS Highland as part of the agreed governance arrangements; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a report on the steps being taken to recruit, retain and train Allied Health Professionals, including the anticipated timescale for improvements and how the position would be monitored, be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

15. High Life Highland Progress Report Aithisg Adhartais High Life na Gàidhealtachd

Declarations of Interest: Mr T Heggie, Mr A Jarvie, Mr D Macpherson and Ms L Munro declared non-financial interests in this item as 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.

There had been circulated Report No PEO/16/17 dated 11 August 2017 by the Chief Executive of High Life Highland (HLH).

The Chief Executive, HLH, gave a presentation in amplification of the report, during which further information and photographs were provided in relation to a number of developments including Thurso Leisure Centre; Nucleous, Wick; HLH operation of Inverness Prison Library; Strathpeffer Pavilion; East Caithness Community Campus; Inverness Castle Tower; the Library Service; and Avern Leisure Centre.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- Strathpeffer Pavilion was an iconic building and its importance to the village was emphasised. Its adoption by HLH for a temporary period was welcomed and Members wished the newly formed community group well in relation to the future purchase and operation of the facility;
- the transfer of the management and operation of Poolewe Swimming Pool to HLH was welcomed, as was the refurbishment of Avern Leisure Centre;
- concern was expressed that the maintenance of Inverness Leisure had deteriorated since its amalgamation with HLH in 2016 – for example, there had been problems with the doors throughout the summer, the self-service machines had not been replaced which had the effect of creating significant queues, particularly when children's swimming lessons were taking place, and there had been chalk hand marks in the Strength and Conditioning Suite for a number of weeks. Whilst it was recognised that it was a large facility and the staff did a tremendous amount of work, such issues caused reputational damage and it was important to retain as many users as possible. Information was sought on whether there was any credence to the rumour that the Highland Institute of Sport was reconsidering its funding of Inverness Leisure as a result of changes in the maintenance regime, and whether maintenance could be improved;
- the success of the Inverness Castle Tower visitor attraction, which was scoring 4.5 out of 5 stars on Trip Adviser, was commended;
- the Council sometimes reduced opening hours due to budgetary constraints and it was suggested that there were lessons to be learned from the amalgamation of leisure and library staffing in Alness, Aviemore and Wick, which had led to extended opening hours and a remarkable increase in library use;
- the partnership working that had taken place in relation to the operation of Bettyhill Swimming Pool was commended. Whilst there were some concerns, the community was predominantly supportive and staff were receiving training and development opportunities as well as an increase in pay;
- the North Coast 500 Explorer Pass included a week's membership of HLH and information was sought on the benefit to HLH; and
- whilst welcoming the provision of new facilities, concern was expressed that signage was still in place directing people to former buildings and it was suggested that the communication process between HLH and the Council be examined.

The Chief Executive, HLH, having responded to the points raised and undertaken to pursue the maintenance and signage issues, the Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** that High Life Highland had met or exceeded the outcomes expected in the Service Delivery Contract with the Council for the period November 2016 to June 2017;
- ii. **NOTED** the general updates since the last report in October 2016; and
- iii. **NOTED** the service improvements achieved through joining the staffing of leisure and library services in Alness, Aviemore and Wick.

16. Community Learning and Development Ionnsachadh agus Leasachadh Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No PEO/17/17 dated 14 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that the Highland Community Planning Partnership had agreed the updated Community Learning and Development Plan for consideration and approval by the Council's People Committee;
- ii. **APPROVED** the updated Community Learning and Development Plan as set out in Appendix A of the report; and
- iii. **NOTED** that work was underway, through the Highland Community Planning Partnership, to develop the 2018-2021 Highland Community Learning and Development Plan.

17. Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan Plana Lìbhridh Tràth-ionnsachaidh agus Cùrain-chloinne

There had been circulated Report No PEO/18/17 dated 14 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Chair assured Members that concerns expressed at the last Committee meeting had been taken into account. However, there was still a considerable amount of work to be completed before the Delivery Plan was submitted to the Scottish Government and, to ensure broad agreement, the final draft would be circulated to Members of the Committee with, if required, further meetings with Group spokespersons to address any matters of concern.

In addition, information was requested on which schools were being used to test the feasibility of hourly payments for Out of School Care, an initiative many Members welcomed.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the development of the Delivery Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the complexities of the planning required for the expansion;
- iii. **NOTED** that further work was still to be undertaken over the next month to finalise the Delivery Plan; and

- iv. **AGREED** to delegate power to the Director of Care and Learning, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the People Committee, to approve the final Delivery Plan for submission to the Scottish Government by 29 September 2017.
- v. **AGREED** that, prior to final approval as set out in iv. above, the Delivery Plan be circulated to Members of the Committee for comment; and
- vi. **AGREED** that details of the schools testing the feasibility of hourly payments for Out of School Care be provided to Members of the Committee.

18. Highland Council Education Improvement Plan for 2017/2018 Plana Leasachaidh Foghlaim Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd airson 2017/2018

There had been circulated Report No PEO/19/17 dated 14 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- appreciation was expressed for the hard work undertaken in collating the Improvement Plan which would prove to be a useful document for both Head Teachers and Elected Members. However, if it was to be sent to parents a more concise document should be considered;
- it was encouraging that ownership of the National Improvement Framework was still based at school level;
- information was requested as to what the Continuous Professional Development programme would be for supporting schools and practitioners;
- it was argued that the actions proposed to close the poverty-related attainment gap were at management level and real positive actions were needed. In response the Chair explained that this would be the subject of a report to the Committee's next meeting;
- while the document was aspirational in nature, it was felt more emphasis could be placed on impacts and outcomes;
- information was requested on how the implementation of the 1+2 approach to Modern Languages was progressing;
- information on the allocation of Pupil Equity Fund and Scottish Attainment Challenge spend to schools was to be provided to Local Members but, it was suggested, some Members might be interested in how this funding was being used across the authority and elsewhere. This would allow good practise to be identified and shared. In response, the Chair explained that this would be the subject of a detailed report to the Committee's next meeting and added that it should include examples of where the pupil premium had been effective in England;
- in relation to the Highland Numeracy Project, information was sought on a number of points including the number of schools attending training and how confident the Service was that all schools were being covered, bearing in mind the importance of inclusivity; why hadn't every Associated School Group had contact with a Numeracy Development Officer/Continuous Professional Development Officer in the last 2½ years; and how much Glow was used. In response to the latter, officers pointed to improvements made to Glow and advised that Head Teachers had in fact asked for material to be made available on this online resource; and
- an explanation of the acronyms used in the Plan was requested.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the revised national expectations summarised in the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the improvement priorities for 2017-18;
- iii. **APPROVED** the plans to deliver on the priorities;
- iv. **AGREED** that a list of acronyms be provided to Committee Members; and
- v. **AGREED** that the forthcoming report on Pupil Equity Fund and Scottish Attainment Challenge spend include information on what had been achieved in England as a result of the pupil premium.

19. Response to Highland Children's Forum report, "Moving on - Life After School" Freagairt do dh'aithisg Fòram Chloinne na Gàidhealtachd, "A' Glusad Air Adhart – Beatha Às Dèidh na Sgoile"

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Christie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Member of Highland Children's Forum Management Committee 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 PEO/20/17 dated 7 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

Highland Children's Forum (HCF) welcomed the responses to their recommendations. However, many of the responses related to the Highland Practice Model, which had a person centred approach. In particular, Child's Plan meetings and decision planning meetings were supposed to be accessible to the young person, as described in the Practice Model, but HCF's consultation had shown that this was not consistent across Highland and, as a result, some children felt that they did not have a good transition. Consequently, the aim had to be to get transitions right for all and to evidence, in future, that policies were working.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that the consultation report previously presented to Committee by Highland Children's Forum had been considered in detail and reflected upon by staff with responsibility for transitions in Highland;
- ii. **NOTED** the ongoing work within the Care and Learning Service and with partner agencies to support transitions from school to adult services to ensure more consistent planning and support for all young people and their families at this key time in their lives; and
- iii. **AGREED** the ongoing commitment to improving the experience of young people and to track their outcomes as an indicator of how successful this work had been.

20. Proposed Joint Transition Service for Young People aged 14 to 25 years Co-sheirbheis Eadar-ghluasaid ga Mholadh do Dhaoine Òga aois 14 gu 25 bliadhna

There had been circulated Report No PEO/21/17 dated 14 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the recommendation to commit to set up a joint transition service (Option 2); and
- ii. that a detailed implementation plan be developed and reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

21. Self-Directed Support (Children) Taic Fèin-Stiùirichte (Clann)

Declaration of Interest: Mr G MacKenzie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a family relative was in receipt of a Self-Directed Support funding 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 PEO/22/17 dated 11 August 2017 by the Director of Care and Learning.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- appreciation was expressed for the explanation of the changes proposed to the procedure for assessing the needs and outcomes of children who were eligible for consideration of Self Directed Support (SDS). However, it was perceived by some that these changes were being made to achieve a budget saving. The changes would create concern and uncertainty for vulnerable individuals and, in this regard, the level of consultation which had taken place with recipients of SDS was queried;
- a comparison of awards between the Resource Allocation System (RAS) and the Child's Plan model, analysing variances, would be the subject of a future report to Members;
- caution was expressed at comparing the process to that used by other local authorities;
- more information was needed as to the number of individuals who would be affected by this proposal;
- those elements of the RAS which overstated the needs of a child could be resolved without the need to change the entire process. However, others were of the view that the RAS was over-complicated and was not based on the individual;
- clarity was sought, and received, about the appeal process;
- evidence was sought to support the claim that SDS was being used to supplement family income. In addition, the new process was unlikely to fund part or all of the costs of a family holiday but the additional costs involved in a person with a disability going on holiday were significant and could prove to be prohibitive. Furthermore, SDS spend on a family holiday enabled what was considered a normal activity, enjoyed by other families, to be experienced by the family of a disabled child;
- clarity was important for parents to be confident that they knew what SDS funding could be used for; and
- the quality of the Child's Plan was critical and should be at the centre of the process.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i. the use of the Child's Plan to replace the current Resource Allocation System (RAS) and support plan sheet;
- ii. the use of the eligibility criteria for disability services as the eligibility criteria for consideration of Self-Directed Support packages;
- iii. the changes to decision making processes as outlined in the report;
- iv. the appeal process and complaint response responsibilities as outlined in the report;
- v. that a follow-up report be presented to the Committee setting out the variance between awards under the previous Resource Allocation System and the new system based on the Child's Plan.

22. Complaints Review Committee Outcome (December 2016)
Toradh Comataidh Ath-sgrùdaidh nan Gearanan (Dùbhlachd 2016)

There had been circulated joint Report No PEO/23/17 dated 11 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development and the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **NOTED** that:-

- i. the Complaints Review Committee met to consider the case and the findings; and
- ii. there were no recommendations made by the Complaints Review Committee.

23. Complaints Review Committee Outcome (April 2017)
Toradh Comataidh Ath-sgrùdaidh nan Gearanan (Giblean 2017)

There had been circulated joint Report No PEO/24/17 dated 11 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development and the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. that the Complaints Review Committee met to consider the case and the findings; and
- ii. the recommendations made by the Complaints Review Committee.

24. Complaints Review Committee Outcome (June 2017)
Toradh Comataidh Ath-sgrùdaidh nan Gearanan (Ògmhios 2017)

There had been circulated joint Report No PEO/25/17 dated 11 August 2017 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development and the Director of Care and Learning.

The Committee **NOTED** that:-

- i. the Complaints Review Committee met to consider the case and the findings; and
- ii. there were no recommendations made by the Complaints Review Committee.

25. Membership of Sub-Committees
Ballrachd Fho-chomataidhean

- * The Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that Mrs M Davidson replace Mr G Ross on the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

26. Appointments to Other Bodies **Cur an Dreuchd gu Buidhnean Eile**

i. SEEMiS Board of Management **Bòrd Stiùiridh SEEMiS**

SEEMiS Group was an Education Management Information System provider. It was a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) comprising all 32 Scottish local authorities. The Board of Management directed SEEMiS on behalf of the members of the LLP.

The Committee **AGREED** to homologate the appointment of Mr J Finlayson to the SEEMiS Board of Management.

ii. Food and Health in Schools Group **Biadh agus Slàinte ann am Buidhnean Sgoiltean**

The Food and Health in Schools Group had replaced the former School Meals Stakeholder Group which had been in place between 2011 and 2015. The Group now covered a broader remit about overall child health and healthy eating and made recommendations on food, nutrition and health policies for pupils and staff in Highland schools.

The Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mrs M Paterson to the Food and Health in Schools Group.

27. Minutes **Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the draft Minutes of the Highland Child Protection Committee – 7 June 2017;
- ii. **NOTED** the draft Minutes of the Highland Community Justice Partnership – 22 June 2017;
- iii. **NOTED** the draft Minutes of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers – 23 June 2017;
- iv. **NOTED** the draft Minutes of the Highland Council/NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee – 26 July 2017; and
- v. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Adult Services Development and Scrutiny Sub-Committee – 3 August 2017.

The meeting concluded at 2.05 pm