



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Stornoway and through Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 6 February 2024 at 10.00am.

PRESENT	Mr Paul Finnegan (Chair) Mr Kenneth J Maclean Mr Paul Steele Mr Robert Mackenzie Mr Norman Misty Macdonald Mr Donald Macsween Mr Malcolm Macdonald Mr Angus McCormack Mr George Murray Rev Bruce Jardine	Mr Iain M Macleod Ms Susan Thomson Mr Ranald Fraser Mr Kenneth Macleod Mr Calum Maclean Mr Rae Mackenzie Dr Frances Murray Mr Finlay M Stewart Mr Norman Macdonald Father Michael Macdonald
APOLOGIES	Mr Mustapha Hocine (Vice-Chair) Rev Hugh Stewart	Mr Grant Fulton Rev Iain Macritchie
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE	Mr Iain A Macneil Mr Angus Morrison Mr Donald F Crichton	Mr Uisdean Robertson Mr Gordon Murray Mr Duncan MacInnes MBE
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE	Mr Malcolm Burr Mr Donald A Macleod Ms Mary Clare Ferguson Ms Kathleen Macleod Ms Jennifer Cairns Mr Angus Mackay Mr Calum Iain MacIver Ms Mairi Macleod Ms Joanna Morrison	Mr Maxwell Smart Ms Carolann Passey Ms Anne Macleod Mr Neil Macleod Mr Sandy Gomez Mr James Mackinnon Mr Iain G Smith Mr Tim Langley Mr Derek Mackay
Prayer	The Meeting was preceded in prayer by Rev Bruce Jardine.	

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2023	1	The Minute of the Meeting of 28 November 2023 was approved .
Declaration of Interest	2	There were no declarations of interest.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

It was agreed that the public, including the press, be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of item 3 on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 5 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely information relating to the adoption, care, fostering or education of any particular child or relating to the supervision or residence of any particular child in accordance with a supervision requirement made in respect of that child under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

Residential Placements for Children and Young People	3	With reference to item 4 of the Minute of the Meeting of 28 November 2023, the Head of Children's Services submitted a Report advising of the position with regard to Specialist Residential Placements for children and young people and of the budgetary implications arising from these placements.
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It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, that the Comhairle note the financial position for specialist residential provision for 2023/24.

Bairns Hoose Pathfinder Programme	4	The Head of Children's Services submitted a Report which detailed the outcome of the application for the Outer Hebrides to become a Bairns Hoose Pathfinder, and which sought approval for progressing with the plan for the ground floor of St Lennans to become our Bairns Hoose.
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The Report noted that the Outer Hebrides was one of six partnerships across Scotland who were successful in their application to be a Bairns Hoose Pathfinder. A key element of Bairns' Hoose is provision of a child-friendly setting which supports an integrated approach as part of the team around the child. Two possible locations were explored to host the Bairns Hoose; the first was the Old House, a resource previously used to support young, homeless adults with the second options being St Lennans. The cost of renovating the Old House to a standard that would meet the requirements of a Bairns Hoose would significantly exceed the budget the Comhairle would receive from the Scottish Government. The second option, St Lennans seems more affordable and realistic, with the added value of having the Children and Families Social Work Team being co-located in the same building.

The Report further noted that There are a number of activities currently taking place within the ground floor space of St Lennans which will require relocating. These include: LGBTQ+ Group; Young Mums Group (meets once per week term time); Young Carers Group (meets once per week term time) and youth café facilities for young people. It was noted that discussions are ongoing with users in relation to the suitable relocation of these activities on an interim/ full-time basis.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note:

- (1) the progress made and the intention to use the ground floor of St Lennans as the Outer Hebrides Bairns Hoose; and**
- (2) the works ongoing to relocate the services currently delivered from the ground floor of St Lennans.**

The following recommendations were agreed by the Comhairle on 15 February 2024:

- (3) the lower floor of St Lennan's be used as the Outer Hebrides Bairns Hoose subject to the Chief Executive/Chief Social Work Officer committing to a process of formal consultation with the current organisations/users utilising the much-valued ground floor of the St Lennan's centre, as regards any process formulated by the Chief Social Work Officer on the venue proposed by him for future use of the St Lennan's centre;**
- (4) the Chief Executive/Chief Social Work Officer advise all members of the council, in writing, of the outcome of the consultation with the current organisations/users utilising the ground floor of the St Lennan's centre; and**
- (5) in taking this decision, the council fully recognises the need to maximise any grant monies made available by the Scottish Government for the establishment of an Outer Hebrides Bairns Hoose whilst at the same time taking full account of the needs and requirements of current organisations/users of the ground floor of the St Lennan's centre.**

- 5 The Head of Children's Services submitted a Report which detailed the outcome of a recent Care Inspectorate inspection of Rowantree House. The Report noted that this was a short notice announced inspection which took place between 7 October 2023 and 9 October 2023. In evaluating quality, the Care Inspectorate use a six-point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent The Service was rated Very Good for how well it supports children and young people's rights and wellbeing?

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the outcome of the Care Inspectorate inspection of Rowantree House.

Local Residential
Facility Project
Update

- 6 The Head of Children's Services submitted a Report which provided an update on progress in relation to the ongoing review of the care estate, and the potential need for a bespoke residential care house with a focus on the complex care needs of some young people.

The Report noted that the review would assess the provision and effectiveness of substitute family care, residential childcare (LAAC), residential care (complex care needs), and preventative service provision. It is anticipated that the Review of the Care Estate will conclude by Summer 2024 and that recommendations will be presented to the Committee with accompanied costs for each option identified considered.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the progress of the Review of the Care Estate.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Report by HM
Inspectors of
Education: Bun-
Sgoil Lacasdail
and Sgoil Àraich
Lacasdail

- 7 The Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which detailed the outcome of the inspection at Bun-sgoil and Sgoil Àraich Lacasdail - Laxdale School and Nursery by His Majesty's Inspectors from Education Scotland. Bun-sgoil and Sgoil Àraich Lacasdail were inspected by a team of HM Inspectors from Monday 29 May-Friday 2 June 2023 for a full inspection model.

The Report noted that Education Scotland published a report in November 2023, in the form of a letter which highlighted the strengths, agreed areas for improvement and a link to the summarised inspection findings (SIF). The school has devised an Action Plan to address the agreed areas for improvement.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the findings of the Inspection Report, including key strengths and areas for development; and**
- (2) support Bun-sgoil Lacasdail and Sgoil Àraich Lacasdail to develop and implement an effective Action Plan which will address the areas for improvement within the HMI Report.**

Report by HM
Inspectors of
Education: The
Nicolson
Institute

- 8 The Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which detailed the outcome of the inspection at The Nicolson Institute by His Majesty's Inspectors from Education Scotland, as published on 16 January 2024. The Nicolson Institute was inspected by a team of HM Inspectors from Monday 2 October to Thursday 5 October 2023 using the Short Model. A short model inspection evaluates a reduced number of quality indicators and tends to last for a shorter period of time.

The Report noted that Education Scotland published a report in January 2024, of findings of the inspection in the form of a letter, which highlighted the strengths, agreed areas for improvement and a link to the summarised inspection findings (SIF) from the visit. Working closely with department officers, the school has devised an action plan to address the agreed areas for improvement and a governance group has been constituted to oversee the delivery of the action plan and support the school.

Inspectors have indicated an intention to carry out a further inspection of the Enhanced Provision element of the school within six months of the publication of the report to assess progress towards delivery of improvements.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the findings of the Inspection Report, including key strengths, areas for development and actions to address improvement.

Stornoway Primary 9
Sports
Development
Update

With reference to item 10 of the Minute of the Meeting of 21 June 2022, the Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which provided an update on progress on the proposed sports facility at Stornoway Primary and to clarify the current financial position of the project.

The Report noted that In November 2021, the Comhairle agreed to the development of a sports facility at Stornoway Primary with a maximum construction cost of £1.8M. Following further consideration, a funding allocation of £2m was agreed for the project by Policy and Resources Committee, and subsequently, the Comhairle in February 2023 as part of the approval of the 2023-28 Capital Programme. The sports development at Stornoway Primary was a specifically identified element of the agreed programme. Since approval of funding, the project has progressed through the tendering of a supplier for the tensile fabric structure (TFS) element of the building and the commissioning of professional construction services that include a quantity surveyor, building services engineer and structural engineer. Survey work to determine ground conditions also took place on the proposed site.

The Report further noted that a tender value for the TFS was now in place and with a detailed full cost plan from the contractors, the estimated cost of the originally planned 740m2 building has been confirmed to be £3.4M, an increase of £1.45M on the agreed budget. Work has been undertaken to amend the design and scale of the building to bring the development within range of the agreed budget. A revised design that reduces the overall building size to 565m2, offering a games hall of 470m2 (three-court), has been costed using the same modelling at £2.25M.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the interests of the Committee were concerned, that the Comhairle agree to:

- (1) proceed with the proposed amendments to the building size and design set out in the Report in the interests of bringing the project development costs to within the range of the £2M budget; and**
- (2) proceed with the project, as costed at £2.25M, if no further construction savings can be identified, and strictly subject to the successful application for external funding via the Free School Meal Expansion Programme. Should the funding bid be unsuccessful, the matter will return to the next series of meetings for the consideration of members as to how to proceed.**

Establishment of a 10
Policy on Mobile
Phone Use in
Schools

The Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which sought consideration of the establishment of a policy on the use of mobile phones and personal communication devices in schools. The Report indicated that with the significant increase in both the availability and capability of mobile phones and other digital devices in schools, there has been increasing consideration for the establishment of a policy to define parameters for responsible and permissible use. This is a matter receiving increasing local and national attention.

The Report noted that the issues relating to the use of mobile devices in schools predominantly affects our secondary school and they have already implemented different local procedures to govern or restrict use. The establishment of a single Comhairle policy would bring consistency to such approaches across all schools.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree to the establishment of a policy on the use of mobile phones and personal communication devices in schools.

Northern Alliance 11
Regional
Improvement
Collaborative:
Progress and
Changes to Funding

With reference to item 10 of the Minute of the Meeting of 29 November 2022, the Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which detailed the progress and impact report for the Northern Alliance for the period 2022 – 23 and provided an update on the potential future direction for Regional Improvement Collaboratives following an announcement by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills about education reform in November 2023.

The Report noted that the Northern Alliance has continued to focus on increasing its reach and impact, mainly through the ongoing promotion of digital engagement. Over the course of 2022/23, this included 715 collaborative engagements, involving 5,918 practitioners from across the Northern Alliance area. In addition to this, there was an increase in sign-ups for professional learning interventions, predominantly from teachers, with 2,019 registrations for professional learning and over 1,000 attendees at professional learning events.

The Report further noted that in an address to parliament on 7th November 2023, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills provided update on progress with the planned reform of education in Scotland. The address included an announcement that Scottish Government intended to significantly taper down funding for the Regional Improvement Collaboratives from April 2024, effectively curtailing their work. The same address confirmed the establishment of a Centre for Teaching Excellence, which is to be hosted within an existing university.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle consider and noted:

- (1) the Northern Alliance Progress and Impact Report 2022-23: and**
- (2) the Scottish Government announcement about changes to the future funding of RICs and the establishment of a Centre for Teaching Excellence.**

Confucius Institute 12
for Scotland's
Schools (CISS)

The Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which provided an update in relation to Chinese language and cultural awareness activities in Western Isles schools, supported by the Confucius Institute for Scottish Schools.

The Report noted that The Confucius Institute for Scottish Schools (CISS) has set up and supports a number of Confucius Classroom Hubs in schools throughout Scotland; Primary and Secondary Confucius Classroom Hubs have now been established at two schools in the Western Isles, Stornoway Primary and Sgoil Lionacleit.

Stornoway Primary School joined the Confucius Institute for Scottish Schools (CISS) network in 2021 and has now established its own 'Confucius Classroom' space. The Confucius Classroom promotes joint planning of cultural activities, sharing ideas and resources to stimulate the teaching and learning of Chinese language and culture. The partnership between Stornoway Primary and CISS has delivered a range of learning and teaching opportunities, including a Climate Ready Classroom link with a school in Tianjin, a link with the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland to learn about endangered animals and project work linking and exploring cultural and geographical differences between Scotland and China.

Confucius Classroom activities are not yet underway in Sgoil Lionacleit, the secondary Hub for the Western Isles. Plans are in place for a number of language and cultural experiences in the coming year.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

RELATED MATTERS

Scottish Library Survey 2023	Public Annual	13	The Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which detailed the views expressed by Library Service users in the Western Isles in the Scottish Public Library Annual Survey 2023. The Report noted that The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) ran a national survey in October 2023 as a follow on from Phase 1 of the Library Data Framework. The aim of the survey was to identify what outcomes there might be for people using library services. The survey focussed on: Learning and Skills; Finance; Health and Wellbeing; and Value and Benefits.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the results from the Scottish Public Library Annual Survey; and**
- (2) respond to correspondence from Ms Pamela Tulloch, Chief Executive, Scottish Library and Information Council, detailing how the Comhairle delivers its Libraries and Information Service.**

Chapman/ Digitisation Map	Gibb	14	The Depute Chief Executive, and the Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which sought approval for the proposal to digitise and preserve the uniquely important Chapman/ Gibb map of Lewis which currently hangs in the stairwell of the Comhairle Offices, Sandwick Road.
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The Report noted that Libraries Service recently worked in partnership with the National Library of Scotland to have its historical maps collection digitised and made available online. However, the Chapman/ Gibb map was omitted from the scope of this project, despite its historical significance, due to the logistical challenges it presents.

The Libraries Service has identified funding through the "Capturing Memories" project to support the removal of the map from its current location, conserve and prepare it for transfer to the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth for digitisation, with support from the Heritage Service, and to incorporate the digital version into the online maps resource hosted by the National Library of Scotland. The digital version would also be made available on the Libraries Service's digital collections website Ar n-àite. The original map would then be returned and stored permanently at Tasglann nan Eilean to ensure its permanent preservation.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) approve the proposal to remove the map from its current location, in order to preserve and digitise it;**
- (2) note the historical significance of the Chapman/ Gibb map of Lewis and the advantages of making it accessible online in digital format; and**
- (3) note the proposal to transfer the original map to Tasglann nan Eilean for safe permanent storage after digitisation.**

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Reports Outstanding		15	The Chief Executive submitted a Report detailing the Reports Outstanding arising from decisions of the Committee.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.