

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 February 2011

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Minute of Special Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 23 February 2011 at 11.00am.

Present: Councillors K Baird, W Lumsden, I Campbell, B Vaughan, W Wilson (substituting for Councillor A Gaunt) and A Wylie.

In Attendance: G Taylor, T Yule, F Mackay and M Kay (all Chief Executive's Service); J Fyffe, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services); H Stewart, J Allan and S Hellier (all Education and Children's Services); and B Renton and S Huggins (The Environment Service)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors A Gaunt and D Scott; Mr I Jackson and Mr D Stewart.

Councillor Baird, Convener, Presiding

83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

84. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF POLICY INTEGRATION (MORE CHOICES, MORE CHANCES) (ART 219/10)

There was submitted a report by Councillor Kathleen Baird, Convener of the Scrutiny Committee, (11/75) setting out the findings of the Scrutiny Committee Review of Policy Integration (More Choices, More Chances) during the period April 2010 and January 2011, based on the scope approved by the Committee on 21 April 2010.

The Convener expressed the Committee's appreciation of the support received from all involved during the review.

The Committee noted that (1) reference in the report to funding for work placements offered to young people from the Fairer Scotland Fund should refer to the Future Jobs Fund and (2) the reference in Appendix 4 to Funding for LINC Courses should read "from the The Environment Service Employability budget". J Fyffe, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) clarified that, in relation to the "Skills for Work" programme, there had been an increase in the number of pupils participating in vocational courses provided from around 50 in 2007 to around 650 in 2010.

J Allan, Education and Children's Services, confirmed that a number of the recommendations in Report 11/75 had already been actioned.

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In response to a question from Councillor Vaughan relating to support for young people with mental health issues, as referred to in Section 8.3 of the report, J Fyffe explained the current arrangements for payment of NHS professional staff services by Perth and Kinross Council and that mainstreaming of funding would make a difference in the levels and focus of what could be provided; he cited the provision of speech and language therapy which, at present, was focussed on primary school age.

Councillor Vaughan was pleased to note that there was commitment from all partners to ensure the best outcomes for all young people and noted that members of the Committee had worked well together during the review. J Fyffe noted that the review had assisted in ensuring a focus on positive outcomes for young people.

Councillors Lumsden and Wilson highlighted the importance of good governance to ensure that maximum benefit can be gained from the More Choices, More Chances strategy, by utilising mechanisms currently in place, and Councillor Lumsden stressed that every opportunity to engage with all young people should be taken, to ensure that all those requiring support can be reached.

Resolved:

- (i) The findings of the Review of Policy Integration (More Choices, More Chances) as set out in Report 11/75 be noted.
- (ii) The governance arrangements for More Choices, More Chances be reviewed and clear lines of accountability for partnership policy and delivery of activity in this area be determined. In particular responsibility for determining the future strategic direction of More Choices, More Chances Partnership activity and routinely monitoring progress resulting from this activity be clearly identified at a partnership level.
- (iii) The relationship between the identified partnership, relevant Council Committees and existing employability groups be clearly established to ensure cohesiveness in future policy making.
- (iv) The membership of the More Choices, More Chances Partnership be extended to include universal representation of the voluntary sector through Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Services and the private sector through an appropriate mechanism.
- (v) Further development of information sharing be an improvement area for both the Council and partner organisations.
- (vi) Best practice in respect of partnership working and communication in schools be consolidated.
- (vii) It be noted that the Committee's findings support current proposals to the revise the criteria for eligibility to Educational Maintenance Allowance to include young people attending the LINC course or equivalent.
- (viii) A progress report on the recommendations of this review and on progress made in areas identified in the findings as being in the early stages of development be provided to the Scrutiny Committee in twelve months.
- (ix) Report 11/75 be referred to the Lifelong Learning Committee and relevant Community Planning groups for their interest.

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