

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL****Lifelong Learning Committee – 15 August 2012****OUT OF SCHOOL CARE****Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)****ABSTRACT**

This report provides an update following on from the review of the Kids Clubs provision (within the context of Out of School Care) in Perth and Kinross. It also provides an update post the engagement process with registered users of the Kids Clubs that were identified for closure or reduction of service.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1.1 Notes the progress made in implementing the agreed outcomes of the review of provision of Kids Clubs in Perth and Kinross; and
- 1.2 Remits the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to ensure Education & Children's Services continue to provide a mixed economy of Out of School Care in each geographical area.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Perth and Kinross Council is committed to supporting all children and young people to be the best they can be and sets high expectations for them, their families and the community in which they live.
- 2.2 The Childcare Strategy for Perth and Kinross was developed in response to the Scottish Government's agenda for the development of childcare services as detailed in its paper Meeting the Childcare Challenge: A Childcare Strategy for Scotland (1998). The strategy recognises that good quality childcare has benefits for children by promoting their development and learning; it also has benefits for parents by enabling them to work or undertake training.
- 2.3 The Childcare Strategy Team of Education and Children's Services (ECS) works with childcare providers within the public, private and voluntary sectors across Perth and Kinross and supports and promotes quality, accessible, affordable, sustainable childcare within all communities.
- 2.4 "Out of School Care" (OOSC) is a recognised term for the formal childcare of children and young people (i.e. aged 4 years 6 months to 14 years in primary 1 to S2 in secondary) being looked after during after school hours in term time usually until up to 6.00pm. This includes the childcare held on school premises provided through Education and Children's Services Kids Clubs or Wraparound Care (WAC) provision as well as some parent led OOSC clubs. It also includes the childcare provided by child minders and private nurseries.

Some OOSC provision also runs on in-service days, during school holidays and before school.

- 2.5 Twelve Kids Clubs and also three Wraparound Care services are currently managed by Perth and Kinross Council. These began in the voluntary sector and were taken into Council stewardship over nine years ago (2003) or were opened with New Opportunities Funding (NOF), in response to parental requests but with the provision that they were to be run as a sustainable business model.
- 2.6 There are many legal requirements in providing OOSC. Each OOSC provider is required to be registered and regulated by the national regulating body Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (known as the Care Inspectorate).

The main purpose of registration is to:

- protect children
- provide reassurance to parents using services provided by people not related to their children
- ensure that services meet acceptable standards of quality

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 established the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC.) The SSSC has the duty to promote high standards of conduct and practice among social services workers and their education and training. Their main tasks are to:

- Publish codes of practice for all Social Service workers and their employees
- Register key groups of Social Service Workers
- Regulate the workforce and its training and education
- Contribute to workforce planning, development of qualifications and promotion of education and training

The requirements of SSSC are such that the manager or lead practitioner of each OOSC provision must hold a relevant childcare degree, or other relevant degree such as in education or nursing or evidence that they are working towards obtaining such a qualification.

- 2.7 The Council has no statutory obligation to provide the Kids Club service, but it does have a duty to ensure that each club managed by the Council is staffed to the level of registered children, even if far less than half of those registered use the service.
- 2.8 The Kids Clubs service operates a business model, which means each of the clubs is intended to generate enough income to cover the cost of running the service over time.

### **3 CURRENT SITUATION**

3.1 Savings were required to be identified in setting the Council's budget for 2011-12 and, in doing so, it was necessary to find ways of continuing to deliver quality services at a lower cost by reviewing, reducing or stopping some services. ECS recognised that it could not continue to subsidise particular Kids Clubs to the high levels associated with some provision in the current economic climate.

3.2 The budget for 2011-14 was agreed at a Special Meeting of the Council on 17 February 2011 (Report 11/56 refers). Within this Report there was agreement reached that there would be a "Review and Reduction in the provision of loss making Kids Clubs" identifying a saving of up to £180k in 2011/12. In a follow-up report which was approved at Lifelong Learning Committee on 1 June 2011 (Report 11/286 refers), the proposal to either close or reduce the service at fifteen clubs which had been identified through this review was approved. The services affected were as follows:

#### Closures

- Abernethy Kids Club
- Birnam and Dunkeld
- Blackford Kids Club
- Comrie Kids Club
- Coupar Angus
- Craigie/Moncreiffe Kids Club
- Crieff Kids Club
- Errol Kids Club
- Longforgan Kids Club
- Pitlochry Kids Club

#### Reduction

- Blair Kids Club
- Invergowrie Kids Club
- Milnathort Kids Club
- Scone Kids Club
- Village Kids Club Bridge of Earn

3.3 Parents who were service users were contacted on a club by club basis to make known which clubs had been identified in the review and were therefore now not able to be sustained by the Council.

3.4 ECS officers worked with parents and carers at these clubs to support them in finding alternative provision; in taking over the running of their club or in setting up an alternative service. The kind of support that was provided is detailed below:

- Meetings took place with the affected parents and carers of each club between 28 February and 9 March 2011 to discuss various implications

of closure or reduction and to consider the personal circumstances of each family.

- Information was given to parents and carers to help find an alternative nursery or child minding service at meetings and by providing written information. Advice was also given on transport options between facilities.
- Parents and carers were given opportunities to consider establishing their own local care provision including the option of taking over the management of their existing Kids Club or creating something new.
- A business and enterprise meeting was organised to raise awareness of different models of provision.
- The agreed changes to service provision did not come into effect until 1 July 2011 to allow parents and carers enough time to make alternative arrangements. A planned period of transition to December 2011, supported by officers from ECS, was negotiated with Errol and Birnam and Dunkeld Kids Clubs to enable the registration and all business and legal aspects to be fully met whilst ensuring continuity of experience for Kids Club users.

3.5 Kids Club employees were consulted on the changes, and all employees affected by the changes were offered meetings and redeployment opportunities.

- All Kids Club staff were offered permanent positions in alternative clubs. Three staff declined these alternatives; one retired, one was re-deployed into a local school and the other declined the offer due to having to now travel to their place of work.
- No staff contracts were ended by Perth and Kinross Council.
- Within the savings, peripatetic posts were created to ensure the service could meet the specific needs as discussed in 2.6.

3.6 Over the last year extensive work has been undertaken by all stakeholders to find solutions to the issue of sustainable childcare across Perth and Kinross. In relation to each of the 5 proposals contained in Report 11/286 submitted to LLC on 1 June 2011 the following update should be noted.

### **Proposal 1**

*Education and Children's Services continue to support a mixed economy of OOSC provision in the main centres of population.*

A range of provisions do exist in each community:

- There are currently 12 Kids Clubs across Perth & Kinross.
- There are 3 Wraparound Care Services.
- There are 6 Out of School Care Clubs run by Parent Management Committees and Social Enterprises.
- There are potential developments for Out of School Care being considered in the Carse of Gowrie and Highland Perthshire. Whilst these developments would not be run by ECS, they would be fully

supported in the establishment and on-going running of the provision by officers as appropriate.

### **Proposal 2**

*Private and voluntary clubs will be supported by the provision of high quality training and access to information for their staff, including the ability to network with other providers in the area.*

- Groups have access to the Providers Childcare Strategy Newsletter which has training opportunities for the year outlined.
- Award Bearing funding has been made available to all providers.
- Committee skills' training was offered to new committees in June 2011 and June 2012 for those taking on this role.

### **Proposal 3**

*Any parent group which undertakes the running of their own provision should be supported in the following ways:*

- Errol and Longforgan Clubs have access to free lets for not for profit clubs within the local school until 6.00pm each weekday and during holiday periods with prior notification.
- Ongoing support for the training of staff, including as appropriate, the access to award bearing courses, continues to be offered and delivered.
- Errol and Longforgan will again be considered for maximum sustainability funding for childcare for the session.

### **Proposal 4**

*Education and Children's Services should continue to provide information about the childcare options available to families in their home area.*

- Family Information Service leaflets, contact details, key contact numbers, website and email information were given to each registered user.
- Posters promoting the Family Information Service and child minding as a career were displayed in all of the identified schools.
- Additional pre-registration training was arranged and promoted both in the press and on the [pkc.gov.uk](http://pkc.gov.uk) website from April 2011 to May 2012. There have been 8 new child minders in the areas where closures took place providing 52 places.

### **Proposal 5**

*In the longer term, Education and Children's Services should explore the options of extending services within the school environment and locality which would allow young people to be safely and purposefully looked after out with the times of the school day.*

One such option currently being considered is exploring how we allow for better coordination of out of school cultural and sporting activities, programmed well in advance, which could support the childcare needs of some parents. Such a scheme is operating in Comrie and we will review its success and look to replicate it in other geographical areas where resource, commitment and demand for such provision exists.

## 4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Heads of Democratic Services, Finance and Legal Services have all been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## 5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no further resource implications arising from this report.

## 6 COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012

- 6.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. This report relates to the following objectives:
- (ii) Healthy, Caring Communities
  - (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
  - (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
- 6.2 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Change and Improvement

## 7 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.

The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA (NB an EqIA was undertaken at the time of the original review)

## 8 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

## 9 CONCLUSION

This update demonstrates that extensive work has been undertaken by all stakeholders to find solutions to addressing the issue of providing sustainable childcare across Perth and Kinross. We continue to support a mixed economy of OOSC provision in the main centres of population and, in parallel, provide high quality information for parents and carers in relation to all aspects of current provision. We are committed to providing on-going support for any group (private, voluntary or parent-led) wishing to establish out of school care provision.

**JOHN FYFFE**  
**Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)**

**Note:** No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

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