
Minute of the meeting held in the Scottish Parliament.

PRESENT Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Mark Griffin MSP, Nanette Milne MSP, Fiona McLeod MSP, Maureen Watt MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP, Clare Adamson MSP, James Dornan MSP, Kim Atkinson, Peter Warren, Daniel Gray, Lee Cousins, Oliver Barsby, David Laing, Charlie Raeburn, Jane Campbell Morrison, David McColgan, Mark McGeachie, Alan Miller, Helen MacFarlane, Fiona Campbell, Marion Macleod, Andy McSweeney, Cameron Watt, Duncan Hamilton, Steve Paige, Diane Cameron, Jim McIntosh, John Comiskey, Jim Moyes, Nicola Lessells, Robert Gibson, Sarah Drury, Kim Karam, Stuart Younie, Hayley Wotherspoon, Emma Biggart, Dougie Porteous, Margaret McLeod, Eddie Dolloch, Jim Moffat, David Webster, Rebecca Lamb.

APOLOGIES Margo MacDonald MSP, James Kelly MSP, Jackie Baillie MSP, Neil Bibby MSP, Hugh Henry MSP, John Lamont MSP, Duncan McNeil MSP, Gil Paterson MSP, Dr Richard Simpson MSP, Drew Smith MSP, Jean Urquhart MSP, Humza Yousaf MSP, David, Arnott, Douglas Bryce, David Carey, John Clayton, Bruce Crawford, Sara Ebbert, Jim Fleeting, Margaret Ann Fleming, Stewart Fowlie, John Gillies, Hugh Hall, Suzanne Hargreaves, Stephanie Ann Harris, Scott Hastings, Walter MacAdam, David Martin, Ian McLaughlin, Jacky Moss, Neil Park, Colin Rennie, Brian Robinson, Pam Scott, James Stuart, Ron Sutherland, Helen Todd, Simon Turner, Brian Walker, Out of School Care Network.

Previous Minute:

Matters Arising – None.

Round Table Discussion

In Margo's absence Paul Wheelhouse MSP convened the meeting. He opened by welcoming guest speakers Heather Stuart (Perth and Kinross Council, VOCAL), Ian Hooper (Glasgow Life, VOCAL) and Tony McDaid (Headmaster of Calderglen High School). Paul confirmed this topical session would focus on Opening Up the School Estate.

Overview

Heather Stuart began with a presentation entitled Community Access to School Facilities. It outlined Perth and Kinross Council's experiences of opening up the school estate, and elaborated on general themes of the policy:

Background and Evidence

- 2003/4 – joint research carried out by the Scottish Executive and Scottish Arts Council
- Focus on different management regimes on extracurricular and community use of schools
- Challenges identified related to availability of facilities on weekends/out of school hours, cost outwith school hours, and cost effectiveness of staffing
- 2006 research - almost all secondary schools and many primary schools in Scotland are open to community users
- Range of case studies
- Key messages - clear philosophy, strategic approach, and proactive management
- Research currently being commissioned by **sportscotland** to get an up-to-date picture.

Possible management models

- Devolved responsibility to the school (various staffing options)
- Management by local authority departments eg community education, culture, and leisure
- Management by a trust or other independent body drawing membership from various stakeholders, including schools, local authority and sports clubs
- Management by a third party contractor eg PPP.

Key considerations

- An effective policy and strategy driving community use
- Schools receiving designated community school status
- Positive attitude and leadership within the school
- Appropriate facilities/provision within a local area
- Partnership working locally with local sports organisations and other facilities
- Meaningful community engagement/partnership
- Proactive promotion of community use of facilities
- See the school estate as part of an overall facilities strategy
- Transparent information on pricing/charges
- Development as part of overall strategy for culture and leisure services and estate management

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- Schools receiving designated community school status.

Challenges for local government

- Staying aspirational – must maintain meaningful community access to sport and cultural facilities locally
- Charging/real cost of facilities and managing expectations and issues of affordability
- Financial pressures driving property rationalisation – need to look at the ‘offer’ within local communities
- Be realistic about the operating costs
- Getting the management model right
- Strategic and local leadership essential – need commitment
- Meaningful engagement with local communities, target groups, and community sports clubs/groups
- Right model for the right facilities.

Key Questions

- When do you want the facilities to be available to the community?
- How will people use the facility?
- Who will use the facility?
- How will bookings work for individuals, teachers, Council staff, community groups?
- How will people in the community know that these facilities are available to them?

Community Campuses

The vision for a Community Campus is of a community resource that offers:

- A range of appropriate community services including - health, library and information, vocational, further, higher and adult education, voluntary services, youth work and adult literacy support, housing and social work
- Quality space, accommodation, equipment, facilities and resources for pupils, staff and the community - for formal, informal and lifelong learning
- Support for all children, young people and families involving integrated multi-agency working
- An appropriate range of cultural and sports facilities which will emphasise the Council's commitment to the quality of life, health and fitness of the local community
- Continuing investment in ICT to enable access to learning to become ever more flexible.

Investment in Learning – Scope

- Six schools + leisure facilities
- 4550 primary and secondary pupils - over 25% of P&K pupil population
- Floor area twice as large as existing schools – 34,000 sq m to 72,000 sq m
- Substantial range of community facilities
- Significant consultation with local communities and key stakeholders to meet specific needs/aspirations: design workshops, open meetings, presentations, etc

Investment in Learning – Consortium

- Funders – public sector (Scottish Government/Perth & Kinross Council) and private sector (ABN AMRO, SMBC)
- The Council has separate agreements, outwith the contract with Axiom, for provision of leisure services (Live Active Leisure) and catering (Tayside Contracts)

Future Perth and Kinross Approach

- Use of community campuses/schools considered on a geographical basis
- Some primary schools only open for one let per evening
- Affordability of running costs
- Monitor usage of community campuses
- Categorisation into school use only or school and community use
- Consolidation of designated evenings for school lets – agree open nights with Head Teachers
- School plan requirements annually by 31 May from Head Teachers and sports development staff
- Move lets from schools to campuses where appropriate
- Discounted rates/preferential access.

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Heather reiterated that they're not schools, they're community campuses and that Head Teachers are 'Community Campus Leaders'. As such, the business change process has been at the forefront of her work to ensure leadership within the facilities.

Ian continued the meeting by outlining Glasgow Life's experiences of opening the school estate. While Perth and Kinross is one of the best examples of community school use, Glasgow is more of a traditional picture and therefore has mixed management models, while retaining significant community use. In Glasgow, lettings for out-of-hours and weekend access to the school estate is generally managed centrally. In some larger schools, all services including lettings are run on-site. These have tended to be the more successful models in terms of the level and quality of community access.

147 primaries are now accessible out-of-hours and on weekends, and 30 secondary schools. 90,000 bookings per year are made, bringing in £1m.

At primary school level access is to a mixture of old and new buildings, the latter being far more suitable. The design issues for older buildings remain a key challenge and limitation in this regard. At secondary, facilities reside in new build schools, largely financed by PPPs. Primaries and secondary schools can be accessed up until midnight on weekdays. Weekend access has been more difficult, and Glasgow City Council now have provision to pay PPP providers extra to open on Saturdays and Sundays where necessary to overcome these restrictions.

Recognition is given to late school access requirements for eg exams, special events etc, with limited disruption to community lets, but priority is given to community access wherever possible.

Onsite management programmes have been introduced in some primary schools, which have permitted community access during the school day also. Such systems are more costly to operate but are more effective in terms of the quality of the customer experience and so are worthwhile.

Ian then ran through a number of key messages and requirements for success:

- Genuine commitment from local government to support community access to facilities
- Schools not developed now without due consideration of community access
- Positive developments through accessing school facilities especially through later PPP arrangements
- Increasing move towards a community campus type model and new high quality facilities locally
- There is a need to continue to rationalise facilities and provision whilst still meeting community needs
- We need an integrated facilities management approach across the local government estate
- The need for a quality evidence base to support key decisions and forward planning
- The need for strong leadership and the right skill sets.

Tony McDaid, Headmaster at Calderglen High School in East Kilbride, presented next on his school's experience of opening up. Calderglen is a new build campus school which shares with Anderson High. PE and sport are at its centre, the ethos being that physical activity should be seen as a school priority and not a 'bolt-on'. In this model, pupils can shape their futures by shaping their wellbeing, both mental and physical. Sport is connected with increased pupil attainment and achievement and an improving school community, while also being used to forge links with the wider community.

PE, the school believes, must be an 'excellent' experience: enthuse pupils in the day, and they return at night, often with sports clubs; curriculum PE has a responsibility to encourage and increase the desire for after school sporting activity. School sport helps pupils to feel like they belong. The success of local sports clubs is celebrated within the school as part of the community. The school initiated links with the community by asking members of the community what their biggest challenge was. The response was lets and funding. This ongoing community engagement continues to be a key aspect of the school's policy and work.

Creative timetabling has been important, with double periods offered up until fifth year level. Few options are compulsory. Sporting links are made through other areas of the curriculum, and also through the school's Sports Leaders programme. Pupils who become Sports Leaders have the chance to take their skills to a twin school in South Africa.

Sports Leaders also build links with local clubs: pupils, for example, speak at community engagement events attended by trampoline or bowling clubs and encourage members to use the facilities in their school. This and outreach work by the head and his team has had good results, with, for example, a local cycling club using the car park, handball using a hall and bowls soon to trial the school.

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In future, older pupils will be handed janitorial responsibilities to help further extend access.

Paul thanked Heather, Ian and Tony for their presentations and commended their enthusiasm. He then invited questions and comments from the floor.

Fiona McLeod MSP stressed the importance of a school finding the right management model, and ensuring community members and groups were asked as to what exactly *they* wanted. Engagement in the past had not always occurred, leaving communities isolated and creating barriers.

Fiona Campbell of Voluntary Arts Scotland asked that the discussion be widened to include the use of schools for culture. Heather Stuart stated that opening up the school estate meant opening it up for the arts as well as sport. The two were not existing in isolation, either: culture and sport were used together to harness personal and community wellbeing.

Clare Adamson MSP welcomed the principle of open school estates but hoped it would not be used as a reason to close other, less popular sports facilities.

David McColgan of SCVO stressed the importance of community engagement and empowerment. This could be through the running of community campuses as social enterprises. He also asked who decides what is the right model for the management of a facility. He was echoed in this proposition by Diane Cameron of Senscot. Ian Hooper assured them there was room for this to happen. Heather Stuart called for more examples of such creative thinking in management structures. Tony McDaid had found leverage in his school's PPP contract to influence its management model.

Mark Griffin MSP asked what the effects on female participation were of community access to schools. Tony explained that there was still more work to be done in this area as male participation remained higher. The key was offering a variety of physical recreation options both inside and outside of the school day.

Lee Cousins of the Scottish Sports Association asked whether facilities management was included in teacher qualification training or in-job training. Tony McDaid confirmed it did form part of leadership training: no teacher could become a head without it. It was agreed that further specific training in this regard would be beneficial to further equip head teachers.

Maureen Watt MSP asserted that cuts in sport and leisure provision should not be forced on communities; they should be given the opportunity to run facilities for themselves. Cuts should never be the default position.

Ian Hooper agreed that bodies such as Glasgow Life did need to engage more with communities, but stressed that VOCAL and others remain open to all management models.

Paul Wheelhouse MSP thanked the guest speakers and those present for attending a lively and positive discussion.

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