

MINUTE
of
EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held at 2.00pm on 11 June 2020.

Present:

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)
Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; and Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1267. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

SCHOOL EXCURSIONS IMPACTED BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1268. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Education Committee held earlier in the day, (Page 1181, Item 1266 refers), the committee considered a report by the Director of Education apprising members of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on school excursions and refunds to parents/carers from travel providers and/or the settlement of insurance claims.

The report explained that a result of the pandemic, numerous school excursions had been cancelled and, given the expected ongoing restrictions around physical distancing and non-essential travel, it was unclear when any school excursions/trips would be able to go ahead over the summer and during the forthcoming school session.

At the point of lockdown, excursions by schools across the authority had been a different stages in the payment process, both in terms of payments made to the Council by parents/carers, and also in respect of funds paid to travel providers by the Council.

The report explained that a number of parents/carers had been in touch with schools requesting reimbursement of funds for cancelled excursions and/or those excursions currently still planned but without confirmation that they would proceed.

In response to these requests, and recognising the financial impact on many parents/carers, the report set out a proposed process to ensure that parents/carers could be refunded in full by the Council thus ensuring that they were not financially disadvantaged by any lengthy delays in repayment by travel providers and/or the Council’s insurers.

1184

Councillor Buchanan having commented on the potential financial impact on parents/carers, Councillor O'Kane reported that earlier in the week he had been in a meeting with Parent Council representatives when this issue had been discussed. The significant outlays incurred by many parents/carers had been highlighted and there was support for the proposed course of action, particularly in light of the financial uncertainty facing many people.

Councillor Miller also having welcomed the proposals, the committee supported the recommendation of the Education Committee and approved the proposal by the department to action full refunds to parents/carers for all school excursions cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

CHAIR