

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Education Committee, held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 13 February 2002 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors James Bollan, Geoffrey Calvert, Mary Collins, Daniel McCafferty, Ronnie McColl, James McElhill, Duncan McDonald, Ian McDonald, Margaret McGregor, Connie O'Sullivan, John Syme, John Trainer, and Mr Ronnie Alexander, Miss Sheila Rennie, Miss Margaret Wallace and Mrs Janice Wardrop.

Also Present: Marc Mclean and Hazel Bain, Pupil Representatives from the Vale of Leven Academy; Terry Lanagan, Head Teacher, Vale of Leven Academy and Lesley Robertson, Head Teacher, Aitkenbar Primary School.

Attending: Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Cultural Services; Bob Cook, Head of Resource Development; Frank Newall, Head of Children's Services; Neil McKechnie, Head of Educational Development; Lynn Townsend, Manager of Special Educational Needs; Margaret McKay, Staff Welfare Officer for Teachers; Alan Douglas, Manager - Best Value and Special Projects and George Hawthorn, Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Anthony Devine and Andrew White and Miss Ellen McBride.

Councillor Margaret McGregor in the Chair

PRESENTATION TO ANDREW CLARK AND BETHANY MILLER

Councillor McGregor informed the Committee that she had invited Andrew Clark, a pupil from Dumbarton Academy, who had achieved the highest marks in Scotland for Higher Physics, to this meeting to formally acknowledge his hard work and excellence in this subject. It was noted that Mr. Graham MacKay, Principal Teacher of Physics at Dumbarton Academy, accompanied Andrew.

She also informed the Committee that the National Child of Achievement Organisers had recently invited Bethany Miller, a pupil from Knoxland Primary School, to attend a ceremony in London to receive a national "Child of Achievement" award and that Bethany and her mother had been invited to this meeting to receive the Council's congratulations on her award. It was noted that Bethany was also accompanied by Mrs Somerville, Acting Head Teacher, Knoxland Primary School.

On behalf of the Education Committee, Councillor McGregor presented Andrew and Bethany with a certificate and a gift voucher in recognition of their achievements.

Thereafter, Andrew, Mr MacKay, Bethany, her mother and Mrs Somerville left the meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Education Committee held on 12 December 2001 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

With reference to the item under the heading “Additional Financial Resources for Schools”, the Committee noted that the report on how the additional monies had been spent would be submitted to the Committee in June 2002.

With reference to the item under the heading “Head Teacher and Pupil Representatives”, the Director of Education and Cultural Services provided Members with an update on work which had been undertaken in respect of arrangements to allow pupil representatives to raise issues at the Education Committee. The Committee noted the position.

With reference to the item under the heading “Draft Adult Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan”, the Head of Educational Development gave members a brief update on discussions which had taken place with Clydebanks College. The Committee noted the position.

PRESENTATION ON GUIDE TO NATIONAL AWARDS

Sarah Grumball, Assistant Head Teacher, Clydebanks High School gave a presentation on the Scottish education assessment process and provided details on how the national assessments related to the age and progress of pupils in both primary and secondary schools.

Following discussion and having heard Ms Grumball and Mr Lanagan in answer to Members’ questions, the Convener, on behalf of the Committee thanked Ms Grumball for her excellent presentation.

Having heard the Director of Education and Cultural Services, the Committee agreed to note that a practitioners working group had been set up to examine some of the issues which had been raised in respect of flexibility in the curriculum and that, if possible, a report on the findings of the working group would be submitted to the Committee in the Autumn.

EDUCATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT REVENUE BUDGET 2001/2002 – VARIANCE REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2001

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing an update on the financial status and performance of the Education and Cultural Services Department’s revenue budget as at 31 December 2001.

Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

Councillor Mary Collins declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item and took no part in the discussion thereon.

ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY ACTION PLANS

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Action Plans submitted by this Council to the Scottish Executive prior to 31 December 2001.

After discussion and having heard the Director of Education and Cultural Services and the Head of Educational Development in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT TENDERING PROCEDURES SESSION 2002/2003

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services:-

- (a) informing of the proposed timetable for the processing of tenders for Special Educational Needs and mainstream contracts; and
- (b) seeking approval to proceed with the proposed timetable in order to secure contracts for Special Educational Needs and mainstream transport for session 2002/2003.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Director be given approval to proceed with the necessary arrangements to secure tenders for the transport of children with Special Educational Needs for session 2002/2003; and
- (2) to authorise the Director to make the necessary arrangements in liaison with Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) to renew mainstream contracts for session 2002/2003.

THE STAFF WELFARE SERVICE FOR TEACHERS: PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the development of the Staff Welfare Service for Teachers at the end of its first 18 months of operation.

On the motion of Councillor Duncan McDonald, seconded by Councillor John Trainer, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Chief Executive brings forward a report to full Council providing details on how this excellent service could be extended to all employees of West Dunbartonshire Council.

Thereafter, the Head of Resource Development and the Staff Welfare Officer for Teachers were heard in answer to Members' questions.

PROPOSAL TO APPOINT ADDITIONAL PERMANENT TEACHERS TO WORK ON A PERIPATETIC BASIS IN THE PRIMARY SECTOR

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking agreement to appoint additional teaching staff to work on a peripatetic basis to cover for staff absences in primary schools.

Councillor Ronnie McColl, seconded by Councillor James McElhill, moved that the recommendations of the report be approved, as follows:-

- (a) to grant authority to the Director of Education and Cultural Services to recruit, initially, three additional teachers to the pool of permanent peripatetic staff for the primary sector; and
- (b) to grant authority to the Director, in consultation with the Convener of Education and the Director of Corporate Services, to expand or contract to the primary peripatetic pool in future, according to the needs of the service.

By way of an amendment, Councillor Daniel McCafferty, seconded by Councillor John Syme, moved:-

That the Committee agrees to recommendation 5.1 (i) of the report but that the Education Committee should remain as the decision making body for expansion or contraction of permanent peripatetic staff for the primary sector.

Having heard the Director of Education and Cultural Services in further explanation, the amendment was withdrawn.

Accordingly, the recommendations of the report were unanimously approved.

SURPLUS PROPERTY – TIED HOUSES

Reports were submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking approval to declare the undernoted properties surplus to the requirements of the Department with the sole purpose of selling the properties to the sitting tenants.

- (a) Janitors' Houses No 1 and No 2, St. Columba's High School, Kirkoswald Drive, Clydebank.
- (b) Janitor's House, Clydebank High School – Upper Flat, Shelley Drive, Clydebank.

Having heard the Head of Resource Development in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the properties outlined above be declared surplus to the requirements of the Education and Cultural Services Department with the sole purpose of selling them to the sitting tenants;

- (2) that as a result of these specific circumstances, the normal procedure of offering the properties to other Council departments be set aside in this instance; and
- (3) that the Director of Economic, Planning and Environmental Services be authorised, in consultation with the appropriate Elected Member of the Education Committee, to carry out a valuation of the properties and thereafter to refer the sales to the Head of Legal and Administrative Services to conclude the transactions subject to such legal conditions as are considered appropriate.

UPDATE ON CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUILDING PROGRAMME 2001/2002

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing up-to-date information on the status of Education Capital and Revenue Building Projects within the Education and Cultural Services Department.

Having heard the Head of Children's Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

The meeting closed at 11.40 a.m.