

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

At a Hybrid Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 28 September 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Karen Conaghan, Gurpreet Singh Johal, Daniel Lennie, David McBride, Michelle McGinty, June McKay, John Millar, Lawrence O'Neill, Lauren Oxley, Martin Rooney, Gordon Scanlan, Hazel Sorrell and Clare Steel, and Mrs Barbara Barnes, Mr Gavin Corrigan, Miss Ellen McBride, Ms Hannah Redford and Ms Julia Strang.

Attending: Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Andrew Brown, Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources; Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer – Services for Children & Young People; Kathy Morrison, Senior Education Officer – Early Learning & Childcare; Susan Gray, Education Officer; Joe Reilly, Business Unit Finance Partner (Education); Alan Douglas, Manager of Legal Services; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Jonathan McColl and Tian Qi Yu MSYP. An apology was also submitted for Julie McGrogan, Senior Education Officer – Raising Attainment/Improving Learning.

Councillor Clare Steel in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor Steel, Chair, advised that the meeting was being audio streamed and broadcast live to the internet and would be available for playback.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Committee agreed that all votes taken during the meeting would be carried out by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held on 15 June 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

The Committee noted that no open forum questions had been submitted by members of the public.

PROPOSAL PAPER AND LAUNCH OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS AT THE FORMER RIVERSIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE CENTRE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer seeking approval for the launch of the statutory consultation document by the Chief Education Officer under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to open a new additional support needs school in the site of the former Riverside Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC) on the St Martin's Primary School site.

It was noted:-

- (a) that following the issue of the papers for the meeting, an erratum notice had been issued which contained a revised version of the report; and
- (b) that the revised report issued with the erratum notice itself contained two typographical errors and that:-
 - (i) the date of the meeting of the Educational Services Committee referred to in paragraph 2.1 (c) of the report should have read 8 March 2023; and
 - (ii) that the date of the end of the statutory consultation process referred to in paragraph 7.2 of the appendix to the report should have read 11 November 2022.

Following discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Services for Children & Young People in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the launch of the statutory consultation document by the Chief Education Officer under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to establish a new additional support needs school to be located in the former Riverside ELCC site within the campus of the current St Martin's Primary School;

- (2) that the consultation period should run from Monday, 3 October 2022 to Friday, 11 November 2022, a total of 33 days when the schools are open for pupils and reflecting the October holiday week; and
- (3) that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to the meeting of the Educational Services Committee provisionally scheduled to be held on 8 March 2023.

The Manager of Legal Services then advised the Committee that, in view of its decision to launch the statutory consultation, and because Members would in due course require to make a decision based on the evidence presented during the consultation process, Members who wished to participate in the decision-making should exercise caution when making any public comment, and in particular should avoid any comment which may lead members of the public to consider that the issues have been pre-judged.

STRATEGY TO RAISE ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on progress with implementing Educational Services' improvement priorities for attainment and equity.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Services for Children & Young People, the Education Officer and the Chief Education Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the increased levels of local and national accountability to deliver improved attainment and a narrowing of the attainment gap by the setting of stretch aims and targets; and
- (2) to note plans to support education recovery and improvement in session 2022/23 building on the success of West Dunbartonshire's Attainment Strategy delivered in academic session 2021/22.

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SQA) ATTAINMENT UPDATE

The Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources provided a verbal update in relation to the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Examination Results 2022 and informed the Committee:-

- (1) that 2,212 candidates had been presented for 10,244 qualifications across National 2 to Advanced Higher and that 75% of these presentations had resulted in a passing grade;

- (2) that it was difficult to make statistical comparisons with the results of the last two years when an 'Alternative Certification Model' had been in place, but that, in comparison with the 2019 results, when 'normal' SQA course delivery and examinations had been in place, Advanced Higher results had reduced by five percentage points, Higher had maintained the same level and National 5 had reduced by two percentage points; and
- (3) that a report providing detailed analysis of the performances of each learning establishment would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the update.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROGRESS UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on progress made to provide high quality Early Learning and Childcare in West Dunbartonshire Council.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Early Learning & Childcare in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the progress to deliver the statutory entitlement of 1,140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare.

INCREASE SUSTAINABLE RATE PAID TO FUNDED EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer proposing an increase in the hourly rate paid by West Dunbartonshire Council to contracted private providers for funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC).

Having heard the Senior Education Officer – Early Learning & Childcare in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to increase the hourly rate paid to ELC private providers, including childminders, for the provision of funded ELC from £5.31 to £5.67 for 3 and 4 year olds from 1 August 2022;
- (2) to note the proposed rate increase for the years 2022-23 and 2023-24, in order that the Council paid rates remained sustainable; and
- (3) to note the external factors influencing the sustainability of the hourly rates paid to contracted providers of funded ELC in West Dunbartonshire, including rising costs and wages.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY – BENCHMARKING

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer advising on the attainment progress and performance of the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire at Early Years, P1, P4, P7 and S3 in academic session 2021/22.

Having heard the Education Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed to note the performance analysis and the progress made in academic session 2021/22 to raise attainment and tackle the poverty-related attainment gap.

Note: Ms Redford left the meeting during consideration of this item.

SUMMER HOLIDAY 2022 PROGRAMME EVALUATION

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer informing and updating on the additional Scottish Government funding allocations, the governance of funding and impact of projects.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Services for Children & Young People in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress and impact of authority-wide plans by partners to reduce holiday hunger and provide childcare provision; and
- (2) to note the ways in which the fund had been administered and governed.

EDUCATION DELIVERY PLAN 2021/22 YEAR-END PROGRESS

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing the year-end progress of the 2021/22 Delivery Plan which had been agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2021.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources and the Senior Education Officer – Services for Children & Young People in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the progress made on the delivery of the 2021/22 plan.

QUALITY FRAMEWORK

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer advising on the launch of the 'Quality Framework' and outlining the programme of activities relating to quality assurance.

Having heard the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed to note the launch of the 'Quality Framework'.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 JULY 2022 (PERIOD 4)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial performance of Education Services to 31 July 2022 (Period 4).

Having heard the Business Unit Finance Partner (Education) in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the revenue account currently showed a projected annual adverse revenue variance of £0.045m (0.04% of the total budget); and
- (2) to note: (i) that the capital account showed a projected in-year adverse variance of £0.025m made up of £0.025m overspend (0.5% of the current year budget); (ii) that there was no slippage to 2023/24; and (iii) that the acceleration of £0.241m had been requested for Renton Campus as a part retention was due to be paid.

The meeting closed at 11.45 a.m.