

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

At a meeting of the Education Committee, held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 10 October 2001 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 Trainer and Andrew White, Mr Ronald Alexander, Miss Ellen McBride, Miss Sheila Rennie, Miss Margaret Wallace and Mrs Janice Wardrop.

**Attending:** Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Cultural Services; Bob Cook, Head of Resource Development; Frank Newall, Head of Children's Services, Lynn Townsend, Manager of Special Educational Needs; Susan Carragher, Manager of Lifelong Learning; Ron Dufour, Section Head (Resources); Crawford Howat, Head of Finance; Alan Douglas, Manager of Best Value and Special Projects; and George Hawthorn, Administrative Officer.

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors John Syme and Anthony Devine.

**Councillor Margaret McGregor in the Chair**

### **CONVENER'S REMARKS**

Councillor Margaret McGregor, Convener, welcomed everyone present to the first meeting of the new Education Committee.

### **REMIT OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing information on the remit of the Education Committee.

Having heard the Director of Education and Cultural Services advise that it was his intention to invite all fourteen pupil representatives to the next meeting of the Committee as observers, and thereafter two pupil representatives would attend future meetings on a rota basis, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the Director's proposal in relation to pupil representation, as outlined above; and
- (2) to note the revised remit as shown in the report.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF EDUCATION APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEES**

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services requesting the Committee to review the composition and membership of the Education Appeals Sub-Committees.

Having heard Mr Alexander and Mr Hawthorn, Administrative Officer, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the composition of the undernoted Education Appeals Sub-Committees would be as follows:

### Teachers' Appeals Sub-Committee

Labour – 3 members.

SNP – 3 members.

Independent - 1 member.

Teacher representative – 1 member.

### Ad-Hoc Committee on Bursary Appeals

Labour – 1 member.

SNP – 1 member.

Independent – 1 member.

### Ad-hoc Sub-Committee on Childminding and Day Care for Young People

Labour – 1 member.

SNP – 1 member.

Independent – 1 member.

- (2) that, in relation to meetings of the Teachers' Appeals Sub-Committee, it would be appropriate for Mr Alexander to attend hearings where the appellant was employed within a secondary school and Mrs Wardrop to attend meetings where the appellant was employed within a primary school.

## **EDUCATION APPEALS COMMITTEE**

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Education and Cultural Services informing the Committee of the main recommendations of the Special Report by the Scottish Committee of the Council on Tribunals concerning the operation of the education appeals committee process and making recommendations for the future operation of this Council's Education Appeals Committee.

Councillor McColl, seconded by Councillor McGregor, moved that membership of the Education Appeals Committee should be increased from seven to ten elected members and that, in order to ensure an independent hearing, the elected member representing the ward where the appellant resided should not participate in the hearing.

By way of an amendment, Councillor Trainer, seconded by Councillor White, moved that the Committee approve the recommendations of the report, as follows:-

- (1) that elected members should not be involved in the education appeal process and that membership be widened to include those persons listed under paragraph 4.7 of the report; and
- (2) to note the actions already taken by officers in implementing the recommendations of the Scottish Committee of the Council on Tribunals.

On a vote being taken, eight Members voted for the amendment and six for the motion. The amendment was carried.

### **LOCAL ATTENDANCE COUNCILS**

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Education and Cultural Services informing the Committee of difficulties being experienced in the administration of the Local Attendance Councils and making recommendations thereon.

Having heard the Convener and following discussion, the Education Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a single panel of Attendance Council members be established for West Dunbartonshire, which includes all existing Members (nominated by School Boards) and former Attendance Council members. This would allow Area Officers to select from a large pool of members but would also allow meetings to be arranged in local venues;
- (2) that the proposed amendments to the scheme as described in the report be reviewed after one year and a report prepared for the Education Committee's consideration; and
- (3) to establish a short term member/officer working group to examine this issue and accordingly that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee making recommendations on the proposed remit and composition of the group.

It was noted that if any of the Education Committee's lay members were interested in participating in the work of the above working group, they should notify the Director of Education and Cultural Services.

### **COMMUNITY LEARNING STRATEGY – UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing an update on progress relating to the implementation of the Council's Community Learning Strategy.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made in relation to the Community Learning Strategy and Plans; and

- (2) to request further progress reports on the delivery of the Community Learning Strategy to future meetings of this Committee.

### **ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department's Circular 1/01 which confirmed the allocation of £471,669 to West Dunbartonshire over 3 years to raise standards of adult literacy and numeracy, and of associated plans.

Having heard the Manager of Lifelong Learning in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note:-

- (1) the contents of the report; and
- (2) that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee concerning the numeracy and literacy Action Plan for West Dunbartonshire Council.

### **SCHOOL BUILDINGS IMPROVEMENT FUND**

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services informing the Committee that the sum of £247,000 had been allocated to West Dunbartonshire Council by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) from the School Buildings Improvement Fund and seeking approval of proposed projects to be funded from the additional allocation.

The Head of Children's Services advised the Committee that the reference to "£27,000" as shown in paragraph 3.2 of the report should have read "£37,000".

Having heard the Head of Children's Services in answer to members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report and the SEED Circular No 6/2001;
- (2) to approve the expenditure for the undernoted projects as follows:-
  - (a) St Columba's High School Heating Upgrade to Technical Block – £100,000;
  - (b) St Patrick's Primary School Roof Repairs and Asbestos Removal Phase 2 - £60,000; and
  - (c) Ferryfield Early Education Child Care Centre - Window Replacement - £50,000;
- (3) to grant discretion to the Director to allocate any surplus to a further project which meets the Scottish Executive criteria;

- (4) that a report including the proposed cost of the above projects, as per the tenders received, be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (5) to note that the Director of Education and Cultural Services was in the process of preparing an asset management report for the Scottish Executive and that a copy of this report, once finalised, would be submitted to the Education Committee.

#### **UPDATE ON CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUILDING PROGRAMME 2001/2002**

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

Following discussion and having heard the Head of Children's Services and the Section Head (Resources) in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to congratulate all staff and pupils from St. Stephen's Primary School on the opening of their new school;
- (2) that the Director of Economic, Planning and Environmental Services be instructed to advise elected members of the amount offered in respect of the sale of land at the former site of St Stephen's Primary School, providing there is no legal or commercial reason why the information should not be released at this point;
- (3) to request the Director of Education and Cultural Services to review the layout of the report and that the information provided therein be as up-to-date as possible; and
- (4) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

The meeting closed at 10.55 a.m.