

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Educational Services Committee: 7 November 2012

Subject: Consultation on the Secondary School Timetable and School Day Pattern

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report informs Members of the Educational Services Committee as to the consultation exercise on the Secondary School Timetable and School Day Pattern which took place from 30 August 2012 until 26 September 2012.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Educational Services Committee is recommended to

- (1) note the contents of this report
- (2) agree in to the implementation of the 32 period week and
- (3) request a further report on issues regarding planning for implementation of the revised week pattern

3. Background

- 3.1** At the meeting of the Education Services Committee of August 2012, members agreed all the recommendations detailed within the report "Curriculum for Excellence – Senior Phase".
- 3.2** A wide ranging consultation was prepared (Appendix 1). Due to the size of this document this paperwork can be accessed as a link rather than as a physical appendix. This involved a PowerPoint presentation and associated notes for each stakeholder group of staff, pupils and parents. Head Teachers, the Director and Education Officers agreed the content of the presentations and discussed how this would be delivered to the 3 stakeholder groups within their school community.
- 3.3** Education Officers agreed to consult with the Trade Unions, Transport and the Manager for Catering and Cleaning provision.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** At present all secondary schools in West Dunbartonshire operate a 30 period week. Under the 2001 national agreement on teachers' salaries and conditions of service, teachers may be allocated a maximum of 22.5 hours class contact each week.

While this is the norm in primary schools, a period structure of 30 periods means that this maximum cannot currently be realised in the secondary sector. However, a 32 period week of 50 minute periods with daily registration can provide the pupil entitlement of 27.5 hours per week and a possible class contact of 22.5 hours (27 periods) for teachers.

- 4.2** A number of local authorities across Scotland have, in recent years, implemented a 32 period week.
- 4.3** The use of a 32 period week allows for greater timetabling efficiency and better use of the available staff resources to deliver the curriculum.
- 4.4** The use of the 32 period week means that there are more teaching periods available. It will also provide schools with an opportunity to utilise additional teaching time available by providing more co-operative teaching and support for learning.
- 4.5** The model will enable schools to sustain a broad curriculum through, for example, the range of advanced higher and higher level courses available in the senior school and also to allow for the delivery of 2 hours of physical education and the requirement for additional religious education in denominational schools.
- 4.6** The continued use of a 30 period week is no longer sustainable when a more efficient model is available that can provide greater flexibility in providing a broad and varied curriculum.
- 4.7** A 32 period week timetabling structure does mean that there is a differential in the number of periods per day across the week.
- 4.8** The Head Teacher Strategy Group, the Director and Education Officers considered a number of possible configurations of a 32 period week before finalising a preferred model to present for consultation. There is scope before an August 2013 implementation to alter the longer day/shorter day configuration.
- 4.9** The timetabling model presented for consultation comprised three 6 period days on a Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and two 7 period days on a Monday and Wednesday.
- 4.10** The Head Teacher/Officer Group considered the requirement to have, on the 7 period days, three consecutive periods at some point in the school day and a model that could support consortia arrangements and arrangements enabling pupil access to courses at further education colleges.
- 4.11** The Group reached a view that three periods prior to the morning interval was not desirable as it is known that some pupils do not eat in the mornings prior to the morning interval.

- 4.12** Through discussion with Clydebank College it has been agreed in principle that Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings will be allocated to West Dunbartonshire schools for those pupils availing themselves of college courses.
- 4.13** The consultation document was also made available on West Dunbartonshire Council's website.
- 4.14** The consultation started on 30 August 2012 and closed on 26 September 2012.
- 4.15** Response to the Consultation on the Secondary School Timetable and School Day.

It should be noted that in West Dunbartonshire we have:

- 5339 secondary pupils
- 465 secondary teachers
- 4552 families associated with pupils in secondary schools

It is not possible to quantify the number of staff and pupils who responded to the consultation as in addition to written responses, they were spoken to in a variety of group sessions. We received 128 responses from parents. This represents 2.8% of the numbers of families in West Dunbartonshire.

- 4.16** In general terms the following issues were identified:

- Traffic, Congestion, Safety (Appendix 2)
- Structure of the 7 period day
- Break Times

Suggestions were given regarding other configurations of the 7 period day. This will be considered by the Head Teacher/Officer Strategy Group.

- Workload

A number of responses expressed concern that a 7 period day would introduce the potential for pupils and teachers to become more fatigued towards the end of a school day. Concern was also expressed that teachers would need to prepare more lessons than at present.

On the days in which there are 7 periods, the pupil day, excluding morning interval and lunchtime, will be 20 minutes longer than at present. However, on the shorter 6 period days the pupil day will be 30 minutes shorter than at present. It is the case that some teachers may, depending on timetabling arrangements, be required to teach 7 periods on a particular day.

Work undertaken by secondary school timetablers indicates that it is unlikely that more than a few teachers in any one school could expect to have two 7 period days pupil contact in a week. It is also likely that the majority of teachers will not be required to teach 7 periods on 7 period days. It is the case that some teachers may be required to prepare more lessons than at present. It should however be noted that teachers will still have at least 6 periods of marking and preparation time allocated within the pupil week.

- Redundancies

There are no planned redundancies as a result of the 32 period week.

- Extra Curricular Activity

Responses from teachers and from some parents expressed concern that a shorter lunch break and the varying pattern of school finishing times may give rise to a diminution in the range of frequency of extra-curricular activities made available to pupils. Teachers within West Dunbartonshire Council's schools have for many years provided a broad range of extra-curricular activities both during lunch breaks and end on to the school day. This contribution is highly valued by the authority and by parents as well as by the pupils. There is clearly potential for there to be some adjustments to what is currently available to pupils. Other local authorities who have adopted the 32 period week structure have not reported that there has been any significant change in the extra-curricular activities available in their schools.

- Supported Study

Teachers across West Dunbartonshire have excellent programmes of supported study/mentoring in place for pupils. The implementation of a 32 period week should not have a negative impact on the support offered to pupils. It will mean a re-adjustment of times. New arrangements connected to 32 period would take effect from August 2013 at the start of a new term. Pupils adjust readily to new arrangements at the start of the school year and there is ample lead in time to make the necessary adjustment.

- Childcare Arrangements

A number of teachers and some parents expressed concern that some parents may need to alter their childcare arrangements, particularly on the two days where schools will finish earlier than at present. It is the case that some parents will need to review arrangements for childcare at the end of the school day.

However, it should also be noted that the existing arrangements may present some families with difficulties with childcare and the change to a later finish on three days of the week may diminish the need for alternative supervisory arrangements until a parent returns home.

- 4.17** Educational Services are confident that the concerns raised can be worked through to enable detailed planning of the revised structures to be put in place.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Discussions with the teachers' side of the LNCT will continue so that arrangements pertaining to part-time and job share staff can be established.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** Existing contract arrangements for the provision of school transport are currently being re-negotiated. The resulting financial implications, until the renewal of contracts in 2016, will be met from existing resources.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** Failure to implement the revised school week/day structure does not carry a specific risk. Failure would mean a less efficient model would exist.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken on the consultation indicated that there were no significant issues.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

- 9.2** The proposed model for consultation was circulated to:

- all secondary schools
- all primary Head Teachers
- all secondary parents and primary 7 parents
- EIS
- HEEDS Roads and Transport
- HEEDS' Manager, Catering and Cleaning
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- Argyll and Bute Council Transport
- Glasgow City Transport
- Escorts who travel on buses

In addition to the circulation of the proposal for consultation the proposal has been discussed at meetings with:

- West Dunbartonshire's Parental Strategy Group
- West Dunbartonshire's Roads Department
- Primary Head Teachers of neighbouring schools
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport representatives
- Secondary Head Teachers have addressed pupils, staff and parents in each community

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** This report reflects the Council's aspiration to improve life chances for children and young people which is one of the strategic priorities for 2012 - 2017.

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Consultation <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council-and-government/politicians,-elections-and-democracy/consultations/previous-consultations/>
Appendix 2 - Transport
Appendix 3 - EIS response

Background Papers: Report presented to Education Services Committee – August 2012 - Curriculum for Excellence – Senior Phase

Wards Affected: All