

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Children's Services Committee held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 18 January 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Provost Alistair Macdonald, Councillors George Black, Dennis Brogan, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey, James Flynn, James McCallum, Jackie Maceira, Connie O'Sullivan, Joe Pilkington, Martin Rooney and Ms Olean Allison, Mrs Barbara Barnes, Mrs Jan Cleife, and Miss Sheila Rennie.

Attending: Bob Cook, Director of Education and Cultural Services; Lynn Townsend, Head of Service; Liz McGinlay, Head of Service; Terry Lanagan, Head of Service for the Schools' Estate; Anne Ritchie, Head of Social Work, Operations; Moira Swanson, Research and Information Officer, Social Work Services; Ronald Dinnie, Head of Land Services, Housing and Technical Services; Alan Douglas, Manager of Best Value and Special Projects and Lorraine Beveridge, Administrative Assistant, Legal and Administrative Services.

Also Attending: Charlie Rooney, Head Teacher, Our Lady and St. Patrick's High School.

Apologies: Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillor Andy White, Miss Ellen McBride and Ms Lesley Robertson, Head Teacher, Aitkenbar Primary School.

Councillor Martin Rooney in the Chair

CONVENER'S REMARKS

7974 Before commencing with the business of the meeting Councillor Rooney, Convener, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Children's Services Committee of 2006.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

7975 The Minutes of Meeting of the Children's Services Committee held on 16 November 2005 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

FUNDING TO IMPROVE FOSTERING SERVICES

- 7976 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services advising of the allocation of specific additional funding by the Scottish Executive to improve fostering services and making recommendations thereon.
- 7977 After hearing the Convener in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the allocation of additional funds and the criteria for its use; and
 - (2) to approve the recruitment of 2 Social Workers to enhance the present service.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE: LEAD OFFICER

- 7978 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services recommending the creation of a Lead Officer post to support and co-ordinate the work of the Child Protection Committee (CPC) as part of the 3 year Reform Programme for Child Protection in accordance with Scottish Executive guidance.
- 7979 After discussion and having heard the Convener and the Head of Social Work, Operations in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to the creation of the post of Lead Officer to the CPC; and
 - (2) that formal negotiations be entered into with East Dunbartonshire to explore the feasibility of sharing such a post.

REPORT ON STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2004/05 AND QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2005

- 7980 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services:-
- (a) providing information on Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for 2004/05 and comparing the authority's performance with that of comparator authorities and the national average;
 - (b) providing information on progress made against the SPIs and Corporate Priorities and Objectives between July and September 2005; and

- (c) in line with Scottish Executive Best Value Guidelines and Audit Scotland recommendations, presenting information for elected members and stakeholders as part of wider Public Performance Indicators.

7981 After discussion and having heard and the Head of Social Work, Operations and the Research and Information Manager, Social Work Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a report on West Dunbartonshire Council's performance on social background reports in comparison to Inverclyde Council, would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

7982 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the second Quarterly Performance for the financial year 2005/06 prepared by the Department of Education and Cultural Services and highlighting its performance across all services delivered.

7983 After discussion and having heard Councillor McCallum and Officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a report containing a breakdown of the type of active library borrowers, would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

PRESENTATION BY MR CHARLES ROONEY, HEAD TEACHER, OUR LADY AND ST. PATRICK'S HIGH SCHOOL

7984 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Children's Services Committee held on 16 November 2005 (Page 2048, paragraph 7549(3) refers), Councillor McCallum invited Mr Charles Rooney, Head Teacher of Our Lady and St. Patrick's High School to the Committee to give a presentation on promoting attainment and achievement in Our Lady and St. Patrick's High School.

7985 In so doing, Mr Rooney informed the Committee that Our Lady and St. Patrick's High School's achievements reflected West Dunbartonshire Council's and national priorities for education, which were (i) pursuing quality improvement, by promoting a positive work ethic and a climate of achievement amongst pupils; (ii) promoting effective learning and teaching by meeting the needs of pupils; (iii) judicious deployment of resources by

analysing performance and initiating action; and (iv) promoting school initiatives.

- 7986 Mr Rooney then summarised specific initiatives which had been successful and of future plans for the school. In relation to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education's report on Our Lady and St. Patrick's School he confirmed that although many key strengths had been highlighted within the school, the points for action identified were being addressed.
- 7987 After discussion and having heard Mr Rooney in answer to Members' questions, the Convener, on behalf of the Committee congratulated Mr. Rooney on the superb work being carried out in the school and for his excellent presentation.
- 7988 Thereafter, after discussion it was agreed that any future presentations to the Committee on West Dunbartonshire Schools should be accompanied by a report.

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF BRAIDFIELD HIGH SCHOOL AND REDELINEATION OF THE CLYDEBANK HIGH SCHOOL DELINEATED AREA

- 7989 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking approval to issue the Consultative Document on the proposed closure of Braidfield High School and the redelineation of the Clydebank High School area.
- 7990 In this respect, the Manager of Best Value and Special Projects advised that if the report was accepted there would be a new consultation. Therefore, if Members of the Committee intended to participate in the subsequent decision making process they should, from the close of this meeting, avoid any comment or declaration which may reasonably lead members of the public to consider that they had pre-judged the issues to be determined. As before advised, it would remain a matter for individual Councillors to determine whether they believed their behaviour may be so interpreted.
- 7991 The Committee noted the position.
- 7992 After discussion and having heard Councillor McCallum and the Head of Service for the Schools' Estate in further explanation, it was agreed:-
- (1) to note that the word 'non-denominational' would replace 'denominational' in paragraph 2.1 and that 'June 2005' be amended to read 'June 2006' in paragraph 2.4 within the consultation document, attached as an appendix to the report;
 - (2) that the following recommendations contained within the Consultative Document as appended to the aforementioned report be approved:-

- (a) to adopt for consultation purposes the proposals that:-
- (i) Braidfield High School be closed from 30 June 2006 with pupils in its current delineated area being transferred to Clydebank High School and Clydebank High School's delineated area be re-defined to incorporate the previous Braidfield High School delineated area. Pupils would transfer from 18 August 2006.
 - (ii) The Braidfield High School buildings and site be retained within the portfolio of the Education and Cultural Services Department pending further decisions on the relocation of other agencies and services which were currently located within the Braidfield High School building.
 - (iii) This report be issued as a Consultative Document and made available to all appropriate parties, including School Boards, parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff of Braidfield High School and Clydebank High School and the parents and pupils of all associated primary schools.
 - (iv) All interested parties be asked to make written representations on the proposals to the Director of Education and Cultural Services, West Dunbartonshire Council, c/o Schools Estate Unit, Braidfield High School, Clydebank G81 2LR no later than Tuesday 28 February 2006 or such extended period as may be deemed appropriate by the Director of Education and Cultural Services.
 - (v) That the matter be referred for determination to the Children's Services Committee meeting on 15 March 2006.

Note: Provost Macdonald left at this point in the meeting.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE IN SCOTTISH SCHOOLS

- 7993 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the attendance and absence figures for West Dunbartonshire schools in the session 2004/05.
- 7994 After hearing Councillor McCallum in further explanation, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

PUPIL ABSENCE MONITORING POLICY IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE SCHOOLS

- 7995 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing feedback on the progress of the revised pupil absence monitoring policy implemented across schools in September 2005 and making recommendations thereon.
- 7996 After discussion and having heard Councillor McCallum in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to approve the formal policy and procedure on absence monitoring in West Dunbartonshire schools, as appended to the report; and
 - (2) that a report on the up to date position in relation to pupil absence monitoring in West Dunbartonshire schools be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

THE WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE LITERACY INITIATIVE – UPDATE REPORT ON THE EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

(a) Presentation

- 7997 Mr Mackay, Consultant Psychologist gave a presentation on the progress of the Early Intervention Programme. It was noted that Mr Mackay had produced a substantial volume of research information on the project titled "The West Dunbartonshire Literacy Initiative: the design, implementation and evaluation of an intervention strategy to raise achievement and eradicate illiteracy" which will be published at the end of January 2006,
- 7998 Mr Mackay, advised that in 1997 West Dunbartonshire Council commenced a ten year initiative to raise the attainment in literacy for all children, to eradicate illiteracy and to tackle serious levels of reading failure across every school in the authority, not just the poorest performing schools, with a particular focus on the early years.
- 7999 He confirmed that since the programme began, rigorous monitoring and evaluation of both the intervention input and the outcomes for children had shown that remarkable results had been achieved, with reading standards rising significantly and that it was hoped that by the end of the programme in 2007, illiteracy in West Dunbartonshire children would be eradicated.
- 8000 Thereafter, after hearing Mr Mackay in answer to Members' questions, the Convener, on behalf of the Committee thanked him for his informative presentation.

(b) Report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services

- 8001 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the progress of the Early Intervention Programme.
- 8002 After discussion and having heard Ms Townsend in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to congratulate all those involved in the Early Intervention Programme; and
 - (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

**TEACHER INPUT TO EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE CENTRES
IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

- 8003 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking approval to implement an organisation of teacher input to Early Education and Childcare Centres.
- 8004 After discussion and having heard Ms Townsend in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the proposal to incorporate the existing Early Years teachers within the Early Intervention Team and provide a standard level of teacher input to all Early Education and Childcare Centres from August 2006.

UPDATE OF CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUILDING PROGRAMME

- 8005 There was submitted and noted a report providing up-to-date information on the status of Capital and Revenue Building Projects within the Education and Cultural Services Department and drawing attention to significant issues or problems with the progress of any particular project.

**2005-06 REVENUE ESTIMATES – BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT FOR
THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2005 TO 15 DECEMBER 2005**

- 8006 There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on expenditure and income to date within the Department of Education and Cultural Services approved budget for 2005-2006.

INSPECTIONS OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE CENTRES – UPDATE

- 8007 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the Integrated Inspections carried out in Early Education and Childcare Centres since September 2005.
- 8008 After hearing Councillor McCallum in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the reports carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education on Garshake, St. Eunan's, Ferryfield and Meadowview Early Education and Childcare Centres; and
 - (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT TENDERING PROCEDURES SESSION 2006/2007

- 8009 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services:-
- (a) advising of the proposed timetable for the processing of tenders for mainstream school contracts and for pupils with additional support needs; and
 - (b) seeking approval to proceed with the proposed timetable in order to secure contracts for school transport for session 2006/2007 and up to session 2010/2011 where contracts are for 3 or 5 years duration.
- 8010 Following discussion and after hearing the Director of Education and Cultural Services and Ms Townsend in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note that the Director of Education and Cultural Services would continue to monitor the condition of school buses;
 - (2) to note that where bus contracts were concerned the advert would specify either a dedicated bus with seatbelts or a dedicated bus with seatbelts and escort;
 - (3) that any Members who had concerns regarding specific issues on school bus routes should report the matter to the Director of Education and Cultural Services for investigation;
 - (4) that the Director be given approval to proceed with the necessary arrangements to secure tenders for the transport of children with additional support needs for session 2006/2007 and beyond for contracts of 3 years duration; and

- (5) that the Director be authorised to make the necessary arrangements in liaison with Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) to renew mainstream contracts for session 2006/2007 and beyond for contracts of 3 or 5 years duration.

The meeting closed at 11.46 a.m.