

# **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services**

**Educational Service Committee: 22 August 2012**

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**Subject: Curriculum for Excellence - Senior Phase**

### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1** This report advises members of the Senior Phase element of Curriculum for Excellence. It details how this crucial aspect of Curriculum for Excellence is being progressed in West Dunbartonshire and seeks members endorsement.

### **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1** note the importance of Senior Phase as part of Curriculum for Excellence 3-18;
- 2.2** endorse the direction and approach to Senior Phase curriculum planning; and
- 2.3** seek a progress report at a future meeting of the Educational Services Committee.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1** Curriculum for Excellence is a national programme of educational change. The aim is to set in place a 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum for 3-18 year olds which improves the standards of learning and teaching and raises achievement and attainment for all learners.
- 3.2** During the last academic session significant work has taken place with Secondary Head Teachers, Depute Head Teachers and Principal Teachers. A steering group comprising Head Teachers, education officers and the Directorate is in place.
- 3.3** An operational planning group and sub-group comprising Depute Head Teachers, education officers and college partners was established to consider various cross-cutting issues pertinent to all schools. Each sub-group is overseen by a Head Teacher who reports back to the steering group.
- 3.4** Two Senior Phase Conferences have taken place at which the Director gave clear definition to expectations of Curriculum for Excellence both nationally and locally. A further Senior Phase Conference is being planned for the Autumn. Head Teachers have asked West Dunbartonshire to consider a common timetabling framework to support S4-S6 in progressing Curriculum for Excellence. As part of this process, a consultation with all stakeholders

will be conducted in September 2012 which will propose an alteration to the shape of the school day and week in all West Dunbartonshire secondary schools.

- 3.5 The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence begins in August 2013. Our current S3 will be the first cohort of learners to benefit from the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence.
- 3.6 The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence has come under considerable scrutiny nationally over the past few months. The Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) and Education Scotland have both issued statements and guidance on the senior phase recently and a national Implementation Group for Curriculum for Excellence has been convened to support progress. The Director of Educational Services serves on this significant group.

#### 4. Main Issues

- 4.1 The most recent statement from Education Scotland, has made two key issues very clear. Firstly, a broad general education to the end of S3 is a core national entitlement for all young people and it is essential that curricular models firmly embed this key characteristic. Secondly, the Senior Phase of education begins in S4 in which young people will begin to build up a portfolio of qualifications. This is essentially a shift away from a 'three phase model' of S1/2, S3/4, S5/6 towards a two phase model of a broad general education to the end of S3 and a Senior phase beginning in S4. It is a requirement that all schools in West Dunbartonshire plan in this way.
- 4.2 A broad general education until the **end** of S3 is a requirement and must cover the range of curricular areas and associated experiences and outcomes.
- 4.3 the Senior Phase **begins** in S4 and there is an expectation that schools will plan on the basis of S1-S3 and S4-S6. The broad general education should support transition to S4 but should not pre-determine young people's options for qualifications from S4.
- 4.4 West Dunbartonshire is committed to implementing the new qualifications from session 2013/14 and this was endorsed by the findings of the recent "Deep Audit" which was commissioned by Education Scotland.
- 4.5 It is expected that schools will move to a combined senior phase for session 2014/15. If any school has difficulty with this due to their existing plans, then appropriate support will be provided to ensure that the goal can be achieved.
- 4.6 The size of West Dunbartonshire enables us to develop further consortia arrangements which ensure that all learners can access a broad curriculum with a wide range of courses and opportunities designed to meet the learners' needs. Each school's plans will reflect the expectations set out nationally and locally. All young people in West Dunbartonshire must have

the same access to opportunities; therefore each of the five secondary school's plans should accord with one another.

- 4.7** West Dunbartonshire's Educational Services will continue to support schools as they develop Senior Phase. An audit of the Broad General Education in each school will be undertaken to ensure that learners are receiving their entitlement.
- 4.8** Preparation for the implementation of new qualifications will be supported through the revised Curriculum Support Network and the two additional In-Service Days. Scottish Government has allocated additional funding of £64,000 to support the development of new qualifications and the 2 additional In Service days.
- 4.9** Senior Phase curriculum planning will continue this session in the light of recent guidance and direction.
- 4.10** Teacher Learning communities are in the process of being established in each secondary and this will be launched in September 2012. These learning communities will focus on learning and teaching and the sharing of good practice.

## **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** All staff are involved in the development of Curriculum for Excellence. This is a standing item on all agendas of the LNCT sub-group.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1** Senior Phase developments are supported from schools' devolved budgets and the additional funding of £64,000.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** This report is concerned with implementation of a curriculum designed to meet the needs of all young people in West Dunbartonshire. Failure to implement this would put our learners at a distinct disadvantage and result in reputational risk to the Council.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** Educational Services has carried out a screening in equality for this report. The report was found not to be relevant to the specified equality duty because the content provides an update on service delivery rather than stating a change of policy.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted on this report. Head Teachers and Trade Unions continue to be involved in on-going discussion regarding implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, 3-18.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

- 10.1** The Council has identified four main strategic priorities for 2011/2012, namely Social & Economic Regeneration, Financial Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, and Fit for Purpose Services.
- 10.2** Raising expectation and aspirations with our young people will ultimately lead to regeneration. Investing in their future is fundamental to the values of our Council. Our staff are our most valuable resource and they have the skills to improve outcomes for young people. Success in improving attainment and achievement will impact positively on Educational Services and West Dunbartonshire Council.

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**Appendix:** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All wards