

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

At a Hybrid Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 1 December 2021 at 2.05 p.m.

Present: Provost William Hendrie and Councillors Jim Brown, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Jim Finn, Daniel Lennie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Iain McLaren*, John Millar*, John Mooney and Martin Rooney, and Mr Gavin Corrigan, Miss Ellen McBride and Ms Julia Strang.

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Andrew Brown, Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources; Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer – Pupil Support; Julie McGrogan, Senior Education Officer – Raising Attainment/Improving Learning; Kathy Morrison, Senior Education Officer – Education, Learning & Attainment; Michelle Lynn, Assets Co-ordinator; 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 Councillors Karen Conaghan and Sally Page, and Mrs Barbara Barnes and Miss Sheila Rennie.

Councillor Ian Dickson in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor Dickson, 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 22 September 2021 were submitted and approved as correct record.

LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 21 September 2021 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved.

OPEN FORUM

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

STRATEGY TO RAISE ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on activity and progress with regard to implementing West Dunbartonshire's Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement, and advising of any future changes to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Raising Attainment/Improving Learning and the Chief Education Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, Councillor Mooney moved:-

This Committee is disappointed in the planned reduction of attainment funding for West Dunbartonshire.

According to the Scottish Government's SIMD, West Dunbartonshire has some of the highest levels of deprivation in Scotland. For example, Clydebank Central is the sixth most deprived ward in Scotland.

The Scottish Parliament accepts there is a link between poverty and attainment. So cutting funding to pupils in West Dunbartonshire following the public health emergency, where pupils missed out on 9 months of education, simply does not make sense.

Therefore, this Committee is extremely concerned about the planned reduction of £2 million of raising attainment funding in West Dunbartonshire.

This will not help to close the poverty related attainment gap. In fact withdrawing funding at this time will increase the poverty related attainment gap in West Dunbartonshire.

Given the above, this Committee calls on the Scottish Government to reverse their decision to cut the £2 million of raising attainment funding, so that we can continue to improve the life chances of young people in West Dunbartonshire through improved educational opportunities

In addition the Committee calls on the Scottish government to change the funding allocation model by the explicit use of SIMD, so that areas of high levels of deprivation such as West Dunbartonshire are prioritised for funding.

Finally, the Committee calls for a full report to come to Council on the impact on cutting £2m from raising attainment funding from our schools.

Councillor McColl asked Councillor Mooney if he would be willing to accept the following as an addendum to his motion:-

Paragraph 5, before full stop, add: “unless this funding is replaced with targetted funding for other work to close the poverty related attainment gap”.

Paragraph 6, after “attainment funding” add: “or provide Councils with details of alternative work that will be funded”.

Councillor Mooney agreed to accept the addendum to his motion which Councillor McColl then seconded. The motion, with addendum, was agreed unanimously by the Committee.

Note: Councillors McLaren and Millar joined the meeting during consideration of this item.

EARLY YEARS IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update of the plan for expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in West Dunbartonshire Council.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Education, Learning & Attainment in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress in meeting our statutory duties, expansion delivery and Funding Follows the Child;
- (2) to note the contents of Appendix 1 to the report, ‘Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Delivery Progress’;
- (3) to note the contents of Appendix 2 to the report, ‘West Dunbartonshire Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Delivery Progress’; and
- (4) to note the contents of Appendix 3 to the report, ‘The Early Learning & Childcare Financial’.

SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT MEMBERSHIP OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer requesting determination of whether there should be Scottish Youth Parliament members nominated to serve on the Educational Services Committee.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Education Officer and the Manager of Legal Services in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the submission of a report to Council recommending the addition of two Scottish Youth Parliament members on the Educational Services Committee; and
- (2) to agree that voting members of the Committee require to be over the age of sixteen.

WEST PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021-2022

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer outlining the main content and process followed to develop the West Partnership Improvement Plan for 2021-2022.

Having heard the Chief Education Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

PROCUREMENT OF ONLINE PAYMENTS SYSTEM AND CASHLESS CATERING SYSTEM

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer seeking approval to tender for an online payments system for all establishments to allow parents and carers to make online payments to their children's school, and a cashless catering system for use in the Authority's secondary schools which would work in conjunction with the online payments system.

Having heard the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the plan for the replacement of the online payment system for all establishments and the replacement of the existing cashless catering system in use within West Dunbartonshire's secondary schools utilising the Scotland Excel Framework for Online School Payments, Cashless Catering and Kitchen Management Systems;

- (2) to note that the cost of both new systems would come from the existing budget for the current systems being used in schools; and
- (3) to approve the proposal to tender for the provision of an online payments system and cashless catering system, and that the award recommendation be reported to a future meeting of the Tendering Committee.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 OCTOBER 2021 (PERIOD 7)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial performance of Education Services to 31 October 2021 (Period 7).

Having heard the Business Unit Finance Manager (Education) and the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources 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 £1.308m (1% of the total budget) of which £1.156m (88%) was COVID-related and therefore resulted in an underlying adverse variance of £0.152m (0.12% of the total budget); and
- (2) to note that the capital account showed a projected in-year favourable variance of £2.444m made up of £0.117m overspend (1% of the current year budget), and slippage to 2022/23 of £2.561m (27% of the current year budget).

The meeting closed at 3.10 p.m.

