

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Education Committee held within the Council Offices, Rosebery Place, Clydebank, on Wednesday 9th February, 2000 at 10.00a.m.

Present: Councillors Daniel McCafferty (LAB), Andrew White (LAB), Mary Campbell (LAB), Anthony Devine (LAB), Duncan McDonald (LAB), John McCutcheon (SNP), Linda McColl (LAB), James McCallum (LAB & CO-OP), John Trainer (LAB), Ronald McColl (SNP), Margaret McGregor (SNP) and Connie O'Sullivan (LAB), Mr Ronald Alexander and Miss Sheila Rennie.

Attending: Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Cultural Services, David Logan, Principal Solicitor, Bob Cook, Neil McKechnie and Frank Newall, Education and Cultural Services Managers.

Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Provost Alistair Macdonald (LAB), James McElhill (SNP), Mary Collins (LAB), Mrs Barbara Barnes and Father John McGorry.

Councillor Daniel McCafferty in the Chair

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Education Committee held on 8th December, 1999 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to Councillor Mary Collins being removed from those present and added to apologies for absence.

CLYDEBANK HIGH SCHOOL: VANDALISM

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Education Committee held on 27th October, 1999 (**Volume page 5193 refers**), there was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing available detail on vandalism at Clydebank High School and describing measures which had been taken in an attempt to reduce the incidence of vandalism.

EXCELLENCE FUND FOR SCHOOLS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services containing information on the progress being made in respect of each of the Core Programmes financed through the Excellence Fund for Schools.

Having heard the Director in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the amendments to the original Improvement Plans, as outlined in the report, for submission to the Scottish Executive;
- (2) that the Director should bring details relating to the Improvement Plan 10 - Inclusion to the next meeting of the Committee for retrospective approval; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE STRATEGY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services containing information on the development of the Childcare Partnership and seeking approval to consolidate, as permanent posts, the posts of Childcare Partnership Officer and Childcare Information Assistant presently filled on a temporary basis.

Having heard the Convener in further explanation, the Committee agreed to continue consideration of the recommendations contained within the report to the next meeting of the Education Committee.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL AND THE STRATHCLYDE PASSENGER TRANSPORT EXECUTIVE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services regarding the Terms of Agreement between West Dunbartonshire Council and the Strathclyde Passenger Transport in relation to the provision of school transport for relevant pupils within West Dunbartonshire.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve the Terms of Agreement between West Dunbartonshire Council and Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive whereby the Executive acts as the Agent of West Dunbartonshire Council as detailed in the Agreement (as shown in the Appendix to the report), all aspects of the Agreement having been scrutinised by the Department of Legal and Administrative Services.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT TENDERING PROCEDURES SESSION 2000/2001

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services advising of the proposed timetable for the processing of tenders for Special Educational Needs and mainstream contracts.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Director be given approval to proceed with the necessary arrangements to secure tenders for the transport of children with Special Education Needs for session 2000/2001;
- (2) that the Director be authorised to make the necessary arrangements, in liaison with Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT), to renew mainstream contracts for session 2000/2001; and
- (3) otherwise to note the report.

ST. KESSOG'S PRIMARY SCHOOL: HEATING UPGRADE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services advising of the requirement for an increased allocation of at least £10,000 to the previously approved sum of £130,000 with regard to the above capital project.

Following discussion and having heard Mr Cook in further explanation, the Committee agreed to note that as the project was now within budget it would no longer be necessary to request a further commitment of £10,000.

A TEACHING PROFESSION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO PROFESSIONAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR TEACHERS CHAIRED BY PROFESSOR GAVIN MCCRONE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking approval for the Council's proposed response to the Committee of Inquiry into Professional Conditions of Service for Teachers, chaired by Professor Gavin McCrone.

Following discussion and having heard the Director in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the report by the aforementioned Committee; and
- (2) that a response by the Director, as detailed within the report, be submitted to the Committee of Inquiry into Professional Conditions of Service for Teachers on behalf of West Dunbartonshire Council.

MEETING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS: A REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services drawing Members' attention to the report 'Meeting Professional Standards' published in December, 1999 by HM Inspectors of Schools.

UPDATE ON CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUILDING PROGRAMME 1999/2000

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing up-to-date information on the status of the Education Capital and Revenue Building Projects for 1999/2000 within the Education and Leisure Services Department and drawing attention to significant issues or problems with the progress of any particular project.

Following discussion and having heard Mr Cook in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the report.

EDUCATION SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET 1999/2000 - VARIANCE REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 1999

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing an update on the financial status of the Education Service Revenue Budget and providing details of performance up to 31st December, 1999.

Following discussion and having heard the Convener in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the report.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE IN SCOTTISH SCHOOLS 1996/97 TO 1998/99

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services bringing attention to the HM Inspectors of Schools Audit Unit publication "Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools 1996/97 to 1998/99" and commenting on the performance of West Dunbartonshire Council schools in the context of the Attendance and Absence statistics.

Following discussion and having heard Mr Newall in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the HM Inspectors of Schools Audit Unit publication "Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools 1996/97 to 1998/99"; and
- (2) to note the Director's intention to write to the head teachers of Secondary Schools commending them on the significant reduction in the rate of exclusions from Secondary Schools in West Dunbartonshire Council particularly when set against an upward trend nationally.

HMI INSPECTION REPORT - STANDARD INSPECTION OF ST. KESSOG'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLOCH

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services advising of a report published by HM Inspectors of Schools following their Standard Inspection of St. Kessog's Primary School, Balloch.

The Convener introduced Mrs Irene McKerry, Acting Head Teacher of St. Kessog's Primary School, to the meeting. Following discussion during which the Director advised that the issues highlighted in the inspection report would be addressed through normal channels, the Committee agreed to note the report, subject to an amendment in paragraph 2.2 which should have read 'inspected in September 1999', and joined the Convener and the Director in offering sincere congratulations to the staff and all associated with St. Kessog's Primary School for the high quality of their work as reflected in the report.

URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

The Convener, in terms of Section 50B(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as inserted by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, decided that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency on the grounds that the action to be taken required early consideration.

HOME FRONT MEMORIAL SERVICE ON 3 MARCH 2000 INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The Convener gave details to the Committee of a letter sent to COSLA from the Scottish Executive, Justice Department, advising of a memorial to those who served on the Home Front during the Second World War, which would be unveiled at a Service of Commemoration and Commendation at Coventry Cathedral on 3rd March, 2000.

The service would be attended by a senior member of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister, the First Minister, United Kingdom Ministers, including the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and other Church and national leaders. In addition, a number of guests from Scotland, who were involved in civilian war work, were also invited to the service together with a representative group of between 20 to 25 young Scottish individuals.

Following discussion the Committee agreed, in principle,:-

- (a) to send 20 to 25 young people from Clydebank schools to attend the memorial service; and
- (b) that the Director would chose the pupils concerned and make appropriate arrangements.

The Meeting closed at 10.35a.m.

