

Agenda

Educational Services Committee

Date: Wednesday, 18 September 2024

Time: 10:00

Format: Hybrid Meeting

Contact: Scott Kelly, Committee Officer
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Dear Member

Please attend a meeting of the **Educational Services Committee** as detailed above.

Members will have the option to attend the meeting remotely or in person at the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton.

The business is shown on the attached agenda.

Note:- Members of the Committee are requested to note that in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended in 2014, the report relating to Item 8, 'Response on Statutory Consultation to Move the Primary 1 (P1) Enrolment Date...' has been issued three weeks in advance of the meeting. The remainder of the reports will be issued by Thursday, 5 September 2024 in accordance with the normal timescale for issuing reports, as governed by the Council's Standing Orders.

Yours faithfully

PETER HESSETT

Chief Executive

Distribution:

Councillor Clare Steel (Chair)
Councillor Fiona Hennebry
Councillor Daniel Lennie
Councillor David McBride
Councillor Jonathan McColl
Councillor Michelle McGinty
Councillor June McKay
Councillor John Millar (Vice Chair)
Councillor Karen Murray Conaghan
Councillor Lawrence O'Neill
Councillor Lauren Oxley
Councillor Martin Rooney

Councillor Gordon Scanlan
Councillor Hazel Sorrell
Mrs Barbara Barnes
Miss Faith Bhardwaj MSYP
Ms Kirsty Connolly
Mr Gavin Corrigan
Miss Ellen McBride
Ms Joanne McLaren
Reverend Ian Miller
Miss Rebecca Ross MSYP
Ms Julia Strang

All other Councillors for information

Chief Education Officer

Date of Issue: 28 August 2024

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EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2024

AGENDA

1 STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

The Chair will be heard in connection with the above.

2 APOLOGIES

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare if they have an interest in any of the items of business on this agenda and the reasons for such declarations.

4 RECORDING OF VOTES

The Committee is asked to agree that all votes taken during the meeting will be carried out by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 7 – 10

Submit, for approval as a correct record, the Minutes of Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held on 12 June 2024.

6 LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS 11 – 12

Submit for information, and where necessary ratification, the Minutes of Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 11 June 2024.

7 OPEN FORUM

The Committee is asked to note that no open forum questions have been submitted by members of the public.

8/

8 RESPONSE ON STATUTORY CONSULTATION TO MOVE THE 13 – 36
PRIMARY 1 (P1) ENROLMENT DATE FOR THE START OF THE
ACADEMIC YEAR FROM THE SECOND WEEK IN JANUARY TO
THE SECOND WEEK OF THE PRECEDING NOVEMBER

Submit report by the Chief Education Officer informing of the outcome from the statutory consultation exercise under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal for the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for the start of the academic year to move from the second week in January to the second week in the preceding November.

9 STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY To Follow

Submit report by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on progress with delivering improved outcomes for attainment and equity, and implementing the service Strategy for Excellence and Equity.

10 SENIOR PHASE ATTAINMENT 2023/24 To Follow

Officers will provide a verbal update on the performance of West Dunbartonshire schools in Senior Phase Attainment for young people in 2023/24.

11 EARLY YEARS SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY To Follow
PROGRAMME

Submit report by the Chief Education Officer providing information on how an appropriate sport and physical activity programme can be delivered within Early Years.

12 SUMMER HOLIDAY 2024 PROGRAMME EVALUATION To Follow

Submit report by the Chief Education Officer:-

- (a) providing an update on plans to reduce holiday hunger and provide childcare support across West Dunbartonshire Council during summer 2024; and
- (b) informing and updating on the additional Scottish Government funding allocations, the governance of funding and impact of projects.

**13 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL To Follow
REPORT TO PERIOD 3 (30 JUNE 2024)**

Submit report by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the capital financial performance to 30 June 2024 of those services under the auspices of the Educational Services Committee.

**14 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL To Follow
REPORT TO PERIOD 3 (30 JUNE 2024)**

Submit report by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the revenue financial performance of Educational Services to 30 June 2024 (Period 3).

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

At a Hybrid Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 12 June 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Gurpreet Singh Johal, Daniel Lennie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Michelle McGinty*, June McKay, John Millar, Karen Murray Conaghan, Lawrence O'Neill, Lauren Oxley, Martin Rooney and Hazel Sorrell, and Miss Faith Bhardwaj MSYP, Mr Gavin Corrigan, Miss Ellen McBride, Ms Joanne McLaren and Ms Julia Strang.

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: Peter Hessett, Chief Executive; Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Alison Bowers, Senior Education Officer – Early Learning and Childcare; Andrew Brown, Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance and Resources; Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer – Services for Children and Young People; Julie McGrogan, Senior Education Officer – Raising Attainment/Improving Learning; Michelle Lynn, Assets Co-ordinator; Joe Reilly, Business Unit Finance Partner (Education); Michael McDougall, Manager of Legal Services; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Clare Steel and Gordon Scanlan, and Mrs Barbara Barnes and Reverend Ian Miller.

Councillor John Millar in the Chair

CHAIR'S REMARKS

Councillor Millar, Chair, welcomed Joane McLaren, Parent Representative, and Faith Bhardwaj MSYP to their first meeting of the Committee.

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor John Millar, 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 Council 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 20 March 2024 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS

The Minutes of Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 12 March 2024 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 FOR EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on progress with delivering improved outcomes for attainment and equity, and implementing the service Strategy for Excellence and Equity.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Raising Attainment/Improving Learning and the Chief Education Officer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the strong attainment and equity performance of West Dunbartonshire in the Broad General Education against the national performance; and
- (2) to note the range of improvement and development work delivered in the service to support improved attainment and a narrowing of the attainment gap.

Note: Councillor McGinty entered the meeting during consideration of this item.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROGRESS UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer informing of progress made to provide high quality Early Learning and Childcare in West Dunbartonshire Council.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Early Learning and Childcare and the Assets Co-ordinator in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the progress to deliver the statutory entitlement of 1,140 hours of high quality Early Learning and Childcare.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES UPDATE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer informing of progress on supports to children, young people and families.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Services for Children and Young People, the Chief Education Officer, and the Chief Executive in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the progress on plans to continue developing and improving supports.

INCREASE SUSTAINABLE RATE PAID TO FUNDED EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer requesting consideration of a proposal to increase the hourly rate paid by West Dunbartonshire Council to contracted private providers for funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC).

Following discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Early Learning and Childcare in further explanation and in answer to a Member's questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the guidance for setting sustainable rates contained in the 'Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers – Guidance for setting sustainable rates for the delivery of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in 2024-25', published in March 2024;
- (2) to increase the hourly rate paid to Early Learning and Childcare private providers, including childminders, for the provision of funded ELC from £5.84 to £6.43 for eligible two-year-olds and from £5.84 to £6.28 for all children aged from three to pre-school age from 1 April 2024, it being noted that this was an increase of 10% for the eligible two-year-old provision and 7.6% for all three-year-olds and above; and
- (3) to note the external factors influencing the sustainability of the hourly rates paid to contracted providers of funded ELC in West Dunbartonshire, including rising costs and to enable payment of the Real Living Wage to those childcare workers delivering the funded entitlement.

SENIOR PHASE CURRICULUM

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on the offer of courses and awards to young people through the Senior Phase curriculum for session 2024/25, and setting out plans to ensure an equitable offer across all establishments.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance and Resources and the Chief Education Officer, in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the breadth of the offer to young people by our schools and partner providers;
- (2) to note the next steps to explore development of a common Senior Phase timetable across all of our secondary schools, and that a proposal would be submitted to the Educational Services Committee in March 2025; and
- (3) to develop the use of digital courses and Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) courses on offer in our schools.

EDUCATION DELIVERY PLAN 2024/25

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer setting out the Education Delivery Plan for 2024/25.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance and Resources in further explanation and in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed the new Delivery Plan.

The meeting closed at 11.45 a.m.

LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS

At a Hybrid Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Tuesday, 11 June 2024 at 2.05 p.m.

Present: Councillors Jonathan McColl; Andrew Brown, Senior Education Officer (for the Chief Education Officer); Lindsay Thomas, Head Teacher, Linnvale Primary School; Gavin Corrigan, Michael Dolan, Laura Minto and Caroline Yates (all EIS); and Claire Mackenzie (SSTA).

Attending: Louise Hastings, People and Change Partner; Kirsty Connor, Education Support Officer – Staffing; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Gordon Scanlan and Clare Steel; Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Alison Boyles, Head Teacher, Dumbarton Academy; and Rebecca McCulloch and Dawn Wilson (both EIS).

Mr Gavin Corrigan in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 12 March 2024 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

THE 35 HOUR WORKING WEEK AGREEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR 2024-2025

A report was submitted by the Joint Secretaries to the LNCT providing the proposed 35 Hour Working Week Agreement (WTA) Framework for 2024-2025.

After discussion and having heard both Sides, the Committee agreed that the framework and supporting guidance be issued to schools/establishments for developing their Agreement for 2024-2025 and their collegiate calendar.

AMENDMENT TO LNCT AGREEMENT NO. 22 – SUPPORTED STUDY RATE

A report was submitted by the Joint Secretaries to the LNCT seeking approval to alter LNCT Agreement No. 22, 'Supported Study Rate' which was approved by the LNCT on 8 September 2015.

After discussion and having heard both Sides, and the Education Support Officer – Staffing in elaboration, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the rate of pay for supported study rate and commissioning payment rate (LNCT Agreement 29) were not consistent;
- (2) the proposed change to realign the rate of pay of the supported study rate to reflect that of the commissioning payment rate;
- (3) to note the manual processing of payment had changed to an online form; and
- (d) the amendment to the Process section on the agreement to reflect the updated process.

GUIDANCE TO COMMISSIONING PAYMENTS

A report was submitted by the Joint Secretaries to the LNCT seeking approval on the rationale and approach to paying teaching staff commissioning payments for work undertaken outwith their 35 hour working week contract.

After discussion and having heard both Sides, and the Education Support Officer – Staffing in elaboration, the Committee agreed the approach to commissioning payments as detailed in the report.

STAFFING AUDIT UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Joint Secretaries to the LNCT providing an update on snapshot of data gathered from a Chris 21 establishment report dated December 2023 for comparison to the findings from the staffing audit undertaken in November 2021.

After discussion and having heard both Sides, and the Education Support Officer – Staffing in elaboration, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the update and comparison of data in relation to the use of fixed term contracts from December 2023 based on the work of the Staffing Audit Working Group and the findings from the audit in November 2021; and
- (2) to a further audit of qualified teachers who are currently looking for a permanent contract but who are either on long term contracts or on supply lists to provide a like for like comparison of the data from 2021 and 2023.

The meeting closed at 2.55 p.m.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee – 18 September 2024**

Subject: Response on Statutory Consultation to move the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for the start of the academic year from the second week in January to the second week of the preceding November

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform the Educational Services Committee of the outcome from the statutory consultation exercise under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal for the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for the start of the academic year to move from the second week in January to the second week in the preceding November.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) Notes the findings from the statutory consultation exercise and the content of the associated Education Scotland report;
 - (ii) Agrees to move the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for the start of the academic year to move from the second week in January to the second week in the preceding November, commencing this year for enrolments due to start school in August 2025.

3. Background

- 3.1** At the meeting on 20 March 2024, the Educational Services Committee approved the launch of the statutory consultation document by the Chief Education Officer under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to move the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for the start of the academic year from the second week in January to the second week of the preceding November.
- 3.2** Committee further agreed that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a meeting of the Educational Services Committee scheduled for 18 September 2024.
- 3.3** The consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and copies of the proposal document were made available to all stakeholders as prescribed by the Act. The consultation ran from Monday 25 March 2024 until midnight on Friday 31 May 2024, which

included a period of 30 days when the schools were open for pupils.

4. Consultation Process / Considerations

4.1 The statutory consultation process was undertaken with a Proposal Paper setting out the proposal on which the Council was consulting being published on the Council's website and stakeholders invited to participate in the consultation exercise. An electronic link to the consultation page and Proposal Paper, was issued by email to the consultees listed within the document and was also published on the Council's website and publicised via the Council's social media channels.

4.2 As part of the Council's consultation process we undertook the following activities:

- Publicised the consultation and date of public meeting through the Council's website, through public notices in local newspapers and on social media.
- Advised relevant stakeholders by email of the consultation and providing an electronic link to the website.
- Held an online and in-person public consultation meeting in Dumbarton.
- Utilised the Council's consultation web page to make documentation on the proposal, link to the online survey, background information and details on how to participate in the survey available.
- Set up a direct telephone line and email address to deal with queries.

4.3 A public consultation meeting was held on 20 April 2024 to allow Officers to explain the proposal and enable interested parties to ask questions regarding the proposal. A representative from Education Scotland was also in attendance at the Dumbarton meeting, as part of their role in the statutory consultation process. There were no attendees at the meeting either in person or online.

4.4 An online survey was available during the consultation period, with 31 respondents registering. ***Do you agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring the date of enrolment for primary school forward by two months from January to November?*** 93.5% (29 respondents) agreed, with 6.5% (2 respondents) disagreeing.

4.5 There were no responses by phone to the consultation. No written responses were received by post. We received an email submission from the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church in support of our proposal (which is included as Appendix A to the Consultation Report).

Education Scotland Report and Considerations

4.6 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires HM Inspectors from Education Scotland to be involved in the formal consultation proposal.

The full report from Education Scotland was published on their website and also published as Appendix B of our Consultation Report.

4.7 As part of this process HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspect of the proposal:

- attendance at a public meeting held on 18 April 2023 in connection with the Council’s proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the Council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;
- visits to the site of St Mary’s Primary School & ELCC (Duntocher), St. Ronan’s Primary School & ELCC, Sunflower Nursery and Andrew B. Cameron ELC, including discussion with relevant consultees and;
- discussion with relevant consultees, including representatives from the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

Education Scotland Summary and Recommendations

4.8 Education Scotland produced a report whose purpose is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of West Dunbartonshire Council’s proposal to bring the date of school enrolment forward.

4.9 Within the report, Education Scotland concluded:

“HM Inspectors agree that this proposal has clear educational benefits. The proposed changes will assist the council in obtaining earlier information to help inform decision making. This includes, class configurations, placing requests, transition support, and to identify required teaching posts at an earlier point in time. It will also enable earlier confirmation to parents of the school their child will attend. If approved, the council should continue to engage parents to provide assurance of their rights regarding flexibility in deferring their child’s start date. Similarly, staff and parents would like confirmation that the arrangements and associated timeline for enrolling children with additional support needs would also be in line with the proposal.”

Next Steps

4.10 Response to the consultation was positive. Comments made by stakeholders suggest that further review of the enrolment and admissions policy are required, specifically in the areas of deferred entries and enrolment and placing requests for children with additional support needs. A further request for a statutory consultation to consult on future changes will be brought to the December Education committee.

Consultation Report

4.13 The Council is required to prepare and publish its final Consultation Report when the consultation exercise has been concluded. In preparing the report, the Council must consider the report from Education Scotland and other responses to the consultation. The consultation report must explain how the Council has reviewed the proposal, a summary of the points raised during the consultation and the Council's response to them. It should consider if there are any other reasonable alternatives to the proposal.

4.14 The Council is required to publish the Consultation Report and Educational Services Committee cannot take a decision on whether to formally implement a proposal until 3 weeks have elapsed from the date it publishes the Consultation Report. The Consultation Report was published on the website on Friday 16 June 2023.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications within this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 HM Inspectors agree that the proposal would provide benefit to parents and carers in West Dunbartonshire, and bring forward decision making around the annual staffing exercise. Failure to ensure adequate staffing of schools would mean that we are not fulfilling our statutory duty to accommodate children in our schools, and would bring reputational damage.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 This report was considered under the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment process, with no adverse impact being identified on groups with protected characteristics.

9. Consultation

9.1 Consultation on the proposed changes was undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

9.2 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted on the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 Undertaking a statutory consultation ensures we meet our responsibilities as defined by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It works towards all three of the Community Planning Partnership priorities of 'empowered', 'sustainability' and 'wellbeing' by ensuring that the views of local citizens are sought and incorporated into our plans, and that we work to promote the wellbeing of our children, young people and families.

Laura Mason
Chief Education Officer

Person to Contact: Andrew Brown, Senior Education Officer
andrew.brown@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Consultation Report

Background Papers: Report and Proposal Paper submitted to Education Committee on 20.03.2024

Wards Affected: All wards



West Dunbartonshire Council Education, Learning and Attainment

REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION RELATING TO THE PROPOSAL

to move the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for the start of the academic year from the second week in January to the second week of the preceding November.

Published 28 August 2024

This report has been published by West Dunbartonshire Council in response to the statutory consultation undertaken under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The report will be published on the Council's website for a period of no less than 3 weeks prior to final consideration by the Educational Services Committee on 18 September 2024.

C O N T E N T S

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is a consultation response report prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 following consultation on the West Dunbartonshire Council (The Council) proposal to move the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for the start of the academic year from the second week in January to the second week of the preceding November.

1.2 The purpose of the response report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
- Provide summary of the written responses;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how the Council acted on it; and
- State how the Council has complied with Sections 11A to 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposals.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting on 20 March 2024, Educational Services Committee of West Dunbartonshire Council approved the launch of a statutory consultation by the Chief Education Officer under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to move the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for the start of the academic year from the second week in January to the second week of the preceding November.

2.2 Educational Services Committee further agreed that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to its meeting scheduled for 18 September 2024.

2.3 The current position is that parents/carers are notified of the enrolment process through public notifications and social media posts issued in December, with the enrolment week normally taking place the second week in January, for enrolment into Primary 1 in August that calendar year. The proposed changes to the enrolment process detailed within the Policy are outlined below.

2.4 THE PROPOSAL

2.4.1 **Date change for publicity from December to October:**

2.4.2 “Your child will be admitted to school in August if they are 5 between 1 March of that same year and the last day of the following February. Entry to schools is on a once a year basis at the start of the new session in August each year. Public notifications and social media posts will be issued in October providing details on how to register your child”

2.4.3 **Date change for Enrolment week from January to November:**

2.4.4 “Enrolment week normally takes place the second week in November. This is an online process and you can register your child by completing the online Registration Form by the set registration date. Further information on schools admissions and the link to the registration form can be accessed from our website: <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-admissions/>”

3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 The statutory consultation process, which requires the Council to adopt a robust and transparent framework for school consultations was undertaken in respect of the proposal. The consultation document developed for consideration included information on the:

- Proposal;
- Consultation process;
- Arrangements for public meetings;
- On how to participate in the consultation;
- Educational benefits of the proposal; and
- Consultation timeline

3.2 An electronic link to the Proposal Paper was issued by email to the stakeholders detailed within that document. The Proposal Paper and details of the consultation were made available on the consultation section of the Council’s website: [Changing the Primary School Enrolment Date](#).

3.3 The Act requires a consultation period of at least 6 weeks which must include at least 30 school days. The consultation period for this project was from Monday 25th March 2024 until Friday 31st May 2024 inclusive (the period covered a total of 30 days to allow for the “clear days” rule and accommodate 15 days where schools were closed due to an in-service day, a long weekend and the spring break).

3.4 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the following steps were taken to ensure compliance with the Act:

- Proposal Paper published on Monday 25 March 2024.
- Statutory consultees were sent an email providing a link to the Proposal Paper and details of where, and how to obtain a paper copy free of charge and how to participate in the consultation.
- Schools distributed details of the consultation to staff and parents/carers.
- Proposal Paper published on the West Dunbartonshire Council website

and available in paper copy upon request, and information on the consultation published on social media.

- Public notice in the 'Dumbarton Reporter' and 'Clydebank Post' newspapers advising of the consultation.
- A public consultation meeting was held on 20 April 2024 to facilitate participation, sharing of information and gathering views.
- Education Scotland's involvement consisted of: Proposal Paper being sent to them, attendance at the public consultation meeting, follow up consultation meetings with Head Teachers, Pupils, Parent Council representatives, and Church representatives. Education Scotland were also provided with copies of online survey results/comments and the written representation received during the consultation period.

3.5 In accordance with statutory requirements and good practice, the following relevant stakeholders were consulted:

- Education Scotland;
- The Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church;
- the Parent Councils of West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the parents/carers of pupils attending all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the parents/carers of any children expected by West Dunbartonshire Council to attend the primary schools listed in section 4.1 above within two years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document, including those pupils attending all private and voluntary pre-school nurseries in the West Dunbartonshire area;
- the pupils attending all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools (insofar as this is possible and taking cognisance of the age and maturity of the pupils);
- the teaching and support staff of all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the trade union representatives of the above staff;
- the constituency MSPs;
- the constituency MP; and
- Neighbouring local authorities.

4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

4.1 One public consultation meeting was held at 6pm on 20 April 2024. This meeting was offered simultaneously in person and online - in person in Dumbarton Academy, and online via google meet.

4.2 The consultation meeting was attended by two Senior Education Officers and an HM Inspector. Unfortunately, there were no attendees in person or online. The online meeting link was accessed by officers to ensure it was working correctly. Officers waited for around 30 minutes to ensure there were no latecomers to the meeting, and stayed on the school premises for the duration of the advertised time of the public meeting, should any

stakeholders have arrived during the meeting timeframe.

5. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

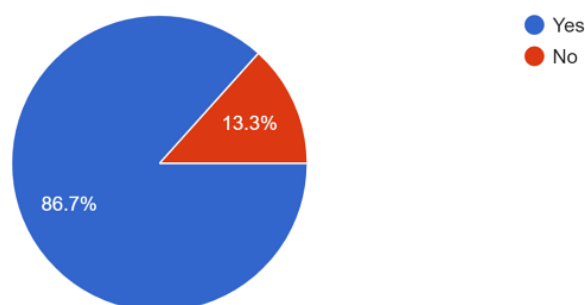
5.1 Members of the public were encouraged to respond to the consultation through the online survey, by phone or in writing.

5.2 A total of 31 respondents responded through the online survey as detailed below.

Q1. Are you a resident of West Dunbartonshire?	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	26	86.7%
No	4	13.3%
TOTAL	30	

Are you a resident of West Dunbartonshire?

30 responses



5.2.1 Question 2 asked respondents to choose which statement described them best. It was possible for respondents to create their own description in response to this question. It had 31 responses. Responses were broken down as follows:

Q2. From the options below, please select the most appropriate one to indicate your interest in this consultation.	Number of responses	% of responses
A parent / carer of child / young person not presently attending primary school but will from August 2025	11	35.5%
A member of teaching / non teaching staff	11	35.5%
A parent / carer of child / young person presently attending primary school	7	22.6%
Other	2	6.4%

TOTAL	31	
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- 5.2.2 35.5% (11 respondents) stated that they were a parent / carer of child / young person not presently attending primary school but will from August 2025
 - 5.2.3 35.5% (11 respondents) stated that they were a member of teaching / non teaching staff
 - 5.2.4 22.6% (7 respondents) stated that they were a parent / carer of child / young person presently attending primary school
 - 5.2.5 It was possible for respondents to add in 'other' categories to this question. Two categories were added:
 - 5.2.6 3.2% (1 respondent) stated that they were a parent & carer of a special needs child starting school August 2024; and
 - 5.2.7 3.2% (1 respondent) stated that they were a parent of a child not yet attending school.
- 5.4 Question 3 asked the consultation question '***Do you agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring the date of enrolment for primary school forward by two months from January to November?***' There were 31 responses. 93.5% (29 respondents) agreed, with 6.5% (2 respondents) disagreeing.

Do you agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring transport provision for schools more in line with the safe walking distance to school?	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	29	93.5%
No	2	6.5%
TOTAL	31	

- 5.5 Question 4 asked respondents to provide a reason for their answer if they wished. There were 16 responses:
- As a parent who has only just received the news in March 2024 that my son will attend a communication base in August 2024 for p1 & in the knowledge that many children did not secure the same setting so close to starting I find it remarkably late & incredibly anxiety inducing. Gradual transitions are difficult and almost non-existent due to time constraints, as is forward planning in regards to looking at other options.
 - Myself a parent of a special needs child waiting to start school have found such difficulty in finding the suitable placement for our son due to numbers and the time we have to have panel meets etc and get things in place by august
 - I have a son with a speech delay and is awaiting a possible autism diagnosis. I feel earlier is harder for parents to be able to confirm if their child is at a level to be attending school. As it starts I have friends who have deferred their child based on the current date and come august regretted it

as by that point they would have been ready for school. I feel making this gap wider again will cause parents making the wrong choices

- It would be great to have advanced notice of placing requests and be able to make appropriate childcare arrangements. It would also allow enhanced transition programmes from nursery to happen more confidently with the children going to each school. I am a teacher, parent of P1 and have a child starting school Aug 2025.
- Planning for everyone and everything can be done earlier
- I believe the whole process should be reviewed. I had a child that potentially should have went aug 2024 and I feel the whole deferral process is unnecessarily emotive and difficult. There isn't a consistent approach from education staff.
- It will allow placing requests to be organised more quickly which will support high quality transition visits.
- Would give earlier notice of staff numbers required in schools. Interviews for teaching posts are currently held much later than neighbouring. The current system has had teachers finding out on the last day of school if they have a job after the holidays, or not, which is not good for staff motivation.
- This will allow the schools to have a better idea of the enrolment number and therefore classes for the upcoming year. This will hopefully allow interviews to take place earlier than June and allow both schools and staff to know and prepare for where (school or stage) they will be the following year. West Dunbartonshire are currently one of the latest councils to interview for positions for the following year which is not beneficial for schools and staff.
- Would hopefully allow for earlier I decisions regarding placing requests/JRP panels etc, in turn provide more adequate timeframes for transitions.
- Better time to prepare
- More time to prepare if first choice not possible
- Some children had started their transition meetings to schools that they were unsure if they were confirmed for having a place or not. Having the consultation earlier might help make that decision quicker so that there's less uncertainty. My friend also has a child who didn't get a place in a special school and are really struggling with the time left to help plan for what happens next. Earlier decisions on this might help too
- As a parent of a child starting primary school in 2026, this would allow me to know about my child's primary place earlier thus giving more time to arrange any wrap-around care that might be needed. As a teacher in WDC who isn't permanent to a school, the annual staffing exercise runs very close to the

end of term which has caused stress and uncertainty every year since I qualified. If this could also be brought forward, it would mean knowing my job situation for the following year earlier.

- This would allow placing requests to be granted at an earlier date and then children can start transition to the school they are going to attend instead of their catchment school.
- To provide earlier certainty to families, allowing greater planning opportunities and more time to explore alternative opportunities and options

5.6 There were no responses by email or by phone to the consultation. No written responses were received by post. We received a submission from the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church in support of our proposal which is provided as Appendix A.

6. ISSUES RAISED BY STAKEHOLDERS AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE

6.1 Of these 16 responses, 5 related to places for children with Additional Support Needs, which, although helpful responses for our future action, was not the focus of this consultation. Similarly, 2 responses related to deferrals which was not the focus of this consultation.

6.2 The responses highlighted the benefits of earlier information to assist in decision making, and staffing requirements. Benefits raised also highlighted earlier clarity for parents on which school their child will be attending.

6.2 It is clear from the responses and in our work to provide places for children in session 2024/25 that a further revision of both the school enrolment and placing request policies is required to ensure compliance with legislation and better meet the needs of stakeholders. Work also needs to be done to clarify the relationship between admissions and deferrals. A further proposal to conduct a statutory consultation will be brought to the December Education committee.

7. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE

7.1 In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal.

7.2 The Education Scotland report can be read in full in Appendix B, and the summary conclusions from the report are presented below.

7.3 Within the report, Education Scotland concluded:

“HM Inspectors agree that this proposal has clear educational benefits. The proposed changes will assist the council in obtaining earlier information to help inform decision making. This includes, class configurations, placing requests, transition support, and to identify required teaching posts at an earlier point in time. It will also enable earlier confirmation to parents of the school their child will attend. If approved, the council should continue to engage parents to provide assurance of their rights regarding flexibility in deferring their child's start date. Similarly, staff and parents would like confirmation that the arrangements and associated timeline for enrolling children with additional support needs would also be in line with the proposal.”

- 7.4 The Council agrees with the points raised by Education Scotland, and will take further action on deferred entries and enrolment and placing requests for children with Additional Support Needs. A proposal to conduct a future statutory consultation will be brought to December 2024 Education committee.

8. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES

- 8.1 Section (10) (3) of the 2010 Act also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.

- 8.2 In the course of the consultation exercise, there were no areas identified by respondents as being inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Paper during the consultation period.

9. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

- 9.1 Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that: After the Education Authority has received Education Scotland's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period;
- (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public Meeting; and
- (iii) Education Scotland's report.

- 9.2 Following receipt of the Education Scotland report, the Council has reviewed the proposal, having regard to the written representations made and to

Education Scotland's report.

- 9.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by officers where all the questions and comments raised were considered in detail. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under section 9(1) and 13(5) of the 2010 Act.
- 9.5 The proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations led to the Council to reconsider any other reasonable alternatives to the proposal. It is clear from the responses received that the vast majority of stakeholders are in favour of the proposal. No alternatives were presented, but further action on deferred entries and enrolment and placing requests for children with Additional Support Needs should take place. A proposal to conduct a future statutory consultation will be brought to December 2024 Education committee.

10. LEGAL ISSUES/NEXT STEPS

- 10.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 throughout this statutory consultation.
- 10.2 Under the terms of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.
- 10.3 This Consultation Report will be published, both electronically and available in written form, if required, on Wednesday 28 August 2024, this meets the statutory requirement to publish this report for three weeks before the report on the consultation is considered by Educational Service Committee on Wednesday 18 September 2024 for final decision. If approved the Council will ensure continued engagement with all stakeholders throughout the implementation of any change to the policy.

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21st May 2024

Consultation to review the Primary 1 enrolment date for children/young people starting school from August 2025. It relates to all primary schools in West Dunbartonshire Council

Response of the Archdiocese of Glasgow

The Archdiocese of Glasgow welcomes the opportunity to respond to the proposal within this consultation paper and to be involved in any discussions about the provision of denominational education within West Dunbartonshire Council.

We note that entry into schools in West Dunbartonshire is on a once a year basis at the start of August each year. Enrolment week normally takes place the second week in January for entry into Primary 1 the following August.

It is now proposed that the enrolment date for Primary 1 children is brought forward from January to November of the previous year.

We acknowledge that this will enable earlier information about P1 intake to be available which will assist:

- Information on placing requests and the decisions on them.
- Confirmation to parents on which school their child will attend if they have made a placing request.
- Class configurations in primary schools.
- Teaching posts required in each school.
- More time for targeted liaison between nurseries and primary schools.

We note that none of the above points will have any detrimental impact on pupils.

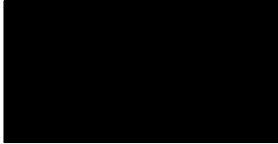
Therefore, we support West Dunbartonshire Council in their proposal to bring forward the enrolment date for Primary 1 pupils from 2025.

ARCHBISHOP OF GLASGOW

We, in the Archdiocese look forward to ongoing discussions on this and any other proposals which might affect denominational education in your Council area.

With my very best wishes for your continued work.

Kind regards,



+William Nolan
Archbishop of Glasgow

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Dunbartonshire Council to review the Primary 1 enrolment date for children starting school from August 2025. The proposal document relates to all primary schools in West Dunbartonshire Council.

June 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of a proposal by West Dunbartonshire Council to review the Primary 1 (P1) enrolment date for children starting school from August 2025. The proposal document relates to all primary schools in West Dunbartonshire Council. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the schools; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 24 April 2024 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of St Mary's Primary School Duntocher, Sunflower Nursery, St Ronan's Primary School, and Andrew B Cameron Early Education and Childcare Centre, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 West Dunbartonshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The council undertook the consultation from 25 March to 31 May 2024. The council published the proposal paper on their website. Paper and electronic copies of the proposal paper were made available to stakeholders. The council advertised the proposal in local newspapers. The council also held a public meeting at Dumbarton Academy. This meeting was also available to attend virtually. No stakeholders attended in person or via the virtual meeting link.

2.3 The council received 31 written submissions. Of these, almost all responses were in favour of the council's proposal to review the P1 enrolment date for children starting school from August 2025. Almost all stakeholders recognise that decisions made earlier regarding placing requests may allow for more timely transition arrangements for children starting school. It may also allow more time for families to organise appropriate wraparound childcare arrangements. Stakeholders recognised that this is particularly important for children with additional support needs. A few responses were not in favour of the proposal. A few stakeholders expressed concern that parents and carers will be asked to make decisions regarding whether they wish their child to start school or defer their school entry too early. They feel that children may need more time to develop before these decisions are made.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council's proposal sets out a number of educational benefits for those directly affected. The current position is that parents and carers are notified of the enrolment in December. The enrolment week normally takes place the second week in January for enrolment into P1 in August that calendar year. The proposal is for a date change for notification of enrolment from December to October, and enrolment week to take place the second week in November. HM Inspectors agree that should the proposal be approved, obtaining earlier information would enable decisions to be made in relation to class configurations, placing requests and identify required teaching posts at an earlier point in time. The proposal also gives earlier confirmation to parents of the school their child will attend.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. Parents and staff welcome the opportunity to begin transitions earlier. All stakeholders agree that the revised registration date has the potential to assist the council with earlier planning and identifying necessary teaching posts. This should also help children to build relationships with their class teachers prior to starting primary school. Parents making placing requests, welcome earlier notification of the school their child is to attend. They suggest that earlier notification will be less stressful and will help them to prepare their child for attending school. A few parents are worried that the earlier registration date may be too early to decide on whether to defer their child starting school. Parents would like assurance from the council that there is flexibility, beyond the registration deadline, to change their decision around deferred entry. Staff and parents would also like confirmation that the process for placing children with additional support needs would be considered in line with the proposal. They recognise that this will provide an opportunity to support a longer enhanced transition period.

3.3 A representative of the Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church who met with HM Inspectors is supportive of the proposal. They believe that the earlier notification to parents will help support the council, schools and parents and carers to make more informed decisions and prepare their child for starting school.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that this proposal has clear educational benefits. The proposed changes will assist the council in obtaining earlier information to help inform decision making. This includes, class configurations, placing requests, transition support, and to identify required teaching posts at an earlier point in time. It will also enable earlier confirmation to parents of the school their child will attend. If approved, the council should continue to engage parents to provide assurance of

their rights regarding flexibility in deferring their child's start date. Similarly, staff and parents would like confirmation that the arrangements and associated timeline for enrolling children with additional support needs would also be in line with the proposal.

HM Inspectors
June 2024