

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held by video conference on Wednesday, 22 September 2021 at 2.05 p.m.

Present: Provost William Hendrie and Councillors Jim Brown*, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Jim Finn, Daniel Lennie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Iain McLaren, John Millar, John Mooney, Sally Page and Martin Rooney, and Mrs Barbara Barnes, Mr Gavin Corrigan, Miss Ellen McBride, Ms Hannah Redford, Miss Sheila Rennie 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; Linda McAlister, Education Support Officer; Michelle Lynn, Assets Co-ordinator; Joe Reilly, Business Unit Finance Partner (Education); Alan Douglas, Legal Manager; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Also Attending: Hayley Paku, Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament; Sophie Marshall, Working 4U Development Officer; and Jimmy Monaghan, Working 4U Assistant.

Councillor Karen Conaghan in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor Conaghan, 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.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held on 9 June 2021 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 22 June 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.

RESPONSE ON THE PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON CHANGES TO THE ADMISSIONS AND PLACING REQUEST POLICY FOR MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer informing of the outcome and findings of the statutory consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the formal consultation on the proposed changes to West Dunbartonshire's Admissions and Placing Requests Policy.

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

- (1) to note the findings from the statutory consultation exercise; and
- (2) to approve the implementation of the proposal to make a limited variation to the Admissions and Placing Requests Policy for mainstream schools within West Dunbartonshire Council from school session 2022/23.

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

PROPOSAL PAPER AND LAUNCH OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW CAMPUS IN FAIFLEY

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer seeking approval for 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 construct co-located replacements for St Joseph's Primary School, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and Edinbarnet Primary School, together with a new ELCC to replace Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs, and also provide a Community Library and Community space within a new campus to be located on the site of the current St Joseph's Primary School.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources, the Legal Manager and the Assets Co-ordinator in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve 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 construct co-located replacements for St Joseph’s Primary School, St Joseph’s Rainbow Base and Edinbarnet Primary School, together with a new ELCC to replace Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs, and also provide a Community Library and Community space within a new campus to be located on the site of the current St Joseph’s Primary School;
- (2) that the consultation period should run from Thursday, 30 September 2021 to Wednesday, 17 November 2021, a total of 32 days when the schools are open for pupils; and
- (3) that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to the meeting of the Educational Services Committee provisionally scheduled to be held on 16 March 2022.

The Legal Manager then advised the Committee that, in view of its decision to launch the statutory consultation, and because Members would in due course require to make a decision based on the evidence presented during the consultation process, Members who wished to participate in the decision-making should exercise caution when making any public comment, and in particular should avoid any comment which may lead members of the public to consider that the issues have been pre-judged.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT CONTRACTS – SESSION 2021/22

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer setting out the steps taken to secure school transport contracts in liaison with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport for mainstream school transport and the Corporate Procurement Unit for Additional Support Needs (ASN) school transport from school session 2021/22 until 2024/25.

Having heard the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the necessary arrangements, in liaison with SPT, for renewed mainstream school transport contracts for session 2021/22; and
- (2) to note that, in consultation with the Corporate Procurement Unit, a Corporate Taxis Services framework had been approved for a maximum period of four years and that all ASN transport would be procured via this framework for the duration of this period.

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.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Raising Attainment/Improving Learning, the Legal Manager and the Chief Education Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the progress made in the past three months with two key priorities: (i) the Scottish Attainment Challenge; and (ii) Education recovery and renewal.

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SQA) ATTAINMENT UPDATE

The Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources provided a verbal update in relation to the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Attainment Update and informed the Committee:-

- (1) that a revised alternative certification model had been developed by SQA for awards which relied on a rigorous process of internal assessment, moderation and quality assurance within schools and local authorities to derive provisional grades for young people;
- (2) that the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic made it difficult to draw meaningful statistical comparisons with previous years' results;
- (3) that 2,136 pupils had been entered for qualifications with 2,110 (99%) obtaining one or more qualification;
- (4) that 3,980 passes were achieved at National 5 out of 4,267 entries (93%), an increase of 9% in comparison to the previous year, with 96% of students achieving one or more qualification at this level;
- (5) that 72% of graded National 5 awards had received a grade A or B;
- (6) that 93% of the 1,748 entries for National 4 had resulted in a pass;
- (7) that 96% of the 2,546 Higher entries had resulted in a pass and 76% of Higher passes were either grade A or B;
- (8) that 95% of the 302 Advanced Higher entries had resulted in a pass with 77% of passes being either grade A or B;
- (9) that the percentage of passes in literacy and numeracy had increased from 82% last year to 93% this year; and

- (10) that a full analysis of young people's performances would be reported to Members in due course.

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 to note the progress that had been made in delivering the statutory entitlement of 1,140 hours early learning and childcare.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY – BENCHMARKING

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer advising on the performance of literacy and numeracy in West Dunbartonshire at Early Years, P1, P4, P7 in 2021.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Raising Attainment/Improving Learning in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed to note the analysis and action plan for recovery and improvement.

SUMMER HOLIDAY 2021 PROGRAMME EVALUATION

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on plans to reduce holiday hunger across West Dunbartonshire Council during summer 2021 and providing information about the additional Scottish Government funding allocations.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Pupil Support in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress and impact of authority-wide plans by partners to reduce holiday hunger; and
- (2) to note the associated administration and governance of the funds.

ALTERNATIVE TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS PAYMENT IN HOLIDAYS

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on Free School Meal payments and to seeking approval for administering Holiday Hunger payments based on entitlement as a result of low income.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Pupil Support in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress of national and local plans to support Holiday Hunger payments; and
- (2) to approve how the Holiday Hunger funds would be administered.

EDUCATION DELIVERY PLAN 2020/21 YEAR-END PROGRESS

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing the year-end position against the 2020/21 Delivery Plan.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer – Policy, Performance & Resources in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member’s question, the Committee agreed to note the year-end position for 2020/21.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 JULY 2021 (PERIOD 4)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial performance of Educational Services to 31 July 2021 (Period 4).

After discussion and having heard the Business Unit Finance Partner (Education) in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that paragraph 3.1 of the report contained a typographical error and that the budget which had been agreed by Council on 3 March 2021 was £103.679m;
- (2) to note that the revenue account currently showed a projected annual adverse revenue variance of £1.058m (1% of the total budget) of which £0.906m (86%) was COVID-related and therefore resulted in an underlying adverse variance of £0.152m (0.15% of the total budget); and
- (3) 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).

PRESENTATION BY MEMBER OF THE SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Hayley Paku, Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament, gave a presentation on the work of MSYPs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main points covered in the presentation were an overview of West Dunbartonshire Youth Council campaigns relating to mental health and employability, and the promotion of 'COVID conversations' in local secondary schools.

Councillor Conaghan, Chair, thanked Hayley for her informative presentation.

The meeting closed at 3.55 p.m.