

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 24 August 2016 at 5.00 p.m.

Present: Provost Douglas McAllister and Councillors Gail Casey, William Hendrie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Michelle McGinty, John Millar, John Mooney, Ian Murray, Tommy Rainey, Martin Rooney, Kath Ryall and Hazel Sorrell, and Mrs Barbara Barnes, Ms Lorraine Bonnar, Mr Gavin Corrigan*, Miss Ellen McBride, Miss Sheila Rennie and Ms Julia Strang*.

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: Angela Wilson, Strategic Director - Transformation & Public Service Reform; Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Andrew Brown, Senior Education Officer - Performance & Improvement; Julie McGrogan, Senior Education Officer - Raising Attainment; Chris Smith, Education Service Manager - Children's Services; Dave Jones, Education Support Officer; Geraldine Lyden, HR Business Partner; Alan Douglas, Legal Manager; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Also Attending: Catriona Robertson, Headteacher, Vale of Leven Academy; John McDonald, Headteacher, Gartocharn Primary School; and Anne Docherty, Headteacher, St Eunan's Primary School.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor George Black.

Councillor Michelle McGinty 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 Educational Services Committee held on 1 June 2016 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS

The following Minutes of Meetings of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers were submitted and approved as correct records:-

- (1) 7 June 2016 (Ordinary Meeting); and
- (2) 21 June 2016 (Reconvened Meeting).

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES PRESENTATION

A presentation was given by Dave Jones, Education Support Officer, on the recent developments and progress in relation to the use of technology in education.

The main points covered in the presentation were:-

- An overview of the various applications which are accessible through the Council's online learning and teaching environment and their use by pupils and staff.
- Information on the use of technology in raising attainment and supporting the learning of languages.
- An overview of the usage of Chromebooks in schools.

In this respect, a report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing background information on the presentation.

After discussion and having heard officers in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made since the introduction of a new online learning and teaching environment, 'Google Apps for Education' and that the Council's domain was known locally as OurCloud.Buzz; and
- (2) to note the progress made in the provision of new Chromebook mobile devices.

Councillor McGinty, Chair, then thanked Mr Jones for his informative presentation.

Note: Mr Corrigan and Ms Strang entered the meeting during consideration of this item.

**A VISION FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IN WEST
DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL – INDICATIVE EARLY YEARS
STRATEGY 2016-2020**

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on developments in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and seeking approval of an indicative strategy for the future provision of ELC within West Dunbartonshire. It was noted that an additional appendix to the report, containing an equality impact assessment of the indicative strategy, had been provided to Members of the Committee in advance of the meeting.

Following discussion and having heard the Chief Education Officer, the Education Service Manager - Children's Services and the Headteachers of Gartocharn and St Eunan's Primary schools in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the update;
- (2) to approve the Early Years Strategy;
- (3) to note the indicative implementation plan to 2020;
- (4) to note the proposal to have all new ELC classes managed by the Headteacher of the school in which the class is located;
- (5) to the retention of the AB Cameron building within the school estate to allow for future re-opening of the Centre;
- (6) to approve the proposal to undertake a statutory consultation to place St Eunan's ELC Centre under the management and leadership of the Headteacher of St Eunan's Primary school; and
- (7) to approve the proposal to undertake a statutory consultation to place Gartocharn ELC Centre under the management and leadership of the Headteacher of Gartocharn Primary school.

The Legal Manager then advised the Committee that, in view of its decision to launch the statutory consultations detailed in paragraphs (6) and (7) above, and because for each consultation 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.

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SQA) EXAMINATION RESULTS 2016

The Chief Education Officer provided a verbal update in relation to the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Examination Results 2016. In so doing, she informed the Committee:-

- (a) that compared to the 2015 results the average pass rate for Advanced Highers had improved by 1% to 77% while Higher results remained the same at 75%;
- (b) that the average pass rate at National 5 level had decreased by 1% to 79% compared to 2015 and National 4 results remained the same at 98%;
- (c) that the results demonstrated that West Dunbartonshire continued to close the attainment gap with the national average, to 4.7% at Advanced Higher level and to 2.2% at Higher level, while National 5 results were comparable to the national average and National 4 results above the national average; and
- (d) that a report providing more detailed information on the examination results would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

In this respect there was submitted (tabled) a document entitled 'Closing the Attainment Gap – Senior Phase' which summarised the key information contained in the Chief Education Officer's update.

The Committee agreed to note the position in respect of this matter.

STRATEGY TO RAISE ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – UPDATE

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.

Having heard the Senior Education Officer - Raising Attainment in further explanation of the report, and following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made in the past three months with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire; and
- (2) to note that a further update would be submitted to the Committee at its December 2016 meeting.

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, P3, P5, P7 and S2 between 2014 and 2016 and P4 and P6 for 2016.

Having heard the Senior Education Officer - Raising Attainment in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that improvements planned would be implemented as per Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC);
- (2) to note that the report would change next year to align with the National Improvement Framework (NIF); and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATION REPORT FOLLOW UP

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer:-

- (a) providing figures on follow up school leaver destinations for West Dunbartonshire Council for 2014/15 and explaining how these figures compared to the initial school leaver destinations reported to the Committee on 2 March 2016; and
- (b) informing of the progress with the action plan being implemented to address the fall in positive destinations, and further identified steps that require to be taken.

Following discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer - Performance & Improvement and the Headteacher, Vale of Leven Academy in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report and its Appendix 1 outlining the statistics for follow up school leaver destinations for West Dunbartonshire for 2014/2015; and
- (2) to note the progress with the action plan (Appendix 2 to the report) outlining the actions and next steps to improve the figure for school leaver destinations.

SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE – RAISING ATTAINMENT, IMPROVING LEARNING IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on the key issues for West Dunbartonshire Council relating to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that it would receive progress updates with regard to the Scottish Attainment Challenge at future meetings; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

WORKING WELL TOGETHER – ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT: QUARTER 1

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer advising on attendance levels across the Council for Quarter 1 and providing a breakdown of absence performance by Strategic Lead area.

Having heard the HR Business Partner in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the report and the attendance results for Q1 2016/17, namely a significant decrease of 1799 days lost (21.3%) compared to the same period last year; and
- (2) that a revised methodology for calculating absence had been adopted consistent with national guidance and to more accurately reflect the workforce demographics.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 JULY 2016 (PERIOD 4)

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on the financial performance of Educational Services to 31 July 2016 (Period 4).

Having heard the Strategic Director in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report which showed:-

- (1) a projected full year adverse revenue variance of £0.233m (less than 1% of budget); and
- (2) a projected full year favourable capital variance of £1.234m (4.7% of budget) of which £1.239m relates to project re-phasing and £0.005m to an in-year overspend.

VALEDICTORIES

Chris Smith, Education Service Manager - Children's Services

Councillor McGinty, Chair, informed the Committee that this was the last meeting of the Committee that Chris Smith, Education Service Manager - Children's Services, would attend as she was retiring from Council service.

On behalf of the Committee, Councillor McGinty thanked Ms Smith for her assistance to the Committee throughout the years and her work in developing Educational Services, and wished her well in retirement.

Catriona Robertson, Headteacher, Vale of Leven Academy

Councillor McGinty then informed the Committee that Catriona Robertson, Headteacher, Vale of Leven Academy would also soon be retiring from Council service and invited Councillor Rooney, Leader of the Council, to address the Committee in this respect.

Councillor Rooney thanked Ms Robertson for her service to various schools throughout West Dunbartonshire during her career and in particular for her commitment and enthusiasm as Headteacher of the Vale of Leven Academy.

It was noted that during her time in this position, the Academy's performance had improved year on year and it was notable that it was the most improved school in West Dunbartonshire over the last year. It was also noted that Ms Robertson had been at the forefront of various local and national initiatives including the SFA School of Football project, the reintroduction of school blazers and the attendance of school pupils at civic events.

On behalf of the Council, Councillor Rooney expressed his gratitude to Ms Robertson for her work in improvements in the Vale of Leven Academy's attainment levels, its involvement the local community and its reputation, and wished her well in the future.

The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.