

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Education Committee, held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Rosebery Place, Clydebank on Wednesday, 12 December 2001 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors James Bollan, Geoffrey Calvert, Anthony Devine, Daniel McCafferty, Ronnie McColl, James McElhill, Duncan McDonald, Margaret McGregor, John Syme, and Mr Ronald Alexander, Miss Ellen McBride, Miss Sheila Rennie, Miss Margaret Wallace and Mrs Janice Wardrop.

Attending: *Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Cultural Services; Bob Cook, Head of Resource Development; Frank Newall, Head of Children's Services; Neil McKechnie, Head of Educational Development; Lynn Townsend, Manager of Special Educational Needs; Nigel Ettles, Principal Solicitor and George Hawthorn, Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Ian McDonald, Mary Collins, Connie O'Sullivan, John Trainer and Andrew White.

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Councillor Margaret McGregor in the Chair

CONVENER'S REMARKS

Councillor McGregor, Convener, welcomed those pupil representatives and head teacher representatives who had been invited to the meeting as observers. She also welcomed teachers, pupils and parents from Gavinburn Primary School who were in attendance to give a presentation on the Travelling Green project.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Education Committee held on 10 October 2001 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

With reference to the item under the heading "Update on Capital and Revenue Building Programme 2001/2002", the Committee agreed that the information requested at the previous meeting by elected Members concerning the amount offered in respect of the sale of land at the former site of St. Stephen's Primary School, be issued by the Director of Economic, Planning and Environmental Services to elected Members by letter as soon as possible.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS – OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

The Convener invited the Director of Education and Cultural Services to address the Committee on the issue of Public Private Partnership Project for School Buildings and, in particular, concerning consultation prior to the matter being considered at a Special Meeting of Council on 29 November 2001.

The Director explained in detail the circumstances pertaining to the decision, which he and the Chief Executive had taken, concerning the release of the report on the Public Private Partnership Project for School Buildings. He then informed the Committee that the Council had agreed to express an interest in submitting a bid to the Scottish Executive in September 2002 and in so doing had given a commitment to consult fully with all relevant parties prior to any final decision being taken. The Director confirmed that the consultation process was now underway and that all relevant parties including trades unions, churches, pupils, parents and staff would be consulted on this issue.

The Chief Executive entered the meeting at this point.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Executive and Director of Education and Cultural Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee noted the concerns which had been expressed in relation to this issue.

PRESENTATION ON TRAVELLING GREEN

The Education Committee received a presentation by Ailsa Alexander, Head Teacher, Gavinburn Primary School and pupils from the school on the Travelling Green project. The Committee noted that the project had been set up by the Greater Glasgow Health Board, this Council's Road Safety section and Primary 5 pupils from Gavinburn and St. Mary's Primary Schools, to encourage healthy attitudes in school children and, in particular, to encourage more children to walk to school. Mrs Patricia Gray, a parent of a pupil from Gavinburn Primary School, was also invited to speak to the Committee to express her views on the project from a parent's perspective.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Director of Commercial and Technical Services should examine the road safety issues at Station Road, Old Kilpatrick which had been highlighted during the presentation and report back to Council, if necessary; and
- (2) to note that it was the Department's intention to extend the project throughout West Dunbartonshire once the pilot project had been completed and fully assessed.

Thereafter, the Convener thanked Ms Alexander, Mrs Gray and the pupils from Gavinburn Primary School for their excellent presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed to adjourn for a period of five minutes to allow her to speak briefly with the teachers and pupils from Gavinburn Primary School who were about to leave the meeting.

The meeting resumed at 10.50 a.m. with all those Members shown on the Sederunt being present.

SERVICE PLAN 2001 – 2004 IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2001 – 2002

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services updating the Committee on progress made in relation to the production of the Education and Cultural Services Service Plan for 2001 – 2004 and the associated Improvement Plan for 2001 – 2002.

Having heard the Head of Educational Development give a brief presentation on the above plans, the Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked him for his presentation.

Following discussion and having heard the Head of Educational Development in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report;
- (2) to approve the draft Service Plan 2001 – 2004 and the associated Improvement Plans;
- (3) that non-elected Members serving on the Education Committee be invited to attend the proposed Seminar for elected Members, which will form part of the self evaluation exercise referred to in the Quality Management in Education (QMIE) Development Plan; and
- (4) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee concerning the Improvement Framework for 2002 – 2005 and the QMIE Development Plan.

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2000/2001

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the publication of the Department's Standards and Quality Report for 2000/2001, a copy of which was circulated to Members.

Having heard the Director of Education and Cultural Services in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report;
- (2) to approve the proposals for the distribution of the Standards and Quality Report for 2000/2001; and
- (3) to commend those officers involved in the preparation of the document.

HEAD TEACHER AND PUPIL REPRESENTATIVES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of Council on 26 September 2001, a report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the selection processes for Head Teacher and Pupil Representation on the Education Committee.

Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

ATTENDANCE ISSUES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Education Committee on 10 October 2001, a report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services making recommendations in respect of the remit and composition of the proposed Member/Officer Working Group on Attendance Issues.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to approve the remit and composition of the Working Group on Attendance Issues as detailed in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.

It was noted that, in addition to elected members and officers, Miss Ellen McBride and Miss Sheila Rennie would serve on Working Group.

DRAFT ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY ACTION PLAN

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Education Committee on 10 October 2001, a report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services updating the Committee of progress on the draft Adult Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan.

The Chief Executive left the meeting at this point.

Having heard the Head of Educational Development in answer to Members' questions and after discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made on the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan within the short timescale to date;
- (2) to instruct the Director of Education and Cultural Services to submit an Action Plan for Adult Literacy and Numeracy to the Scottish Executive by 31 December 2001 and report to a future meeting of this Committee on the content of the plan;
- (3) that, when submitting the plan to the Scottish Executive, the Director of Education and Cultural Services should express the Committee's view that the timescale for submission of the such plans was insufficient to allow proper preparation and discussion of the issues;

- (4) to instruct the Director of Education and Cultural Services to issue the proposed template, which would be used to provide Members with information on the plan, to all Members of the Committee for information;
- (5) that the Director of Education and Cultural Services should write to Clydebank College seeking clarification on the issue of their financial contribution to the Social Inclusion Partnership Project – Learning Works and that a report on the outcome be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (6) to note that Councillor McCafferty, as a Member of the Clydebank College Board of Management, would do everything within his power to ensure that the necessary information was provided to officers of this Council.

A TEACHING PROFESSION FOR THE 21st CENTURY: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE McCRONE AGREEMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on progress towards meeting the recommendations of the Agreement ‘A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century’.

Having heard the Head of Resource Development in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and the substantial progress which had been made in implementing significant issues in the McCrone agreement.

Councillor Devine left the meeting at this point.

REVIEW OF DEVOLVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the findings of a short life working group set up by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) in November 2000 to carry out a comprehensive review of Devolved School Management (DSM) across 32 Scottish Local Authorities.

Having heard the Head of Resource Development in further explanation, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

EDUCATION (DISABILITY STRATEGIES AND PUPILS’ RECORDS) (SCOTLAND) BILL – CONSULTATION PAPER

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services on the Department’s response to the SEED consultation on the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils’ Records) (Scotland) Bill.

Having heard the Director of Education and Cultural Services, the Committee agreed;-

- (1) to grant retrospective approval of the comments submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services in his letter to the Scottish Executive dated 20 November 2001, as this Council's response to the Consultation Paper; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing details of the arrangements for the distribution and payment of additional financial resources for schools which have become available following decisions by Scottish Ministers on the allocation of resources carried over from financial year 2000/2001.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to welcome the additional sum of £413,000 which had been allocated to West Dunbartonshire Council;
- (2) that the additional resources allocated to schools within West Dunbartonshire be distributed on the basis of the calculation shown in Appendix 2A of the report (25% roll related, 75% deprivation related);
- (3) that the Scottish Executive be informed that the additional monies for schools in West Dunbartonshire would be distributed on this basis but that the Director should also express the Committee's view that the money could be put to better use if the Council was given greater flexibility in its use;
- (4) that it be suggested to Head Teachers that, if they so decided, some of the money allocated to them could be transferred to a central fund for the purpose of purchasing shared musical instruments; and
- (5) that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee providing information on how the additional monies had been spent.

GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2001/2002 (REVISED PROPOSALS)

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services requesting the Committee to consider revisions to the Department's proposals for the General Services Capital Programme 2001/2002.

Having heard the Head of Children's Services in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) to recommend to Council the transfer and expenditure of capital monies from the General Services Capital Programme 2001/2002 for the projects, as identified in the report.

UPDATE ON CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUILDING PROGRAMME 2001/2002

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing up-to-date information on the status of Education Capital and Revenue Building Projects within the Education and Cultural Services Department.

The Committee, having approved the new format of the report, agreed to note the contents therein.

The meeting closed at 12.20p.m.