

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Education Committee held within the Council Offices, Rosebery Place, Clydebank on Wednesday 23rd June, 1999.

Present: Provost Alistair Macdonald (LAB), and Councillors Daniel McCafferty (LAB), James McElhill (SNP), Mary Campbell (LAB), James Flynn (LAB) (substitute for Councillor Andrew White), Anthony Devine (LAB), Mary Collins (LAB), Duncan McDonald (LAB), John McCutcheon (SNP), John Trainer (LAB), Ronnie McColl (SNP), Margaret McGregor (SNP), and Connie O'Sullivan (LAB), Mr Ronald Alexander, Mrs Barbara Barnes and Miss Sheila Rennie.

Attending: Tim Huntingford, Acting Chief Executive, Ian Leitch, Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council, Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Leisure Services, Bob Cook, Neil McKechnie and Frank Newall, Education and Leisure Services Managers.

Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Andrew White (LAB) and Father Barry.

Councillor Daniel McCafferty in the Chair

Before commencing with the business of the meeting, Provost Macdonald, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated Councillor McCafferty in being appointed Education Convener of COSLA and added that this appointment reflected well on West Dunbartonshire Council.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of meeting of the Education Committee held on 14th April, 1999 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

COUNCIL VEHICLE FLEET

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Contract Services Policy Board of 24th March, 1999 (**Volume page 4508 refers**), there was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Contract Services advising of the current position with regard to the Council's Vehicle Fleet.

APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee was requested to consider whether it wished to re-establish various Committees and Sub-Committees.

Following discussion it was agreed that the following Committees and Sub-Committees should be re-established and that the undernoted elected Members should serve thereon:-

- (a) Appeals Committee - Education
Councillor Mary Collins
Councillor Margaret McGregor
Councillor James Flynn as Chair (decision to be ratified by Council)

- (b) Ad Hoc Sub-Committee on Bursary Appeals
Councillor Daniel McCafferty
Councillor Mary Campbell
Councillor Ronnie McColl

- (c) Teachers Grievance Appeal Sub-Committee
Councillor Daniel McCafferty
Councillor Andrew White
Councillor John Trainer
Councillor Mary Collins
Councillor Anthony Devine
Councillor John McCutcheon
Councillor James McElhill
Mr Ronald Alexander (for secondary appeals)
Mrs Barbara Barnes (for pre-five and primary appeals)

- (d) Childminding and Day Care for Young Children Appeals Committee
Councillor Daniel McCafferty
Councillor Mary Collins
Councillor Margaret McGregor

EXCELLENCE FUND: UPDATE ON PROGRESS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services advising that all 9 bids submitted under the Excellence Fund Core Programme relative to Improvement Plans under each specific area, had been successful and approved by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department.

Following discussion and having heard the Director in answer to Members' questions and advise that the additional money which would be made available to West Dunbartonshire Council as a result of the success of these bids was £1,848,295 the Committee agreed to note:-

- (1) the contents of the report and of the letter from the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, attached as an Appendix to the report;

- (2) the related initiatives and developments being taken forward within the Department relative to the Excellence Fund Special Programme, involving the Braidfield New Community School initiative and the Education Action Plans being developed relative to three school cluster groupings, namely, those involving Clydebank High School, Dumbarton Academy and St. Andrew's High School, Clydebank and their associated feeder primary schools; and
- (3) the Director's intention to explore all possible options to extend the operating principles of the New Community School and of the Education Action Plans to all schools within West Dunbartonshire.

REVIEW OF THE TECHNICIAN SERVICE

The was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services containing, prior to final consultation with all relevant parties, details of a Review of the Technician Service.

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

- (1) to approve that the recommendations contained within the report should be subject to consultation with all interested parties;
- (2) to note that the final report, including any responses, would be submitted for approval to the Education Committee to be held on 1st September, 1999; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS 1999/2000

There was submitted and approved a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services amending the school term dates and local holiday arrangements for schools for Session 1999/2000 as shown in Appendix I to the Minutes.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS 2000/2001

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services requesting approval of the school term dates and local holiday arrangements for schools within West Dunbartonshire for Session 2000/2001 as detailed in Appendix II to the Minutes.

The Committee agreed to approve the contents of the aforementioned report.

CONSULTATION ON THE RESTRUCTURING AND DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES WITHIN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services seeking approval to undertake a full consultation on the restructuring and development of Early Childhood Services within West Dunbartonshire.

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

- (1) that the proposals for the restructuring and development of Early Childhood Services within West Dunbartonshire Council, as outlined within the report, be the subject of a full consultation with all relevant parties;
- (2) that the responses to this first phase of the consultative exercise be the subject of a full and detailed report to the Education Committee to be held on 8th December, 1999;
- (3) that thereafter a full formal consultation should be undertaken; and
- (4) that proposals thereafter adopted take full effect from the commencement of school session 2000/2001.

REGULATION OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE: A CONSULTATION PAPER

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services bringing attention to the Consultation Paper "Regulation of Early Education and Childcare" issued by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department in March, 1999.

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

- (1) to note the publication of the Consultation Paper "Regulation of Early Education and Childcare"; and
- (2) that Appendix 1 to the report be submitted to the Scottish Office by the due date of 30th June 1999, as West Dunbartonshire Council's response to the Consultation Paper; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

EXCLUSION TARGETS FOR WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR SESSION 1999/2000

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services containing information on the significant reduction which had been effected in the level of pupil exclusions from West Dunbartonshire secondary schools over the last two years.

Having heard the Directors of Education and Leisure Services and Social Work and Housing in further explanation the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the significant reduction which had been effected in the level of pupil exclusions from secondary schools in West Dunbartonshire over the last two years;
- (2) to note and approve the targets which had been agreed with Head Teachers for further reductions both in the number of half day exclusions per pupil and the number of pupil exclusions for session 1999/2000;
- (3) to note that the Department's Standard Circular No. 8, which contained guidance to Head Teachers relative to exclusions, was available upon request from the Education and Leisure Services Department;
- (4) to note that the Director of Education and Leisure Services and relevant Officers of Social Work and Housing Department would give a presentation on Braidfield New Community School at the next meeting of the Education Committee; and
- (5) that suitable arrangements would be made to enable Members of the Committee to visit the aforementioned school before the September Meeting of the Committee.

REQUEST TO EXTEND PERIOD OF SICKNESS ALLOWANCE TO TWO COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services seeking retrospective agreement to continuing, for an initial period of three months, the Sickness Allowance payable to two members of teaching staff.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to grant retrospective approval for the continuation of half salary to the members of the teaching staff referred to within the report for a period of up to three months commencing in May, 1999; and
- (2) to delegate to the Acting Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Education and Leisure Services and the Leaders of the Political Parties within the Council, the authority to grant a further extension of half pay to either or both of these members of staff, depending on the medical progress, if either is unable to return to work in August, 1999.

GARTOCHARN NURSERY - PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services informing Members of the opening of Gartocharn Nursery and seeking approval for the introduction of charging for childcare in Gartocharn Nursery.

Having heard Mr Newall in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report detailing those facilities which would be available within Gartocharn Nursery, to be opened in August, 1999;

- (2) to approve the proposal that any surplus places within Gartocharn Nursery after pre-school places and ante-pre-school places had been taken, be allocated for “wrap-around care” and childcare; and
- (3) to approve that a charge, of in the first instance £2.00 per hour, be levied at an economical rate for “wrap-around care” and childcare.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE OUTDOOR EDUCATION SERVICE: INCREASE IN CHARGES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services containing up-to-date information on developments within West Dunbartonshire Outdoor Education Service and seeking approval to increase charges of this service in line with inflation and current policy.

Having heard Mr McKechnie in further explanation, the Committee agreed to approve the charges detailed in paragraph 3.2 of the report, with effect from 31st July, 1999 and to otherwise note the contents of the report.

MCDONALDS OUR TOWN’S STORY (OUR DAY IN THE DOME)

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services introducing Members to the rationale behind the McDonalds Our Town’s Story Project.

Having heard Mr McKechnie inform that:-

- (1) British Airways had offered to sponsor the project by providing free flights from Glasgow to London for participants; and
- (2) a similar project entitled “Our Day in the Drome” would be held in the Playdrome, Clydebank in conjunction with the Dome Project, to enable a greater participation of children.

Following discussion the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to authorise officers to work towards securing major sponsorship to help defray costs to the authority;
- (b) that a full report on Our Day in The Dome be submitted to the September Meeting of the Committee; and
- (c) to defer consideration on the recommendation to underwrite the project costs, up to a maximum of £25,000, to the September Meeting of the Committee.

SURPLUS PROPERTY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services seeking approval for the disposal of two football pitches at Braidfield High School.

Following discussion and having heard Mr Cook in answer to Members' questions, Councillor McCafferty, seconded by Councillor Flynn, moved that the Committee:-

- (1) declare two of the four football pitches at Braidfield High School surplus to the requirements of the Education and Leisure Services Department;
- (2) that the matter be remitted to the Policy and Resources Committee to determine the future of the said property; and
- (3) that a site visit be arranged for Members of the Committee before the next Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee at which Members could raise any concerns they may have on the future of the property.

As an amendment, Councillor McGregor, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved that any decisions on the report be deferred pending the site visit to Braidfield High School.

On a vote being taken, 4 Members voted for the amendment and 7 voted for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

SURPLUS PROPERTY - TIED HOUSE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services seeking approval to declare surplus the Janitor's house at Our Holy Redeemer Primary School, East Barnes Street, Clydebank.

Following discussion and having heard Mr Cook in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed that a decision on the future of the aforementioned property be deferred pending a site visit.

UPDATE ON CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUILDING PROGRAMME 1998/99

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services providing up-to-date information on the status of the Capital and Revenue Building Projects for 1998/1999 within the Education and Leisure Services Department and drawing attention to significant issues or problems with the progress of any particular project.

UPDATE ON CAPITAL BUILDING PROGRAMME 1999/2000

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Provost Macdonald left the meeting after consideration of this item.

STAFF WELFARE

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services requesting approval to set up a Staff Welfare Service for Teachers on an initial nine month pilot basis and to second a suitable Officer as Staff Welfare Officer, to provide welfare and first level counselling service to teaching staff.

Following discussion and having heard Mr Cook in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the setting up of a Staff Welfare Service for Teachers on an initial nine month pilot basis;
- (2) to approve the secondment of an appropriate member of staff as Staff Welfare Officer for Teachers;
- (3) that a full report be submitted to a future Meeting of the Committee, based on an evaluation of the pilot scheme at the end of six months of operation; and
- (4) that a review of operation of the Scheme would be undertaken after nine months, with a view to deciding whether the project should be terminated at the end of the nine month period, continued or extended to other staff within the Department or alternatively to refer the matter to Council with a view to recommending extension of the scheme Council-wide.

FIRE PROCEDURES

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services containing up-to-date information on aspects of the current fire procedures implemented in all schools and pre-five establishments.

OUR LADY AND ST. PATRICK'S HIGH SCHOOL: BUILDING ISSUES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services advising of two significant property issues in relation to Our Lady and St. Patrick's High School and on measures being taken to address these issues.

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

- (1) to approve the Director's proposals for measures to progress works as required;

- (2) to note that the Director would submit a progress report to the next cycle of the Committee; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION REPORT ON PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 1996/97 - 1997/98 COMPARISONS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services drawing attention to the recently published Accounts Commission analysis of West Dunbartonshire Council's Performance on the table of Key Performance Indicators, comparing the period 1996/97 with 1997/98.

The Committee agreed to note the report and the attached Appendix.

REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICE

There was submitted a report advising of the progress made to date concerning the review of the Community Education Service.

Following discussion and having heard Mr McKechnie in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the review of the Community Education Service, the development of a Youth Strategy and the interim outcomes of the HMI Inspection, be reported to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (2) that henceforth the Review Group for Community Education be a Member/Officer Group; and
- (3) that 6 elected Members be included in the membership of the Review Group, 4 from the Administration, namely Councillors McCafferty, Campbell, Collins and Devine and 2 from the Opposition (to be advised later).

Councillor McElhill left during discussion of this item.

EDUCATION FOR WORK

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services containing information on the proposed establishment of an Education For Work Unit, in partnership with East Dunbartonshire Council.

Having heard Mr McKechnie in further explanation the Committee agreed:

- (1) to the establishment of an Education For Work Unit, through a contractual agreement with East Dunbartonshire Council, to deliver a Work Experience Programme for pupils in S4;
- (2) that a report on the work of the Education For Work Unit and the associated contractual details be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (3) to approve the expenditure of £40,000 from the Education budget;
- (4) to note that Linnvale Primary School had been successful in winning the Young Enterprise competition; and
- (5) that in recognition of this achievement congratulations should be sent to the pupils of Linnvale Primary School on behalf of the Education Committee.

ELECTION OF TEACHERS' REPRESENTATIVES TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services advising that Mr Ronald Alexander and Mrs Barbara Barnes had been re-elected as the teachers' representatives to serve on the Education Committee for the period from August 1999 until June 2001.

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE ON THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Leisure Services advising of the result of an advertisement placed in the press seeking a church representative to the Education Committee to take up the position vacated by Reverend Ronald S. Millar, Minister of Dalreoch United Free Church.

Thereafter the Committee noted that Ms Kerr, Vestry Secretary of St. Augustine's Church had nominated Ms Margaret Wallace as a church representative and that the Director intended to write to her to extend an invitation to Ms Wallace to fill this vacant position.

BUSINESS NOT ON THE AGENDA

In terms of Standing Order No. 7, by reason of limited timescale and as a matter of urgency, the Convener accepted a proposal (tabled) by Councillor McGregor that condolences should be sent to the family of Ross Baillie, the young athlete who died recently from anaphylactic shock syndrome.

Following discussion the Committee agreed to the aforementioned proposal and that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the implications of anaphylactic shock syndrome having regard to catering in schools and other establishments.

