

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Education Committee held within the Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday 5th April, 2000 at 10.00a.m.

Present: Councillors Daniel McCafferty (LAB), James McElhill (SNP), Mary Campbell (LAB), Andrew White (LAB), Mary Collins (LAB), Duncan McDonald (LAB), Linda McColl (LAB), Iain Robertson (SNP) (substituting for Ronald McColl), James McCallum (LAB & CO-OP), John Trainer (LAB), Margaret McGregor (SNP) and Connie O'Sullivan (LAB), Mr Ronald Alexander, Mrs Barbara Barnes, Miss Sheila Rennie, Father John McGorry and Ms Margaret Wallace.

Attending: Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Cultural Services, Alan Douglas, Manager - Best Value and Special Projects, Legal and Administrative Services, Bob Cook, Neil McKechnie and Frank Newall, Education and Cultural Services Managers.

Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Provost Alistair Macdonald (LAB) and Councillors Anthony Devine (LAB), John McCutcheon (SNP) and Ronald McColl (SNP).

Councillor Daniel McCafferty in the Chair

Before commencing with the business of the meeting, Councillor McCafferty, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Councillor Collins to her first meeting following her recent illness.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE STRATEGY

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Education Committee held on 9th February, 2000 (**Volume page 5486 refers**), re-submit report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services containing information on the development of the Childcare Partnership and seeking approval to consolidate, as permanent posts, the posts of Childcare Partnership Officer and Childcare Information Assistant, presently filled on a temporary basis.

Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note
 - (a) that these posts would be financed from the Childcare Strategy Grant in 2000/2001 and 2001/2002. (Details regarding the Government's funding strategy beyond 2001/2002 are not yet available).

- (b) that, if, for any reason the Government was to change its priorities and redirect funding, these posts would continue to require funding from the Council's Education revenue budget;
- (2) to note that the annual cost of the two posts, including employer's on-costs, would be approximately £43,000;
- (3) to approve the recommendation of the Childcare Partnership, that the posts of Childcare Strategy Development Officer and Childcare Information Assistant be consolidated as permanent posts; and
- (4) that the matter be remitted to the Personnel Sub-Committee in order that the posts may be graded appropriately.

Councillor Campbell entered the meeting following consideration of this item.

EXCELLENCE FUND: CORE PROGRAMME 10 - INCLUSION

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Education Committee held on 9th February, 2000 (**Volume Page 5486 refers**), a report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services requesting retrospective approval for submission of those proposals relating to the Excellence Fund: Core Programme 10 - Inclusion, to the Scottish Executive.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to grant retrospective approval for submission of those proposals relating to the Excellence Fund: Core Programme 10 - Inclusion, to the Scottish Executive;
- (2) that the lack of disabled access to the Music and Physical Education Departments within Our Lady and St. Patrick's High School be investigated; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the 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 Cultural Services seeking approval for a full formal consultation on the Restructuring and Development of Early Childhood Services within West Dunbartonshire.

Councillor McCafferty, seconded by Councillor Trainer, moved approval of the recommendations of the report as follows:-

- (1) That the Committee agrees to adopt the proposals that
 - (i) all pre-5 establishments within West Dunbartonshire Council should be designated as Early Education and Childcare Centres;

- (ii)
 - (iii) each Early Education and Childcare Centre be staffed to an agreed basic staffing formula including an agreed allocation of teacher input. That specific staffing formula would require to reflect the opening hours and range of provision in the particular Centre;
 - (iv)
 - (iii) the management of these Centres, under the direction of the Director of Education and Cultural Services, should be by a Head of Centre;
 - (iv) charging for the childcare element of provision within all Early Education and Childcare Centres in West Dunbartonshire Council be introduced from the start of the 2000/2001 session on the basis of £2.50 per hour; and
 - (v) the actual opening hours and range of provision in each Centre, within the general framework, should be the subject of local negotiation in order to ensure that it corresponds to the expressed needs of that local community.
- (2) this report be issued as a Consultative Document and made available to all interested parties;
 - (3) all interested parties, including the relevant School Boards be asked to make written representations on the proposals to the Director of Education and Cultural Services, West Dunbartonshire Council, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton G82 3PU no later than Friday 19th May, 2000; and
 - (4) the Director of Education and Cultural Services prepare a report on the results of the consultative process for consideration at a meeting of the Education Committee to be held on 31st May, 2000.

As an amendment, Councillor McGregor, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved as follows:-

That recommendations (1) (i), (ii), (iii) (iv) and (v), referred to in the report be deferred and that the Committee agree to adopt the proposals that recommendations (2), (3) and (4) as shown above be approved.

On a vote being taken, 7 Members voted for the amendment and 10 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

Councillor White arrived during consideration of the above item.

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE CHILDCARE PARTNERSHIP - EARLY EDUCATION
AND CHILDCARE PLAN 2000/2003**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services containing information on the West Dunbartonshire Childcare Partnership Early Education and Childcare Plan for 2000/2003 and seeking approval for the particular proposals within the plan which have implications for Council Services.

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

- (1) to note the distribution of Partnership funds outlined in the aforesaid document; and
- (2) to approve the West Dunbartonshire Childcare Early Education and Childcare Plan 2000/2003.

DECLARATION OF NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

Councillor McCafferty declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the undernoted item and took no part in the Committee's deliberation with respect thereto.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES: PROPOSALS FOR BRAIDFIELD COMMUNITY SCHOOL EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CHILDCARE CENTRE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services advising of the request by the Committee of the parent run pre-5 facility in Braidfield Community School that the facility should be managed by the Council as part of its Early Education and Childcare provision.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that further discussions should take place with the parents' committee of the Braidfield Community Nursery and with all other relevant parties including the Head Teacher and Integration Manager of Braidfield High School; and
- (2) that a further report containing detailed and fully costed proposals regarding any proposed development be submitted for consideration to a future meeting of the Committee.

ALTERNATIVES TO EXCLUSION - PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITY ENTERPRISE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking approval for a development and expansion of the present partnership between Unity Enterprise and West Dunbartonshire Council.

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

- (1) to approve the further development and expansion of the present partnership between Unity Enterprise and West Dunbartonshire Council as outlined in the aforesaid report; and
- (2) that the Director of Education and Cultural Services would make the necessary arrangements to enable elected Members to visit Unity Enterprise, Cochno Street, Clydebank.

Councillor Collins left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF MIDDLEMUIR SCHOOL

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking approval for a formal consultation to take place on the proposed closure of Middlemuir School, Clydebank.

Councillor McCafferty, seconded by Councillor Trainer, moved approval of the recommendation of the report as follows:-

That the Committee agree to adopt the proposals that:

- (1) Middlemuir School be closed from 30th June, 2000;
- (2) Middlemuir School building be declared surplus to the requirements of the Department of Education and Cultural Services;
- (3) this report be issued as a consultative document and made available to all interested parties;
- (4) all interested parties be asked to make written representations on the proposals to the Director of Education and Cultural Services, West Dunbartonshire Council, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU no later than Friday 12th May, 2000; and
- (5) the Director of Education and Cultural Services prepare a report on the results of the consultative process to be submitted for consideration at the meeting of the Education Committee to be held on 31st May, 2000.

As an amendment, Councillor McGregor, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved as follows:-

That recommendations (1) and (2) be deferred and that the recommendations (3), (4) and (5) as shown above, be approved.

On a vote being taken, 7 Members voted for the amendment and 10 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) that the Manager - Legal and Administrative Services seek to clarify the wording to be used for future consultations, in line with regulatory requirements;
- (b) that the Director of Education and Cultural Services make the necessary arrangements to enable members of the Education Committee to visit Middlemuir School.

Councillor Collins re-entered the meeting during consideration of the above item.

FOOTWEAR AND CLOTHING GRANTS - CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking approval of an amendment to the criteria for eligibility to Footwear and Clothing Grants in the light of the introduction of the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) which replaced Family Credit.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve the following two changes to the criteria for eligibility to Footwear and Clothing Grants:-

- (1) that in the list of qualifying benefits for Footwear and Clothing Grants, Working Families Tax Credit replaces Family Credit; and
- (2) that a further restriction is placed on the eligibility for those in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit to the extent that the applicant would have qualified previously for Family Credit.

Councillor Trainer left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

REVIEW OF THE TECHNICIAN SERVICE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services advising of the results of further discussion with interested parties, including the relevant Trades Unions, on the extent to which the proposals contained in the paper submitted to the Education Committee held on 27th October, 1999 (**Volume page 5190 refers**), can now be implemented.

Following discussion and having heard the Convener and Mr Newall in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the implementation of the report on the Review of the Technician Service, shown as Appendix 7 to the report, subject to the following amendments:-

- (1) that no regradings should take place pending the implementation of the National Job Evaluation Scheme;

- (2) that the job descriptions of the Technician Support Officer - Science Subjects Specialist, the Technician Support Officer - Technical Subjects Specialists (school based) and the Central Technical Technician should be amended in line with Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report; and
- (3) that the implementation should be progressed to the extent to which the budgetary provision for the Education and Cultural Services Department allows.

Councillor Trainer re-entered the meeting during consideration of the above item.

HIGHER SCHOOL BURSARIES 2000/2001

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking approval of the Higher School Bursary Policy for the financial year 2000/2001. A copy of the proposed Higher School Bursary Policy for academic session 2000/2001 was appended to the aforesaid report.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the report and to adopt the aforesaid Appendix "A Guide to Higher School Bursaries" as West Dunbartonshire Council's Bursary Policy document in the academic session 2000/2001.

5-14 ATTAINMENT

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing an overview on school performance against targets for 5-14 attainment in primary and secondary schools.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and the steady progress which was being made in West Dunbartonshire schools towards achieving 5-14 targets.

CONSULTATION ON THE "REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT IN PRE-SCHOOL AND 5-14"

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the West Dunbartonshire response to the "Review of Assessment in Pre-School and 5-14", published by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and the Scottish Executive in December, 1999.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve submission of this report and its Appendix to Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools as West Dunbartonshire Council's contribution to the review of assessment of pre-school and 5-14; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

CONSULTATION ON REVISED NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR ASPECTS OF THE 5-14 CURRICULUM

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing an overview of the review of:-

- (i) Environmental Studies 5-14 Society, Science and Technology National Guidelines - Consultation Draft;
- (ii) Information and Communications Technology 5-14, National Guidelines - Consultation Draft; and
- (iii) Health Education 5-14 National Guidelines - Consultation Draft.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the submission of the aforesaid report and its Appendices to the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum as representing the views of West Dunbartonshire Council; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY LEARNING STRATEGY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services updating Members on developments in relation to the production of the Community Learning Strategy. A copy of the document entitled "West Dunbartonshire Community Learning Strategy", was shown as Appendix 3 to the aforesaid report.

Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the document "West Dunbartonshire Community Learning Strategy for 2000/03";
- (2) that a report on the delivery of the Strategy be submitted for consideration to the Education Committee every six months; and
- (3) that a report in relation to the development of Community Learning Plans be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES SEMINAR 25 NOVEMBER 1999

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services on the Equal Opportunities Seminar held on 25th November 1999, seeking approval for the proposals outlined in the Education and Cultural Services Equal Opportunities Action Plan as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed to note the report and to approve the Education and Cultural Services Equal Opportunities Action Plan.

REVIEW OF THE CAREERS SERVICE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services seeking retrospective approval for the response to the National Review of the Careers Service submitted to the Scottish Executive on 1st March, 2000 on behalf of West Dunbartonshire Council.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve retrospectively the aforementioned report as West Dunbartonshire Council's submission to the Scottish Executive to the National Review of the Careers Service.

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT: EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE - SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE INQUIRY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing Members with West Dunbartonshire Council's draft response to the Scottish Parliament: Education, Culture and Sport Committee Inquiry into the current state of school buildings and infrastructure.

Having heard the Convener, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the draft response, shown in Appendix 2 to the report, for submission to the Scottish Parliament: Education, Culture and Sport Committee as West Dunbartonshire Council's official response to the aforesaid Inquiry;
- (2) to add Kilbowie Primary School to the list of schools which may be visited by the Committee of Inquiry; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

MCDONALDS OUR TOWN'S STORY (OUR DAY IN THE DOME/DROME) UPDATE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services containing information on the excellent progress made in relation to Our Day in the Dome/Drome.

Having heard Mr McKechnie in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a report on development in relation to Our Day In The Dome/Drome would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

INTEGRATED LEARNING SYSTEMS: AWARD OF CONTRACT

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services advising that the contract for the supply of Integrated Learning Systems had been awarded to Research Machines.

CHILDREN ACT 1989 - REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION STATISTICS

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing information on the number of services registered and inspected under the terms of the Children Act 1989 in the period 1st August, 1999 to 31st January, 2000.

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION REPORT ON PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: 1998/99

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural 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 years 1996/97, 1997/98 with 1998/99.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the terms of the report.

UPDATE ON CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUILDING PROGRAMME 1999/2000

There was submitted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing up-to-date information on the status of the Education Capital and Revenue Building Projects for 1999/2000 within the Education and Cultural Services Department and drawing attention to significant issues or problems with the progress of any particular project.

Having heard Mr Cook in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the terms of the report.

EDUCATION SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET 1999/00 - VARIANCE REPORT TO 29 FEBRUARY 2000

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing an update on the financial status of the Education Service Revenue Budget and providing details of performance up to 29th February, 2000.

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS: COSTS 1997/1998 TO 1999/2000

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services highlighting relevant detail from the Scottish Office, HM Inspectors of Schools Audit Unit report on “Budgeted Running Costs for Scottish Schools 1997/1998 to 1999/2000”.

URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

The Convener, in terms of Section 50B(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as inserted by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, decided that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency on the grounds that the action to be taken required early consideration.

CLOSURE OF KEIL SCHOOL, DUMBARTON

Councillor McCafferty informed the Committee that due to the closure of Keil School in Dumbarton, West Dunbartonshire Council may be required to place some of Keil School’s day pupils into West Dunbartonshire Schools.

Thereafter, the Director of Education and Cultural Services requested Members of the Committee to refer any enquiries received by them, from parents or children regarding placement in schools, to either himself or his senior staff, who would be happy to provide any necessary advice or information in that respect.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the position and requested the Council’s Public Relations Section to make the necessary arrangements in the media to highlight West Dunbartonshire Council’s position on this matter.

The Meeting closed at 11.10a.m.