

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by Chief Education Officer**

**Education Services Committee – 01 December 2021**

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**Subject: Scottish Youth Parliament Membership of Educational Services Committee**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ask Committee to determine whether there should be Scottish Youth Parliament members nominated to serve on the Educational Services Committee.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) Approves the submission of a report to Council recommending the addition of two Scottish Youth Parliament members on the Education Services Committee.
  - (ii) Agrees that voting members of the Committee require to be over the age of sixteen years old.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Following the presentation to the Educational Services Committee on 22 September 2021 by the Scottish Youth Parliament there was a request from the Educational Services Convenor to investigate the possibility of creating two places on the Committee for the Scottish Youth Parliament Candidates.

**4. Main Issues**

- 4.1 This report asks the Educational Services Committee to determine whether it believes there should be Scottish Youth Parliament representation on the Educational Services Committee.
- 4.2 The decisions of the Educational Services Committee have a direct impact on the children and young people of West Dunbartonshire and as such it is important that their voice is heard as part of the democratic process. Schools involve young people in their own decision making processes through Pupil Councils and pupils aged 16 upwards have voting rights in Scottish Parliamentary Elections. We have all seen very recently just how young people have embraced the climate change agenda reminding decision makers that they require to have their voices heard globally. This proposal opens up the opportunity for them to influence local educational matters as key stakeholders.

- 4.3** The presence of members of Scottish Youth Parliamentarians on the Educational Services Committee will add an additional dimension to the Committee and will contribute in supporting adoption of the principles in The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by allowing the youth representatives a voice and voting position within the Educational Services Committee
- 4.4** Scottish Youth Parliament elections are held in Scotland every two years and will next take place in November 2021, so the method chosen for the selection of the Members is straightforward and transparent. West Dunbartonshire Council has two nominated Scottish Youth Parliament members with this process replicated every two years, resulting in an automatic renewal of membership to serve on the Educational Services Committee.
- 4.4** While it is possible for members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to be as young as 14 years it is proposed that membership of the Committee and Voting Rights be restricted to those aged 16 and over. This suggested age qualification reflects the law of Scotland as regards the age of legal capacity and the fact that sixteen years and above is recognised, through the grant of democratic rights, as an age of which individuals can be expected to understand and participate in significant decision making processes.
- 4.5** Given the implications for confidentiality in respect of potentially sensitive information any report to Council will consider whether, in, the event of exclusion of press and public, such Members would require to be excluded from consideration of certain items.
- 4.6** Similarly Council will need to further consider the appropriateness of the requirement of such members to participate in matters such as school closures where they may be more vulnerable than other Committee Members to lobbying from individuals and pressure groups.
- 4.7** While the Committee would offer Membership to the local members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, they are under no obligation to accept and in such circumstances the position would remain vacant.
- 4.8** In terms of Section 124(2)(a) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, it is essential that any committee determining educational matters has at least half of its membership drawn from Members of the Authority. Were Council to agree to amend membership as recommended this requirement would be met.

## **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** There are no people issues arising from this report.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 6.1** There are no financial or procurement implications associated with this report.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** Elected Members are governed by the Councillor Code of Conduct and as such are bound by those rules with sanctions available for breaching such rules. Whilst lay people can be bound by such rules, there are no sanctions available to the Council, other than through court processes, for any breaches. Accordingly the Council would require to carefully consider what restrictions it may consider around particular items of business

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** EIA screening conducted and included as Appendix 1

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1** The Chief Education Officer consulted Legal Services and Finance in the preparation of this report.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

- 10.1** The inclusion of the Scottish Youth Parliament members will further provide an additional level of scrutiny to the Education policies which will accordingly assist the Council in delivering a fit for purpose Education Services.

Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer  
9 November 2021

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<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Council Wards

