

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Educational Services Committee held in Committee Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 6 June 2018 at 2.05 p.m.

Present: Provost William Hendrie and Councillors Jim Brown, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Jim Finn, Daniel Lennie, Caroline McAllister, Jonathan McColl, John Millar, John Mooney and Martin Rooney, and Mrs Barbara Barnes, Mr Gavin Corrigan, Miss Ellen McBride and Ms Julia Strang.

Attending: Angela Wilson, Strategic Director - Transformation & Public Service Reform; Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer - Pupil Support; Julie McGrogan, Senior Education Officer - Raising Attainment/Improving Learning; Kathy Morrison, Education Officer, Craig Jardine, Capital Investment Programme Manager; Michelle Lynn, Client Business Partner; Alan Douglas, Legal Manager; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Miss Sheila Rennie.

Councillor Karen Conaghan 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 7 March 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS

The Minutes of Meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 6 March 2018 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved.

OPEN FORUM

Councillor Conaghan, Chair, advised the Committee that five Open Forum questions had been received from Mr Stephen Storrie, Ms Ann Carr, Lynn Mcfetridge, Ms Elizabeth Kelly and Mr Drew MacEoghainn, all of which related to St Martin's Primary School and the Alexandria Schools' Estate.

Councillor Conaghan invited Mr Storrie forward and he read out his question:-

(a) Stephen Storrie, Chairperson, St Martin's Primary School Parent Council

We understand that officers have identified 21 options for the future educational provision in Renton, we the parent council of St Martins have proposed two options in fact the same two options which were proposed in 2015 in response to the then administration and education departments proposal to close St Martins and build a super school.

As the proposal to close St Martins in 2015 and move our children to a school which was deemed "unfit for purpose" investment in which "didn't give bang for the buck" by the former head of education Terry Lanagan in conjunction with the senior members of staff and the estates department, some of whom have drawn up the latest proposal in fact one of whom is leading the education department, how is it possible that after 3 additional years of neglect from the local authority that this building "miraculously" now is deemed as suitable for investment?

Councillor Conaghan provided the following response:-

The proposals put forward in 2015 were very different to considerations in 2018. Parents at the time were very clear that they did not want a 'Super-Campus'. In reconsidering the Schools Estate in 2018 Officers worked from the starting point that the same proposal would not be acceptable to parents.

The investment in St Mary's is already well under way with the opening of the new Early Learning and Childcare Centre. Further extensions/refurbishments will begin.

Works have commenced in relation to the roof works and scoping has commenced in relation to the internal and STEM hubs.

TYPE	TIMEFRAME/STATUS
Roof Works	Ongoing
Internal Condition	June – October
Stem Works	Currently Scoping – to be delivered by March 2019
Dining Hall – Extension	Currently Scoping – to be delivered by August 2019
External Areas	Currently scoping

Via the Central Repairs Budget the following has been spent on both St Mary's and St Martin's from 2015 to date totalling £87,081.77.

		2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	Total
F2087	ST MARTIN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	£23,740.30	£10,702.54	£7,204.05	£41,646.89
F2088	ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA, REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	£25,224.93	£8,864.75	£11,345.20	£45,434.88

As a supplementary question, Mr Storrie asked:-

What are the plans for further works at St Martin's and St Mary's and what are the timescales?

In response, Councillor Conaghan stated that details of future works and timescales would be provided to Mr Storrie in writing.

Councillor Conaghan then invited Ms Carr forward and she read out her question:-

(b) Ann Carr, Renton

Even though St Martins school is in a state of disrepair, (responsibility for maintenance of which lies with the local authority) the educational attainment in our school is nothing short of astounding. This in part must be accredited to the teaching and other staff associated with our school and the personal pride and involvement all members of staff have with our children, but a major factor in the high attainment levels is due to smaller class sizes.

How is the education department going to assure parents and staff that their decision today will ensure that the educational attainment levels and the sense of community our children and staff members feel in their school will not only be sustained at their current level but will be enhanced for all children and staff members?

Councillor Conaghan provided the following response:-

The test results at St Martin's started to improve when St Martin's was brought into shared Headship with St Mary's. This was a result of St Martin's following the same systems for planning, learning, teaching and assessment which St Mary's has. The shared Headship has also enabled professional learning opportunities for staff which were not available when St Martin's was stand alone. We cannot attribute small class sizes to raised attainment in this instance.

The Education of children at St Martin's is not set to change from the current position as a result of the proposal in the report.

Councillor Conaghan then invited Ms Mcfetridge forward and she read out her question:-

(c) Lynn Mcfetridge, Renton

As anyone can testify Renton has suffered from lack of major investment for decades from the local authority, in fact without local people taking control of the local housing association I would hate to contemplate what our village would look like today.

The result of lack of investment is a village which is just beginning to recover from poor housing, lower than average income, closure of our library, nursery, community centre and what seems to be an annual crusade to close one of our two schools. If we go by all statements and literature circulated by the education department on their preferred option, (one of closure of St Martins and forcing children to be educated in Alexandria), then we will have the spectacle of half of the children and families who have had to live with this massive under investment being forced to drive or walk past the first piece of major investment in our village from the local authority in decades and attend a school deemed unfit for purpose in 2015, coupled with this there is a projected increase in numbers of inward migration to our village due to planning applications for new homes.

So taking this into account how does the committee feel that at a time of increasing number of families preparing to stay in our village many of whom will have no connection previously, how will children being forced to be educated outside of our village affect community continuity, cohesion and equality?

Councillor Conaghan provided the following response:-

WDC has taken account of potential new housing. St Mary's building has the capacity for the numbers which may emanate from new builds. It is highly unlikely that every child to come from new build housing would require a Catholic Education.

The current roll is 188 and the capacity of St Mary's is 320.

The areas of Renton and Alexandria provide both denominational and non denominational education, they provide ELC as well as access to ASN provision. We are confident that this area is very well served in terms of Education provision.

The Council maintains committed to working with and for the community to support the national Community Empowerment agenda and build the resilience of the local area.

Renton has an active community and strong Community Development Trust with a long history of acting in the interest of the local community. We will continue to work with them and any others interested to ensure services are targeted to meet the needs of the local community, building on local activity.

Councillor Conaghan then invited Ms Kelly forward and she read out her question:-

(d) Elizabeth Kelly, Renton

If as has been highlighted in every piece of literature and every statement which the education department has circulated, that officers preferred option will be closure of St Martins and the forcing of children to attend a school in Alexandria then there is both safety and financial implications to this proposal.

Adoption of this proposal will result in primary children being unable to walk to school as they would need to share a pavement beside a main road with young adults going to high school in the opposite direction, to cross at least three roads, two of which have no crossing lights, many grandparents being unable to pick children up after school, there is additional cost implications for parents through additional travel, there are implications on which careers parents are able to pursue due to grandparents or guardians being unable to collect their children and for those who are fortunate enough to have their own transport, traffic chaos in an already not fit for purpose traffic blackspot.

With this in mind how does the education department propose to address all of the above and ensure that our children arrive safely at the school and that an already less affluent area is not further financially burdened by a forced move of our children's educational facility?

Councillor Conaghan provided the following response:-

The Council would undertake a "Safe Walking Route to School Assessment" using national guidelines.

Councillor Conaghan then invited Mr MacEoghainn forward and he read out his question:-

(e) Drew MacEoghainn, Renton

Catholic education in Renton predates the Scottish Education act of 1918, Renton has always been a village which prides itself on equality fairness and social responsibility, this was the manner in which the parent council of St Martins approached this process.

We have had an open meeting which saw 90 people in attendance, a questionnaire circulated which saw 90% returned, all of which agreed unanimously that the parents and pupils in Renton deserve a new build St Martins in our village, we also arranged a walk attended by over 100 people, whereas the education department has circulated letters, some of which they asked "children who could read, not to" due to the absence of an envelope, a survey which will not be considered here today due to it being declared "unsuitable" and one which "should have never been circulated", they've had to withdraw proposals from the last education committee due to lack of information being utilised in its deliberations on potential options for St Martins, disobeyed a direct instruction from this committee to consider all options and circulated a letter stating that the parents proposal for a new build St Martins was "not an option", how can this committee have any faith in the education department to deliver for you but more importantly for the people of Renton a paper which gives due consideration and a "professional" opinion the likes of which we have seen in the two dual campus schools already built in Balloch and Bellsmyre and assure us parents that the education department have given the 21 options fair consideration especially the two options submitted by the parent council and not what is the widely held belief just gone back to their old failed proposal and only considered the eradication of over 118 years of Catholic education in our village as the ONLY option?

Councillor Conaghan provided the following response:-

Balloch and Bellsmyre communities were consulted via a statutory consultation led by officers and presented to Committee. St Martin's consultation has not followed the statutory route and has been taken in a different direction in accordance with the wishes of Elected Members. The report today presents 11 options and appraisal. Some options have been removed because during the options appraisal process it became apparent that they would not be feasible.

ALEXANDRIA SCHOOLS' ESTATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update in relation to Alexandria Schools' Estate.

Councillor Conaghan moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

- (1) to note the options appraisal contained in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report;
- (2) to undertake works on an interim basis to the existing St Martin's Primary to ensure that it continues to comply with Health and Safety requirements; and

- (3) to proceed as previously noted at the Educational Services Committee meeting in March 2018, with plans for Renton Primary, Renton Language and Communication Base (LCU) and a new Riverside Early Learning and Childcare Centre and a refurbishment of St Mary's Primary.

Following discussion, and having heard officers in answer to a Member's questions, Councillor McColl seconded Councillor Conaghan's motion.

As an amendment, Councillor Mooney, seconded by Councillor Millar, moved:-

Committee thanks the Chief Education Officer for the report on the Alexandria Schools Estate.

There has been significant progress in modernising our schools estate and developing our early years and specialist provision across the whole schools estate and the Committee commend those actions taken to drive forward the improvements in school conditions and making best use of available space for the new curriculum for excellence etc.

This Committee confirms its support for: (i) the refurbishment of St. Mary's Primary and (ii) a new build school for Renton Primary.

However, Committee agrees that the St. Martins Primary School community are entitled to have the same degree of clarity about the long term future of their school.

Committee agrees that any assessment should take account of the long term sustainability of St. Martins and the potential for future growth at the school. Given the above, the committee assesses the identified options as follows:

- **OPTION A: DELAY** - St Martin's Maintenance & Repair only – **REJECTED**
- **OPTION B: DELAY** - St Martin's Maintenance & Repair only - **REJECTED**
- **OPTION C: NEW BUILD** - St. Martins stand alone on Existing Site – **POTENTIAL**
- **OPTION D: NEW BUILD** - St. Martins / Riverside on St. Martins Site - **PREFERRED**
- **OPTION E: COLLOCATED** - St. Martins on Renton site – **POTENTIAL**
- **OPTION F: COLLOCATED** - St. Martins on Renton site – **POTENTIAL**
- **OPTION G: COLLOCATED** - St. Martins on Renton site – **POTENTIAL**
- **OPTION H: RELOCATED** - St. Martins new build on Vale of Leven Academy Site – **REJECTED**
- **OPTION I: RELOCATED** - St. Martins with a nursery and language base on Renton site; with a stand-alone Renton PS on Vale of Leven Academy Site - **REJECTED**
- **OPTION J: AMALGAMATED** - St. Martins with St. Marys – **REJECTED**

- **OPTION K: MODULAR** - St. Martins on Renton PS site - **REJECTED**

The preferred option of a new build comprising St. Martins Primary and Riverside ELCC on the current St. Martins site means there is a clear future for the school and the two other school projects St. Marys refurbishment and Renton Primary rebuild can progress to procurement exercise phase unhindered.

This means however that the Renton Primary School plans would not include Riverside Early Years Learning and Childcare Centre which would mean additional space available for the Renton site facilities.

The St. Martins project can also progress as there is no requirement for a formal consultation as the new school is to be built on its current site.

In revenue terms Option D is also the 4th best option. In addition, there is potential for the new build St. Martins School to be built on a single level and therefore to be wheelchair accessible.

The Committee therefore agrees:

- (i) To proceed with the St. Mary's refurbishment;
- (ii) To proceed with the Renton Primary project, less Riverside Early Years;
- (iii) to proceed with Option D to rebuild a new St. Martins Primary including Riverside Early Years at circa £19.7million;
- (iv) To authorise the commencement of appropriate procurement exercises to deliver the necessary improvements to the Alexandria Schools Estate;
- (v) To seek additional Scottish Government funding support for the new builds; and
- (vi) To update the Ten Year Capital Plan later this year to take account of the Educational Services Committee decision.

Note 1: The Capital Plan prior to 5th March showed £20m available for investment:

- £5m 17/18 not spent
- £8m 18/19 not allocated
- £7m 19/20 not allocated

Note 2: The Scottish Government usually fund 33% of the costs of new build primary schools.

Note 3: The Council had £4m in the regeneration Capital fund which could include investment in new schools.

Note 4: There is specific Scottish Government capital to support the expansion of early years and any new build could potentially draw on this fund as required.

ADJOURNMENT

Having heard Councillor Conaghan, Chair, the Committee agreed to adjourn for a period of 15 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 3.08 p.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance.

Following debate and at the request of Councillor Millar, the Committee agreed to proceed by way of a roll call vote.

On a vote being taken, 4 Members, namely Councillors Lennie, Millar, Mooney and Rooney voted for the amendment and 10 Members, namely Provost Hendrie and Councillors Brown, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, Finn, McAllister and McColl, Mrs Barnes and Miss McBride voted for the motion. Mr Corrigan and Ms Strang abstained from the vote. The motion was accordingly declared carried.

AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer:-

- (a) highlighting the recommendations contained in the Audit Commission Report in February 2018 on the expansion of early learning and childcare in Scotland; and
- (b) providing information on the progress of West Dunbartonshire Council's expansion plans to introduce 1,140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) by 2020, specifically in relation to the recommendations for Councils contained in the report.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Audit Scotland report and the information provided in section 4 of the report submitted to the Committee concerning how the Council is dealing with the issues highlighted in the Audit Scotland report.

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.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Education Officer and the Senior Education Officer - Raising Attainment/Improving Learning in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the progress made in the past three months with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire.

Note: Councillor Lennie left the meeting during consideration of this item.

**UPDATE ON THE INSPECTION OF THE PROGRESS MADE BY LOCAL
AUTHORITIES IN IMPROVING LEARNING, RAISING ATTAINMENT AND
CLOSING THE POVERTY RELATED ATTAINMENT GAP: WEST
DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL (INPLA)**

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on the outcome of the inspection of the local authority which took place in December 2017.

After discussion and having heard officers 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; and
- (2) to congratulate the staff and centrally deployed staff for their hard work in delivering this service within the Authority.

EARLY YEARS IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on the plan for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in West Dunbartonshire Council.

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

- (1) to note the contents of the current updated version of the Early Learning & Childcare Expansion Plan 2018 – 2020 (Appendix 1 to the report);
- (2) to note that partner provider rates of funding had increased from April 2018; and
- (3) that a further update be provided to the Committee at the next meeting in September 2018.

**SUPPORTING POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE SCHOOLS**

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer:-

- (a) informing of practices supporting positive outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) and Young People in West Dunbartonshire schools; and
- (b) informing of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in ensuring adherence to policy and guidance.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Education Officer - Pupil Support in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note West Dunbartonshire Council's support practices; and
- (2) to note West Dunbartonshire Council's 'Guidelines for Supporting Positive Outcomes for Looked After Children and Young People', a copy of which was appended to the report.

WORKING WELL TOGETHER – ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT: 2017/18 ANNUAL RESULTS

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - People and Technology providing a detailed analysis of the annual attendance performance for 2017/18.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the decrease in sickness absence of 0.07 FTE days lost (1.3%) for teachers and an increase of 0.43 FTE days lost (4.7%) for support staff compared to last year as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) to note the increase in Council wide sickness absence of 2,284 FTE days lost (4.87%) compared to last year as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report; and
- (3) to note that future Working Well Together reports would be submitted to the Committee on a bi-annual basis as opposed to quarterly with the first report for 2018/19, which would report on absence from 1 April 2018 to 31 October 2018, being due in November 2018

The meeting closed at 4.35 p.m.