

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 6 October 2016.**

**Present:**

Councillor Elaine Green (Chair),	Councillor Ian McAlpine
Councillor Paul O’Kane (Vice Chair),	Councillor Mary Montague
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Ms Dorothy Graham
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Ms Mary McIntyre
Councillor Gordon McCaskill	Mr Des Morris

Councillor Green in the Chair

**Attending:**

Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources); Mark Ratter, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance); and Ron Leitch, Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Jim Fletcher, Alan Lafferty, Jim Swift and Vincent Waters; and Dr Frank Angell.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**2221.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENTITLEMENT TO 600 HOURS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE**

**2222.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 19 November 2015 (Page 1696, Item 1808 refers), when it was agreed that the Director of Education would proceed with a consultation exercise, report on the findings and bring forward a proposed model for East Renfrewshire to a future meeting, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing Members of the results of the consultation with parents on the future of early learning and child care in East Renfrewshire and the proposals for taking this forward. A copy of the full consultation report was appended to the report.

The report explained that, with effect from August 2015, the provision and allocation of nursery places had been organised in communities with a family centre at the heart of each community offering 52 week provision and greater flexibility. Communities were aligned as follows; Barrhead/Neilston/Uplawmoor; Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham; Giffnock/Thornliebank; and Newton Mearns. It went on to explain that 233 parents/carers had responded to the consultation representing approximately 10% of the total number of children accessing the service; that most had indicated that quality was the most important factor when choosing a service; that the majority used a local authority nursery class or family centre indicating that flexibility and affordability were important factors; and that most had indicated that core hours suited their needs best and did not use wraparound services with cost and the short-term factor being stated as a reason for this.

The report concluded by explaining that a significant number of parents/carers took advantage of the flexibility offered within East Renfrewshire and that parental needs differed across the 4 communities. In response to the consultation the department would carry out further analysis of holiday provision to ensure that it was proportionate to needs and more cost-effective for the Council to provide. The department would also increase places as planned in Busby/Clarkston and in Newton Mearns to allow further flexibility to be offered in these communities and to introduce extended day provision within Newton Mearns.

Responding to enquiries from Members regarding the location of the additional nursery places within Newton Mearns and the cost of conducting the consultation given the relatively low response rate, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that additional nursery places would be located at the new Joint Faith Campus currently under construction as well as at the proposed new non-denominational primary school, the introduction of nursery provision in St. Cadoc's (subject to a statutory education consultation), and with the expansion of provision at Crookfur Primary School. She went on to explain that the consultation had cost very little in view of the fact that the consultation documentation had been made available on the Council's online Citizen Space. The main cost had been the time of officers in analysing the responses and in leading a number of focus groups of parents/carers from each of the communities across the authority area.

Following further brief discussion the committee agreed to:-

- (a) approve the department's proposals to meet the Council's duty to provide 600 hours to all prescribed preschool children by continuing with the current model of core hours, additional hours, flexible hours and holiday provision; and
- (b) further increase flexibility for parents, in particular full day places, to address parental and family needs.

## **SQA EXAMINATION RESULTS 2016**

**2223.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 25 August 2016 (Page 2012, Item 2151 refers), when it was noted that a full presentation, including an examination of the improvement made by pupils in the most disadvantaged groups, would be made to this meeting, Councillor Green invited Dr Mark Ratter, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) to make a presentation to the committee.

Dr Ratter provided a comparison of East Renfrewshire's performance in 2016 against its Virtual Comparator schools explaining that this had been the second year in which East Renfrewshire had presented candidates for the new National 4 and 5 examinations. He

highlighted that pupils had once again achieved outstanding S4, S5 and S6 results achieving the best ever results at 5 or more awards at Level 5 in S4; 1,3,and 5 awards at Level 6 in S5; and 1 or more awards at Level 7 in S6. East Renfrewshire schools had performed very well in comparison to their Virtual Comparators and the quality of awards achieved remained very high. He went on to advise that results for all East Renfrewshire young people, and particularly for the lowest performing 20%, had continued to improve year on year over recent years and that young people from the most deprived backgrounds, as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), performed well above comparator groups nationally.

Responding to comments from Councillor McCaskill regarding the reduction in literacy and numeracy scores reported nationally and the lack of comparative data for other local education authorities, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance), supported by the Director of Education, explained that East Renfrewshire literacy and numeracy performance as measured by Curriculum for Excellence attainment had shown an increase in both primary schools and at the S3 stage. Performance in English and mathematics at S4 and S5 had also remained very high or shown an increase and was above the national average. It was also explained that the Association of Directors of Education (ADES) would continue to press the Scottish Government for greater access to Insight data to enable individual education authorities to carry out their own comparisons.

Councillor Montague sought clarification on how the additional resources allocated to helping the lowest performing 20% of pupils were being used. In response, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) explained that additional staff had been made available to schools to support individual pupils who required additional support. He went on to outline the range of work being taken forward in this regard including the establishment of literacy support groups; S6 pupils supporting younger pupils; and the encouragement to staff to adopt a professional enquiry approach and to seek out independent external research. He went on to explain that head teachers used relevant data to identify the barriers that existed for individual pupils and groups of pupils and used this to tailor individual support to those pupils who required additional support as well as to family learning partnerships. The Director advised that it was her intention to once again invite a number of head teachers to address a future meeting of the committee to explain in detail how they approached this issue.

Having heard a number of Members congratulate the Education Department on another commendable set of figures and, in particular, the inroads which had been made into closing the attainment gap for the lowest performing 20% of pupils, and having heard Councillor Green thank Dr Ratter for an excellent and informative presentation, the committee agreed to note the position.

CHAIR

