

MINUTE
of
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 17 November 2016.

Present:

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| Councillor Elaine Green (Chair) | Councillor Ian McAlpine |
| Councillor Jim Fletcher (Leader) | Councillor Gordon McCaskill |
| Councillor Tony Buchanan | Councillor Mary Montague |
| Councillor Danny Devlin | Councillor Vincent Waters |
| Councillor Charlie Gilbert | Dr Frank Angell |
| Councillor Alan Lafferty | Ms Dorothy Graham |
| Councillor Mary Montague | 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); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager; and Ron Leitch, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Paul O’Kane (Vice Chair), and Jim Swift; and Ms Mary McIntyre.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2266. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

FUTURE NON-DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN NEWTON MEARNS SOUTH AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW NON-DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS AT MAIDENHILL FROM SESSION 2019/20 AND BEYOND

2267. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval to carry out a statutory consultation on the future non-denominational primary school provision in Newton Mearns South and the establishment of a new non-denominational primary school and nursery class at Maidenhill. The proposal would take effect from school session 2019/20. A copy of the proposed consultation document was appended to the report.

The report explained that the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) included the need to provide 2 new primary schools and nursery classes to serve planned residential developments in the Maidenhill/Malletsheugh area and that a previous consultation had taken place which resulted in the establishment of a new Roman Catholic primary school, St Clare's Primary, which was currently under construction as part of the faith schools joint campus due to open by August 2017. The proposed consultation related to the planned non-denominational primary school and nursery class expected to open by August 2019 and for which provision had been made within the Council's general capital plan.

It went on to explain the reasons why a new non-denominational primary school was required. Existing associated primary and secondary transfer arrangements would not be affected by the proposal as the areas of change were already zoned to Mearns Castle High School which would simply have an additional associated primary. The current planning capacity of Mearns Castle High School could accommodate the anticipated additional pupil numbers.

Responding to comments from members, the Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources), supported by the Director, explained that colleagues from the Planning Service had been involved in discussions on the proposal from the outset; that a site had been identified for the proposed new school as part of those discussions; and that officers from the Planning Service would be in attendance at the public meetings related to the consultation to answer questions relating to planning matters. She also confirmed that meetings had been held with colleagues from the Council's Communications Team with a view to developing a robust media strategy to support the proposed consultation.

Following further brief discussion, in the course of which a majority of members expressed their support for the proposed consultation, the committee agreed to:-

- (a) approve that the Director of Education proceeds with a consultation on a proposal, which would take effect from school session 2019/20, concerning future non-denominational primary school provision in Newton Mearns South and the establishment of a new non-denominational primary school and nursery class at Maidenhill; and
- (b) instruct the Director to report on the results of the consultation to the Education Committee in March 2017.

FORMULATING EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION: *EMPOWERING TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION*

2268. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the Education Department's approach to gathering views to formulate the Council's response to the Scottish Government consultation on the governance of education in Scotland.

The report explained that in September 2016 the Scottish Government had launched a consultation to seek views on how education in Scotland was run. The consultation period would run until 6 January 2017 and a copy of the full consultation document was appended to the report. The Director explained that the department had already raised awareness of the consultation with Parent Council Chairs at a recent meeting and it had been agreed that they would respond both collectively and independently. Meetings had also been held with representatives of Head Teachers and teachers and elected members had been invited to an event in Eastwood House on 29 November. The department would also gather views

from representatives of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) and officers from the Quality Improvement Team. Head Teachers had also been asked to consult with Pupil Councils to ensure that learners had a voice in this important consultation.

Following these meetings, the department would collate all of the views expressed and draft a response which would be brought to the committee on 20 December for approval prior to it being submitted to the Scottish Government by the deadline of 6 January 2017.

Responding to criticisms expressed by a number of members that the consultation document was too complex to be understood by those not professionally involved in education, the Director informed the committee that within the consultation document there is leeway to answer some or all of the questions, but that Question 17 allowed for more general comment, and it was her intention to use this opportunity in drafting the Council's response. She also indicated that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) had drafted a response based on a number of principles and would not rigidly follow the laid down format in submitting its own response.

Councillor Fletcher, supported by a number of other elected members, expressed concern at what he considered to be the centralisation agenda driving the consultation and expressed the view that this would not benefit the residents of East Renfrewshire. He also agreed with the view that the consultation document had been made deliberately complicated in order to confuse parents and discourage responses. He went on to outline the implications of the imposed rise in Council tax levels for certain households explaining that most of the additional income collected would be diverted by the Scottish Government to other local authority areas to allow them to fund efforts to narrow the attainment gap in their areas. He expressed the strong view that this would not be well received by East Renfrewshire residents.

Councillor Buchanan explained that all responses, including any concerns raised, would be forwarded to the Scottish Government and expressed the view that many of the examples of best practice adopted in East Renfrewshire could be extended to other local authorities as a result of this consultation.

Having heard Mr Morris express the view that this was a very significant consultation and welcome the opportunity afforded to teaching staff to participate fully in the process, the committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the content of the report;
- (b) approve the department's approach to seeking the views of stakeholders to respond to the national consultation: *Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities to Achieve Excellence and Equity In Education*: and
- (c) note that a further report, including the Council's overall response, would be brought to the committee on 20 December for consideration.

REVIEW OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES' ACTIONS TO TACKLE BUREACRACY AND UNDUE WORKLOAD IN SCHOOL BY EDUCATION SCOTLAND

2269. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the content of the report commissioned by the Deputy First Minister which focussed on the demands placed on schools in relation to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

The report explained that, in response to national concerns regarding teacher workload, the Deputy First Minister had commissioned a review of all local authority education departments which had taken place in August 2016 and had been carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe). A copy of the report setting out the findings of the review of all local authorities was appended to the report.

The report from HMIe had concluded that East Renfrewshire was amongst 15 local authorities identified as "being proactive in providing support and guidance that minimises the workload demands for staff in their schools". The review also recognised a number of strengths and specifically that the department had a strong ethos of high expectation and self-evaluation with a sense of mutual trust and respect evidenced at all levels within the department. It concluded by confirming two areas for improvement relating to the monitoring of IT systems to ensure that they promoted efficiency for teachers and the monitoring of the Staged Intervention process to ensure that this facilitated efficiencies for teachers when planning for learners with barriers to their learning.

Having heard Mr Morris welcome the opportunity to be involved in the discussions on this issue and look forward to this co-operation continuing in the future, the committee agreed to note:-

- (a) the evaluation by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) of East Renfrewshire's approaches to managing and reducing teacher workload;
- (b) the Director of Education's intention, together with LNCT colleagues, to maintain levels of support with regard to workload management; and
- (c) the Director of Education's response to the recommendations made by HMIe following their review of practices within East Renfrewshire.

RESPONSE TO DRAFT STATUTORY GUIDANCE - STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS ETC ACT 2000

2270. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education updating members on the Council's response to the Scottish Government consultation on the draft statutory guidance: *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000*.

The report explained that the National Improvement Framework (NIF) had been introduced by the Scottish Government in January 2016 and was underpinned by a series of new planning and reporting duties designed to support the Scottish Government and local education authorities to improve educational outcomes. These duties had been inserted into the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 through the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. It went on to explain that the Scottish Government had developed draft statutory guidance in August 2016 to support those with responsibility for fulfilling the duties associated with the Act, specifically in relation to the delivery of the priorities associated with the NIF; reducing inequalities of outcomes for pupils experiencing them as a result of socio-economic disadvantage; and planning and reporting duties at school and education authority levels.

In producing the draft guidance, the Scottish Government had been keen to ensure that local authorities raised awareness of the consultation and encouraged engagement from key stakeholders. To this end, a short life working group, chaired by a Head Teacher and with representatives from all sectors and the Quality Improvement Team, had been established to co-ordinate a response for East Renfrewshire and a copy of the response was appended to

the report. In producing the response, the group considered the implications of the draft guidance for East Renfrewshire. These implications were listed in the report and related to the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan and guidance for schools.

The report concluded by explaining that the consultation period had ended on 11 November and that the final guidance would be published in March 2017.

The committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the content of the report;
- (b) approve the Council's response to the Scottish Government consultation on the draft statutory guidance; and
- (c) homologate the action taken by the Director in responding to the consultation.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE'S CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN 2016 – 18

2271. The committee considered a report by the Chief Officer, East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) sharing East Renfrewshire's first Corporate Parenting Plan 2016 – 18. A copy of the draft Corporate Parenting Plan 2016 – 18 was appended to the report.

The report explained that the *Keep Calm and Be a Corporate Parent* conference held in June 2016 and involving children, young people and their carers had led to the creation of the East Renfrewshire Champions Board and subsequently to the first Corporate Parenting Plan. It went on to outline the legislative duties surrounding corporate parenting as set out in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and highlighted the high level of partnership working across all Council services to focus on all of the themes and indicators with the aim of improving outcomes for the Council's looked after children and young people. As a Champion, the Director of Education would provide support and challenge to all with regards to the educational attainment and achievement of this group of children and young people.

Having heard Councillor Lafferty commend the extent of the partnership working relating to the future implementation of the plan and report that it had recently been considered by the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and would soon be presented to the Council, the committee agreed to note the content of the plan.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE - ANALYSIS OF HOLIDAY PROVISION FOR 3 & 4 YEAR OLD CHILDREN

2272. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 6 October 2016 (Page 2071, Item 2222 refers), when it had been noted that 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 committee considered a report by the Director of Education updating members on the outcome of that further analysis of early learning and childcare holiday provision.

The report explained that previous Pre-Five and Childcare annual reports had highlighted the feasibility of providing holiday provision in 3 family centres within the communities of

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Barrhead and Neilston. It went on to explain that analysis showed that holiday provision was the least popular option for parents when choosing how to access their entitlement of 600 hours of early learning and childcare. The views of parents and carers of children currently attending Carlibar Family Centre as well as those of staff at the centre had been gathered and considered within the report.

The report concluded by explaining that, given the higher occupancy levels in Arthurlie Family Centre and the planned new building for the community, it was being proposed that Carlibar Family Centre would revert to being a term-time only facility from session 2018/19 and that this would allow the department to honour any existing arrangements with those families which used the service provided there.

Following brief discussion the committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the content of the report; and
- (b) approve the next steps as outlined in the report.

CHAIR