

Education Executive
24 May 2011

IRVINE, 24 May 2011 - At a Meeting of the Education Executive of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

John Bell, Tom Barr, Alex Gallagher, Gordon McConnell, Very Reverend Matthew Canon McManus, Peter McNamara, David O'Neill, John Reid and Gordon Smith.

In Attendance

C. Kirk, Corporate Director, M. Armstrong and J. Leckie, Heads of Service, S. Storrie, Project Manager, J. McKnight, Manager, Community Learning and Development, A Sutton, Manager, Information and Culture and G Johnstone, Quality Improvement Manager (Education and Skills); C. McCourt, Finance Manager (Finance and Infrastructure); J. Montgomery, General Manager, M. Adams, Policy and Performance Officer, K Dyson, Communications Officer and P. Shiach, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Chair

Councillor Bell in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Reverend David Karoon.

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 Advice to Elected Members

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the requirements of Standing Orders and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors in relation to declarations of interest.

The Standards Commissioner for Scotland recently reported on an investigation into a complaint that a Member of the Council had breached the Code of Conduct for Councillors. The Commissioner concluded that the Councillor had not breached the Code of Conduct and recommended that:-

- all Elected Members be made aware of the provisions of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct, including specifically paragraph 5.15, in relation to declarations of interest;
- that Elected Members receive training on how properly to make declarations of interest, including the need to state the nature of the interest; and
- Committee Chairs and officers with responsibility for the conduct of Council or committee meetings should ensure adherence to the proper mode and content of declarations of interest.

Standing Order 16 provides that if any Member of the Council has a financial or non-financial interest in any contract or any other matter as defined by Section 5 of the Councillors' Code Conduct, and is present at any meeting at which that matter is to be considered, he or she must, as soon as practicable after the meeting starts, disclose that he or she has an interest and, importantly, state the nature of this interest. Section 5 of the Code, which was appended to the report, sets out the rules in relation to declarations of interest.

To facilitate such declarations, a heading "Declarations of Interest", routinely appears as the first item on agendas for all meetings of the Council and its Committees. The report provided information on the future arrangements for the Committee Chairs when dealing with the Declarations of Interest item on the agenda, the Commissioner's suggested wording for Members declaring an interest in an agenda item and induction training for Elected Members following next year's local government elections.

Noted.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bell declared a non-financial, non-significant interest in Agenda Item 4 (outcome of the Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Garnock Academy, Moorpark and Glengarnock Primary Schools) as the spouse of a member of the Parent Council and parent of a pupil of Moorpark Primary School.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Education Executive held on 12 April 2011 were signed in accordance with paragraph 7 (1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Violence Against Women: Challenging Young People's Attitudes

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a project in secondary schools to challenge young people's attitudes in terms of violence against women.

In May 2010, the Scrutiny Committee approved its Investigation Report on improving effectiveness in tackling domestic abuse. The report recommended that further action was required on preventative work which sought to influence attitudes about violence against women, and that this should be given greater focus through all educational services. The report also recommended enhancement of the role of the Campus Police Officers, school staff and school nurses in assisting in both delivering the message, and in supporting young people disclosing domestic abuse.

The North Ayrshire Violence Against Women (VAW) Strategy 2010/13 was developed out of research into how to improve effectiveness in tackling domestic abuse. The research report suggested that there should be discussions on the possibility of a pilot study in a secondary school, which could track the experiences of young people affected by domestic abuse and the support available to them, and review how the school is addressing issues relating to domestic abuse through the curriculum and the arts.

The VAW Strategy Action Plan contains actions to:-

- Provide guidance to schools in delivering preventative messages to children in line with the Curriculum for Excellence; and
- Promote the message to children and young people that domestic abuse is a crime.

In August 2011, the Violence Against Women Partnership received a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the preventative work which is currently being undertaken in North Ayrshire Schools and the links to the Curriculum for Excellence.

In November 2010, North Ayrshire Women's Aid prepared a proposal on a pilot prevention project in two secondary schools, which was supported by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) as the basis for an application to the Robertson Trust for funding to allow the work to proceed.

The report indicated that the project involved the following: -

- A Women's Aid Training Worker delivering two "Healthy Relationships" workshops over two weeks to 340 S1 pupils at St Matthew's Academy and Irvine Royal Academy each year for the next three years. The first workshops will be delivered in May 2011 in partnership with a Guidance Teacher and/or Campus Police Officer to build capacity within schools;
- An Arts project developed in conjunction with the schools' Art Departments to reinforce the message from the workshops, and
- An evaluation of the project using a questionnaire to assess the attitude of S1 pupils prior to commencing, with surveys being conducted to assess the short term results and at the end of the project.

The main outcomes of the project are to ensure that young people are more aware of the impact of domestic abuse and less likely to tolerate abusive behaviour.

The Education Executive sought, and received, clarification on a number of issues raised in the report, including staff dealing with domestic abuse issues raised by pupils, and whether the project, if successful, will be rolled out to all secondary schools in North Ayrshire.

The Education Executive (a) noted the proposed Prevention Project; and (b) agreed that an evaluation report on progress during 2011/12 be circulated to Elected Members for information.

4. Outcome of the Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Garnock Academy, Moorpark and Glengarnock Primary Schools

This item was subject to the call-in procedure per the Council's Scheme of Administration. Please refer to the Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 6 June 2011.

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on proposals in relation to the provision of education in the Garnock Academy catchment area, and the inclusion of leisure facilities in the proposed new school campus.

In December 2010 the Education Executive agreed to issue a consultation paper on the future of Garnock Academy, Moorpark and Glengarnock primaries to all interested parties. The proposal included the closure of Garnock pool leisure facilities and their inclusion in a new school campus.

A consultation paper was subsequently issued and public meetings of parents and other interested parties arranged. The outcome of the consultation exercise was detailed in the appendices attached to the report.

The key messages which emerged from the consultation were

- there will be increased opportunity for pupils, including both curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- there will be greater flexibility in grouping for children and young people in learning and teaching;
- there is broad support for the campus, however, there needs to be clear delineation to external areas serving both schools and the leisure facilities;
- while there is broad agreement with the campus, careful management of the pupil/staff transition is required;
- with a campus approach there will be more efficient and effective use of Council resources;
- there is mixed support for the preferred site area of South Lochshore;
- site 12, North Lochshore has emerged as the most economically and geographically advantageous location for the new campus;
- site 12 better meets the needs of primary school children in respect of distance and safe routes;

- the issues with the South Lochshore in terms of perception of safety within an industrial area have been strongly expressed;
- the North Lochshore site offers a higher density of housing current and proposed which gives added security to the location;
- site 2 west of School Road has received some support but offers little economic advantage to the Council and geographically no benefit to the catchment areas of the campus.

The report proposed that the Education Executive approves the closure of Garnock Academy, Moorpark and Glengarnock Primary Schools, and the closure of Garnock pool and leisure facilities.

The Education Executive sought, and received, clarification on a number of aspects of the report, including issues raised by consultees in terms of the preferred site and other identified sites.

The Education Executive agreed, subject to confirmation of a full funding agreement with the Scottish Government a) that at the end of school session in June 2015 the provision of education at Garnock Academy, Moorpark and Glengarnock Primary Schools be discontinued and that pupils transfer to new school; b) that in August 2015 Garnock pool closes and reopens in the new campus at an agreed date as detailed in the report and consultation documentation appended thereto; and c) that the campus be sited at site 12 North Lochshore.

5. Inspection of the Learning Community Surrounding Arran High School HMIE Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the report by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education on the Learning Community surrounding Arran High School.

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) carried out an inspection of the Learning Community surrounding Arran High School in February 2011, covering the work of a range of services, and work by community organisations and partnership groups.

The HMIE Inspectors evaluated the range and quality of learning opportunities available to community groups, young people and adults, and the inclusion opportunities provided for residents from across the Island. Members of the Inspection Team met with learners, staff and volunteers from a range of Council services, partner agencies and community organisations.

The HMIE report was published in April 2011 and identified the following key strengths: -

- Well resourced and well used facilities;
- Active and vibrant community groups;
- Committed, skilled and confident community activists;
- Effective youth participation structure, and
- A wide range of informal learning opportunities.

The following areas for improvement were agreed between HMIE, North Ayrshire Council Community and Culture and local partners:-

- Improve information sharing across partners with a particular focus on increased use of current technologies, and
- Further develop joint planning, monitoring and evaluation between partners to focus on improving services.

In consultation with North Ayrshire Council Community and Culture, plans will be put in place to incorporate the recommendations of the HMIE report, which will be included in the Service Improvement Plan. The Community and Culture Service Plan to address the points for improvement will be submitted to the Head of Service for approval. In terms of follow-through, HMIE will make no further visits as a result of this inspection.

The Education Executive sought, and received, clarification on various aspects of the report, including means of improving information sharing with partner organisations and communication between partners.

The Education Executive noted a) the steps being taken to address the key points for action in the Inspection report; and b) the arrangements for follow-through.

6. Arran High School, Lamlash: HMIE Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the HMIE Report on Arran High School, Lamlash.

Arran High School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in March 2011 as part of a national sample of secondary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages.

HM Inspectors evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school and nursery class, the environment for learning and the school's processes for self-evaluation. The examined the pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils and staff. Members of the inspection team met the chairperson of the parent council, representatives of local partners and a group of parents.

The report by HMIE Inspectors was published on 26 April 2011 and identified the following key strengths:-

- Motivated young people enthusiastic about learning;
- Highly committed staff who provide young people with a wide range of opportunities for achievement in and outwith the classroom;
- The willingness of the headteacher and staff to introduce new approaches to learning and teaching, and
- The quality of support provided to meet young people's social, emotional and learning needs in a very inclusive environment.

The following areas for improvement have been agreed between HMIE, the school and the education authority:-

- Continue to develop the school in line with national advice on Curriculum for Excellence, and
- Continue to develop approaches to improvement through self-evaluation, including more effective tracking of progress and achievement, involving young people, parents and partners more.

In consultation with the designated quality improvement officer and staff, the headteacher has put in place plans to incorporate the recommendations of the HMIE report into the School Improvement Plan. The school's plan to address the recommendations will be submitted to the Head of Service for approval following consultation with staff and the parent council and will subsequently be shared with parents and carers.

In terms of follow-through procedures, HMIE will make no further visits following this inspection. The school's progress will be reported to parents through the normal school and local authority processes.

The Corporate Director (Education and Skills) circulated for the information of the Education Executive, the results of HMIE Reports on 12 small and remote rural schools inspected since 2008, indicating that Arran High School compared favourably with these comparator schools, attaining a joint second highest score.

Mr. D. Auld, the headteacher of the school was in attendance and answered questions in relation to increasing the pace of improvement, and the particular challenges faced by an island school.

The Education Executive noted the steps taken to address the key points for action, and that in terms of follow-through, HMIE will make no further visits given the high level of confidence in the school to make the necessary improvements.

7. Castlepark Primary School, Irvine: HMIE Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the HMIE Report on Castlepark Primary School, Irvine.

Castlepark Primary School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in March 2011 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages.

HM Inspectors evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school and nursery class, the environment for learning and the school's processes for self-evaluation. The examined the pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils and staff. Members of the inspection team met the chairperson of the parent council, representatives of local partners and a group of parents.

The report by HMIE Inspectors was published on 26 April 2011 and identified the following key strengths:-

- The quality of the relationships between staff and children creating a nurturing learning environment for children;
- Staff team work to improve the school and ensure all children make progress in their learning;
- Self-evaluation leading to improvements across all areas of learning, and
- The headteacher's leadership of change leading to better quality learning and teaching.

The following areas for improvement have been agreed between HMIE, the school and the education authority:-

- Continue to take forward the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, including a clear focus on health and wellbeing across learning, and
- Build on the good practice in learning and teaching to ensure learning tasks are set at the right level of difficulty for all children.

In consultation with the designated quality improvement officer and staff, the headteacher has put in place plans to incorporate the recommendations of the HMIE report into the School Improvement Plan. The school's plan to address the recommendations will be submitted to the Head of Service for approval following consultation with staff and the parent council and will subsequently be shared with parents and carers.

In terms of follow-through procedures, HMIE will make no further visits following this inspection. The school's progress will be reported to parents through the normal school and local authority processes.

Mrs A. Nicholson, the headteacher of the school was in attendance and answered questions in relation to the changes she has made within the school, and the particular challenges that face the school.

The Education Executive noted the steps taken to address the key points for action, and that in terms of follow-through, HMIE will make no further visits given the high level of confidence in the school to make the necessary improvements.

The meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.