

Educational Services Committee  
20 September 2006

**IRVINE, 20 September 2006** - At a Meeting of the Educational Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 P.M.

**Present**

Peter McNamara, Jacqueline Browne, Donald Reid, Tom Barr, Gordon Clarkson, Father Matthew McManus, Rev. Sandy Montgomerie, David Munn, David O'Neill, John Reid, John Scott, Elaine Shaw, Gordon Smith and Nan Wallace.

**In Attendance**

J. Travers, Corporate Director, B. Gardner, Head of Educational Resources, C. Kirk, J. Leckie, and J. Ward, Heads of Service, and G. Johnstone, Quality Improvement Manager (Educational Services); H. Hunter, (Finance); and M. McKeown, Corporate and Democratic Support Officer and A. Wattie, Communications Officer (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor McNamara in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Gordon Allison, Stewart Dewar, Drew Duncan, Jean Highgate, Elisabeth Marshall and Richard Wilkinson.

**1. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 8 August 2006, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

In terms of Standing Orders, Father McManus and Councillor O'Neill declared an interest in items 8 and 11 respectively, and took no part in the discussions thereon.

**3. Educational Services Standing Sub Committee**

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix ES1) being the Minutes of the Meeting of the Educational Services Standing Sub Committee held on 30 August 2006.

The Committee agreed to approve the Minutes.

#### **4. Expenditure on External Placements**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on current expenditure on external placements, both day and residential, for children and young people with additional learning support needs.

The pattern of placements is dependent on a number of external factors, including the decisions of the Authority Reporter to the Children's Panel. Expenditure on external placements has a significant budgetary impact on both Educational and Social Services as substantial funds are invested in a small number of children and young people. The report provided information on current expenditure levels. Although there has been no overall increase in the number of placements in recent years, the costs of external provision have risen significantly beyond the rate of inflation, due in part to the national increase in teachers' salaries and changes to safety standards, accommodation and staffing required by the Care Commission.

The report set out the steps being taken by Educational Services to manage costs. Despite these efforts and the increasing number of children remaining in Council establishments, expenditure on external placements continues to be a significant budgetary pressure. As a result, additional operational savings will require to be made during the current financial year in order to balance the Educational Services budget. Educational Services, together with Social Services, Ayrshire and Arran Health Board, the Reporter to the Children's Panel Chair, and the Integrated Children's Services Steering Group, will continue to explore more cost effective local solutions to meeting the requirements of children and young people with additional learning support needs.

The Committee agreed to (a) note the budgetary pressures arising from expenditure levels on external placements; and (b) approve the steps being taken by Educational Services to address the issue.

#### **5. Educational Services Budget 2006/07: Budgetary Control**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the budgetary control position for Educational Services at the end of July 2006, and on projections to the end of 2006/07.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the budgetary position for Educational Services at the end of July 2006 and the end of year projections; and (b) that the Corporate Director (Educational Services) take appropriate measures to address the budgetary pressures identified in the report.

## **6. More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People in Scotland Not in Education, Employment or Training**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a strategy to reduce the proportion of young people in Scotland not in education, employment or training.

In June 2006 the Scottish Executive launched "More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Scotland". Over the next 2 years funding will be made available to support local authorities in addressing the 39 point action plan contained within the strategy document. North Ayrshire Council is one of 7 local authorities where the number of young people who fall within the NEET category is particularly high. Each of these 7 authorities will receive £400,000 from the Scottish Executive in both 2006/07 and 2007/08 to address the issue locally. Every other authority in Scotland will receive £75,000 in each of these 2 years.

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) will take on responsibility for developing a comprehensive and coordinated action plan for meeting the needs of the NEET group within North Ayrshire through a sub group of its Social and Economical Development Thematic Group. The action plan, which will be submitted to the Scottish Executive by the end of October 2006, will take account of the actions set out in the Integrated Children's Plan and the CPP's Regeneration Outcome Agreement. A range of interested parties locally will be invited to participate in the work of the group.

The Committee agreed to (a) approve the proposals set out in the report for developing a local NEET action plan for North Ayrshire; and (b) receive progress reports on the implementation of the action plan at future meetings.

## **7. Additional Teachers - School Session 2006/07 and Future Plans for August 2007**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the investment which has taken place to increase the number of teachers within schools, and seeking approval for the deployment of additional resources provided by the Scottish Executive.

Since August 2006 all full time primary and secondary school teachers have had their contractual contact time with pupils lowered to 22.5 hours per week from within their contractual hours of 35 hours per week. Similar pro rata changes also apply to teachers on part time contracts. These reductions form part of the teachers agreement for the 21st century and must be applied by local authorities.

The Scottish Executive has set aside funding of £18 million in 2006/07 to facilitate this change. North Ayrshire Council's share is £522,000 and this has been used to employ an additional 21.31 FTE teachers from August 2006 to the end of March 2007.

The Scottish Executive has also announced that the Education Minister wishes to increase the number of teachers in Scotland to over 53,000 by August 2007, to reduce class sizes for English and mathematics, to reduce the size of Primary 1 classes, and to employ more specialist teachers particularly in physical education and expressive arts. The funding to implement these proposals is included within the sum of £1.28 million which has been allocated to the Council in 2007/08. £835,000 will be used to cover the full year cost of the proposed reduction in class contact time, with the remaining £445,000 being used to implement the Minister's proposals. A further £406,000 has been made available to the Council to bring forward the Minister's proposals for August 2007. The report set out how these additional resources will be utilised within North Ayrshire schools.

The Committee agreed to approve the utilisation of additional funding from the Scottish Executive for the employment of additional teachers, as detailed in the report.

## **8. Funding of Pre School Education**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on proposed increases in funding for pre school education places in 2006/07.

At its meeting on 4 April 2006 the Committee approved payments of £1,125 per place for nursery education in private and voluntary establishments working in partnership with the Council. Subsequently the Scottish Executive has informed local authorities that the minimum amount per place which nurseries should receive will increase to £1,250 per place from the beginning of the academic year 2006/07. The Executive has allocated an additional £88,000 to the Council for the academic year beginning August 2006, and an additional £129,000 for academic year 2007/08. It was proposed therefore that the Council should increase the level of support from £1,125 to £1,300 per place which includes £50 for staff development purposes. The revised allocations to private and voluntary sector providers were detailed in the appendix to the report.

The Committee agreed to increase the level of payment to private and voluntary sector providers for pre school nursery education places from £1,125 to £1,300 per place, as set out in the report.

## **9. The Schools Fund: Additional Resources**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on additional resources allocated by the Scottish Executive for investment in school buildings during financial year 2006/07.

The Schools Fund is a capital grant to local authorities for the purpose of making improvements to schools. The Scottish Executive has announced that additional funding will be made available in financial year 2006/07 of which North Ayrshire Council has been allocated £835,000. The appendix to the report set out proposals to utilise these funds to provide all weather pitches at Ardrossan and Irvine Royal Academies, to undertake an energy efficiency programme within primary schools, and to introduce a cashless payment system within the canteens of 10 primary schools.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposals for using the additional funding from the Scottish Executive as set out in the appendix to the report.

## **10. Leadership Development**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the Council's response to the Scottish Executive's national agenda for introducing better leadership and innovation in schools and education authorities.

The report highlighted the support that the Council currently provides to teachers wishing to improve their leadership skills through the Scottish Qualification for Headship and in service opportunities. To ensure that the existing opportunities are enhanced, Educational Services has established a Leadership Group comprising a cross section of staff from all sectors including class teachers, principal teachers, chartered teachers, deputies and head teachers. This group will examine current practice with an emphasis on developing a coherent set of pathways to leadership in management. A number of initiatives will be put in place, as set out in the report, to develop capacity for leadership at all levels.

The Committee agreed to approve the existing and proposed measures being put in place by Educational Services to develop the leadership skills of North Ayrshire Council staff and improve North Ayrshire schools.

## **11. Consultation on the Demerger of Careers Scotland from Scottish Enterprise**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the Scottish Executive's intent to demerge Careers Scotland from Scottish Enterprise and to provide a response to the Executive's consultation document on the proposal.

The Executive has issued a consultation questionnaire on the proposal to demerge to a number of interested parties and is seeking responses by mid September 2006. The Appendix to the report set out a proposed North Ayrshire Council response to the consultation which highlights the importance of ensuring that the proposed demerger does not result in any diminution of service to Careers Scotland's client groups.

The Committee agreed to approve the terms of the proposed response to the Scottish Executive consultation on the demerger of Careers Scotland from Scottish Enterprise, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

## **12. The Scottish Schools Digital Network (SSDN)**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on North Ayrshire Educational Services Implementation Plans for the Scottish Schools Digital Network.

The National Grid for Learning (NGfL) Scotland was launched in August 1998 to ensure that the educational benefits of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) would be available to schools and the wider education community. The programme has provided modern ICT equipment to all schools in North Ayrshire and, as part of the programme, significant funding was allocated to install broadband connections and wireless technology in schools.

Current and future developments in schools will be shaped by the roll-out of the Scottish Schools Digital Network (SSDN). SSDN is an ambitious education project to put in place a National Education Intranet. It is made up of three key initiatives that together form a coherent programme that has significant implications for the way local authorities and schools will work together in the future i.e.

- The national SSDN Interconnect - a broadband network which currently connects all 32 Scottish local authorities and other key agencies such as SQA and Learning and Teaching Scotland.
- The Content Delivery Infrastructure - which comprises storage systems in each school. These systems will speed up delivery and allow prior downloading of media-rich resources for use in the classroom.
- The National Intranet, now renamed GLOW, will provide an integrated package of services and applications for teaching, learning and education management.

The programme will enable the local authority, schools and teachers to educate North Ayrshire children and young people to twenty-first century technological standards. It will create a national education community in a powerful communications network to benefit all its members.

The initiatives will be delivered within a safe, secure environment, with instant access. Personalised learning will become a reality. The features that will be available as part of core provision are Individual email addresses, chatrooms, Interest groups and Newsgroups, secure file sharing, on-line training, virtual learning environment, and instant messaging.

Consultations with the national SSDN team are ongoing and a North Ayrshire Implementation Plan has been drawn up in consultation with the SSDN team and IT Services. This plan will form the basis of the contract between North Ayrshire Council, SEED, Research Machines and Learning and Teaching Scotland, to take forward the SSDN in North Ayrshire. A number of mentors (Glow mentors) have been identified and will be trained in using the SSDN. They will become trainers for teachers and librarians in North Ayrshire. Roll-out of the SSDN is expected to begin in June 2007. Implementation of the SSDN programme is scheduled for completion by December 2008.

The Committee agreed to approve the steps being taken to implement the SSDN programme within North Ayrshire.

### **13. HMIE Report: Garnock Academy**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on outcome of the inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) to Garnock Academy in April 2006.

The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages and the inspectors evaluated learning, teaching and achievement, and how well pupils are supported. The report by HMIE was published on 29 August 2006 and highlighted the key strengths within the school as well as areas where action is required. Action plans are being put in place to address the recommendations arising from the inspection.

The Committee agreed to approve the actions being taken to address the recommendations arising from the HMIE report.

### **14. HMIE Report: Corsehill Primary School**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the outcome of the inspection visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) to Corsehill Primary School, Kilwinning, in May 2006.

The inspection report was published on 29 August 2006 and highlights key strengths within the school as well as areas requiring attention. Appropriate action will be taken to address the recommendations arising from the report, and progress will be monitored.

The Committee agreed to approve the actions being taken to address the recommendations arising from the HMIE report.

The meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.



**Educational Services Committee**  
**20/09/2006**

Appendix No  
**ES1**

Educational Services Standing Sub Committee  
30 August 2006

**IRVINE, 30 August 2006** - At a meeting of the Educational Services Standing Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

Jacqueline Browne, Jean Highgate, Peter McNamara, Donald Reid, John Reid, John Scott and Elaine Shaw.

**In Attendance**

J. Leckie, Head of Service, G. Johnstone, Quality Improvement Manager, A. McGonigle and G. Syme, Quality Improvement Officers, M. Craik, Principal Children's Services Officer, N. McCrone, Cultural Services Manager, A. Milson, Learning Manager - Quality Development and C. Sharp, Acting Country Parks Manager (Educational Services); M. McKeown and E. Fisher, Corporate and Democratic Support Officers (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Browne in the Chair

**Apologies for Absence**

Gordon Allison, Drew Duncan, Elisabeth Marshall.

**1. Sporting Opportunities for Young People**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the current arrangements in place to support sport development within North Ayrshire.

At its meeting on 23 May 2006, the Educational Services Committee agreed that a report on sports development should be submitted to a future meeting of the Standing Sub Committee. In recent years there has been a substantial expansion of formal sports development opportunities within North Ayrshire. Support for sport comes through three main avenues - Educational Services, North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL) and sports clubs. The following areas were highlighted:-

### Educational Services

All pupils aged 3-18 will receive 2 hours of physical education every week by 2007. The authority, in partnership with Sportscotland, has put in place the Active Schools Programme. The Council will invest £360,000 in the Programme over a 3 year period which will in turn attract almost £1m from Sportscotland in the same period. There are 7 full-time and 13 part-time Active Schools Co-ordinators. Each cluster of schools has a small team of co-ordinators who work closely with community sports clubs and who, each year, produce a plan to address the 10 targets set for the programme i.e.:-

- Increasing the range, number and regularity of sustainable extra-curricular opportunities
- Increasing activity levels in playgrounds
- Establishing/developing school-community links
- Developing opportunities for pupils to complete, display and celebrate their achievements
- Developing the number and expertise of volunteers working in schools
- Help to put in place facilities, equipment and resources to support physical activity
- Increasing the number of pupils walking or cycling to school
- Developing a range of opportunities for staff to be active
- Monitoring levels of activity in each school
- Informing and promoting physical activity in each school

### North Ayrshire Leisure Limited

The services of the Sport Development Team of North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL) are available to all schools in the authority. This is a professional support for which schools pay from their devolved budgets.

A McDonalds Programme has, for the last 4 years provided football coaching and games, and a new Programme will be delivered to schools over the next three years.

Swimming, gymnastics, basketball, badminton and hockey coaching is also available on a pay and play basis and competitive opportunities in athletics and cross country are popular with schools.

### Community Club and Volunteer Input

Pathways to develop as performers and competitive opportunities are provided in a number of sports by local community clubs and volunteers. The needs of football are well serviced by the many teams in the community. However, teams change on a regular basis because of the lack of a supportive infrastructure.

Rugby and swimming clubs provide essential development, competitive and essential pathways. The key to the effectiveness of these sports relates directly to the organisational strength of the clubs, supported by National Governing Bodies and an organised systematic approach to involving young people in their sport at an early age.

Other sports served by local clubs offer some pathways for young people. These are limited by the number of coaches, expertise of coaches, number of volunteers and the availability of facilities.

Protocols are being put in place detailing what support sports clubs can expect from the Council.

The Sub Committee agreed (a) to note the sporting opportunities for children in North Ayrshire as set out in the report; and (b) to receive a future report comparing sports provision in North Ayrshire with other Councils in Scotland.

## **2. Service Performance Reports for 12 Months Ended 31 March 2006**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the performance of the main service areas within Educational Services in the 12 months to 31 March 2006.

The appendices to the report set out Service Performance Reports for School Education, Library and Information Services, Community Learning and Development, Cultural Services, Children's Outreach Services, and Country Parks. The report set out the performance highs and lows, and the immediate priorities for each of these Service areas.

The Sub Committee discussed each of the Performance Reports in turn and asked questions of the officers present.

The Sub Committee agreed (a) to note the performance of each of the Service areas in the 12 months to 31 March 2006; (b) that in future performance reports containing percentage figures should also include actual numbers where possible; and (c) that a report on the Valley Ark Group should be submitted to the next meeting.

## **3. Survey of Partnership Working in North Ayrshire Primary Schools**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the result of the survey undertaken between January and March 2006 on partnership working in North Ayrshire Primary Schools.

North Ayrshire schools have initiated and developed a range of partnerships which support them in delivering a comprehensive curriculum as well as providing support for staff, young people and their families. Partnerships have developed through national initiatives e.g. Integrated Community Schools, Determined to Succeed. To be effective, they have to be delivered at local authority, cluster and school level.

The survey, which was conducted by the Council's Quality Improvement Officers, was undertaken in order to provide information on how well partnership working is being undertaken in the primary sector. The report on the outcome of the survey concludes that overall the partnerships in place are working well. There are sometimes barriers to effective working e.g. lack of knowledge, time constraints, unrealistic expectations etc., but these occur infrequently. In almost all cases staff in schools welcome the support they receive and value the relationships that have developed. In many cases initiatives that have been developed in one area have been extended to others. Pupils and their families receive valuable co-ordinated support and schools are able to extend their provision by working with other agencies to pool resources.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.55 pm.