

Educational Services Committee  
20 February 2007

**IRVINE, 20 February 2007** - At a Meeting of the Educational Services Committee on North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 pm.

**Present**

Peter McNamara, Jacqueline Brown, Donald Reid, Thomas Barr, Stewart Dewar, Jane Gorman, Jean Highgate, Margaret McDougall, Father Matthew McManus, Reverend Sandy Montgomerie, David Munn, David O'Neill, John Reid, John Scott, Elaine Shaw, Gordon Smith and Nan Wallace

**Also Present**

Margaret Munn

**In Attendance**

J Travers, Corporate Director, J Tulips, Project Team Leader, B Gardner, Head of Educational Resources J Ward, J Leckie and C Kirk, Heads of Service, A McGonigle, Quality Improvement Officer (Educational Services); H Hunter, Principal Accountant (Finance); G Lawson, Head of Corporate and Democratic Support, A Wattie, Communications Officer and P Shiach, Corporate Support Officer (Chief Executive's)

**Chair**

Councillor McNamara in the Chair

**Apologies for Absence**

Gordon Allison, Drew Duncan, Elisabeth Marshall and Richard Wilkinson

**1. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 9 January 2007, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Dewar declared an interest in Item 8 in respect of the Sports Pitches Improvement Programme. Councillors O'Neill and D Reid declared an interest in Item 12 in respect of the Scottish Maritime Museum Trust.

**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 31 January 2007.

The Committee approved the Minutes.

#### **4. Partnership for Schools Project: Transition Arrangements**

The Committee received a presentation from the Project Team Leader providing an update on progress relative to the PPP projects in respect of Arran High School, Lamlash, Stanley Primary School, Ardrossan, Greenwood Academy, Irvine and St Matthew's Academy, Saltcoats.

Thereafter, submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on transition arrangements for the new PPP schools.

The four Public Private Partnership schools outlined above are scheduled to open in 2007. The dates programmed for these openings are 13 August for Arran High and Stanley Primary Schools, and 27 October for Greenwood Academy and St Matthew's Academy. Details of the logistical challenges involved in the move from the existing building to the new premises, together with proposals to facilitate the moves, were contained in the report. The proposed measures include seeking permission from the Scottish Executive for the use of full and partial exceptional school closures (ESC), which free staff for removal-related duties.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the presentation, and (b) to approve the proposed transition arrangements.

#### **5. Partnership for Schools Project: Disposal of Surplus Furniture and Equipment**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a strategy for the effective disposal of surplus furniture and equipment from the schools involved in the PPP Project.

The creation of four new schools referred to in item 4 above, together with the provision of new furniture and computers under the PPP Project, will result in a significant amount of furniture and computers being surplus to requirements.

Council policy on the disposal of furniture and equipment is contained within Financial Services' guidance. In addition, included in the PPP contract is provision for the demolition of the existing buildings with the appointed contractor having the right of salvage of any materials left within the school buildings, together with any economically recoverable elements of the structures.

The report detailed the sequence of activities designed to achieve the disposal of surplus materials and the main steps to be taken together with the implications arising therefrom.

The Committee agreed that the arrangements for the disposal of surplus furniture and equipment as detailed in the report, be approved.

## **6. School Transport to St Matthew's Academy**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on changes to the current school transport policy in relation to the new St Matthew's Academy.

Under the current policy, assistance is provided for children living more than three miles away from their catchment area school. This policy does not apply to those children who attend school as a result of a successful placing request.

The amalgamation of St Andrew's and St Michael's Academies to form St Matthew's Academy required a change in the admission arrangements to the new school. Admission to St Matthew's Academy is automatic only to those children attending an associated primary school, namely one of the denominational primaries serving the communities across North Ayrshire. Children attending other primaries would require to make a placement request, and are therefore, in terms of the current policy, ineligible for assistance with school transport.

Interim measures designed to address the situation, were contained within the report.

Councillor Reid, referring to PPP projects generally, requested that, following the forthcoming local government elections, the Corporate Director (Educational Services) report on comparisons between PPP and traditional build projects.

The Committee agreed (a) to amend the school transport policy to take account of primary school admission arrangements for St Matthew's Academy, (b) to apply these changes to pupils who transfer to St Matthew's Academy from a North Ayrshire primary school at which they are in attendance in school session 2006/2007, and (c) that the Corporate Director (Educational Services) submit, to the new administration, a report on comparisons between PPP and traditional build projects.

## **7. Schools of Ambition**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on Auchenhavie Academy being accepted on the Schools of Ambition programme.

Following the publication, in 2004, of the Scottish Executive Education Department report "Ambitious, Excellent Schools", which proposed "bringing about a step change in ambition and achievement" with funding for schools achieving the criteria, all secondary Head Teachers in North Ayrshire were invited to express an interest in joining the Schools of Ambition programme.

The Scottish Executive subsequently, in February 2007, announced that a second tranche of schools, including Auchenhavie Academy, had been invited to join the programme. Details of the Academy's proposals were contained within the report.

The report indicated that the Scottish Executive will provide a grant of up to £100,000 per annum for a minimum of two years with the possibility of additional funding from external sources. Further progress reports will be submitted in due course.

Noted.

## **8. Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a Parent Council and Parent Forum Draft Initial Constitution.

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 requires education authorities to promote and support the creation of Parent Councils in schools.

North Ayrshire Council, as a first step in the process, has informed all parents/carers that they are automatically members of the Parents Forum for their child's school, and as such will be informed of the ways in which they can become involved in the work of the school.

Details of the current proposals, including a relevant timetable and future developments were detailed in the report which also contained, in an appendix thereto, a copy of the proposed Parent Council and Parent Forum Draft Initial Constitution.

The Scottish Executive has allocated £31,400 to the Council to support the parental involvement measures.

The Committee agreed to approve (a) the issue of the Parent Council and Parent Forum Initial Draft Constitution, and (b) the further steps proposed to promote parental involvement in schools.

## **9. One Plus**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the local impact of the liquidation of One Plus.

One Plus, an independent organisation for one parent families, was set up in 1986 and employed approximately 500 workers throughout west and central Scotland.

Following unsuccessful attempts to agree a rescue package with the Scottish Executive and the seven local authorities where they had been in operation, the organisation went into liquidation on 15 January 2007. CEIS has been appointed by the Scottish Executive to liaise with local authorities to continue the provision of services.

Details of the action which has been taken by the council and partners to minimise the effect of the liquidation on children and families in North Ayrshire were detailed in the report.

Councillor M Munn advised the Committee of the outcome of a meeting which she attended in Saltcoats with some of the people affected by the current situation and indicated the level of concern expressed at the meeting.

Noted

## **10. Sports Pitches Improvement Programme**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the first phase of a programme of improvements to sports pitches.

North Ayrshire Council previously approved a Strategy for Physical Activity and Health, one outcome of which was a commitment, in August 2003 to the improvement of sport and activity facilities

The report advised that a capital allocation had been agreed within the Council's capital plan to carry out major improvements to pitches and pavilions, and that following a survey of all playing fields, taken in conjunction with North Ayrshire Leisure Limited and Sportscotland, it is proposed that an improvement project for playingfields utilising £1.5 million from the capital programme covering the period to 2010 be undertaken with an additional £625,000 for improvements to the pavilions.

Details of the proposed phased works were contained within the report.

Concern was expressed with regard to a possible conflict of interest with regard to the promotion of sports development through NALL in terms of the requirement for profit maximisation, and the possibility of responsibility for sports development reverting to the Council.

The Committee agreed (a) the programme for carrying out improvements to sports pitches as outlined in the report, and (b) that discussions take place with North Ayrshire Leisure Limited with a view to returning responsibility for sports development to the Council.

## **11. Mobile Phones in Schools**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a standard circular on the use of mobile phones in schools

The increasing inappropriate use of mobile phones in schools and subsequent concern expressed by Head Teachers has led to requests for authority guidance on the matter.

In this regard a draft circular addressing the key issues was submitted to Head Teachers and their comments incorporated into a revised standard circular, which was contained in an appendix to the report.

The Committee agreed that the revised standard circular be issued to all schools in North Ayrshire.

## **12. Scottish Maritime Museum Trust**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on providing ongoing funding support, in financial year 2007/08, to the Scottish Maritime Museum Trust.

In keeping with previous practice, the Scottish Maritime Trust, in financial year 2006/07 was awarded an amount of £86,000 from the Educational Services revenue budget. The aims and objectives of the organisation were detailed in the report.

In addition to the Council's contribution, the Trust attracts funding from the Scottish Executive, some charitable trusts and from fund raising activities. In view of this level of funding, the Trust is subject to monitoring and scrutiny by an Educational Services Monitoring Officer and the Finance Officer. The key aspects of the monitoring exercise were detailed in the report.

The Committee agreed support of £86,000 to the Scottish Maritime Trust during financial year 2007/08.

## **13. Grants to Voluntary Organisations 2007/08**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the award of Educational Services Grants to Voluntary Organisations.

The report detailed, in Appendix 1, the organisations currently being supported and the amounts recommended for the coming financial year. In light of decisions taken during the construction of the Educational Services budget for financial year 2007/08, and the consequent reduction in funding for grants to voluntary organisations, applications for support from a number of smaller organisations will be redirected for consideration under the Corporate Policy Grants procedures.

The Committee agreed to make awards of Grants to Voluntary Organisations as follows, subject to review of the most recent audited accounts and compliance with the Council's financial regulations pertaining to grants:-

Redburn and Vineburgh Community Association -	£52,943
Fullarton Community Association -	£27,545
Vineburgh Community Centre Management Committee -	£36,544
West Kilbride Public Hall Management Group -	£10,100

## **14. Education Appeal Committees**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the Scottish Executive's consultation on proposals to reform Education Appeal Committees and to agree a response to the consultation from North Ayrshire Council.

Appeals Committees are currently arranged and clerked by the Council's Legal and Protective Services. Committee membership is drawn from councillors and parent members of Local Attendance Councils. Representatives from Educational Services attend as appropriate and parents are invited to attend, with support, if they wish to present their case.

The Scottish Executive has issued a consultation paper on proposals to improve the current system, and a proposed response to the consultation was contained in an appendix to the report.

Councillor Barr suggested that the proposed response provide further details on who should be in attendance at Appeal Committee meetings.

The Committee agreed to submit the response detailed in Appendix 1, as amended, to provide clarification on attendance at Education Appeal Committee meetings, to the Scottish Executive.

## **15. Attendance in Scottish Schools**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the Scottish Executive's consultation on attendance at school and to agree a response from North Ayrshire Council.

The Scottish Executive published a consultation paper "Engaged and Involved: Attendance in Scottish Schools" in December 2006 which updated local authorities on the impact of a number of national strategies on school attendance.

The consultation document, which sought responses by 27 February 2007, addressed a range of factors affecting school attendance while recognising the diversity of the school community and the need for sensitivity in terms of the specific needs of minority groups. Details of the range of strategies proposed within the consultation document to promote improved attendance at school were contained within the report

The Committee agreed to respond to the consultation document in the terms outlined in the report

## **16. Care Commission Reports**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the outcome of Care Commission inspections of services providing Pre-Five Care and Education in 2006.

The National Care Standards for Childcare are used as the benchmark for inspections of services for Pre-Five Care and Education, covering services for children and young people up to the age of 16 which require to be regulated under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001.

Since January 2006 there have been 51 Care Commission inspections of pre-five centres within North Ayrshire, with the outcome of these inspections contained within appendices 1 and 2 attached to the report. It is proposed that a monitoring procedure be established to inform Members of Care Commission inspections of pre-five centres managed by the local authority and of private and voluntary sector centres which are in partnership with the local authority, and that the outcome of Care Commission inspections be reported on an annual basis

The Committee agreed (a) the recommended action for local authority nurseries, and (b) the recommended procedure for considering future reports

## **17. 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 January 2007 and projections for the financial year 2006/07.

Noted

## **18. Vision, Values and Aims**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the review of Educational Services' statement of Vision, Values and Aims.

The North Ayrshire Plan for 2006/09 was launched in June 2006 setting out the Council's aims in a more assessable and concise style. The opportunity has also been taken to review the Educational Services vision, values and aims to update and more closely align them with the aims of the Council Plan. A revised statement of overall aims values and priorities was detailed in an appendix to the report.

The Committee agreed to the revised statement of aims values and priorities as outlined in the appendix to the report.

## **19. Standards and Quality Report and Service Improvement Plan**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the Services Standards and Quality Report for 2006 and Service Improvement Plan for 2007.

North Ayrshire Council's Performance Management Framework involves regular reports to Standing Sub Committees on the performance of each service together with its plans for the forthcoming year.. Copies of the documents, Draft Standards and Quality in North Ayrshire Council Educational Services, and the Educational Services Improvement Plan 2007/2010 were attached as appendices to the report.

The Committee agreed to approve the draft Standards and Quality Report, and the Service Improvement Plan for publication and general use within Educational Services.

## **20. Valedictory**

The Chair recorded his thanks to the Members of the Committee and to the Officers present for their contribution to the work of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 4.10pm.

**Educational Services Committee**  
**20/02/2007**

Appendix No  
**ES1**

Educational Services Standing Sub Committee  
31 January 2007

**IRVINE, 31 January 2007** - At a Meeting of the Educational Services Standing Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 pm.

**Present**

Jacqueline Brown, Gordon Allison, Jean Highgate and Father Matthew McManus.

**In Attendance**

J Ward and C Kirk, Heads of Service, M McLarty, Manager (Culture and Life Long Learning), G Johnstone, Quality Improvement Manager, A McGonigle, Quality Improvement Officer and C Sharp, Acting Country Parks Manager (Educational Services); P Shiach and E Fisher, Corporate Support Officers (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Browne in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Drew Duncan.

**1. Irvine Royal Academy**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on progress in implementing the HMIE report on Irvine Royal Academy.

At its meeting on 4 April 2006 it was reported to the Educational Services Committee that progress in Irvine Royal Academy continues to be monitored closely in light of the HMIE report.

The HMIE will visit Irvine Royal Academy again in 19-22 February 2007. The main actions to be taken leading up to this visit are:-

- Staff will continue to improve and implement the Self Evaluation Framework with appropriate authority support.
- Principal Teachers to be given greater guidance and clarity on their role in Self Evaluation/Quality Assurance procedures.

- Depute Head Teachers will complete the next round of classroom monitoring by February/March 2007.
- A whole school Learning and Teaching Policy will be agreed and implemented by March 2007.
- The whole school Homework Policy will be monitored through regular classroom visits to ensure consistent implementation.
- Rigorous analysis of prelim results will take place and next steps will be agreed with Principal Teachers.
- The second phase of pupil tracking will be finalised and an analysis carried out.
- There will be additional intensive support for the English department from the authority and from the school's Senior Management Team.

Progress monitoring reports concerning the period from September to October were contained in Appendices to the report.

It was reported that although there are identified improvements in ethos, staff moral and quality assurance, there are still areas needing a more consistent improvement.

The Sub Committee agreed to (a) note the report; and (b) receive a further report following the visit by HMIE to a future meeting.

## **2. Race Equality Policy Monitoring**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the implementation of the Race Equality Policy and Action Plan.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000) places responsibilities on education authorities to make provision for minority ethnic groups, under the section dealing with national priorities. A Race Equality Policy and Action Plan had been adopted by Educational Services, with one aspect of the Action Plan being the monitoring and reporting of the attainment of ethnic minority children and young people.

Attainment of pupils within the main ethnic groups is in line with over all attainment of North Ayrshire pupils and attendances of pupils within the main ethnic groups compares well with the population as a whole. There are continuing concerns with the attendance of travellers and it was reported that Outreach Services engage to a certain degree with these children.

In North Ayrshire there are 157 pupils for whom English is an additional language. These pupils are supported by English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers within the Pupil Support Service and additional classroom assistant time is also allocated through the annual audit if required. Special exam arrangements are allowed through the Scottish Qualification Authority for candidates who require them.

Annual Updates will be reported on equalities issues.

Noted.

### **3. Service Performance Reports for 6 Months Ended 30 September 2006**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the performance of each of the main Service areas in the 6 months ended 30 September 2006.

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

The Sub Committee discussed each of the Performance Reports in turn and asked questions of the officers present. Regarding the outcome of the One Plus closure, the Sub Committee were advised that Educational Services had put in staff immediately and contacted children and parents. It was also reported that local childcare providers are willing to take on the One Plus facilities in the James Moffat Centre in Ardrossan when the building becomes available.

Noted.

### **4. Follow-Through Reports**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the completion of the follow-through process by a number of schools following HMIE inspections between April and September 2006.

The HMIE reports contain action points for improvement and there is a well established and rigorous monitoring system in place in which the Quality Improvement Service is involved. The publication of Follow-Through reports has been finalised for a further 6 schools in North Ayrshire, namely, Haysholm School, St Andrew's Academy, West Kilbride Primary School, Education Support Resource: Stanley Primary School, Stanley Primary School and Moorpark Primary School. Copies of the finalised individual school reports were appended to the report and provided details on the HMIE inspection, continuous improvement and the steps taken to progress towards meeting the main points for action.

Noted.

## **5. Harbour Art Centre: Monitoring of Impact**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the impact of the re-opened Harbour Arts Centre.

The redeveloped Harbour Arts Centre (HAC) has been open since 31 August 2006 and now offers a welcoming foyer area, 2 multipurpose studio spaces, a theatre, a gallery, a cafe bar and a courtyard space. The HAC provides a modern, responsive and innovative arts service to the community of North Ayrshire. An analysis of visitor numbers within the period September/October 2006 showed an increase of 700% compared to the same period in 2004.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm.