

Education Executive
10 April 2012

IRVINE, 10 April 2012 - At a meeting of the Education Executive of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

John Bell, Alex Gallagher, Gordon McConnell, Peter McNamara, David O'Neill, and Gordon Smith.

Also Present

John Ferguson.

In Attendance

C. Kirk, Corporate Director, M. Armstrong, Head of Service (Logistics and Infrastructure), F. Rodman and M. Cunningham, Quality Improvement Officers, D. Yuille, Project Manager (Education and Skills); C. McCourt, Finance Manager (Finance and Infrastructure); J. Montgomery, General Manager, K. Dyson, Communications Officer and M. McKeown, Committee Services Manager (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

T. Swan, Head Teacher, Kilwinning Academy.

Chair

Councillor Bell in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Reid.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 16.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Education Executive held on 28 February 2012 were signed in accordance with paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (copy enclosed).

3. Teaching Scotland's Future - The Donaldson Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the Scottish Government's response to the Donaldson Report and seeking approval for the Education and Skills Action Plan thereon.

The Report 'Teaching Scotland's Future' (the Donaldson Report) was the outcome of a national review of teacher education in Scotland undertaken in 2010 by Graham Donaldson, former head of HMIE. The Report contains 50 recommendations, covering the entirety of teacher education, which are designed to help to build the professional capacity of Scottish teachers and ultimately to improve the learning of the young people of Scotland. These recommendations, and the Scottish Government's response thereon, were outlined in Appendix A to the committee report. The Scottish Government has accepted all the recommendations contained in the Report in full, in part or in principle.

The evidence gathered in the course of the review highlighted five major ideas which underpin its recommendations i.e.

- The two most important and achievable ways in which school education can realise the high aspirations Scotland has for its young people are through supporting and strengthening firstly the quality of teaching, and secondly the quality of leadership.
- Teaching should be recognised as both complex and challenging, requiring the highest standards of professional competence and commitment.
- Leadership is based on fundamental values and habits of mind which must be acquired and fostered from entry into the teaching profession.
- The imperative which gave rise to Curriculum for Excellence still remain powerful and the future well-being of Scotland is dependent in large measure on its potential being realised. That has profound, and as yet not fully addressed, implications for the teaching profession and its leadership.
- Career-long teacher education, which is currently too fragmented and often haphazard, should be at the heart of this process, with implications for its philosophy, quality, coherence, efficiency and impact.

Recommendation 15 provides that "new and strengthened models of partnership among universities, local authorities, schools and individual teachers need to be developed. These partnerships should be based on jointly agreed principles and involve shared responsibility for key areas of teacher education". In its response, the Government committed to setting up a Partnership Working Group which would take forward this and all recommendations related to partnership. The National Partnership Group for Teacher Education in Scotland will bring together representatives of universities, local authorities, schools, individual professionals and national organisations to discuss how the recommendations in the Report can be implemented. The outcomes that were sought by the Partnership Group are that:

- Career long professional learning is clearly focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for learners.
- Effective approaches to professional learning foster, and are sustained by, a culture of professional and collegiate responsibility.
- Professional learning makes best use of available resources and the full range of available expertise, through effective partnership working at every level.

Education and Skills Extended Leadership Team have discussed the Report and its impact on the Service. A focus group of head teachers and deputies, as well as the EIS Learning Representative, examined the Government response to the recommendations with a view to shaping a local response/action plan. This was attached as Appendix B to the committee report.

North Ayrshire Council Education and Skills is well placed to respond to the recommendations contained in the Donaldson Report, with a number of key officers involved in national developments and with work in a number of areas linked to the Report already well underway. The committee report summarised the measures in place to respond to the recommendations of the Donaldson Report.

Members asked questions and received clarification in relation to the implementation of the measures set out in the Action Plan.

The Education Executive agreed to (a) note the good progress being made within North Ayrshire to respond to the Donaldson Report; and (b) approve the action plan detailed in Appendix B to the report.

4. Curriculum for Excellence

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence and on further plans to support preparation for National Qualifications.

The Education Executive received a report at its meeting held on 6 December 2011 which detailed progress made in the implementation of the Senior Phase. That report identified the significant progress made by secondary schools in responding to the demands of Curriculum for Excellence. All schools are increasingly delivering the entitlements within Curriculum for Excellence. Pupils take responsibility for their learning and make choices during the broad general education 3-15 and in the senior phase 15-18.

In recent months, there has been discussion about the timeline for the implementation of National 4 and National 5 examinations for the current cohort of pupils in S2. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Life Long Learning, Mike Russell MSP, recently announced a support package to respond to teachers' concerns over workload. The support package (detailed at Appendix 1 to the report) will include two additional in-service days for secondary schools, financial support for resources related to National 4 and 5 and preparation of course materials. The two additional in-service days for secondary schools will focus on supporting additional preparation for the introduction of the S3 profile in 2012/13 and the new qualifications from 2013/14.

Education Scotland has been tasked with carrying out an audit of the state of readiness in secondary schools with regard to the introduction of National 4 and 5 which will be shared with the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board.

The position in North Ayrshire is that schools are on track to deliver the new qualifications on time. A strong message has been communicated to head teachers and school staff that Education and Skills is very committed to the timeline for the implementation of the new qualifications. Secondary head teachers have had regular meetings with parents to consult on changes as it affects the school and individual pupils. The Leadership Team have had additional meetings with Secondary Parent Council Chairs to provide reassurance.

The support package also details an option of switching to Intermediate for the current S2 cohort if a school or department is not sufficiently on track in June 2012.

Primary schools are currently developing profiles for learners in P7. Profiles will contain a learner's statement, outlining their latest and best achievements and aspirations in and out of school. Learners are actively engaged in thinking about the content of the profile and are making choices about what information to include. Robust information on progress on achievement in literacy, numeracy and health and well-being will also be provided and the focus is on the breadth, challenge and application of learning.

In session 2012/13, learners in S3 will have a profile detailing the progress made. As with learners in P7, the document will include reflection by young people jointly with their teachers on what they have learned, experienced and achieved.

The Education Executive agreed to (a) note the additional support provided by the Cabinet Secretary in preparation for National Qualifications; (b) authorise the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) to write to the Scottish Government requesting two additional in-service days in session 2012/13; (c) note progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence; and (d) receive progress reports at future meetings.

5. Change to Title of "Nursery Nurse"

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the outcome of the consultation on changes to the title of "nursery nurse".

In North Ayrshire, staff working with children 0-5 in an early years setting are titled "nursery nurses" or "teachers". Nursery nurses hold either a BA Early Childhood, HNC Early Education and Childcare or SVQ level 3 in Children's Care Learning and Development. Across Scotland, staff qualified to this level have a variety of titles including nursery nurse, early years practitioner, early education officer and early educators.

In recent years the remit of a nursery nurse has changed from a predominantly child care role to child development and learning. As part of the significant review of early years it was proposed that the name should be changed to a title that reflects the current remit and responsibilities. Examples of possible titles were discussed at the meeting of the Early Years Review Group held on 17 November and the following titles were proposed:

- Early Years Practitioner
- Early Childhood Educator
- Early Childhood Practitioner

All nursery nurses working in North Ayrshire were consulted on this change and encouraged to choose their preferred title. The outcome of the consultation was set out in the report with the preferred title being 'Early Years Practitioner'.

Noted.

6. Kilwinning Academy Improvement Plan

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the efforts made by Kilwinning Academy to improve the quality of education.

The Education Executive has previously agreed that there should be an opportunity for members to engage more closely with the work of secondary schools in their efforts to improve attainment and achievement.

Kilwinning Academy was inspected by HMIE in October 2007 and a positive report was published in January 2008. A further follow-through report published in September 2009 noted the considerable commitment of staff to improving the quality of young people's learning of experiences. Some essential facts about Kilwinning Academy were set out in Appendix A to the report.

The school Improvement Plan for 2011/12, a copy of which was attached as Appendix B to the report, outlines three priorities i.e.

- Curriculum for Excellence
- Raising Attainment & Achievement
- Quality Assurance and Self-Evaluation

The Head Teacher, Mr T. Swan, was in attendance at the meeting and presented the Education Executive with information about the challenges facing the Academy and the approach being taken by the school, in partnership with its stakeholders, to meet these challenges through its Improvement Plan. A draft Improvement Plan for 2012/13 was circulated. The Education Executive also viewed a video presentation made by school pupils.

Members asked questions and received clarification on the information presented.

The Education Executive agreed (a) to note the efforts made by Kilwinning Academy to improve the quality of education; and (b) that a follow up visit to the Academy by Elected Members be scheduled early in the new Administration.

7. North Ayrshire Council School Estate

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the progress made on current school estate improvements.

On 18 January 2011, the Education Executive received a report which presented a vision for the future of the school estate and agreed (a) to approve the broad principles detailed around the vision presented for the future of the school estate; (b) the delivery model outlined to achieve it; and (c) to receive proposals at a future meeting to consolidate school buildings in order to deliver a school estate that is sustainable, maximises efficiencies, and optimises use.

Subsequently, on 25 October 2011, the Education and Skills Business Case was presented to the Education Executive for consideration. The Business Case highlights a number of service proposals and opportunities to support a net positive impact upon learning delivery and the regeneration of localities. The Education Executive agreed to further development of the Business Case, including the proposals relating to *"the effective use of the educational and skills estate"*.

The delivery model agreed by the Education Executive proposed a phased approach to achieving a sustainable school estate that looks to:

- Rationalise and consolidate assets.
- Increase total occupancy level from 68% (current) to 85% (target).
- Place the school estate in the context of the wider community and learning infrastructure.
- Further develop the concept of a school as a community hub.
- As far as possible, include additional supported learning provision in all new builds and redevelopments.
- Develop a different model of measuring capacity.
- Invest capital funding to upgrade and adapt school stock to condition rating B or better.

Following the Scottish Government's approval on the outcomes of the Irvine East and Irvine West Public Consultations in 2010, phase 1 of the Business Case is currently underway. The outcome of the Irvine West consultation was to close John Galt Primary School in June 2013 and rezone the catchment area which impacts on Castlepark and Woodlands Primary Schools. An opportunity was also taken to replace the hatted accommodation at Castlepark Community Nursery. The scope of these projects was presented in the report. The budget for the Irvine West projects is £7.4m with a completion date of August 2013.

The outcome of the Irvine East consultation was to close Broomlands, Fencedyke and Towerlands primary school in June 2014, and build a new primary school on the Broomlands site. The scope of this project is to deliver a new 23 classroom primary school including all activity areas and associated spaces, provision for assisted learning and hearing impairment and a new 60/60 (3-5 years) nursery to replace existing requirement including outdoor play area. The budget for the project is £12m with a completion date of August 2014.

An extensive stakeholder consultation process has taken place with local Elected Members, Council officers, head teachers, staff, parents, pupils and the wider community to shape the design of these facilities. Workshops, meetings and drop-in days have been held to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on and influence the design process.

In addition to these projects, the new Dreghorn Primary School is currently on site and is due for completion in July 2012 with the school occupying the new building after the October holidays 2012. This will allow for the school and the wider community to have a familiarisation period between hand-over and occupation. This development follows a decision that was taken by the Education Executive on 23 June 2009 to replace the existing Dreghorn Primary School with a new purpose built school on the Dundonald Road site that would provide an excellent environment for learning and address a number of the current deficiencies related to the current provision. As with the Irvine East/West schools projects, the design for the new facility has been developed through stakeholder consultations with local Elected Members, Council officers, head teachers, staff, parents and pupils. The budget for the project is £8.3m.

A further project has been approved to plan for a new Garnock school campus which includes early years, an amalgamated primary school and new secondary school, to serve the combined catchment areas of the primaries and the current catchment of Garnock Academy and to close Garnock pool and leisure facilities and to include these facilities in the new campus. Indicative facilities will include:

- A new secondary school with a roll of around 1000 pupils.
- A new 21 classroom primary school including all activity areas and associated spaces.
- A new 60/60 (3-5 years) nursery to replace existing requirement including outdoor play area.
- A new pool and enhanced leisure facilities.
- The campus to be built at a new location.
- The budget for the project is £46m (of which £22.5m will be met from existing budgets) with a provisional date for commencement of works around the summer of 2013 and a target date for completion of works Spring 2015 to allow school opening August 2015, or earlier if achievable.

Through a SFT initiative, North Ayrshire is working in partnership with South Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and Dumfries and Galloway Councils to explore shared opportunities for the design and procurement process of the Garnock Campus Project. Any benefits which might be realised will be reported to a future committee.

The significant investment by the Council to deliver these projects aims to provide school facilities that provide an environment which is efficient to run, fit for purpose in terms of condition, inclusion and suitability, sustainable in terms of design and carbon footprint, future proofed for flexibility and adaptability and support high quality, effective learning and teaching.

Phase 2 of the Education and Skills Business Case relates to a further consideration of the primary school estate. Proposals are currently being developed by officers which will be presented at a future Education Executive for consideration by Members. This body of work has been carried out in conjunction with iMPower to ensure a corporate approach that is integrated with the Council Asset Management Strategy and in line with the Council's broader change programme. Data has been collated to project future school rolls and establish a picture across the entire school estate for the next 10 years to help identify proposed class structures, areas of potential under occupancy and to establish opportunities for the improvement of education outcomes and infrastructure.

Phase 3 of the Business Case relates to the restructuring of secondary school estate, resource sharing between denominational and non-denominational schools, opportunities for the combination of libraries with the school estate and for the incorporation of compatible services. Consideration is currently being given to this in the context of the Phase 3 Schools Investment Programme recently announced by the Scottish Government. Details around a bid for funding will be submitted to a future Education Executive for Members consideration.

Members asked questions and received clarification in relation to the information provided, including the scope for restructuring the secondary school estate.

The Education Executive agreed to (a) note the progress made by Education and Skills to deliver a school estate that is sustainable and which maximises efficiencies and optimises use; and (b) receive a report at a future meeting on a bid for funding from the Scottish Government's Schools Investment Programme.

8. Chair's Remarks

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the Education Executive in the current administration.

He recorded his thanks to the Elected and Lay Members, and to the Officers, who had contributed to the work of the Education Executive since 2007.

The meeting ended at 3.35 p.m.