

Educational Services Committee
10 November 1999

Irvine, 10 November 1999 - At a Meeting of the Educational Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Peter McNamara, Thomas Barr, John Reid, John Bell, Jacqueline Browne, Gordon Clarkson, Ian Clarkson, Janet Fernandez, David Gallagher, Samuel Gooding, Jane Gorman, James Jennings, Father Matthew McManus, Rev. Sandy Montgomerie, David Munn, David O'Neill, John Sillars, Gordon Smith, Samuel Taylor, Christine Welch and Richard Wilkinson.

In Attendance

B. Devine, Chief Executive; J. Travers, Corporate Director (Educational Services); B. Gardner, Head of Educational Resources; J. Tulips, L. Owens, J. Leckie, F. Keddlily and D. Anderson, Heads of Service (Educational Services), L. Morton, Principal Officer (Accountancy) (Finance); M. Adams, Corporate Policy Officer; M. McCormick, Media Relations Officer; A. Clarke, Public Relations Assistant; and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Mr McNamara in the Chair.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 29 September 1999, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Educational Services Committee: Parent Representation

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the outcome of the election to identify a parent to serve on the Educational Services Committee.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the appointment of Janet Fernandez as the duly elected parent representative on the Educational Services Committee; and (b) to write to the unsuccessful candidates thanking them for their valued participation in the election.

3. Revenue Budget 1999/2000

(a) Budgetary Control

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the budgetary control position for Educational Services at the end of September 1999 and projections for the financial year 1999/2000.

The Committee noted (i) the current financial position, the year end projections and the result of the management action which has been taken to date to address the anticipated shortfall; and (ii) that the Corporate Director, in consultation with the Chair of Educational Services has

identified further measures to address the anticipated shortfall.

(b) Savings Measures

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on projections for financial year 1999/2000 and savings measures designed to reduce the projected deficit which is currently estimated at £290,000.

The proposed savings measures include (i) the retention of current vacancies and delay in filling new vacancies; (ii) the revision of the school letting plan; (iii) overtime reduction in halls and community centres; (iv) the discontinuation of the landscape service and reductions in the amenity service and conservation and woodland expenditure; (v) a reduction in sports development; (vi) the closure of catering facilities at Vikingar and Auchenhavie Leisure Centre; (vii) the restructuring of Vikingar staffing; (viii) a reduction in marketing expenditure; (ix) a reduction in entertainment activities; and (x) savings arising from the establishment of the Leisure Trust.

With regard to the closure of catering facilities at Vikingar and Auchenhavie Leisure Centre over the period December 1999 to March 2000, assurances were given that the provision of catering facilities required for curling events will be examined.

The Committee agreed (A) to approve the proposed savings measures as detailed in the report; and (B) to initiate discussions with the relevant Trade Unions on the implementation of the savings measures.

4. Improving Our Schools: Response to Consultation

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the proposed response to the consultation document in relation to the Improvement in Scottish Education Bill.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to approve the response to the consultation document issued by the Government in relation to the Improvement in Scottish Education Bill, as detailed in the report.

5. New Deal for Schools: Capital Resources

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the proposed projects to be funded from additional capital resources available through the New Deal for Schools Programme.

The Committee agreed to approve the allocation of the additional capital resources for school improvements under the New Deal for Schools Programme of £782,000 in 2000/2001 to the projects detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

6. Arran Community Learning Centre

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the successful funding bids that will ensure the creation of a Community Learning Centre on Arran.

The Committee agreed that a further report be submitted on progress towards the opening of this new facility.

7. Sexual Health Education Policy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the proposed policy statement on Sexual Health Education which had been re-drafted following an extensive consultation process, taking into account a number of suggestions which had been made.

The Committee agreed to approve the Sexual Health Education Policy.

8. Countdown North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the arrangements which have been made for the launch on 29 November 1999 and marketing of the programme of Millennium celebrations, Countdown North Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed that further reports on Millennium celebrations be submitted, as appropriate.

9. The Whole Picture

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the development and production of a curricular support art book "The Whole Picture".

The Committee agreed to approve the donation of funds raised from sales of the book to the North Ayrshire Kosovo Appeal.

10. Grants Strategy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a revised Grants Strategy, taking into account the discussion on this item at the Committee on 29 September 1999.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the revised Grants Strategy to be implemented in 2000/2001, as detailed in the report; and (b) to transfer the appropriate sums to the Community Grants Scheme Budget of each Divisional Committee for financial year 2000/2001.

11. Nursery Admissions Policy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on proposals to review the policy for admissions to all local authority nursery provision within North Ayrshire.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to approve the new Nursery Admissions Policy.

12. New Opportunities Fund: Out of Hours Childcare

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the success of Springside and Beith Out of School Groups in obtaining funds from the New Opportunities Fund, which will enable them to provide new Out of Hours childcare places.

The Committee agreed that a further report on all new and existing Out of Hours childcare developments be submitted to a future meeting.

13. Pre-School Education and Childcare Plan

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the Pre-School Education and Childcare Plan for North Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed to approve the Pre-School Education and Childcare Plan for North Ayrshire for submission to the Scottish Executive.

14 Improving our Schools: Special Educational Needs

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the report of the Advisory Committee on the Education of Children with Severe Low Incidence Disabilities and the Scottish Executive's response "Improving Our Schools: Special Educational Needs" on which comments have been invited by 30 November 1999.

The Committee agreed to approve the response to the Scottish Executive, as detailed in the report.

15. School Board Biennial Elections

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the current position in North Ayrshire regarding the School Board biennial elections which involve certain schools holding postal ballots and by-elections

Noted.

16. HMI Report: Cumbrae Primary School

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the HMI Report on Cumbrae Primary School.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposals to address the key points for action in the HMI Report on Cumbrae Primary School.

17. Educational Services Sub-Committee

Submitted report by Chief Executive on the proposed composition of the Educational Services Sub-Committee to deal with cases under Sections 35 to 38 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

The Committee agreed that (a) the Educational Services Sub-Committee to deal with cases under Section 35 to 38 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 comprise four members; and (b) the Sub-Committee be chaired by one of the Vice-Chairs, with the other categories of membership being a Church representative on the Educational Services Committee and two other members of the Committee.

18. Educational Services: "On the Net"

Submitted report and received presentation by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on Internet developments within schools and other educational establishments in North Ayrshire.

Noted.

19. Best Value Service Reviews

Submitted report and received presentation by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the results of Best Value Service Reviews.

The Committee agreed to approve the Improvement Plans arising from the Service Review of Secondary Education, Primary Education and Educational Services Central Administration.

The meeting ended at 4.05 p.m.

