

Education Executive  
2 August 2011

**IRVINE, 2 August 2011** - At a Meeting of the Education Executive of North Ayrshire Council at 3.00 p.m.

**Present**

John Bell, Tom Barr (from Item 9), Alex Gallagher, Very Reverend Matthew Canon McManus, David O'Neill, John Reid and Gordon Smith.

**In Attendance**

E. Murray, Chief Executive, M. Armstrong and M. Docherty, Heads of Service and S. Storrie, Project Manager (Education and Skills); C. McCourt, Finance Manager (Finance and Infrastructure); R. Forrest, Planning Services Manager (Corporate Services); J. Montgomery, General Manager, K Dyson, Communications Officer and A. Little, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

**Also In Attendance**

A. Wilson, Headteacher, John Galt Primary School and D. Hutchison, District Inspector (HMIE).

**Chair**

Councillor Bell in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Gordon McConnell, Reverend David Karoon and Peter McNamara.

**1. Declarations of Interest**

In terms of Standing Order 16, Councillor Bell declared a non-financial insignificant interest in Agenda Item 3, as the spouse of a member of the Parent Council and parent of a pupil at Moorpark Primary School.

**2. Minutes**

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Education Executive held on 24 May 2011 were signed in accordance with paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

**3. Garnock Campus Site Selection**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the outcome of consideration by the Scrutiny Committee of a call-in in relation to the Garnock Campus site selection.

At its meeting on 24 May 2011, the Education Executive of North Ayrshire Council received a report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on proposals that the provision of education at Garnock Academy, Moorpark and Glengarnock Primary Schools be discontinued and that a new school campus be built to serve the combined catchment areas of the primaries and the current catchment of Garnock Academy. The report also sought approval for the closure of Garnock pool and leisure facilities and to include these facilities in the new school campus.

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 the 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.

The report provided details of the terms of a call-in request, signed by Councillors Hill, Gibson and R. Barr and considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 6 June 2011. The Scrutiny Committee considered the call-in on 20 June 2011, and agreed to recommend to the Education Executive that a Members' Seminar be arranged to allow Members to examine the wide range of information in more detail.

A presentation on the proposals for the Garnock campus was held on 2 August 2011, providing an opportunity for Members to ask questions and express their views on the information provided in relation to the preferred site selection. The Members made the following requests/contentions for consideration by the Education Executive:-

1. Site visits be arranged to provide an opportunity for Members to familiarise themselves with the sites;
2. A further seminar be arranged following the site visits;
3. Consideration be given to progressing the project with more than one site (sites 12 and 7);
4. The scope of the project be amended to include a secondary school and pool and the addition of only one primary school at a later date;
5. That a Regeneration Impact Assessment on each of the four sites be undertaken;
6. Clarification be sought from Scottish Enterprise on the exact location of the proposed site 12; and
7. That the consultation process undertaken had not been robust and further consultation was required.

The Committee discussed each of the requests/contentions arising from the Seminar and concluded:-

1. That site visits would be arranged to provide all Members with an opportunity to view the sites in proximity to the town and local infrastructures;
2. That a further seminar would be useful to discuss the findings of the site visits;
3. Progressing the project with more than one site would not be feasible in respect of the potential for land 'blight' to be associated with other sites;
4. The scope of the proposed campus project encompassing a new secondary school, a new primary school and a swimming pool would provide state of the art facilities in education and leisure and had been the subject of detailed discussion prior to the agreement of this ambitious approach;
5. That an independent assessment on the regeneration impact of the project on the Kilbirnie and surrounding area would be beneficial (and it was noted that there would be a cost to this work);
6. That pegging out of the site would assist confirmation of the exact location of site 12; and
7. That positive feedback from both the Scottish Government and HMIE on the consultation process undertaken had already confirmed that it had been robust.

The Committee agreed that (a) site visits be arranged for all Members; (b) a further seminar be arranged following the site visits; (c) the project should not be progressed with more than one preferred site; (d) the scope of the project should remain unchanged; (e) an independent consultant should be engaged to undertake a Regeneration Impact Assessment of the project; (f) clarification should be sought from Scottish Enterprise on the location of the proposed site 12 and that this should be pegged out prior to any site visits; and (g) a comprehensive consultation exercise on the school closures had been undertaken in line with the statutory process and further consultation is not required.

#### **4. Validated Assisted Self Evaluation (VSE)**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) on the changes to procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the Education and Skills functions and progression to Validated Assisted Self-Evaluation.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 sets out the national agenda for education. The Act provides an improvement framework for Scottish Education, an integral aspect of which was the planned programme of inspection of the Education Functions of Scottish Local Authorities (INEA) by Her Majesty's Inspector of Education. North Ayrshire Council was inspected in 2008 as one of the first evaluations to be jointly approved.

A different approach to inspection was introduced in 2009 based on the pilots in North Ayrshire and elsewhere. Validated Assisted Self-Evaluation is a proportionate model of inspection based on the view that good information on the performance of education authorities is available; there is a positive, established link between District Inspector and the authority; and there is a wide range of national performance data available.

The process for VSE takes place over three distinct stages: initial engagement, self-evaluation and validation and reporting stage. The report recommended that VSE focus on 2-4 key themes and that all elected members are involved in selecting the themes. Members will be surveyed to identify their top three preferences from the listed detailed in the report. Results will be collated and brought back to the Education Executive on 13 September 2011 for a final decision.

Consultation and dialogue will take place with establishments, services, trade unions and other stakeholders as Education and Skills prepares for undertaking a validated self-evaluation in 2012. It is intended that two update seminars for elected Members will be held during the preparation phase.

Members asked questions and were provided with information in relation to:-

- The benefits of the validated assisted self-evaluation model which included strengthening of the partnership between the education authority and HMIE, the involvement of Elected Members in the self-evaluation process, ownership of the model by the education authority and the opportunity for the education authority to have a robust external scrutiny to support the self-evaluation and continuous improvement agenda;
- The focus by HMIE on enhancing the capacity of education authorities to self-evaluate; and
- Nominal staff time costs of self-evaluation as a result of existing external scrutiny processes.

The Education Executive agreed (a) to note the changes to HMIE procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the Education and Skills functions of North Ayrshire; (b) to approve the progression of VSE; and (c) that Elected Members be surveyed on the selection of the key themes for self-evaluation.

## **5. School Estate Proposals John Galt Primary School Placing Request Arrangements 2013/2014**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) on the placing request arrangements for session 2013/2014 in respect of the closure of John Galt Primary School.

At its meeting on 14 December 201, the Education Executive agreed to approve that (a) following the end of school session in June 2013 the provision of education at John Galt Primary School is discontinued; (b) the appropriate arrangements for rezoning the catchment area are made as detailed in section 3 of the report and the attached consultation documents; (c) Castlepark Primary School is extended to accommodate additional children from John Galt Primary School and projected house building; (d) Woodlands Primary School is extended to accommodate additional children from John Galt Primary School and Nursery and projected house building; and (e) the existing Castlepark Community Nursery is accommodated in a new building within the campus of an extended Castlepark Primary School.

As part of the statutory public consultation process, requests were received from three interested parties (representing two households) for their addresses to be re-zoned to Woodlands Primary School rather than Castlepark Primary School as proposed.

The report provided details of the current priorities for placing requests and proposed that placing requests received from parents of pupils in attendance at John Galt Primary School in June 2013 are considered after medical requests and requests from siblings but before any other placing requests to these schools.

The Education Executive agreed to the amendment of the placing request arrangements in order that pupils in attendance at, or about to attend, John Galt Primary School in June 2013, are given priority consideration in respect of placing requests to Castlepark and Woodlands Primary Schools for session 2013/2014.

## **6. Impact of Improvement Planning on Raising Attainment and Achievement in Secondary Schools**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) presenting proposals to allow the Education Executive to engage with secondary headteachers on the impact of improvement planning on raising attainment and achievement.

On 26 January 2010, the Education Executive approved a workplan proposal for Elected Members to engage more closely with the work of secondary schools in relation to improving the quality of education and raising standards. Since that time, headteachers of all secondary schools have presented a report to the Education Executive on arrangements for sustaining and improving the quality of education in their school. Members had the opportunity to receive clarification on various aspects of each presentation including Curriculum for Excellence, promoting positive behaviour and community engagement.

Appendix 1 to the report provided a programme for further presentations from secondary headteachers. An opportunity will be made available for elected members to visit each secondary school in the week prior to their presentation to the Education Executive.

The Education Executive was advised that a planned programme of visits to secondary schools would be prepared for Members.

The Education Executive agreed to (a) receive a presentation from secondary headteachers on the impact of improvement planning on raising attainment and achievement; and (b) note that an opportunity will be made available for Elected Members to visit each secondary school in the week prior to the Education Executive.

## **7. Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 5, a framework for assessment, recognising achievement, profiling, and reporting**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) on revised national guidance on reporting to parents and carers and subsequent developments in North Ayrshire.

In January 2010, Building the Curriculum 5: a framework for assessment (BtC5) was published. BtC5 included a commitment to provide further guidance on recognising achievement, profiling and reporting to parents. Guidance on reporting was published on-line in June 2010. In December 2010, additional guidance was published in Building the Curriculum 5, a framework for assessment: recognising achievement, profiling and reporting.

Reports outlining key issues in assessment and reporting were presented to the Education Executive in March 2010 and August 2010.

The report detailed the main purposes of reporting and the key messages of the BtC5 Guidance on Reporting to Parents issued in December 2010

A consistent approach to reporting to parents has been developed within each primary cluster and reports were issued to parents and carers by the end of June. Secondary schools also issued new style reports to parents of young people in S1. Early feedback has indicated that parents felt the information on their children's progress was relevant and constructive.

Members asked questions and received information on the undernoted:-

- Work to support teachers in implementing Curriculum for Excellence;
- The work undertaken by primary clusters on the creation of a report template;
- The responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure the consistent quality and quantity of information reported to parents;
- The participation of learners in recording progress and achievement; and
- Work with parents to gather their views on the profiles and reports.

Noted.

## **8. Curriculum for Excellence: Progress Report**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) on developments in North Ayrshire with respect to Curriculum for Excellence.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), remains the key government priority which aims to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, flexible and enriched curriculum from 3-18.

A report outlining progress in taking forward CfE within North Ayrshire Council was presented to the Education Executive in June 2010. Reports outlining key issues in Assessment and Reporting following the publication of Building the Curriculum 5: Assessment and Reporting were presented to the Education Executive in March 2010 and August 2010.

Significant progress has been made in taking forward CfE to improve outcomes for children and young people. An intensive programme of support for managers and staff to enable them to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence in developing and delivering the new curriculum to learners. Details of the support provided was provided at Appendix A.

Strategic direction for the pacing of developments is provided by the CfE Strategy Group. Professionals from across Education and Skills have actively participated in and contributed to these developments including the Quality Improvement Service, the Educational Psychology Service, Community Learning and Development, Information and Culture and the Pupil Support Service.

Children and young people, through school reviews and other in-house mechanisms have been given increasing responsibility for their learning. Parents have been involved through Parent Council events such as the NAC conference, Parent Council Chair meetings and through a variety of events in schools across all clusters.

The milestones achieved to date were detailed in the report and information on the CfE timeline of developments was attached at Appendix B.

Work has begun with headteachers to evaluate the strengths and development needs in terms of CfE implementation to inform Education and Skills' work and to enable a return to be made to the Scottish Government by October 2011. This will be shared with the Education Executive at a later stage.

Members asked questions and received further information in respect of:-

- The anxiety around the lack of detail on assessment for the Scottish Qualifications Framework; and
- A range of supports provided to staff to increase their knowledge, skills, and confidence in developing and delivering the new curriculum to learners.

Noted.

Councillor T. Barr joined the meeting.

## **9. Maintaining Teacher Numbers: Deployment of Additional Resource**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) on action to deploy additional teacher resource in 2011/12 to support the building of sustainable capacity within learning community clusters and improve outcomes for children and young people.

North Ayrshire Council agreed to the terms of the agreement on funding for local government in 2011-12 reached between the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Scottish Government has included an additional £15 million, to be distributed amongst all local authorities to cover the education costs associated with protecting, as far as possible, the number of teachers posts and allowing opportunities for unemployed teachers. North Ayrshire Council's allocation of this additional funding will be approximately £400,000 and will be paid through a redetermination of Aggregate External Income.

Compliance with the specific commitment concerning teacher numbers will be determined through the annual census of teacher numbers, scheduled to take place on 22 September 2011. As a planning assumption, North Ayrshire Council is aiming to employ at least 1,364 teachers at the time of the census, compared to 1,388 in 2010.



It is projected that the deployment of this additional teacher resource, equivalent to 16 FTE, along with its current budgeted teacher resource will enable the Council to meet the agreement on teacher numbers. These posts are in addition to 59 full time class teacher posts that have been already advertised and filled by the Council this year.

This additional resource will be used to build on and support the work that has been evident in school clusters and will be managed at a cluster level.

Members asked questions and received clarification in respect of the retention of the pupil/teacher ratio and the declining pupil roll, and the options outlined in the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) Agreement should there be failure to deliver on the agreed figure for the national census return.

The Education Executive agreed (a) to note the deployment of additional teacher resource in 2011/12 to support improved outcomes for children and young people through capacity building within learning community clusters; (b) to receive a report after session 2011/12 detailing the impact of this intervention; and (c) that a report on the SNCT Agreement will be provided to a future meeting.

## **10. Secondary School Timetabling**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) on progress on the proposals to adopt more efficient timetabling models in secondary schools and the impact on school transport.

On 1 March 2011, the Education Executive agreed (a) to note the implementation of more efficient timetabling structures by August 2012; and (b) that headteachers continue to consult parents, pupils, teachers and Trade Unions on the detail of the implementation.

Headteachers consulted on the implementation of a change to the school day (Standard Circular S7) and assessed the impact of school transport as a result of the proposed change of school hours. The financial impact assessment, which has taken into account recent increases due to fuel costs since original paper, has led to a 'phased approach' being adopted to the implementation of revised timetable structures, thereby ensuring the most cost effective approach to implementation. Details of the phased approach were provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

The 33 period week is an efficient and effective timetabling model that has benefits in terms of flexible curriculum delivery and efficiency. The implementation of these changes will generate full year savings of £320k as outlined in the 2011 budget.

Members asked questions, and received clarification on delivery of the savings in full by the schools unable to implement the efficient timetabling structures by August 2012.

The Education Executive agreed (a) to note the proposals for the implementation of more efficient timetabling structures in secondary schools by August 2012 with the exception of Arran High School and Garnock Academy due to the issues relating to transport costs and at Largs Academy to allow further discussion with the Parent Council; and (b) that headteachers continue to consult parents, pupils, and teachers on the detail of the implementation.

### **11. John Galt Primary School and Nursery Class, Irvine: HMIE Report**

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education & Skills) on the HMIE Report on John Galt Primary School and Nursery Class, Irvine.

John Galt Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in May 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 also evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning and the school's processes for self-evaluation. They examined 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 HM Inspectors was published on 28 June 2011 and identified the following key strengths:

- Children who are friendly and enthusiastic and enjoy learning.
- The impact of the headteacher in supporting and developing a strong sense of community.
- The quality of relationships between children and all staff.
- Staff teamwork and their adaptability to change, which is having a positive impact on learning and teaching.
- Strong partnerships with a range of agencies to give additional support to children and their families when appropriate.

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

- Continue to improve attainment in writing.
- Make more effective use of assessment to ensure sufficient challenge for all learners.

In consultation with the designated Quality Improvement Officer and staff, the headteacher has put plans in place to incorporate the recommendations of the HMIE report into the School Improvement Plan. The school and the authority will build on the strengths identified in the inspection report and work together to address the key recommendations, as outlined in the report.

In terms of follow-through procedures, HMIE will make no further visits given the high level of confidence in the school to make the necessary improvements. The school's progress will be reported to parents through the normal school and local authority process.

Mrs A. Wilson, the headteacher of the school was in attendance and answered questions in relation to the unique challenges facing the school, examples of activities to continue to improve attainment in writing and the partnerships in place with a range of agencies to give additional support to children and their families where appropriate.

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 4.35 p.m.