

Educational Services Committee
29 September 1999

Irvine, 29 September 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, David Gallagher, Jane Gorman, Alan Hill, Father Matthew McManus, 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, J. Leckie, F. Keddilty and D. Anderson, Heads of Service; G. Hamilton, Festival and Events Officer; R. Wilson, Football Development Officer (Educational Services); L. Morton, Principal Officer (Financial Services); D. Green, Senior Solicitor (Court) (Legal and Regulatory); G. Lawson, Principal Policy Officer; M. McCormick, Media Relations Officer; and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Mr McNamara in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Samuel Gooding and James Jennings.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 18th August 1999, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Membership of Educational Services Committee

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the proposed appointment of a third Church representative and the appointment of a teaching staff representative to the Educational Services Committee.

The Committee (a) agreed to appoint Rev. Sandy Montgomerie from the Scottish Episcopal Church as the third Church representative; and (b) noted the appointment of Mr Gordon Smith as the teaching staff representative on the Committee.

3. Parent Representation on the Educational Services Committee

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the steps being taken to identify a parent to serve on the Educational Services Committee. Four nominations have been received from interested parties.

The Committee agreed to approve (a) the holding of an election in order to identify the preferred candidate; and (b) the appointment of the successful candidate to the Educational Services Committee.

4. Grants Strategy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on issues for consideration in relation to the Educational Services Committee's Grants Strategy for financial year 2000/2001. A number of options were outlined, including the possibility of devolving certain of the grants listed to Divisional Committees and allocating funding either on the basis of actual expenditure or on the basis of the current Divisional Committee formula, which takes account of population and a poverty weighting using free school meals and clothing grants as an indicator.

After a full discussion, the Committee agreed that a further report be submitted setting out a proposed Grants Strategy for 2000/2001, taking into account the views expressed by members.

5. North Ayrshire Leisure Trust

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the result of the ballot of staff in relation to the formation of a North Ayrshire Leisure Trust, which indicated a majority in favour of the establishment of a Leisure Trust.

The Committee agreed to proceed with the establishment of a North Ayrshire Leisure Trust.

6. The Structure and Balance of the Curriculum 5 - 14

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on (a) the review of the Structure and Balance of the Curriculum 5 - 14; and (b) the consultation process being undertaken by the Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (CCC). This Committee is seeking views on possible amendments to time allocations for the different curricular areas in primary schools and on whether the flexibility factor should be increased further. The proposed North Ayrshire response is based on the views of primary Head Teachers in North Ayrshire and reflects a preference for time to be allocated to specific areas of the curriculum, including an increase in the allocation to Language and Maths and a specific allocation for Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The response also proposes a decrease in the allocation of time for Environmental Studies in the light of the recent review and taking into account that ICT and Health Education have been reallocated from Environmental Studies to other areas. There would still be an opportunity to use the flexibility time allocation on any areas of the curriculum.

After discussion, during which further clarification was provided on aspects of the curriculum, the Committee agreed to approve the proposed response as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report for submission to the Scottish CCC.

7. New Community Schools

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the progress being made towards establishing two New Community School projects and to seek nominations for the Project Steering Groups.

The Committee agreed to nominate (a) Councillor David Munn to serve on the Steering Group of Auchenharvie Academy Project; and (b) Councillor Jacqueline Browne to serve on the Steering Group of the Irvine Royal Academy Project.

8. ARION Study Visit to North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the outcome of the recent Study Visit to North Ayrshire under the ARION Scheme, which provides opportunities for educationalists in European countries to study aspects of good practice. The Group Report completed by the participants from the visit comments favourably on the organisation of the programme and highlights the main observations of the group in relation to the European Dimension, which was the theme of the visit.

The Committee (a) noted the outcome of the ARION Study Visit; and (b) agreed to commend the organisers of the visit for the successful arrangements.

9. Public Arts Project: New Lawthorn Primary School

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the award of £92,273 by the Scottish Arts Council to support the creation of a public art feature, using the external north wall of the new primary school in the Lawthorn area of Irvine.

The Committee agreed to welcome the public art enhancement of the new Lawthorn Primary School.

10. Three Towns Community Learning Centre

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on progress in establishing a Community Learning Centre in Auchenhavie Academy.

The Committee agreed (a) to welcome the establishment of the Community Learning Centre in Auchenhavie Academy; and (b) that further reports on the expansion of Further Education provision be submitted on a regular basis.

11. Sportscotland Talent Identification and Development Pilot Project

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the successful outcome of a bid to Sportscotland to participate in the Talent Identification and Development Pilot Programme. Following a strong expression of interest in the programme from the Head Teacher of Largs Academy, a Working Group was established to develop a bid. The award to the Council is £65,000 for each of two years, subject to successful progress during the first year, which will provide a programme initially targeting S1 pupils at Largs Academy to attract and encourage their participation in sport and physical activity. It will involve the employment of a Co-ordinator on a fixed term contract to manage the project and liaise with all participating agencies.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the implementation of the Pilot Programme; and (b) to write to the Head Teacher of Largs Academy thanking him for his assistance in progressing the bid.

12. School Exclusions 1998/1999

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the degree and pattern of the use of school exclusion in North Ayrshire schools, which shows a significant fall in the number of exclusions over the past 4 years. This is due to a number of factors including the introduction of a new exclusion policy and new Education Support Bases.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that regular monitoring reports on exclusion levels be submitted and include a breakdown on an area basis.

13. Links with Karmoy, Norway

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on current educational and cultural links with Karmoy.

The Committee agreed to approve the continuation of links with Karmoy.

14. North Ayrshire Football Development Strategy

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the Football Development Strategy for North Ayrshire for the period 1999/2002. The Strategy aims through a structured programme to promote and develop football within North Ayrshire and includes proposals for improving opportunities, expansion to new groups, support structures for the game and the balance of provision of football pitches.

After discussion, during which further clarification was provided on the provision of a booking system for football pitches, the Committee agreed to approve the proposed North Ayrshire Football Development Strategy.

15. Children's Services Charges

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a number of the Children's Services available to Voluntary Groups and proposed revisions to existing charges for these services.

The Committee agreed to approve (a) the phased increase in charges for Out of School Hours provision in Local Authority units; (b) the reduction in charges for playgroups, nurseries and childminders using the toy library; (c) the retention of the current equipment hire scheme; (d) the introduction of the 'Gala Pack' of play activities; and (e) the annual indexing of charges in line with the current rate of inflation.

16. Millennium Celebrations in North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on arrangements for the Millennium celebrations in North Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed that further reports be submitted on progress in due course.

17. Out of School Hours Provision

Submitted report by Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the current position with respect to Out of School Hours Provision in North Ayrshire and the developments taking place.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the current development in Out of School Hours provision; (b) that future developments should be monitored by the Childcare Partnership; and (c) that an audit of provision be undertaken in June 2000.

18. External Funding for Arts and Culture in North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on external funding received from a variety of sources to support arts and cultural development in North Ayrshire.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that further reports be submitted on future successful funding bids; and (b) that the Largs Viking Festival Advisory Forum be requested to examine the organisation and funding of the Largs Viking Festival.

19. Pre-5 Voluntary Sector Grants 1999/2000

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the award of grants to voluntary organisations providing pre-5 services.

The Committee agreed to approve the award of grants to voluntary organisations providing Pre-5 services as detailed in the annexed report (Appendix ES1).

20. Adult Education

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on current developments that will increase the opportunities for Adult Learning across North Ayrshire. These include the transfer of responsibility for the Vocational Educational Programme to James Watt College, principally operating at Ardrossan and Garnock Academies which will allow Higher and Standard Grade courses to be offered free of charge. In the future, James Watt College will become involved in the delivery of the community based programme to a wider area of North Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the developments outlined in the report; and (b) that a further monitoring report be submitted in March 2000.

21. Notes from a Small Island

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on an award of £30,000 from the Scottish Arts Council to support a cross authority music-based project. The project will involve bringing together 75 young musicians aged 16-18 years from the three areas involved, North Ayrshire, Aberdeen and South Lanarkshire, for a week long residency on Arran, culminating in a series of live performances in Arran, New Lanark and Aberdeen.

The Committee agreed (a) to welcome the Scottish Arts Council grant to the Notes From a Small Island Project; and (b) to support the future development of the project.

22. Revenue Budget 1999/2000: Budgetary Control

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

The Committee (a) noted the current financial position, the year end projections and the results of the management action which has been taken to date to address the anticipated shortfalls; and (b) agreed to authorise the Chair and Vice-Chairs, in consultation with the Corporate Director (Educational Services) and if appropriate, local members, to approve measures which require to be implemented with immediate effect.

23. Exclusion of the Public

The Committee resolved, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following items of business on the ground indicated in terms of Paragraph 5 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

24. Attendance Order

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Regulatory) on the Education Sub-Committee meeting held on 23rd September 1999.

Councillor McNamara relinquished the Chair and took no part in the discussion. Councillor Barr also took no part in the discussion. Councillor Reid took the Chair for this item.

The Committee agreed (a) to homologate the action of the Convener in nominating Councillors

McNamara and Barr to form an Education Sub-Committee to deal with a case which fell within Section 37 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980; (b) to approve the making of an Attendance Order in respect of Child B; and (c) to amend the Scheme of Delegation to Committees to include the establishment of an Education Sub-Committee to deal with cases which fall within Sections 36 and 37 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

The meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.

Educational Services Committee
29/09/99

Appendix No
EDS1

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Grants to Pre-5 Organisations

Scottish Pre-School Play Association	£5,000
Scottish Childminding Association	£1,200
Action for Sick Children	£100
National Playbus Association	£50
Parkhouse Special Needs Group	£8,000
TOTAL	£14,350