

Education Committee  
22 April 1997

**Irvine, 22 April 1997** - At a Meeting of the Education Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

Thomas Morris, Margaret Highet, Thomas Barr, James Clements, Stewart Dewar, John Donn, Samuel Gooding, Stef Holmer, Father Matthew McManus, Peter McNamara, David Munn, Alan Munro, Robert Rae, Evelyn Sillars, Gordon Smith and Reverend John Taylor.

**In Attendance**

The Director of Education, The Architectural Services Manager, B. Gardner, Head of Education Resources, L. Rowson, J. Leckie, J. Tulips, Heads of Education Services, N Marshall, Co-ordinator, Arran Outdoor Education Resource (Education), A. Herbert, Head of Accountancy (Financial Services), D Anderson, Head of Cultural and Community Services (Community and Recreational Services) and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

**Chair**

Mr Morris in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Irene Oldfather, Patrick Browne, Thomas Dickie, David O'Neill, John Sillars and George Steven.

**1. Minutes Confirmed**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 March 1997, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

**2. Arran Outdoor Education Resource**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the work of the Arran Outdoor Education Resource.

On 17 September, the Committee approved a new financial structure for the operation of the Resource incorporating a revised fee structure and clear income targets to be achieved. The number of places available per week was expanded and included provision for primary school children. In addition, courses were diversified to meet the varying age range of pupils and link into the curriculum, including field work, environmental issues etc.

The Resource has achieved many of its aims successfully to date, including client bookings at a higher level; satisfaction reports at a high level; new health and safety legislation standards secured; and income targets being achieved. Further development of the Resource will centre on the issues of accommodation. Following a review of accommodation, the administration base and equipment storage facility has moved from its original base on the upper levels of the Council offices at Lamlash. Suitable alternative accommodation is currently being explored. Consideration will also require to be given to the residential accommodation which at present is secured through the block booking of beds in the Whiting Bay Youth Hostel.

The Committee then received a presentation from Mr Nigel Marshall, the Co-ordinator of the Arran Outdoor Education Resource, and viewed a video of pupils participating in the activities.

The Committee expressed their satisfaction with the provision available and agreed to note the significant progress being achieved by the Arran Outdoor Education Resource.

### **3. James MacFarlane School Summer Arrangements**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the proposed alteration to the summer holiday provision for children attending James MacFarlane School.

Within North Ayrshire, James MacFarlane School, Ardrossan provides for children with complex and multiple learning difficulties. The agreed contracts inherited from the former Strathclyde Regional Council have resulted in teaching staff commencing their holidays at the end of June, with instructors and auxiliary staff continuing to work for a further two weeks. The school remains open and it is necessary to recruit temporary staff for these two weeks to maintain appropriate cover.

It is proposed to resolve these difficulties and to create instead a special educational needs summer playscheme. This would still be exclusively for the pupils of James MacFarlane School but would operate on a significantly different basis, in that it would be open throughout the summer holiday and would provide a play/respite environment rather than a school. The benefits of this alteration would be a more flexible and extensive support to children and parents. There is funding within the Education budget to operate the playscheme for 15 days, by reallocating the finance currently used to operate the longer school year. There is also potential for obtaining additional funding from the Social Work Directorate, Special Needs Playscheme Grants, Ayrshire and Arran Health Board, Lottery Fund, etc. There has been considerable consultation on these proposals, including the Social Work and Community and Recreational Services Directorates and the parents and there has been strong support from the parents for the proposal. It is proposed to create a Parental Management Committee and appoint senior staff to run the playscheme and liaise with the school staff on the programme.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposals to alter the current summer arrangements at James MacFarlane School to create a special educational needs playscheme as detailed in the report.

### **4. Nursery Education Initiative: Moorpark Primary School**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on a proposal to increase nursery provision in Kilbirnie.

The monitoring of the uptake of nursery places has indicated that 15 children in the Moorpark area of Kilbirnie have not taken up a nursery place during 1996/97 due to the distance from the nearest nursery class at St Bridget's Primary School. Suitable accommodation for a nursery class is now available at Moorpark Primary School, following a drop in the school roll. This would provide up to 20 morning places for children in their pre-school year.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the proposal to set up a nursery class in Moorpark Primary School; and (b) to approve registration arrangements for the nursery class during the week beginning 28 April 1997.

### **5. Investors in People (IIP) Award**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the success of Hayocks Primary School, Stevenston in gaining the Investors in People Award.

On 29 October 1996, the Education Committee was informed of a pilot initiative in which several North Ayrshire schools were undertaking assessment for the Investors in People awards, a

prestigious national award based on a rigorous evaluation of management and quality assurance. Each school has continued to work towards the achievement of the award.

Following an assessment in February 1997 by IIP Scotland, Hayocks Primary School has been successful in obtaining an Investors in People Award.

The Committee agreed to congratulate Hayocks Primary School on its success.

## **6. Information and Communication Technologies in Schools**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the current provision and uses of information and communications technologies within schools.

Information technology applications within schools cover both teaching and learning in the curriculum and the management and administration of the school. With the rapid advances in computer technology, the creation of the new local authorities and the new demands on the curriculum such as the Higher Still and the 5-14 Programme, it is now considered necessary to review the current situation and produce future strategies for all aspects of the development of information and communications technologies in schools. It is proposed to establish a Departmental Review Group, comprising representatives from all sections of the department and the Council's Information Technology Service.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (a) that a Departmental Review Group be established to consider the future requirements for information and communications technologies in schools; (b) that the Review Group should (i) take into account the type of applications in industry to ensure that the equipment and software in schools is compatible; (ii) assess the cost-effectiveness of leasing equipment as compared to purchasing; and (iii) consult appropriate outside agencies, such as the Scottish Council for Educational Technology; and (c) that a progress report be submitted to a future meeting.

## **7. Revised Memorandum and Articles of Association for the Ayrshire Careers Partnership Limited**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the proposed revised Memorandum and Articles of Association for the Ayrshire Careers Partnership Limited.

The Ayrshire Careers Partnership Limited was established in July 1995 as a joint member company comprising Strathclyde Regional Council and Enterprise Ayrshire. The Secretary of State for Scotland, who has the statutory duty to provide a careers service in Scotland, has entered into a contract with Ayrshire Careers Partnership Limited to deliver a careers service in the geographical area formerly known as Ayr Division of Strathclyde Region. At the reorganisation of local government, the responsibilities of Strathclyde Regional Council as the joint member/owner of the Careers Service company became the collective responsibility of North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils but under the revised arrangements the three Councils secured only one collective vote because they were taking over the singular rights of the former Strathclyde Regional Council. It is however considered appropriate for each Council to hold individual member rights within the company and following discussions between the legal representatives of the three Councils and Enterprise Ayrshire, the Memorandum and Articles of Association for the company have therefore been revised accordingly.

The key revisions stipulate that the company shall have four members/owners, namely North Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council and Enterprise Ayrshire and that when decisions are being taken by the members, each Council member shall have one vote and Enterprise Ayrshire shall have three votes. Additionally, there will be no casting vote, all issues must be debated to a consensus, all members must be present for a quorum and any member may appoint a proxy to vote on its behalf at any meeting.

The Committee acknowledged that the Secretary of State had previously introduced legislation which removed the local authorities' right to run their own Careers Service and

recognised that the service is centrally funded by the Scottish Office to the Ayrshire Careers Partnership Limited, who then sub-contracts its delivery to the three Ayrshire Councils.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the revised Memorandum and Articles of Association as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; (b) that the North Ayrshire Council member's proxy be lodged with the Director of Education or his representative, to be used in the event that an elected member of the Council is unable to attend a meeting of the members of the company; and (c) that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the possibility of a Council run careers service.

#### **8. 5 to 14 Curriculum Development: Science**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the work currently being undertaken by two school clusters in developing continuity in science teaching from primary to secondary within the 5 to 14 curriculum programme.

St Andrew's Academy, Saltcoats and Auchendarvie Academy Stevenston and their associated primaries have been working on separate projects to provide well structured science activities for pupils; support and staff development opportunities for teachers in the primary schools; and materials and specialised equipment where this was appropriate. The St Andrew's Academy cluster project involved Primary 7 pupils and their teachers from the four associated primaries in visiting the Academy once per week for seven weeks to receive lessons in science, technology, and information technology. The Auchendarvie Academy cluster set up a working group comprising primary and secondary teachers, who produced three science topics to be used at the upper end of the primary school and/or early secondary school along with materials and equipment for each of these topics which are now available for use by all the associated primaries.

Information on both projects will be made available to all schools in North Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed to note the work of St Andrew's and Auchendarvie Academies and their associated primary schools in developing Science 5 to 14.

#### **9. Formal Adult Education: Monitoring Report**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the delivery of Formal Adult Education in North Ayrshire.

On 17 September 1996, the Committee agreed to approve the Service Level Agreement between the Directorates of Education and Community and Recreational Services for the delivery of formal adult education. The mid-year progress report is very favourable, indicating that the number of classes and the diversity of courses on offer exceeds that initially anticipated within the Service Level Agreement and that the number of enrolments in classes also exceeds projections. The demands from the community are also increasingly taken into account when identifying the types of courses required.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the monitoring report on Formal Adult Education provision; and (b) that further monitoring reports be submitted to future meetings.

#### **10. Educational Services to Hearing Impaired Children**

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the current educational arrangements for hearing impaired children in North Ayrshire and proposals for the continuation of a shared Hearing Impaired Service with East and South Ayrshire Councils.

On 5 March 1996, the Committee approved a unified Hearing Impaired Service for the three Ayrshire authorities with each being responsible for a pro rata share of the running costs based on pupil population and with East Ayrshire operating as lead authority. The benefits anticipated from the shared arrangement included stability and consistency of provision; continuity of relationships;

and flexibility of deployment of staff and financial savings. A review of the current arrangements has been undertaken by senior Education staff from each of the three participating Councils, who have concluded that the benefits of the shared arrangements continue to outweigh any disadvantages. Consultations have taken place with staff, parents and the West of Scotland Deaf Children's Society and all have expressed their satisfaction with the shared arrangements. The issues of complexities of management and procedural aspects of the service will however be looked at to further improve the service.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) to approve the continuation of the present joint arrangements for the provision of the Hearing Impaired Service for a further period of two years; and (b) that a further report reviewing the arrangements be submitted in due course.

#### **11. Capital Building Programme 1997/98: Ardrossan Academy Window Replacement and Over-cladding Phase II**

Submitted report by the Architectural Services Manager on proposals to negotiate a tender with the contractor carrying out Phase I of window replacement and over-cladding at Ardrossan Academy and extend the existing contract.

The contract for Phase I of the window replacement over-cladding on the south facade of Block B at Ardrossan Academy is currently being carried out by A C Whyte, of Thornliebank and is due to be completed in approximately five weeks time. There is also provision within the 1997/98 Capital Building Programme for these works to be carried out on the north facade of Block B. Since the contractor is still on site and now has the expertise and experience of the system application to the existing construction, it is proposed to negotiate a tender with A C Whyte to extend the existing contract to cover Phase II of the works. It is considered that this will save time and prove to be more cost effective. The Architectural Services Manager will, however, proceed to competitive tender if he is not satisfied with the negotiated tender.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Architectural Services Manager to negotiate a contract to extend the existing contract for window replacement and over-cladding at Ardrossan Academy.

The meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.