

EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 16 March 2010

Chair:

Councillor Mary Smith

Councillors Present:

Alex Allison (Depute), Gerry Convery, Bev Gault, Tommy Gilligan, Bobby Lawson, Eileen Logan, Anne Maggs, Edward McAvoy, Lesley McDonald, Jim McGuigan, Alice Marie Mitchell, Graham Scott, Graham Simpson, Hamish Stewart, George Sutherland, Chris Thompson, Sheena Wardhaugh, David Watson

Councillors' Apologies:

David Baillie, Jackie Burns, John Cairney, Michael McCann, Pat Watters

External Members Present:

Terri Connolly, John Hannah, Dr Nagy Iskander, David Kerr, Rev Sarah Ross

External Members' Apologies:

Joan Kyle, Linzi Moore

Attending:

Corporate Resources

T Slater, Administration Officer

Education Resources

L Forde, Executive Director; A Batchelor, Head of Education (Inclusion); D Bruce, Integrated Children's Services and Community Learning Manager; S Fellows, Head of Education (Resources); R Gallacher, Youth Learning Manager; J Gilhooly, Head of Education (Quality and Personnel); J Humphreys, Personnel Services Manager; C Mason, Head of Education (Clydesdale); T McDade, Headteacher, Calderglen High School; M McDonald, Early Years Manager; L Sherry, Head of Education (Finance)

Finance and Information Technology Resources

M Murphy, Accountant

Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed a group of staff and pupils from St John's Primary School, Blackwood to the meeting. Photographs and illustrations which formed part of the school's wildlife garden exhibition were on display.

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Education Resources Committee held on 19 January 2010 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Minutes of Special Meeting

The minutes of the special meeting of the Education Resources Committee held on 5 February 2010 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

4 Capital Budget Monitoring 2009/2010 - Education Resources

A joint report dated 5 February 2010 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Information Technology Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted advising of progress on Education Resources' capital programme for 2009/2010 and summarising the expenditure position at 22 January 2010.

The Committee decided: that the Education Resources' capital programme of £90.856 million and expenditure to date of £52.628 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 January 2010 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2009/2010 - Education Resources

A joint report dated 2 February 2010 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Information Technology Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 22 January 2010 against budgeted expenditure for 2009/2010 for Education Resources.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on Education Resources' revenue budget, as detailed in the appendix to the report, and the forecast to 31 March 2010 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (2) that the budget virements, as detailed in the appendix to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 January 2010 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Education Resources - Workforce Monitoring - December 2009 and January 2010

A joint report dated 12 February 2010 by the Executive Directors (Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Education Resources for the period December 2009 and January 2010:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers
- ◆ Joint Staffing Watch as at 12 December 2009

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 January 2010 (Paragraph 5)]

7 Outcome of Review of Admissions Policy for Early Years Establishments

A report dated 24 February 2010 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on a review of the policy for the admission of children into early years establishments in South Lanarkshire.

Since 1996, the Council's Admissions Policy for Early Years Establishments had been regularly reviewed to reflect changes in legislation and national policy development. A further review had been undertaken from December 2009 until January 2010 following consultation with stakeholders on the impact of current service. The main priorities had been identified as follows:-

- ♦ children affected by abuse
- ♦ children with additional support needs
- ♦ looked after and accommodated children
- ♦ children affected by domestic violence
- ♦ children affected by substance misuse
- ♦ children affected by a disability within the home

A number of procedures had been established to reflect the following:-

- ♦ priorities for children aged 0 to 3 years as outlined in the Early Years Framework
- ♦ entitlement in terms of pre-school education for 3 and 4 year olds to be allocated before additional hours
- ♦ nurseries would not operate catchment areas
- ♦ transfer applications would be considered in 2 categories:-
 - ♦ where there was a change in family circumstances, for example a house move, this would be treated as Priority 2 for 4 year olds and Priority 3 for 3 year olds and 0 to 3 year olds
 - ♦ where the transfer was parental choice, all applications would be Priority 4
- ♦ children who resided outwith the South Lanarkshire Council area irrespective of their priority needs would only be considered for any remaining places once the allocation of places had been concluded for all children living within the South Lanarkshire Council area and those applications would remain within Priority 5 for the duration of the pre-school stage
- ♦ where possible, the child would be allocated the first choice nursery, however, this could not be guaranteed
- ♦ admissions to operate annually in May for the coming year. Applications not received before 30 April would be allocated places at the December or February Admissions Panel meetings

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:

(1) that the priorities for admission to early years establishments be revised as follows:-

Children aged 0 to 3 years

Priority 1

Children affected by abuse
Children with additional support needs
Looked after and accommodated children
Domestic violence referral
Substance misuse referral
Children affected by a disability within the home

Priority 1 applications must be substantiated by a referral form

Children aged 3 to 5 years

Priority 1

Children affected by abuse
Children with additional support needs
Looked after and accommodated children
Domestic violence referral
Substance misuse referral
Children affected by a disability within the home

Priority 1 applications must be substantiated by a referral form

Children aged 0 to 3 years**Priority 2**

Children aged 0 to 3 years – new applications

Priority 3

Transfer applications – change in circumstances

Priority 4

Transfer applications – parental choice

Priority 5

All children who reside outwith the Council – new applications
All transfer applications
All deferred entry to primary applications (January/February and September/December birthdays)

Children aged 3 to 5 years**Priority 2**

Children in their pre-school year – new applications
Deferred entry children September/December birthdays – referred (approved by scrutiny panel)
Transfer application pre-school year children – change in circumstances

Priority 3

Children in their ante-pre-school year – new applications
Transfer applications ante-pre-school year – change in circumstances

Priority 4

Deferred entry children - September/December birthdays – parental choice
Transfer application pre-school year children - parental choice
Transfer applications ante-pre-school year – parental choice

Priority 5

All children who reside outwith the Council – new applications
All transfer applications
All deferred entry to primary applications (January/February and September/December birthdays)

- (2) that the revised Admissions Policy for Early Years Establishments be implemented with effect from May 2010.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 July 2008 (Paragraph 12)]

8 Class Sizes in Primary 1 to 3

A report dated 25 February 2010 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on:-

- ♦ primary 1 class sizes within South Lanarkshire
- ♦ the Reserved Places Scheme for primary 1 in selected schools
- ♦ the commitment to increase the number of pupils in primary 1 to primary 3 who were taught in classes of 18 or less

At its meeting on 19 May 2009, the Committee had approved the continued commitment to primary 1 class sizes of a maximum of 25 pupils for the school term starting in August 2009. This position had been challenged by 19 parents who had successfully argued in the Sheriff Court that the definitive legal position was that stated in the Education (Lower Primary Class Sizes) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 that “No lower primary class at a school shall contain more than 30 pupils while an ordinary teaching session is conducted by a single qualified teacher”.

A legislative basis for a primary class size maximum of 25 pupils in primary 1 would not be in place before August 2010.

At its meeting on 3 March 2009, the Committee had delegated powers to the Executive Director (Education Resources) to reserve places for catchment area children within both primary and secondary schools at his discretion to be allocated on or before the first day of the August term each year. It had become clear that accommodating catchment demand would be helped by expanding the period for which reserved places were retained.

The Council was committed to ensuring that 20% of children in primary 1 to primary 3 were taught in classes of 18 or less.

Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Allison, moved that the recommendations detailed in the report be approved. Councillor S Wardhaugh, seconded by Councillor Maggs, moved as an amendment that recommendation 1 be expanded to include that, where the Executive Director used his authorisation to vary class sizes, the support of a Classroom Assistant should be prioritised in such classes thus reducing the adult/pupil ratio to 1:15 which would improve the pupils' experiences of active learning. On a vote being taken by a show of hands, 10 members voted for the amendment and 13 for the motion which was declared carried.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that powers be delegated to the Executive Director (Education Resources) to vary class sizes in primary 1 in response to local circumstances and taking cognisance of the Education (Lower Class Sizes) (Scotland) Regulations 1999;
- (2) that the powers delegated to the Executive Director (Education Resources) to reserve places for catchment area children within both primary and secondary schools be amended to the extent that those places could be reserved from the time of consideration of placing requests up to and for the whole of the session to which the placing request related; and
- (3) that the progress made in introducing a maximum class size of 18 in schools with the highest free meal entitlements be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 May 2009 (Paragraph 11) and Executive Committee of 11 February 2010 (Paragraph 4)]

9 'Curriculum for Excellence'

A report dated 25 February 2010 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the publication and implementation of 'Building the Curriculum 4' and 'Building the Curriculum 5'.

In preparation for the implementation of the wide ranging changes that comprised 'Curriculum for Excellence', the Scottish Government had published a range of advice to support the development and implementation of the programme. The 2 latest documents to be published were:-

- ◆ 'Building the Curriculum 4', which focused on the development of Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ 'Building the Curriculum 5', which provided a framework for assessment and guidance on establishing moderation and quality assurance procedures in schools and local authorities

Establishments would be subject to external moderation and quality assurance processes by the local authority and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). To ensure that the role envisaged for education authorities was fully addressed, it was proposed that existing area based quality assurance arrangements be further developed.

To assist teachers with the implementation of the new assessment arrangements, it had been agreed that all establishments would have an additional in-service day on either 27 May or 1 June 2010 or, in the case of Lanark, on 14 June 2010.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the publication and distribution of 'Building the Curriculum 4' and 'Building the Curriculum 5' be noted;
- (2) that the arrangements for the provision of an additional in-service day be noted; and
- (3) that the proposal to further develop existing quality assurance arrangements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 October 2009 (Paragraph 12)]

10 Youth Learning Service Update

A report dated 26 February 2010 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the developments within the Youth Learning Service in relation to supporting young people and meeting their identified needs.

Details were provided on:-

- ◆ the current programmes and initiatives organised by the Youth Learning Service
- ◆ the awards achieved by young people through their participation in the programmes

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the initiatives that identified and addressed the changing needs of young people in South Lanarkshire continue to be supported; and
- (2) that presentations be made to each of the Area Committees on the Youth Learning Service development programmes operating within their area.

11 Microsoft Partners in Learning - Pathfinder School (Microsoft Innovation Schools)

A report dated 24 February 2010 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Calderglen High School's successful bid to become a Pathfinder School as part of the Microsoft Innovative Schools Programme.

The Programme, which offered the chance for Calderglen High School to be part of a global community of educational institutions that had ambitions for educational reform, would:-

- ◆ support those schools as they worked together to develop a culture of innovation within their learning communities
- ◆ collaborate with them to formulate their vision for change
- ◆ identify partners, technologies and environments that would improve learning

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 July 2009 (Paragraph 8)]

12 Children in Scotland Annual Conference 2009

A report dated 19 February 2010 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the Children in Scotland Annual Conference 2009 which had been hosted by this Council on 5 and 6 November 2009.

The conference had provided an opportunity to showcase good practice in South Lanarkshire in meeting the needs of children, young people and their families. Conference delegates had been afforded the opportunity to see a wide range of examples of good practice, through workshops and study visits, in the following areas:-

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ◆ early years services | ◆ child protection |
| ◆ multi-agency working | ◆ health and well-being |
| ◆ Getting it Right for Every Child | ◆ supporting children and family programmes |

As a result of the success of the conference, Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, had asked the Council to host their conference, designed to share good practice, on 9 March 2010.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 3 March 2009 (Paragraph 9)]

13 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.