

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 25 JANUARY 2022

Education and Communities Committee

Tuesday 25 January 2022 at 1pm

Present: Provost Brennan, Councillors Clocherty, Curley, MacLeod, McCabe, C McEleny, McVey, Murphy, Quinn, Robertson and Wilson, Rev D Burt and Ms F Gilpin, Church Representatives, Ms A McMillan, Parent Representative and Ms P McEwan, Teacher Representative.

Chair: Councillor Clocherty presided.

In attendance: Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development, Head of Culture, Communities & Educational Resources, Head of Education, Service Manager Community Learning & Development, Community Safety, Resilience & Sport, Mr I Cameron (for Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance), Finance Manager (Education & Communities), Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Interim Head of Property Services, Interim Head of Public Protection & Covid Recovery, Ms D Sweeney and Ms L Carrick (Legal & Democratic Services), Libraries, Museum and Archive Manager, Ms L Wilkie (Education Services), Mr M Coyle (Education Services), Ms L Fisher (Head Teacher, All Saints Primary School), Ms K Barclay (Corporate Policy & Performance), ICT Services Manager and Service Manager (Communications, Tourism & Health & Safety).

The meeting was held by video conference.

The following paragraphs are submitted for information only, having been dealt with under the powers delegated to the Committee.

46 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

46

No apologies for absence were intimated.

Declarations of interest were intimated as follows:

Agenda Item 3 (Communities Performance Report – Capital Programme Progress and Asset Related Items) – Councillors Clocherty, Curley, MacLeod and Quinn.

Agenda Item 4 (Communities Update Report – Overview of National and Local Initiatives) – Councillors Clocherty and Robertson.

Agenda Item 6 (Update on Swimming for Under 16s & Gym Membership) – Councillors Clocherty, Curley & Quinn.

47 Communities Revenue & Capital Budget Report 2021/22 – Projected Out Turn at Period 7 to 31 October 2021

47

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance and the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development advising Committee of the 2021/22 Revenue and Capital Budgets position as at Period 7 to 31 October 2021.

Councillor Wilson joined the meeting during consideration of this item.

Decided:

(1) that the current projected underspend of £68,000 for the 2021/22 Communities Revenue Budget as at Period 7 to 31 October 2021 be noted; and

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(2) that the financial position of the specific Capital Projects, as detailed in appendix 4 of the report, be noted and that the cost of the current Communities Capital Programme is being contained within existing budgets.

48 **Communities Performance Report – Capital Programme Progress and Asset Related Items** 48

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing performance information for the Communities part of the Education & Communities Committee, and (2) providing an update in respect of the status of the projects which form the Communities Capital Programme.

Councillors Clocherty, Curley and Quinn declared a non-financial interest in this item as members of the Board of Inverclyde Leisure, and Councillor MacLeod declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Non-Executive Director of Parklea Branching Out. All four Councillors formed the view that the nature of their interest and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence in the meeting or their participation in the decision making process.

Decided:

(1) that the current position of the 2021/24 Capital Programme be noted; and
 (2) that the progress on the following projects be noted (a) Lady Alice Bowling Club, (b) Indoor Sports Facility for Tennis, (c) Rankin Park Bowling Club, (d) Leisure Pitches Asset Management Plan/Lifecycle Fund, (e) Grieve Road Community Centre, (f) Wemyss Bay Community Centre, (g) Whinhill Golf Club Lifecycle Works, (h) Waterfront Leisure Centre Training Pool Moveable Floor, (i) Watt Institution Creativity Space, (j) Community Hub King George VI, (k) Craighend Resource Centre, (l) The Inverclyde Shed Meet, Make & Share, and (m) Parklea Branching Out.

49 **Communities Update Report – Overview of National & Local Initiatives** 49

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the Communities aspects of the service.

Councillors Clocherty and Robertson declared a non-financial interest in this item as members of the Board of Greenock Arts Guild, and Councillor Robertson declared a non-financial interest in this item as a member of the committee of Inverclyde Youth Theatre (Kayos). Both Councillors formed the view that the nature of their interest and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence in the meeting or their participation in the decision making process.

Decided: that the updates on the following be noted (a) return to youth work, (b) return to Adult Learning & Literacies, (c) return to sport, (d) 16 days of activism update, (e) CLD SQA update, (f) Affordable Childcare Holiday Hubs, (g) use of Emergency Powers for Grant Award, (h) impact of Covid-19 on services for children with autism, (i) Culture Collective, and (j) Public Library Improvement Fund.

50 **Inverclyde Historical Links to Slavery – Final Report** 50

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) advising Committee of the work that has been undertaken by the Inverclyde's Historical Links to Slavery Working Group over the course of 2021, and (2) seeking approval for the Working Groups final report and recommendations.

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Councillor Wilson left the meeting during consideration of this item for the remainder of the Communities business.

Decided:

- (1) that the work completed by the Working Group so far be noted and that officers be commended for the depth of research which has gone into the report;
- (2) that the work of the Education Inclusive School's Curriculum Sub-Group be noted;
- (3) that it be agreed (a) that the Gourrock Burgh coat of arms be removed from display or covered on a case by case basis where practicable, and (b) to produce additional information on the coat of arms in any location where removal or covering may prove problematic; and
- (4) that it be remitted to officers to submit a further report examining the logistics of applying the Working Group's proposals, as detailed at paragraphs 11.1 and 11.2 of the report, and suggesting ideas for further community engagement on this matter.

51 Update on Swimming for Under 16s & Gym Membership

51

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) detailing proposals for the provision of free or subsidised swimming for the year 2022/2023, and (2) providing an update on a pilot scheme introduced on 3 January 2022 which provides free gym membership for 12-16 year olds at all Inverclyde Leisure gyms.

Councillors Clocherty, Curley and Quinn declared a non-financial interest in this item as members of the Board of Inverclyde Leisure. All three Councillors formed the view that the nature of their interest and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence in the meeting or their participation in the decision making process.

Following discussion, Councillor Clocherty moved for the continuation of free swimming as detailed at paragraph 5.4 of the report, and that this would continue to be delivered for 2022/23 with the budget pressure of £40,000 being funded from the Community Grants Fund.

As an amendment, Councillor C McEleny moved that the Committee endorses that free swimming is reinstated as per previous arrangements and that this budget pressure is referred to the Members Budget Working Group.

Following a roll call vote, one Member, Councillor C McEleny, voted in favour of the amendment and nine members, Provost Brennan, Councillors Clocherty, Curley, MacLeod, McCabe, McVey, Murphy, Quinn and Robertson, voted in favour of the motion, which was declared carried.

Decided:

- (1) that the continuation of free swimming as detailed at paragraph 5.4 of the report, and that this will be continue to be delivered for 2022/23 with the budget pressure of £40,000 being funded from the Community Grants Fund, be approved; and
- (2) that (a) the introduction of the pilot scheme for free gym usage be noted, and (b) it be remitted to officers to engage in a consultation process with school pupils whilst the pilot scheme is running.

52 Results from the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2021 Survey

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There was submitted a report by the Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications advising Committee of the results from the Citizens Panel Autumn 2021 Survey.

Decided:

- (1) that the findings of the Citizens Panel Autumn 2021 Survey be noted; and

(2) that the results of the survey will be taken into account when reviewing service delivery, as appropriate.

53 New Smoke & Heat Alarm Legislation – Request by Councillor C McEleny

53

There was submitted a report by the Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services on a request received from Councillor C McEleny in the following terms:-

‘Committee notes that the Scottish Government have brought in new legislation that requires all homes to have new smoke alarms installed.

By February 2022 every home will need to have:

- 1 smoke alarm in the room you spend most of the day, usually your living room;
- 1 smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings; and
- 1 heat alarm in the kitchen.

All smoke and heat alarms should be mounted on the ceiling and be interlinked. Check the manufacturers’ guidance on each alarm for instructions on where the alarm should be placed.

If you have a carbon-fuelled appliance, like a boiler, fire, heater or flue you must also have a carbon monoxide detector. This does not need to be linked to the fire alarms. Gas cookers and hobs do not need a carbon monoxide detector.

There are 2 types of interlinked fire alarms that meet the new rules:

- sealed battery alarms – which should be tamper-proof long-life (which can be up to 10 years) batteries. The cost for an interlinked system with sealed long-life battery alarms in a two storey house is around £220, if you fit the alarms yourself. However, for many elderly home owners this is not a simple cost and will mean another add on cost; and
- mains-wired alarms - these are cheaper than tamper proof long-life battery alarms, but should be installed by a qualified electrician. The cost of which could be in the region of about £60 installation of each alarm. These should be replaced every 10 years. This would mean that although the unit cost is cheaper the installation cost could run into hundreds of pounds.

Committee welcomes the laudable aims of making every home in Inverclyde safe and Committee endorses the safety benefits of such a scheme.

However, Committee notes that there has been little public awareness of this new requirement. Committee further raises concerns of the affordability of this scheme for many households in Inverclyde due to the limited financial support that has been provided by the Scottish Government.

Committee notes that local tradespeople have confirmed that they have not been overwhelmed with mass installations of the new required alarms therefore it is likely that come February a very small percentage of Inverclyde home owners will be compliant with the new Scottish government requirements.

Committee requests that officers bring back a report on an estimation of how many households have installed new smoke alarms as required and uses that report as the basis to set out any further financial support schemes that will need to be put in place in order that the Scottish Government realise their policy intention.’

Decided:

- (1) that the Committee note the content of Councillor McEleny request, and
- (2) that it be remitted to officers to submit a report to the Committee providing an estimate of how many households have installed new smoke alarms as required and uses that report as the basis to set out any further financial support schemes that will need to be put in place in order that the Scottish Government realise their policy intention.

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The Communities Business concluded at 3.45pm. The Committee commenced consideration of the Education items of business at 4pm with Reverend Burt, Ms Gilpin, Ms McMillan & Ms McEwan joining the meeting. Councillor Wilson rejoined the meeting at this juncture.

54 Education Revenue & Capital Budget Report – 2021/22 Projected Out Turn at Period 7 to 31 October 2021 54

There was submitted a report by the Interim Director Finance & Corporate Governance and the Corporate Director Education Communities & Organisational Development advising the Committee of the 2021/22 Education Revenue & Capital Budget positions as at period 7 to 31 October 2021.

Decided:

- (1) that the projected underspend of £273,000 for the 2021/22 Education Revenue Budget as at Period 7 to 31 October 2021 be noted; and
- (2) that the financial position of the specific Capital Projects, as detailed in appendix 4 of the report, be noted and that the cost of the current Education Capital Programme is being contained within existing budget.

55 Education Scotland Follow through Report on All Saints Primary School 55

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development informing the Committee of the recent Education Scotland follow through visit of All Saints Primary School.

The report advised that very good progress had been made towards areas identified for improvement in an earlier report published in March 2019. Particular praise was made of the school's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, its support for families and its ongoing focus, despite the pandemic, on continuing to improve and address the areas for improvement.

Ms Lorraine Fisher, Head Teacher, was present and addressed the Committee in relation to the findings of the report.

Decided:

- (1) that the Education Scotland follow through report on All Saints Primary School be noted; and
- (2) that the appreciation of Ward 3 Councillors and the Committee be extended to school staff and all those involved in the inspection process.

56 Education Performance Report – Capital Programme Progress 56

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing performance information for the Education part of the Education & Communities Committee, and (2) providing an update in respect of the status of the projects which form the Education Capital Programme.

Decided:

- (1) that the current position of the 2021/24 Capital Programme be noted; and
- (2) that the progress on the following projects be noted (a) Gourock Primary School extension, (b) Hillend Children's Centre refurbishment, (c) former Kelly Street Children's Centre landscaping works, (d) demolition of former Sacred Heart Primary School, (e) school artificial pitches, (f) general lifecycle works, (g) Public Partnership Schools (PPP) lifecycle works, (h) Rainbow Family Centre extension, (i) Larkfield Children's Centre new build, (j) Glenpark Early Learning Centre outdoor unit, (k) various Early Years

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establishment's direct access/canopies/environmental, and (l) interactive whiteboard/active panel refresh.

57 Education & Communities Corporate Directorate Improvement Plan 2019/22 Progress Report 57

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the delivery of the improvement actions in the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Corporate Directorate Improvement Plan.

Ms McMillan left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Decided: that the progress made in delivering the year 3 improvement actions contained within the Education & Communities Organisational Development Improvement Plan be noted.

58 Education Update Report – Overview of National & Local Initiatives 58

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the Education aspects of the service. Ms McMillan rejoined the meeting during consideration of this item.

Decided: that the updates on the following be noted: (a) return to school guidance, (b) Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), (c) Education Scotland, (d) Happy Tots Greenock and Inverkip, (e) Early Learning and Childcare Consultation 2021, (f) West College Scotland Nursery, (g) Early Years Budget, (h) school holidays, (i) school meals and breakfast clubs, and (j) universal free school meal provision for P6 and 7 pupils from August 2022.

59 The Scottish Attainment Challenge Refresh 2022/23-2025/26 59

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the Scottish Governments announcement in November 2021 regarding the future of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Decided:

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that a further update report will be submitted to the March 2022 Committee which will include a draft Strategic Plan for 2022-26 as well as a more detailed plan for the year 2022/23.

60 Gaelic Secondary Education in Inverclyde 60

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing proposals for the future of Gaelic Secondary Education in Inverclyde, and (2) informing the Committee of the outcome of meetings with Comann nam Parant at Whinhill Primary School, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Education Scotland.

Reverend Burt, Councillor Wilson, Ms McMillan and Provost Brennan left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Decided:

- (1) that approval be given to officers undertaking a statutory consultation for the creation of an Inverclyde wide catchment area for primary Gaelic provision, in compliance with the timeline detailed at appendix 2 of the report; and

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(2) that approval be given for the immediate creation of a Gaelic Advisory Group to consider options for medium and longer term Gaelic provision in Inverclyde.

61 Proposal to Establish an Inverclyde Schools' Pipe Band

61

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) advising Committee of a generous offer of funding support from the Scottish Schools Pipe Band and Drums Trust to assist Inverclyde Council to establish an Inverclyde schools' pipe band, and (2) seeking authority to establish same. **Decided:** that the establishment of an Inverclyde schools pipe band be approved.

Councillor McVey left the meeting at this juncture.

Prior to discussion of the following item Councillor C McEleny moved that the meeting be adjourned as (1) he was concerned that the members of the Committee may not have had an opportunity to read the Scottish Government's Transgender Guidance in full, (2) he had numerous questions on the matter, and (3) a number of members had left the meeting, and accordingly he moved that the item be considered at a time agreed with the Convener and officers or at the next Committee.

Following a roll call vote, one Member, Councillor C McEleny, voted to adjourn the meeting and seven Members, Councillors Clocherty, Curley, MacLeod, McCabe, Murphy, Quinn and Robertson, voted not to adjourn the meeting, and accordingly the meeting continued. Ms Gilpin and Ms McEwan abstained from voting.

The Committee adjourned at 7.10pm, and confirmation was given by the Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services that there was a quorum when it reconvened at 7.15pm.

62 Guidance on Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools and the National Health & Wellbeing Survey

62

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing updates to the Committee on (1) the national guidance on supporting transgender pupils in schools, (2) the National Health and Wellbeing Survey, and (3) seeking approval to change the wording for selected questions in the S4-6 survey for pupils.

Following discussion, Councillor C McEleny moved that on account of a lack of clarity that there is a potential breach of the United Nations Human Rights Charter of the Child regarding privacy and a lack of clarity over serious data protection issues that have not been answered that the National Health and Wellbeing Survey does not proceed.

As an amendment, Councillor Robertson moved that officers be instructed to ascertain (1) the possibility of creating two versions of the survey, one of which will include questions on sexual health and the other which will not contain questions on sexual health, and that pupils and parents will thereafter be given the choice as to which survey they complete, and (2) if the Scottish Candidate Number can be removed from the survey.

As a further amendment, Councillor McCabe moved that the survey should not proceed at this time but that officers should explore option 5, as detailed at paragraph 5.2.8 of the report: to explore the costs and implications of delivering an Inverclyde specific survey (in the region of £50,000).

On a vote between the two amendments, 3 Members, Councillors McCabe, C McEleny and Ms Gilpin, voted for the amendment by Councillor McCabe and 7 Members, Councillors Clocherty, Curley, MacLeod, Murphy, Quinn, Robertson and Ms McEwan,

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voted for the amendment by Councillor Robertson. Councillor McCabe's amendment having received fewer votes then fell.

On a vote between the motion and the amendment by Councillor Robertson, 1 Member, Councillor C McEleny, voted for the motion and 7 Members, Councillors Clocherty, Curley, MacLeod, Murphy, Quinn, Robertson and Ms McEwan voted for Councillor Robertson's amendment which was declared carried. Councillor McCabe and Ms Gilpin abstained from voting.

Decided:

- (1) that it be remitted to officers to submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee providing an update on the national guidance on supporting transgender pupils in schools; and
- (2) that officers be instructed to ascertain (a) the possibility of creating two versions of the survey, one of which will include questions on sexual health and the other which will not contain questions on sexual health, and that pupils and parents will thereafter be given the choice as to which survey they complete, and (b) if the Scottish Candidate Number can be removed from the survey.