

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 3 SEPTEMBER 2024

Education and Communities Committee

Tuesday 3 September 2024 at 2pm

Present: Councillors Armstrong, Brennan, Clocherty, Law, McCabe (for McGuire), McVey, Moran, Quinn, Robertson and Wilson, and Rev D Burt, Rev F Donaldson and Mr J Docherty, Church Representatives, and Ms P McEwan, Teacher Representative.

Chair: Councillor Clocherty presided.

In attendance:

Ruth Binks	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development
Michael Roach	Head of Education
Anne Sinclair	Managing Solicitor (for Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services)
Hugh Scott	Service Manager, Community Learning & Development, Community Safety & Resilience and Sport
Eddie Montgomery	Head of Physical Assets
Mary McCabe	Finance Manager (Education & Communities)
Sarah Christie	Cultural Services Manager
Lorna Coote	Service Manager – Educational Resources & Facilities Management
Yvonne Gallacher	Quality Improvement Manager – Early Years
Adam Stephenson	Education Officer
Jennifer McDonald	Head Teacher, St Stephen's High School
Nicola Devine	Head Teacher, St Columba's High School
Martin Craig	Head Teacher, St John's Primary School and Nursery Class
Diane Sweeney	Senior Committee Officer
Colin MacDonald	Senior Committee Officer
Karen MacVey	Members' & Committee Services Team Leader
PJ Coulter	Corporate Communications Officer (Media Relations)
Rhoda Braddick	Corporate Policy, Performance & Communications Manager

The meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors Law, McCabe, Moran and Wilson, Rev Burt, Rev Donaldson and Ms McEwan attending remotely.

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

383 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

383

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor McGuire, with Councillor McCabe substituting, and Ms F MacDonald, Parent Representative.

No declarations of interest were intimated, but certain connections were intimated for the purposes of transparency as follows:
Agenda Item 10 (Education Scotland Inspection Report – St Columba's High School) – Councillor Quinn

384 2024/25 Communities Revenue Budget and 2023/24 Out-turn

384

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There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development advising Committee of the outturn for 2023/24 and the 2024/25 projected position, including details of action being taken to reduce the projected overspend.

Decided:

- (1) that the Committee notes (a) the outturn for 2023/24, (b) that the Revenue Budget is currently projected to overspend in 2024/25 by £64,000, and (c) the action being taken to address the projected overspend; and
- (2) that it be noted that an update report will be provided to the next meeting detailing progress in reducing the overspend.

385 Communities Capital Programme Progress and Asset Related Items

385

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Financial Officer (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 and Asset related items.

Councillor Wilson joined the meeting during consideration of this item.

Decided:

- (1) that the current position of the 2024/28 Capital Programme be noted;
- (2) that the progress on the following projects be noted (a) Leisure Pitches Asset Management Plan/Lifecycle Fund, (b) Community Hub King George VI, (c) Parklea Branching Out, (d) the Asset Transfer Working Group updates on (i) Gourrock Park Walled Garden, (ii) Wellington Allotments, (iii) KGV Bowling Club, (iv) Coppermine (Scouts), (v) Larkfield Waste Ground (Larkfield Guerilla Gardens), and (vi) Broomhill Way shop unit (Broomhill Beats);
- (3) that it be noted there is a report later in the agenda seeking an extra £22,000 Council contribution to the Parklea Branching Out project; and
- (4) that it be remitted to officers to provide (a) a report to the next meeting on the King George VI Community Hub project detailing expenditure and funding, and (b) a further report once the project has been completed detailing how officers expect the building to be utilised.

386 Communities Update Report – Overview of Local and National Initiatives

386

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

Decided: that the updates on the following be noted (a) Locality Plan Progress and Review, (b) Bikeability, (c) Food Growing, (d) Early Adopter Community for Affordable Childcare, (e) Child Poverty Accelerator Funding, (f) Inverclyde Libraries updates on (i) Inverclyde Libraries Team Leader – Scotland's Library and Information Professional of the Year Award, (ii) SLIC Small Business Support Fund, and (iii) CILIPS Green Library Funding, (g) Culture and Heritage updates on (i) NLHF Connecting Inverclyde Heritage Project, and (ii) Culture Collective Legacy Funding, and (h) Youth Music Initiative.

387 Parklea Branching Out Community Garden Hub – Funding Gap

387

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking agreement to provide an additional £21,522 from the Capital Projects Contingency to support the completion of Parklea Branching Out Community Garden Hub project.

Decided:

- (1) that the content of the report and the previously approved funding by the Scottish Government and Inverclyde Council in respect of the Parklea Branching Out project be noted; and
- (2) that it be agreed that a report be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee requesting additional funding to Parklea Branching Out totalling £21,522 to address the overall funding shortfall.

388 School Crossing Patrol (SXP) Site Survey Results 388

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) detailing the results of school crossing patrol site surveys, and (2) requesting approval to use this data to evaluate the current and future placement of patrol sites.

Decided:

- (1) that the updates provided in the report be noted; and
- (2) that approval be granted to officers to continually assess and adjust school crossing patrol site locations in consultation with the school community to ensure that they are in optimal locations.

389 Education Scotland Community Learning and Development Progress Visit Report 389

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development advising Committee of the recent Education Scotland progress report on Inverclyde's Community Learning and Development Partnership, which was presented to the Inverclyde Alliance on 17 June 2024 and a copy of which was appended to the report.

Decided:

- (1) that the positive outcome of the progress visit be noted;
- (2) that the inspector's recognition of national good practice on youth New Scots engagement be noted;
- (3) that the improvement actions recommended by Education Scotland be noted; and
- (4) that the thanks and appreciation of the Committee be conveyed to all staff at the Community Learning and Development Partnership for the positive Education Scotland progress report.

390 Clyde Conversations 6 Report 390

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development advising Committee of the Clyde Conversations 6 report, which was presented to the Inverclyde Alliance on 17 June 2024 and a copy of which was appended to the report.

Decided:

- (1) that the success of Clyde Conversations be noted and the participation of young people at all levels of planning be acknowledged; and
- (2) that it be noted that the key actions, as detailed in the event report at appendix 1 to the report, will be taken forward by young people and partners.

The Communities business concluded at 3.15pm. The Committee commenced consideration of the Education items of business at 4pm, with Rev Burt, Rev Donaldson and Ms McEwan joining the meeting remotely and Mr Docherty attending the Municipal Buildings.

391 Education Scotland Inspection Report – St Stephen’s High School 391

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development informing the Committee of the recent Education Scotland full inspection of St Stephen’s High School.

The report outlined four key strengths including the highly effective leadership of the Head Teacher which supports the culture of improvement within the school and raises the aspirations of staff and young people, with four areas highlighted for improvement.

Ms McDonald, the Head Teacher, was present and addressed the Committee in relation to the findings.

Decided:

- (1) that the Education Scotland full inspection report on St Stephen’s High School be noted; and
- (2) that the thanks and appreciation of the Committee be extended to all staff at St Stephen’s High School for the successful Education Scotland inspection outcomes recently received.

392 Education Scotland Inspection Report – St Columba’s High School 392

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development informing the Committee of the recent Education Scotland short inspection of St Columba’s High School.

The report outlined four key strengths including that the Head Teacher, senior leaders and staff have worked very successfully to develop a common approach to planning learning, teaching and assessment which has resulted in young people building on their prior learning, with tasks and activities being set at the right level of difficulty for young people, with two areas highlighted for improvement.

Ms Devine, the Head Teacher, was present and addressed the Committee in relation to the findings.

Councillor Quinn declared a connection as her son was Head Boy at St Columba’s High School and as such participated in the Pupil Leadership Group involved in the inspection, and she is part of the St Columba’s community. She also formed the view that the nature of her connection and of the item of business did not preclude her continued presence in the meeting or her participation in the decision-making process and was declaring for transparency.

Decided:

- (1) that the Education Scotland short inspection report on St Columba’s High School be noted; and
- (2) that the thanks and appreciation of the Committee be extended to all staff at St Columba’s High School for the successful Education Scotland inspection outcomes recently received.

393 Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate Inspection Report – St John’s Primary School and Nursery Class 393

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development informing the Committee of the recent joint Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate full inspection of St John’s Primary School and Nursery Class.

The report outlined four key strengths including that the strong leadership of the Head Teacher which has led to the creation of a caring, respectful learning environment in the school and nursery class, with all children being known and nurtured as individuals and staff being valued and empowered to lead change, with two areas highlighted for

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improvement.

Mr Craig, the Head Teacher, was present and addressed the Committee in relation to the findings.

Decided:

(1) that the Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate full inspection report on St John's Primary School and Nursery Class be noted; and

(2) that the thanks and appreciation of the Committee be extended to all staff at St John's Primary School and Nursery Class for the successful joint Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection outcomes recently received.

394 2024/25 Education Revenue Budget and 2023/24 Out-turn 394

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development advising Committee of the Education Revenue Budget outturn for 2023/24 and the 2024/25 projected position, including details of action being taken to reduce the projected overspend.

Decided:

(1) that the Committee notes (a) the outturn for 2023/24, (b) that the Revenue Budget is currently projected to overspend in 2024/25 by £460,000, and (c) the action proposed to address the projected overspend;

(2) that it be noted that proposals will be presented to the next meeting of the Committee to address the transportation and Partner Provider pressures; and

(3) that the virement detailed at paragraph 3.7 and appendix 5 to the report be approved.

395 Education Capital Programme 2024/28 - Progress 395

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and Chief Financial Officer (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 2024/28 Capital Programme be noted; and

(2) that the progress on the following projects be noted (a) general lifecycle works, (b) Public Private Partnership (PPP) Schools, (c) Estate Lifecycle Programme 2024/25, (d) Artificial Pitches Asset Plan, (e) Active Panel Refresh, and (f) Net Zero.

396 Education Services Improvement Plan 2024-25 396

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development presenting the Education Services Improvement Plan for session 2024-25 for approval, a copy of which was appended to the report.

Decided: that approval be given to the content and publication of the Education Services Improvement Plan for session 2024-25.

397 Education Update Report – Overview of Local and National Initiatives 397

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on local and national projects and initiatives linked to education.

Decided: that the updates on the following be noted (a) Care Inspectorate inspection outcomes for local childminder Ms A Hutchinson, (b) national qualifications outcomes

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2023/24 diet, (c) Digital Education Strategy consultation, (d) Education Bill consultation, (e) post school education and skills reform legislation consultation, (f) independent review of qualifications and assessment, (g) Education and Skills reform, (h) national response to improving maths/national maths specialist advisor, (i) outdoor learning, (j) secondary Gaelic Medium Education progress, (k) introduction of Stay and Play sessions for ASN and review of admission for Play4All service, (l) closure of Cedars School of Excellence, (m) commitment to maintain teacher numbers, and (n) admissions for 2024/25 and placing requests, a private appendix to this item forming agenda item 21.

398 Increase of Sustainable Rate for Early Learning and Childcare Funded Provision 398

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing an update on a further review of the sustainable rate paid to Funded Providers for the provision of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), and (2) seeking agreement for a new payment rate to be backdated to 1 April 2024.

Decided:

- (1) that an increase in the hourly rate paid to all Early Years Funded Providers including Childminders from the current rate of £5.87 per child to £6.32 per child be approved;
- (2) that it be agreed this new rate be backdated to 1 April 2024; and
- (3) that it be agreed the new rate will be implemented for all eligible children aged two to five years who are accessing ELC within a funded provider setting.

399 3-Year-Old Provision Early Years Admissions – Eligibility for ELC Term after Second/Third Birthday 399

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing information on current early learning and childcare provision within Inverclyde, (2) providing detail on a recommendation to change the current provision to the statutory requirement, and (3) seeking agreement to consult with relevant stakeholders on this matter as part of an already planned consultation for admissions.

Ms Gallacher, the Quality Improvement Manager – Early Years, advised the Committee of a typographical error in the report, and accordingly the first line of the Finance Implication at paragraph 5.2 should read ‘As reported earlier in the agenda the Committee is projecting a £524,000 overspend with £155,000 attributable to early years.’

Rev Burt left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Decided:

- (1) that it be agreed that officers consult stakeholders on the proposed change to process for starting dates for two/three-year-old eligible children, from the month after the child’s second/third birthday to the term after the birthday, as part of the upcoming consultation on the early years admission process; and
- (2) that it be agreed that a final recommendation will be brought back to the Education & Communities Committee in November.

400 Senior Phase Curriculum Consultation 400

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing information on the senior phase within Inverclyde secondary schools, (2) advising that a working group has been established

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to examine the current curriculum offer and senior phase in Inverclyde in order to explore more flexible timetabling and identify potential improvements to the learner journey, and (3) seeking approval for the working group to consult with stakeholders on the senior phase curriculum model.

Councillor Moran left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Decided:

(1) that approval be given to a consultation with stakeholders on the senior phase curriculum model; and

(2) that it be agreed a further report on the outcome of the consultation and any identified changes will be brought back to a future meeting of the Education & Communities Committee prior to being implemented.

401 Inverclyde Wellbeing Service – Annual Report 2023/24 401

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development presenting the annual governance report for 2023/24 from Action for Children who deliver the Inverclyde Wellbeing service which includes the school aged counselling service.

Decided: that the content of the annual governance report be noted.

402 School Term Dates – Session 2025 / 2026 402

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking Committee approval for the setting of school term dates for the session 2025/26.

Decided: that the school term dates for 2025/26, as detailed at appendix 1 and 2 to the report, be approved.

The documentation relative to the following item has been treated as exempt information in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, the nature of the exempt information being that set out in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

403 Appendix relative to agenda item 15 providing additional information on placing requests 403

There was submitted a private appendix providing additional information on placing requests by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development.

Decided: that the appendix be noted.