

MINUTE
of
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 8 December 2022.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Chair)	Councillor Owen O'Donnell (*)
Councillor Tony Buchanan (*)	Councillor Katie Pragnell (Vice Chair)
Councillor Kate Campbell	Ms Fiona Gilchrist
Councillor Danny Devlin	Ms Dorothy Graham
Councillor Colm Merrick (*)	Mr Des Morris

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement); Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change); John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

Apology:

Dr Frank Angell.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

261. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE CONSULTATIVE PROPOSAL ON FUTURE SPECIALIST ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING PROVISION FOR CHILDREN OF EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

262. Under reference to the Minute of 23 June 2022 (Page 53, Paragraph 32 refers) when it had been agreed to proceed with a consultation on a proposal to establish further provision for children and young people with Additional Support Needs, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the results of the consultation. The original consultation document was attached as Appendix A to the report for information.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) briefly explained the proposal to establish a Pre-School Assessment and Development Unit and Primary Communication

Service in Carolside Primary School, and move the current Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Outreach Service to an enhanced nurture classroom at Carlibar Communication Centre, referring to related consultation on this.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) provided details of the responses received to the consultation, clarifying that 751 responses had been received, 94% of which were from statutory consultees of which 94% were from pupils. An external, independent consultant had managed the process and analysed the results. Their analysis was attached as Appendix 3 to the report and the views expressed were summarised in the report. The vast majority of those who responded to the consultation were in favour of the proposal. 90% of pupils had agreed with it and 93% of statutory respondents other than children agreed also.

In response to a question from Councillor Pragnell about Pupil Support Assistants, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) explained that an action plan had been prepared which addressed aspects of professional learning and looked at the role of Pupil Support Assistants. There were also resources being made available online from the West Partnership which would offer additional professional learning for Pupil Support Assistants.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) also addressed a question from Mr Morris on the structure of the Social Emotional Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Outreach Service, indicating that a blended model would be established which would include all current SEBN staff, who had been consulted as part of the ASL review and would be fully involved in the development of the service. It was noted that one of the SEBN teachers currently in the Outreach Service is a member of the Specialist Provision Working Group and involved in leading developments in this area.

Councillor Merrick received clarification on the meaning of the term "Autism Acceptance", which referred to meeting the needs of autistic children through understanding of needs, skills in supporting and having inclusive values, and this being embedded within all educational establishments and the responsibility of all rather than this being an added on service.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity), in response to a question from Councillor Campbell, indicated that a phased approach was being taken to the delivery of the proposal, should it be approved, with 1 classroom being used initially and full expansion coming at a later time. Resourcing and design would also be looked at immediately subject to approval of the proposal. She also addressed the issue of increasing numbers of children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN), highlighting that nationally the number of children with such needs was rising which was mirrored in East Renfrewshire Council. In East Renfrewshire there were a number of factors contributing to increase levels of ASN including the fact that a number of families with children who have ASN move into the area, and there being increased awareness and understanding of ASN leading to more children being diagnosed. Other factors such as poverty could also contribute to rising levels of ASN.

Having heard Councillor Anderson welcome the report and state that early intervention was key to giving children the best start in life, the committee agreed:-

- (a) to note the results of the consultation;
- (b) that the Director of Education progress the establishment of a Pre-School Assessment and Development Unit and Communication Service in Carolside Primary School; and

- (c) to transfer the current Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Outreach Service to an enhanced nurture classroom at Carlibar Communication Centre.

CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE CONSULTATIVE PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GAELIC MEDIUM PRIMARY EDUCATION AT THORNLIEBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM AUGUST 2023 AND BEYOND

263. Under reference to the Minute of 23 June 2022 (Page 53, Paragraph 32 refers) when it had been agreed that the Director of Education proceed with a consultation on a proposal to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and beyond and report on the outcome at this meeting, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the results of a consultation. The original consultation document was attached as Appendix 1 to the report for information.

The Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) briefly explained the proposal to introduce GMPE at Thornliebank Primary School, referring to related consultation on the proposal. He provided details of the responses received to the consultation, confirming that 225 responses had been received, 76% of which were from statutory consultees of which 84% were from pupils. An external, independent consultant had managed the process and analysed the results. Their analysis was attached as Appendix B to the report and the views expressed were summarised in the report.

Overall 64% of respondents were in favour of the proposal, with 66% of pupils and 74% of statutory respondents other than children agreeing with it.

Councillors Anderson and Buchanan both welcomed the report and the professional way in which the Education Department had carried out the consultation. Councillor Anderson asked a question regarding the recruitment of teachers for GMPE and received assurance from the Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) that recruitment would commence as soon as possible following approval of the proposal.

The Director of Education also offered assurance regarding the extension of GMPE into the secondary education sector, indicating that provision would commence in Primary 1, and therefore the need for secondary provision would not be realised until 2030. This would be monitored as the provision progressed over the years with provision put in place at the appropriate time if required.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the results of the consultation;
- (b) adopt the proposal for Thornliebank Primary School Campus to be the location of Gaelic Medium Primary Education within East Renfrewshire Council from August 2023 and beyond; and
- (c) request that the Director of Education continue to consider the extension of Gaelic provision to the early years and secondary sectors, in order to provide a 3-18 experience in the Gaelic medium.

