

MINUTE
of
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 13 March 2014.

Present:

Councillor Elaine Green (Chair)	Councillor Mary Montague
Councillor Paul O’Kane (Vice Chair)	Councillor Jim Swift
Councillor Danny Devlin	Dr Frank Angell
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Reverend Thomas Boyle
Councillor Alan Lafferty	Ms Mary McIntyre
Councillor Ian McAlpine	Mr Alan Munro
Councillor Gordon McCaskill	

Councillor Green in the Chair

Attending:

Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; John Fitzpatrick, Head of Education Services (Inclusion, Schools and Staff); Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (School Performance and Provision); and Ron Leitch, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Councillors Tony Buchanan, Jim Fletcher (Leader) and Vincent Waters.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

954. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

CHAIR’S REMARKS

955. Councillor Green thanked members of the committee for their numerous good wishes following her recent surgery. She also welcomed John Fitzpatrick who was attending his first meeting of the committee as Head of Education Services (Inclusion, Schools and Staff).

Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 23 January 2014 (Page 858, Item 903 refers) when it had been agreed to issue a summary version of the Standards and Quality Report 2012/13 to all parents with children attending East Renfrewshire schools with copies

being issued to parents of all pre-school children and copies of the full report being made available in all libraries, education, sports and cultural centres and on the Council's website, Councillor Green advised that these reports had now been made available with hard copies being tabled for information and retention by members of the committee.

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

956. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the outcome of the most recent Customer Service Excellence assessment for the Education Department.

The report explained that the Customer Service Excellence Standard tested in great depth those areas indicated by research as priorities for customers with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. The assessors had spent the one and a half day visit interviewing a wide range of customers and service users and their report had recognised the Department's continuing commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified no non or partial compliances with the Customer Service Excellence Standard and identified five areas of "Compliance Plus" defined as *"behaviours or practices which exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as an exemplar to others"*.

Councillor Green, supported by others, congratulated the Director on an excellent assessment report with particular reference to the work of the Quality Improvement Officers (QIO) who had assisted the assessors throughout the assessment process. Responding to Councillor Swift who had sought clarification on whether or not the facilities of any proposed new school buildings within the Newton Mearns area would be made available to the wider community, the Head of Education Services (School Performance and Provision) confirmed that it was intended that facilities such as Multi User Games Areas (MUGA) would be made available for use by others outwith school hours.

Thereafter, the committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the continuing high standard of the Customer Service Excellence Award in recognition of the Department's high quality services; and
- (b) approve this approach to ensuring the Department's sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE ARTHURLIE FAMILY CENTRE TO A NEW FACILITY IN THE AUCHENBACK AREA OF BARRHEAD FOR SCHOOL SESSION 2015/16 AND BEYOND

957. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 14 November 2013 (Page 771, Item 809 refers) when it had been agreed that the Director of Education should proceed with a consultation exercise on the proposal to relocate Arthurlie Family Centre to a new facility on the site of the former Auchenback Primary School, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education reporting on the results of the consultation.

The Director explained that whilst only seven responses had been received to the formal consultation exercise, much wider community consultation had been going on through the Early Years Collaborative. She highlighted that all of the responses to the formal consultation had been in favour of the proposal and that representatives from Education Scotland had met with parents and staff and produced a report on their findings, a copy of which was included at Appendix D. This report had concluded that the Council had set out a positive and well-reasoned case for its proposal which would be better placed to meet the needs of children and their families in the Auchenback community.

Responding to comments from members, the Director explained that it was anticipated that benefits of early intervention initiatives already underway would be seen in terms of increasing the number of children achieving all their developmental milestones on entry to primary school and improved attainment at various stages of assessment. The provision of the proposed new facility was expected to further assist in this improvement as well as in related areas such as reductions in interventions by, for example, social work. She also confirmed that the Environment Department had been fully involved in the consultation process given the importance of good quality housing in supporting families to be independent and improving their overall well-being.

Having heard a number of members welcome the continued commitment of various departments to work together to reduce inequalities across the Council's area, the committee agreed to:-

- (a) adopt the proposal as described in the original consultation document; and
- (b) instruct the Director of Education to work with colleagues across the Council to plan for a new build family centre with community facilities to be available for occupation in school session 2015/16.

CHAIR

