

Minute of Hybrid Meeting of the Education Committee of East Dunbartonshire Council held within Tom Johnston Chamber, 12 Strathkelvin Place, Kirkintilloch and via Cisco Webex on **Thursday 25 May 2023**.

Present: Councillors **GALLAGHER, MARSHALL, MATHIESON, MURRAY, MACDONALD, MCDIARMID, PATERSON, AILEEN POLSON, ANDREW POLSON, SMITH and WILLIAMSON**

Also Present Councillor **LOW**

Church Representatives: **B. Jarvie
L. Ireland
W. McCreadie**

Assessors: **G. McGill** Head Teacher Representative

In Attendance: **B. Bell** Media Adviser
G. Bremner Interim Chief Education Officer
A. Conway Quality Improvement Manager - Quality Assurance
M. Cunningham Corporate Governance Manager
A. Dolan Modern Apprentice
J. Frame Committee Services Officer
C. Magowan Team Leader – Litigation & Licensing
J. Swan Quality Improvement Manager - Additional Support Needs and Children's Services
D. Stewart Manager for Skills, Learning, Life and Work

Councillor Williamson (Convener) presiding

OPENING REMARKS

The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting. She advised that this was a hybrid meeting where Members and Officers were participating in the Chambers and remotely. She outlined a number of procedural matters to assist Members with their participation in the meeting. She also advised that the meeting would be streamed live on YouTube.

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 MAY 2023**

1a APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Gibbons, and Andrene Bamford, Teacher Representative, Nina Teasdale, Parent Representative and Sophie Gartshore, Youth Representative.

The Team Leader - Litigation & Licensing advised that Councillors Williamson, Gallagher, Marshall, Mathieson, Murray, MacDonald, Paterson, Andrew Polson and Smith were present in the Chamber and Councillors McDiarmid and Aileen Polson were present online.

She further advised that B. Jarvie and L. Ireland, Church Representatives, were present in the Chamber and G. McGill, Head Teacher Representative, and W. McCreadie, Church Representative were present online.

1b DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were intimated.

1c DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

The Convener advised that there were no items of exempt business.

1d CONVENER'S REMARKS

The Convener referred to the recent publicity around the closure of the TLC Early Years facility and advised that it was not appropriate for the Committee to discuss the business affairs of a private organisation, however, she assured Members that Council Officers had and would continue to support those families affected by the closure.

1e ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CONVENER DECIDES IS URGENT

The Convener advised that there were no urgent items of business.

2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF 30 MARCH 2023

There was submitted and approved Minute of Meeting of Education Committee of 30 March 2023, copies of which had previously been circulated.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE PARENT COUNCIL FORUM OF 22 NOVEMBER 2022

There was submitted and noted Minute of Meeting of the Parent Council Forum of 22 November 2022, copies of which had previously been circulated.

4. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS STATEMENT

Consideration was given to Report EPB/059/23/GB by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, providing Committee with an update in relation to progress on decisions taken by the Education

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 MAY 2023

Committee. Full details were contained within the Report and a copy of the Outstanding Business Statement was attached at Appendix 1.

Councillor Murray referred to the review of the audio-visual equipment across all schools in East Dunbartonshire and enquired whether this had been included within the Council Outstanding Business Statement. The Convener advised that this could be clarified at a later date.

Following further consideration, the Committee agreed as follows:-

- a) to consider the updates contained within the Outstanding Business Statement attached as Appendix 1; and
- b) to note that actions marked as completed would be removed from the Outstanding Business Statement.

5. INTERIM NURTURE EVALUATION REPORT 2023

Consideration was given to Report EPB/060/23/GB by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, providing Committee with an update on the Nurture Intervention which had been in place since June 2021. Full details were contained within the Report and Appendix 1: Interim Nurture Evaluation Report April 2023, which provided information on progress so far with core Nurture Groups as well as details of support offered to Early Years and Secondary Sections this academic year.

Councillor Mathieson welcomed the Report and all the work and training that had been carried out within Early Years.

With regard to wellness supports for parents/carers, and in response to a question from Councillor Mathieson, the Interim Chief Education Officer advised that a rolling programme of training commenced across the primary sector last year, moved into secondary this year and will now be undertaken by the Family Champions within each Early Years Centre. He added that the Family Champions would promote nurture practices and supports within Early Years.

G. McGill, Head Teacher Representative, was heard in relation to the positive experience of nurture within her own primary school, which had taken part in the pilot over the past few years. She advised of the benefits gained from the Family Learning Assistants working alongside the nurture teacher and the positive relationships which had been developed not only with the most vulnerable children but also with families. She further advised that parents were more forthcoming in seeking supports and where staff could not assist, they were able to signpost them to the appropriate agencies.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the Nurture Intervention Evaluation Report April 2023.

6. EDUCATION SERVICE PLAN 2023 - 2026

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 MAY 2023

Consideration was given to Report EPB/063/23/GB by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, informing Committee of the Education Service Plan 2023 – 2026. Full details were contained within the Report and Appendix 1.

Councillor MacDonald commented that it was an interesting Report which illustrated the breadth of work and challenges facing Officers going forward. He also enquired if there had been any specific evaluation carried out on the long-term effects of Covid and whether there was any knowledge or evidence of children and young people still trying to catch up from the period of blended learning. The Interim Chief Education Officer advised that the Quality Improvement Team were currently undertaking work in this regard to ensure that the gap was bridged. He referred to the various sources of data that were being examined for both primary and secondary schools. He highlighted that, alongside attainment and achievement, wellbeing support, concentration and anxiety levels were also being looked at to make sure the necessary quality assurance and supports were put in place for schools.

Following further consideration, the Committee approved the content of the Report

7. STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2022/23

Consideration was given to Report EPB/068/23/GB by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, informing Committee of the Education Service's Standards and Quality Report 2022/23. Full details were contained within the Report and Appendix 1.

Councillor Murray referred to Page 78, Paragraph 3.2 of the Report, Mentors in Violence Prevention, and enquired whether it would be appropriate to include a further action recognising that there was an issue with violence in schools. The Interim Chief Education Officer advised that, although there may be key areas where young people were found to be deregulated or not engaging to the same levels, there was not, however, high levels of violence reported in schools towards staff or pupils.

In relation to Page 98, Paragraph 9.6, joint motion by East Dunbartonshire MSYPs to the Scottish Youth Parliament on vaping and e-cigarettes, and in response to a request from Councillor Gallagher, the Convener agreed that a letter be sent on behalf of the Council welcoming the MSYPs' action and leadership on this matter.

With regard to the reporting of violence within schools, and in response to a question from Councillor MacDonald, the Convener advised that this matter would be given consideration and the Interim Chief Education Officer would look to provide a Report to a future meeting of the Committee.

With regard to Page 82, Paragraph 4.4, and in response to questions from Councillors Andrew Polson and Mathieson in relation to the signposting of the

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 MAY 2023

Family Champions service to parents, the Interim Chief Education Officer undertook to include this information within the Early Years Centre handbook.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the Report.

8. NUMERACY & MATHEMATICS STRATEGY (UPDATED 2023)

Reference having been made to the Education Committee of 4 April 2019 when Report Number EPB-062-19-PDN had been agreed by the Committee, consideration was given to Report EPB/069/23/GB by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, informing Committee on the updated Numeracy and Mathematics Strategy. Full details were contained within the Report and Appendix 1.

Following consideration, the Committee approved the content of the Report 'A Strategy to Improve Numeracy and Mathematics for Learning, Life and Work' – updated 2023.

9. EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (JULY – DECEMBER 2022)

Consideration was given to Report EPB/063/23/GB by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, providing Committee with an update to 'East Dunbartonshire Council Counselling Service for Children and Young People. Full details were contained within the Report and attached appendices: Summary of School Counselling Service in East Dunbartonshire Council (Appendix 1); and Implementation Plan for Counselling Services in East Dunbartonshire Council (Appendix 2).

Councillor Murray welcomed the Report and the good work that had been undertaken. She also enquired whether there was any indication that the counselling service in schools was reducing the need for GPs to refer children to CAMHS. The Quality Improvement Manager - Additional Support Needs and Children's Services advised that the work being carried out was very specific to schools and the monitoring and evaluation was not illustrating this currently. He provided Committee with details of the partnership work being undertaken with Lifelink and CAMHS in relation to children over the age of 16 or those being home educated who were going or not going to schools, and who had mental health problems and looking at supports which could be provided as an alternative to CAMHS.

In response to a question from Councillor Mathieson in relation to the services' knowledge and awareness of conditions associated with Autism, particularly in girls, the Interim Chief Education Officer undertook to liaise with Lifelink in this regard and provide Councillor Mathieson with an update outwith Committee.

Following consideration, the Committee noted the contents of the March 2023 update of the 'East Dunbartonshire Council Counselling Service for Children and Young People.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 MAY 2023

**10. CARERS LINK EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT
(APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022)**

Consideration was given to Report EPB/070/23/GB by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, providing Committee with the Annual Report for Carers Link East Dunbartonshire for April 2021 to March 2022. Full details were contained within the Report and Appendix 1.

Councillor Marshall welcomed the Report and commended the work of Carers Link. She highlighted in particular the strategic priorities detailed within Paragraph 3.4 of the Report and advised that this would enable schools to identify young carers and signpost them to Carers Link for long term support for their own health and wellbeing which was incredibly important.

Councillor McDiarmid also welcomed the Report. She referred to the fantastic work Carers Link was doing in East Dunbartonshire to support young carers and commented that it was encouraging to know they were also getting emotional and financial assistance in terms of getting access to IT equipment.

Councillor Murray welcomed the Report and echoed Councillors Marshall and McDiarmid's comments.

Following further consideration, during the course of which the Convener associated herself with comments made, the Committee noted the content of the May 2023 Annual Report for Carers Link East Dunbartonshire.

11. SCHOOL CALENDAR – SESSION 2024/2025

Consideration was given to Report EPB/064/23/DS by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, seeking Committee approval for the school holiday dates for session 2024/25. Full details were contained within the Report and attached Appendix.

Following consideration, the Committee approved the School Calendar for 2024/25.

12. YOUTH WORK

Consideration was given to Report EPB/062/23/GB by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, updating Committee on the increased youth work offer in secondary schools and communities. Full details were contained within the Report.

Councillor Murray welcomed the Report. She referred to Page 176, Paragraph 3.9, New Detached Youth Work Project, and sought further information in relation to how the locations for the work would be determined. The Manager, Skills for Learning, Life and Work advised that Officers would work with Partners in the Steering Group to identify which areas required priority support in terms of young people getting involved in activities. He highlighted that there would be a degree of flexibility within the project and workers would be able to move around the Council area at short notice. He also advised that they would be interested

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 MAY 2023

in feedback from communities. He added that in the first instance a mapping exercise of the entire Council area would be undertaken with partners to establish the locations.

In response to a question from Councillor Andrew Polson in relation to why youth workers were appointed later to Boclair Academy and Douglas Academy, the Manger for Skills for Learning, Life and Work advised that all youth workers were appointed at the same time, however, some choose to move onto other opportunities.

Councillor MacDonald welcomed the Report and enquired whether there was a time limit on the funding for the project. The Interim Chief Education Officer advised that an element of the funding was Scottish Government grant funding over two years. He added that Officers would try to sustain these models where they felt there was a real benefit to schools and young people.

Thereafter, the Committee was invited to view a video that demonstrated the impact of youth work in Kirkintilloch High School.

Following discussion, during the course of which the Convener commented that the video was inspiring, the Committee noted the contents of the Report.