

## EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 21 JANUARY 2025

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### Education and Communities Committee

Tuesday 21 January 2025 at 2pm

**Present:** Councillors Armstrong, Brennan, Brooks (for Wilson), Clocherty, Hellyer, McGuire, McVey, Quinn, Reynolds and Robertson, and Rev D Burt, Church Representative, Ms P McEwan, Teacher Representative, and Ms F MacDonald, Parent Representative.

**Chair:** Councillor Clocherty presided.

**In attendance:**

Ruth Binks	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development
Tony McEwan	Head of Culture, Communities & Educational Resources
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
Iain Cameron	Principal Accountant (Education & Communities)
Mary McCabe	Finance Manager (Education & Communities)
Mark Coyle	Project lead – Scottish Attainment Challenge, Education Services
Yvonne Gallacher	Quality Improvement Manager – Early Years, Education Services
Adam Stephenson	Education Officer
Lindsay Kelly	Head Teacher, St Francis' Primary School and Nursery Class
Diane Sweeney	Senior Committee Officer
Lindsay Carrick	Senior Committee Officer
Karen MacVey	Members' & Committee Services Team Leader
PJ Coulter	Corporate Communications Officer (Media Relations)

The meeting was held at the Municipal Buildings, Greenock with Councillors Hellyer, McGuire and Reynolds, Ms McEwan and Ms MacDonald attending remotely.

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

### 21 Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

21

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Wilson, with Councillor Brooks substituting, Councillor Nelson and Rev. Donaldson and Mr Docherty, Church Representatives.

No declarations of interest were intimated, but certain connections were intimated for the purposes of transparency as follows:

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

Agenda Item 7 (Beacon Arts Centre – Update on 24/25 Performance Outcomes) –

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Councillors Brennan and Robertson

Agenda Item 8 (Warm Hand of Friendship Grants 2024/25) – Councillor McGuire

Agenda Item 15 (Future of Additional Support Needs Specialist Provision) – Councillors Robertson and Reynolds

Agenda Item 18 (Update to School Transport Policy) – Councillor Armstrong

### 22      **2024/25 Communities Revenue Budget Update**      22

There was submitted a report by the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development advising Committee of the projected position of the 2024/25 Communities Revenue Budget.

**Decided:** that it be noted that the Committee's Revenue Budget is currently projected to overspend in 2024/25 by £4,000 (0.07%).

### 23      **Communities Capital Programme Progress and Asset Related Items**      23

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.

The Service Manager, Community Learning & Development, Community Safety & Resilience and Sport provided a verbal update on the current status of the Coppermine (Scouts) within the Asset Transfer Working Group, advising that the property was awaiting valuation.

**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) Leisure Pitches Asset Management Plan/Lifecycle Fund, (b) King George VI Community Hub, (c) Boglestone Community Centre – Childcare Early Adopter Project, (d) Parklea Branching Out, (e) Bank Street Community Hall, and (f) the Asset Transfer Working Group updates on (i) Wellington Allotments, (ii) KGV Bowling Club, (iii) Larkfield waste ground/Larkfield Guerilla Gardens (Banff Road/Fife Drive), (iv) Guides at Kilmacolm, (v) Broomhill Way shop unit/Broomhill Beats, and (vi) the verbal update on the Coppermine (Scouts).

### 24      **Communities Update Report – Overview of Local and National Initiatives**      24

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

Councillors Brooks and Clocherty declared connections as members of the Board of Inverclyde Leisure. They also formed the view that the nature of their connection and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence in the meeting or their participation in the decision-making process and were declaring for transparency.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the updates on the following be noted (a) Inverclyde's anti-social behaviour strategy review, (b) 16 Days of Action (gender based violence campaign), (c) Inverclyde Fire Skills Course, (d) Inverclyde Leisure Memorandum and Articles of Association, (e) Inverclyde Music Service, (f) Book Week Scotland, (g) Scottish Book Trust – Bookbug Gifting, (h) Libraries as Community Spaces, (i) Galoshans Festival 10th Anniversary, and (j) the Watt Institution; and
- (2) that the revision to Inverclyde Leisure's Articles of Association, as detailed at

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paragraph 3.4 of the report, be agreed, it being noted that the Inverclyde Leisure employee member of the IL Board shall be a member for a period of 24 months.

### 25 Corporate Workstream: Review of Community Learning and Development Services 25

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development advising of recommendations arising from the review of Community Learning and Development (CLD) Services which was undertaken as part of the Council's Corporate Workstreams exercise, the aim of which is to realign services to meet the requirements of previous savings and the delivery of future savings targets.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the review of CLD be noted;
- (2) that the realignment of CLD to 'Inclusive Communities' be agreed; and
- (3) that the services approach to the achievement of the previously agreed savings target of £180,000 as part of the Council's Corporate Workstreams, as detailed in the document forming appendix 1 to the report, be agreed.

### 26 Watt Institution Collections Development Policy 26

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development presenting the Watt Institution's updated Collections Development Policy for approval.

**Decided:**

- (1) that the content of the report be noted;
- (2) that the Collections Development Policy, as detailed at appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

### 27 Beacon Arts Centre – Update on 24/25 Performance Outcomes 27

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing the annual performance outcomes for 2024/25 between Inverclyde Council and the Greenock Arts Guild Ltd, who are the Board for the Beacon Arts Centre.

Councillors Brennan and Robertson declared connections as members of the Board of Greenock Arts Guild. They also formed the view that the nature of their connections and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence in the meeting or their participation in the decision-making process and were declaring for transparency.

**Decided:** that the performance outcomes and annual report for the Beacon Arts Centre, as detailed at appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

### 28 Warm Hand of Friendship Grants 2024/25 28

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the successful applications for funding through the Warm Hand of Friendship initiative for 2024/25.

Councillor McGuire declared a connection as a member of an organisation which received a grant, although she took no part in the application process. 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.

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### **Decided:**

- (1) that the progress made in the distribution of funding to the various organisations, as detailed at appendix 1 to the report, through the Warm Hand of Friendship funding initiative be noted; and
- (2) that the thanks and appreciation of the Committee be extended to all volunteers who assist with the organisations named in the report.

**The Communities business concluded at 2.50pm. The Committee commenced consideration of the Education items of business at 4pm with Ms McEwan and Ms MacDonald joining the meeting remotely.**

### **29 Education Scotland Inspection Report – St Francis’ Primary School and Nursery Class 29**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development informing the Committee of the outcome of the recent Education Scotland short inspection of St Francis’ Primary School and Nursery Class. Ms Kelly, the Head Teacher, was present and addressed the Committee in relation to the inspection report.

#### **Decided:**

- (1) that the Education Scotland report on St Francis’ Primary School and Nursery Class be noted; and
- (2) that the thanks and appreciation of the Committee be extended to all staff involved in the inspection process at St Francis’ Primary School and Nursery Class.

### **30 2024/25 Education Revenue Budget Update 30**

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

#### **Decided:**

- (1) that the Committee notes that the Education Revenue Budget is currently projected to overspend in 2024/25 by £35,000;
- (2) that it be noted that proposals to address the underlying budget pressure within Partner Providers are contained in the report later in the agenda ‘Early Years – Partner Provider Overspend’;
- (3) that the virement of £50,000, as detailed in paragraph 3.5 and appendix 5 to the report, be approved; and
- (4) that it be noted that the Council has received additional one-off funding of £74,000 from the Scottish Government to fund the write-off of historic school meal income debt, and that this is reflected in the projected outturn figures.

### **31 Education Capital Programme 2024/28 - Progress 31**

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

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(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.

### 32 Education Update Report – Overview of Local and National Initiatives 32

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:**

(1) that the updates on the following be noted (a) Care Inspectorate inspection outcome for Blairmore Early Learning Centre and Newark Nursey School, (b) education reform, (c) Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessments, (d) teacher numbers, and (e) Play 4 All Out of School and Holiday Care; and

(2) that it be noted (a) that officers will provide a further report to this Committee on the outcome of the Phase 1 consultation to evaluate the priority for places at Play 4 All Out of School and Holiday Care, and (b) that the Committee will be updated as to the progress of further consultation and reviews of Out of School holiday and childcare for pupils with Additional Support Needs.

### 33 Outcome of Consultation Regarding Future Leadership Model – Newark Nursey School 33

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing an update on the outcome of the pre-consultation process relating to the future leadership model of Newark Nursery School, and (2) recommending a single option to take forward to statutory consultation.

**Decided:** that approval be given to the commencement of a formal consultation process with key stakeholders of Newark Nursery School for it to become a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre, all as detailed at appendix 1 to the report.

### 34 Attendance Policy 34

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development presenting the new Attendance Policy for over the Education Service.

**Decided:** that the Attendance Policy be approved.

### 35 Future of Additional Support Needs Specialist Provision 35

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing an update on the future requirements of Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision from August 2025, and (2) seeking agreement for a statutory consultation relating to the introduction of a new ASN provision at Clydevview Academy.

Councillors Reynolds and Robertson declared connections as members of Clydevview Academy Parent Council. They also formed the view that the nature of their connections and of the item of business did not preclude their continued presence in the meeting or their participation in the decision-making process and were declaring for transparency.

**Decided:**

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(1) that the Committee note (a) the content of the report, and (b) that a report will be brought to a future meeting to update on progress with planning for ASN provision for August 2025; and

(2) that (a) approval be given to a statutory consultation relating to the introduction of a new ASN provision at Clydevview Academy for 2025, and (b) it be noted that a report on this consultation will be brought back to Committee in the spring once the consultation is complete.

### 36 Early Years – Partner Providers Overspend

36

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development (1) providing detail on proposed actions to address a previously reported overspend of £230,000 in Early Years Partner Provider payments caused by a higher than budgeted number of placements in private nurseries, (2) noting that a previous Committee decision to implement a delayed start date for two and three-year-olds within early years establishments has saved £70,000, and (3) seeking approval to delete 3.43 FTE vacant posts.

The Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development advised of a typographical error at paragraph 1.3, and accordingly the report should read 'This leaves £35,000 which the CMT are recommending is funded from the Corporate Pressures Budget'.

#### **Decided:**

(1) that the actions proposed by officers to address the £230,000 Budget pressure be noted;

(2) that the deletion of 3.43 FTE vacant posts to save £125,000 from 2025/26 be approved; and

(3) that it be noted that the Council has been asked to allocate £35,000 to address the overspend from the Corporate Pressures Budget and that this will be considered at a Special meeting of the Council on 23 January 2025.

### 37 Update on Senior Phase Curriculum Consultation

37

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the Senior Phase Curriculum consultation recently undertaken.

**Decided:** that the recommendations contained within the report to amend the Senior Phase timetable model to begin from 2025/26, and allow young people in S4 to take up to seven courses as opposed to the current six, be approved.

### 38 Update to School Transport Policy

38

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking approval for a number of minor updates to the Policy on Provision of School Transport.

The Head of Culture, Communities & Educational Resources advised of a typographical error at paragraph 1.3, and accordingly the report should read 'This has been updated as and when required over recent years and when changes have been identified.'

Councillor Armstrong declared a connection as a committee member of Inverclyde Voluntary Council of Social Services which provides transport. 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

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and was declaring for transparency.

**Decided:** that the updates to the Policy on Provision of School Transport, as detailed at appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

**39 School Term Dates – Session 2026/27****39**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking approval for setting the school term dates for the session 2026/27.

**Decided:** that the term dates for 2026/27, as detailed at appendix 1 and appendix 2 of the report, be approved.