

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2008 AT 1000 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors Douglas Reid, Iain Linton, John MacKay, Jim Buchanan, Hugh Ross, Jim Todd, Robert McDill, Eric Jackson, Jim Roberts and Kathy Morrice; Church Representatives: Bill McGregor, John McHugh and Dr Ivy Barclay; Teacher Representative Iain Harvey; and Parent Representative David Fraser.

ATTENDING: Fiona Lees, Chief Executive; Elizabeth Morton, Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support; Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services; William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services; Alex McPhee, Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management; Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support; Robin Gourlay, Head of Facilities Management; David Mitchell, Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services; Euan Couperwhite, Head of Resources; Kenneth McKinlay, Acting Head of Service: Schools; Julie McGarry, Administration Manager; Julie Jamieson, Chief Accountant; Alastair Wyper, Chief Engineer, Operations; Gwen Barker, Community Planning and Partnership Manager; Karl Doroszenko, Development, Planning and Regeneration Manager; Margaret True, Members' Secretary; Alan Paterson, Principal Quantity Surveyor, Technical Services; Julie Haig, Public Relations Officer; Ken Mitchell, School Estate Manager; and Christine Baillie, Administrative Officer.

CHAIR: Councillor Douglas Reid, Chair.

LIFELONG LEARNING

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT THE MEETING

1. The Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services outlined the Procedure to be followed at the meeting (circulated) and advised that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services would present the report on General Issues which had emerged from the consultation. Thereafter, each project would be considered following the Procedure, in the order shown on the Agenda.

He further advised that, after each Parent Council Spokesperson had made their statement to the Cabinet, clarification could be sought by any Cabinet Member, if required, on any issues raised.

At this point the Cabinet agreed that the timescale for Local Members' statements would be no more than five minutes.

BETTER SCHOOLS: BETTER LEARNING: GENERAL ISSUES (Item 9, Page 167, 07/11)

- 2E. There was submitted a report dated 19 March 2008 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which informed Cabinet Members of some of the general issues that had emerged in the Better Schools: Better Learning Consultation together with comments arising from those points.

Cabinet agreed:-

- (i) to take account of the issues raised in the report when evaluating the results of the consultation of individual projects; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

PROJECT 1 - A PROPOSED MERGER OF WOODSTOCK AND WITCHHILL SCHOOLS

2.1E There was submitted a report dated 13 March 2008 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which set out the views expressed, and the issues raised, during the public consultation exercise on the future of Witchhill and Woodstock Schools and which made recommendations for Cabinet approval as a result of this exercise.

Cabinet then heard from Mr Muir, Spokesperson for Woodstock School Parent Council and Mr White, Spokesperson for Witchhill School Parent Council.

At this point the Chair, having been advised of requests to make statements from Councillors Maureen McKay and Tom Cook as well as Local Member Robert Keohone, acknowledged that Cabinet had invited, in accordance with Standing Order 42, those Local Members who were not Members of the Cabinet, to attend this meeting and participate in any discussion in respect of which they had a local interest.

However, he appreciated Councillor Maureen McKay's position as Opposition Spokesperson for Lifelong Learning for her group and Councillor Tom Cook's capacity as Spokesperson for his Group and he was happy for them to make statements on all six projects.

Thereafter, Councillors Tom Cook, Robert Keohone and Maureen McKay made statements to the Cabinet on the proposals.

The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services and the Head of Community Support then provided clarification on issues raised.

Thereafter, Cabinet agreed:-

- (i) to Option 4, namely, that Witchhill and Woodstock Schools be closed with effect from the end of the school session June 2009, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (ii) that a new school results from the merger of the schools and that the pupils would transfer to this new school facility on the current Park School site, in August 2009, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (iii) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services conduct a consultation exercise in due course to determine a name for the new school and report back to the Cabinet in due course;
- (iv) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services declare the existing buildings and land on both Woodstock and Witchhill School sites surplus to educational requirements in August 2009, or as soon as possible thereafter, and remit the matter to the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management for disposal;

- (v) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services would ensure effective procedures for continued consultation with all relevant stakeholders to inform them how the matter would be progressed; and
- (vi) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

PROJECT 2 - CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL

2.2.1E Declaration of Interest

Councillor Jim Roberts declared a non-financial interest in this item in accordance with paragraphs 5.17 and 5.18 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the meeting.

2.2.2E Consideration of Item

There was submitted a report dated 13 March 2008 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which set out the views expressed and the issues raised resulting from the public consultation exercise on the future of Crossroads Primary School and which recommended accordingly.

There was also circulated (tabled) with Cabinet's agreement, a copy of the statement to be made from Mr Speir, Crossroads Primary School Parent Council.

Cabinet then heard from Mr Speir, Spokesperson for Crossroads Primary School Parent Council, Councillors Alan Brown, Tom Cook and Maureen McKay.

The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services then provided clarification on issues raised.

Thereafter, Cabinet agreed:-

- (i) to Option 1, namely, to retain Crossroads Primary School as a separate establishment and located in its current location;
- (ii) to further note the proposal put forward by Mr Wallace Hendrie as detailed in the report;
- (iii) to remit to the Chief Executive to set up a short term Officer Working Group to further assess the financial, commercial, legal, planning and community planning implications of Mr Hendrie's alternative proposal;
- (iv) to remit to the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to bring forward a further report to Cabinet as soon as practicable, detailing the outcome of that assessment; and
- (v) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

ADJOURNMENT/RECONVENTION OF MEETING

It was agreed to adjourn the meeting at 12 Noon. The meeting reconvened at 1215 hours with the same Members and Officers present and in attendance (Councillor Jim Roberts having re-joined the meeting at this point).

PROJECT 3 - PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND NURSERY SCHOOL IN NEW CUMNOCK

2.3E There was submitted a report dated 13 March 2008 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which set out the views expressed and the issues raised resulting from the public consultation exercise on the future of Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools and New Cumnock Nursery School and which made recommendations accordingly.

Cabinet then heard from Mr Hastie, Spokesperson for Castle Primary School Parent Council, Mr Ballantyne, Spokesperson for Cairnhill Primary School Parent Council, Mrs McClounie, Spokesperson for New Cumnock Nursery School Parent Council, Councillors Tom Cook, Neil McGhee (on behalf of the Local Members) and Maureen McKay.

The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services then provided clarification on issues raised and acknowledged, following a statement made by Mrs McClounie, that the response to the consultation by New Cumnock Nursery School should have appeared in the report under a separate heading but did confirm that their comments had been included within the body of the report.

Clarification was also provided by the Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services on title issues and the Chief Engineer, Operations on road safety issues.

Thereafter, Cabinet agreed:-

- (i) to Option 2, namely, that Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools be closed with effect from the end of the school session June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (ii) that the pupils would transfer to a newly refurbished and merged school to be sited in the building of the current Castle Primary School in August 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (iii) that New Cumnock Nursery School remain on the Castle Primary School campus;
- (iv) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services be authorised to consult on a name for the newly merged school and report back to Cabinet in due course;
- (v) to a temporary decant of pupils to Cairnhill Primary, as appropriate, to allow completion of building work at the Castle/New Cumnock Nursery School site;
- (vi) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services declare the building and land at Cairnhill Primary surplus to educational requirements in August 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter, and to remit the matter to the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management for disposal;
- (vii) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services would ensure effective procedures for continued consultation with all relevant stakeholders to inform them of how the matter would be progressed; and
- (viii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

ADJOURNMENT/RECONVENTION OF MEETING

It was agreed to adjourn the meeting at 1310 hours. The meeting reconvened at 1400 hours with the same Members and Officers present and in attendance.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT THE MEETING

The Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services outlined the Procedure to be followed at the meeting.

BETTER SCHOOLS: BETTER LEARNING: GENERAL ISSUES

Cabinet agreed, that as there were no new issues arising from the report circulated at Agenda Item 2E there was no need for the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to again present the report.

PROJECT 4 - LITTLEMILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

2.4E There was submitted a report dated 13 March 2008 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which set out the views expressed and the issues raised resulting from the public consultation exercise on the future of Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Class and which put forward recommendations in respect of those matters.

There was also circulated (tabled) with Cabinet's agreement, a copy of the statement to be made from Ms McMath, Spokesperson for Littlemill Parent Council.

Following a request from the Chair for clarification of the ingress of water from the property next door to the School, Councillor Jim Buchanan advised that the Head of Planning and Economic Development had commenced enforcement action on the owner of the property.

Cabinet then heard from Ms McMath, Spokesperson for Littlemill Primary School Parent Council and Councillors Tom Cook, Elaine Dinwoodie, Drew Filson and Maureen McKay.

The Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services advised that he had received notification from Local Member Jim Sutherland that, unfortunately, he was unable to attend the meeting but had requested that his representation on both Littlemill and St Xavier's Primary Schools be made on his behalf.

Cabinet agreed to the request and the Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services outlined Councillor Sutherland's statement on Littlemill Primary School, a copy of which was also circulated to each Cabinet Member.

The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services and Head of Community Support then provided clarification on issues raised.

Clarification was also provided by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services on road safety issues and the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support on planning issues.

Thereafter, Cabinet agreed Option 1, namely, to retain Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Class as a separate establishment in its present accommodation.

As a consequence of this decision, Cabinet noted that the Chief Executive would ask Officers to bring back a report to a future Cabinet meeting on options for a long-term solution for the sustainability of the building as a modern educational facility.

ADJOURNMENT/RECONVENTION OF MEETING

It was agreed to adjourn the meeting at 1500 hours. The meeting reconvened at 1510 hours with the same Members and Officers present and in attendance.

PROJECT 5 - ST XAVIER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

2.5E There was submitted a report dated 13 March 2008 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which set out the views expressed and the issues raised resulting from the public consultation exercise on the future of St Xavier's Primary School.

Cabinet then heard from Mrs Healy, Spokesperson for St Xavier's Primary School Parent Council, Councillors Tom Cook, Elaine Dinwoodie, Drew Filson, Jimmy Kelly and Maureen McKay.

The Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services then outlined the written statement by Councillor Jim Sutherland, a copy of which had previously been circulated to each Cabinet Member.

The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services then provided clarification on issues raised.

Clarification was also provided by the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management on building issues.

Councillor Kathy Morrice, seconded by Councillor Jim Roberts moved Option 3, namely:-

- (i) that St Xavier's Primary School remains as a school;
- (ii) that the existing buildings of St Xavier's Primary School be closed with effect from the end of the school session June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (iii) that the pupils transfer to the relocated school which would be based within separate accommodation in Patna Primary School and Nursery Class in August 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (iv) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services consult on all aspects of the design of the Patna Primary School and Nursery Class/St Xavier's Primary School Campus;
- (v) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services declare the St Xavier's Primary School buildings and land surplus to educational requirements in August 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter, and remit the matter to the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management for disposal;
- (vi) that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services would ensure effective procedures for continued consultation with all relevant stakeholders to inform them of how the matter would be progressed; and
- (vii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

Councillor Eric Jackson, seconded by Parent Representative David Fraser, moved as an amendment that St Xavier's Primary School be retained as a separate educational establishment located at its present location and that a new school be built on that site.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 12 votes to 3.

As a consequence of this decision, Cabinet noted that the Chief Executive would ask Officers to bring back a report to a future Cabinet meeting setting out options for the provision of the proposed new shared campus in terms of either the extensive refurbishment or a possible new build on the Patna site.

ADJOURNMENT/RECONVENTION OF MEETING

It was agreed to adjourn the meeting at 1610 hours. The meeting reconvened at 1620 hours with the same Members and Officers present and in attendance.

PROJECT 6 - SORN PRIMARY SCHOOL

2.6E There was submitted a report dated 13 March 2008 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services which set out the views expressed and the issues raised resulting from the public consultation exercise on the future of Sorn Primary School and which made recommendations accordingly.

There was also circulated (tabled) with Cabinet's agreement, a copy of the statement to be made by Mrs McKerrow.

Cabinet then heard from Mrs McKerrow, Spokesperson for Sorn Primary School Parent Council, Councillors Tom Cook, Neil McGhee and Maureen McKay.

The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services then provided clarification on issues raised.

Clarification was also provided by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support on planning issues.

Thereafter, Cabinet agreed Option 1, namely, to maintain Sorn Primary School as a separate establishment and in its present accommodation.

As a consequence of this decision, Cabinet noted that the Chief Executive would ask Officers to bring back a report to a future Cabinet meeting on options for a long term solution for the sustainability of the building as a modern educational facility.

The meeting terminated at 1720 hours.