

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 AUGUST 2010

GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION UPDATE REPORT

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update report to Governance & Scrutiny Committee on Gaelic Medium Education provision provided by East Ayrshire Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A report was presented to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on 19th March 2010 summarising the ways that East Ayrshire Council supported the former Scottish Executive National Priority 3: 'To promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education, with particular regard paid to pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and to Gaelic and other lesser used languages'. The present provision in East Ayrshire is designed to meet the statutory responsibilities of the 2005 Gaelic Language Scotland Act.
- 2.2 The previous report outlined that there is a Gaelic medium presence in every sector of East Ayrshire's education service. A 'Mothers and Toddlers' provision exists at Mount Carmel Primary School and facilities at Onthank primary school are designated for nursery and primary aged provision. Grange Academy is responsible for secondary provision while adult services are managed through Community Learning and Development.
- 2.3 Following presentation of the Report the Governance and Scrutiny Committee requested a visit to the Onthank Campus and to Grange Academy to meet with staff and pupils and gain a better understanding of the provision. This took place on 20 May 2010 and five members of the Committee attended the visit.
- 2.4 The Governance and Scrutiny Committee requested at the meeting of 19th March detail of the comparable cost of transporting pupils in East Ayrshire to Gaelic Provision in Glasgow compared to the present cost of transporting pupils to the Onthank Campus and Grange Academy.

3. VISIT TO THE ONTHANK CAMPUS AND GRANGE ACADEMY

- 3.1 During the visit to Onthank Campus the following information was presented to the Committee. The numbers of pupils studying through the medium of Gaelic is as follows:
- Nursery: 11
 - P1 – 10 pupils
 - P2/3 – 10 pupils overall (P2 – 4, P3 – 6)
 - P4/7 – 11 pupils overall (P4 – 5, P5 – 4, P6 – 1, P7 – 1)

- 3.2 The Principal Teacher for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) at Onthank Campus delivered a detailed presentation of the nature of teaching GME and outlined the benefits for young people studying through this medium. The committee also visited a class of pupils studying through the medium and spoke briefly to the children and their teacher. The teachers and pupils demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject and were positive about the benefits and experience of being taught through the Gaelic language.
- 3.3 In Grange Academy during session 2009-2010 fifteen pupils were taught geography, personal and social development and religious and moral education in Gaelic and this is also the language used in their registration class. During the visit however, as a result of examinations, only three pupils (S1/2) were present with the class teacher. The pupils delivered part of a presentation then joined the committee for a 'round the table' discussion about the benefits of GME.
- 3.4 During the visit to Grange Academy the challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers trained to deliver education through the medium of Gaelic was discussed. This is presently a challenge for the authority and a range of approaches are being taken to try to recruit and retain a specialist for the Academy following the recent retiral of the previous teacher.

4. THE COST OF MAINTAINING GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION IN EAST AYRSHIRE

- 4.1 The cost of transporting pupils to Onthank Primary School and Grange Academy is £48,000, while the other costs, including staffing, for 2009-2010 were £220,000 for primary GME education and £47,300 for secondary GME costs. Costs associated with GME nursery were £53,335 while Community Learning and Development costs totalled £14,210. The total cost to the Council was £348,845.
- 4.2 In the nursery sector no pupils are transported to Onthank Campus. In the primary sector 22 of the 42 pupils are transported and all of the 15 pupils attending Grange Academy are transported. Pupils are travelling from a range of home bases including Fenwick, Catrine, Ochiltree and Newmilns.
- 4.3 East Ayrshire Council receives £150,000 as a block grant from Scottish Government to cover in part these costs. The net cost to the Council is therefore £232,845. This information is outlined for clarity in the table below.

Present staffing cost to Mount Carmel	Present staffing cost to Onthank Campus	Present staffing cost to Grange Academy	Present staffing cost to CLAD	Present transport costs	Total cost	Grant received from Scottish Government	Net cost to Council
£53,335	£220,000	£47,300	£14,210	£48,000	£382,845	£150,000	£232,845

5. COMPARISON OF COSTS OF TRANSPORTING PUPILS BETWEEN EAST AYRSHIRE AND GLASGOW

- 5.1 If all East Ayrshire pupils were transported to the Gaelic Medium Centre in Glasgow the associated cost would be in the region of £100,000.
- 5.2 An additional cost would be the transfer of the Scottish Government block grant from East Ayrshire to Glasgow which is presently £150,000.
- 5.3 The present cost of transporting pupils to Gaelic Medium Education in Grange Academy is £16,821. The cost of transporting these pupils to Gaelic Medium Education in Glasgow would be £34,000 using the present contract, although there may be scope to reduce the number of contracts come renewal and reduce the cost to approximately £28,000.
- 5.4 If secondary pupils were educated in Glasgow there would be a pro-rata reduction in the block grant from Scottish Government. The table below summarises the figures above.

Total cost of transporting primary and secondary pupils to Glasgow	£100,000
Cost of transporting nursery and primary pupils to Glasgow	£66,000
Cost of transporting Grange Academy pupils to Glasgow	£34,000 (max)
Value of block Grant from Scottish Government	£150,000

6. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The present provision in East Ayrshire meets the duties identified in the 2005 Gaelic Language Scotland Act which established the Bòrd na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Board).

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The present programme of Gaelic Medium Education supports the general targets identified in the Community Plan: 'Promoting Lifelong learning.'

9 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Any adaptation to the existing provision of Gaelic Medium Education must meet the targets identified in the 2005 Gaelic Language Scotland Act.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Governance & Scrutiny Committee:

- i. note the outcome of the visit to Onthank Primary School and Grange Academy and the support of the teachers for the GME provision available at these schools;

- ii. consider the cost of transporting pupils to the schools in East Ayrshire compared to transporting pupils to Glasgow; and
- iii. otherwise, note the contents of this report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

GS/AS
2 August 2010

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- i. Governance and Scrutiny Committee Report – 19th March 2010: Gaelic Medium Education Update Report
- ii. The Education Committee on 17th September 2002 on a strategy for Gaelic Education.

Members requiring further information should contact Andrew Sutherland, Head of Service: Schools on Tel: (01563 576126).

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