

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 23 MARCH 2004**

#### **PROGRESS REPORT ON STUDENT COUNCIL FORUM DEVELOPMENTS**

##### **Report by Director of Educational and Social Services**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Education Committee of progress made regarding the Student Council Forum development as it relates to the citizenship agenda.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The national context for the citizenship agenda is set within the context of Community Planning requirements and is clearly identified as a priority issue within Education's National Priorities. Within the National Priorities schools are required to show ways and the extent by which young people are consulted and involved in the decision making process of the school life.
- 2.2** This development is supported by the work of Learning and Teaching Scotland who have developed the Education for Citizenship Network. Further it is clearly identified in the guidance for local authorities for community learning and development.
- 2.3** The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 imposes a duty on education authorities to consult young people and children and ensure that they have the opportunity to make their views known. The Children and Young Person's Service Plan also seeks to reflect the councils commitment to ensure the strategic development of citizenship initiatives.

### **3. REPORT**

- 3.1** Within each school an extensive range of initiatives are in place relating to the citizenship agenda, this includes the development of student councils and the involvement of older young people as representatives on the Council's local committees.
- 3.2** Within each community a variety of local approaches have been used to support, encourage and involve young people in the citizenship agenda including the development of local youth forums and support to Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- 3.3** All schools in East Ayrshire now have a Student Council and in 2002 it was agreed that representatives from Student Councils in Secondary Schools and Park School would meet together on a regular basis with the Chair and Vice-

Chair of Education Committee and Director to discuss issues of importance to young people in East Ayrshire schools and the Council.

- 3.4** The first Student Council Seminar was held in October 2002 organised by Student Council representatives, facilitated by the student representatives and supported by Community Learning and Development staff. The seminar considered the issues of better behaviour and better learning and was evaluated as a positive experience.
- 3.5** In 2003 a conference was held on 19 November with a theme of citizenship issues. This event was a joint initiative between the local youth forums and the student councils across East Ayrshire.
- 3.6** In addition, a Student Council website is being developed in conjunction with some of the Student Council representatives to enable Student Councils to 'speak' to each other using information technology.
- 3.7** This work is supported by Community Learning and Development staff as part of the wider citizenship agenda, which includes the Multi Agency Forum where senior representatives from East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and the Police meet with young people representing local Youth Forums across East Ayrshire. The most recent meeting of the Multi Agency Forum was attended by Justice Minister, Cathy Jamieson MSP and local MSP Margaret Jamieson to discuss the implications of the Anti Social Behaviour Bill.
- 3.8** The format of the Student Council meetings supports the students to consider subjects identified by the Chair and Director but also supports young people to represent issues from their own school and present them to the Chair and Director for consideration. Topics discussed at the suggestion of the Chair and Director have included religious observance and promotion of the Health agenda, topics introduced by students and considered to date have included for example, development of the webpage, increasing the range of advanced higher subjects available and healthy school meals options.
- 3.9** Currently the student councils are considering how they might best communicate with the young people in the Multi Agency Forums and local youth forums and the impact and roll out of the Dialogue Youth Initiative.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** Financial commitments relating to the Student Council Forum representation is met from existing schools delegated budgets.

#### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** Support for the development of Student Council and the Student Council Forum is compatible with the Community Plan and the promotion of active citizenship.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Nil

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1** It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee

- (I) note the developments regarding student councils and the Student Council Forum; and
- (II) otherwise note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational & Social Services  
23 February 2004

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

Members wishing further info should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support. Tel (01563) 576104, or Anne Jackson, Principal Officer (Communities). Tel (01563) 576126.