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**Motherwell, 6 September 2000 at 2 pm.**

**A Meeting of the EDUCATION JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**PRESENT**

Authority Side - Councillor Gray (Convener) and Councillors Curran, Grant, Lyle and G. Murray.

Teachers' Side - W. Brown, W. Cairns, H. Glen, P. Lavery, P. McGowan, A. Taylor, V. Topping and P. Cullen, as substitute for A. Morrice.

**CHAIR**

Councillor Gray (Convener) presided.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

The Committee Services Officer, Director of Education, Depute Director of Education and Chief Personnel Officer.

**APOLOGIES**

Authority Side – Councillors Love and McGhee.

Teachers' Side – A. Morrice.

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

1. The Chief Executive outlined his vision for the Council and his plans for actioning that vision, highlighting organisational issues for 2000/2001.

The Committee thanked the Chief Executive for his presentation.

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

2. There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 10 May 2000.

P. Lavery and W. Brown, on behalf of the teachers' side, referred to item 3 of the Minute relating to the Education Budget 2000/2001 and, in particular, to the 2.5% pay settlement for teachers for 2000/2001 despite 3% funding provision in the authority's budget and asked if further consideration had been given to the allocation of the 0.5% balance of monies in the budget for the 2000/2001 pay settlement.

For the authority, the Director of Education advised that the 0.5% balance of monies in the budget for the 2000/2001 pay settlement would be reviewed following the finalisation of the APT and C pay settlement for 2000/2001.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that with reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute relating to ICT development and, in particular, to user access guidelines, that the reference to "ICT Network" in paragraphs 1 and 2 be deleted and replaced by the word "Internet", and
- (2) that the Minute be otherwise approved.

**The Convener exercised his discretion to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted in order to consider agenda item 3 relating to the "Scottish Qualifications Authority" and agenda item 7 relating to the "Higher Still Development Programme" together.**

### **SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY AND THE HIGHER STILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

3. There were submitted (1) letters (tabled) of 13 and 14 April, 3 July and 14 August 2000 by the Director of Education to the Chief Executive, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) expressing concern at the complexity of the administration of the new internal assessment arrangements and of the failure of the SQA to identify the changes required to existing IT systems and programmes to enable the Higher Still Development Programme to be implemented and administered effectively, and (2) a letter (tabled) of 21 August 2000 by the Director of Education to all secondary Head Teachers in North Lanarkshire (a) indicating that the Council would make strong representations on the matter to the two national inquiries which were to be held, and (b) thanking Head Teachers and their staff for the efforts in ensuring that pupils were not disadvantaged when results were received.

For the authority, the Director of Education (1) reiterated his thanks for the work undertaken by secondary teachers in relation to the situation, and (2) outlined the action taken to date in collating evidence for submission to the two inquiries and in making recommendations as to how the appeals process should be taken forward.

Councillor Gray also paid tribute to the teachers who had voluntarily returned to work before the end of the summer holiday period to help pupils cope with the situation.

P. Lavery, on behalf of the teachers' side, (1) acknowledged the difficulties of the situation and indicated that they looked forward to receiving the results of the inquiries; (2) sought assurance (a) that the authority would continue to provide training for the implementation of the Programme as a priority, and (b) that funding for the Programme would be kept under review; (3) highlighted the need for improvement in the standard of staff deployed given the increase in the complexity of the courses, and (4) expressed concern about advanced Highers and CSYS courses.

The Director of Education (1) confirmed that the authority would sustain its support to teachers for the implementation of the Programme; (2) advised that the situation required to be resolved at a national level before any local action could be taken thereon, and (3) intimated that the results of the audit to be carried out in North Lanarkshire Secondary Schools would be reviewed to identify the issues.

The Committee noted the position.

### **INSPECTION OF EDUCATION FUNCTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

4. For the authority, the Director of Education advised (1) that following the enactment of the Improving Schools Bill etc., the education function of each of the Scottish local authorities would be inspected over the next five year period to assess their frameworks for improving education, and (2) that North Lanarkshire might be included in the next trawl of assessments.

The Committee noted the position.

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**CURRICULUM OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL**

5. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 1 February 2000, P. Lavery, on behalf of the teachers' side, referred to the curriculum of secondary schools and sought a further informal meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee to discuss certain outstanding issues.

For the authority, the Director of Education indicated that there were no objections to the further informal meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee being held to discuss the issues.

The Committee noted that there would be further informal discussion between the Director of Education and the teacher representatives on the curriculum of secondary schools.

**SCHOOLS FOR THE MILLENNIUM**

6. P. Lavery, on behalf of the teachers' side, referred to the rationalisation of school provision and (1) expressed concern that the viability of schools might be assessed on the basis of statistics and sought clarification on the formula applied to such assessments; (2) emphasised the need to look at the impact of schools on the community; (3) indicated that in light of requirements to reduce class sizes and of the need for accommodation to meet recent and potential curricular developments, schools had to be more flexible than for example, three years ago, and (4) requested that the teacher unions be consulted on matters relating to the rationalisation of schools prior to the formal consultation process.

For the authority, the Director of Education advised (1) that the formula used for assessing the viability of schools in North Lanarkshire was the same formula as that applied nationally for such purposes; (2) that the authority, when reviewing school provision, had a duty to look at the viability of schools on a comprehensive basis, taking account of the potential impact of schools on the community as well as other relevant issues, and (3) that although a Member/Officer Group had been established to consider the five review priorities in respect of the rationalisation of school provision as approved by the Education Committee at its meeting on 13 June 2000, the Group had not yet met.

The Committee noted the position.

**AIRDRIE ACADEMY - PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

7. With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 10 May 2000, P. Lavery, on behalf of the teacher's side, requested an update on the status of the authority's consideration of proposals for a Public/Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement for the refurbishment of Airdrie Academy.

For the authority, the Director of Education advised that although both he and the Director of Finance had met with representatives of the Scottish Executive to discuss the PPP submission for the new build school on the site of Airdrie Academy, no formal response had yet been received from the Scottish Executive.

The Committee noted the position.

**FORWARD PLANNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

8. P. Lavery, on behalf of the teachers' side, referred to the new Working Group which had been set up to produce guidelines for forward planning in primary schools and requested that the Working Group meet as soon as possible.

For the authority, the Director of Education (1) advised that although the Working Group had started to gather background information on the subject, there was no merit in arranging meetings until the relevant documentation had been received, and (2) intimated that every effort would be made to obtain the documentation in order that the Working Group might meet as soon as possible.

The Committee noted the position.

#### **ICT DEVELOPMENT**

9. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 10 May 2000 W. Brown, on behalf of the teachers' side, referred to the installation of the ICT development in schools and (1) expressed concern that, whilst emphasis had been placed on the development of the infrastructure, additional resources were now required for software, training and technical support, and (2) sought clarification as to who was responsible for managing ICT systems in schools.

For the authority, the Director of Education (1) advised that as this was the first year of a three year programme for ICT development in schools, the programme was at an early stage and that any shortcomings in the programme would be assessed; (2) intimated that although proposals for technical support had been approved it was acknowledged that there might be a need to look at the potential for additional technical support as the programme progresses, and (3) indicated that training had been provided.

The Committee, having noted the concerns of the teachers' side on the level of IT training provided, agreed that "ICT Development in Schools" be included on the agenda of future meetings of the Committee in order that any issues related thereto could be addressed.