

**MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY,
LOCHGILPHEAD
on WEDNESDAY, 5 JANUARY 2011**

Present:

Provost William Petrie (Chair)

Councillor Chalmers	Councillor R Macintyre
Councillor Colville	Councillor Mackay
Councillor Currie	Councillor MacMillan
Councillor Dance	Councillor McQueen
Councillor Devon	Councillor Marshall
Councillor Freeman	Councillor Morton
Councillor Hay	Councillor Mulvaney
Councillor Daniel Kelly	Councillor Philand
Councillor Donald Kelly	Councillor Reay
Councillor Kinniburgh	Councillor Robb
Councillor MacAlister	Councillor Robertson
Councillor McAlpine	Councillor Scoullar
Councillor McCuish	Councillor Semple
Councillor Macdonald	Councillor Simon
Councillor McIntosh	Councillor Strong
Councillor D MacIntyre	Councillor Walsh

Attending:

Sally Loudon, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director of Customer Services
Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director of Community Services
Carol Walker, Head of Education
Bruce West, Head of Strategic Finance
Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Malcolm MacFadyen, Head of Facility Services
Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and HR

Prior to the start of Council Business, the Provost wished everyone a Happy New Year.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillors Horn, McNaughton and Nisbet.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

4. REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE

This Special Meeting had been called in terms of a requisition under Standing Order 1.3.2 signed by Councillors Macintyre, Strong, Semple, Macdonald, McIntosh, Devon, McCuish, Chalmers and Philand for the purpose of revisiting the Review of the School Estate.

In terms of Standing Order 16.1 no motion which seeks to alter or revoke a decision of the Council or has that effect will be considered within a period of 6 months of the original decision. In terms of Standing Order 16.2 it would be competent to review a decision before the end of the 6 month period, provided that the Provost was satisfied

that a material change of circumstances had occurred.

The Provost ruled that he was satisfied that a material change of circumstance had occurred. He also ruled that items 3 and 4 on the Agenda were effectively about the same matter and that he would conjoin consideration of these and would deal firstly with the substantive item. The Council then considered the report by the Scottish Rural Schools Network as requested by the above named Councillors.

Motion

The Council:-

a) expresses its appreciation of the work which individuals, schools and communities have put in to the current consultation process; thus illustrating the benefits that have arisen from going out to consultation.

b) notes with concern the detail in the article that appeared in the Glasgow Herald article dated 4th January with the reference to the Minister for Education and requests that the Chief Executive of our council raises this issue with the senior Civil Servants in the Scottish Government. Further, seeks an assurance that our Council will receive a fair and impartial hearing as it progresses an outcome to its service review process, in particular, Education School Estate

c1) notes the Minister has apparently identified a list of 8/9 schools for closure with no consultation, analysis or public reasoning and is quoted as describing Council officers as "obdurate and working against him"

c2) regrets that the Minister has failed to respond to the letter of 6th December from the Education Spokesperson asking for a meeting with the Minister to discuss the Rural Schools Grant and authorises the Spokesperson for Education to write to the Minister requesting details of the 8 or 9 schools privately accepted by him for closure and details of the extra finance the council could obtain to "look at the issue in the round" to "allow itself some breathing space"

c3) notes that the Scottish Government's response to representations made by the council completely ignores that this "mainland" Council has the largest number of islands to support of any Scottish authority, 25 in total.

d1) notes that the average cut in Council funding across Scotland is 2.59%

d2) notes that Argyll & Bute Council face a funding cut of £11,429 million or 4.94%, the worst in Scotland, plus inflation and cost pressures meaning that £15.434 million savings need to be found.

d3) notes with concern the adverse impact that the current system of calculating small school support grants has on Argyll & Bute where 25 of our small schools have fewer than 20 pupils.

e1) The Council reaffirms its decision to review the entire primary school estate as

required by HMIE in 2005 / 2007 and by the independent auditors on behalf of our national scrutiny bodies.

e2) agrees that in the light of all the above factors, the current consultation process should be halted and authorises the Spokesperson for Education to bring forward a new set of consultation proposals to reflect on the consultation feedback already submitted and the knowledge acquired by the Spokesperson on her visits to schools across Argyll & Bute.

e3) agrees that if any schools are taken forward for merger, implementation will remain as in the current proposal i.e. October 2011

e4) agrees that the Spokesperson for Education bring back new proposals to the Council meeting on 3rd March.

Moved by Councillor Morton, seconded by Councillor Walsh

The Provost adjourned the meeting at 2.25pm and reconvened at 2.35pm.

Amendment

The Council :-

1. Expresses its appreciation of the work which individuals, schools and communities have put in to the current consultation process.
2. The Council reaffirms its decision to review the primary school estate.
3. Agrees that the current consultation process should be halted and authorises Council Officers to bring forward a new set of consultation proposals.
4. Parklands School should be removed from any School Estate Review as it is a special case. It should be the subject of a separate report and reviewed in the context of the specialised nature of its provision and the need/demand for such provision.

Moved by Councillor R Macintyre, seconded by Councillor Philand

The requisite number of Members required the vote to be taken by calling the roll, and Members voted as follows:-

Motion

Councillor Colville
Councillor Currie
Councillor Dance
Councillor Hay
Councillor Daniel Kelly
Councillor Kinniburgh
Councillor D MacIntyre
Councillor Mackay
Councillor MacMillan
Councillor McQueen
Councillor Marshall
Councillor Morton
Councillor Mulvaney
Councillor Petrie

Amendment

Councillor Chalmers
Councillor Devon
Councillor Freeman
Councillor Donald Kelly
Councillor MacAlister
Councillor McAlpine
Councillor McCuish
Councillor Macdonald
Councillor McIntosh
Councillor R Macintyre
Councillor Philand
Councillor Robb
Councillor Semple
Councillor Simon

Councillor Reay
Councillor Robertson
Councillor Scoullar
Councillor Walsh

Councillor Strong

Decision

The Motion was carried by 18 votes to 15 and the Council resolved accordingly.

(Ref: Report by the Scottish Rural Schools Network as requested by Councillors R Macintyre, Strong, Semple, Macdonald, McIntosh, Devon, McCuish, Chalmers, Philand, submitted)

There followed a Presentation by the Scottish Rural Schools Network.