



EDUCATION EXECUTIVE

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION – POLAR ACADEMY

REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (CURRICULUM, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To invite members of the Education Executive to consider further support for the ten pupils from Bathgate Academy who will participate in the 2019 Polar Academy expedition to Greenland.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To consider the participation of ten pupils from Bathgate Academy in the 2019 Polar Academy expedition to Greenland, the support already agreed by the Council and whether any further support is required.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Bathgate Academy will use £5,000 of its Pupil Equity Fund to support the participation of its pupils in the Polar Academy, and West Lothian Council has paid for each pupil to receive free access to Xcite leisure facilities, worth £2,400,

to help their preparation for the physical challenge they will face.

VII Consideration at PDSP

The Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, at its meeting of 18 December 2018, noted the invitation to participate in the Polar Academy, which will give 10 pupils an exceptional opportunity to participate in a polar expedition with the aim of boosting their self-confidence and self-esteem. The PDSP requested that a report be submitted to the Education Executive exploring any further support the council could provide to the pupils.

VIII Other consultations

Meeting with Polar Academy Fundraising Committee representative.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

The Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, at its meeting of 18 December 2018, noted the participation of Bathgate Academy in the 2019 Polar Academy Expedition.

Polar Academy is a youth training programme which seeks to inspire youth through a 10 day Arctic expedition. The purpose of the programme is to identify young people between the ages of 14-17 and give them the chance to build their physical and mental capacity. The expedition which will give 10 selected pupils an exceptional opportunity to participate in a polar expedition with the aim of boosting their self-confidence and self-esteem.

The PDSP requested that a report be submitted to the Education Executive exploring whether any further support was required.

Polar Academy is a Scottish charity which raises £170,000 annually to operate. The majority of the funds required to support the programme comes from donations to the charity from private donors and companies with an 'outdoors' profile such as Tiso and Bergens. Pupils are provided with high quality equipment at no cost through this sponsorship.

Polar Academy has indicated to Bathgate Academy that it expects to meet its fundraising target for the 2019 expedition, according to the plans it has in place. A meeting with Craig Mathieson, Head of the Polar Academy, has been arranged for Friday 11 January 2019 to confirm the funding position for the Bathgate expedition.

Parents at Bathgate Academy have also set up a fundraising committee, and over £43,000 has been raised for this year's expedition through a combination of donations and sponsored activities. This is understood to be the greatest amount raised by any school participating in the Polar Academy.

Any surplus money raised by Polar Academy, over and above that required to run the current year's expedition, is automatically passed on to the school which will be participating the following year.

West Lothian Council has paid for all pupils to access Xcite leisure facilities free of charge until next Easter 2019, to support the intensive preparation they are undertaking. This support is worth £2,400. Due to the makeup of the pupil group, some of whom are included in the school's Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) planning, Bathgate Academy has contributed £5,000 from PEF towards the cost of the expedition.

The Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel at its meeting of 18 December 2018 also considered a budget monitoring report setting out financial performance within the Education portfolio.

West Lothian Council approved savings of £41.281 million for the three year period 2018/19 to 2020/21 as part of a five year budget strategy on 13 February 2018. For 2018/19, there remain risks around the deliverability of budget reductions. In addition, recurring pressures of £3.894 million will have an impact on how the council can contain overall spending within the approved budget.

The revenue budget forecast position at period 6 for the portfolio of services covered by the Education PDSP is an overspend of £1.497m. This consists of a projected overspend mainly on transport, including Additional Support Needs transport for schools and homelessness transport of £1.703m with facilities management an extra £83,000. This is partially offset by an under-spend in core Education services of approximately £289,000.

Pupils from West Lothian schools participate in a number of international education opportunities every year. These have links to international education, and the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. The norm is for such opportunities to be self-financing, so as to minimise any impact on opportunities available to the wider student body within the school, or Council as a whole.

E. CONCLUSION

The Education Executive is invited to consider further support for the ten pupils from Bathgate Academy who will participate in the 2019 Polar Academy expedition to Greenland, in light of the positive fundraising outlook, the support already committed, and the financial position within West Lothian Council.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: None

Contact Person: Andrew Sneddon, Service Manager – Learning, Policy and Performance

Donna McMaster, Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance)

Date of meeting: 15 January 2019