

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST Lothian COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST Lothian Civic Centre, on 17 JANUARY 2017.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, Tony Boyle, Harry Cartmill, Tom Conn, Alexander Davidson, Jim Dixon, Carl John, Dave King, Danny Logue, John McGinty, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller, George Paul, Frank Toner, Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, Myra Macpherson and Margaret Russell; Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden

Apologies – Councillor Sarah King

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

- 1) The Education Executive approved the Minute of its meeting held on 6 December 2016. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair; and
- 2) The Depute Chief Executive provided the committee with an update in relation to Minute Item 6 (Governance Review – Excellence & Equity) in that the response had now been finalised and approved by Council Executive and was available to members via the COINS system.

3. PRESENTATION BY PUPILS FROM BROXBURN ACADEMY ON STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS)

The Education Executive was provided with a briefing by pupils Hlumelo Konini, Amelia Beckett, Nikola Wostak, Connor Young and Taylor Richardson from Broxburn Academy who explained their involvement in the STEM Learning Programme.

The pupils, aided by their teacher Mr Steven Bryce, explained that the STEM programme provided a diversity of activities alongside the core curriculum and included STEM work placements, school trips to places such as a nuclear power plant and attendance at weekly STEM Clubs.

Support for STEM projects came from a number of organisations including Education Scotland, Glasgow Science Centre, The Institution for Engineering and Technology, Institute of Physics and Practical Biology.

The pupils continued by explaining that they had been involved in a number of STEM projects which included working with the Engineering Development Trust Engineering Education Scheme (EES) to provide a disabled access ramp design for the Union Terrace Gardens in Aberdeen

and working as part of the Shell Bright Idea Challenge on thinking of the problems that will face a city in the year 2050 on matters such as pollution and fossil fuel consumption.

Finally the Education Executive was advised that the latest STEM project had involved working as part of the LEGO EEP Space Challenge which involved the designing of a lego robot to undertake a series of challenges which then had to be presented to a panel of judges to explain its design and to see how it could overcome risks associated with space travel.

The presentation concluded with a demonstration of the lego robot.

There then followed a series of questions and the presentation concluded with the Chair thanking the pupils and their teacher for coming to the meeting to present their very interesting work with the STEM Learning Programme.

Decision

To note the contents of the presentation by pupils from Broxburn Academy on the STEM Learning Programme.

4. A STEM EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) advising of the Scottish Government consultation on a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Education and Training Strategy for Scotland and to seek approval of a response to the consultation.

The Head of Education explained that the Scottish Government was consulting on its approach to delivering high quality Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and training with the draft strategy having the following two aims :-

1. To improve levels of STEM enthusiasm, skills and knowledge in order to raise attainment and aspirations in learning, life and work; and
2. To encourage the uptake of more specialist STEM skills required to gain employment in the growing STEM sectors of the economy, through further study and training.

The Education Executive continued to be advised that there was a strong and sustained demand for STEM skills, knowledge and capability in Scotland's economy and that this demand was projected to grow. As a result there was a need for a highly numerate, digitally skilled, capable, creative, entrepreneurial and empowered workforce with a global outlook.

The consultation paper and the proposed response were both attached to the report as a series of appendices with responses required by 31 January 2017. The response was broadly supportive of the draft STEM

Education and Training Strategy for Scotland and also provided some suggestions on the content for consideration by the Scottish Government.

It was recommended that the Education Executive approve the response to the Scottish Government consultation on STEM Education.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report