

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 21 MARCH 2017.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Stuart Borrowman, John McGinty, Andrew Miller and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, Myra Macpherson, Lynne McEwen and Margaret Russell; Parent Council Representative Lynn Taylor

Apologies – Councillor David Dodds, Appointed Representative John MacKinnon and Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 8 – Youth Music Initiative Year 15 Proposed Programme

Councillor Miller declared a non-financial interest due to the fact that his daughter was involved in one of the music projects.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS

Agenda Item 6 – Developing a Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for West Lothian

The Chair agreed that this item be withdrawn from the agenda as he had been informed that more work was required before the report was considered. This report would be forwarded to a relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel when updated.

Agenda Item 11 – Support for Virtual Learning

The Chair agreed that this item be considered following agenda item 5, Update on Developing Young Workforce Regional Group report, to allow a presentation to be provided.

3. MINUTE

The Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 10 January 2017 as being a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

4. UPDATE ON DEVELOPING YOUNG WORKFORCE REGIONAL GROUP

A presentation was given by the Project Manager for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) in West Lothian providing details of the work undertaken to promote employers' engagement within schools and colleges with a view to recruit more young people into their workforce.

The development of the West Lothian Regional Group of Developing

Young Workforce was led by a private sector board organised via the Chamber of Commerce, which included representatives from West Lothian Council and other economic partners. The aims of DYW were to bridge the gap between education and the workplace, implementing the Wood Commission's recommendations at a local level to:

- Complement the existing relationships in the area;
- Engage more employers in the idea of investing in young people;
- Help businesses to understand how they could get involved;
- Raise awareness of the benefits of getting involved;
- Align priorities on both sides of the coin;
- Increase engagement with SMEs and Micro-firms;
- Ensure meaningful opportunities were created; and
- Ensure our young people make a successful transition into the world of work and achieve positive destinations for West Lothian pupils.

A number of key performance indicators (KPIs) were outlined which related to a variety of measures to support increased employer collaboration with education. The presentation concluded by providing details on the activity highlights and future plans of DYW.

The Project Manager then responded to questions from members of the Panel.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, acknowledged the work carried out and the future plans to continue to increase engagement of the business community within West Lothian to encourage more active participation with local employers.

Following the conclusion of the presentation the Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration providing details of the development of the West Lothian Regional Group of Developing Young Workforce.

The report recalled that in February 2016 a West Lothian proposal, led by the Chamber of Commerce, with a 'steering group' formed from local economic partners and the business community was presented to the Scottish Government. The proposal was successful resulting in a funding award of approximately £500,000 over a three year period.

The additional funding was to add value to what was currently being offered and to increase skills and positive outcomes for the future workforce. The proposal builds upon work which had already been taking place by Education and Skills Development Scotland and added value to current processes rather than duplicating them.

As part of the agreement with the Scottish Government a monthly highlight report was prepared to monitor activity against the actions and targets in the proposal.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the presentation and contents of the report and note that officers would support the ongoing work of the Board.

Decision

Noted the presentation and contents of the report.

5. SUPPORT FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING

The Panel noted a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) and the Head of Corporate Services providing details of the status of the Digital Learning and Schools Network Infrastructure in West Lothian.

The Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) advised that work was carried out by staff in education services working with colleagues in IT to upgrade the ICT Infrastructure in West Lothian schools.

A presentation by the IT Manager and the ICT Curriculum Development Officer was provided with information given on the range of digital tools being used in schools in West Lothian to support digital learning. The Panel viewed a video presentation which gave examples of how children were using digital tools in schools and the positive impact this was having in their learning, allowing information to be shared with parents and carers. Anywhere, Anytime Digital Learning (AAL) allowed pupils, staff, parents and carers to share information to support learning for all children. Many children have the use of personal devices which supports AAL to develop research skills, share ideas and improve their ability to work independently.

The Panel was advised that following the success of implementing AAL digital technology in West Lothian schools, a number of other local authorities were interested in sharing this information.

In conclusion, the report confirmed that Education Services would continue to develop an expectation of digital learning in schools to inspire, motivate and engage learners in line with the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland.

In response to questions from members of the Panel the ICT Curriculum Development Officer confirmed that the Scottish Government's application, GLOW, was becoming the core digital learning tool for children. The council's ICT Capital Programme enabled schools to provide devices in the learning environment which allowed learners who did not have access to a personal device to access digital information.

The Panel acknowledged the excellent work carried out in West Lothian to improve the ICT infrastructure in schools and thanked staff involved within education and IT services for supporting the growth and use of digital learning in schools.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the progress that has been made upgrading the ICT infrastructure to implement Anywhere, Anytime Digital Learning (AAL) in West Lothian schools.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report and the presentation and video provided.

6. ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: POLICY AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A report was circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) informing the Panel of the revised policy document Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures, which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Inclusion & Wellbeing manager advised that the purpose of revising the 2010 policy was to provide clarity on the collaborative, multi-agency approach and related procedures involved in:

- improving overall attendance and punctuality of all pupils at school;
- ensuring that engagement and attendance was a priority for pupils, parents/carers, staff and partner agencies to enable all pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors;
- ensuring consistency in dealing with all issues of attendance and absence; and
- ensuring the accurate recording of pupils' attendance and absence in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.

The Panel was advised that the revised Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures would be implemented in August 2017 following the school holiday period.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the revised policy document Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures which would be submitted to the Education Executive for approval.

Decision

1. Noted the terms of the report; and
2. Noted that the report would be submitted to the Education Executive for approval.

7. YOUTH MUSIC INITIATIVE YEAR 15 PROPOSED PROGRAMME

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing details of the progress with the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) Year 15 application to Creative Scotland who grant the funding for YMI.

The report explained that YMI funding enabled schools to meet the Scottish Government's target that "all school children in Scotland should have access to twelve hours free music tuition by the time they reached Primary 6". This target was met by commissioning specialist individuals and organisations to deliver a range of music education projects to pupils in West Lothian. Community Arts successfully applied to Creative Scotland for Year 14 funding for the YMI programme for 2016/17 and received the maximum award available of £246,228. The programme for August 2017 to June 2018 included fourteen projects plus investment in management, promotion and evaluation. Creative Scotland confirmed in January 2017 that the Youth Music Initiative Fund would be reduced by 10% in 2017/18 which resulted in an overall reduction of £25,332 for West Lothian with the maximum grant available of £220,896. The breakdown of the costs for each of the fourteen projects, totalling £220,896, were outlined in the report.

Community Arts would deliver and manage the 2017/18 YMI programme which would make a significant contribution to enabling the participants to embrace the principles and capacities of Curriculum for Excellence through a high quality programme of music-making activities.

The Senior Arts Officer advised the Panel that the application would be submitted to Creative Scotland in April 2017 and confirmation received in June 2017 if the application was successful.

The Panel was asked to note the report and recommend that the Education Executive approves the proposal that Community Arts submit a funding application for £220,896 to Creative Scotland to support the Youth Music Initiative programme in West Lothian in 2017/18.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Agreed that the report be forwarded to the Education Executive for approval.

8. ERASMUS PLUS PROJECT: PRACTICE

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) informing the Panel of the progress of the ERASMUS Plus Project PRACTICE between West Lothian Council, Cooperative Education Trust Scotland (CETS), West Lothian College and partners in Hochsauerlandkreis in Germany.

The report recalled that Hochsauerlandkreis was twinned with West Lothian Council and had worked cooperatively through youth exchanges, partnership working and council visits for a number of years. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to apply for ERASMUS Plus funding to allow a project to be undertaken to share good practice between both countries and enable joint staff development activities and exchange students. The project was officially approved by the European Union in 2016 and the contracts were signed in February 2017 between all those involved agreeing the dates and locations of all meetings and mobility's.

The aim of UK partners for the project was to support young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) and staff from Pinewood and Cedarbank Schools. The German partners wished to focus on young people who have Social Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN). The report went on to outline the key points of the project. Over the next two years West Lothian Council hoped to trial a range of vocational opportunities for S5/6 ASN pupils which would result in more choices being made available to them when they left school. The project would allow staff and young people from both countries to meet, share ideas, exchange good practice and experience each other's cultures.

The Panel was asked to note the sharing of good practice between all of the partners and the joint working to give both staff and students new opportunities to learn.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. OUT OF SCHOOL CARE CONSULTATION AND PLAN

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) informing the Panel of the results of the consultation on out of school care and the proposed plan to use the consultation results.

The Service Manager – Policy and Performance advised the Panel that local authorities were required to provide out of school care to school aged children defined as in need. The provision of out of school care for children who were not in need was discretionary. A range of out of school care for school aged children was provided by West Lothian Council to support parents, details of which were outlined within the report.

The report explained that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires local authorities to consult representative populations of parents on whether discretionary day care and out of school care for children not in need under the Children (Scotland) 1995 Act, should be provided or supported. There was a requirement to publish a plan in response to the consultation, which required to be done every two years.

A consultation of parents of school age children was undertaken in late 2016. Parents were asked to complete an on-line survey, included at appendix 1 to the report. Responses were received from 3,256

parents/carers. Details of the respondents were included at appendix 2 to the report. The majority of parents/carers in West Lothian reported no unmet childcare need. Unmet need was greatest during the school holidays and after school, compared with before school.

Based on the results of the consultation, the Panel was asked to note the recommendations to be submitted to the Education Executive to adopt and approve the Plan to use the consultation results to i) inform future resource allocation decisions in relation to non-statutory out-of school care provision; ii) use the consultation results to inform discussions with partners in relation to opportunities to increase provision through partnership; and iii) share the consultation results with Social Policy in order to help inform provision for children defined as in need.

The Panel then acknowledged the robust and informative report.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report; and
2. To note that the report would be submitted to the Education Executive for approval.

10. RAISING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN PRIMARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) informing the Panel of the work of the Physical Education Lead Officer towards raising the quality of learning and teaching within primary physical education and maintaining the 100% two hours/two periods of physical education delivery by West Lothian primary, secondary and ASN schools.

The report recalled that in 2011 the Scottish Government made a commitment to ensure that every pupil would benefit from at least two hours of physical education in primary schools and two periods (100 minutes) in S1 to S4 per week. In order to monitor progress in meeting this commitment, questions on physical education provision in schools were included in the Healthy Living Survey since 2012.

The Physical Education Lead Officer presented the report and advised the Panel that although the report referred to appendices 1 and 2 being included this was a typographical error as reference to these should have been deleted.

A Physical Education Lead Officer (PELO) post was created in West Lothian in 2012 with partnership funding from Education Scotland to enable authorities to work towards the Scottish Government target of two hours (primary)/2 periods (secondary) of high quality PE. The lead officer supported schools to maintain West Lothian's 100% performance in delivering two hours/two periods of PE per week. The lead officer also provided input for school staff, PE specialists and head teachers to support primary schools in West Lothian raise the quality of learning and

teaching in PE. A wide range of support services were delivered during November 2016 to April 2017. The impact of the lead officer post would be recorded via the Healthy Living Survey published in June 2017.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the projects, programmes and support provided to schools by the Physical Education Lead Officer.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report subject to noting that no appendices were included.

11. WORKPLAN

A copy of the workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.