

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE on 5 MARCH 2013.

Present: Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, John McGinty, Andrew Miller and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Lynne McEwen, Eric Lumsden and Myra MacPherson.

Apologies: Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken and John Hendrie and Senior People's Representative Elizabeth Hands.

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair ruled that an appendix to Agenda Item 5 – West Lothian Saturday Strings Project – be tabled to support the report.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Dodds declared a general non-financial interest in that his wife worked as a nursery nurse within West Lothian Council and his son worked as a teacher within West Lothian Council. He also declared a non-financial interest as a member of the Education Institute for Scotland.

Councillor Andrew Miller declared a non-financial interest in Agenda Item 5 – West Lothian Saturday Strings Project – as the parent of a child who attended the Saturday Strings project and as one of the consultees on the paper.

3. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the Minute of the meeting held on 5 February 2013 as being a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. WEST LOTHIAN SATURDAY STRINGS PROJECT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) and the questionnaire tabled at the meeting as an appendix to the report, which provided information regarding the options available for the future delivery of the Saturday Strings Project.

The report advised that the Saturday Strings Project had been running since September 2005 and was delivered through Musicworks (Royal Conservatoire Scotland). There were 170 children who took part in the project, which was based in Livingston (Letham Primary) and Armadale (Armadale Primary) on a Saturday during school term time.

The project was solely funded by the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) until school session 2012/2013. However, it was necessary to adjust the

Saturday Strings Project for session 2012/2013 as the previous arrangement did not fully meet YMI funding criteria and could not be sustained in the previous format. The Saturday Strings project was then funded by West Lothian Council for school session 2012/2013 as a temporary measure. Consideration was required for the future delivery of the project to ensure both the continued delivery of positive outcomes for the young people and the financial viability of the project.

The following two options were available for consideration:

- Option One – to transfer from the current model to lessons during the week delivered by WLC Instrumental Music Service as detailed in the report; or
- Option Two – to transfer to partnership between RCS Musicworks and WLC Community Arts as detailed in the report.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) advised that Option One would involve an estimated 3 FTE string staff to teach approximately 50 pupils each and travel between approximately 19 schools. This would cost approximately £120,000. .

Option Two would enable the current model to continue in its present form and represent best value for the council. The maximum contribution from council resources was currently estimated as £55,000. YMI funding could be sought (approximately £20,000) to supplement the £55,000 available as the new access aspect of the project was in line with the funding criteria

The Panel recommended that Option Two would be the preferred option. However, it was noted that if any difficulties were highlighted in future regarding funding from YMI to supplement the funding available by the council, then a report would be brought back to the Education PDSP for further consideration.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To recommend that Option Two – Transfer to partnership between RCS Musicworks and WLC Community Arts – be the preferred option;
3. To agree that a report be submitted to a suitable meeting of the Education Executive for approval indicating the preferred option of the Panel; and
4. To note that if any difficulties were highlighted in future regarding funding from YMI to supplement the funding from the council, then a report would be brought back to the Education PDSP for further consideration.

5. PUPIL SUPPORT WORKERS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing information on the proposals for the introduction of the post of advanced pupil support worker (PSW) in schools following a review of this role across the sectors.

The Head of Schools with Education Support advised that page 1, part B, second paragraph in the recommendation within the report should be amended to read as follows to provide more clarity:

- The introduction of the post of advanced level pupil support worker in schools for pupils with significant additional support needs in specialist provision and in line with service and mainstream school requirements as outlined in this report.

The report advised that a review of the PSW role was undertaken to ensure high quality school support provision to meet the needs of all pupils across all school sectors and specialist provision. The council had developed a job remit for a PSW post at two levels – Core and Advanced, in order to more fully reflect the requirements of Additional Support Needs provision and developing service requirements. The advanced level PSW post would cover all the duties outlined within the core PSW role but additionally would incorporate requirements in relation to supporting pupils with severe and complex additional support needs. In addition, the need for the advanced level PSW role had been highlighted by recent changes in the National Health Service (NHS) that required diabetic children to receive insulin injections in the middle of the day which previously parents/carers undertook at home before/after school.

The report provided details of the key differences between the two post levels (Core PSW Band C and Advanced PSW Band D), both of which would be carried out under the direction of a teacher/head teacher. The average salary difference between Band C and Band D was £834 per annum at the first point in the Band D scale. It was noted that appointment to hours at advanced level would be made by interview on a fixed term contract and reviewed on an annual basis.

The Panel recommended that page 3, second paragraph of the report be amended to read as follows, removing “to support advanced level posts” which provided improved clarity for the PSW provision:

- Within mainstream schools an allocation for PSW provision will be made on the basis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and pupil numbers. The ...

In conclusion, there was a need to ensure high quality school support provision at an appropriate level to meet the needs of all pupils across all sectors and specialist provision.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and

2. To agree to refer the recommendations within the report to the Education Executive for approval subject to amending the report as follows:
 - Page 1 – Recommendations: 2nd paragraph to be enhanced to read – The introduction of the post of advanced level pupil support worker in schools for pupils with significant additional support needs in specialist provision and in line with service and mainstream school requirements as outlined in this report; and
 - Page 3 – 2nd paragraph – to begin: Within mainstream schools, an allocation for PSW provision will be made on the basis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and pupil numbers.

6. CLOSING REMARK

The Chair advised that an additional meeting of the Education Executive was planned to be held on 27 June 2013 at 9.00 a.m. to discuss Cedarbank School consultation, which would be confirmed following approval by the Council Executive at its meeting due to be held on 12 March 2013.