



EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

SCHOOL LINK OFFICERS: PILOT PROJECT

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek support for a pilot project to base a Police Officer in each of two West Lothian Secondary Schools during Sessions 2009/10 and 2010/11.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To agree a pilot project with F Division Lothian and Borders Police, where a full-time Police Officer based in a Secondary School will work in partnership with school staff and pupils to identify, support, and work with pupils at risk of victimisation, offending and social exclusion, and to assist staff, pupils and parents with information on community safety and substance abuse.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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| I Council Values | Focusing on our customer's needs

Being open, honest and accountable

Providing equality of opportunity

Making best use of resources

Working in partnership |
| II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | The pilot will support the application of Council policy in numerous areas including citizenship, health and well-being, social inclusion and positive behaviour. |
| III Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property) | Within existing resources |
| IV Consultations | Schools proposed for pilot

Teaching Unions |

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Background

Similar projects across Scotland have demonstrated that close partnership working with the Police can enhance the school experience for all children, particularly at the Secondary stage. The Officers provide a high visibility presence within the Secondary School, its Cluster partners, and the local neighbourhood. Working closely with teaching and support staff, the Officers adopt an early intervention approach in dealing with matters of indiscipline. Evidence from other Councils where 'campus police officers' have been employed, shows reductions in truancy and exclusion.

The two schools selected to take part in the pilot project are Bathgate Academy and Deans Community High School. Both schools have been involved in proposing a set of aims for the project. These aims include:

- Reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour and victimisation amongst young people.
- Provide a safe and secure school community which enhances the learning environment.
- Engage with young people, challenge unacceptable behaviour, and help them develop a respect for themselves and their community.
- Ensure that young people remain in education, actively learning, and achieving their full potential.

The funding of the two Officers will be shared between the Council and the Police, and the project will be reviewed by Education Officers and senior Police Officers in June 2010, using Performance Indicators agreed between the two services.

E. CONCLUSION

The pilot is designed to support the application of Council policy, and the achievement of positive educational outcomes in numerous areas including citizenship, health and well-being, social inclusion and positive behaviour.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Nil

Appendices/Attachments: Nil

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