

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 17 DECEMBER 2019.

Present – Councillors David Dodds (Chair), Peter Heggie, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, John McGinty, and Andrew Miller; Elsie Aitken, Eric Lumsden and Myra MacPherson; and Jackie Galbraith, West Lothian College.

Apologies – Councillor Stuart Borrowman; Heather Hughes, Lynne McEwen and Margaret Russell

Absent – Councillor Tom Kerr

In Attendance –

Jock Kerr, Unison

Pippa Plevin, Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTES

The Panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 22 October 2019 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. UK HEADTEACHER OF THE YEAR (PRIMARY)

The Panel received an inspirational presentation from Lisamaria Purdie who had recently been awarded the Headteacher of the Year in a Primary School Award at the Pearson National Teaching Awards.

Lisamaria spoke of her eagerness and enthusiasm to become a teacher from the age of 4 and how that sense of purpose had helped her to succeed in a vocation she loved. She spoke of her teaching career in West Lothian and of her time as Headteacher at Holy Family and St. Ninian's primary schools. She gave an overview of her style of transformational leadership which had helped to inspire positive change and focussed on helping every member in her team.

She spoke of the vision and values which had been made possible due to the collective passion of the staff, pupils, parents and the wider school community. She believed that a collective culture was vital to success and that positive results followed. Lisamaria spoke of the benefits of parents being partners and provided an example of some of the joint initiatives at St. Ninian's Primary School.

Lisamaria concluded her presentation with an outline of how she planned

to use her year's secondment with the Education Quality Improvement Team to support others to become transformational leaders and to spread the joy of teaching.

The Panel then noted a report by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) confirming that Lisamaria had been awarded UK Headteacher of the Year (Primary) 2019, the only Scottish recipient to receive an award at the UK wide Pearson National Teaching Awards in 2019.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the success of Lisamaria Purdie's national recognition for her role as Headteacher at St. Ninian's Primary School, Livingston.

Decision

- (a) To note the terms of the report and interesting presentation..
- (b) To congratulate Lisamaria on her deserved award as UK Headteacher of the Year in Primary 2019.

4. FORTH VALLEY & WEST LOTHIAN REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

The Depute Chief Executive spoke of the recent publication of PISA results for Scotland and provided the Panel with a brief overview of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) results at stages P1, P4, P7 & S3 which had been published in December 2019. She advised that a report providing in-depth analysis of the PISA and CfE results would be presented to the Education Executive in January 2020.

The Panel then received an interesting presentation on the work of the Forth Valley & West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative which had been established to provide additionality and enhancement to support attainment and achievement strategies already in place in West Lothian. The presentation provided the Panel with an overview of the groups priorities for 2019-2022; information on its funding priorities; extensive information on the Numeracy and Mathematics Programme for 2019-20 which included a range of research-based professional learning opportunities that would build staff capacity to ensure all learners had access to meaningful learning experiences to enable them to progress their skills in numeracy and maths.

The Panel then considered a report by the Depute Chief Executive (which had been circulated) providing an update on the work of the Regional Improvement Collaborative, including West Lothian, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling.

It was recommended that the Panel notes and considers the contents of the Forth Valley & West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative next phase plan (2019-2022).

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. COSLA AWARD - WHITBURN ACADEMY MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing information on the Whitburn Academy mental health project which had recently been successful in the national COSLA awards.

The Panel received an emotive and inspirational video on Whitburn Academy's Be Herd mental health project. Heather Forbes, PEF Co-ordinator and Geography Teacher at the Academy was in attendance supported by Jack Logan, Levi Morrison and Bethany Allardyce, all students who were part of the Be Herd project.

The Be Herd group had been set up to raise awareness of mental health issues and to remove the associated stigma. The group promoted their message through the Whitburn Academy school mascot, an elephant called Ellis (who was also present at the meeting), who was used to represent the elephant in the room which no one wanted to talk about – mental health.

A Be Herd Concert had been held to encourage wider community involvement and attended by over 250 people ranging from 7-80 years in age. The concert was an innovative way of delivering messages of how mental health issues affect pupils and the importance of seeking early help. It featured personal stories of pupils and staff together with contributions from mental health charities. As a result of the concert, Neil Findlay MSP had raised the issue of mental health in the Scottish Parliament which had led to the group being invited to address MSPs in November 2019.

The group was now delivering its message to associated primary schools, other secondary schools in West Lothian and the Regional Improvement Collaborative.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the success of Whitburn Academy mental health project in the recent national COSLA Awards.

Ms Forbes and the pupils responded to questions raised by the Panel. They expanded on their plans to spread the news of their work across West Lothian and beyond.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chair extended sincere congratulations to all of the staff and pupils at the school involved with the extraordinary project. The Principal of West Lothian College invited the school to get in touch to explore ways in which the college could continue the fantastic work of the Be Herd project for pupils moving on from school to college.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. 2019/20 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - MONTH 6 MONITORING REPORT

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the financial performance of the Education portfolio.

It was recommended that the Panel:-

- A. Notes the financial performance of the Education portfolio as at month 6;
- B. Notes that the Education portfolio position as month 6 was part of the overall council budget position reported to Council Executive on 12 November 2019; and
- C. Notes any actions required to be taken by Head of Service and budget holders to manage spend within available resources.

In response to a question, the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resource) confirmed that work was underway within another service area to address the impact of the homeless housing allocation policy on the homeless transportation budget.

Decision

To note the terms which would be submitted to the Education Executive for consideration.

7. OUT OF SCHOOL CARE SURVEY RESULTS

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Panel to note the results of the consultation on out of school care across West Lothian and the Scottish Government's consultation on the Out of School Care in Scotland Draft Framework 2019 and proposed funding.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the results and the following proposals which would be submitted to the Education Executive for consideration:-

- i. To use the consultation results to inform discussion with local providers and partners including the voluntary and third sectors, in relation to opportunities to increase provision;
- ii. Share the consultation results with Social Policy in order to help information provision for children as defined "in need"; and
- iii. Note the Out of School Care in Scotland Draft Framework 2019 consultation.

Decision

To note the terms of the report which would be submitted to the Education Executive for consideration.

8. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE - EXPANSION PLAN UPDATE

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the progress of the approved Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion Plan to deliver 1140 hours of free high quality ELC within West Lothian for August 2020.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the progress made to date and the following proposals which would be submitted to the Education Executive for consideration:-

- I. To appoint an additional 7 ELC Area Support Managers from January 2020 to support Head Teachers and settings outwith the school day and school session dates;
- II. To cease payment for nursery snack in council ELC settings from 6 January 2020; and
- III. To note the pilot of "Marvellous Meals" for Spring 2020 providing free school meals in 4 ELC settings.

Decision

To note the terms of the report which would be submitted to the Education Executive for consideration.

9. WORKPLAN

The Panel considered the workplan (copies of which had been circulated).

Decision

To note the workplan.