

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 10 OCTOBER 2017.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Stuart Borrowman, Harry Cartmill, Peter Heggie, Chris Horne, Charles Kennedy, Dave King, Sarah King, John McGinty, Andrew McGuire, Dom McGuire (substituting for David Dodds), Andrew Miller, Cathy Muldoon, George Paul and Kirsteen Sullivan; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, Heather Hughes and Myra Macpherson

Apologies – Councillors David Dodds, Pauline Clark, Tom Conn and Moira Shemilt; and Appointed Representatives Eric Lumsden, Margaret Russell and Lynne McEwen

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The Education Executive confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 29 August 2017. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

Matters arising were dealt with in that following a question relating to Minute Item 5 (S5 and S6 SCQF Examination Results 2017) on page 11, the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) confirmed that an updated report would be brought forward to the next Education Executive meeting.

3. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE - ADDITIONAL GRADUATE COMMITMENT, ACTION PLAN

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) advising of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Additional Graduate Commitment Action Plan which would ensure that West Lothian Council provided an additional graduate or teacher within those nurseries that provided ELC to young children in the most deprived areas of the local authority.

On 18 January 2017 the Scottish Government made a commitment that children receiving early learning and childcare (ELC) were to have access to qualified staff with expertise in early childhood learning and development. In order to support this commitment the Scottish Government would provide local authorities with additional funding to appoint either a teacher or a graduate level practitioner in those nurseries which supported children from the most deprived areas from August 2018. This commitment was to be delivered as part of the ELC Expansion Plan to provide 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for eligible children from August 2020.

The Scottish Government had determined that 435 (full time equivalent) additional graduates would be required to deliver the commitment, with West Lothian Council being allocated funding for 19 new positions. It was expected that the commitment would be met through a combination of upskilling current practitioners and the recruitment of already qualified teachers or those with, or working towards, recognised graduate level qualifications within each local authority area.

The Scottish Government was expecting that the vast majority of identified nurseries in each local authority area would receive 1 full time equivalent graduate or teacher. The posts in West Lothian would be deployed to those nurseries outlined in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

The report then provided a summary of the policy objectives for the posts as laid down by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government had also provided local authorities with a draft job description which had been developed by the Additional Graduate Working Group. The expectation was that local authorities would use the job outline to undertake a job evaluation of the post using the agreed council process for Scottish Joint Council (SJC) staff to identify the grade and corresponding salary.

It was recommended that Education Executive approve the report and Appendix 1 as the council's ELC Additional Graduate Commitment Action Plan.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report

4. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE EXPANSION PLAN

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing a proposal to deliver 1140 annual hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) within West Lothian.

Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Plans were to be submitted to the Scottish Government to inform the national ELC Expansion Programme. However it was to be noted that the statutory duty for delivering additional funded entitlement would remain with the Local Authority. Local Authority plans were to be based on Planning Guidance issued by the Scottish Government and contained a number of key assumptions as summarised in the report.

The Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) then explained what the current service delivery was in West Lothian noting that West Lothian Council currently provided 600 early learning and childcare in 69 settings.

A pilot for the delivery of 1140 hours had been established at two new nurseries which had opened in August 2017; these being Boghall PS Nursery Class and Deans North Nursery based in Deans Community High

School. These pilots had been financed by utilising funding identified by West Lothian Council and the Scottish Government as approved by Education Executive on 28 March 2017.

The report continued by providing details of how it was proposed to phase in the additional hours noting that it was the Scottish Government's requirement that local authorities continue to provide increased flexibility and choice for parents/carers over the next three years with additional hours to be made available within areas of high deprivation before the universal provision of 1140 hours for all eligible children in August 2020.

The report concluded that the Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Plan that would be submitted to the Scottish Government following approval contained the following highlights :-

- An assurance that West Lothian Council, working with childminders, private and third sector partners could deliver expanded early learning by August 2020;
- Notes that there would be a need to provide both term time and 50 week models of delivery to provide 1140 hours and offer flexibility and choice to parents/carers;
- Notes that the extent of flexibility within locations was dependent on the level of capital investment to expand the number of council; and
- Notes the expectation that increased hours would be phased in for areas of high deprivation prior to 2020.

It was recommended that the Education Executive approved the high level ELC Expansion Plan for submission to the Scottish Government and that the Education Executive receive updates as the implementation proposals developed.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report

5. TRACKING AND MONITORING ATTAINMENT IN THE BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION (BGE)

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing an update on progress being made locally and nationally with tracking and monitoring achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels within the Broad General Education (BGE); the planned implementation of the new Scottish National Standardised Assessments at P1, P4, P7 and S3; and a proposal to discontinue the local authority programme of adaptive testing (CEM).

West Lothian Council had a robust and integrated approach to developing quality assurance, assessment and moderation approaches through a

number of strategies. Assessment involved gathering, reflecting on and evaluating evidence of learning to enable staff to ensure and report on progress. Teachers also used a range of assessment approaches to assess achievement across the curriculum. It was however important that any assessment arrangements did not place excessive burdens on learners and teachers which could divert their time and effort from learning and teaching.

It was expected that each school constantly monitored and tracked pupils' progress through and towards achievement of levels. As a result of the publication of the finalised benchmarks in April 2017, the national and local focus for monitoring, tracking and reporting on pupils' progress was to be solely in line with national expectations. Therefore the Scottish Government was developing a BGE tracking and monitoring system that would focus on using teacher's professional judgement, together with diagnostic assessment information from National Standardised Assessments at P1, P4, P7 and S3 to rigorously monitor and track attainment over time. All schools in Scotland would be required to use the national BGE tracking system to track progress in Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing across all Curriculum for Excellence levels.

The Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) continued to advise that the introduction of Scottish National Standardised Assessments from session 2017-18 would mean that every learner in P1, P4, P7 and S3 would undertake national standardised assessments covering aspects of reading, writing and working with numbers over the course of the school year.

National standardised assessments would be used to help teachers understand how children were progressing with their learning and to plan the next steps. In implementing the new national standardised assessment, local authority consideration would be required on advising schools of appropriate timescales for using the assessments in the first year of implementation.

Therefore with the introduction of the national assessments for P1, P4, P7 and S3 and the introduction of robust tracking and monitoring of Curriculum for Excellence, it was being recommended that the current system of adaptive testing programme be discontinued with the exception of S1 CATs and that this would allow a clear strategic focus for all schools and practitioners on teacher's professional judgement in order to drive improvement in attainment.

It was recommended that Education Executive :-

1. Notes the innovative and nationally recognised approaches used locally to monitor and track attainment across the BGE;
2. Approves the planned discontinuation of the adaptive testing programme (CEM programme) to allow schools to focus on monitoring and tracking attainment across the BGE; and
3. Notes the authority's approach in the implementation of Scottish

National Standardised Assessments (SNSA)

Decision

To approve the terms of the report

6. EDUCATION GOVERNANCE - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON FAIR FUNDING

The Education Executive considered a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) and Head of Finance and Property Services seeking approval for the submission of a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on "Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education".

The report explained that the Scottish Government published their response to the recent consultation on Education Governance in 2017 in a document called "Education Governance: Empowering our Teachers, Parents and Communities to Deliver Excellence and Equity for Children", which set out the Scottish Government's vision for a school and teacher led system, where decisions about learning and teaching rested at the school level.

The Scottish Government was looking to establish a funding model that supported this concept and had launched a consultation called "Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education". The consultation was seeking views on the Scottish Government's approach to school funding, including the way education was currently funded in Scotland, the purpose of developing a new more consistent approach to school funding and principles that would underpin any changes.

The proposed response was attached to the report and the Education Executive was asked to approve the response to the Scottish Government consultation on "Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education".

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

7. PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING IN WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing an update of Pupil Equity Funding interventions being used in West Lothian schools.

The Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) was additional funding allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Scottish Government was committed to this funding as part of the Attainment Challenge Programme for 2017-18. The Pupil Equity Funding

formed part of the £750m Attainment Scotland Fund which would be invested over the current Parliamentary term. The total amount allocated to West Lothian schools was £5,052,000,

Headteachers had now completed their plans in line with the key principles for expenditure for session 2017-18 with these plans being divided into the areas of Literacy, Numeracy, Health & Wellbeing and Across Learning. The interventions proposed would directly contribute to the priorities outlined in the National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan.

The Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) then provided a summary under each of the key areas providing examples of the various types of interventions being implemented by schools.

Career long professional learning for teachers and support staff would underpin many of the Pupil Equity Funding interventions and this was being developed and implemented by the central PEF team, with partners. Key elements of the programme would include the development of a reading culture and comprehension in schools, numeracy strategies and mathematical mindsets and positive mental health and resilience.

The Education Executive was asked to note the progress of Pupil Equity Funding interventions and their contribution to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Decision

To note the content of the report

8. EDUCATION REFORM - IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVES

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive advising of national developments since the Scottish Government's publication of *Education Governance: Next Steps* on 14 June 2017.

The Standards in Scotland Schools, etc Act 2000, as amended by the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 along with statutory guidance and policy directives including *Education Governance: Next Steps* set out various requirements and reforms. This included proposals to establish regional collaboratives now referred to as Improvement Collaboratives to drive improvement and ensure excellence and equity in all local authorities.

A national steering group was established in August 2017 and was tasked to develop implementation proposals based on the policy direction *Education Governance: Next Steps*. These proposals were then discussed and developed at meetings between Cosla and Scottish Government representatives on 5 and 15 September 2017.

On 29 September 2017 the Leaders of Scotland's Councils agreed to deliver between local government and the Scottish Government a

collective commitment to collaborative working on educational improvement.

The report then summarised the overarching purpose of Improvement Collaboratives noting that West Lothian would engage in an Improvement Collaborative with three other councils.

Each Improvement Collaborative would be led by a “Regional Improvement Lead” who would be selected jointly by the local authorities that made up the Improvement Collaborative and the Chief Inspector of Education.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was the operational detail of Improvement Collaboratives which included the themes of Guiding Principles, Functions, Leadership, Staffing, Geography, Accountability and Measures of Success.

The Improvement Collaborative was now required to prepare a joint improvement plan to prioritise improvements from local assessment of where the most meaningful work would be taken on a partnership basis. The Improvement Plan would also be based upon current and robust performance information and was to deliver excellence in training by raising attainment for all and reduce inequality in education.

Initial discussions in the collaborative had identified a number of themes and these were detailed in the report. Additionally to enhance improvement a full time project officer would be deployed to support the Regional Improvement Lead.

It was recommended that the Education Executive note the agreement between Scottish Ministers and Cosla on the implementation of Improvement Collaboratives.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

9. NEW WEST CALDER HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) and a presentation by the Head of Finance and Property Services and Depute Chief Executive providing an update on the progress of the new West Calder High School.

The report recalled that the Council Executive at its meeting on 28 October 2014 agreed to progress the replacement of West Calder High School with a new school building. On 22 November 2016 Council Executive approved the terms of the Financial Close for the project and noted the delivery timescales.

As a consequence of the pro-active approach adopted, such as progressing enabling site infrastructure works in advance of the main school construction works, the financial close for the project had been

achieved on time.

The main school construction works were progressing well with all ground engineering works, foundations, initial utility diversions, steel structure and pre-cast concrete floors and stairs completed. Other concrete works and the external envelope were progressing well and were nearing completion. The building was reaching full wind and watertight status. Works thereafter would consist of internal walls, floors, ceilings, fixtures, fittings and finishes.

The project remained on target with planned timescales for completion forecast for June 2018 with the school open and pupils attending from August 2018.

The report continued to advise that for all construction projects the council was committed to delivering community benefits. The council's development partners; Hub South East Scotland Ltd and Morrison Construction had set ambitious community benefit targets and had made good progress in delivering these. The community employment and sub-contract award benefits achieved to date and the target forecasts through to completion were shown in Appendix A attached to the report.

The council and the development partners had actively engaged with the community including the establishment of a consultation group which met bi-monthly with the primary aim of facilitating effective communication on the progress of the project and to allow engagement on issues as they arose.

The report concluded that the school, when completed, would be one of the most innovative and efficient schools to be constructed in the UK and to highlight this whilst construction was ongoing an animated flythrough was developed to provide an illustration of the accommodation and layout.

The Education Executive was then shown the animated flythrough.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To record a note of thanks to all those involved in the collaborative working that was taking place to bring about the project; and
3. To agree that officers arrange to share the fly-through presentation with all elected members.