

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, HOWDEN SOUTH ROAD, LIVINGSTON, EH54 6FF, on TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2009.

Present – Leader of the Council Peter Johnston (Chair), Andrew Miller (Vice-Chair), Frank Anderson, Willie Boyle, John Cochrane, Robert De Bold, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Ellen Glass, Isabel Hutton, Carl John (substituting for Martyn Day), Danny Logue and Jim Walker; Mrs Elsie Aitken and Mrs Myra MacPherson.

Apologies – Councillor Martyn Day; Mr Bob Birrell and Rev. W. Richard Houston.

1. MINUTE

The Education Executive confirmed the Minute of its Meeting held on 13th October 2009. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

2. OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON FUTURE OF PUMPHERSTON AND UPHALL STATION INSTITUTE HALLS

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services (which had been circulated) on the outcome of the consultation on the future of both Pumpherstun and Uphall Station Institute Halls.

The report set out the background to the public consultation which had been instructed by the Education Executive on 23 June 2009, and explained the steps taken to consult with the public by way of public meetings and requests for written representations. It went on to summarise the questions and points raised during the consultation process and officers' responses to them.

The report concluded by saying that there was a strong community desire to retain Uphall Station Institute Hall and to develop the facility, with some interest in doing so through the formation of a Management Committee, but that there was no such strong feeling for the retention of the hall in Pumpherstun as a result of the new school being built closer to that community.

The Director of Education and Cultural Services recommended that the Education Executive:-

- confirm the closure of Pumpherstun Institute Hall once the new primary school community facilities are available and to declare the building and site surplus to requirements, and
- retain Uphall Station Institute Hall and assess the investment

requirements which would need to be addressed in line with available capital provision.

Motion

“To approve the terms of the report, and the Director of Education and Cultural Services to ensure that a full assessment of the investment requirements at Uphall Station Institute Hall is carried out prior to the review of the capital programme which is due to be undertaken within the next month”.

Moved by the Leader of the Council, seconded by Councillor John.

Amendment

“In noting the report, due acknowledgement is given to the wishes of the local community and Councillors King and Dunn not to close the facility at Uphall Station, being the earlier position of the previous administration”.

Moved by Councillor Fitzpatrick, seconded by Councillor Logue.

Decision

On a vote being taken, the motion was successful by 11 votes to 2 votes (there having been 1 abstention) and it was agreed accordingly.

3 PUPIL CONSULTATION – P7

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services (which had been circulated) on the outcome of a consultation meeting held with Primary 7 pupils on 2 October 2009 as part of a regular programme of consultations with pupil groups.

The report explained that topics were pre-selected and discussed in each school before being examined at the consultation meeting at which all 11 school clusters were represented. It went on to advise that the outcome of the consultation would also be reported to parent representatives, head teachers and the teaching unions and so would allow the views of pupils to be taken into account in future policy development and service improvement.

A record of the questions and answers dealt with at the consultation meeting was set out in the appendix to the report.

The Education Executive was invited to note that the views of P7 pupils will be taken into account during future policy development.

Decision

After discussion, the Education Executive agreed:-

1. To note the terms of the report;
2. To commend pupils for participating eloquently in the discussion at the P7 consultation meeting the results of which would be taken into account during future policy development; and
3. That officers should present a report to a future meeting of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel to assess whether changes were necessary to the policy on the use of new technology in schools to fit the “Anytime, Anywhere” learning initiative.

4 ANNUAL INFORMATION ON SCHOOL LEAVERS’ DESTINATIONS 2008/09

The Education Executive considered a report by the Head of Community Planning and Regeneration (which had been circulated) providing information obtained from Skills Development Scotland in November 2009 on the Destinations of School Leavers from West Lothian schools in 2009/09. In the course of its consideration of this item of business, the Chair allowed to be tabled an additional paper containing a comparative table of the percentages of school leavers from publicly funded secondary schools in Scotland by destination category for the years 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09.

The report outlined the work carried out by Skills Development Scotland to ascertain the destinations of summer school leavers and the data for the council’s leavers for 2008/09 was provided in the 7 appendices to the report.

The report summarised the data for West Lothian, it drew a comparison between 2007/08 and 2008/09, and it provided explanations for the historically poor performance by the council. The report went on to explain the steps taken to improve performance and highlighted the recent positive developments and improvements in the council’s destination figures.

The Education Executive was invited to note the progress made in securing positive destinations for school leavers in West Lothian and that a further report will be presented once national and comparator destination figures are available.

Decision

Following discussion, the Education Executive agreed:-

1. To note the terms of the report;
2. To thank and congratulate everyone involved in improving the destination of school leavers for their tremendous efforts and the good progress made in 2008/2009;

3. That officers should investigate whether the Mai Tai training College in Lanarkshire was still operational and whether there was any potential for the council to get involved in increasing access to training places there for students; and
4. That officers should provide all members of the Education Executive with background information on the reasons for the dip in performance figures at James Young High School and West Calder High School.