



Joint Consultative Group (Teaching Staff) (Private)

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

14 February 2023

A hybrid meeting of the **Joint Consultative Group (Teaching Staff) (Private)** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Emergency Planning Room, West Lothian Civic Centre** on **Monday 20 February 2023** at **11:00am**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members must declare any interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda items and the nature of their interests.
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business
4. Confirm Draft Minutes of Meeting of Joint Consultative Group (Teaching Staff) (Private) held on Monday 21 November 2022 (herewith)
5. Revenue Budget 2023/24 to 2027/28 and Corporate Asset Management Strategy and General Services Ten Year Capital Investment Strategy 2023/24 to 2032/33 - Briefing on Budget Proposals by Senior Officers

NOTE **For further information please contact Anastasia Dragona on tel. no. 01506 281601 or email anastasia.dragona@westlothian.gov.uk**



CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (2021)

This form is a reminder and an aid. It is not a substitute for understanding the Code of Conduct and guidance.

Interests must be declared at the meeting, in public.

Look at every item of business and consider if there is a connection.

If you see a connection, decide if it amounts to an interest by applying the objective test.

The objective test is whether or not a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making.

If the connection does not amount to an interest then you have nothing to declare and no reason to withdraw.

If the connection amounts to an interest, declare it as soon as possible and leave the meeting when the agenda item comes up.

When you declare an interest, identify the agenda item and give enough information so that the public understands what it is and why you are declaring it.

Even if the connection does not amount to an interest you can make a statement about it for the purposes of transparency.

More detailed information is on the next page.

Look at each item on the agenda, consider if there is a “connection”, take advice if necessary from appropriate officers in plenty of time. A connection is any link between the item of business and:-

- you
- a person you are associated with (e.g., employer, business partner, domestic partner, family member)
- a body or organisation you are associated with (e.g., outside body, community group, charity)

Anything in your Register of Interests is a connection unless one of the following exceptions applies.

A connection does not exist where:-

- you are a council tax payer, a rate payer, or a council house tenant, including at budget-setting meetings
- services delivered to the public are being considered, including at budget-setting meetings
- councillors’ remuneration, expenses, support services or pensions are being considered
- you are on an outside body through a council appointment or nomination unless it is for regulatory business or you have a personal conflict due to your connections, actions or legal obligations
- you hold a view in advance on a policy issue, have discussed that view, have expressed that view in public, or have asked for support for it

If you see a connection then you have to decide if it is an “interest” by applying the objective test. The objective test is whether or not a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making.

If the connection amounts to an interest then:-

- declare the interest in enough detail that members of the public will understand what it is
- leave the meeting room (physical or online) when that item is being considered
- do not contact colleagues participating in the item of business

Even if decide your connection is not an interest you can voluntarily make a statement about it for the record and for the purposes of transparency.

The relevant documents are:-

- [Councillors’ Code of Conduct, part 5](#)
- [Standards Commission Guidance, paragraphs 129-166](#)
- [Advice note for councillors on how to declare interests](#)

If you require assistance, contact:-

- James Millar, Interim Monitoring Officer and Governance Manager, 01506 281613, james.millar@westlothian.gov.uk
- Carol Johnston, Chief Solicitor and Depute Monitoring Officer, 01506 281626, carol.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk
- Committee Services Team, 01506 281604, 01506 281621
committee.services@westlothian.gov.uk

January 2022

MINUTE of MEETING of the JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP (TEACHING STAFF) (PRIVATE) held within CONFERENCE ROOM 3, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 21 NOVEMBER 2022.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Tom Conn (Ordinary Member), Moira McKee Shemilt (Ordinary Member), Pauline Stafford (Ordinary Member); and Cathy Muldoon (Ordinary Member - substituting for Andrew McGuire); Mark Bonallo, (EIS), Shona Walker (EIS), Heather Hughes (EIS), Shirley Thomson (EIS), Michael Donnelly (EIS); and Douglas Bringham (SSTA)

Apologies – Councillors Damian Doran-Timson and Andrew McGuire

Absent – Councillor Harry Cartmill

In Attendance – Greg Welsh Head of Education (Early Years, Primary and Resources); and Siobhan McGarty Head of Education (Secondary, Community Learning and Inclusion)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The group confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 22 February 2022 as a correct record.

3. CONSULTATION PROPOSALS AND BUDGET CUTS IN EDUCATION

Proceedings commenced with an opening statement by the joint Education Unions in that they understood that budget efficiencies had to be made by the Council and that in doing so difficult decisions would have to be taken by elected members.

It was noted that there were 15 proposals contained within the councils most recent consultation document on the future shape of council services and which directly impacted upon Education. The second phase of the consultation would close on 20 November 2022.

The focus of the discussion was to be on proposals 1D (Allocation of Education Resources); 1E (Re-alignment of free provision in schools to match Scottish Government commitments and funding and maintain school clothing grants at current levels); and 1F (Restructuring the school day). Concerns were also noted around the choice of language used in the consultation in that it was not easily understood and lacked clarity which as a result many teachers and parents would struggle to respond to in a meaningful way.

Each of three proposals were explored by the parties present noting that there would require to be a reduction in teaching numbers to deliver some

of the proposals if the proposals were taken forward. Officer's provided a number of examples where efficiencies could be made including an assessment of outdoor learning provision.

It was noted that whilst there was a greater emphasis on closing the attainment gap it could prove even more challenging with less resources. Discussion was also undertaken around delivery of the curriculum which could be more streamlined which could be one measure to assist with its delivery if the school day was restructured.

The Head of Education (Early Years, Primary and Resources) advised all the parties present that the proposals being considered by the council were not unique to West Lothian and that all local authorities were having to consider similar difficult decisions. Some benchmarking had also taken place with other local authorities and most of them were looking at ways to change their model for delivering education.

The Head of Education (Early Years, Primary and Resources) also confirmed that if the proposals contained within the consultation were progressed then a saving of £8.3m would be achieved over a three-year period. It was not known how this compared with those budget savings determined for other council services.

In closing, the joint Education Unions advised that they were very disappointed with what was proposed by the council and would continue to press their case with Parent Councils, MSP's, MP's and the media about the proposals. And finally, they would ballot their members on the final proposals once the outcome of the consultation was known.

Decision

To note the concerns of the joint Education unions with regards to the council's budget savings for Education as outlined in the consultation exercise.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking all those present for their contributions.