

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 16 MAY 2023.

Present – Councillors Andrew McGuire (Chair), Stuart Borrowman, Tony Boyle (substituting for Councillor Tom Conn), Pauline Clark (substituting for Councillor Moira McKee Shemilt), Peter Heggie, George Paul (substituting for Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick) and Pauline Stafford

Apologies – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Tom Conn and Moira McKee Shemilt

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item 9 - West Lothian Virtual Campus

Councillor Peter Heggie stated a connection in that his daughter may be a part of the virtual campus provision due to her course choices.

Agenda item 12 - Revised Schemes of Devolved School Management

Appointed Member Heather Hughes stated that as well as being an Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) National Officer Bearer she would also be addressing the item as Joint Chair of the Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers (LNCT) for the unions representing all West Lothian teachers.

Agenda Item 11 - Review of Non-denominational Primary Catchments at Mid Calder PS, East Calder PS, Williamston PS, Parkhead PS, Addiewell PS, Woodmuir PS, Stoneyburn PS and Fallahill PS

Councillor Pauline Clark stated that her children had attended Woodmuir Primary School.

2. MINUTES

The panel confirmed the minute of its meeting held on held on 28 February 2023 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. PROGRESS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT - CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Secondary, Community Learning and Inclusion) providing members with an update on progress in Educational Attainment of Care Experienced pupils.

The report was accompanied by a presentation which provided information on Insight, including Virtual Comparators, and analysis of Looked After Children's performance. Officers expanded on the presentation topics before the panel were given the opportunity to ask

questions and provide comment.

It was recommended that the panel note the key features of attainment set out in the report and presentation, which demonstrated the impact on attainment of Looked After Children.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and presentation.

4. CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: LEVEL UP PROJECT AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Secondary, Community Learning and Inclusion) providing an overview of the Level Up project and recent mainstream school developments which were supporting the attainment, wider achievements and positive destinations of our care experienced children and young people.

Officers were asked to what extent the Third Sector was involved in supporting Care Experienced Young people in raising their attainment and whether there would be the opportunity for increasing partnerships to do so. In response, the panel were informed of the current focused and informal partnerships and that the service would be open to engaging with the Third Sector.

In concluding discussion, the Chair advised that the panel would appreciate an update on developments as the project progressed.

It was recommended that the panel note both the positive impact of the Level Up project on the educational outcomes for our most disengaged care experienced children and young people and the ways in which recent, planned developments were supporting our young people in mainstream schools.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To note future engagement with the Third Sector would be considered; and
3. To request a future report to the panel as the Level Up project developed.

5. ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH HOME EDUCATING FAMILIES

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary, Early Years and Resources) informing of

the engagement and relationships with home educating families as requested by Education Executive at its meeting on 21 June 2022.

It was recommended that the panel note the procedures in place to engage with home educating families and the areas for future development.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. SCHOOL SESSION DATES 2024/25

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary, Early Years, and Resources) informing of the proposed school session dates for 2024/25 and providing information on the naming of school holidays as requested by Education Executive at its meeting of 7 June 2022.

It was recommended that the panel:-

1. note the proposed dates for submission to the Education Executive for consideration; and
2. note the naming of holidays including National Bank Holidays, and current practice in West Lothian and other Local Authorities.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To agree that the report be presented to Education Executive for approval.

7. WEST LOTHIAN VIRTUAL CAMPUS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Secondary Schools) informing of the planned changes to the West Lothian Virtual Campus provision for session 23/24.

Officers were asked how often the young people, parents and teachers would be consulted, on the model, throughout the year. In response, members were informed that, at a minimum, there would be formal consultation termly. However, through face-to-face virtual teaching, there would be ongoing consultation, between learners and teachers, through their open dialogue. The consultation results would be provided to the panel in the next academic session together with an update on progress.

It was recommended that the panel note the changes proposed to the virtual campus model and the ongoing service that it provided to strengthen the breadth of the curriculum across the Senior Phase, supporting the Raising Attainment Strategy.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;
 2. To provide a progress report during the next academic session including the results of future consultation with virtual campus pupils, parents and carers and teachers.
8. PRESCRIBING THE MINIMUM ANNUAL NUMBER OF LEARNING HOURS - SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PAPER

The panel considered a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary, Early Years and Resources) and Head of Education (Secondary, Inclusion and Community Learning) inviting the panel to consider a draft response to the Scottish Government Consultation on prescribing the minimum annual number of learning hours in schools.

It was recommended that the panel consider the draft response to the Scottish Government Consultation on prescribing the minimum annual number of learning hours in schools, and to refer it to the Education Executive for approval.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
 2. To agree that the report be presented to Education Executive for approval.
9. REVIEW OF NON-DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY CATCHMENTS AT MID CALDER PS, EAST CALDER PS, WILLIAMSTON PS, PARKHEAD PS, ADDIEWELL PS, WOODMUIR PS, STONEYBURN PS AND FALLAHILL PS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary, Early Years, and Resources) informing of the proposal to commence public consultation on the review of Non-Denominational Primary catchments at; Mid Calder PS, East Calder PS, Williamston PS, Parkhead PS, Addiewell PS, Woodmuir PS, Stoneyburn PS and Fallahill PS. The report also presented the draft Consultation Document prepared by Council officers.

It was recommended that the panel recommend to the Education Executive that it approve the proposal to commence consultation on Non-Denominational Primary catchments at; Mid Calder PS, East Calder PS, Williamston PS, Parkhead PS, Addiewell PS, Woodmuir PS, Stoneyburn PS and Fallahill PS.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and

2. To agree that the report be presented to Education Executive for approval.

10. REVISED SCHEMES OF DEVOLVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The panel considered a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary, Early Years, and Resources) and Head of Finance and Property Services inviting members to consider the draft revised schemes of Devolved School Management.

Several questions were asked of officers regarding the proposed changes and the potential financial impact, with the panel informed that the service's financial monitoring period would be reported in the next academic session.

During comments, Heather Hughes read a statement of dissent, from the teachers side of the LNCT, to the proposals contained within the report.

It was recommended that the panel note the draft revised schemes of Devolved School Management and refer it to the Education Executive for approval and implementation from August 2023.

Decision

1. To note contents of the report; and
2. To agree that the report be presented to Education Executive for approval.
3. To note an update on the services financial monitoring period would be provided to the panel in the next academic session; and
4. To note the statement of dissent to the proposals from the teachers side of the LNCT.

11. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

1. To note the workplan; and
2. To include reports on the following:
 - i. an update for the Level Up project as it developed;
 - ii. progress of the virtual campus during the next academic session including the results of future consultation with pupils, parents and carers and teachers; and

- iii. an update on the services financial monitoring period during the next academic session.