

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 5 DECEMBER 2023.

Present – Councillors Andrew McGuire (Chair), Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Stuart Borrowman, Peter Heggie, Moira McKee Shemilt and Pauline Stafford; and Appointed Members Kent Ballantyne, Mark Bonallo, Peter Doolan, and Lynne McEwen

Apologies – Councillor Tom Conn; Appointed Member Heather Hughes; Leona Mullarky (Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils representative); and Raymond Branton (Voluntary Sector representative)

In Attendance - Pippa Plevin (Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils – substituting for Leona Mullarky)

Councillor Stuart Borrowman left the meeting following consideration of agenda item 9 (Education Reform Consultation – New Qualifications Body and Inspectorate) and did not participate in the remaining items of business.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair advised that a presentation for agenda item 10 (101 Youth Project Report) would accompany the report.

3. MINUTES

The panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 24 October 2023 as a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the Minute.

4. INTERNET OF THINGS (IOT) PROJECT – EAST CALDER PRIMARY SCHOOL

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary, Early Years and Resources) informing of the impact of the Internet of Things (IoT) in Schools project. The report was accompanied by a presentation provided by pupils from the school, following which members asked the pupils about their experience and what they had learned from the project before thanking them for their presentation.

It was recommended that the panel note the positive impact the IoT project had on pupil learning and the plans in place to expand the project in other schools across West Lothian.

### Decision

To note the contents of the report and presentation.

## 5. PROGRESS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – DECEMBER 2023

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Secondary, Community Learning and Inclusion) which provided an update on progress in Educational Attainment and informed of specific areas for strength and development across Higher and subjects being taught in S5 for session 2022/23 as well as updating on progress at Level 3, 4 and 5 for S5 students. The report was accompanied by a presentation which provided further detail and comparisons, together with information on wider achievement opportunities.

Members were informed that a research project was underway concerning the differences in attainment outcomes by gender, and it was requested and agreed that a report detailing the project outcomes would be provided to the panel when the analysis was complete.

Having discussed the content of the report and presentation, the Head of Education (Secondary, Community Learning and Inclusion) was asked to consider including in a future presentation details of gender attainment differences in SCQF 5+ Level 6 attainment which resulted from such disaggregated data as course choice, attendance, participation, exclusion and how these affected positive destinations.

It was recommended that the panel note:

1. the key features of attainment set out in the report and presentation, which demonstrated the impact of the Raising Attainment Strategy in making progress towards achieving the outcomes and targets that it contained;
2. the subject specific attainment information in S5 Higher subjects, and;
3. that a further report was due in February 2024 after a further update from Insight.

### Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and presentation;
2. To agree that a report be provided on the outcome of the gender research project concerning attainment differences, and;
3. To note the Head of Education (Secondary, Community Learning and Inclusion) undertook to include in a future presentation further information regarding the gender differences in SCQF 5+ Level 6 attainment resulting from disaggregated data such as course

choice, attendance, participation, exclusion and how these affected positive destinations.

6. NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATE – MOVING FORWARD IN LEARNING: COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FOCUS ON IMPROVING LITERACY AND NUMERACY

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Heads of Education informing of the Moving Forward in Learning collaborative plans to improve Literacy and Numeracy outcomes across schools, in line with the National Improvement Framework priorities 2023-24.

It was recommended that the panel note the key activities planned for session 2023-24 to further improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. CONSULTATION ON ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW NON-DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL IN CRAIGSHILL, LIVINGSTON

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary, Early Learning and Resources) informing of Education Services intention to seek Education Executive approval to commence statutory consultation on proposals to:

- establish a new primary school in Craigshill, Livingston and subsequent closure of Riverside and Letham Primary Schools;
- review the catchment area for the new school;
- close Riverside Primary School, and;
- close Letham Primary School.

The report also presented the draft consultation document prepared by West Lothian Council officers.

It was recommended that the panel note:

1. Education Services intention to progress commencement of formal consultation in relation to establishment of a new non-denominational primary school in Craigshill, review of catchment areas for new school and subsequent closure of Riverside Primary School and Letham Primary School; and
2. that the proposal would be presented to Education Executive for its consideration in January 2024.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To agree that the report be forwarded to a future meeting of the Education Executive for approval.

8. EDUCATION REFORM CONSULTATION – NEW QUALIFICATIONS BODY AND INSPECTORATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Education Heads of Service inviting members to consider and comment on the draft response to the Education Reform Consultation, included as Appendix 1 to the report.

It was recommended that the panel consider and comment on the draft response to the Education Reform Consultation, included as Appendix 1 to the report, and note that officers would submit a response to the Scottish Government by the closing date of 18 December 2023 taking account of the comments of the Education PDSP.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and draft response.

9. 101 YOUTH PROJECT REPORT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Secondary, Community Learning and Inclusion) providing an update on the dedicated youth facility 101 Youth Project in The Centre, Livingston.

A presentation with images of the preview event was then shared with the panel to enable members to view the Project.

It was recommended that the panel note the establishment of 101 Youth Project in The Centre in Livingston and the intended positive impacts for young people.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and presentation.

10. 2023/24 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – MONTH 6 MONITORING REPORT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on the financial performance of the Education portfolio.

It was recommended that the panel note:

1. the financial performance of the Education portfolio as at month 6;
2. that the Education portfolio position at month 6 was part of the overall council budget position reported to Council Executive on 7 November 2023, and;
3. actions to be taken by Heads of Service and budget holders to manage spend within available resources.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

11. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

1. To note the workplan; and
2. To agree the addition of a report on the outcome of the gender research project concerning attainment differences.