

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 31 AUGUST 2010.

Present – Leader of the Council Peter Johnston (Chair), Councillors Andrew Miller, Frank Anderson, Willie Boyle, John Cochrane, Martyn Day, Neil Findlay (substituting for Danny Logue), Ellen Glass, John McGinty (substituting for Lawrence Fitzpatrick) and Jim Walker; Mr John Hendrie and Mrs Myra McPherson.

Apologies – Councillors Robert De Bold, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Isabel Hutton and Danny Logue; Mrs Elsie Aitken and Rev. W. Richard Houston.

1. MINUTE

The Education Executive approved the minute of its meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

2. CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PROVISION MADE FOR S4 TO S6 PUPILS WHO HAVE SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND A HIGH LEVEL OF VULNERABILITY -

Cedarbank School provided education for secondary aged pupils S1 to S6 from throughout West Lothian. The pupils had a range of additional learning needs (moderate to severe), were socially vulnerable and required an elaborated curriculum. There were 5 classes for pupils with additional learning difficulties with a maximum of 10 pupils. Each class had a register teacher and was further supported by a pupil support worker. Pupils experienced the range of secondary school subjects. The school had extended the range of National Qualification (NQs) courses and units offered.

The Education Executive considered a report by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) (which had been circulated) advising of proposed changes to the provision made for S4 to S6 pupils who had significant additional learning needs and a high level of vulnerability.

The proposal, which was fully described in the appendix to the report, was to establish a class for a maximum of 10 S4 to S6 pupils in identified available space within Armadale Academy. It was recognised that, in exceptional circumstances, to ensure a successful outcome for each pupil, some pupils might require a delayed transition to Armadale Academy. The proposal would ensure that pupils were taught within a mainstream school setting in line with best practice highlighted by HMIE. The class teaching and support team from Cedarbank would transfer to Armadale Academy.

The report went on to outline the wider learning experiences and further development of independence it was anticipated the creation of the class

at Armadale Academy would bring, as well as the access students would get to the range of resources available in mainstream secondary schools and the opportunity to work with a wider peer group. The proposal would be developed in a well planned and supported manner.

The report concluded that the proposals would ensure that the cohort of vulnerable young people would have equal access to the full range of subject specialists and resources, thereby widening their learning experiences and opportunities and being better prepared for the transition to college and to the world of work. It would also create a provision that represented national best practice.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) recommended that the Education Executive agree to undertake formal consultation by 5<sup>th</sup> November 2010 on the proposed creation of a class at Armadale Academy and that the outcome be reported thereafter to a future meeting of the Education Executive.

### Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

### 3. CONSULTATION ON THE AUTISM (SCOTLAND) BILL – RESPONSE BY WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL EDUCATION SERVICES -

The Scottish Parliament's Education and Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee had sought written evidence on the Autism (Scotland) Bill. The Bill was at Stage 1 of the process and the committee was interested to hear views on the general principles to assist the scrutiny of the Bill. The deadline for written submissions to the consultation was 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

The Education Executive considered a report by the Head of Service - Schools (which had been circulated) that outlined the five key sections to the Autism (Scotland) Bill. The proposed council response to the Scottish Government's consultation was outlined in the appendix to the report.

The report detailed how the provision of services for children and young people with autistic spectrum conditions in West Lothian was already reviewed and developed on an ongoing basis. The number of children diagnosed had risen considerably in recent years and additional provision and services had been developed to support pupils with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. Furthermore, in line with Government guidelines, the Education Service also offered additional support to meet the needs of pupils who had not been formally diagnosed but had been identified as requiring education based on "autistic friendly" principles.

A multi-agency Autism Support Group operated in West Lothian. The group had produced the West Lothian Strategy for Autism and an action plan for implementation. The council aimed to meet the needs of pupils within their local mainstream school, although a range of specialist

provision had also been developed within West Lothian to meet the needs of pupils who found it difficult to cope within the mainstream school environment.

The Head of Service – Schools recommended that the council response to the consultation, as outlined in the appendix to the report, be approved for submission.

The Council Leader suggested that an additional sentence be added to the final paragraph on Page 2 of the proposed response that the council considered that the Scottish Government should allocate funding to local authorities to meet the cost of implementing the Bill.

### Decision

To approve the terms of the report, subject to including the additional sentence proposed by the Council Leader on Page 2 of the council's response.