

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 31 JANUARY 2012.

Present – Councillors Andrew Miller (Chair), Jim Walker, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Ellen Glass, Danny Logue, Greg McCarra, Mr Eric Lumsden and Mr John Hendrie.

Apologies – Ms Elsie Aitken

In Attendance

Councillors William Boyle, Stuart Borrowman and Isabel Hutton (Observing)

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS.

The Chair ruled that whilst the HMI reports were available in the public domain, they were discussed in private at PDSP meetings as discussions could lead to information being divulged that otherwise should remain private.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McCarra declared a non-financial interest in Agenda Item 5 (Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools) in that he was a member of staff and court at Edinburgh Napier University.

Councillor McCarra also declared a second non-financial interest in that he was a member of the EIS Council.

3. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the Minute of the meeting held on 6th December 2011 as a correct record.

4. LoTHIAN EQUAL ACCESS PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS (LEAPS)

a) The Panel welcomed Ged Lerpiniere, Director of LEAPS, who carried out a presentation giving an overview of the programme. Information was provided on the partnerships and stakeholder groups involved. Positive feedback was received by West Lothian on the progression to higher education for young people which was a rising trend, as detailed in the progression tables. The Panel thanked Ged for the very informative presentation.

b) Following the conclusion of the presentation the Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing an update in relation to the well established Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS) and the benefits offered in promoting social inclusion for West Lothian

Council pupils entering Higher Education.

The Lothian Equal Access Programme aimed to promote social inclusion and equality of opportunity by enabling increased participation and success in higher education of young people in West Lothian and the Lothians. LEAPS continued to help West Lothian Council to meet strategic goals in relation to 16+ positive destinations. LEAPS work also informed Curriculum for Excellence, More Choices More Chances, equal opportunities and the overall aim of promoting social justice. West Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools Annual Report 2010-2011 was attached as an appendix to the report.

The LEAPS programme supported West Lothian schools in a number of ways and the encouraging news for West Lothian was that progression to higher education was a rising trend in all secondary schools. Assistance was also provided with university applications, organising a schools' programme to prepare pupils for university life and workshops, as well as S6 conferences and summer schools. At the 2011 Summer School 32 students from West Lothian schools graduated which accounted for 21% of the 159 graduating students. A total of 11 promotional events took place for West Lothian pupils to encourage their involvement in the LEAPS Summer School.

The report advised that a priority service was offered by LEAPS to those pupils whose ability to be involved in Higher Education as a post school destination would have been inhibited by economic, social or cultural factors.

Recommendation

The Panel were recommended to continue to support the work of the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools and to note the continued work carried out through the LEAPS programme which supported those pupils whose social, economic or cultural factors would deter them from successfully entering Higher Education.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and presentation; and
2. The Panel thanked Ged Lerpiniere, Director of LEAPS, for the very informative presentation.

5. WEST LOTHIAN GAMES LEGACY UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing an update on key achievements with regard to London 2012 and Commonwealth Games 2014.

The report advised that London 2012 and Glasgow 2014, along with other major sporting events happening in Scotland and other parts of the United

Kingdom between now and 2014 were not only about delivering world class sport but about creating a lasting legacy for Scotland, progressing towards a healthier nation, healthier communities and a strong and flourishing economy.

The London 2012 Inspire programme recognised innovative and exceptional projects that were directly inspired by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Key legacy achievements detailed in the report to date were:

- Linlithgow Games 2012 which would see a year long Games inspired programme of sport, culture and education featuring eleven festivals in the run up to a mini Olympic and Paralympic Games for Linlithgow;
- The Paralympic Festival which was designed to allow a large number of children to experience a range of paralympic sports delivered by some of the best coaches available in Scotland; and
- The School Sport Partnership which ensured an integrated and planned approach to the development and delivery of high quality Physical Education (PE), Physical Activity (PA) and School Sport in West Lothian and ensured a structured pathway existed from participation to performance.

The Get Set Network was the community of schools which demonstrated a commitment to the Olympic and Paralympic Values and were using the London 2012 Games to inspire learners of all ages and abilities. At the end of November 2011, 61 (70%) of West Lothian Schools had registered for the London 2012 Get Set programme with 31 (36%) of them taking it a step further in applying. Across Scotland, West Lothian had the sixth highest percent of registered schools and the second highest percent of schools who had applied. The UK average for registering was 68% and 30% for applications.

Three athletes from West Lothian were reported to have competed at the last Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010 and two promising young West Lothian athletes were aiming for inclusion in the 2014 Games

In conclusion, Glasgow 2014 and other major sporting events taking place in Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom between now and 2014 would bring a wealth of opportunities for Scotland and West Lothian. West Lothian had already had some notable Games Legacy achievements and it was expected that these would be built upon and developed in the coming months and years.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services providing information about changes in the School Leaver Destination Figures for 2010/11 based on the School Leavers' Destinations Review carried out by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) in September 2011.

The local School Leaver Destination results were published by Skills Development Scotland twice a year in November and May. The November figures were based on the information gathered by SDS in September of each year and the May figures were based on a follow through exercise by SDS in March of each year. The figures indicated whether young people who left school in the summer had gained employment on a particular day in September, whether they were in a positive destination (further or higher education, training or volunteering) or whether they were in a negative destination (unemployed and seeking, or unemployed and not seeking).

Key points highlighted from the School Leaver Destination Figures for September 2011 were:

- These figures were the best ever achieved within the authority;
- West Lothian Council's position had improved considerably from 29th out of 32 to joint 16th out of the 32 councils;
- The actual level of young people in a positive destination had risen from 84% in September 2010 to 89% in September 2011;
- Negative destinations in West Lothian were at the lowest level since 2000/2001; and
- Particular areas of increase for West Lothian had been in higher education (up 3.8%) and further education (up 1.9%).

A more detailed analysis of the School Leaver Destination Figures for September 2011 was attached as appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that on page 3 of appendix 1; second paragraph from the bottom, reference should have been made to St Kentigern's School instead of Whitburn Academy.

The report advised that a full analysis of the positive results for West Lothian was carried out which showed that the key strategies that had been put in place over the past three years proved to be effective and successful in targeting key groups of young people in West Lothian and raising their aspirations for the future. To assist in the future improvement in SLDR figures, schools were asked to provide an SLDR estimate for next year and incorporate it into their forward planning. The provision of positive destinations for young people in care and secure accommodations was also high on the government agenda and to meet this a key worker would be allocated to manage this area of work.

In order to meet the ever changing education and economic landscapes, schools were seeking to further develop the Skills for Learning, Life and Work agenda and extend their provision of vocational training as part of the 16+ Senior Phase campus model. The CMT Employability Summit held in June 2011 highlighted the need to progress the vocational provision. Through an allocation of £200k from council under spend, West Calder High School would be able to offer sustained engineering and construction vocational training for pupils across the authority as part of the 16+ Senior Phase Campus model. There was a very positive growing demand from the school to expand their vocational provision in a similar way and several indicated an interest in developing other skill sector areas. However, this would prove to be difficult to achieve from existing budgets. A sum of up to a maximum of £20k for each school would enable them to progress in developing new sustainable vocational training programmes by enabling them to upgrade existing facilities or purchase specialist equipment. Schools seeking to progress in developing sustainable vocational training were consulting with staff and pupils to ensure that there would be adequate demand and that staff expertise could deliver the courses at a level that met SQA/FE progression requirements and as a consequence would further improve the council's SLDR results.

In conclusion, it was noted that West Lothian was also working in partnership through the skills agenda, with several of the national skills sector areas in Scotland (food and drink, oil and gas, motor industry) and regularly informed schools about local and national Labour Market Intelligence. West Lothian won the accolade of becoming Scotland's first Enterprise capital and from two recent skills conferences had again raised the bar in developing the new Skills for Learning, Life and Work agenda across all schools.

The Panel thanked all the staff involved for their efforts as evidenced in the very positive report on school leaver destinations and suggested that officers bring forward a report to a future meeting of the PDSP with regards to vocational courses being offered by West Lothian schools.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To note the amendment to page 3 of appendix 1 to the report; second paragraph from the bottom of the page where reference should have been made to St Kentigern's School instead of Whitburn Academy;
3. To agree that officers bring forward a report to a future meeting of the PDSP with regards to vocational courses being offered by West Lothian schools; and
4. To agree to record a note of thanks to all the staff involved for their efforts as evidenced in the very positive report on school leaver destinations.

7. BURNHOUSE SCHOOL

In November 2011, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Burnhouse School. At the time of the inspection the roll was 33 pupils from S1-S5 which included 4 shared placements. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 21st December 2011 in the new style HMle report which was in the format of a letter to parents and carers.

The inspection of the school highlighted the following key strengths:

- Young people's achievements in physical and sporting activities;
- Staff commitment to improving young people's learning experiences; and
- The start made by the new headteacher in supporting and challenging staff to improve the quality of the school's work.

The following area of improvement had been agreed with HMle, the school and the education authority to enable continued improvement in the quality of education:

- Implement Curriculum for Excellence and ensure that young people received their entitlements;
- Introduce effective approaches to identifying and meeting young people's needs;
- Establish teamwork and an atmosphere of collective responsibility and mutual support across the school community; and
- Put in place rigorous approaches for evaluating the work of the school and for promoting continuous improvement.

As a result of the inspection it was agreed that HMle would allow more time for the school to make the necessary improvements and provide ongoing support. The HMle District Inspector along with the local authority discussed the most appropriate support to help build capacity for improvement and agreed to maintain contact to monitor progress made. The school and the authority set out and agreed actions for improvement as follows:

- The school's action plan for improvement;
- Additional resources to improve the outdoor environment through the provision of a MUGGA;
- Additional resources to improve the indoor environment, including the refurbishment of classroom areas and the cool down area;
- The implementation of a model for emotional and behavioural support in secondary schools that reflected the current primary provision; and

- The oversight of the provision for emotional and behavioural support through the multi-agency strategy group.

HMIe would return to evaluate aspects of provision and the progress made in improving provision within a year of publication of the report. At that stage the local authority would be informed if further inspection would be carried out.

The Panel suggested that a progress report on both the implementation of the School Strategy and Action Plan be presented to the June meeting of the PDSP.

Decisions

- To note the contents of the report;
- To endorse the school's plan for improvement; and
- To agree that a progress report on both the implementation of the School Strategy and Action Plan would be presented to the June meeting of the PDSP.