

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE on 10 JUNE 2014.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, Harry Cartmill, Alexander Davidson, Jim Dixon (substituting for Danny Logue), Carl John, Peter Johnston, Dave King, John McGinty, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller, Angela Moohan, Cathy Muldoon (substituting for Tony Boyle), George Paul, Frank Toner and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, John Hendrie, Eric Lumsden and Myra MacPherson.

Apologies – Councillors Tony Boyle and Danny Logue; Appointed Representatives Lynne McEwen and Graham Stormont.

Absent – Councillor Tom Conn

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 5 – F1 Challenge

Councillor Dodds declared a non-financial interest arising from his son being employed by West Lothian Council as a teacher who was also involved in the F1 Challenge project.

2. MINUTE

The Education Executive confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 29 April 2014 as being a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3. F1 CHALLENGE

A presentation was given to the Education Executive by five S4 students from Deans Community High School on the F1 in Schools Challenge.

The challenge was aimed at developing skills in STEM based subjects – Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, and aimed to develop partnerships between competing teams and a variety of businesses and industries. The challenge required competing teams to design, test, manufacture and race a miniature Formula 1 car and generate the required resources, support and sponsorship to compete.

Team Robus had specific skills and qualities that contributed towards the team, which included specific knowledge and expertise in areas such as business, manufacturing and engineering as well as skills in communication, problem solving, negotiation, leadership and organisation. Team Robus had a number of successes which included competing in the Scottish Regional Finals in Fife on 25 February 2014 against a range of teams from across Scotland. Team Robus then qualified for the British finals and also received the award for Best

Marketing and Sponsorship. The team went on to compete in the British Finals in Birmingham in March 2014 and qualified for the World Finals to be held in Abu Dhabi in November 2014 as the sole team representing Scotland in the World Finals which would include over 30 teams representing countries from all over the world.

A number of fund raising events were arranged to support the team in covering the £20,000 costs involved in attending the World Finals. Many of their existing partners provided support with technical advice, raw materials and promoting the team within their workplace.

Following conclusion of the presentation the Education Executive commended the school for the excellent innovative project. The students and teachers involved were then congratulated on the success of the project and were wished every success in the World Finals.

The Education Executive then considered the report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) which advised that the F1 in Schools challenge encouraged young people across the world to work in teams to collaborate, design, analyse, manufacture, test, and then race miniature compressed air powered balsa wood F1 cars. The challenge has had a huge impact on the students involved and across the whole school. Not only have the team members developed important technical skills, but in order to achieve their success they have had to learn and develop so many more skills. They have forged many positive links with local businesses which extended beyond this challenge.

In conclusion, participating and achieving success in the F1 Challenge has created a much greater awareness across the whole school community of the importance of STEM subjects as well as the importance of skills in order to secure a successful future.

The Education Executive was asked to note the contents of the report and the presentation and to commend the school for this excellent innovative project.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report and the presentation; and
2. Commended the school for this excellent innovative project and wished the students every success for the future.

4. WRAPAROUND CARE

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the on-going work to review the Wraparound Care Service in order to ensure full financial viability of the business model.

The report advised that the council had six pre-school centres which provided wraparound care for 176 children aged between 3-8 years,

details of which were outlined in the report. The provision of wraparound care was reviewed on an annual basis as part of the pupil placement process to ensure that staffing levels reflected current demand and that service remained financially viable.

The Strategic Resource Manager then advised the Executive that demand for the Wraparound Care Service had been declining over the last five years as a result of the economic climate and the roll out of initiatives such as free breakfast clubs. The demand for the Wraparound Care Service at five of the six centres for session 2014/15 was sufficient to provide a service with income covering expenditure. However, demand for the service within Linlithgow Primary School required to be adjusted to reflect customer demand. It was recommended that the service be provided after school and the afternoon nursery session Monday – Thursday to reflect customer demand and ensure cost recovery.

During the question and answer session Councillor Miller stated that he had received conflicting information from parents in relation to the demand for wraparound care at Linlithgow Primary School. The Strategic Resource Manager advised that the report was based on the information received following the closing date for applications in April 2014.

In conclusion, the Education Executive was asked to:

1. Note the on-going review of the Wraparound Care Service in order to ensure the service achieved full cost recovery; and
2. To recommend that the Education Executive approve the proposal to maintain the wraparound service at all six pre-school centres but with a change to hours at Linlithgow Primary School.

Motion

To approve the terms of the report.

- Moved by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Dodds.

Amendment

To support recommendation 1 within the report with an amendment to recommendation 2 as follows:

- To recommend that there be a delay in the proposals to change the hours at Linlithgow Primary School to allow further information to be provided in relation to the demand.
- Moved by Councillor Miller and seconded by Councillor Johnston.

The motion was successful by 15 votes to 4 with 2 abstentions.

5. SCHOOL SESSION DATES 2015/16 AND 2014/15

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been

circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the proposed session dates for West Lothian schools in 2015/16. Appendices to the report included the proposed session dates for 2015/16 (1), the proposed session dates 2015/16 calendar (2), the neighbouring authority session dates 2015/16 (3) and the proposed session dates 2015/16 revised version B (4).

Elsie Aitken asked the Executive to agree to withdraw appendix 4 to the report, the revised proposal submitted by the LNCT staff side, due to errors contained therein. The Executive agreed that appendix 4 be withdrawn.

The report advised that the proposal to fix the Easter break commencing on the last Monday in March in future years had received support from head teachers, LNCT and 9 parent councils. Consultation for the proposed school session dates for 2015/16 had now been concluded and appendix 1 to the report listed the proposed school session dates for 2015/16 with a new calendar format for ease of reference attached as appendix 2. As a result of the consultation the proposals had the broad agreement of head teachers, trades unions, school staff and parent councils.

It was noted that the proposed dates were similar to the dates made available by other neighbouring authorities in East Central Scotland as detailed at appendix 3, in an attempt to prevent difficulties arising with the childcare and social arrangements of parents and staff who resided in the area of one authority but worked in another.

The Executive was asked to:

1. Note the outcome of the proposal for a fixed Easter break and agree adoption of this proposal from session 2015/16;
2. Note the update on the outcome on the consultation on the planned dates for session 2015/16 and agree the proposal at Appendix 1;
3. Note the extension to pre-school provision to 600 hours agreed at the Education Executive on 4 February 2014, and that as a result the published session dates for 2014/15 would be amended to show pre-school establishments opening and closing on the same days as all other schools.

Decision

- Agreed that appendix 4 to the report be withdrawn; and
- Agreed the terms of the report.

6. ADDITIONAL IN-SERVICE DAY FOR THE NEW NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been

circulated) which provided details of the proposal for an additional in-service day to be held during session 2014/15 to help the continuing implementation of national qualifications, including the new Highers.

The report recalled that in February 2014, the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages announced additional support for secondary schools in preparation for the new National Qualifications. Included in this support was provision for one additional in-service day for secondary schools for the academic year 2014-15, to help the continuing implementation of national qualifications, including the new Highers. In April 2014, the Scottish Government invited education authorities to apply for dispensation from Regulation 5 of the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975, as amended to allow for the closure on the proposed additional In Service Day. This dispensation has been applied for.

Consultation was carried out with the teaching unions, secondary head teachers and parent councils through the Parent Council Forum. As a result of the consultation process it was proposed to hold the additional in-service day on Tuesday 28 October 2014. This followed the in-service day on Monday 27 October 2014 and the October holiday. Schools would close to pupils on these days, teaching staff would be engaged in developmental activities and non-teaching staff would work as normal

During the question and answer session the Strategic Customer and Information Manager advised the Education Executive that the Scottish Government had recently announced that there would be an additional in-service day for primary school teachers for the continuing implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence. It would be the intention of Education Services to hold the additional day for primary schools on Tuesday 28 October 2014, the same day as secondary schools.

The Education Executive was asked to note the proposal for an additional in-service day to be held during session 2014/15 to help the continuing implementation of national qualifications, including the new Highers, and to agree that the additional in-service day be held on Tuesday 28 October 2014.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014: PROVISION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE FOR TWO YEAR OLDS LIVING IN "WORKLESS" HOUSEHOLDS

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support and Head of Social Policy advising of the requirement to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare for two year olds living in 'workless' households by August 2014.

The report advised that in January 2014, the Scottish Government

announced that there would be provision for secondary legislation in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act for two year olds in 'workless' households from August 2014. This would entitle all two year old children living in eligible households to 600 hours of early learning and childcare from the start of term following their second birthday. Provision of early learning and childcare for these children was aimed to aid child development and to assist parents to access employment.

During 2013 Looked After two year olds became entitled to 600 hours of early learning and childcare. There were 20 eligible Looked After two year old children in West Lothian with individual packages being provided for by Whitdale Early Years Centre and Livingston Family Centre.

The report went on to provide details of eligibility from August 2014 for recipients of specific benefits. The number of anticipated intakes expected in West Lothian from August 2014 was 272. Children who were deemed to be eligible would remain entitled to provision from the start of the term following their second birthday until they were offered a place in nursery. This entitlement would remain regardless of whether the parent in their household remained on eligible benefits or not. Families who became 'workless' at any point during the year would also become entitled to 600 hours of early learning and childcare.

The proposals were that education authorities would not be under any duty to identify children and families who were eligible. National information from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) would promote eligibility for those two year olds. Once the DWP advised parents of their eligibility, parents would self-refer to the local authority to request provision. Pupil Placement would then process applications. It was anticipated that a range of provision would best meet the needs of children and families, details of which were outlined in the report. It was noted that the timescale for implementation was challenging both in terms of ensuring capacity to meet demand and recruiting qualified staff to meet the particular needs for two year old children. A partnership between education and social policy to quality assure provision was being explored. A survey of child-minders had also been carried out with 116 places identified, over 80 of which were in localities where places would be required. Plans for additional provision were based on eligibility in ward areas.

During the question and answer session the Head of Schools with Education Support agreed to circulate to all elected members within a two week period details of the places identified for the provision of the service for each ward area. It was also recommended that education services should engage with play groups as parallel work was being carried out in developing the extension of pre-school provision.

The Education Executive was advised that an update report would be provided to its meeting scheduled to be held on 19 August 2014 on the progress made in implementing the provision for two year old children from August 2014.

The Chair, on behalf of the Education Executive, then recorded a note of

thanks to officers for the extensive work carried out within such a short timeframe.

In conclusion, the provision of early learning and childcare for two year olds living in 'workless' households has the potential to improve outcomes for children, some of whom may be vulnerable. Capital and revenue resource requirements and distribution of funding had still to be finalised following on-going meetings between COSLA and the Scottish Government.

The Education Executive was asked to:

- Note the requirement to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare for two year olds living in 'workless' households by August 2014;
- Note that revenue funding and distribution had been agreed but discussions between COSLA and Scottish Government on capital funding and distribution were on-going; and
- Note the timescale for implementation was very challenging, both in terms of ensuring capacity to meet demand and recruiting qualified staff.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report;
2. Agreed that officers would circulate to all elected members details of the places identified for the provision of the service for each ward area within a two week period; and
3. Agreed that an update report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Education Executive providing details of the progress made in implementing the provision for two year old children for August 2014.