

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE on 23 APRIL 2013.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, Tony Boyle, William Boyle (substituting for Carl John), Harry Cartmill, Tom Conn, Alexander Davidson, Peter Johnston, Dave King, Danny Logue, John McGinty, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller, Angela Moohan and Frank Toner; Appointed Representative Lynne McEwen.

Apologies – Councillors Carl John and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken and Myra MacPherson.

Absent – George Paul

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 5 (Support for Playgroups Across West Lothian) - Councillor William Boyle declared a non-financial interest as his daughter was Chair of Preston Play Group, Linlithgow. Councillor Boyle participated in consideration of the item of business.

2. MINUTE

The Minute of the meeting of the Education Executive held on 12 March 2013 was approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to record that apologies were received from Councillor Dave King who was marked as absent. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. SUPPORT FOR PLAYGROUPS ACROSS WEST LoTHIAN

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Schools) providing an update to the report dated 25 February 2011 in developing a new model of management for playgroups.

The Early Years Development Officer provided background information relating to the current playgroup structure which involved volunteer committees for each playgroup and usually consisted of current users. However, due to changes to legislation and regulation over the past years there have been increased levels of responsibilities and liabilities for playgroup committees, which placed additional burden on the majority of playgroups across West Lothian in relation to attracting and retaining appropriately qualified staff. Playgroup services would be required to be led by a manager, qualified to degree level in Childhood Practice. Training requirements were therefore onerous to enable members of playgroup committees to achieve necessary skill levels, which discouraged parents from taking on committee roles leaving playgroups in a difficult position. Eight playgroups had closed over the past three years

due to increased legislation and regulation pressures.

Following consultation with all playgroups it was agreed that a working group be set up to identify the issues surrounding the sustainability of playgroups and investigate possible solutions. The working group identified a number of alternative management structures with a single organisation for community playgroups being the preferred option. An information session was held to update all playgroups on the progress made by the working group.

The first step in this process would be the development of Bathgate Playgroup to become a lead organisation known as Community Playgroups. This lead organisation would give the security for all playgroups to be managed by an Executive Board and strengthen the relationship and partnership between the local authority, parents/carers and the third sector to deliver flexible playgroup services within local communities. The Executive Board of Community Playgroups would lead and manage all the playgroup services across West Lothian who wished to become part of the new model. This would give flexibility to employ or promote a member of staff to become a Peripatetic Manager responsible for more than one playgroup. Each Playgroup would be led by a Supervisor supported by other staff members. Each group would have a parent group, made up of parents/carers from the local community with a vested interest in the Playgroup. The parent group would cease to have any legal responsibility for the Playgroup but their role would include fundraising and preparing the daily parent rota. Most playgroups indicated that they were supportive of the new model of management. Playgroups who did not wish to take part in the model would carry on as they were.

The new model would move from a parent led committee to a single organisation for community playgroups. The new Executive Board would be trained and skilled to enable support to be given to all playgroups on a universal basis. The new model would require to:

- Engage playgroup committee participation with the development of the new model;
- Ensure that the Care Inspectorate regulations were met and adhered to;
- Ensure that an Executive Board for Community Playgroups was appointed; and
- Assess current playgroup provision across West Lothian in order to meet demand.

The report provided details of the funding arrangements which would be shared out on a proportionate basis to the individual playgroups. Playgroups who did not wish to be part of the new model would receive a proportion of the grant in 2013/14. Individual playgroups would continue to fundraise independently to support their service delivery. The new lead organisation, Community Playgroups, would be required to ensure service

delivery was viable and able to meet local needs.

In conclusion, it was recognised that if changes were not made at this time, many of the current playgroups in operation could close down in two to five years due to a variety of regulatory, governance and financial pressures placed upon parent committees.

Recommendations

The Head of Education (Schools) recommended that the Education Executive:

1. Endorse the development of a revised model based on Bathgate Playgroup becoming a lead organisation in playgroup provision; and
2. Agree to target additional playgroup provision to meet the needs of children and families in areas of deprivation through new arrangements.

Decision

The Education Executive approved the terms of the report.

4. CENTRAL LIVINGSTON SCHOOLS CONSULTATION 2012: CONSULTATION REPORT

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development which provided information relating to the outcome of the public consultation proposal to change the catchment boundaries of Livingston Village and Toronto Primary Schools, Mid Calder and Dedridge Primary Schools, St Paul's and St Ninian's Primary Schools, The James Young High School and West Calder High School.

The Planning and Information Manager advised that changes to catchment boundaries were required to allow more effective use of existing and future capacity for potential future residential developments, which included the potential development sites at Buchanan House and New Calder Paper Mills.

Education provision was a major factor restricting both Buchanan House and New Calder Paper Mills development sites being developed for residential use, as the existing capacity restrictions and school catchment arrangements would lead to a recommendation to refuse planning permission.

It was noted that Livingston Village Primary School had insufficient capacity to support the redevelopment of Buchanan House for residential use and would be unlikely to change within a five to ten year period. The redevelopment of New Calder Paper Mills was constrained by the consent of the Calderwood, Raw Holdings and Mossend part of the Livingston and

Almond Valley Core Development Area. It was therefore deemed necessary to re-align the catchment boundaries to ensure that schools had sufficient spaces for the catchment children. The proposal to realign the catchment boundaries formed the basis for the public consultation.

A formal consultation process ran from Monday 29 October 2012 until Monday 10 December 2012. Public meetings were also held at Livingston Village Primary School and Mid Calder Primary School with copies of the consultation report available to be viewed within the schools affected by the proposal and in local public libraries and nurseries as well as being published on the council's web site. Full details of the consultation arrangements were provided in the appendices to the report.

In conclusion, the report advised that the proposal followed the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and attracted a low level of response in relation to the number of families who would be directly affected by the proposal.

It was recommended that the Education Executive:

1. Considered the issues raised through the consultation and the officer responses provided; and
2. Determine the proposal as outlined in the consultation document.

Motion

West Lothian Education Executive agreed on 9th October to commence statutory consultation on a proposal to re-align the existing school catchment boundaries for both Buchanan House and the New Calder Paper Mills development sites.

The Education Executive agrees with immediate effect to implement part of the proposal, specifically that part relating to Buchanan House, to re-align the non-denominational primary school catchment boundaries so that the entire Buchanan House development site is within the catchment area of Toronto Primary School.

The Education Executive does not agree to implement that part of the proposal relating to New Calder Paper Mills. All school catchment boundaries relating to New Calder Paper Mills will remain unchanged

- Moved by the Chair and seconded by Councillor King.

Decision

To unanimously agree the terms of the motion.

5. YOUTH MUSIC INITIATIVE YEAR 11 PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services providing details of the progress

of the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) Year 11 application to Creative Scotland, who would grant the funding for YMI.

The report advised that Youth Music Initiative funding enabled schools to meet the Scottish Government target that all school children in Scotland should have access to twelve hours free music tuition by the time they reached Primary 6. This target was met by commissioning specialist individuals and organisations to deliver a range of music education projects to pupils in West Lothian. The programme would run from August 2013 to June 2014 and would include fourteen projects, details of which were outlined in the report, plus investment in management, promotion and evaluation.

The Community Arts Co-ordinator advised that all contracts were advertised through Quick Quote with a response date for quotes from suppliers of 28th February 2013. Contracts would be issued for the delivery of the projects outlined in the application following confirmation of funding. Subject to approval by the Education Executive, the Year 11 application would be submitted to Creative Scotland by the deadline date of 30th April 2013.

In conclusion, it was noted that the projects outlined in the YMI application would be extremely beneficial to the young people and would make a significant contribution to enabling the participants to embrace the principles and capacities of Curriculum for Excellence through a high quality programme of music making activities.

It was recommended that the Education Executive approve the proposal for submission to Creative Scotland.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.