

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE , on 25 FEBRUARY 2014.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, John McGinty, Andrew Miller and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives: Myra MacPherson, Lynne McEwen, Graham Stormont and Alan Wright (substituting for Eric Lumsden)

Apologies – Appointed Representatives - Elsie Aitken, John Hendrie and Eric Lumsden and Senior Peoples' Forum Representative – Elizabeth Hands

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 12 (Active Schools Performance Management Review Term 1) – Lynne McEwen declared a non-financial interest in that her daughter was an Active Schools Co-ordinator but would participate in the item of business.

2. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 7 January 2014 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. 2012 BASE SCHOOL FORECASTS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development advising of the 2012 base school forecast that would be used for future revenue and capital plans, pupil placement decisions, education planning and consultation and development plan consultations. The report also included an updated methodology summary.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development explained that medium term primary and secondary school forecasts were critical elements in the forward planning of revenue and capital investment in West Lothian. The current base forecast covered a time range from school session 2012-13 with forecast school rolls from 2014-15 through to 2023-24. The housing component of the forecast was based on Audit 13.

The 2012 Base had been updated with the 2013 school census and would also be updated when the session 2014 pupil placement applications for P1 and S1 were determined in late March 2014. There was also a requirement for ongoing monitoring to determine if revised methodological development were required and that any such changes were fit for purpose.

The Head of Planning and Economic continued to advise that it was important to note that whilst the trend in primary school rolls was generally downward in the last decade, this was currently reversing, short term at

least, irrespective of economic conditions, as potential pupils had already been born and were living in West Lothian. Tracking pupil cohorts from birth to P1 entry indicated sustained growth in the short term and P1 intakes of a higher level than in previous years. And although the figures contained in the appendices attached to the report showed a reduction in the 2016 and 2017 P1 cohorts these cohorts were expected to increase before actual enrolment at P1 as exhibited by the current 2015 P1 intake cohort.

It was also likely that primary school rolls would increase and remain above the 2013 roll total of 14,888 for the next four years for demographic reasons irrespective of new housing development.

Information on the 2012 base school roll forecast was summarised in the report and whilst both secondary school roll forecasts showed some decline in the last two years of the forecast time period, the anticipated growth in the 2016 and 2017 cohorts could completely remove these current forecast reductions. It was also noted that the Base Auditable Forecast, as demonstrated in a series of appendices attached to the report, showed an increase in total primary rolls from 14,685 pupils in school session 2012-13 to 16,108 pupils in school session 2023-24.

In conclusion the forecasts showed a particular demand for school places with some schools likely to avoid the effect of school roll decline whilst others showed a significant increase/decrease. The council had recently completed a series of school consultations that had dealt with primary/secondary school associations and also primary school catchment boundary changes. Therefore ongoing school consultation and a review of education provision arrangements were essential to support the development plan at this time.

It was recommended that the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel consider the content of the report and present the following recommendations to the Education Executive :-

- i. Agree the forecast update on pupil rolls, including the assumptions and methodology applied in producing this data; and
- ii. Agree the school roll forecasts as being the basis for future education provision planning and consultation on development planning.

Decision

1. To approve the terms of the report;
2. Noted that an "Exception Report" would be brought to a future meeting of the Panel and that in the meantime would be added to the Work Plan; and
3. Agreed to forward the report to the next appropriate meeting of the Education Executive with the recommendation that it be approved.

4. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH EDUCATION SCOTLAND

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) and Head of Schools with Education Support advising of a proposed Partnership Agreement with Education Scotland.

Education Scotland was committed to working more closely with all local authorities. To take this forward Education Scotland intended to establish a broad national agreement with all authorities over a period of time. Each agreement would be unique to every authority and would form the basis of the work Education Scotland would undertake within each authority.

West Lothian's Partnership Agreement for session 2013-14 was developed with Education Scotland and was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The partnership agreement :-

- Would be aligned with council priorities and Education Scotland objectives;
- Would have clear, measurable outcomes that would have a positive impact on all learners; and
- Would engage all staff within schools (and other partners) in collaborative work to extend the skills base in our schools.

There were four priorities detailed in the partnership agreement and these were summarised as follows :-

- ❖ Develop a curriculum framework from 3-18 to ensure consistency in approach across all schools. This would include ensuring progression at all stages but in particular from the broad general education into the senior phase;
- ❖ Improve collaborative working within and between schools to enable greater consistency in the learning experiences for children and young people;
- ❖ Build capacity in schools and staff to carry out self evaluation that was rigorous, accurate and positively impacted on outcomes for children and young people; and
- ❖ To improve the quality of education provision as evidenced in Education Scotland inspections and school Validated Self-Evaluations (VSE). This priority was linked to improving the skills of all staff in self evaluation.

The new partnership approach was recommended since it would ensure that there continued to be a clear focus on improved outcomes for children and young people.

It was recommended that the Panel note the report and recommend to the Education Executive that it approve the Partnership Agreement with Education Scotland.

Decision

1. To approve the terms of the report;
2. Noted that the Partnership Agreement for 2014-15 would be presented to a future meeting of the Panel; and
3. Agreed to forward the report to the next appropriate meeting of the Education Executive with the recommendation that it be approved.

5. SCHOOL ESTATE PERFORMANCE 2012-2013 - CONDITION & SUITABILITY

The Panel considered a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Estates and Head of Schools with Education Support providing an update on the condition and suitability of the school estate for 2012-13 on the basis of the latest audited figures.

The report advised that within the school estate there were 96 establishments consisting of 66 primary school (including 3 PPP and 2 co-located schools), 11 secondary schools (including 5 PPP), 5 additional support needs schools and 14 nursery schools. The school estate extended to approximately 303,899m².

Within the school estate the following project milestones and planned improvements were key highlights during 2012-13:-

- Meldrum Primary School completed;
- Uphall Station and Pumpherston Primary School completed;
- New Woodmuir Primary School and Community Space started on site (completed by August 2014);
- Burnhouse School Campus Improvements Phase 1 completed;
- West Calder High School Undercroft refurbishment completed; and
- Funding secured for West Calder High School extension for new PE Facilities and Planned Improvements from the Scottish Government.

With regards to the Condition of the School Estate overall, it was measured as outlined in Appendix 1 attached to the report. Condition was also reported on an annual basis to the Scottish Government as part of the council's School Estate Core Facts submission. It was also to be noted that Core Facts nursery schools were not submitted. However nursery schools were considered in the council's measure of condition

across the school estate. Overall condition based on gross internal floor area in satisfactory or better condition was currently 98.8% (2012-13) which was an increase from 97.5% in 2011-12.

With regards to Suitability of the School Estate this was measured as outlined in Appendix 2 attached to the report. Suitability was also reported on an annual basis to the Scottish Government as part of the council's School Estate Core Facts submission. It was also to be noted that Core Facts nursery schools were not submitted. However nursery schools were considered in the council's measure of condition across the school estate. Overall Suitability was based on the total number of schools considered satisfactory or better in terms of suitability. Those considered satisfactory or better in terms of suitability totalled 91 and represented 94.8% of the estate for 2012-13 which was an increase from 92.7% in 2011-12.

It was proposed that the reporting of performance on the School Estate for condition, suitability and other performance measures as detailed in the approved Property Asset Management Plan 2013-14 to 2017-18 be provided to the Panel on an annual basis at the same time as reporting wider property portfolio performance to ensure the inclusion of the latest audited performance figures. On this basis a further report would be presented to the Panel in the Autumn of 2014.

It was recommended that the Panel note :-

- i. The overall property condition of the School Estate for 2012-13;
- ii. The overall property suitability of the School Estate for 2012-13; and
- iii. The proposed reporting arrangements for the School Estate Property Performance for future years.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Noted that the future report would contain further details of the feasibility studies that would be undertaken on Peel Primary School, Carmondean Primary School and Broxburn Academy.

6. STATISTICS FOR SCHOOLS - PUPIL TEACHER RATIOS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support advising of the statistics published by the Scottish Government in relation to pupil teacher ratios and class size reduction as per the annual census in publicly funded schools in Scotland conducted on 18 September 2013, details of which were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Head of Schools with Education Support explained that the Scottish Government required all local authorities to provide information in relation to pupils and teachers in publicly funded schools on an annual basis with

the census being undertaken in September each year. The results of the latest census were published on 11 December 2013.

The pupil teacher ratio for West Lothian Council in 2013 was 14:1 and compared favourably with the ratios being provided by other local authorities of a similar size. Pupil teacher ratios in 2013 across Scotland ranged from 12:4 to 14:8 (disregarding island authorities) with the average being 13:5. The pupil teacher ratio in West Lothian met the commitment made as part of the local government settlement for 2012-2015 to maintain teacher numbers in line with pupil numbers.

Additionally the percentage of P1-P3 pupils in classes of 18 pupils or less or in two teacher classes with a pupil teacher ratio of 18 or less was 20.8% for West Lothian schools in 2013. This percentage varied considerably between local authorities with the existence of a large number of small schools in some areas as one of the main reasons for this. The national level for 2013 was 13.6%.

In conclusion West Lothian Council's statistics for pupil teacher ratio and class size reduction compared favourably with similar local authorities and reflected the high level of investment in early education in West Lothian.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Agreed that the statistics specifically to West Lothian would be circulated to all Panel Members.

7. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing national and local performance information of the educational outcomes for West Lothian's Looked After Children (LAC).

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) advised that in June 2013, the Scottish Government published official statistics, which summarised the Educational Outcomes for Scotland's Looked After Children 2011-12. The publication contained statistics linking Looked After Children's data provided by local authority social work service departments with education data provided by publicly funded schools, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

The publication presented key findings on a range of educational outcomes for children and young people who were looked after continuously during the 12 month period, in different types of care placements and for pupils with multiple care placements.

The report provided national and local authority statistics and information comparing West Lothian statistics with comparator councils had also been included; comparator authorities were North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Fife, Clackmannanshire and Midlothian.

A series of charts were attached to the report and the report summarised the main findings under the headings of Attendance, Exclusion, Attainment and Positive Destinations.

The report also provided details of a number of strategies which were being employed and which contributed to improvements and these included :-

- Enterprise group work activities;
- Primary 7 transition group work;
- A *Give us a Break* group work (a grief and loss programme)
- Involvement in the *My Netopian* project.

The report concluded that the statistical evidence indicated that West Lothian had achieved better outcomes than both the national average and the average for our comparator authorities in the areas of attendance, average educational tariff scores and positive destinations. However areas identified for further analysis and action within West Lothian included a focus on reducing exclusions and on increasing the proportion of Looked after Children and young people who moved onto sustained positive destinations.

The Panel were asked to note the positive educational outcomes of West Lothian's Looked after Children compared to national and comparator statistics.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Welcomed the work being done to assist Looked after Children and Young People in West Lothian.

8. YOUTH MUSIC INITIATIVE YEAR 12 - PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services advising of progress with the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) Year 12 application to Creative Scotland who granted funding for YMI.

The Head of Area Services explained that Youth Music Initiative funding enabled schools to meet the Scottish Government target that "*all school children in Scotland should have access to 12 hours free music tuition by the time they reach 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

Community Arts successfully applied to Creative Scotland for Year 11 funding for the YMI programme for 2013-14 and received the maximum

award available of £246,228. This year's programme would run from August 2014 to June 2015 and would include 13 individual projects, details of which were summarised in the report, and would include investment in management, promotion and travel subsidy. West Lothian's allocation for this year was once again £246,228.

All contracts had been advertised through Quick Quote with a response dates for quotes from suppliers of 25 January 2014. Contracts for the delivery of the projects detailed in the applications would be awarded following confirmation of funding. Subject to Education Executive approval the Year 12 application would be submitted to Creative Scotland by the deadline date of 20 March 2014.

The Head of Area Services continued to advise that the projects outlined in the YMI application would be extremely beneficial to the young people who would participate, providing opportunities for them to work closely with professional musicians, creating performance opportunities and develop their listening, creative and critical thinking skills. They would also develop self confidence and self esteem as well as having an enjoyable experience.

In conclusion Community Arts would deliver and manage the 2014-15 YMI programme which would make a significant contribution to enabling 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 Panel note the report and recommend to the Education Executive that it approve the proposal for submission to Creative Scotland.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Agreed that the report be submitted to the Education Executive with the recommendation that it be approved.

9. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing an update on the new National Qualifications.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) explained that the new qualifications which were known as "Nationals" had been developed to support Curriculum For Excellence.

From August 2013 new qualifications were introduced by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The final certification of Standard grade at the end of S4 took place in August 2013. The report then provided a table showing how the new National Qualifications would replace previous and existing qualifications.

For 2013-14 the new national 2, 3, 4 and 5 qualifications were being studied by pupils in S4. Learners in S5 and S6 would complete their educations with the existing qualifications at Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher Levels.

For 2014-15 the new Higher would be added to articulate from National 5. This would run alongside Access, Intermediate and the current Higher which would be certified for the last time. The new qualifications would be available for students in S4 and S5.

For 2015-16 the new advanced higher would be available and would take over from the old Advanced Higher.

The report continued to provide information on National 4 and 5 courses and their content and included information on National Literacy Units and the Life Skills Maths that would form part of the new system. It was also noted that with regards to internal assessment teams local authorities had nominated subject specialists to form internal assessment teams and would be supported by Principal Verifiers and Teams Leaders appointed by the SQA.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) also advised that from April 2014 the new "Results Services" would replace the Appeals Service for all National Qualifications where an exam or coursework contributed to a candidate's final grade. This would be in two parts :-

1) Exceptional Circumstances Consideration

This would assist candidates who could not sit an exam or whose performance in the exam could have suffered due to exceptional circumstances and whose school had relevant alternative evidence to support this.

2) Post-Results Service

Support would be offered where a school had concerns regarding a student's result. It would consist of a clerical and/or working review of the candidate's paper.

The results service would differ from the previous appeals process in that schools would no longer be able to submit evidence in an effort to improve a result. Results would only change if there had been a clerical or marking error.

In conclusion the new qualifications had been developed to support Curriculum for Excellence and the SQA had developed the new qualification which would help students demonstrate the knowledge and skills they had developed and enable them to prepare for further learning, training and employment.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

10. ACTIVE SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW TERM 1 2013-14

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) advising of progress made during Term 1 Academic year 2013-14, in Active Schools Performance.

The Panel were advised that Active Schools West Lothian worked together with organisations and individuals, including PE staff and Sports Development Officers to provide a wide range of opportunities connected to physical education, school sport and club sport. Active Schools was a national programme delivered in partnership with sportscotland.

The national aims of Active Schools were :-

- More and higher quality opportunities to participate in sport in schools;
- Building capacity through the recruitment, retention and development of a network of volunteers; and
- Motivate and inspire children and young people to participate in sport.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) explained that local (Covalent) and national (ASMO) monitoring for Active Schools during academic year 2012-13 indicated a dip in performance across several Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Although this was explained due to an absence of three Active Schools Co-ordinators as a result of maternity leave, it provided the impetus for a review of service provision to ensure outcomes would be met during academic session 2013-14.

Therefore two planning days were undertaken during July and August 2013 with all Active Schools staff to review practices undertaken towards achieving service KPI's. Areas of strength and areas for development were identified utilising a Total Quality Management (TQM) approach leading to identification of five key areas of work that would be highlighted within individual action plans for academic session 2013-14. All staff was asked to discuss and identify service targets that would provide a realistic increase in performance. This approach helped to provide an understanding for staff of how actions within individual clusters impacted on higher level performance towards West Lothian's Single Outcome Agreement.

These new agreed targets were included in each of the 11 cluster area Individual Action Plans for 2013-14 and as a result of the performance management review Active Schools had recorded a significant improvement across national and local outcomes in comparison to Term 1 August to December 2012-13, details of which were summarised in the report and included extracurricular sport and physical activity sessions for primary pupils and secondary students increased by 25% to 2,934 and participant sessions for curricular sport and activity taster sessions

increased by 18% to 18,293.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report

11. SQA RESULTS 2013 POST-APPEAL

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) advising of the post-appeal performance of West Lothian pupils in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations in 2013.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) explained that the Panel had previously considered pre-appeal SQA results for 2013. Post-appeal results had now been published and a broad analysis was summarised in the report.

With regards to performance in S4 :-

- Overall performance at Standard Grade had shown an improvement over the five year period 2009 to 2013;
- The percentage of pupils attaining 5+ at each of Levels 3, 4 and 5 (Standard Grade Foundation, General and Credit or equivalent) had risen. All measures continued to be above both the national average and comparator authorities' average; and
- Following appeals, performance improved by 1% in relation to 5+ at Level 4 and by 2% at 5+ at Level 5. Figures for English at Level 3, Mathematics at Level 3 and English & Mathematics at Level 3 remained unchanged after appeals, details of which were demonstrated in a series of tables in the report.

With regards to performance in S5 :-

- Performance at Higher Grade had improved over the five year period 2009 to 2013;
- The percentages of pupils attaining passes had risen significantly over the five year period at each of 1+, 3+ and 5+ at Level 6 (Higher or equivalent). The increase at 1+ at Level 6 was from 41% to 50% which was a 22% increase. At 3+ at Level 6 it was from 21% to 29% an increase of 38% and at 5+ at Level 6 the increase was from 9% to 15% which was an increase of 67%;
- In comparison with pre-appeal results, performance improved by 1% at each of 1+ and 5+ at Level 6 and remained unchanged at 3+ at Level 6;
- Performance was now above comparator average at all three measures; and

- Performance was now above the national average at 1+ at Level 6 and 5+ at Level 6 and equal to the national average at 3+ at Level 6, details of which were outlined in a table in the report.

Other improvements were also detailed as follows :-

- The percentage of pupils attaining 1+ at Level 7 (Advanced Higher or equivalent) had risen from 12% to 18% in the five year period 2009 to 2013. This figure was the highest ever attained in West Lothian at 1+ Advanced Higher. It was now above both the national average and the comparator authorities average; and
- After appeals, performance improved by 1% at 1+ at Level 7, as outlined in a table in the report.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) continued to explain that the improvement achieved in West Lothian performance in SQA examinations was the result of an enhanced, strategic approach to raising attainment. Education Services had analysed carefully the SQA 2013 data and had taken a number of key actions to further improve levels of attainments and these were summarised in the report and included a more robust and challenging programme of monitoring levels of attainment, grouping of local schools which encouraged schools to collaborate more effectively by sharing staff expertise and a sharper focus on improving attainment at Higher Grade across key subject areas, including English, Mathematics and the Sciences.

In conclusion overall performance in SQA examinations continued to improve strongly and Education Services had taken and would continue to take appropriate actions to sustain and further develop levels of attainment.

Decision

1. Noted the terms of the report; and
2. Congratulated all the staff on the continuing improvement in SQA examination results.

12. WORK PLAN

The Panel considered the contents of the Work Plan which would form the basis of the panel's work over the coming months.

Decision

Noted the contents of the Work Plan.