

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE on 11 NOVEMBER 2014.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Frank Anderson (substitute for Peter Johnston), Stuart Borrowman, Tony Boyle, Harry Cartmill, Tom Conn, Alexander Davidson, Carl John, Dave King, Danny Logue, John McGinty, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller, Angela Moohan, George Paul, Frank Toner and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives: Elsie Aitken, John Hendrie, Myra MacPherson and Lynne McEwen.

Apologies – Councillor Peter Johnston and Eric Lumsden, Appointed Representative

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

Agenda Item 5 – Home Educated Children and Young People Policy

The Chair advised that a late deputation request had been received from Mrs Morag Davidson under Standing Order 13(5). The Committee agreed that Agenda Item 5 – Home Educated Children and Young People Policy be carried forward to the next meeting of the Education Executive to enable officers to consult with Mrs Davidson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTES

- a) The Education Executive confirmed the Minute of the meeting held on 30 September 2014 as being a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.
- b) The Education Executive confirmed the Minute of the Special Meeting held on 14 October 2014 as being a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. SCHOOL EXCURSION POLICY

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the amended School Excursion Policy, details of which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report recalled that the School Excursion Policy was designed to ensure that risks arising from trips and excursions were minimised to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of pupils were protected.

The Customer and Performance Manager advised that an audit of the

application of the School Excursion Policy was carried out in West Lothian which highlighted significant non-compliance with the policy. The Education Services Senior Management Team subsequently instructed that all schools must comply with the policy, which was to be interpreted and applied within the context of the national Scottish Government Guidance framework.

In order to avoid any confusion about the paperwork required for audit purposes, a new section was inserted into the policy specifying the minimum requirements. The report outlined the documentation required to be retained for a period of three months following the excursion, or the last of a series of repeat excursions, which were required for audit purposes. Schools should take a sufficiently robust approach to planning and organising trips and excursions while at the same time should adopt a low bureaucracy, enabling approach to outdoor experiences and off-site visits focusing on how the real risks arising from such visits were managed.

The Education Executive was asked to approve the amended School Excursion Policy.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

5. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH EDUCATION SCOTLAND

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) and Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the proposed Partnership Agreement with Education Scotland for 2014-2015. West Lothian's Partnership Agreement for session 2014-2015 was developed with Education Scotland and was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The report outlined the priorities of the partnership agreement which highlighted a number of areas of development support and activity between Education Scotland and West Lothian Council which assisted both organisations in taking forward priority objectives designed to improve outcomes for learners, families and communities.

The Chair then welcomed Peter Hamilton, Education Scotland's Area Lead Officer for West Lothian, to the meeting. Mr Hamilton advised the Education Executive that West Lothian Council and Education Scotland worked in partnership on a Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE). HM Inspectors expressed a high level of competence in West Lothian Council's approach to quality improvement which resulted in the development of a new improvement strategy, applying some of the principles of validated self-evaluation. Effective partnership working between West Lothian Council and Education Scotland focused on improving outcomes at a local level delivering improvements and raising attainment in schools.

The Chair expressed a note of thanks to Mr Hamilton for attending the meeting and providing an update.

In conclusion, the council would continue to work closely with Education Scotland to develop the partnership approach for continuous improvement to ensure positive outcomes for West Lothian's children and young people.

The Education Executive was asked to approve the Partnership Agreement with Education Scotland 2014-2015.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

6. CONSULTATION ON ADOPTION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS - SPECIALIST PROVISION

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing details of the proposals for a formal public consultation on the adoption of admission arrangements for specialist provision. The proposed Consultation Document November 2014 was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Customer and Information Manager highlighted the following amendments to the Consultation Document:

- Page 25 – Public Meeting in Bathgate Academy, Bathgate (not Livingston);
- Page 25 – The structure of the web address was to be amended; and
- Page 26/27- Translations were to be amended as advised by the Customer and Information Manager.

The Education Executive was advised that Education Services was undertaking a public consultation on proposals to ensure equitable, high quality and sustainable provision to meet the needs of increasing numbers of pupils with additional support needs. This review presented a timely opportunity to also carry out a public consultation in relation to admission arrangements for specialist provision. The adoption of the proposed admission arrangements would ensure equity in the admission of children and young people to specialist provision and also ensure high quality decision making regarding admission. The formal adoption of a single catchment area in West Lothian for all specialist provision would ensure equity for all children and young people with additional support needs.

The Education Executive was asked to authorise a formal consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the Admission Arrangements for Specialist Provision Consultation Document.

Decision

- Noted the amendments highlighted above; and
- Approved the terms of the report.