

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE on 8 DECEMBER 2015.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, Tony Boyle, Harry Cartmill, Tom Conn, Jim Dixon (substituting for Alexander Davidson), Carl John, Dave King, Sarah King, Danny Logue, John McGinty, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller, George Paul, Frank Toner and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, John MacKinnon, Myra Macpherson, Lynne McEwen and Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden.

Apologies – Councillors Alexander Davidson and Angela Moohan

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 6 – Naming of the new Primary School in Armadale

Councillor Sarah King declared a non-financial interest as the parent of children attending Armadale Primary School.

2. MINUTE

The Education Executive approved the minute of the meeting held on 27th October 2015 as being an accurate record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3. RAISING ATTAINMENT STRATEGY 2015-17

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing details of the revised Raising Attainment Strategy 2015-17, which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) advised members that the council's Raising Attainment Strategy has driven significant improvements in attainment in West Lothian. The Strategy was reviewed to reflect the learning derived from its original implementation, the reorganisation and refocussing of centrally based teams, as well as evolving national and local priorities and emerging and best practice within West Lothian and other local authorities. While evidence demonstrated continuous improvement in raising attainment, the council's focus must also be on closing the attainment gap for those children and young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Consideration had also been given to the Raising Attainment Strategy 2015-17 by the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel with a recommendation to forward the report to the Education Executive for approval and implementation.

The Education Executive was asked to approve the Raising Attainment Strategy 2015-17.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

4. NAMING OF THE NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ARMADALE

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the outcome of the consultation on the naming of the new primary school in Armadale. A list of the suggested school names agreed by the Education Executive at its meeting held on 25 August 2015 was attached as an appendix to the report, which formed the basis of the consultation.

The Education Executive was advised that extensive consultation had been carried out and the most frequent name suggested by all three school communities and by members of the public was Southdale Primary School. The name receiving the largest number of votes, taking into account a petition submitted by Armadale and District War Memorial Association, was William Angus VC Primary School in recognition of the deeds of William Angus, VC, who was born in the area that the school was built on.

The Education Executive was asked to consider the outcome of the consultation on the naming of the new primary school in Armadale.

Motion

Education Executive commends all contributors with suggestions on the name of the new primary school in Armadale, currently under construction.

Education Executive agrees that following consideration of all suggestions, the school shall be named Southdale Primary School.

It was also agreed to dedicate and name the school's assembly hall in remembrance of William Angus V.C. who was born in the area in which the school was built.

- Moved by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Dodds.

Decision

The motion was unanimously agreed.

Councillor Cartmill joined the meeting following consideration of the naming of the new primary school in Armadale.

5. CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL FOR A DIGITAL LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND

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

circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of a response from education to the Scottish Government's consultation on a proposal for a Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland, details of which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report explained that digital technology has rich potential to support education in Scotland's schools in a wide variety of ways. Ensuring that digital technology was embedded in learning and teaching across the curriculum was important to ensure that children and young people were equipped with the essential digital skills they needed to flourish in the 21st century.

West Lothian Education broadly welcomed the themes and priorities for action outlined within the consultation document.

The Education Executive was asked to approve the response to the consultation on a proposal for a Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

6. 2015 BASE SCHOOL FORECASTS

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development providing details of the 2015 Base School Forecast. The forecasts included scenarios which could be used for future revenue and capital planning, pupil placement decisions and responses to developers on planning proposals which would have an impact on education capacity, details of which were summarised in the appendices to the report.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development advised members that the 2015 Base School Forecast report was considered by the Education PDSP at its meeting on 24 November 2015 and recommended for submission to the Education Executive for approval. He also advised that the 2015 Base Forecast was presented in a revised format.

The updated forecasts and methodology would be used in association with the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Planning for Education. Updates to the SPG might be required from time to time to ensure its currency with the latest school forecast methodology. It should also be noted that approval of this latest school forecast and methodology would enable progress to be made on revision of existing SPG for schools and provision of new SPG for schools (developer contribution policies) to be brought to future Development and Transport Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels for consideration.

Overall the forecast showed that there would be an on-going need to invest in the school estate to ensure that sufficient places would be available in catchment schools to meet anticipated demand. Demand would be influenced by the rate of increases in housebuilding and the

number of planning applications for new housebuilding coming forward, which would be kept under on-going review. The forecasts highlight a particular demand for school places with some schools likely to avoid the effect of school roll decline while others show significant increase/decrease. Ongoing school consultation and review of education provision arrangements was essential to support the development plan.

In conclusion, the updated school roll projections indicated growth in the pre-school and primary sectors over the forecast period. There was a need to continue to monitor the broader economic context in updating school rolls and projecting school capacity requirements. It was also important to review forecasts in light of any material changes, such as demographics, but particularly so with house building completions as this was the greatest single factor influencing school roll forecasts. Further school consultation and capacity enhancement would be necessary to ensure sufficient pre-school and school places were available.

The Education Executive was asked to:

1. Note that the forecasts have been updated and incorporated the 2015 School census as the base;
2. Note that, unlike previous forecast reports, the forecasts now included scenarios based on projected house completions;
3. Agree the updated forecasts of pupil rolls, including the assumptions and methodology applied in producing these data;
4. Agree the school roll forecasts as being the basis for future education provision planning and consultation on development planning; and
5. Note that further investment in the school estate would be necessary in the future but the time of that investment would be influenced by house building rates and the commitment of developers to fund additional school capacity.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

7. ACCESS TO EDUCATION GRANT FUNDING - PHASE 2

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the successful bids made by West Lothian schools for grant funding from the Access to Education Fund provided by Education Scotland.

In total, 23 schools would benefit from the £117,300 total funding which was granted to West Lothian Council as part of the Access to Education fund. West Lothian was commended by Education Scotland for the high quality, innovative bids which were submitted. Work was underway to transfer the funds to individual schools and clusters/groups in order that the projects could begin. Schools would be required to report on progress

and it was hoped that in addition to a national good practice event, West Lothian schools who had benefitted from funding could share the outcomes of their projects with all schools within West Lothian in order to build capacity and share good practice. Ongoing support would be available for all schools involved both at a local and national level.

The Education Executive was asked to note the successful bids for funding.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

8. WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL EDUCATION SERVICES: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS REVIEW 2014

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing details of the progress made in relation to the implementation of the “West Lothian Council, Education Services, Additional Support Needs Review 2014” as agreed at its meeting on 24 March 2015.

The report recalled that the public consultation “West Lothian Council, Education Services, Additional Support Needs Review 2014” was a significant undertaking and the implementation of the agreed proposals culminated in a range of educational benefits, enabling the council to secure further improvements in the quality of education for pupils with additional support needs.

The pupils were thoroughly enjoying their new schools and were benefitting from staff with high levels of expertise providing a wide range of activities, a high level of support and experiences to maximise progress within the level appropriate to each pupil’s ability. Staff within the specialist provisions were continuing to work in partnership to secure improvements in teaching and learning to ensure progression, achievement and attainment.

The report also outlined the outcome of a feasibility study carried out in relation to the provision of breakfast clubs in specialist provisions. Education Services was confident that the existing arrangements for the provision of breakfast in specialist provisions met the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence and that breakfast was available in all specialist provisions over the course of the morning.

The Education Executive was asked to note the progress made to date in relation to the implementation of the “West Lothian Council, Education Services, Additional Support Needs Review 2014”.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

