

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 1ST FLOOR, WEST LoTHIAN HOUSE, on 19TH MAY 2009.

Present – Leader of the Council Peter Johnston (Chair); Councillors Frank Anderson, Gordon Beurskens (substituting for Robert De Bold), Willie Boyle, John Cochrane, Martyn Day, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Ellen Glass, John McGinty, Andrew Miller and Jim Walker; Mr Robert Birrell, Mrs Elsie Aitken and Mrs Myra MacPherson.

Apologies – Councillors Robert De Bold and Isabel Hutton.

Absent - Rev. Dr. Robert Anderson.

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS – ALLOCATION OF PROBATIONARY TEACHERS -

The Chair ruled that a verbal report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services on the final allocation of probationary teachers for West Lothian for school session 2009/10 was urgent due to the impact teacher numbers had on planning for education in schools and that it be considered at the end of the meeting.

2. MINUTES -

(a) The Education Executive confirmed the Minute of its Special Meeting held on 31st March 2009. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

(b) The Education Executive confirmed the Minute of its Meeting held on 7th April 2009. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. ADDITIONAL IN-SERVICE DAYS FOR CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE 2009/10 AND 2010/2011 -

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning had enabled the provision of an additional in-service day in the current school year, and in each of the next two years, focussed on the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. At its meeting held on 23rd February 2009, the Education Executive had approved the additional in-service day in the current school year as Monday 15th June 2009.

The Education Executive considered a report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services (which had been circulated) advising that consultation had now taken place with teaching unions, head teachers and parents through the Parent Council Forum on the proposed dates for school session 2009/10 and 2010/11. The Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers and Head Teachers had been consulted over the timing of

the additional closures and the consensus was to have the in-service days early in the school session. A wide variety of responses had been received from parents, some of whom had felt strongly that the additional in-service days should not be taken from the 190 teaching days and be found elsewhere. The report went on to list the variety of suggestions made by parents, together with the educational implications of some of those suggestions.

Separate arrangements would have to be made for teachers in the pre-school sector. For the additional in-service day on 15th June, it had been agreed with teaching unions that pre-school establishments and schools with nursery classes would be asked to make in-house arrangements, on a school by school basis, so that nursery teachers could participate in the same continuous professional development as their colleagues from other sectors, on the basis that Curriculum for Excellence should cover the entire 3-18 curriculum. Having regard to legal advice, the in-house arrangements would ensure that nursery classes and pre-school establishments remained open that day with appropriate staff/pupil ratios and using appropriately trained and disclosed staff. Further discussions would take place with the teaching unions to determine arrangements for the pre-school sector in 2009/10 and 2010/11 following assessment of the experience on 15th June.

The Director of Education and Cultural Services, having regard to the views expressed during the consultation and the overwhelming importance of providing an effective education to pupils in West Lothian, recommended that the undernoted additional in-service dates be approved and that all primary, secondary and special schools be closed to pupils on those dates:-

Tuesday 27th October 2009

Tuesday 26th October 2010

The Director wished to record his thanks to the parent council chairs for the very effective way in which they had engaged in the consultation exercise and, in particular, for the unprecedented level of response that had been received from parent councils.

Decision -

To approve the terms of the report.

4. SCHOOL SESSION DATES: 2010-2011 -

Following consultation with parent councils, head teachers, teaching staff, trades unions and the LNCT, a proposed schedule of school session dates for 2010-2011 had been drafted.

The Education Executive considered a report by the Head of Education

(Development) (which had been circulated) which listed the proposed school session dates for 2010-2011.

The proposed dates conformed to the Lothian model which had been developed in 2001 to harmonise session dates. Representatives from the four ex-Lothian authorities had met to discuss the harmonisation of session dates for 2010-2011. As a result, the main dates had been harmonised, although differences remained in local holidays and in-service days. The proposed dates also closely matched the dates that had been made available by other authorities in East Central Scotland.

The Head of Education (Development) recommended that the proposed school session dates for 2010-2011 be approved.

Decision -

To approve the terms of the report.

5. BUSINESS DEALT WITH IN TERMS OF STANDING ORDER NO. 31 (URGENT BUSINESS) – WORKING FOR INCLUSION: THE ROLE OF THE EARLY YEARS WORKFORCE IN ADDRESSING POVERTY AND PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION -

The Education Executive noted that approval had been granted under Standing Order 31 for Councillor Miller to participate in a study visit and conference in San Miniato, Italy, from 13th-16th May 2009, led by Children In Scotland.

Decision -

To note the action taken in terms of Standing Order 31.

6. ALLOCATION OF PROBATIONARY TEACHERS -

The Director of Education and Cultural Services provided the meeting with a verbal update on the final allocation of probationer teachers for West Lothian for school session 2009/10.

The Education Executive noted that 109 primary probationer teachers had been allocated for August 2009, an increase of 62 from the previous school year. 69 secondary probationer teachers had been allocated for August 2009, an increase of 25 from the previous school year. Members noted that that the final number of probationer teachers would be subject to change dependent on (i) the number of probationers that could be accommodated with appropriate levels of supervision in schools and (ii) whether students failed their final exams or decided not to pursue a career in teaching.

In response to a question, the Director of Education and Cultural Services undertook to present a report to the Education Policy Development and

Scrutiny Panel with information on the total number of current probationer teachers who would be offered permanent contracts with the council before the end of the 2008/09 school session.

Decisions -

- a. To note the additional allocation of probationer teachers for West Lothian which would allow the council to meet its commitments to delivering class size reductions.
- b. That the Director of Education and Cultural Services present a report to the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on the total number of current probationer teachers who would be awarded permanent contracts before the end of the current school session.