

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 6 DECEMBER 2016.

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

Apologies – Councillor Carl John; Appointed Representative Myra Macpherson.

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair ruled in terms of Standing Order 11 that agenda item 9 (Appointment of Religious, Teacher and Parent Council Representatives) be considered following agenda item 4 (Minute) to allow the Chief Solicitor to present the report before the presentations were carried out.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTE

The Education Executive approved the minute of the meeting held on 25th October 2016 as being a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. APPOINTMENT OF RELIGIOUS, TEACHER AND PARENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

A report had been circulated by the Head of Corporate Services providing details of the arrangements required for the appointment of religious, teacher and parent council representatives to any committee set up to deal with education following the May 2017 council election.

The report recalled that the council has a statutory duty to appoint three religious representatives to any committee dealing with its education functions. The council also has the statutory power to appoint other non-elected members to the committee, as it sees fit. The existing council policy was to appoint two teachers (one from the primary/early years' sector and one from the secondary/special education sector) and one representative of parents who was nominated by the West Lothian Parent Council's Forum.

Members appointed to any committee set up to deal with education would be invited to accept the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and

abide by its requirements.

The arrangements outlined in the report would enable the religious, teacher and parent council representatives to join the first meeting of any committee set up to deal with education after the council election on 4 May 2017.

The Education Executive was asked to note the report on the arrangements for the appointment of three religious representatives, two teacher representatives and one parent council representative to any committee set up to deal with education following the May 2017 council election and note that members appointed would be invited to accept the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and abide by its requirements.

### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

## 5. PROGRESS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Education Executive noted a presentation by The Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing details of the progress in educational attainment, highlighting the impact of the Raising Attainment Strategy in making progress towards achieving the outcomes and targets that it contained.

The Education Executive was advised that national reporting was now carried out at point of exit, rather than in relation to the performance of a specific year group. The end point of a young person's schooling was considered to be the most relevant for comparison by Insight, the national performance tool, as it allowed comparison of all attainment and achievement throughout the young person's schooling and contributed to the destination that the young person progressed to. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework uses SCQF Awards at level 6 at point of exit as its benchmark measurement of local authority education performance.

Details of the performance of individual secondary schools in West Lothian were provided covering the five year period from 2012 to 2016. This showed a general upward trend of the pupils achieving 3+ and 5+ passes at SCQF Level 6. The performance of each secondary school highlighted details of the correlation between performance and the mean score achieved by each cohort in cognitive ability tests. West Lothian pupils were leaving school with more qualifications than the council's Virtual Comparators and more than the National average.

The Education Executive acknowledged the progress made in the implementation of raising attainment and commended all teaching staff for their dedication and commitment. The Executive also acknowledged the support from parents, carers and the wider community for supporting the schools in West Lothian.

Following conclusion of the presentation the Education Executive

considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance). West Lothian Council was committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people, in line with the Single Outcome Agreement outcome that children would make the best possible start in life.

It was proposed to adopt 5+ and 3+ Level 6 SCQF Awards at point of exit as the key measure of attainment reported to members, parents and the public with effect from the 2017 exam diet. A further report on the progress in the implementation of the Raising Attainment Strategy would be presented to the next meeting of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

The Head of Education then responded to questions from the Education Executive confirming that although it was proposed to adopt 5+ and 3+ Level 6 SCQF Awards at point of exit as the key measure of attainment reporting, information would also be available on the wide range of awards and qualifications achieved in schools in West Lothian.

The Education Executive was asked to:

1. Note the key features of attainment set out in the report and presentation, which demonstrated the impact of the Raising Attainment Strategy in making progress towards achieving the outcomes and targets that it contained;
2. Note that a further report on progress in the implementation of the Raising Attainment Strategy would be presented to the next meeting of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel; and
3. To adopt 5+ and 3+ Level 6 SCQF Awards at point of exit as the key measure of attainment reported to members, parents and the public with effect from the 2017 exam diet.

#### Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

### 6. GOVERNANCE REVIEW - EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) advising that the Scottish Government had launched a consultation on its governance review of Scottish education, entitled 'Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities to achieve Excellence and Equity in Education' with responses required by 6 January 2017.

The Consultation Paper set out a series of questions, details of which were included in the appendix to the report and within the presentation carried out inviting members of the Education Executive to comment. Members comments would be included within a report which would be submitted to the next meeting of Council Executive for consideration, which was due to the fact that the consultation related to a range of other

services which supported children and young people, families and communities such as child protection, social services and housing.

The Scottish Government identified key principles which supported the approach of the review. It focussed on how governance could be improved to support delivery of excellence and equity to children and young people. The governance review sought views on how education in Scotland was run, including who should take decisions in relation to the education of children and young people and how funding could be made fairer. It also asked about the support teachers and practitioners needed to do their jobs well and how this could be improved.

The Education Executive was then asked to comment on the set of questions included in the Consultation Paper. The following comments were received and would be included in the report submitted to the next meeting of the Council Executive:

Q1: Elsie Aitken agreed that good quality improvement systems were in place to improve attainment and positive destinations in schools in West Lothian and that head teachers had autonomy to develop the curriculum to meet the school's needs. Head teachers would agree that they had to deal with a lot of governance issues and would not want additional administration and governance arrangements to be handed down to schools.

Q10: Councillor Miller stated that in his opinion services were best delivered at a local level through hubs of schools where appropriate, and that a return to delivering services at a regional level would not be acceptable.

Q15: Elsie Aitken stated that there were not enough teachers being trained which was a big issue in schools, regardless of where decisions were made.

The following general comments were then received from members of the Education Executive:

- Councillor Miller stated that he felt there was already a good system of devolved schools management in place in West Lothian and was supportive of the responses to the consultation by officers;
- Councillor Toner stated that West Lothian's education system was working well and the issues relating to raising attainment in other local authorities were no longer an issue in West Lothian. He believed that it was unnecessary for officers of West Lothian Council to be involved in responding to the consultation;
- Eric Lumsden stated that parents were happy with the way that West Lothian education services were run. Parents had no demand for change. The present system of devolved schools management was good. If regional bodies were to be introduced then parental

involvement would be required.

- Councillor Borrowman highlighted that Regional Councils were previously abolished and welcomed the fact that there was no support for a regional structure. However, he was not sure if the balance was right in West Lothian and he believed that there was scope for greater devolution to be given to clusters of head teachers but within the present structure. He believed that now was not the time to make changes when things were going well locally.
- Councillor Fitzpatrick stated that if the funding formula was changed he believed that this would have a negative impact on local authorities. He saw a risk in moving to the English model which was fragmented, led to a loss of economies of scale and reductions in budgets available for teaching due to spending on consultants and advisers by individual schools.

The report recommended that the Education Executive should consider the presentation and comment on the Scottish Government governance review 'Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities to achieve Excellence and Equity in Education'.

#### Decision

- Noted the contents of the report and presentation;
- Noted the comments from members of the Education Executive in response to the consultation questions; and
- Noted that the comments from members would be included in a report which would be submitted to the next meeting of the Council Executive for consideration.

### 7. WRAPAROUND CARE - HOLIDAY PROVISION

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing details of the new model of provision for wraparound care offered on days that schools and early learning and childcare establishments were closed.

The report explained that the current wraparound care model required parents/carers to pay for sessions booked, whether they were used or not, on all days that wraparound care was offered. This model resulted in parents/carers being charged for their regular sessions on those days that wraparound care was offered, but on which schools and early learning and childcare provision were closed. Within the current session a number of users objected to being billed for days on which they decided not to use the service offered. In light of the complaints received it was deemed appropriate to review the current practice.

The changes to holiday provision for wraparound care were made in response to customer feedback. The proposed changes were designed to benefit working parents/carers by ensuring they were only charged for the days of wraparound care that they actually used. The provision of wraparound care was expected to be reviewed again in light of the anticipated expansion of early learning and childcare from 600 to 1140 hours.

The Education Executive was asked to recommend that the new model of provision, proposed within the report, be adopted in relation to wraparound care offered on days that schools and early learning and childcare establishments were closed.

### Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

## 8. CONSULTATION - A BLUEPRINT FOR 2020: THE EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IN SCOTLAND

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing details of the proposed response to the Scottish Government consultation 'a Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland'. The draft response was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report advised that the consultation document set out the Scottish Government's vision for high quality, flexible Early Learning and Childcare which was affordable and accessible for all. It recognised that high quality Early Learning and Childcare could contribute to closing the attainment gap and delivering opportunities to our young people. The Scottish Government identified the following themes, which would guide the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare:

- Quality;
- Flexibility;
- Accessibility; and
- Affordability.

West Lothian Council was in broad agreement with these aims and themes and believes that the best way to achieve the aims and ensure that the themes were implemented was through a publicly delivered, comprehensive early learning and childcare provision, linked to the accessible primary schools that were at the heart of each community.

The Education Executive was asked to approve the proposed response to the Scottish Government consultation 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland'.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.