

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 28 MARCH 2017.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, Tony Boyle, Tom Conn, Alexander Davidson, Jim Dixon, Carl John, Sarah King, Danny Logue, Anne McMillan, John McGinty, Andrew Miller, George Paul and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, Lynne McEwen and Margaret Russell.

Apologies – Appointed Representatives John MacKinnon and Myra Macpherson; Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden.

Absent – Harry Cartmill, Dave King and Frank Toner

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Education Executive was advised by the Governance Manager that agenda items 9, 10 and 11 required the recommendations within the reports to be converted into items for decision rather than items for noting. The Education Executive would therefore be asked to agree the proposals within these reports.

It was agreed that agenda item 8 (ERASMUS Plus Project) would be considered as the last item on the agenda.

3. MINUTE

The Education Executive approved the minute of the meeting held on 28 February 2017 as being a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: POLICY AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A report was circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) informing the Education Executive of the revised policy document Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures, which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Inclusion & Wellbeing manager advised that the purpose of revising the 2010 policy was to provide clarity on the collaborative, multi-agency approach and related procedures involved in:

- Improving overall attendance and punctuality of all pupils at school;

- Ensuring that engagement and attendance was a priority for pupils, parents/carers, staff and partner agencies to enable all pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors;
- Ensuring consistency in dealing with all issues of attendance and absence; and
- Ensuring the accurate recording of pupils' attendance and absence; in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.

The Education Executive was advised that the revised Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures would be implemented in August 2017 following the summer holiday period.

It was recommended that the Education Executive approve the revised policy document Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

5. YOUTH MUSIC INITIATIVE YEAR 15 PROPOSED PROGRAMME

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing details of the progress with the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) Year 15 application to Creative Scotland who grant the funding for YMI.

The report explained that YMI funding enabled schools to meet the Scottish Government's target that "all school children in Scotland should have access to twelve hours free music tuition by the time they reached 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 14 funding for the YMI programme for 2016/17 and received the maximum award available of £246,228. The programme for August 2017 to June 2018 included fourteen projects plus investment in management, promotion and evaluation. Creative Scotland confirmed in January 2017 that the Youth Music Initiative Fund would be reduced by 10% in 2017/18 which resulted in an overall reduction of £25,332 for West Lothian with the maximum grant available of £220,896. The breakdown of the costs for each of the fourteen projects, totalling £220,896, were outlined in the report.

Community Arts would deliver and manage the 2017/18 YMI programme which would make a significant contribution to enabling the participants to embrace the principles and capacities of Curriculum for Excellence through a high quality programme of music-making activities.

The Education Executive was asked to approve the application for

submission to Creative Scotland.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

6. OUT OF SCHOOL CARE CONSULTATION AND PLAN

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) informing the Education Executive of the results of the consultation on out of school care and the proposed plan to use the consultation results.

The Service Manager – Policy and Performance advised that local authorities were required to provide out of school care to school aged children defined as in need. The provision of out of school care for children who were not in need was discretionary. A range of out of school care for school aged children was provided by West Lothian Council to support parents, details of which were outlined within the report.

The report explained that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires local authorities to consult representative populations of parents on whether discretionary day care and out of school care for children not in need under the Children (Scotland) 1995 Act, should be provided or supported. There was a requirement to publish a plan in response to the consultation, which required to be done every two years.

A consultation of parents of school age children was undertaken in late 2016. Parents were asked to complete an on-line survey, details of which were included at appendix 1 to the report. Responses were received from 3,256 parents/carers. Details of the respondents were included at appendix 2 to the report. The majority of parents/carers in West Lothian reported no unmet childcare need.

Based on the results of the consultation, the Education Executive was asked to adopt and approve the Plan to use the consultation results to: i) inform future resource allocation decisions in relation to non-statutory out-of school care provision; ii) use the consultation results to inform discussions with partners in relation to opportunities to increase provision through partnership; and iii) share the consultation results with Social Policy in order to help inform provision for children defined as in need.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

7. HOLIDAY LUNCH AND ACTIVITY CLUBS - EXPANSION OF PROVISION

A report was circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing details of the implementation of Holiday Lunch and Activity Clubs. The Education Executive acknowledged that the

recommendation within the report was converted to requiring a decision rather than for noting.

The report advised that the provision of holiday lunches and activities had been received positively by those making use of the service. The level of provision made by West Lothian Council compared favourably with provision by other local authorities across Scotland and the United Kingdom.

The inclusion of an additional £200,000 in the 2017/18 revenue budget allowed further expansion of the existing pilot and supported the introduction of a new model of provision at community education centres. The expansion would support the health and well-being and educational attainment of children in less affluent communities. The report outlined details of the venues and provision for the Spring 2017 holiday programme, which was expected to deliver nutritious meals and worthwhile fun activities to a greater number of children than ever before.

Planning for Summer 2017 would build on the lessons learned in implementing the pilot so far, with provision made at schools, in partnership with existing community organisations, and exploring the possibility of expanding the number of community education centres offering holiday lunches and activities.

In response to a question from the Education Executive relating to the Summer holiday programme, the Service Manager, Policy and Performance, undertook to submit a report to a future meeting of the Education Executive providing details of the Summer holiday lunch and activity clubs programme.

The Education Executive welcomed the continued work on the expansion of holiday lunch and activity clubs and acknowledged the model of working with partners which has proved to be beneficial.

The Education Executive was asked to agree the expansion of holiday lunch and activity clubs utilising the additional funding granted in the 2017/18 Revenue Budget.

Decision

1. To approve the terms of the report; and
2. To agree that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Education Executive providing an update on the proposed Summer holiday lunch and activity clubs programme.

8. RAISING ATTAINMENT IN EARLY YEARS' LITERACY AND NUMERACY

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) informing the Education Executive of a planned programme of universal and targeted interventions to further raise literacy and numeracy attainment in the early years,

utilising the additional funding identified in the 2017/2018 revenue budget. The Education Executive acknowledged that the recommendation within the report was converted to requiring a decision rather than for noting.

The report provided details of how the literacy and numeracy programme would be delivered and how the impact of children's progress and attainment would be measured. Universal interventions were planned to ensure that there remained a focus on raising the attainment for all children, as well as a targeted approaches to areas with the highest levels of deprivation, as determined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). A summary of the costings for the £500,000 additional funding identified in the 2017/18 revenue budget for the literacy and numeracy programme was also outlined within the report.

The Quality Improvement Manager advised that the appointment of family support workers in the six early years' settings with the highest levels of deprivation based on SIMD would provide further opportunities to involve and engage parents/carers in their child's development and learning.

In conclusion, the report outlined a planned programme of intervention delivered by highly skilled practitioners which would enhance the opportunities and experiences for all children in the early years' settings.

The Education Executive was asked to agree the planned programme of interventions, and expected measures for impact in children's progress in literacy and numeracy.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

9. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (ELC) - 1140 HOURS EXPANSION

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) informing the Education Executive of the new revenue funding allocation for 2017/18 for the initial phase towards the expansion of 1140 hours by 2020 for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). The Education Executive acknowledged that the recommendation within the report was converted to requiring a decision rather than for noting.

The report recalled that the Scottish Government allocated additional revenue and capital funding to all local authorities in 2017/18 to enable them to invest in workforce development and expansion for 1140 hours by 2020. The primary purpose of the funding was to enable local authorities to begin to increase the size of the workforce and to equip existing staff with new skills. A summary of the costings for the additional revenue funding for 2017/18 allocated to West Lothian Council were outlined within the report. The additional revenue and capital funding enabled the service to implement phase one of the planned programme for the expansion of ELC for 2020, including expanding the workforce and trials of 1140 hours. Appendix 1 to the report provided details of the allocation per

establishment of targeted early years' funding.

The Strategic Resources Manager then responded to questions from members of the Education Executive.

The Education Executive acknowledged that the focus of learning in early years' establishments would continue to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

The Education Executive was asked to approve the planned initial expansion programme for early learning and childcare.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

10. ERASMUS PLUS PROJECT: PRACTICE

A report had been circulated by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing details of the progress of the ERASMUS Plus Project PRACTICE between West Lothian Council, Cooperative Education Trust Scotland (CETS), West Lothian College and partners in Hochsauerlandkreis in Germany.

The report recalled that Hochsauerlandkreis was twinned with West Lothian Council and had worked cooperatively through youth exchanges, partnership working and council visits for a number of years. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to apply for ERASMUS Plus funding to allow a project to be undertaken to share good practice between both countries and enable joint staff development activities and exchange students. The project was officially approved by the European Union in 2016 and the contracts were signed in February 2017 between all those involved agreeing the dates and locations of all meetings and mobility's.

The aim of UK partners for the project was to support young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN), and staff from Pinewood and Cedarbank Schools. The German partners wished to focus on young people who have Social Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN). The report went on to outline the key points of the project. Over the next two years West Lothian Council hoped to trial a range of vocational opportunities for S5/6 ASN pupils which would result in more choices being made available to them when they left school. The project would allow staff and young people from both countries to meet, share ideas, exchange good practice and experience each other's cultures.

The Education Executive was asked to note the sharing of good practice between all of the partners and the joint working to enable both staff and students new opportunities to learn.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

11. CLOSING REMARKS

Since this was the last Education Executive meeting before the elections in May 2017, the Chair thanked all elected members and appointed representatives for the excellent support provided over the last five years. He also thanked all officers who provided support for their commitment to raising attainment which was evidenced by West Lothian Council moving from being ranked 17th to 3rd position in Scotland.