



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 7 APRIL 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar (Convener)
Councillor D Berry
Provost L Broun-Lindsay
Councillor J Caldwell
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor D Grant
Councillor J Gillies
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor M Libberton
Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor F McAllister
Councillor J McNeil
Councillor M Veitch
Councillor J Williamson
Ms G Gillan
Mrs M Goldsmith
Mr M McHugh

Council Officials Present:

Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)
Mr D Nightingale, Head of Education
Mr G Wilson, Senior Solicitor
Mr R Parker, Service Manager – Education (Strat & Ops)
Mrs F Brown, Principal Officer (Business Unit)

Clerk:

Ms F Currie, Committees Assistant

Apologies:

Councillor S Brown
Councillor S Currie
Councillor W Innes
Councillor P McLennan
Mr S Bunyan

Declarations of Interest:

None

Councillors MacKenzie and Berry raised concerns about the absence of certain agenda items. The Convenor stated that, due to time constraints, it was important to deal with the business first and the Councillors' concerns would be heard at the end of the meeting.

1. MINUTE OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2014 FOR APPROVAL

The minute of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 30 September 2014 was approved.

2. ROLL CAPPING AT DUNBAR GRAMMAR SCHOOL, KNOX ACADEMY, MUSSELBURGH GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND NORTH BERWICK HIGH SCHOOL

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources & People Services) asking the Committee to approve the S1-S4 intake level at the above secondary schools for Session 2015/16.

Principal Officer, Fiona Brown, presented the report which, she said, sought to provide a high quality education while ensuring equality of resources across East Lothian. She explained that a range of factors were taken into account when considering where and how to cap numbers, including proposals for new housing and the levels of migration in and out of catchment areas. She stated that the only increase or decrease that had been requested from June 2015 was for Knox Academy.

Mrs Brown responded to questions from Members relating to figures for North Berwick High School, class sizes for practical and academic subjects and the factors involved in determining the number of reserved places. Councillor MacKenzie suggested that, given the complexities of the calculations, it might have been useful to have a Members' briefing prior to the meeting.

Councillor Goodfellow was content with the terms of the report. However, Councillor Berry expressed concern that not all possible options were being explored.

Mrs Brown then alerted Members to an emerging situation relating to St Mary's RC Primary School in Haddington. She advised that the Committee had previously agreed to formally cap the roll of St Mary's at a maximum of 125 pupils. However, she stated that the P1 intake for August 2015 was already oversubscribed and there was a risk that the school would not have the capacity, in future years, to accommodate expected pupils. She therefore sought the Committee's agreement to cap the P1 intake at a maximum of 16 pupils.

Councillor McNeil asked why this amendment was in the form of a verbal update rather than a written report. Mrs Brown explained that there had not been time to prepare a formal report in advance of the meeting. However, at the request of Councillor McNeil, she agreed to place a brief report in Members' Library following the meeting.

Councillors Berry and MacKenzie raised a Point of Order stating that the Committee should have been informed of the proposed amendment at the beginning of the meeting. While there was no intention to deliberately mislead the Committee, the

Convenor accepted that she should have made Members aware of this matter earlier.

Councillor Libberton moved that the recommendations of the report be amended as proposed by Mrs Brown and Councillor McNeil seconded the motion.

Decision

The Committee agreed the recommendations as amended:

- (i) a maximum intake level in S1-S4 for session 2015/16 for the schools as set out in recommendation 2.1 of the report.
- (ii) to take account of migration in and out of the above schools prior to and throughout school session 2014/2015; the only increase or decrease that has been requested from June 2015 is for Knox Academy to increase the current S2 from 140 to 150 for S3; and
- (iii) a maximum intake level in P1 at St Mary's RC Primary School of 16 pupils for session 2015/16.

3. RESERVING PLACES IN SCHOOLS FOR CATCHMENT PUPILS WHO MOVE INTO THE CATCHMENT AREA DURING ACADEMIC YEAR 2015/16

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources & People Services) to obtain the Committee's approval for retaining places for incoming catchment pupils in identified schools for session 2015/16.

Mrs Brown presented the report providing a summary of its content. She sought Members' agreement to hold in reserve places for incoming catchment pupils and to delegate decisions on any changes to the number of places held in reserve to the Head of Education in consultation with the Education Convenor.

In response to questions from Members, Mrs Brown explained the background to the calculations for primary and secondary schools and addressed specific concerns relating to Pinkie St Peter's Primary School, North Berwick High School and Knox Academy.

Councillor Goodfellow thanked officers for their hard work in preparing this paper and indicated that, following discussions with Head Teachers at schools in his ward, he was satisfied with the proposed arrangements.

Councillor Berry expressed concerns that the calculations for North Berwick High School appeared to be different to those for other secondary schools in the county, such as Knox Academy.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- (i) hold in reserve places for incoming catchment pupils for session 2015/16 as detailed in section 2.1 (i); 2.1 (ii); and 2.1 (iii) of the report
- (ii) delegate any changes to the number of places held in reserve to the Head of Education in consultation with the Education Convenor, should the number of pupils requiring a place at the school significantly increase or decrease.

4. PUPIL PLACEMENT POLICY

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources & People Services) asking the Committee to approve the updated Pupil Placement Policy.

Mrs Brown presented the report advising Members that the policy had been updated following a review of the Council's Standing Orders in 2014 which gave authority to the Head of Education to make decisions previously taken by the Pupil Placement Sub Committee.

Councillors MacKenzie and Grant, as previous members of the Pupil Placement Sub Committee, both welcomed this change to the governance arrangements.

Councillors Berry and Goodfellow also supported the paper and commented on the importance of having a clear placement policy.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the updated Pupil Placement Policy which delegates the responsibility of considering placing requests to the Head of Education in the case of entry to primary one and secondary one.

Councillors Mackenzie and Berry asked why certain items, which had appeared on the agenda for the Committee's March meeting, had not been on the agenda today. They suggested that a further meeting of the Education Committee be convened as soon as possible to consider these items. The Convenor said she would discuss this with officers and arrange another meeting of the Committee at a date and time to be agreed.

Signed

Councillor Shamin Akhtar
Convener of the Education Committee