



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

**TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar (Convener)
Councillor D Berry
Councillor S Brown
Councillor J Caldwell (Items 2 – 5)
Councillor S Currie
Councillor D Grant
Councillor J Gillies
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor W Innes
Councillor M Libberton (Items 2 – 5)
Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor F McAllister
Councillor P McLennan
Councillor J McNeil (Items 2 – 5)
Councillor J Williamson
Mr S Bunyan
Ms G Gillan
Mrs M Goldsmith

Council Officials Present:

Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive – Resources & People Services
Mrs M Ferguson, Service Manager – Legal & Procurement
Ms A Mitchell, Service Manager – ASN/Early Years
Ms A Hood, Team Leader (Employability)
Mr P Raffaelli, Head Teacher of Dunbar Grammar School
Mr P Reynolds, Head Teacher of Ross High School

Clerk:

Ms F Currie, Committees Assistant

Apologies:

Councillor A Forrest
Councillor M Veitch
Provost L Broun-Lindsay
Mr M McHugh

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2015 FOR APPROVAL

The minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 22 September 2015 were presented for approval.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the minutes.

Sederunt: Councillors Caldwell, Libberton and McNeil arrived during item 2.

2. THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014 – UPDATE ON 600 HOURS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE FOR PRIORITY 2 YEAR OLDS (2014-15)

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to update the Committee on the uptake of places for Priority 2 year-olds receiving 600 hours of early learning and childcare as detailed in Part 6 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The report also made the Committee aware of the uptake and future demand for places for priority 2 year-olds living in East Lothian following the changes to the qualifying criteria introduced by the Scottish Government that has been implemented since August 2015.

Alison Mitchell, Service Manager – ASN/Early Years, presented the report setting out the background and providing a breakdown of the number of applications received and those expected in the coming year. She advised Members that the Council's nurseries were at approximately 98% capacity and that many of the partner provider nurseries were also close to their limits. She added that a steering group would be convened in January 2016 to develop strategies to address capacity issues and to meet the statutory requirements for 600 hours of early learning and childcare for priority 2 year-olds.

Responding to questions from Members, Ms Mitchell provided details of the criteria for applications and the close working relationship which exists with health colleagues to ensure that the most vulnerable children are not overlooked.

Several Members raised the question of finance for delivery of the 600 hours statutory hours of childcare and Ms Mitchell confirmed that existing budgets would be adequate to meet the costs of delivering this provision.

She then went on to address points raised over measuring quality and outcomes for children and young people, how to address the lack of places in some areas of the county and why childminders appeared to be a less popular choice for many parents.

Councillor Currie welcomed the confirmation that the costs of this provision would be met from existing budgets and that steps would be taken to protect parental choice. He said this was a positive report and he looked forward to further updates.

Councillor McAllister also commended the report and supported the view that we all have a role to play in raising attainment and instilling values such as fairness and kindness.

The Convenor concluded by thanking Ms Mitchell for her report and confirming that updates would be provided to future meetings of the Committee.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

3. PRESENTATION ON ATTAINMENT

Paul Rafaelli, Head Teacher of Dunbar Grammar School, and Paul Reynolds, Head Teacher of Ross High School, gave a presentation to the Committee entitled 'Attainment – What's it all about?'. They covered topics including the broad general education, the senior phase, key actions to improve attainment, key partners and initiatives to improve learning and teaching in the classroom.

Mr Rafaelli and Mr Reynolds responded to questions from Members explaining the 'Virtual Comparator' tool, expanding on examples of how schools were improving attainment, outlining the differences between the new and old qualifications and how attainment was being measured in non-academic subjects.

The Members commended the work being undertaken to improve all aspects of attainment and the Convenor thanked both Head Teachers for their presentation.

4. ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE AND THE ATTAINMENT SCOTLAND FUND

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to inform the Attainment Challenge, a Scottish Government initiative, and the Attainment Scotland Fund.

Alex McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive, presented the report seeking the Committee's agreement to write to the Scottish Government and put forward a case for East Lothian's schools to benefit from the Attainment Scotland Fund.

Members from all parties expressed their support for this proposal and urged Mr McCrorie to put forward a positive case to secure additional funds to help improve attainment levels.

Decision

The Committee agreed to authorise Mr McCrorie to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning to put forward a case for East Lothian to be considered for future allocations of the Attainment Scotland Fund.

5. NEW PREVOCATIONAL OFFERS AND POST SCHOOL PROVISION

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to inform the Committee regarding updates to the 2016/17 prevocational

prospectus and to seek the Committee's support for further increased provision for post school pupils.

Alison Hood, Team Leader (Employability), presented the report outlining the range of early intervention programmes for 2016/17, including new S3 and post school options.

Ms Hood responded to questions from Members regarding payment of the Living Wage for paid work experience, the geographical spread of programmes across the county and why certain initiatives were gender specific.

The Convenor agreed to give further consideration to payment of the Living Wage.

Councillor MacKenzie commended the suite of measures and the hard work undertaken by Ms Hood and her team which was now being recognised beyond East Lothian.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i. note the updates to the 2016/17 prevocational prospectus and further increased provision for post school pupils; and
- ii. support the new early intervention programmes planned for the S3 cohort and the post school LAC specific programme, Learn 2 Work.

Signed

Councillor Shamin Akhtar
Convener of the Education Committee