

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet

**MEETING DATE:** 12 June 2018

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

**SUBJECT:** Proposal to Introduce a Common Secondary School Day

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 East Lothian Council wishes to deliver on its commitment to reduce the attainment gap and raise the attainment and achievement of our children and young people and improve inclusion, wellbeing and equality throughout East Lothian's schools. In order to support the delivery of this commitment, it is proposed that the Council considers the introduction of a common secondary school day, and the potential resultant benefits for primary education.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the launch of a feasibility study and consultation on the introduction of a common secondary school day, and the potential resultant benefits for primary education.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Common Secondary School Day**

- 3.1.1 A feasibility study and consultation would consider and explore the following:
- 3.1.2 All six East Lothian secondary schools have historically had considerable autonomy in planning their school days and curricular arrangements. This has resulted in six different structures, length of the school day and different levels of access in terms of experience and opportunity, depending on where a young person attends school. As a result of this mixed economy across secondary schools, there is an inequity of opportunity, experience and resource within our system of education, potentially disadvantaging some young people. Attainment, aspiration, pace and challenge for all young people, but especially for looked after children, minorities, vulnerable groups and S4 leavers is significantly

different from school to school, which runs contrary to the Common Moral Purpose and the Public Proposition of the East Lothian Council Education Service.

3.1.3 There is significant variation in:

- The range of vocational qualifications and experiences (geographic and time restrictions in relation to Schools College Partnership (SCP) courses).
- The breadth of experience and time dedicated to ensure young people's full entitlements to the broad range of curricular outcomes and experiences.
- The Religious and Moral Education, Personal and Social Education and Physical Education entitlement in the senior phase.
- The range of Advanced Higher and Higher courses.
- The number of qualifications being offered in S4.
- The levels of Literacy and Numeracy achieved by school leavers in S4.
- The number of qualifications expected and further education opportunities readily available for this cohort and winter leavers.
- The breadth of curriculum in the senior phase through the impact of specialization on minority subjects.
- Access to wider experiences and opportunities to achieve success through awards such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

3.1.4 It is proposed that we carry out a feasibility study which would look at realigning our consortia arrangements to meet the aspirational goals of the One Council agenda, by creating a common secondary school day and a common curricular structure. This will create a more equitable educational experience, where schools support each other to get the best outcomes and opportunities for young people across East Lothian.

3.1.5 The common secondary school day will also support the delivery of the Council's commitment to improving options in the Senior Phase (S4 – S6) through the use of IT to enhance/support the delivery of the curriculum, which has a budgeted saving of £160,000 in 2019/20.

3.1.6 Every secondary school would start and end at the same time and run the same curricular period structure (27, 32 or 33 periods). The final decision on start and finish times and timetable structure will reflect the consensus reached through the consultation process. Schools would have the opportunity to agree common timetabling arrangements, which should lead to joint delivery, mutual support, sharing of best practice and collaborative professional development opportunities. A wealth of research suggests that schools who look outwards have more successful outcomes. Appendix 1 provides an illustration of what a 33-period common school day could look like.

- 3.1.7 Each secondary school would incorporate travel time for inter-authority learning, college, university and work experience. The proposed change would enable East Lothian Council to meet the local, regional and national priorities outlined in the Scottish Government's seven year 'Developing the Young Workforce - Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy' (2014), whilst reviewing and improving the curricular opportunities and experience of all of East Lothian's young people. This school to school collaboration would lead to a greater equity of resource and opportunity for young people across East Lothian and as a result, barriers to travel would be reduced.
- 3.1.8 East Lothian secondary schools are pursuing a strategic skills development agenda, involving the delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships in specialist departments located in the six secondary schools and will involve young people traveling between schools on a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. The move to a common school day/timetable would enable East Lothian Education Department to make bids in to the 'Employability and Skills' fund for the City Deal. We would also receive the support of Skills Development Scotland and both the Regional and Local DYW group. This would lead to greater involvement of employers in the creation of talent and new, easily accessible, Modern Apprenticeships with these partners.
- 3.1.9 Secondary lunchtimes would be scheduled to allow all young people in East Lothian to access the full vocational offer whether this is delivered in their home school, a neighbouring school, a college, an employer or a university. In the existing system it is difficult to plan coherent pathways with the college and employers when the school days are so different. Transport and resources cannot be easily shared.

## **3.2 Changes to Primary School Day**

- 3.2.1 In order to deliver a common secondary school day it will be necessary to change the start and finish times of East Lothian's primary schools. This is to ensure cost-effective transportation can continue to be provided through the sharing of school buses.
- 3.2.2 The changes to proposed start and finish times would mean that all East Lothian primary schools would start and finish at the same time. Individual schools could start up to 30 minutes earlier, or finish up to 30 minutes later than they do at present, depending on the consensus reached through consultation.
- 3.2.3 If the primary school start and finish times are not adjusted to match the secondary school time changes, the cost for additional transport would be approximately £190,000. There would be an immediate impact for Dunbar Grammar School cluster, North Berwick High School cluster and Knox Academy cluster where additional transport would have to be procured.
- 3.2.4 However by adjusting the primary school start and finish times to align with the secondary school day there could be a saving generated of approximately £76,000.

### **3.3 Increase of Number of Hours of Education for Primaries 1 and 2**

- 3.3.1 As a consequence of aligning both secondary and primary school days, this offers an important opportunity to consider increasing the number of hours of education for primaries 1 and 2. Current legislation states that children and young people should experience 190 days of education. Currently, legislation does not state the length of a school day. Recent inspection outcomes highlight an inequity of experience for those P1 and P2 children receiving less hours of education than their peers in P3 to P7. Twenty-nine out of the 32 Scottish Councils already provide 25 hours of education for all primary school children.
- 3.3.2 In East Lothian Council children in primaries 1 and 2 receive 22.5 hours of education per week, as opposed to 25 hours for those in primaries 3 to 7. Curriculum for Excellence sets out key principles that children have a range of entitlements in their learning. It is challenging for teachers to provide the same broad, balanced curriculum, across eight curricular areas, to all children, when some of the children are in school for 10% less time.
- 3.3.3 There is an additional benefit of moving to providing 25 hours of education for all primary school children, for those families who have children finishing school at different times of the day. Parents, carers, and young children often have no choice but to wait in the playground for the time between the younger child and older sibling finishing school.
- 3.3.4 There is also a potential saving in childcare costs for parents and carers with children in primaries 1 and 2 if the school day is extended.
- 3.3.5 There are 15 P2/3 composite classes in East Lothian at this time. The earlier finish time for P2 means that some teachers are teaching only a proportion of their class for 2.5 hours per week when some of their pupils have finished before others.
- 3.3.6 However it must be noted that, in order to provide an additional 2.5 hours of education per week for children in primaries 1 & 2, it is estimated that an additional 11.2 FTE teaching time would be required, at a cost of approximately £518,000 per annum.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

- 3.4.1 The proposals in this document will support the delivery of a number of objectives of the East Lothian Council Plan 2017 – 2022, including:
- Reducing inequalities within and across communities: Implement the recommendations within the Poverty Commission Action Plan
  - Growing our economy: Reduce unemployment and improve employability
  - Growing our people: Reduce the attainment gap and raise the attainment and achievement of our children and young people and improve the life chances of the most vulnerable people in society

- Growing our communities: Extend community engagement and decision making and increase community and individual resilience
- Growing our capacity: Deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible within our limited resources

3.4.2 The proposals also support several outcomes in the East Lothian Council Education Service Improvement Plan, including:

- Improve inclusion, wellbeing and equality
- Improve attendance and reduce exclusions
- Raise attainment and achievement, particularly the lowest 20%, LAC and ASN
- Improve positive destinations, particularly the lowest 20%, LAC and ASN
- Improve the percentage of schools and early learning and childcare settings evaluated as good or better across the NIF quality indicators

### 3.5 **Next Steps**

3.5.1 Should Cabinet agree the principles outlined in this report, a feasibility study will be undertaken, followed by a consultation with staff, pupils, parents, carers and stakeholders.

3.5.2 The findings from the feasibility study and consultation process and the resulting proposals will be brought back to Council later in 2018.

## 4 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The subject of this report does not impact on any policies. A full assessment of policies affected will be undertaken as part of the feasibility study and consultation.

## 5 **INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

A full integrated impact assessment will be completed as part of the feasibility study.

## 6 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1.1 Financial – There are additional costs associated with extending the school day for children in primaries 1 and 2 of approximately £518,000. The actual cost will be confirmed during the feasibility study. The cost

would be offset in part through the adjustment of primary school start and finish times, which would lead to a transport saving of £76,000. However the balance will have to be funded and proposals will be brought forward, including the review of the current arrangements for home to school transport. Full financial implications will be considered during the feasibility study.

6.2 Personnel - depending on the outcome of the feasibility study there could be implications for staff including the requirement for additional teachers and the changing of start and finish times for teachers and other school based staff. A staff consultation will take place alongside the public consultation.

6.3 Other – None.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None

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| <b>DATE</b>          | 12 June 2018                  |

**Appendix 1: Possible Common Timetable for Secondary Schools  
(Based on 33-Period Week)**

|                  | 1             | 2              | 3               | 4               | 5               | 6               | 7               | 8           | 9           |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
|                  | 8.30-<br>9.20 | 9.20-<br>10.10 | 10.10-<br>10.25 | 10.25-<br>11.15 | 11.15-<br>12.05 | 12.05-<br>12.55 | 12.55-<br>13.45 | 13.45-14.50 | 14.50-15.40 |
| <b>Monday</b>    |               |                |                 | Break           |                 |                 | Lunch           |             |             |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   |               |                | Break           |                 |                 | Lunch           |                 |             |             |
| <b>Wednesday</b> |               |                |                 | Break           |                 |                 | Lunch           |             |             |
| <b>Thursday</b>  |               |                | Break           |                 |                 | Lunch           |                 |             |             |
| <b>Friday</b>    |               |                |                 | Break           |                 |                 | Pupils Go Home  |             |             |