

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE of Meeting of the EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber,
Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells,
TD6 0SA on Tuesday, 18 October, 2016 at
10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman – Education Business), C. Bhatia, J. Brown, V. Davidson, G. Edgar, J. G. Mitchell, D. Moffat, D. Parker (Chairman), D. Paterson, F. Renton, R. Smith.

Also Present:- Councillors I. Gillespie, J. Greenwell.

Apologies Councillor S. Bell, M. Cook, Mr. J. Walsh.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (People), Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Services Officer (F. Henderson).

1. **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

2. **VISIT TO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.**

There were present at the meeting Ceri Hunter, Engagement and Participation Officer, Pam Rigby, Youth Engagement Worker and Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) to make a presentation on their recent trip to the Houses of Parliament in London. Funding had been secured through Westminster Education Department and Local Rotary Clubs to send Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to London for the day. A guided tour of Westminster, while Parliament was sitting had been a wonderful experience for the Young People together with a debating workshop, the trip finished with a flying visit to some of the main tourist attractions. In response to questions from Members, it was reported that one representative from each High School and the SYP Members had been invited to attend and it was hoped to provide the opportunity to more Young People in the future. A visit was planned to attend the Scottish Parliament during First Ministers question time. The Chairman thanked the MYSYPs for their most interesting presentation.

DECISION NOTED.

3. **SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN.**

There had been circulated copies of a report 'Our generation's epidemic' which was based on research carried out by the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) and their partners which represented all of Scotland's young people. Their vision for Scotland was of a nation that listened to and valued the participation of children and young people. Their goal was to do their utmost to make the vision a reality which they considered vital in ensuring Scotland was the best place in the world to grow up. The report explained that each year the Scottish Youth Parliament ran a national campaign focusing on an issue which young people care about. In October 2015, the Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) voted for the 2016 campaign to focus on young people's mental health. The campaign, called 'speak your mind', had been developed by young people and its objectives were:-

- To increase young people's awareness and understanding of the issues associated with mental health.
- To encourage the use of a common language in order to promote positive conversations and tackle stigma associated with young people's mental health.
- To identify young people's awareness and experience of mental health information and services for young people across Scotland.
- To advocate for high quality mental health services and information provision for all of Scotland's young people, with supporting guidance on best practice for service providers.

Cian Gullen and Cory McFarlane were present at the meeting to give a presentation on the work undertaken and answer members' questions. The Chairman thanked those present for their very informative presentation.

DECISION NOTED.

4. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT.

Catherine Thompson, Senior Lead Officer gave a presentation on the 2016 Exam Performance. She explained that following three years of Curriculum for Excellence there was an improving picture in terms of attainment. Over the period of Curriculum for Excellence the percentage of pupils gaining qualifications in five subjects at Level 5 in S4 had risen steadily from 37.3% in 2013/14 to 52.6% in 2015/16. In terms of pupils gaining five subjects at Level 6 in S5 this had also increased from 14.9% in 2013/14 to 16.6% in 2015/16. The % of Pupils gaining five subjects at Level 6 in S6 had increased from 30.0% to 33.9%. The presentation went on to highlight attainment at National 5 in English, Maths, PE and Practical Woodwork compared to the National Statistics and Higher English, Mathematics, History and French compared with the National Statistics which were above the national average each year. The Presentation further highlighted that 20 subjects at Advanced Higher were offered within Secondary Schools in the Scottish Borders. There had been 70 entries for English with an 89% pass rate, 62 entries for Maths with an 82% pass. 90% of pupils presented for Advanced Higher History passed with an 87% pass in Chemistry and Geography and 100% pass in Music. In terms of improving Literacy and Numeracy, the presentation explained that Scottish Borders Council compared favourably against their virtual comparator in terms of SCQF level 4 and 5. Scottish Borders Council also matched the National and Virtual Comparator in terms of improving attainment for all S4 and S5 pupils. In terms of tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers, Scottish Borders had improved. The next steps included forensic analysis of data per School, subject and specifics including gender, LAC, SIMD, ASN, EAL. There would be, learning visits to schools in and outwith SBC, an Action plan prepared, targeted support, the sharing of good practice and working with learning partners. In response to questions about links with businesses for vocational training, it was explained that some young people needed to go onto work rather than further education and a prolonged period of work experience rather than the traditional one week was being developed where there was mutual gain for both parties. Work was being carried out through the Developing Young Workforce Programme and each School also had a Developing Young Workforce co-ordinator who would make links with local businesses. It was acknowledged that there was a balance to be struck between attainment and a good quality learning experience. The Depute Chief Executive People advised that a more detailed report on the Developing Young Workforce Programme would be submitted to a future meeting.

DECISION NOTED.

5. NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK.

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Children and Young People which provided an update on the new Strategic Policy and to raise Members'

awareness of the change in national policy to assessing and reporting children's progress. The report explained that raising attainment and achievement had been a key priority locally and nationally for a number of years. In 2016 a significant shift of emphasis occurred when the "National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education" was published. The document set out a clear vision for both excellence and equity in Scottish Education. It also included the introduction of national assessment and reporting of attainment levels for primary aged children. The report outlined how Scottish Borders Council was taking forward the practice set out in the National Improvement Framework. The report went on to detail the background, and the implications. Members were in agreement with the National Improvement Framework but did express some concerns with regard to making the data publically available. Councillor Aitchison acknowledged these concerns but advised that a final decision had not yet been taken on what exactly would be published. Liz Wharton, Senior Lead Officer was present at the meeting and answered Members questions. She confirmed that once teachers' confidence grew with increased participation in moderation practice and working with the recently published national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy, there could be a higher degree of confidence in the data.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED that a communication be sent to all parents about the National Improvement Framework, including the changes taking place regarding the assessment and reporting of children's progress.**
- (b) **NOTED:-**
 - (i) **the contents of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education; and**
 - (ii) **the levels of achievement in schools across the Scottish Borders in respect of Reading, Writing and Numeracy as per the National Improvement Framework.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11.25 a.m. and reconvened at 11.30 a.m.

MEMBERS

Councillors Davidson and Edgar left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN

When the meeting reconvened, Councillor Parker took the Chair for the remaining business.

5. MINUTE

The Minute of meeting of the Executive Committee of 4 October 2016 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

6. PRIVATE BUSINESS

DECISION

AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure

of exempt information as defined in paragraph 8 of part 1 of schedule 7A to the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

1. **INSURANCE SHARED SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer which set out a proposal to establish a shared service of insurance services with the City of Edinburgh Council and agreed the recommendations contained in the report.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.