

Education Convener Advisory Group

Report by Mary Smith, Director, Education, Communities and Economy

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Cabinet on the proposed Education Convener Advisory Group. As outlined to Cabinet on 16th April 2013, this proposed forum will be used informally as a platform for the Education Convener to help inform and explore developments in relevant policy.

This report provides a short summary on progress made and planned for the formation of this group.

2. Background

The proposed Group will provide ongoing recognition of, and dialogue with, key stakeholders in education for Midlothian. Parties identified for inclusion are young people, parents and staff. Key principles of operating include working together in an open forum, members offering their views, and encouraging a collective and inclusive process relating to key education policy issues.

3. Progress report

Since Cabinet agreed to the formation of the group the following progress has been made:

- The proposed Convener has met with Director, Education and Children's Services and Head of Service, Education to undertake further scoping work. It was agreed that each meeting of the group should have an agenda and a theme, e.g. positive behaviour, positive destinations. The membership was defined to be:

- 5 young people

- 2 parents

- 2 school staff

- 1 religious rep (this can be one of the three current reps, dependent on interest/availability)

- 2 invitees at the discretion of the Convenor

In accordance with the initial Cabinet paper, the Convener will also invite Les McEwan, Chair of Standards Committee, to attend. His role will be to offer guidance borne from his experience in both Standards and practice with young people.

It was also agreed that should there be more interest from stakeholder groups than places on the Committee, a reserve pool of members would be set up. In the event of members' unavailability, members of the reserve pool would be called upon (maintaining the balance outlined above) to substitute. They would also be called upon if group members are unable to maintain their commitment to the group.

Agenda and minutes to be prepared and issued to members. These will also be made openly available.

- Information has been relayed to three principal groupings: parents (via Parent Councils), young people and school staff, including details of the proposals and seeking nominations from interested parties.
- At the first meeting of the group, the following will take place:
 - A programme for the coming year's meetings
 - An agreement of protocols including roles and responsibilities of members
 - Head of Education to observe and provide constructive feedback
- To date interest received has been:
 - 5 parents
 - 10 school staff (representing 5 different schools, both primary and secondary)
 - 3 young people
 - Rose Andrew, MYSP

Planned activity

Further progress will be made following summer recess. We will contact the schools immediately on their return and ensure that all nominations from parents and school staff have been recorded. We will also seek further nominations from young people.

Once all nominations are received, the Convenor and Head of Education will consider an appropriate procedure for selection for membership. It is anticipated this will either be at random (asking Les McEwan to select the required number from random selection) or by ensuring as many schools and communities as possible are represented. In case of the latter, this will be done transparently.

Once these decisions are made there will then be an agreed membership for the Group and all interested parties will be informed accordingly. Those not selected will be invited to form the reserve list.

The inaugural group meeting will then take place in accordance with the above.

4. Report Implications

4.1 Resource

There are no human resource implications. The proposed Group will be administered from existing Members' Services support.

4.2 Risk

There are no risk implications arising directly.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

This report addresses the theme of Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child and will assist us in addressing our three key priorities.

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

4.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Feedback, ideas and partnerships generated through the Group will contribute to policy and operational development with a view to improving performance and outcomes for children and young people.

4.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The preventative approach will permeate discussions and provide a context for agenda setting.

4.6 Ensuring Equalities

An equalities impact assessment is not required in relation to this report.

4.8 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

5. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress made on the formation of the Education Convener Advisory Group;
- 2) Endorse the plans set out in this paper; and
- 3) Seek an update on further progress made no later than January 2014

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