

Committee Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 15 January 2008

Present:- Councillors Mrs MacLaren (Convener), Beckett and Burns; Sandy Cruickshank (East Craigs Primary), Luke McCullough (Clermiston Primary), Polly Purvis (Boroughmuir High), Jane Watson (Nursery Head Teachers representative), David Thomson (Royal Mile Primary), Stuart Roebuck (South Morningside Primary), Lynda Flex (Drummond Community High), Anne Heggie (Prospect Bank), Naomi Stewart (Preston Street Primary), Andrew MacMillan (Trinity Primary), Arlene Mooney (Braidburn School), Armando Ditano (St Augustine's High), Majella Dunn (St Augustine's High), Susan Edwards (Victoria Primary), Paddy O'Donnell (St John Vianney's Primary), Julia MacIntosh (Abbeyhill Primary), Bernard Macdonald (Leith Primary), Penny Radway (Leith Primary), Sean Watters (Towerbank Primary), Eric Jackson (Drum Brae Primary), Tracy Rendall (Craigentenny Primary), Neil Thomson (Craigentenny Primary), Alison Walker (Tynecastle High), Elizabeth Anderton (Westfield Court Nursery), Henrietta Forman (Braidburn School), Allan Todd (Fox Covert RC Primary), Nigel Goddard (James Gillespie's High), Geoff Brown (Broughton High), Carolyn Girvan (Currie Community High), John Walker (Juniper Green Primary), Willie French (Primary Head Teachers representative), Gavin Corbett (Craiglockhart Primary), Jeanna Brady (Bruntsfield Primary), Clare Murdoch (Dean Park Primary), Patricia Aitchison (Balerno High), Karen Traill (Liberton High), Lorna Whitefield (Kaimes School), Julian Chapman (Fox Covert ND Primary), Tina Woolnough (Royal High), Pauline Lindsay (Blackhall Primary), David Kyles (Trinity Academy), Norman Brown (Sciennes Primary), Gordon Chrumka (Broughton Primary) and Judith Gillespie (Scottish Parent Teacher Council Observer).

Apologies for Absence:- Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Balfour, Donald Craigie, Meg Donaldson, Donna Hennem, Natasha Kirby, Gus Meechan and Susan Hardman Moore.

1 Children and Families Department Revenue Budget 2008-09

The Children and Families Department was currently preparing Revenue Budget estimates for 2008-09. As part of the process, an annual briefing was undertaken with the Consultative Committee with Parents.

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Iain Shaw, Principal Finance Manager, presented details of current proposals for the Children and Families Department Revenue Budget 2008-09. It was noted that nursery, primary and secondary education comprised 65% of the department's revenue budget, with the cost of special education being additional to this. Efficiency savings in 2007-08 Revenue Budget approved by the Council in February 2007 were outlined. The department would now have to address a shortfall in these savings targets, due to the postponement of building rationalisation programme. Revenue budget pressures of £18.2 million for 2007-08 were detailed. Management measures taken would leave an adverse variance of £1.1m for the current year, but there was a need to address these revenue budget pressures on an ongoing basis and place the department's revenue budget on a more sustainable basis.

For 2008-09 the department's revenue budget strategy was to identify measures to place the budget on a sustainable basis, address ongoing savings targets and remove one-off savings measures used to address pressures in the 2007-08 budget. There was also a need to identify funding to meet additional cost pressures e.g. energy costs in schools and the new pupil information system (SEEMIS). Savings would require to be made across all departmental budgets. It was proposed to target all front-line service budgets with a 2% savings target and other departmental services with a 5% savings target. Work was ongoing in the lead-up to budget setting to achieve a balanced budget. At this stage there was a remaining target of savings of £3.7m to be identified.

The methodology to develop budget savings for school services was outlined. Income proposals in 2008-09 budget included a 10p increase in 2007-08 charge for school meals and a proposed 2p increase in school milk, effective from August 2008.

For school services:

- a savings target of 2% was proposed (reflecting savings target applied to all Council services). This would be achieved in the first instance by savings occurring through the fall in school rolls. A savings target would then be applied to school budgets, in order to achieve the overall savings target of 2%. At this stage, it was anticipated that a minimum of £1 million would be achieved from the fall in school rolls, reducing the impact on school budgets
- the Scottish Government's Concordat afforded Councils the opportunity to re-align grant funding. The element of this funding paid to schools would be excluded from school savings targets
- there were no further reductions to school budgets planned
- departmental investment in Pupil Information System (SEEMIS) (£0.6m) would enable time-releasing benefits to schools
- additional funding was planned to schools for energy costs – to address budget pressure of £1.1m.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

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- Cuts to outdoor education centres, the impact on prices for pupils and consideration of reinstatement of the hardship fund.
- Budget proposals in respect of Go4It and Play4It would be considered as part of the overall budget process.
- Falling pupil rolls and savings made through class formation and filling of teacher posts.
- Benefits of the SEEMIS system included saving of staff time putting information into two systems.
- Timescale for the estate rationalisation process meant that savings would not be factored into the budget process until future years.
- Ongoing discussions were taking place with the Scottish Government on teacher/pupil rationalisation and free school meals.
- Outline of the process for enrolment of P1 and S1 pupils and how prediction of numbers of pupils was made.
- Edinburgh spent in excess of funding received for each child. All money received from Government was passed on to schools.

The Committee agreed:

- 1) **That a briefing be made to the next meeting of the CCWP on the budget set.**
- 2) **That a capital budget presentation be made to a future meeting.**
- 3) **To note that details of the budget would be available on the Council's website after the budget was set on 21 February 2007.**

2 Minute

The minute of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 6 November 2007 was approved as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising

3.1 Sports in Schools Development (item 3 refers)

The Sports and Outdoor Education Unit had agreed that information would be included on the Council's website of regional/local events where possible.

It was further noted that no money was available for new equipment and there was insufficient staffing for consideration of the request for sports equipment lending. It was suggested that Parent Councils consider recycling sports equipment within their own schools.

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3.2 Revenue Budget (item 4 refers)

Maps of catchment areas for all Edinburgh Schools were available via the Edinburgh Grid for Learning Website and statistics showed these had been well used. It was intended that three years of school roles (based on pupils census information) would be available in a similar fashion in the short term. Other information such as population projections were currently available via the General Register Office Website.

4 Rationalisation Forum

The Education, Children and Families Committee on 19 November 2007 had approved the establishment of a Cross-Party Forum to review the Children and Families Estate and play a key role in shaping the development of new proposals. The first meeting of the Cross-Party Forum had taken place. The criteria for proposals focused on three areas:-

- (i) Will this improve outcomes for children?
- (ii) Is this in line with parental choice?
- (iii) Will this provide value for money?

The three representatives on the Forum from the Consultative Committee with Parents were Liz Anderton (Nursery Representative), Martin Southern (Primary Representative) and Lynda Flex (Secondary Representative). Each representative outlined their involvement and experience in education matters and how they hoped they would contribute to the consultation on the rationalisation process. It was confirmed that special schools were currently not directly affected by any Estate rationalisation proposals, other than as part of the overall consultation process. The next meeting of the Forum would map out a timescale for progress. An ongoing process for parents to become involved and to give regular wider feedback was proposed.

The Committee agreed:-

- 1) To endorse the appointment of Elizabeth Anderton, Martin Southern and Lynda Flex as the representatives from the Consultative Committee with Parents to the Estate Rationalisation Forum.**
- 2) That a meeting for Chairs of Parent Councils be arranged and that contact e-mail addresses be forwarded to Parent Council Chairs of cluster representatives to involve wider future communication.**

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5 Membership of Consultative Committee with Parents

The role of Members of the Consultative Committee with Parents was outlined as follows:-

- To attend and contribute to discussion at the CCWP meetings.
- Communicate the work of the CCWP to the Parent Council Chairs of the Schools that they represent.
- Propose agenda items from the schools they represent, initially through the parental involvement unit.
- Encourage Parent Councils to include CCWP business as a regular agenda item on Parent Council agendas.
- Secondary School representatives to report to all the Secondary Parent Council Chairs in their neighbourhood.
- Special School representatives to report to all Parent Council Chairs for Special Schools.
- Nursery School Representatives to report to all Nursery Parent Council Chairs.
- Primary School Representatives to report to all Primary Parent Council Chairs within their cluster.

The Parental Involvement Unit (PIU) assisted with the dissemination of information by issuing a summary of each CCWP meeting to all parent Council Chairs. Plans were also being developed to establish Neighbourhood Parent Council Sessions which might in the future offer further opportunities for dissemination of information from, and to, the CCWP.

Membership of the CCWP comprised:-

- 2/3 Secondary Parent Council members per neighbourhood.
- 1/2 Primary Parent Council members per cluster.
- 3 Special School Parent Council members.
- 2 Nursery Parent Council members.
- 1 Special Needs Forum member.
- 4 Head Teacher members (one from each sector).
- 1 Teacher representative.
- 1 Observer from the Scottish parent-teacher Council.

CCWP members would normally be Chairs of Parent Councils, however, other members could be nominated with the approval of the Chair of their Parent Council. Where there were more nominees than noted above, it was proposed that, as discussed at a previous CCWP meeting, that it would be for the nominees themselves to determine who would attend CCWP meetings. The PIU would assist with this where required. Attendance could be on a rota basis, however, for contact purposes, only one name would be submitted to the parental involvement unit. It was proposed that every member would serve for a period of two years. The PIU at the end of the two year period, would write to

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Parent Councils, Head Teachers Associations and others to seek nominations. Existing CCWP members would be able to nominate themselves again. Current membership would run from 1 November 2007 until 31 October 2009. Any member with a disability could contact the PIU in the first instance. The Unit would then ensure that any additional requirements would be in place at meetings. Any enquiries should be directed to the Parental Involvement Unit – graham.douglas@edinburgh.gov.uk telephone: 0131 469 3131.

The Committee agreed:-

- 1) **To approve the proposals made for membership, terms of office, remit and arrangements for members with disabilities as detailed in the report.**
- 2) **To review the arrangements in early 2009.**

6 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 11 March 2008 at 6.30 pm.