

Committee Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 3 November 2009

Elected Members Present:- Councillors MacLaren (Convener) and Henderson.

Parent/School Members Present:- as detailed on the appendix to this minute.

Apologies:- Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Chris Marks, Lawrence Rea, Kevin O'Donnell, Judith Gillespie, Iain McGillivray, Julie-Ann Syme, Nigel Goddard, Donna McNeill and Susan Edwards.

1 Susan Weir

The Convener informed members that Susan Weir, Clerk to the Committee was moving to Clerk other meetings of the Council. She thanked Susan for her help and assistance over the past seven years.

Susan related that she had found this Committee particularly interesting from a personal point of view as she had two children being educated in Edinburgh. However, after seven years it was now time for her to bring her experience to other meetings.

2 Minute

The minute of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 15 September 2009 was approved as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising

3.1 Convener and Directors Update (item 3.1 of minute of 15 September 2009)

It was noted that;

- (i) a presentation on Getting it Right for Every Child in Edinburgh (GIRFEC) would be brought to a future meeting;

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- (ii) there was a vacancy for a Duke of Edinburgh Award lead officer. Also that a significant number of children from the Royal High School had signed up for the Bronze Award. The Bronze intake had been limited this year and the Duke of Edinburgh Unit was looking to the Royal High School to provide teacher/parent volunteers to be trained and to provide help for the existing volunteers;
- (iii) School Senior Management, Edinburgh Catering Services and Children and Families staff were working together to improve quality of meals. An increased number of pupils now took school lunches. There were no current plans to provide a production kitchen at Blackhall Primary School given the current financial constraints; and
- (iv) information on reduced exclusions would be brought to a future meeting.

3.2 ICT in Support for Learning (item 4 of minute of 15 September 2009)

John Fraser, Head of Schools reported that some schools would have access to GLOW from January.

He explained that under Curriculum for excellence all Secondary Schools had been asked to opt in to GLOW and did not have to wait for the official project to get underway. Part of the 2008/09 budget had funded the training on GLOW for three development officers and other staff in Primary and Secondary Schools.

The roll out schedule was planned to start in January 2010 and finish by the end of April 2011.

Decision

To note that there would be a presentation on GLOW at a future meeting.

3.3 Attainment in City of Edinburgh Primary and Secondary Schools 2008 – 2009 (item 5 of minute of 15 2009)

It was noted that a copy of the presentation on Attainment in City of Edinburgh Primary and Secondary Schools 2008 – 2009 was circulated electronically to CCWP members on 16 September 2009.

3.4 Swine Flu Update (item 7 of minute of 15 2009)

There was tabled paper updating the Committee on information relating to Swine Flu.

It was noted that a further communication would be circulated to parents week commencing 2 November 2009.

3.5 Chartered Teacher Statistics

There was tabled paper showing Chartered Teacher Statistics as at

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10 September 2009, which was noted.

4 Welcome to new members

Councillor MacLaren welcomed new members to the Committee.

5 Update by Convener and Director

The Convener informed the Committee of a blog site set up on the Councils website charting the journey being taken by "Waverley the Bear". The teddy bear had joined the crew of Edinburgh's Inspiring Capital yacht on 13 September 2009 in the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race. The aim was that the blog site would educate and entertain school children on the environment of each destination reached.

The Committee was then updated on the school closure consultation completed on 5 October 2009. Meetings had been held with each school, in addition to public meetings. An officers workshop for elected ward members would be taking place on 24 November 2009, and a formal report on submissions from the consultation would be brought to the full council meeting on 17 December 2009.

The Convener reported that correspondence had been received from Fiona Hyslop, MSP, about legislation to be brought forward which would restrict primary 1 classes to 25.

Following discussion at a previous meeting, it was noted that attainment had not declined where team teaching operated. The Convener would be visiting two of these schools to view team teaching at first hand.

The Convener went on to inform the Committee that two new community buildings had been opened in South Edinburgh, these being Valleypark Community Centre and Holyrood High School. Further buildings to be opened included Broughton High School, Craigroyston, Tynecastle, St Augustines and Forester High Schools and Redhall special school.

With regard to James Gillespies High School, it was explained that two thirds of the cost of improvements were to be funded from Central government, with one third to be found by the Council.

Following on from this, Gillian Tee, Director endorsed the VSE (Validated Self Evaluation) approach which was to be discussed later in the Agenda. She felt that VSE provided an opportunity to secure wide engagement in evaluating how good education services were in Edinburgh. VSE would provide an opportunity to identify strengths and areas for development and an improvement plan for education services in Edinburgh over the next 3 – 5 years.

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She went on to inform the Committee that recent inspections had taken place on the Child Protection, Social Work, and Psychological Services. A draft report was awaited on each. A Validated Self Evaluation of Educational Services in Edinburgh would take place early in 2010.

The Departmental budget was then discussed, and it was noted that the Revenue Budget Consultation meeting had been brought forward to 16 December 2009 as requested.

Discussion took place on class sizes and pending legislation. Following a query, Mike Rosendale, Head of Schools and Community Services confirmed that the increased number of children remaining until 5th or 6th year at high school had been accounted for in the budget. He felt it was encouraging that there was a small improvement in Edinburgh of young people going on to further education.

Decision

To bring the draft report on the Child Protection Service inspection to a future meeting.

6 Progress on Integrated Childrens Service Plan - Achievements

There was tabled paper on Integrated Children and Young People's Plan – Progress and Next Steps.

Andy Gray, Head of Planning and Performance gave a presentation on the Plan. He explained the partnership, what was trying to be achieved, how this was being carried out, progress to date, key priorities for improvement and the next steps. Following the presentation he asked members to email him, andy.gray@edinburgh.gov.uk, with any additional suggestions to those already presented.

Decision

- 1) Agreed to provide a list of all the partner organisations.
- 2) To thank Andy Gray, Head of Planning and Performance for his presentation.

7 VASE (Validated Self Evaluation)

There was tabled paper on VSE (Validated Self Evaluation), which had previously been referred to as VASE.

Sheena Liddell, Senior Quality Improvement Officer gave a presentation on VSE (Validated Self Evaluation). She defined self-evaluation, the aims of which

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were to ensure that action at all levels had a direct and measurable impact on the achievements of pupils and the overall quality of the education provided; monitor progress of the impact of the priorities in the school improvement plan; and provide a basis for reporting and planning.

She outlined the process, strategies involved, and the programme of engagement which would result in an Edinburgh Improvement Model (EIM).

Following the presentation, members divided into Groups and were asked to give suggestions on areas of Educational provision they felt was successful or which could be improved on. Any comments would be added to responses gathered as part of the consultation exercise.

Following a comment whereby Members felt that it would be particularly helpful for pupils to be aware of the relevance of their submission, Sheena confirmed that account would be taken of all submissions. Results from VSE would be widely disseminated.

Decision

To thank Sheena Liddell, Senior Quality Improvement Officer for her presentation.

8 Draft School Session Dates 2011/12

Decision

To note that dates provided would be widely circulated, including to Parent Councils. Any comments on proposed dates and the possibility of St Andrews Day being a school holiday should be emailed to the Parental Involvement Unit at graham.douglas@edinburgh.gov.uk by 22 January 2010.

9 Oracle e-Business Suite – Financial Savings

There was tabled paper on Oracle e-Business Suite – Financial Savings

Rory Mackenzie, CCWP Secondary Headteacher representative spoke to the paper. He reminded the Committee that at a report to a previous meeting from the Oracle team had not mentioned costs charged to schools, and also that a question of “legality” had been raised when schools opted out to go with the Oracle contract when procuring goods and services.

A meeting had consequently been arranged between the Oracle team and a group of secondary headteachers and business managers to discuss these issues.

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The Oracle team had provided a report which indicated that overall schools were making savings. However, this could not be broken down on a school by school analyses making it difficult for schools to see where these savings were being made. Concern was also raised over the visibility of Oracle charges on the 09/10 budget statement. There had been an expectation that these would be reduced by 50%, but the statement showed no "e-procurement" charges. However, Flexibility funding had been reduced by approximately £5k.

Oracle had now paid for itself, but it appeared that BT may require schools to pay an ongoing "license and maintenance fee" of around £5k, with concern that the BT charge to Edinburgh was significantly higher than the national Oracle price.

With regard to legality issues, the concern raised over schools going outwith the contract was to avoid "disaggregation of spend", which was regulated by the EU. As the Council had overall contracts in place for stationery etc it was not permitted for Council departments to go outwith these. More efficient procurement was being looked at to help schools.

Decision

- 1) To note that the issue regarding the removal of Oracle charges and the reduction of Flexibility Funding would be taken forward by secondary headteachers with David Robertson.
- 2) To identify why BT may require schools to pay an "ongoing licence and maintenance fee" of around £5k.
- 3) To query why the BT charge to Edinburgh is significantly higher than the national Oracle price.

10 Future Agenda Items

It was noted that the following business would be brought to a future meeting of the CCWP;

- P1 setting policies
- Parental Involvement Strategy – assessment to its effectiveness
- Planned maintenance list
- A BT e-mail to its staff advising "some may be on Parent Councils" – Looking to set up a Community of Interest Group to help manage queries or challenges in their role - request that Parent Councils be offered guidance on protocols for declaring interests.
- CCWP focus group 9 March – to look at information requested from Parent Councils under legislation. Volunteers to form Focus Group will be sought at CCWP meeting on 12 January 2010
- Licensing Act 2005 – detrimental effect on school activities

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Decision

Noted that T Woolnough was the Edinburgh representative on the National Parent Forum.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The Revenue Budget Consultation would take place on Wednesday 16 December 2009 at 6.30 pm at a venue to be confirmed.

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Appendix

Parent/ School Members Present

Paul Smart	Portobello High School
Martin Southern	Bonaly Primary School
Eric Jackson	Drumbrae Primary School
Andrea Bracher	Kaimes Special School
Norma Lynn Devlin	St Thomas of Aquins RC High School
Miranda Harvey	Additional Support for Learning
Jeanna Brady	Bruntsfield Primary School
Tracy Rendall	Craigentiny Primary School
Anne Dunnigan	Braidburn Special School
Arlene Mooney	Braidburn Special School
Willie French	Parsons Green Primary School
Rory Mackenzie	Balerno High School
Tina Woolnough	The Royal High Secondary and Blackhall Primary Schools
Paul Iannetta	Holyrood High School
Patricia Aitchison	Balerno High School
Donald Craigie	Dean Park Primary School
Anne G McGowan	St Peter's Primary School
Sean Watters	Towerbank Primary School
Sally Smith	Currie Community High School
Karen Traill	Liberton High School
Alison Walker	Tynecastle High School
Lesley McGoohan	Wester Hailes Education Centre
Gordon Chrumba	Broughton Primary School