

Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Item no.

Edinburgh, 15 January 2013

Present

Councillors Key (Chair), Corbett, Dixon and Redpath
Diane Anderson, Parent Representative, Leith Academy
Mary Brownlee, Parent Representative, Tynecastle High School
Willie French, Head Teacher, Parsons Green Primary School
Jonathan Gibbs, Parent Representative, Nether Currie Primary School
Lesley Gibson-Eaglesham, Parent Representative, Gracemount High School
Lindsay Law, Parent Representative, Broughton Primary School
Kirsty Lawson, Parent Representative, Prospect Bank School
Iain McGillivray, Parent Representative, Firrhill High School
Ellen Muir, Head Teacher, Pilrig Park School
Norma Prentice, Head Teacher, Drummond Community High School
Alex Ramage, Parent Representative, Prestonfield Primary School
Sarah Ross, Parent Representative, St Catherine's Primary School
Josephine Samuel, Parent Representative, Kaimes School
Paul Smart, Parent Representative, Portobello High School
Tina Woolnough, National Parent Forum Scotland

Officers in Attendance

Gillian Tee, Director, Children and Families
Alistair Gaw, Head of Support to Children and Young People, Children and Families
Mike Rosendale, Head of Schools and Communities, Children and Families
Rosie Wilson, Special Schools and Specialist Provision, Children and Families
Susan Weir, Committee Services, Corporate Governance

Apologies:- Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Godzik, Rust and Shields, and Christine Wallis

1. Welcome

Councillor Key welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new Consultative Committee with Parents.

2. Minute

The minute of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 24 April 2012 was approved as a correct record subject to a minor change to the attendance list.

3. Role and Remit of the Consultative Committee with Parents (CCWP)

Gillian Tee thanked parents for their time and involvement with the Consultative Committee. In terms of development of the Parental Engagement Strategy, it had become clear that the CCWP was only reaching a small number of parents. To enable a more joined up approach, ensure two way feedback, and promote networking, a two way engagement and consultation process was established between Parent Councils, Neighbourhood Groups and the CCWP. Five neighbourhood Groups covering nursery, primary and secondary schools and a city wide Group for special schools had been established. Parent representatives from each Group, elected members from each political party, and Head Teachers from each sector had been invited to attend the Consultative Committee. In addition, representatives from the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Forum, Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) and National Parent Forum Scotland (NPFS) were invited to attend, with officer support provided. The Department aims to reach all School Parent Council Chairs, further increase the two way engagement process, and improve and involve parents more in the agenda planning process. The new neighbourhood meetings had already made contact with 70 parents and had already included discussion on the budget process and the Vision for Schools across Edinburgh.

During discussion on ways to improve engagement and consultation, the following points/suggestions were made:-

- It would be useful to have as many papers as possible for meetings circulated in advance, preferably at least a week before each meeting.
- It would be helpful if papers could also be made available to Parent Council Chairs at the same time as CCWP representatives.
- It would be useful at a future point to look at the effectiveness of, and measures of success for the CCWP.
- CCWP representatives needed information on the schools and Parent Council Chairs in their Neighbourhoods.

Decision

- 1) To note the above points/suggestions made on improvements to the engagement/consultation process.
- 2) To agree that the Director check with Parent Council Chairs that they would be happy to share e-mail addresses with CCWP representatives.

- 3) To agree that measures of success on the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood meetings and the CCWP be reviewed at the end of June 2013 and reported back to a future meeting of the CCWP; the report to include whether feedback was working, communication was effective, appropriate representation/attendance at meetings, etc.
- 4) To note the schedule of meetings (as detailed in the appendix to this minute), and that all Parent Council Chairs be advised of the dates.

(Reference – paper by the Director of Children and Families, tabled.)

4. Introduction to the Children and Families Department

An Information Pack on the structure of the Children and Families Department was available by clicking on “Parents” on the front page of the Council website, then “Children and Families Information Pack”. The information pack provided relevant e-mail addresses and phone numbers of the Department’s key officers/service areas.

Decision

- 1) To note the details on the Information Pack.
- 2) To note that a link to the Information Pack would be forwarded to all Parent Council Chairs.

5. Communications

Gillian Tee noted the earlier comments made regarding agenda planning (item 3 above). She referred to the Bright Futures blog which could be accessed by clicking on “Parents” on the Council website. The blog provided news items, outlined good practice, provided summaries of reports/papers and links to committee papers. Parents could subscribe to this and receive information each week.

Decision

- 1) To note the details of the blog.
- 2) To note that feedback on the blog and other ideas for good communication would be welcomed by the Department.

6. Parental Engagement Strategy Update

Input was sought from parents and teaching staff to the six working groups which were preparing information for the Parental Engagement Strategy Action and Implementation Plan. The groups and lead officers were as follows:

Key Area	Lead Officer
To strengthen all parents' engagement in their children's learning	Joyce Rochford
To develop effective communication and consultation	Moyra Wilson
To develop effective partnership working and opportunities for the removal of barriers to engagement	Lynne Porteous
To develop the linkage of parent and pupil voice	David Maguire
To strengthen parent councils and forums	Moyra Wilson
To assist parents/ carers through parenting support when required	Pat Southall

Decision

- 1) To note that the report on Parental Engagement considered by the Education, Children and Families Committee in October 2012 would be re-circulated to parents for information.
- 2) To note that draft reports on parental engagement would be brought before the CCWP and that the next report to be presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee on Parental Engagement would re-scheduled from the March to May 2013 meeting.

(Reference – paper by the Director of Children and Families, tabled)

7. Agenda for Forthcoming Meetings of the Education, Children and Families Committee

Gillian Tee outlined the Key Decisions Forward Plan for the Education, Children and Families Committee for March to May 2013. The Plan could be subject to change, and views were sought on arrangements that parents wanted for agenda planning. Dates for meetings of the Education, Children and Families Committee were provided as follows:

Education Children and Families Committee

- 5 March 2013
- 21 May 2013

Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee

- 4 February 2013
- 25 April 2013
- 12 June 2013

During discussion, some points/suggestions were made as follows:

- If required, it would be possible to focus on for example, a couple of reports from the Forward Plan.
- Neighbourhood Groups should be asked what they would like to discuss once the Plan had been circulated to the Groups for consideration.
- Agenda planning suggestions (see item 8 below) for the current session (2012/13) should tie in with the Plan.
- Decisions taken at the Education, Children and Families Committee should be fed back to the CCWP.
- Headings such as “Positive Destinations” on the Plan did not provide enough information and should be expanded to provide clearer information.
- It was noted that ongoing work of the Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee included the areas of Estate and Rising Rolls; Community Access to Schools; Early Years; Support for Children with Additional Support Needs; and Vision for Schools; all of which could involve engagement with parents.

Decision

- 1) To note the above points/suggestions made on agenda planning.
- 2) To agree that the Department identify key issues from the Forward Plan for discussion at future meetings of the CCWP
- 3) To note that once elected, the new parent representative on the Education, Children and Families Committee would be well placed to give the CCWP a steer on issues of particular interest for discussion.
- 4) To note that the Department would forward a link to parents so they could easily access the Key Decisions Forward Plan.
- 5) To note the future dates of Neighbourhood Groups and the CCWP (detailed in the appendix to this minute).
- 6) To recommend provision of a column in the Plan giving summary decisions made by Committee as this would be helpful.
- 7) To note that the Department would facilitate the sharing of e-mail addresses of parents present at the meeting (parents not present at this meeting to be asked if they agree to share their e-mail addresses).

8. Agenda Planning for Session

Suggestions on ideas for agenda planning during the current school session included:

- Information Technology
- School Placements
- Food
- Health
- Sport
- Diversity
- Vision

Decision

- 1) To note that the Department would keep an ongoing agenda planning list which would be updated to include feedback from the Education, Children and Families Committee, and that this would be a standing item on the CCWP agenda.
- 2) To note that briefings from the National Parent Forum and Scottish Parent Teacher Council would be included as standing items on CCWP agendas.

(Reference – paper by the Director of Children and Families, tabled)

9. Review and Monitoring Process

Decision

To note the earlier decision at item 3 above that the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Groups and the CCWP be reviewed at the end of June 2013.

10. Appointment of Parent Representative to the Education, Children and Families Committee

Revised governance arrangements agreed by the Council on 20 September 2012 included the appointment of a parent representative to the Education, Children and Families Committee. The postholder would have full voting rights and hold office until the Council elections in May 2017. Nominations were sought for the position which would require to be approved by the Council on 31 January 2013.

A first nomination for Lindsay Law was moved by Mary Brownlee and seconded by Alex Ramage.

A second nomination for Josephine Samuel was moved by Kirsty Lawson and seconded by Diane Anderson.

Both nominees gave a brief summary of their experience for the position.

The Consultative Committee agreed that votes be cast by parents (not elected members) by secret ballot. The result was as follows:

Lindsay Law – 8 votes

Josephine Samuel – 3 votes

Decision

- 1) That Lindsay Law be nominated as the parent representative to the Education, Children and Families Committee.
- 2) To note that the appointment would require to be approved by the Council on 31 January 2013.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted)

11. National Parent Forum Scotland

Tina Woolnough provided an update on the plans for the National Parent Forum Scotland in 2013, including three regional information events for parents titled Qualifications Plus. The East of Scotland event would be held on 5 March (6-9pm) with places allocated on a first come first served basis.

The Forum's newsletter would be available in early February and the Forum's website and communications networks would be promoted. Parents were encouraged to communicate and share information/experiences. The Forum was keen to gather and share innovative and effective examples of parental involvement.

The Forum was currently campaigning for schools to access and switch on wi-fi to create additional learning opportunities for pupils. Another campaign would shortly be launched to improve communications between schools and parents.

Decision

To note the information provided and to thank Tina for the update.

12. Placing in Schools Appeal Committee – Appointment of Parent Representatives

The Placing in Schools Appeal Committee was established to hear and decide appeals against decisions of the Council or relevant Head Teacher to refuse placing requests, exclude pupils, and refuse early admission to school. Vacancies had arisen for parents of children of school age on the Council's Placing in Schools Appeal Committee.

Decision

- 1) To confirm the existing Panel 2 membership as set out in Appendix 1 to the Director's report.
- 2) To nominate Christine MacGillivray, Sarah Ross and Olivia Ramage to serve on Panel 2 of the Placing in Schools Appeal Committee.
- 3) To re-appoint Karen Traill to serve on Panel 2 of the Placing in Schools Appeal Committee.
- 4) To refer the appointments to the Council on 31 January 2013 for approval.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted)

13. Future Agenda Items

Decision

To note other future items of business requested for discussion as follows:

- The increasing size of school rolls and temporary accommodation.
- Parking around schools and communication with parents.
- Janitorial cover during evening use of schools.

14. Budget Meeting

Decision

To note a meeting would be held next week on the Council budget to which all Parent Council Chairs were invited.

Appendix

(as referred to in items 3 and 7 of the foregoing minute)

Dates of CCWP meetings and Neighbourhood Groups February to May 2013

CCWP

26 February 2013

19 March 2013

14 May 2013

Neighbourhood Groups (all timings 6.30-8.30pm)

West – 19 February 2013

South – 21 February 2013 (N.B. subsequently changed to 20 February)

South West – 25 February 2013

East – 27 February 2013

North – 4 March 2013

Special Schools – 6 March 2013

West – 22 April 2013

South – 24 April 2013

South West – 29 April 2013

East – 1 May 2013

North – 7 May 2013

Special Schools – 8 May 2013