

Committee Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 24 April 2012

Elected Members Present: - Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Johnstone, McIvor and Rose.

Parent/School Members Present:- Raymond Simpson (Teacher Representative), Willie French (Parsons Green Primary School – Primary Head Teacher Representative), Margaret Russell (Craigroyston Community High School – Secondary Head Teacher representative), Karen Traill (Liberton High School and South Neighbourhood Secondary Schools), Iain McGillivrey (Firrhill High School), Julie-Ann Sime (Tollcross Primary School), Alex Ramage (Prestonfield Primary School), Jeanna Brady (Bruntsfield Primary School), Andrea Henderson (Boroughmuir High School), Carole Fisher (Duddingston Primary School), Lucy Blackburn (Liberton Primary School), Paul Smart (Portobello High School), Eileen Prior (Scottish Parent Teacher Council), Paul McGlaughlan (James Gillespie's Primary School), Michelle Thomson (St Peters RC Primary School) Tina Woolnough (Royal High Primary School), Arlene Mooney (Special Schools Head Teacher), Lesley Broadwood (Bonaly Primary School) Robert Baltzer (Gracemount Primary School) and Mary Brownlee (Tynecastle High School).

In Attendance:- Gillian Tee (Director of Children and Families), Wendy Gray, Rosie Wilson, Helen Purves, Mairi McNeill, Graham Douglas, Alistair Gaw, Moyra Wilson and Mike Rosendale (Children and Families Department) and Henry Scullion (Committee Services).

Apologies: - Lindsay Law (Broughton Primary School), Susan Edwards, (Victoria Primary School) and Kevin O'Donnell, (Trinity Academy).

1 Minute of Meeting

Decision

The minute of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 31 January 2011 was approved as a correct record.

2 Matters Arising from Minute

None

3 Update by Convener and Director

A progress update was provided on some of the achievements of the Department of Children and Families in meeting their outcomes for children and families in Edinburgh. The report covered the following areas:-

- Business dealt with at the March Meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee
- Celebrating Creativity, including “From Studio to Stage” and Creative Learning at the annual Student Council Conference
- Effective Partnership Working with Lothian and Borders Police by rolling out the linkage of police officers to secondary schools
- Investment in the School Estate

Gillian Tee highlighted some of the areas covered in the report.

Decision

To note the update.

(Reference – report by the Convener and Director of Children and Families, submitted)

4 Parental Engagement Strategy

Moyra Wilson gave a presentation on parental engagement, following up on work undertaken during and after a number of events held throughout the city.

The presentation set out the Council’s vision and values and the commitment to parents and described feedback from parental surveys and the roadshows. It also set out issues surrounding engagement, areas for improvement and partnership working

Thereafter, the members broke into a number of groups to discuss aspects of parental engagement.

Feedback from the groups was noted and an undertaking given that it would help inform discussions with the new Council administration following the May 2012 elections.

It was noted that copies of the presentation would be emailed to members.

(Reference – presentation handouts, tabled)

5 Pupil Placements

Moyra Wilson gave a presentation on pupil placements in 2012. The presentation highlighted the extent of the issue this year, explained the reasons for the number of refusals and gave advice to members about what information they could provide to parents affected by the issue. An explanation was given of the Council's priorities for dealing with placement requests and of the setting of intake levels.

Discussion following the presentation highlighted: -

- Discussions with developers over the impact of new developments
- Potential for the realignment of catchment areas in light of the renewal of the estate
- The implications of parents withdrawing one or more children from a school if they cannot accommodate a sibling child at the same school via a placing request
- Schools with a surplus of places
- Issues concerning Tollcross Primary School following the relocation of the Gaelic Unit
- That classes could have more than 25 pupils if the additional numbers resulted from decisions by the Placing in Schools Committee or the Sheriff
- Confidence that catchment area children would be accommodated this year but that there was pressure next year

Decision

To note the position and the Director's confirmation that the Department would welcome further feedback from members on the issues surrounding pupil placements and the promotion of catchment area schools.

(Reference – slides handouts, tabled)

6 AOB – Parent Council Raised Issues

No issues had been raised by Parent Councils.

7 National Parent Forum – Update

Tina Woolnough updated members on issues from the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS). The update included information on communication, the NPFS conference to be held in October 2012, the Curriculum for Excellence, sources of information and representation by NPFS on other bodies.

Tina Woolnough also sought a replacement or reserve representative for the NPFS as she would be standing down in June 2012.

In addition to the issues covered in the update, the following issues arose: -

- The development of a sub-group on additional support for learning
- Comments would be welcome on the 3rd NPFS Newsletter which would be issued shortly
- The future role of the NPFS
- Difficulties facing children under 18 moving on to University and feeling excluded from freshers' week activities

Decision

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To note that the Director would raise with college and university principals issues concerning under-18s entry to higher education.

8 Placing in Schools Appeal Committee: -Appointments

The Director of Corporate Governance reported on two recommended appointments to Panel 2 of the Placing in Schools Appeal Committee. In addition to the two persons recommended for appointment in the report, there was scope for further nominations to the Panel membership.

The appointments were subject to Council approval

Decision

To recommend to the Council that Jenn Scott and Neil Clarkson be appointed as members to serve on Panel 2 of the Placing in Schools Appeal Committee.

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

8 Date of Next Meeting

The Clerk reported that the first meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee after the May 2012 Council elections would be on 21 June. Given the summer recess, the first meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents would probably be held after the Council's summer recess. As much notice as possible would be given to members of the intended date.

Decision

To note the position.