

Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 3 October 2013

Present

Elected Members

Councillors Godzik (Convener), Corbett and Fullerton

Neighbourhood Groups - Parent Representatives

Diane Anderson, Leith Academy
Alison Bowyer, Craigmount High School
Jonathan Gibbs, Nether Currie Primary School
Lesley Gibson-Eaglesham, Gracemount High School
Anna Evans, Blackhall Primary School
Lindsay Law, Broughton Primary School
Alex Ramage, Prestonfield Primary School
Sarah Ross, St Catherine's Primary School

Head Teacher Representative

Norma Prentice, Drummond Community High School

National Parent Forum

Tina Woolnough

Scottish Parent Teacher Council

Eileen Prior

Officers in Attendance

Gillian Tee, Director, Children and Families
James Coltham, Web Services and Content Manager, Children and Families
Robbie Crockatt, Planning Officer, Children and Families
Alistair Gaw, Head of Support to Children and Young People, Children and Families
Billy MacIntyre, Head of Resources, Children and Families
Mike Rosendale, Head of Schools and Community Services, Children and Families
Moyra Wilson, Senior Education Manager, Children and Families
Susan Weir, Assistant Committee Officer, Corporate Governance

1. Welcome

Councillor Godzik welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 15 May 2013 was approved as a correct record.

3. Web Communications

James Coltham presented details of work carried out in developing web communications for parents. In addition to the provision of information on Education, Children and Families, information on other services for parents, such as the Libraries service, was also being developed.

A group which included parents as well as officers, would continue to develop new ways of presenting information for parents on the website. It had yet to be decided whether a parents' website would be provided separately from the main Council website.

During discussion, points were raised as follows:

- Visibility of issues raised by parents and feedback mechanisms were felt to be a priority for parents.
- Publication of minutes from the Neighbourhood Group meetings would be useful.
- An audit of school websites was being undertaken and guidelines developed to ensure quality and the upkeep of content for school websites.
- The possibility of an Edinburgh Education brand was suggested.

Decision

- 1) To note the information.
- 2) To note that the presentation on development of web communications for parents would be made available on CCWP papers online [CCWP 3 October 2013](#).

(Reference – presentation on Web Communications)

4. Rising Rolls and School Placement Issues

Rising Rolls in Schools

A report on Rising Rolls in Schools had been considered by the Education, Children and Families Committee on 8 October 2013. Billy MacIntyre presented information on the report.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Parents felt it would be useful to know the sq.m space of halls in schools so that all schools could be encouraged to creatively use all spaces.
- Children and Families welcomed suggestions of best practice in the use of schools in neighbourhoods as well as for community access.
- Schools should be encouraged to explore the possibility of applying for grants for events using other school facilities.
- Norma Prentice gave the example of the drama studio at Drummond High School being used by St Mary's primary school for a production.
- The suggestion of shared catchment areas.
- The Local Development Plan and work with developers in new housing and new school provision.
- A huge amount of work had been undertaken by Children and Families to encourage families to use catchment schools.

School Placements

Moyra Wilson provided information on school placement requests and the appeal process where out of catchment placing requests had been unsuccessful. Council policy for parental choice was outlined, together with priorities for placements and grounds for refusal of placing requests.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Work was ongoing to give key messages to families on catchment places and enrolment.
- Catchments for nursery places was frequently raised and was currently being looked at. It was acknowledged this would be a complex process.
- Provision of breakfast clubs and after school care often influenced parental choice of schools.
- Out of catchment schools were sometimes closer to families' places of residence than their catchment schools.
- The real reasons that families chose non-catchment schools needed to be examined.

Decision

- 1) To note the information.
- 2) To note that the presentation on rising rolls and school placement issues would be made available on CCWP papers online [CCWP 3 October 2013](#).

(Reference – Education, Children and Families Committee 8 October 2013 (agenda item 7.2); presentation on Rising Rolls and School Placements)

5. Committee Reports

The Director gave an outline of the reports being presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 8 October 2013.

Arising from the discussion, Lindsay Law noted the amount of work involved for the parent representative on the Education, Children and Families Committee.

The Convener noted the comments made and advised that parental representation on the Committee would be kept under review.

Decision

- 1) To note the information provided on the reports to the Education, Children and Families Committee.
- 2) To note that the issue of workload sharing for the parent representative on the Education, Children and Families Committee would be raised at an agenda planning meeting.
- 3) To thank everyone involved in the Parental Engagement Strategy.

(Reference – Education, Children and Families Committee 8 October 2013)

6. Vision for Schools - Update

Details were provided of the initial feedback from the Education, Children and Families' Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee on progress towards the development of the Vision for Schools. A summary of the feedback included the current strengths identified in education in Edinburgh and areas for development.

Decision

- 1) To note the information.
- 2) To note that the summary of feedback from the Children and Families' Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee would be made available on CCWP papers online [CCWP 3 October 2013](#).
- 3) To note that further information on the Vision for Schools would be provided to a future meeting of the Consultative Committee.

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

7. Neighbourhood Group Updates

Issues raised by the individual Neighbourhood Groups were as follows:

South Neighbourhood

- The Group were supportive of the budget setting process.
- The issue of roof works at Bruntsfield Primary School was raised. It was confirmed that all the roof works were now being carried out.
- Gracemount Primary School required urgent attention to the issue of access to the school where there was currently no pavement provision.
- It was confirmed that a condition survey for schools would be reported at a future date.

West Neighbourhood

- The Group had discussed appeals and rising rolls. It was suggested that feedback from the Appeal process should be provided to look at the effects of decisions on schools.

East Neighbourhood

- The Group noted the good work of the Head Teacher at Portobello High School on Curriculum for Excellence.
- Parking at schools in their neighbourhood continued to be a huge problem. The Convener confirmed that a report on this matter would be brought to the CCWP when it became available.
- The Director confirmed that the issue of school meals and healthy eating would be discussed at a future meeting.

South West Neighbourhood

- Moyra Wilson confirmed that the Group had discussed the Growing Confidence Programme and had requested more information on ICT.

North Neighbourhood

- The barriers at Leith Primary School had been taken down and needed to be reinstated.
- School meals were also discussed.
- A shared sports hub was being looked at.
- The Group had discussed the image of Edinburgh's schools and what parents could do to highlight how great Edinburgh's schools were.

Decision

- 1) To note the reports from the individual Groups.
- 2) To note that issues raised by schools were monitored.
- 3) To note that reports would be presented to future meetings of the CCWP on parking at schools, school meals/healthy eating, and PE.

8. Report from the National Parent Forum Representative

Tina Woolnough provided an update report on the latest issues from the National Parent Forum.

- An E newsletter was circulated about two weeks ago, both through schools and using the Forum's own database.
- The Forum's annual conference on Saturday 5 October was free with activities for children, train straight there and free shuttle bus. The theme of the conference was Healthy, Happy Children (health and well being). The SQA would also be in attendance.
- The Forum continued to campaign on Internet access for schools.

- Development of Nationals in a Nutshell were nearly finished with 34 subjects at Nat 4 and 5; some generic Nutshells on Nats 1 to 3 and on Highers.
- The Forum was campaigning for more resources to help parents support their children with exam revision.
- Edinburgh Council was being asked for more information on prelims, post 16 choices, exam leave, revision support etc, and college and uni arrangements with schools as well as shared coursing eg Advanced Highers between schools, Scottish Government investment in Scholar, Heriot Watt's online Higher resource.
- It was noted that the SQA appeals system was changing – there would be no more automatic appeals.
- SQA special arrangements for exams had changed. Scribes would no longer be used in exams. The use of IT was imperative eg digital exams.
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) Scottish Government survey - to assess levels of parental awareness was available online. This had been circulated through the Edinburgh Parent Council Network.

Decision

- 1) To note the information and to thank Tina for the update.
- 2) To note that further information on any of the issues raised could be obtained from the National Parent Forum website www.parentforumscotland.org .

9. Report from Scottish Parent Teacher Council Representative

Eileen Prior provided an update report on the latest issues from the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC). The SPTC 'Backchat' newsletter dated September 2013 and information on important insurance changes for SPTC members during 2013-14 were circulated.

Decision

- 1) To note the information and to thank Eileen for the update.
- 2) To note that the update report from the SPTC would be made available on CCWP papers online [CCWP 3 October 2013](http://www.ccwp.org.uk) .
- 3) To note that further information on any of the issues raised could be obtained from the SPTC website www.sptc.info .

(Reference – paper by the Scottish Parent Teacher Council Representative, tabled)

10. Dates for Future Meetings

Decision

- 1) To note that a budget consultation meeting for parents would be held on Monday 11 November 2013 in the City Chambers, High Street.
- 2) To note that the next meeting of the CCWP would be held on Thursday 5 December 2013 in the City Chambers, High Street.