

Item 4.1 - Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families Update

Update for Parent Council Neighbourhood Groups - May 2016

Introduction

We are currently in a time of unprecedented change in the Council which affects everyone. As we move toward implementing the Locality model there have been many creative discussions about how best our services and partnerships can work for the benefit of our communities, which I am sure will deliver real dividends. While thinking ahead and working on the future of service delivery, I have been impressed by the commitment and dedication shown by colleagues as they continue to provide our vital services every day to a high standard across the city.

The recent decision to close several Edinburgh schools – all of which were designed, constructed, and continue to be managed, by the Edinburgh Schools Partnership (ESP) - was deeply regrettable, but absolutely necessary in order to prioritise the safety of our pupils and staff. I cannot emphasise enough how impressed I have been by the levels of collaborative working, commitment and dedication shown by colleagues who have worked tirelessly in their efforts to help minimise the disruption to children's learning and care.

An urgent update report will be presented to the Corporate, Policy and Strategy Committee on 17 May 2016 to include a full update from the Edinburgh Schools Partnership (ESP) on the reasons for the identified defects and information about contract management and governance of the project.

Exam Arrangements

Alternative arrangements for pupils sitting exams next month, and who are affected by the recent school closures, have been drawn up by the Council.

The contingency plans have been put together as exams start in the first week of May. All pupils will be sitting their exams in the schools where they are currently attending.

The arrangements are:

- Royal High, Drummond and Firrhill pupils will use their schools;
- Gracemount and Craigmount pupils will be sitting their exams at their host schools of Liberton and Tynecastle respectively.

Individual schools will update pupils and parents regarding their specific arrangements.

The Council has had very positive discussions with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) about exams and the contingency arrangements. Jean Blair, SQA Director of Operations, said: "*Clearly our primary concern is for all the young people involved. We continue to work closely with City of Edinburgh Council and the individual schools to support them in the practical arrangements for the exams, which begin on Wednesday 4 May.*

"The national timetable of exams will continue as planned and pupils should continue with their studies in preparation to sit their exams on the dates in the published exam timetable."

Education, Children and Families Committee – 1 March 2016

The Committee received 10 Executive decision reports and seven Routine decision reports. Here is a summary of the Executive reports presented to the committee and their outcome.

1. Communities and Families Small Grants to Third Parties 2016/17 – Proposals for Expenditure

This [report](#) detailed the recommended awards to organisations submitting small grant applications. The awards are for one year and are for a minimum of £1,000 and a maximum of £10,000.

The Committee was asked to note the 2016/17 small grants budget approved by the previous committee on 11 February 2016, which agreed an allocation of £108,000 for small grants to third parties. They were also asked to approve the awards to the organisations outlined in the report and note that support would be offered to unsuccessful applicants in terms of additional assistance.

The committee approved the report recommendations and decided that the short-life working group (which committee had previously agreed to reconvene to discuss lessons learned), should also consider the small grants awards included in the report, and specifically include - the form and level of support provided to unsuccessful organisations; the ability to provide part-awards; the ability of national organisations to bid for awards and the criteria used; the role localities may play in future decision-making; and quality assurance processes.

2. Primary School Estate Rising Rolls

The purpose of this [report](#) was to identify the schools which will potentially face accommodation pressures in August 2017 and beyond, together with options to address the issue at each school. Seven schools have been identified which may face a rising rolls accommodation pressure during this time. The report stated that where necessary, working groups involving school management and parent council

representatives will be established by the school estate planning team and progressed with the aim of identifying a preferred option for each school and this will be reported back to the next committee in May.

The committee noted the report and asked that the next report include information on Wardie Primary School and that the implications of classroom reconfiguration on the delivery of the recommended two hours of P.E. activity per week be included in a future update report.

3. Strategic Management of School Places: P1 and S1 Intakes for August 2016

This report was withdrawn and a revised report will be submitted for consideration at next committee in May.

4. Review of Positive Action Funding in Primary Schools

This [report](#) advised of the further work undertaken and sought approval for the proposed changes to the way in which Positive Action funding is allocated across Primary Schools to ensure effective targeting for those children most in need.

The report sought approval for funding to be allocated to primary schools with children living in Deciles 1 and 2 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation with a weighting of 2:1 to those pupils living in Decile 1 and a 40% threshold being used. The committee was also asked to approve the interventions to be used in reducing the attainment gap amongst those pupils most in need and was asked to note the way in which the use of funding will be monitored in the future.

The committee approved the recommendations and asked to receive a yearly update on the impacts of the review.

5. Scottish Attainment Challenge

This [report](#) outlined the aims of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the planned projects for the Council's eight Attainment Challenge schools, where the overall aim is to raise attainment and ensure equality for all learners.

The committee noted the report and that a further update will be provided once the projects have been evaluated.

6. Vision for Schools

This [report](#) detailed the progress made in implementation in the specific areas which were previously identified as priorities for development in March 2015. The committee was asked to note the continued progress being made and the positive

contribution of the new initiatives, Edinburgh's Challenge and '1 in 5 – Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh' strategy.

The committee noted the report and stated that officers would be available to discuss the issues raised in the amendment with the teacher representatives.

7. Total Craigroyston

This was the final [report](#) of the Total Craigroyston initiative. It outlined the work done over the past year and detailed the lessons that can be taken forward into the Council's Transformation project, with particular relevance for the development of the locality management structure. The committee was asked to note the impact of the approach on the key outcomes for children and families as well as the lessons learned for the future development of the localities approach.

8. Castlebrae Community High School – Progress Report

This [report](#) provided an update on progress towards improving outcomes for pupils attending Castlebrae Community High School. Previously, the committee had considered a progress report on 8 December 2014 on improvements within the school and the Castlebrae Learning Community. This report provided a further progress update, which included the progress of strategies within the school which aim to deliver a high quality educational experience for learners and details of the updated management arrangements which were implemented in December 2015.

The committee approved the recommendations and noted that a briefing note will be prepared for committee members on the delivery of a new high school for Craigmillar.

9. Outdoor Centres and Outdoor Learning

This [report](#) informed committee about the recent and newly proposed developments at the Outdoor Centres, in particular an enhanced commercial approach to facilitate future investment in the centres, and to set this in the context of an updated Outdoor Learning Strategy.

The report asked that the committee support the expectation that primary schools in Edinburgh choose Benmore or Lagganlia as their first choice of a fully serviced Residential Outdoor Learning week, providing there is available space during the peak period of mid February through to mid November. The report also asked that the committee approve the updated Outdoor Learning Strategy for 2016-2020 and stated a further report would be provided in September 2017, following the completion of an organisational review and the performance of the Outdoor Centres

in the next full financial and academic year. The committee approved these recommendations.

10. Support to Children and Young People with Disabilities

This [report](#) provided the committee with a progress update over the last 18 months. A previous annual report in September 2014 had given an overview of performance and planning in relation to support to families who have a child with disability. The report asked the committee to note the progress being made within social work services for children and young people with disabilities and stated that a further progress report would be provided in March 2017.

Sub-Committee on Standards

At this meeting on 7 March 2016, seven reports were discussed. Congratulations to the staff and parents from Queensferry Primary School and Nursery Class who received an exceptionally positive report.

BBC documentary – ‘Educating Sir Tom’

Castleview Primary School featured in a recent BBC Scotland documentary, ‘Educating Sir Tom’, and provided a really positive example of how schools are closing the attainment gap. Businessman and philanthropist, Sir Tom Hunter, asked how we can guarantee every child a world-class education and visited schools across Scotland to see why children from poorer backgrounds do worse, and what can be done to improve results.

Sir Tom visited Castleview Primary to interview staff and parents and was clearly impressed with what he learnt on his visit. Our sincere thanks go to Lindsey Watt and her staff for showing our education service in such a positive light.

Royal Visit to Edinburgh Schools

In late February, three of our schools - St Catherine’s RC Primary School, Wester Hailes Education Centre and Craigmount High School - all had a very special visitor, HRH The Duchess of Cambridge. The visits provided an opportunity for the Duchess to find out more about Place2Be (St Catherine’s) and the Art Room Project at Wester Hailes Education Centre. The Duchess ended her day with a visit to Craigmount High School where she joined pupils from the school and their associated primary schools in a tennis coaching session with Judy Murray as part of the Tennis on the Road initiative. These visits were enjoyed by everyone and received widespread media coverage.

Two students were also given the opportunity to record their own news item for the BBC School Report initiative, including their own interview with the Duchess during her visit to Wester Hailes Education Centre.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport/35728907>

Child Poverty Conference

A conference on 22 March 2016 at the Faith Mission looked in more detail at the work being done by the '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh' project. A key note speaker at the event was Naomi Eisenstadt, the Scottish Government's Independent Poverty Adviser

The project has been taking place in five primary schools and one secondary school, and has involved working with staff, pupils and parents to raise awareness of the scale, causes and impacts of child poverty; challenge poverty-related stigma; and investigate what practical actions can be taken to lower the cost of the school day.

A report describing the work of the project will be presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 24 May.

LGBT Charter Mark Award

Every organisation has a responsibility to value diversity and promote good practice in terms of LGBT equality. Raising awareness and sending out positive messages to LGBT people and society serves to challenge discrimination and promotes a more inclusive society. I am therefore delighted that Communities and Families have successfully completed the LGBT Charter of Rights at Foundation level. This level is the overarching Charter Mark and demonstrates a very clear commitment from the Council to be LGBT inclusive. We are also the first Council in Scotland to have achieved this award, so well done to all those involved in taking this forward.

<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/charter-general>

John Byrne National Drawing Competition

An Edinburgh pupil has won the second annual John Byrne National Drawing Competition. From 4,000 entries, the winning piece (selected by John himself) was a drawing by a student from Hermitage Park Primary School. John presented the prize at an award ceremony on 18 March at the Paisley Museum and Art Gallery.

Two other Edinburgh students from South Morningside Primary and Tynecastle High School were amongst the runners-up.

Boroughmuir Win Scottish Young Consumers Competition

A team from Boroughmuir High School has clinched the title of Scotland's Young Consumers of the Year 2016. After a closely fought quiz competition held at the

Scottish Parliament, Boroughmuir prevailed in the all important final round to lift the title and claim the coveted trophy. Boroughmuir will now represent Scotland at the UK Final, which is being held in London in June.

New Sensory Room opened at Prospect Bank School

The school received funding from Spifox and The Lords Taverners to officially open their new sensory room. Both companies helped fund the room after being sourced by parents of the Friends of Prospect Bank charity.

The donations allowed the school to create a new sensory room that the children can access as part of their school day. The room offers a quiet space with a bubble tube, fibre optic lights and relaxing music allowing pupils to 'chill' and relax in a calm safe environment. All classes can access the room.

Reducing Food Waste Project

Pupil chefs from Juniper Green Primary School cooked and served up an impressive three-course meal to parents and older people in their community using food that was just about to go out of date. The children used a 'pop up cafe' to show what can be done with food nearing its expiry date rather than throwing it away. Guests were treated to homemade breads and leak and potato or carrot and coriander soup; sausage casserole or vegetable bake; and delicious fruit flans and apple crumbles.

The school teamed up with the Real Junk Food Project Edinburgh (part of a wider charity which runs a UK-wide network of cafes and communities) and the pupils spent months learning about sustainability and how to help their community reduce food waste. Local businesses and supermarkets also supported the children in demonstrating how junk food can be recycled and reused and food was donated by several outlets. The evening sent out a fantastic message to pupils, the future generation of recyclers, about how easy it is to do.

Alistair Gaw
Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families
May 2016

