

Note of meeting

Item 3.1

Consultative Committee with Parents

6:00pm Thursday 14 September 2017

City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh

Present:

Elected Members

Councillors Alison Dickie (Convener), Eleanor Bird and Mary Campbell.

Locality Groups - Parent Representatives

Alison Bowyer, North West Locality
Billy Samuel, North West Locality
Derek McNeill, South East Locality
Alex Ramage, South East Locality
Ian Willis, South East Locality
Paul Millan, South West Locality
Gareth Oakley, South West Locality
Sarah Kembrie, Citywide Special Schools

Officers in Attendance

Andy Gray, Head of Schools & Lifelong Learning
Andy Jeffries, Acting Head of Children's Services
Lorna Sweeney, Senior Manager, Quality Improvement and Curriculum
Maria Plant, Schools and Lifelong Learning Service Manager
Alasdair Oliphant, DA to Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee
Lesley Birrell, Committee Services

Apologies

Councillor Ian Perry, Councillor Callum Laidlaw, Councillor Louise Young, Crawford McGhie (Head of Operations, Communities and Families), Julia Main (Citywide Special Schools), James Nicol (South West Locality) and Eileen Prior (Scottish Parent Teacher Council).

1. Note of Previous Meeting

Decision

The Note of Meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 6 March 2017 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

2. Update on Behalf of the Executive Director

The Head of Schools and Lifelong Learning provided an update for the period since the previous meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents and highlighted the following issues.

Recruitment of Maths Teachers

There was a national issue about recruitment of maths teachers in general. Arrangements had been put in place specifically at Trinity Academy to support maths teaching. There were currently 10 vacancies for maths teachers in Edinburgh. Broadly, the trend was that there was a shortage of maths, home economics and computing teachers. A collaborative approach was being looked at in schools which had been identified as being under pressure.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

- innovative ways of filling gaps on an interim basis needed to be explored for example encouraging retired teachers back onto the supply list
- we should be trying to ensure the best teachers were in place – there were 160 probationers across the school estate, all of whom had been interviewed and graded

Budget

There were significant pressures across the Council over the next two years. First year indications for Communities and Families were around £2.8m from an overall budget of £350m.

Decision

To note the updates.

3. Appointment of Parent Representative

Nominations were sought for the position of parent representative on the Education, Children and Families Committee for the period to 30 April 2022.

Alex Ramage was nominated by Derek McNeill and Gareth Oakley and unanimously appointed.

On a separate but related issue, concerns were expressed that the parent representative no longer had voting rights on the Committee. This had been decided by the Council at their meeting on 22 August 2017 as part of the new political management arrangements.

Decision

- 1) To recommend Alexander Ramage to the Council as the parent representative on the Education, Children and Families Committee for the period to 30 April 2022.
- 2) To write to the Council Leader expressing concerns about the non-voting status of the parent representative on the Committee and to request that this be reviewed.
- 3) To note that each Locality would be entitled to appoint up to three representatives onto the Consultative Committee with Parents.

4. Locality Issues

South West

No additional issues were raised.

North West

No additional issues were raised.

South East

- **Scottish Government Consultation on Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education** - The consultation invited views on the way education was currently funded in Scotland, the purpose of developing a new more consistent approach to school funding and the principles that should underpin any changes. The deadline for submission of responses was 13 October 2017.
- **Rising Cost of School Meals** – parents were extremely concerned by the sudden significant rise (35%) in the cost of school meals – a report on the issue was scheduled to be considered at the Education, Children and Families Committee in December 2017. A large number of families were at the limit of the benefit cap and may lose some if they registered for free school meals. It was a problem in all schools and the situation needed to be reported back to the Scottish Government. Eligibility and registering were also issues with some parents choosing not to register for various reasons. Communities near the margins were disproportionately affected.

North East

Fairer Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education - feedback was sought by the Department from parents on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing

City Wide

Teacher Recruitment - Teacher shortages particularly head teachers were an issue in particular getting the right fit with special schools was difficult

Transport to Schools – rolling this out at the beginning of the year seems to happen too late – advance contact with families is not happening. Concerns had been expressed about times of pick-ups changing and too many children with one escort in one taxi. Further concerns had been raised regarding sub-contracting and sub-sub contracting particularly in relation to PVG checks.

It was noted that a review of transport was underway in the Council. A lot of practice issues had been raised and these would be addressed if highlighted to the department. Shared routes to schools and numbers of requests for individual journeys had increased. A meeting with parents was offered to address these issues.

Holiday Activity Provision and Playscheme – concerns were raised that the holiday activity provision and playscheme for October had been cut – this was a lifeline for some families and there was a lack of communication about the level of service which would be available.

It was noted that a holding response would be sent out in the next couple of days and a face to face meeting with parents offered to talk through the issues. The tender with the previous consortium had provided an extra summer but the new tender had not been up and running in time.

Occupational Therapies – issue raised about occupational therapies and how they are managed and classification of special schools depending on the needs of the children

Meeting Venues - Pilrig Park School parents had asked for meeting venues and timings to be alternated – this will be looked at going forward.

Decision

To note all the issues raised and proposed actions to address these.

6. Update from National Parent Forum Scotland

An update from the National Parent Forum Scotland (NPFS) was circulated by Alison Bowyer.

The Forum was a national body funded by the Scottish Government. Each local authority area in Scotland had a representative on the Forum. Work undertaken included consultations and discussions, review of parental involvement act, parental voting rights and the Scottish Parent Involvement Officer network.

Publications were available on the website “In a Nutshell” which was an innovative information series for parents, carers and children – link <https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

The next Forum meeting was scheduled to be held on 30 September 2017.

Decision

To note the update.

7. Update from Scottish Parent Teacher Council

An update on the work of the Scottish Parent Teacher Council was submitted.

The following areas were highlighted:

- Member Support
- Partnership Schools
- Data Protection
- Directors
- Stirling Council Parental Engagement Strategy
- Website and Identity
- Scottish Government Governance Review

Decision

To note the update.

8. Named Person Supreme Court Judgement – Implications for Services

The Scottish Parliament were currently scrutinising a new Bill around the information sharing element of the Children and Young Person's Act. The Bill was currently being re-drafted with an accompanying draft Code of Practice.

The judgement by the Supreme Court found that in future staff would have the power to share information rather than a duty to share information. Any sharing of personal information would need to be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act.

Decision

To note the update.

9. 20mph Zones – Briefing Note

The Transport and Environment Committee, on 13 January 2015, had approved a citywide 20mph speed limit following extensive consultation and research.

Where an existing part time 20mph limit became incorporated into a new full time 20mph area, different signage was required to comply with the relevant Regulations. Consequently, the signs with flashing lights outside schools required to be removed and replaced with new signage.

A number of enquiries had been received from schools requesting the installation of Vehicle Activated Signs outside their school. Trials were taking place at locations across the City to reinforce the 20mph speed limit and Roseburn Primary had been included as part of these trials.

The Council was working with Police Scotland to raise awareness of the new speed limits with drivers through the road safety education and prevention activities.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

- the circumstances of each individual school would need to be looked at to assess whether a VAS sign could be installed
- size of traffic islands and traffic light phasing around Corstorphine Primary
- Royal Mile Primary had requested a VAS sign but this had been placed in Holyrood Road not the Royal Mile – this would be picked up by the Department and rectified

Decision

To receive a presentation from the Council's Transport Division on the wider School Streets and 20mph programmes to a future meeting of the Committee.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Decision

To note that the next meeting of the Consultative Committee would take place on Thursday 7 December 2017 (6.00-8.00pm) in the City Chambers, Edinburgh.