

Note of meeting

Consultative Committee with Parents

6:00pm Thursday 7 December 2017

City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh

Present:

Elected Members

Councillors Ian Perry (in the Chair), Eleanor Bird, Mary Campbell and Louise Young.

Locality Groups - Parent Representatives

Paul Millan, North West Locality (Roseburn Primary Parent Council)
David Sterrat, North West Locality (Drummond Community High Parent Council)
Billy Samuel, North West Locality (Corstorphine Primary Parent Council)
Becky Entwistle, South East Locality (Royal High Primary Parent Council)
Alex Ramage, South East Locality (Education, Children & Families Parent Rep)
Ian Willis, South East Locality (Royal Mile Primary Parent Council)
James Nicol, South West Locality
Gareth Oakley, South West Locality (Craiglockhart Primary Parent Council)
Kirsty Stoddart, South West Locality (Currie Community High Parent Council)
Julia Main, Citywide Special Schools

Officers in Attendance

Alistair Gaw, Executive Director for Communities and Families
Andy Gray, Head of Schools & Lifelong Learning
Crawford McGhie, Acting Head of Operational Support
Maria Plant, Schools and Lifelong Learning Service Manager
Laura Millar, Service and Policy Adviser to the Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee
Lesley Birrell, Committee Services

Apologies

Councillors Alison Dickie and Callum Laidlaw.

1. Note of Previous Meeting

Decision

The Note of Meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 14 September 2017 was submitted and approved as a correct record subject to amending the note to reflect that Paul Millen represented North West Locality.

2. Update from the Executive Director for Communities and Families

The Executive Director for Communities and Families provided an update for the period since the previous meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents and highlighted the following issues.

Informal Consultation on Schools and Lifelong Learning Estate Strategic Review

The informal consultation process was currently ongoing as part of the overall strategic review of the schools and lifelong learning estate. A report on the proposals for the informal consultation to be carried out in West and South West Edinburgh, the future of Gaelic Medium education and an update on the Wave 4 Trinity Academy feasibility study would be presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 12 December 2017.

Extending Early Years Provision

It was proposed to increase the number of local authority early years settings providing early learning and childcare over 50 weeks open between 8am and 6pm. The Early Years Admission Policy outlining the criteria for phasing in 1140 hours of early learning and childcare before 2020 would be recommended to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 12 December 2017 for approval.

Teacher Recruitment

Recruitment and retention of teachers continued to be a challenge across Scotland. Details of the number of teacher vacancies in Edinburgh Schools and an assessment of any impact on standards of learning would be presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 12 December 2017.

Woodlands School – Sport Scotland Gold School Sport Award

Woodlands Special School had recently achieved the Sport Scotland Gold School Sport Award. The award was presented in recognition of the school's ongoing commitment to self-evaluation and continuous improvement and for putting young people at the forefront of the decision-making, planning and implementation processes around sport and physical activity in the school.

Decision

To note the updates.

3. Edinburgh Schools Review

The Council were undertaking a strategic review of the schools estate across the city. Proposals for West and South West Edinburgh had been communicated to parents/carers. Events were planned at all the affected schools between 9 January and 9 February 2018. These events would be organised via the parent councils and would allow an invited focus group to discuss the proposals with Council officers.

An update on the informal consultation would be presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 6 March 2018 with recommendations about what should happen next.

The following issues were raised and discussed:

- since the Local Development Plan was approved last year there had been good engagement from officers with quite a lot of focus on Currie Primary – disappointed that closing high schools had never been mentioned before and concerns were expressed about the impact on the community
- would be helpful for parents/carers to see the building survey report on Currie High – the Wave 4 assessment Currie High had scored a B Rating
- the options presented would mean that three greenfield sites would be destroyed – would be helpful to know why these three particular sites were chosen against other sites in Currie together with setting out an option for rebuilding on the current site
- 80-90% of parents/carers were against the proposals in their current format
- The community understood the need for change and some of the reasons behind the proposals but the impact would be huge – families were planning 5 years ahead now and the community infrastructure and school was an integral part of that
- disappointment that Woodlands School was brought in late to the discussion and there was no mention in the letter sent out to parents/carers – Woodlands was situated adjacent to Currie High and if plans progressed as detailed their pupils would lose access to the swimming pool and sports hall
- major changes would have a detrimental effect on the pupils at Woodlands
- integration is done correctly would be welcomed
- impact of the location on the second school at Kirkliston in terms of safer routes to school
- catchment changing from Craigmount to Tynecastle
- concerned that perceptions of schools won't influence the outcome of the consultation – sometimes there is a great fear of some schools which isn't in reality justified
- concerned about disruption at Currie High – what would be done to make sure the children would continue to get the best education during repair works
- recognised that ultimately a decision would need to be made by the Council as to the level of investment to be made in Currie but that immediately required maintenance would continue to be carried out

- communication with parents/carers at all stages of the information consultation was vitally important
- recognised the pressures on parent council Chairs in ensuring that information was communicated to the wider parent body – parents were looking to parent councils for more information
- 0-18 GME strategy was included in the Gaelic Language Plan and the aspiration was for there to be a dedicated GME secondary provision at some point in the future – it was recognised, however, that this was at a very early stage of thinking
- pressures on James Gillespie's High School for the delivery of GME was acknowledged – Drummond High could be an option as it was currently operating under capacity

Decision

- 1) To record thanks to those present for their contributions to the discussion.
- 2) To note the ongoing informal consultation arrangements.
- 3) To receive an update at the next meeting of this Committee on 1 March 2018.

4. Empowering Schools – A Consultation on the Education (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish Government had issued a consultation paper setting out proposed changes to the Education (Scotland) Bill to improve educational outcomes for young people, how they would work in practice, and what legislative changes were needed to enable them to happen. Views were sought on whether the changes would deliver the empowered school and teacher-led system which the Scottish Government were seeking to achieve. The deadline for responses was 30 January 2018.

A link to the document had been sent to all parents/carers asking for comments.

Alex Ramage had already drafted some answers and shared them via the Edinburgh Parent Council Network.

The National Parent Forum were putting together a summary document which would be sent on to all parents once it was available.

Decision

To note the update.

5. Locality Issues

The following issues were raised by the Locality Representatives:

South West

Provision for Children with Dyslexia

Information was currently being put together for parents/carers regarding provision for children with dyslexia.

North West

Health and Wellbeing

Colleagues from Waverley Court had attended the locality meeting to talk about health and wellbeing.

Voting Rights of parent Representative on Education, Children & Families Committee

Concerns had again been expressed about the non-voting status of the parent representative on the Education, Children and Families Committee.

20mph Speed Limits

Issues around 20mph speed limits on school streets were discussed including vehicle activated signs. It was agreed to ask for a presentation on this at the next meeting of the CCWP.

Provision of 1140 Hours – Early Years

Some initial thoughts from parents regarding the 1140 hours provision were that demand would increase. People valued the link between nursery and P1 and parents had felt that there might be the need to look at the non-catchment aspect of nursery places in the future.

South East

Health and Wellbeing

Colleagues from Waverley Court had attended the locality meeting to talk about health and wellbeing.

Voting Rights of parent Representative on Education, Children & Families Committee

Concerns had again been expressed about the non-voting status of the parent representative on the Education, Children and Families Committee.

Recruitment for Appeal Committee Parent Representatives

The Council were looking for additional parents to support the Appeal Committee process for school placings. The closing date for applications was 22 December 2017.

School Meals

Concerns had been raised about the quality of school meals – some schools had their own kitchens but some had to have school meals delivered in.

20mph Zones

Discussion had taken place around reducing urban speed limits. Problems in the Old Town included containment of pollutants especially on the Cowgate. There needed to be joined up thinking about traffic management within the overall context of the Transport Strategy.

North East

School Meals

Concerns had been raised about the standard and quality of school meals.

Citywide Special Schools

Financial Provision – Special Schools

Concerns had been expressed about any further planned financial savings which could affect special schools particularly in relation to provision of some services. The Executive Director for Communities and Families confirmed that savings required to be made across the whole budget over the next 4 years amounted to £140m. However, the Council had iterated very strong commitments to protecting schools and special schools and pupil support assistant posts. There had been a commitment from the coalition administration to increase pupil support assistants across the board.

Transport to Schools

Parents/carers expressed concerns that rolling this out at the beginning of the year seemed to happen too late and that advance contact with families was 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 had been 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

An issue had been raised about occupational therapies and how they were managed and classification of special schools depending on the needs of the children.

Meeting Venues

Parents/carers had asked for meeting venues and timings to be alternated. This would be looked at going forward.

Decision

- 1) To note all the issues raised and proposed actions to address these.
- 2) To ask for a presentation on 20 mph zones and traffic management on wider school streets to the next meeting.

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 developed in partnership with Skills Development Scotland – link <https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

Dr Beata Kohlbek from Currie Academy had been appointed as Deputy Forum Representative.

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 by Eileen Prior.

The following key areas were highlighted:

- Member Support
- Partnership Schools
- Data Protection
- SPTC AGM and Annual Lecture – 8 February 2018
- Scottish Government Governance Review
- Continuous Professional Development Service

Decision

To note the update.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Decision

To note that the next meeting of the Consultative Committee would take place on Thursday 1 March 2018 (6.00-8.00pm) in the City Chambers, Edinburgh.