

## Note of meeting

### **Consultative Committee with Parents**

**6:00pm Thursday 17 May 2018**

**City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh**

#### **Present:**

##### **Elected Members**

Councillors Dickie (in the Chair), Mary Campbell and Smith.

##### **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)

Ailsa McIntosh, South East Locality (James Gillespie's High School)

Alex Ramage, South East Locality (Education, Children & Families Parent Rep)

Ian Willis, South East Locality (Royal Mile Primary Parent Council)

Naomi Barton, South West Locality (Currie Community High School)

Gareth Oakley, South West Locality (Craiglockhart Primary Parent Council)

Kirsty Stoddart, South West Locality (Currie Community High Parent Council)

Rachel Wood (Citywide Special Schools – Pilrig Park)

##### **National Parent Forum**

Alison Bowyer

##### **Connect (formerly Scottish Parent Teacher Council)**

Eileen Prior

##### **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

Anna Gray, Acting Quality Improvement Manager, Special Schools

Jack Simpson, Senior Education Manager

Laura Millar, Service and Policy Adviser to the Convener of Education, Children and Families Committee

Lesley Birrell, Committee Services

## **Apologies**

Councillors Laidlaw and Perry; Julia Main (Citywide Special Schools), James Nicol (South West Locality).

## **1. Note of Previous Meeting**

### **Decision**

The Note of Meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 7 December 2017 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

## **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.

### **Financial Challenges**

Financial challenges remained considerable as the Council's programme of transformation continued and further savings were to be made. Key areas of investment had been identified and for schools this meant:

- Additional funding for investment in school buildings
- An extra £415,000 to support children with additional support needs including the Holiday Activity Programme for Disabled Children
- Funding to allow current library hours to be maintained
- An increase in the level of grant for school uniforms to bring Edinburgh to the Scottish average
- An extra £1.5m for looked after children and young people

### **Sub-Committee on Standards for Children and Families**

The sub-Committee on Standards for Children and Families gave elected members the opportunity to look at the quality of education and care experiences for young people in Edinburgh by scrutinising the reports and follow up actions of Education Scotland inspections in schools. The following schools were considered:

Tynecastle High School – Inspection Report

Victoria Primary School – Inspection Report

Hermitage Park Primary School – Inspection Report

### **Holiday Activity Programme for Disabled Children**

The programme works with disabled children with complex and diverse care needs providing care during the school holidays. The contract for this provision was awarded to the organisation FABB from October 2017.

A number of issues and concerns had been raised by parent including the amount of provision available per child and quality of the provision during the October week.

Due to ongoing management difficulties the Council took over managerial responsibility for the provision. The October, February and Easter holiday programme had all been delivered. The Council was investigating all options to increase recruitment including direct approaches to colleges and universities. The aim was to extend provision for up to 6 weeks for children but under current conditions 4 weeks had not been able to be offered to families who wished that level of service.

### **South West Schools Review**

The informal consultation on the future of the school estate in the West and South West Edinburgh had come to a close. This was the first step in looking at the future for schools in the area in order to plan for rising rolls and provide modern facilities for young people.

Alternative options had been identified as a result of community engagement. Elected members would consider all the views expressed during the information consultation process and the deputations. A report on any final proposals would be presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 22 May 2018.

### **Rights Respecting Schools Silver Award**

Firrhill High School had been accredited with the UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools silver which was the second stage of the Award. Firrhill High were the first school in the UK to have achieved Silver under the new criteria. The award recognised good progress towards embedding children's rights in the school's policy, practice and ethos.

### **Schools WiFi Update**

As a result of a number of service issues relating to WiFi coverage within schools, a service improvement plan had been implemented to deal with the poor coverage issues.

A progress report would be considered at the Education, Children and Families Committee in due course.

### **Para Sport Festival**

The seventh para sport festival had taken place at Forrester/St Augustine's School Campus on 23 March 2018. 81 school aged pupils with a physical or sensory impairment from across the East of Scotland had registered for the event.

### **Gaelic**

The Gaelic Language Plan was considered by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 15 May 2018. The report contained details on the Council's plans to develop Gaelic and Gaelic Medium education in the City.

In addition to supporting progress across the wider agenda, the Plan sought to address the challenges of increasing demand for GME and GLE across the city and teacher recruitment and retention.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the updates.

- 2) To ask the Executive Director for Communities and Families to consider re-instating the previously held meetings between parents, communities and families and finance officers via the Locality Group meetings to have a discussion around the budget.

(Reference - update paper submitted by the Executive Director for Communities and Families, submitted)

### **3. Teacher Workforce - Update**

Jack Simpson provided an update on the issue of teacher recruitment and retention across the city. The recruitment campaign had been highlighted on the Council's website and 557 applications had been received for the 34 advertised posts for secondary education. The majority of the vacancies had been interviewed for and appointments made. The final number of vacancies still to be filled would be known by mid-June.

Recruitment to STEM subjects, home economics, computing, Gaelic and history continued to be an issue not just in Edinburgh but across Scotland.

A meeting had been held on 2 May 2018 with Napier and Queen Margaret Universities. 41 under or post graduates had now signed up for observation experience in schools.

Thanks were recorded to colleagues in HR and Communities and Families and teaching staff for all their efforts in promoting the recruitment campaign.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- what could be done to help with the cost of living in Edinburgh?
- Might need to have a more strategic look at incentivisation
- Noted that there were allowances in teachers' conditions of service for remote areas but that there was not really a precedent for that in Edinburgh
- There were not enough people training to be teachers and the Scottish Government were trying to encourage students to take up teaching
- 2 Gaelic probationers had been requested for secondary but none had been forthcoming – there were 3 primary Gaelic probationers
- question feedback mechanism on quality of supply teachers and challenge from GTCS – is there a risk from a quality perspective that we have full information

#### **Decision**

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To note that work was ongoing with schools towards developing a supply teacher policy.

### **4. Schools Estate – Strategic Review - Update**

Crawford McGhie provided an update on the strategic review of the school estate. There were papers on the agenda for the Education, Children and Families Committee meeting to be held on 22 May 2018 covering the following issues:

- Informal consultation on west and South West Edinburgh
- GME growth in the City and capacity issues at James Gillespie's High School

A report on the Wave 4 schools was scheduled to be considered at an additional meeting of the Committee on 21 June 2018.

The following issues were raised during discussion:

- There was a general lack of clarity on the capacity of primary schools and in particular high schools weren't clear on how notional capacity was calculated
- There were different reasons at different schools about how capacity was calculated in terms of curriculum choice / number of children / teaching spaces
- Concerns that if notional capacity was reached, one dining space and one assembly space was not going to be sufficient
- Capacity will be an issue when rising rolls progress through primary schools – the key issue would be managing the S1 intake each year
- Investment was required in all the school and a financial plan would need to be developed showing how investment could be staggered over different time period – capital investment would require borrowing
- The proposed rising rolls group at James Gillespie's High School would ensure that parents were fully engaged in the process – GME provision would form part of this discussion
- There still remained a lot of stress for families involved in the West/South West informal consultation – consultation and engagement needed to be done differently

## **Decision**

- 1) To note the update.
- 2) To request that a short briefing paper be issued to parent councils on how notional capacity was calculated to aid understanding and the complexities around that.

## **5. Transition from Children's to Adult Services**

Concerns had been expressed by parents of children who were pupils at the Council's special schools about the transition from children's to adult services once their children were no longer of school age.

The Council's Disability Support and Strategy Manager had been present at the Locality Group meeting and had provided an information sheet to all special schools parent council Chairs setting out what could be provided in terms of support. The capacity of the support team had been enhanced but there was still an approximate 4 week delay in arranging appropriate provision.

Parents had highlighted the difficulty of ensuring everyone was engaged and felt it would be helpful if an information booklet could be prepared which could be issued via the school to all families. There was also the issue around care during holidays for young people who were in work or college.

## **Decision**

- 1) To note that the Disability Support Team were currently developing a programme for senior phase pupils that built packages around the curriculum.
- 2) To note that Edinburgh College had appointed a disability engagement officer which would help to address these issues and would link in to all the special schools in Edinburgh.
- 3) To note that transition was a standing item on the Citywide Special Schools Group.

## **6. Locality Representatives – Key Issues**

The following issues were raised by the Locality Representatives:

### **South West**

#### **Health and Wellbeing**

The Quality Improvement Officer had delivered presentations at each of the Locality Groups on Health and Wellbeing.

#### **Electronic Homework Diary**

Concerns had been expressed by parents that some pupils might not have enough data to access the electronic homework diary via mobile phones.

## **Decision**

- 1) To invite the Quality Improvement Officer to a future meeting of this Committee to provide an update on health and wellbeing.
- 2) To update the South West Locality Group as soon as possible on the issues around accessing the electronic homework diary.

### **North West**

#### **20mph Speed Limits and Vehicle Activated Signs**

Issues around 20mph speed limits on school streets were discussed including vehicle activated signs. This had been a long running outstanding action.

#### **Quality of School Meals**

Quality of school meals had been discussed – time to serve, portions, menu variety and innovative ways of getting pupils to stay in school for lunch at High Schools.

#### **Works Planned Over the Summer Break**

Some schools had expressed concerns about the works being completed in time for the first day of term in August. Individual Head Teachers and school business managers had project manager details. It was noted that an updated schedule of works would be requested from property services and parents would be kept updated via individual Head Teachers and via the Council's website.

## **ICT Strategy**

Parents had requested information on the availability of information technology within schools and how they would access this. It was noted that the Council's ICT Strategy was available to view on the Council's website.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the issues.
- 2) To prepare a rolling actions log for the Committee detailing any outstanding actions requested.
- 3) To ask for a presentation at the next meeting of the Committee on 20mph zones and vehicle activated signs and wider traffic management on school streets.

## **South East**

### **WiFi in James Gillespie's High School**

Concerns continued to be raised about the availability of WiFi in James Gillespie's High School to allow pupils to fully engage in learning. At the present time, pupils could only access WiFi in the playground and this was hugely disadvantageous. The Education, Children & Families Committee had agreed to carry out a pilot at the school to address the issues including equity of use. Security risks of malware into the Council system was an issue which was preventing the pilot from progressing within the initially planned timescale but it was hoped to commence in June 2018.

## **North East**

### **Maintenance of Sports Pitches**

Concerns had been expressed about grass cuttings left lying on sports pitches after cutting making them almost unplayable. It was noted that facilities management should be contacted about this. 3G pitch maintenance had not to date been part of the business model, however, the PPP schools and Balerno high School had maintenance contracts.

### **Safer Streets**

There were concerns around safety issues of bin lorries and delivery vans driving past schools at pick up and drop off times. It was noted that the police had powers in safer streets over and above ordinary streets. The Council paid £2.6m to Police Scotland for additional community police officers.

### **Spend to Save Campaign – Energy Saving**

Discussions had taken place around a spend to save campaign regarding saving energy within schools, eg. installing blinds to reduce the sunlight without blocking it out entirely.

## Citywide Special Schools

### Current and Future Strategies for Placement of Children into Special Schools

Parents had requested an update on current and future strategies for placement of children into special schools. Information would be passed to the Quality Improvement Officer who would be attending the meeting at Braidburn School.

#### 7. Update from National Parent Forum Scotland

A paper from the National Parent Forum Scotland (NPFS) was circulated by Alison Bowyer.

Updates were included on the following:

- Annual Conference 2018
- Empowering Schools – A Consultation on the Provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill
- Early Learning and Childcare Service Model – Consultation
- Learning Disability Week – Promotion of Letter Templates by People First

#### Decision

To note the updates.

#### 8. Update from Connect (formerly Scottish Parent Teacher Council)

A paper from Connect (formerly Scottish Parent Teacher Council) was circulated by Eileen Prior.

The following key areas were highlighted:

- Member Support
- Partnership Schools
- Continuous Professional Development Service
- Data Protection
- Survey on Support for Families Experiencing Poverty
- Scottish Government
  - Educational governance
  - Bullying reporting and monitoring
  - School transport
  - Music education partnership group

#### Decision

To note the update.



## **8. Dates of Next Meetings**

### **Decision**

Thursday 9 August 2018 at 6pm in the City Chambers

Thursday 4 October 2018 at 6pm in the City Chambers

Thursday 6 December 2018 at 6pm in the City Chambers

Thursday 28 February 2019 at 6pm in the City Chambers

Thursday 16 May 2019 at 6pm in the City Chambers