

Community Access to Schools

Education, Children & Families Committee

9th October 2012

Purpose of report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to inform and seek approval from the committee for the initial work identified within the Scope of the Review of Community Access to Schools.

Main report

- 2 A commitment has been made to review the way in which the Children and Families Department manages and administers Community Access to Schools (CATS). There are currently high levels of community access in schools and this review will result in increased levels of access where possible. This review will result in a single system, centrally managed and resourced. The intended outcome would be a system that is more efficient, less costly and fit for purpose. The system would result in a consistency of approach throughout the city that would further enhance the place of schools at the heart of local communities.
- 3 The current position in the city is that Community Access to Schools is supported by four separate systems. These are in place for discreet areas of activity i.e. Primary Schools, designated Community High Schools, other Secondary Schools and the school based Adult Education programme. All of these discreet areas of activity have specific resources attached to them and it is these areas that will be the focus of doing things differently. There should be a positive impact on service users in that a single system should offer clarity and consistency for all stakeholders. In simple terms if any community group or individual wants to get access to any school there will be one way of doing it. There will be an agreed scheme of charges throughout the city that takes account of the quality of facilities on offer. These charges should not be set at a level that undermines local access for local people. However, income generation is important and as such the opportunity to maximise income from a mixed economy of user groups e.g. local authority, private and business sectors will be explored.

- 4 The scope of the review would include the following activity;
- Audit current levels of community access to schools and the different pricing charges and costs of operating that sit alongside this activity
 - Develop proposals to increase community access to school facilities
 - Explore the systems that would be required to administer a city wide approach across all schools
 - Establish the current costs associated with running the systems currently in place
 - Establish the level of efficiency available and identify the source of that efficiency
 - Ensure that all key stakeholders are able to participate in the review process and that relevant consultation takes place
 - Explore the alignment of CATS with other local planning mechanisms
 - Explore the possibility of a new electronic booking system for school lets
- 5 A short life project team will be created to take forward the CATS review. The work of this project team is intended to be completed by May 2013 so that decision can be taken to have the new systems and management in place for August 2013. That group will be inclusive of all key stakeholders and will ensure that appropriate engagement and consultancy is undertaken. The membership of the group will include representatives from Children and Families, Services for Communities, Edinburgh Leisure and EVOG. It is important to acknowledge that Headteachers will have a significant contribution to make to the design of the new systems and that they have a wealth of knowledge that should influence the way forward.
- 6 It is equally important to acknowledge the need for effective collaboration with colleagues in Edinburgh Leisure and CEC Culture and Sport. There are a number of national strategies regarding sport and culture that will require an agreed implementation across the Edinburgh Partnership. The new systems for supporting CATS will be key to helping realise the ambitions in those strategies together with the fundamental purpose of supporting learning in our communities.

Financial Implications

- 7 The intention is that the Council will achieve an efficiency saving of approximately £300K. This will be achieved by a reconfiguration of staffing and a review of the scheme of charges.

Equalities Impact

- 8 The review of Community Access to Schools will impact positively on the outcomes for children, families and communities throughout Edinburgh

Environmental Impact

- 9 There are no adverse environmental impacts and the action taken to review Community Access to Schools will contribute positively to a number of national and council priorities

Recommendations

- 10 The committee is asked to approve the following:
- a) That a short life project team is formed to take forward the Review of CATS.
 - b) That the project team undertakes the work agreed within the scope.
 - c) That all stakeholders are engaged and consulted with at key stages of development.

Gillian Tee
Director of Children and Families

Appendices	None
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Wards affected	
Single Outcome Agreement	Supports the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">2. Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health3. Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential4. Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Background Papers	None