

Deputations and Letters of Support

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00 am Tuesday, 15th December, 2020

Virtual Meeting - via Microsoft Teams

12. Deputations and Letters of Support

Contacts

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Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Education, Children and Families Committee

15 DECEMBER 2020

DEPUTATION REQUESTS and LETTER OF SUPPORT

Subject	Deputation
3.1 In relation to item 7.12 on the agenda – Revenue Monitoring 2020-21 – Month Six Position	Edinburgh Parent Council Network
3.2 In relation to item 8.2 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor Laidlaw – Delivery of School Sports	Letter of Support from C Walsh (Parent) Letter of Support from C Kelly (Parent) Letter of Support from L Sutherland, Active Schools Co-ordinator, James Gillespie’s High School Parent Council
3.3 In relation to additional item – Motion by Councillor Laidlaw – Funding of the Flu Vaccine by Headteachers for Staff	Edinburgh Parent Council Network

Edinburgh Council Budget Deputation from the Parents

Meeting of the Education Children and Families Committee 15/12/20

Background

The Council have issued a consultation to residents in Edinburgh to provide information to the Councillors of all Parties regarding the Budget for 2021 to 2024. The consultation explains that the reasons for the consultation relates to the need for the Council to make significant savings to bring the budget into balance.

The Consultation

The consultation issued to residents through the consultation hub was articulated as seven questions, shown below:

1. During the pandemic, what do you think the Council has done well?
2. In order to keep residents and Council colleagues safe, some services were limited and some closed altogether over the last year. What Council services have you missed during the pandemic?
3. What has been different about your life because those services were not available, or less available than they used to be?
4. What do you think the Council should prioritise to help the city and Edinburgh residents - especially those experiencing financial hardship - recover from the effects of the pandemic?
5. The Council has already identified over £80m of savings and funding in 2020/21, but has to find at least £5.1m more because of extra costs and lower income resulting from the pandemic. Over the next three years, the Council has identified £40m of savings, but needs to find at least a further £47.5m in savings or service cuts. Where could the Council reduce the cost or frequency of services it provides to your household?
6. The pandemic is one of two global emergencies we are dealing with. Edinburgh has declared a climate emergency and is still working to reach net-zero emissions by 2030. What do you think should be done in Edinburgh to avoid waste, reduce energy use, or make the city more sustainable?
7. What else, if anything, would you like Edinburgh councillors to be aware of before they make decisions about the city's budget?

Parental Comments on the Consultation

The parents feel that the number of questions are looking to ask the Parents to prioritize the spending over the next three years based on the experience of the last nine or more months. Furthermore, Parents are concerned that the questions will lead to cuts by omission of services that are listed by the respondents. We feel that this is not an appropriate approach to the Council's Budget, which should not be subject to the unusual issues that have come to the fore as a result of the pandemic.

Parents Thoughts

Although we understand the Education Children and Families Budget is a significant proportion of the spending of the Council, the vast majority of the cost in the Budget relate to the Salary costs for the staff of the Schools. Each school receives a Budget from the Council. The Budget covers salaries and running costs for the schools. The salaries costs are approximately 90% of the budget, leaving the running costs for the school to be covered by the remaining.

Our Head Teachers tell us that the running cost element of the budget does not cover the needs of the schools and the Head Teachers are forced to make difficult decisions between over spending and reducing the number of staff employed. Given the pandemic and historic budget cuts it is already a challenge for many schools to deliver the full curriculum. Advanced Highers have been cut back, subject choices have narrowed and resources for learning are scarce. It is very clear that there is no remaining slack in school budgets and the City should be investing in our schools rather than looking to make further cuts to either current or capital budgets.

Since the previous administration started to do these Budget Consultations, the Leadership of the Council have been making significant reductions year on year to school budgets and of the monies expended on our children in the City (including library closures) and this needs to stop.

Although the Council have told us on many occasions that they have protected "front line" education elements, the cuts that have been made have not removed the need for the work that is required to deliver quality education in our schools.

The Council have made decisions at the Centre in Waverley Court, that have implications to the schools delegated budgets and yet Parent Councils have not been consulted about budgets directly for a number of years. Parents often find out about these funding cuts after the decisions have been made.

Although we as parents support the ambition of proper access of children to online learning, the proposal of one 2 one devices in Secondary schools and one 2 six in primary schools delegates the funding of these devices to schools and, as indicated above, this makes a concerning call on the running costs for the school.

What do Parents want the Committee to do?

Parents are looking for the Committee councillors to take the strong concerns of Parent back to their groups, and through those groups to protect Education Spending including front line spending. This should also include school based libraries and other functions of the Council that are used by pupils in Schools.

Signed

Edinburgh Parent Council Network

From: Charis Walsh [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 December 2020 19:51
To: Ian Perry <Ian.Perry@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Alison Dickie <Alison.Dickie@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Eleanor Bird <Eleanor.Bird@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Mary Campbell <Mary.Campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Scott Douglas <Scott.Douglas@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Joan Griffiths <Joan.Griffiths@edinburgh.gov.uk>; David Key <David.Key@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Steve Burgess <Steve.Burgess@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Jason Rust <Jason.Rust@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Callum Laidlaw <Callum.Laidlaw@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Louise Young <Louise.Young@edinburgh.gov.uk>
Cc: Andy Gray <Andy.Gray@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Adam McVey <Adam.McVey@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Alistair Gaw <Alistair.Gaw@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Lorna French <Lorna.French@edinburgh.gov.uk>

Subject: Education, Children and Families Committee Meeting 15/12/20

I am writing in regard to the motion proposed by Councillor Laidlaw concerning the delivery of sport in school at the Education, Children and Families Committee Meeting on Tuesday 15th December 2020.

I am fully in support of the motion to re-introduce the Active Schools programme. There are children missing out on sport because they do not have the access to funds or transport to join external private clubs. For example, to join a privately run football club costs £25 a month subs, plus £20 deposit for the match kit and £32 for the training kit. With families struggling in the current climate they simply cannot manage the outlay.

Joining private clubs also puts children in contact with children from other schools, thereby increasing the risk of infection from Covid and a lot of these clubs are at full capacity and cannot take on further members.

Parent volunteers need to be allowed in schools to deliver these sports while following all necessary procedures for safe delivery.

The benefits of sport for children is well documented and I find it incredibly sad that children are missing out.

I strongly urge you to pass the motion and get ALL of our children active again.

Kind regards

Charis Walsh

Sent from my Galaxy

Item 3.2

From: Chas Kelly

Sent: 14 December 2020 22:23

To: Adam McVey <Adam.McVey@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Andy Gray <Andy.Gray@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Alistair Gaw <Alistair.Gaw@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Ian Perry <Ian.Perry@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Alison Dickie <Alison.Dickie@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Mary Campbell <Mary.Campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Scott Douglas <Scott.Douglas@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Joan Griffiths <Joan.Griffiths@edinburgh.gov.uk>; David Key <David.Key@edinburgh.gov.uk>; Louise Young <Louise.Young@edinburgh.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Call for the resumption of Extra-Curricular Sport for Primary school children

Good evening,

I understand that there is to be an Education Children and Families Committee tomorrow, and that a motion (8.2) is being tabled by Cllr Laidlaw to try and get sport started and delivered in state schools properly and comprehensively.

As someone who dialled into the last meeting (see below) I was extremely disappointed by the update afterwards that effectively banned volunteers from running safe outdoor sports.

I very much welcomed the clarity that was provided by the Head of Facilities, who laid out that staff levels would not allow him to re-open sports centres at the same time as keepings schools open, due to the increased workload in the cleaning and organising a safe environment. While disappointing again, this makes sense, is rationale and transparent, and reasonable in these difficult times.

Sadly, such clarity and honesty was missing while describing the planned “decision tree” that was said to be in final draft at that point. The meeting seemed to provide a lot of hope that this would allow outdoor sports at least to restart, and the tone was very much that guidance was close and would be supportive. What I find particularly galling is:

- It was clearly stated that the decision tree was pretty much complete as at the time of the meeting. This was framed as being from an overall risk perspective. If the guidance was close at that point, and given the amount of discussion that there had been on the use of parents and volunteers in a lot of the outdoor activities, I am puzzled as to why was it not stated that the use of volunteers would not be possible? If there was a late change, what caused this about turn?
- There was a fear from the committee that any guidance could put pressure on teachers and other staff to have to support extra-curricular activities. By effectively banning volunteers, I would argue that is exactly what the council’s implementation of the decision has done.

Again, I would point out that other much wider groups (non school) of children from multiple catchments remain able to mix in other clubs, and indeed play other teams now. All within risk assessed and government confirming guidance from the relative sporting associations This decision tree that was published is completely inconsistent with this.

I appreciate the need for a cautious approach and also the logistical / resource restrictions in place. However, I contrast the level of clarity from the head of Facilities Management on the rationale as to why he couldn’t support indoor sports centres activities, to why volunteers cannot help here where they can elsewhere – schools outside this council area are doing so as are clubs inside the area.

It has been suggested that a potential blocker is the councils lack of resource to review the volume of risk assessments that would be required. If this is the case then open and honest clarity around this would be appreciated. If there is another reason why the motions that were passed have been followed in letter only and not in spirit, then again clarity on this is really required.

Overall, I would implore the council to take this chance to provide consistency and show how our children can resume the sports that they so love and need for all the beneficial reasons that have been documented at length elsewhere.

Yours faithfully

Chas Kelly

Item 3.2

December 16th 2020

To: Head of Education
Edinburgh City Council

CC: Lorna French

Dear Andy

Subject: Active Schools and Safe School Sport Delivery

I am writing to express how upset I was watching the CCwP meeting back last week. I have say it was very disheartening and in places, disconcerting (I have a list of 34 unanswered questions that I won't burden you with now!). Despite the motions being passed on Oct 13th at the last ECF, children have still yet to experience a widespread, systematic return to after-school (outdoor) sports delivery in Edinburgh. As a Health Psychologist, Active Schools Netball Coach and Parent, this deeply concerns me!

SAFETY

Despite your arguments to the contrary, outdoor sport for under 18s even in Tier 4, is deemed safe (as per SG / Active Scotland and SportScotland guidelines for Children and Young People). I appreciate your goal is to put safety first. I work in public health and I understand exactly what is going on right now and how (and to what extent in each LA) Covid-19 is spreading. A huge amount of evidence gathering and policy making has been made at a national level through SG, Active Scotland, SportScotland and National Sport Governing Bodies to make games, training, players and coaches - Covid-19 safe. However, despite the guidance - this is now being ignored by yourselves at ECC.

It would appear that you are implementing disproportionate risk mitigation with little quantifiable justification. Please could you share what part of Education Scotland guidance you are following?

It is important to state that even if we remain in Tier 3 in January, there is a clear pathway and support for external coaches to enter school property and deliver outdoor sports.

To reassure you from a coach's perspective - there are many safety procedures and protocols already in place, (again from SportScotland, Scottish Government Active Scotland and National Sport Governing Bodies) to make training within the school community hub setting as 'Safe As Possible'. As a Netball Coach, I am 'duty bound' to implement these to minimise transmission for both players and coaches, including sanitising the ball every 15 minutes and taking player temperatures on arrival. And yet, we are denied access to help and support schools, teachers and students in the safe delivery of sport. I do not understand why you rejected Alex Ramage's suggestion to 'employ' volunteers to work within your own stipulated guidelines (articles of memorandum) to control delivery, and therefore risk.

Certainly, most volunteers do not go into more than one school setting a day anyway and would happily sign this.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Outdoor sports and indoor sports are happening within Edinburgh Schools at night for U18 and there is no evidence of increased transmission.

We need you as Education Officers to re-consider the evidence - especially now that Edinburgh's private schools have shown that outdoor sport is relatively lower risk and have therefore continued to deliver it since August. It is important that you be transparent with the logic model underpinning your fixed decision-making tree - (that was in place to the 23rd Dec, and has treated outdoor sport like all other ECAs). I also kindly request that you show the evidence, rationale, contingencies (rates of positive cases in schools?) for moving into different phases from Jan to June 2021 - and be more specific with schools and parents alike about when and how it will be reviewed. Currently - there is little or no direct communication - and I don't mean just putting it on your website! Some schools didn't even know that it was up to teachers to now deliver sport. There is no transparency, and increasingly unfortunately - no trust. You did not communicate to the school community on the 16th October as promised at the last ECF meeting on the 13th to Cllr Laidlaw and Cllr Burgess.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES & INEQUALITIES OF DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

I believe that the ECC's 'appetite for low risk' has a detrimental impact on certain groups and is denying equal opportunities to access coaching, facilities, resources - which result in no after school sports clubs for the majority of our children, including those in deprived areas or with lower income families in more 'middle class' schools.

The unintended consequences of banning Active Schools' paid or volunteer coaches going into schools (all 1,345 of them according to SportScotland City of Edinburgh 2018/19 report) to help support delivery is not being measured or impact assessed in a way that is being made public. It would appear from the CCwP that ECC have not conducted a specific risk assessment of this current policy approach, for those who rely more heavily on school sport (e.g. Teenage Girls, BAME Community, High School children in lower income families - who turn to drugs and alcohol instead. Source: Sports England 2020). Those children who benefit from free Active School places (if on school meals) can't go to clubs in their own school and their parents can't afford them to go to private clubs at night (ironically often in School Community Sports Hubs they go to school in during the day).

Private school children are getting a full 'menu' of outdoor sporting options after school. Yet Edinburgh's state school children can't even play sport in their own school facilities, sports halls, pitches or AstroTurf's right now if a teacher isn't present. This is leading to widening health inequalities. This is ironic when SG is focusing on physical activity to help mental health and fight obesity as 'resilience' factors in Covid times. And some studies show that academic attainment is associated with sports participation (Dyer et al, 2017). One would argue with your classification of sport as 'non-essential' when the Curriculum for Excellence has focused on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing in lockdown. For those studying Nat 5, Higher or Advanced Higher PE that need to perform two sports successfully in their practical

assessments, one would argue - it is educationally relevant. Particularly for those children who need coaching opportunities and experience to put on their University application forms.

LACK OF SYSTEM SUPPORT

It was mentioned that Active Schools is changing its focus, but this has not been articulated clearly yet or undergone a consultation process as national level through SportScotland or yourselves yet - will that happen? Although a 'targeted' approach has been taken to put AS co-ordinators in 13 primary schools in 'poorer' areas full time since August, this is not hitting the large High School numbers I believe are required. You have also ineffectively dismantled the support system for schools and teachers. Teachers don't have the capacity and it is evident as only a handful of clubs have returned Oct-Dec. As Active Schools has been taken out - there is no infrastructure to support schools - (through protective let time bookings, pupil registration, payment, insurance, first aid training etc.). The joinedinburgh.com online AS booking system would be key to help implement track and trace measures. One would argue that it is unethical to put the burden on Teachers at this time, particularly when you have re-deployed the resource to help them.

So, what is the solution? Coaches will in all honesty not set up private clubs (often they are running them outside too) - there is no capacity in Edinburgh Leisure or available sports facilities in community sport in the city to do so! Providing isolated Virtual Active Schools Sessions in January will not substitute for the social wellbeing aspects of team sport or build a school community and it is something that Joe Wicks or Sports Governing Bodies have already done successfully during lockdown - so it is unclear - what 'difference' that will really make.

PREVENTING CHOICE & OPPORTUNITIES

By the time that coordinators are back in situ in Feb, and the booking system is up and running again, we could be talking a whole year off of sport. Meanwhile children's' private school counterparts are literally bounding ahead into national sporting pathways and career opportunities. The failure for ECC Sports Academies to be started back is also a travesty as this could be managed safely. Again, withholding support for talented children's future sporting opportunities. Who will play for Scotland in the World Cup in the future we ask?

Finally - parents need to be given the choice to 'expose' their child to a potential positive test case by attending an 'additional' activity in a school setting (even if reduced probably to contract outside), and therefore require to self-isolate and undergo online learning. But they are being forced to make those choices in their own time right now anyway as their children's only option is to attend private clubs in the evening and weekends, mixing with more children from different schools across the city anyway indoors and outdoors, arguably increasing risk across Edinburgh's City.

Peebles High School, North Berwick High School and Dunbar have all used work around solutions to help deliver outdoor sports successfully since August with external coaches. This is not a national decision, following national guidance, this is in the hands of a small group of officers who appear to have inadvertently put a stranglehold on outdoor sports provision in the Edinburgh state school sector. I beg you to work together with parents and volunteers

quickly, to find a safe solution – quickly. The clock is ticking and it would appear that there is a lack of motivation from ECC to work with parents and schools to now make this happen.

Kind regards

Lisa Sutherland

Active Schools - Volunteer Coach - Netball
JGHS Parent Council
Public Health/Health Psychology (BPS Graduate Member)

Table A: Sport & Physical Activity Protection Levels

		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
OUTDOOR SPORT Organised outdoor sport, competition, events and Physical Activity (PA)	Overview	An outdoor sporting 'field of play bubble' can consist of a maximum of 30 people including coaches, officials and other support staff at any one time. Multiple bubbles, each with up to 30 people, can be used in training, competition or small-scale sporting events if all guidance is followed (200 max per day unless with exemption).				
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited
	Adults (18+ years)				Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	
INDOOR SPORT Organised indoor sport, competition, events and Physical Activity (PA)	Overview	The number of participants allowed to take part in organised indoor sport or physical activity should follow Scottish Government guidance on the opening of sport and leisure facilities and sport specific SGB Guidance . 'Group' activity refers to adults, from more than 2 households (6 members) who take part in organised sport or physical activity. 'Individual exercise' refers to organised sport or physical activity within household rules i.e. 1:1 coaching. For further information see definitions within this guidance.				
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Indoor sport & PA prohibited: Leisure Centres, gyms and other indoor sports facilities closed. Exemptions available for professional /performance sport
	Adults (18+ years)		Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	Indoor <u>individual exercise only</u> No contact or non-contact group activity	