

## Note of meeting

## Item 2.1

### **Consultative Committee with Parents**

**6.00 pm, Thursday, 16 May 2019, Dunedin Room, City Chambers, Edinburgh**

#### **Present:**

##### **Elected Members**

Councillors Perry (Convener) and Mary Campbell.

##### **Locality Groups – Parent Representatives**

Kevin Kealy (Nether Currie Primary School Parent Council)

Gareth Oakley, Southwest Locality (Craiglockhart Primary School Parent Council)

David Sterratt, North East Locality (Drummond Community High School Community Council)

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

Naomi Barnton, South West Locality (Currie Community High School Parent Council)

John Brownlee, South East Locality (Gracemount High School Parent Council)

Paul Millan, North West Locality (Roseburn Primary School Parent Council)

Melissa Wilson, North West Locality (Fox Covert Primary School)

##### **Connect**

Eileen Prior

##### **Officers in Attendance**

Alistair Gaw, Executive Director for Communities and Families

Andy Gray, Head of Schools and Lifelong Learning

Bernadette Oxley, Head of Children's Services

Crawford McGhie, Head of Operational Support, Children and Families

Maria Plant, Senior Education Manager, Communities and Families

Janice Watson (QIEO) Maria Plant, Schools and Lifelong Learning Manager

Kirsty Watt, Braidburn School/Citywide Special Schools

Alison Nicolson, Redhall School/Special Schools

##### **Apologies**

Councillors Dickie and Young and Amanda Campbell.

## 1. Minute

### Decision

To approve the note of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 28 February 2019 as a correct record.

## 2. Rolling Action Log

The Rolling Actions Log was submitted for consideration.

### Decision

- 1) To note the Rolling Action Log.
- 2) To try to work to target dates for the next meeting of the Consultative Committee.

## 3. Health and Wellbeing

An update was provided by Janice Watson, Quality Improvement Education Officer, Communities and Families.

She explained that the most important development of this year was the development of Health and Wellbeing Framework. It was challenging because it covered so many areas of work, so the strategy was designed to pull together all the different aspects of health and wellbeing to make it more manageable. (She then handed out copies of the strategy).

In Scotland there was a clear definition of health and wellbeing and there was also a policy agreement. The agreed definition of health and wellbeing was wellbeing indicators and the strategy was based on these indicators. It was important to ensure that this was correct. The Strategic Group helped to fine-tune the strategy. Strategy and the accompanying booklet, which outlined minimum standards, had now been shared with all the schools. The feedback from the schools showed that this strategy was beneficial to them. The small booklet was a guide to show what the authority's expectations were and what has been done well. The Strategy was leading what has been done across the authority. There were four strategic group meetings per year and pupils' input was welcomed.

The priorities for the authority included relationships that came from parenthood. The meeting that was held three weeks previously focused on that, with input from Education Scotland and NHS Scotland. Children's views should be heard in a meaningful way. In respect of special schools, one of meetings would be held in special schools.

The other method to move the strategy forward was through network of primary, secondary and special schools, which provided feedback from schools. It was also necessary to give information to schools on strategic aspects. A pupil wellbeing questionnaire had been sent to schools. The results from this would be used to inform the authority how to progress matters. Health and wellbeing were inspected in schools, through the full model and the short model. Primary Head Teachers were sharing good

practice with other schools. Regarding the curriculum, primary schools had developed health and progression frameworks to help them navigate aspects of the curriculum to facilitate planning for teachers.

It had been found that child protection was very outdated and Janice Watson had chaired a group to improve matters, make it more relevant and help it tie with progression frameworks. A report on Health and Wellbeing would be considered at the Education, Children and Families Committee. However, some health and wellbeing issues were difficult to measure. Consequently, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland had worked on this to establish a measurement. There would be a questionnaire circulated to schools in August. The Scottish Government would be able to pull together national data on what improvement would look like. This authority needed to be clear on the aspects that they had to improve. The report would consider each of the wellbeing indicators. There would be a new welcome national resource on the teacher relationship and parenthood education across Scotland. A number of clusters in the authority were piloting that at the moment.

She was optimistic about this going forward. The NHS was committed to training authority staff, as it was important to have professional development to give staff confidence. There was funding for a food and health development officer.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- It was important to rely on partnerships across the council and the NHS, and to provide support for all the schools.
- The third sector was represented by the Strategic Group. There had also been meetings with officers in council.
- The role of these officers in the council was explained. It was necessary to fulfil national obligations and it was fundamental that children felt safe and happy.
- Parent clubs should be involved in activities. Some parents were involved with working with food.
- At localities it was beneficial to know what was working well and to share ideas.
- Regarding the safeguarding policy, it was necessary to keep that ongoing and to keep pace with technology. The “Keeping Myself Safe” programme was taught to children.
- Work was being carried out on the on-line technology aspect of this. There was also a tool to signpost to other resources.
- Whether there was a standard document, keeping up to date with learning and developments.
- It was critical that information was shared with families as well as schools.
- Staff should be trained to avoid bad practices.
- How individual learning in schools was being undertaken and what more support was needed for mental health and specialist issues.
- In different schools, there were different challenges and support to be provided.
- The route would be the head teacher. School staff were aware what the main activities were.
- At what stage it would be necessary to bring in professional advice.

- The child planning process was in place. Then the key professionals would be brought in to discuss this. Schools would try to keep children in schools, but this was not always possible.
- Primary schools could usually deal with disruptive pupils, but at secondary schools, this was more challenging. Head teachers had the right to exclude pupils as they had to think about the well-being of the school.
- Even at the top end of primary schools, there were issues such as cyber bullying. School tried to deal this this, but the bullying was not always taking place in school time.
- Teachers were under increasing pressure, as some of the behaviour was difficult to deal with.
- It was necessary to consider the pressure on young people with challenging behaviour and to educate them. Providing balance, which included a safe environment was when the child learned best. The pressure on children because of social media was massive, so it was necessary to create resilience in children and support them in this.
- The Education and Health Care team had developed tools for resilience for young people and given staff tips on how to help them build resilience.
- It was testament to the commitment of the staff that they wanted to keep disruptive pupils at schools.

The Convener thanked Janice Watson for the presentation.

### **Decision**

- 1) Not all special schools were treated as active schools and this should be investigated to encourage healthy lifestyles.
- 2) Special schools were used to dealing with disruptive pupils and it might be idea to use their strategies.

## **4. Scottish Government – Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy**

An update was provided by Maria Plant, Senior Education Manager, Communities and Families

She explained about the Parental Involvement and Engagement strategy. The Authority would be circulating the parental involvement survey, which was government-led, to gather information. There was an opportunity to include questions that were more specific for Edinburgh. She described how the survey could be completed.

The information would be sent to schools and all parent council chairs. The survey would have a link to the orb, but there would also be paper copies for families who could not access the internet and key information would be provided. The format of the survey was not generally available yet, but it should not be a “ticking boxes” exercise.

## Decision

- 1) If there were issues with completing the parental survey, the Authority would help parents with this.
- 2) The information would definitely be sent through schools. However, the Authority would set out information to everyone that not received it.

## 5. School Estate

An update was provided by Crawford McGhie, Head of Operational Support, Communities and Families.

He reported that there was positive news to report in respect of the School Estate. Following the objection by SEPA to the proposed new St Crispin's Primary School, the Scottish Ministers had decided not to call in the planning application, so it had been possible to get planning permission and proceed with the tender for that school. The current estimate for that would be available by Easter 2021. Other projects included the replacement for Queensway High School, and three primary schools which were at various stages in the planning process. Tenders had gone out for some primary schools and the designs were progressing. There was a number of primary and secondary extensions taking place and there would be funding for the replacement of Castlebrare High School and for Phase 1 of Trinity Academy replacement. Funding would be made available to account for rising school rolls and a design budget provided for further primary schools. These primary schools formed the basis of the report being submitted to the committee for a statutory consultation. That paper also included the possibility of areas for further consultations. The Authority was committed to forming masterplans for all of the Wave 4 schools.

For the Phase 4 schools, the masterplans were based on guiding principles set out in the Scottish Government Draft Strategy. This focused on preserving aspects such as learning and integration, creating community hubs and digital learning. This would be taken into consideration as new schools projects were developed.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- There was pressure on schools rolls as the population of Edinburgh was increasing.
- The last report about PPP in schools had a major impact. Previously, the Clerks of Works had been taken off site, however, this has been reversed and now all Authority sites had a Clerk of Works. The contractors would also consider their recording procedures.
- A report was being submitted on the change in the ratio of pupil generation. There had been a study of recent developments and they had updated pupil generations. Using the projections, the ratio would increase slightly. The statutory consultation papers for specific would use these projections.
- Whether this would affect class sizes.
- The projections were important for pupil/teacher ratios.

- It was planned to deliver 5 phases. There were also plans to deliver other phases, had they had not yet been progressed the design phase.
- The date when the contractor would be appointed to Nether Currie Primary School and when that project would start.
- The tenders that had been returned were very high and it was necessary to get the best value.
- Whether it was planned to keep Woodland Special Schools in its present form or integrate it into Currie High School.
- The overarching principle was to consider the integration of special schools into mainstream whenever possible. The Council would engage with various groups and consider the various options.
- The main concern was about teaching and what was best for the children. Only if beneficial would integration take place. This not financially driven.
- Everything at Currie High School would be carried out by due process. A management plan was being compiled according to the Strategic Brief and this would include Woodlands.
- A statutory consultation was taking place, but parents were being given insufficient information.
- It should be possible to communicate the information to parents.

## **Decision**

- 1) Crawford McGhie would provide the information to parents, if required, on when the project for Nether Currie Primary School would start and when the contractor would be appointed.
- 2) Crawford McGhie to check the matter of communicating information to parents on the statutory consultation.

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

### **City-Wide Special Schools Group**

Alison Nicolson reported on the transition between primary and secondary for special schools and how this was different from mainstream schools. She was grateful that their views had been listened to. From next year there would be request for a secondary school in October and this would be confirmed by December. Regarding the secondary transition to adulthood, this was still uncharted territory. In respect of transition, a new process was being proposed, which was not yet clear. It was difficult for parents as there was confusion over the new process applying for transport. An officer had said they would send the guidance pack out. There was an action with the Council to make this a much smoother process for parents.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- It was agreed at last special school meeting that Frank Henderson and Mark Grierson would regularly attend these, especially to discuss transport issues.
- A paper was going to Committee on transport. This would be discussed at the PC's before it came to Committee, but this meeting had not taken place yet.

- There had been a briefing note circulated, but all this was subject to consultation.
- The policy was not being changed, but there was some confusion about how the policy was being applied. For any changes, there would be consultation.
- PC 's had discussed the issue of non-verbal children in special schools and mainstream who were getting support through PECS. GDPR compliance was interpreted differently in various schools, therefore, there should be a consistent approach.
- Some schools were content for it to be known which children were in class on a particular day, other school's thought that they could not give any information on any child in the class. Some schools were supporting children really well, others were taking a more hard line because of data protection issues. There needed to be consistent approach.
- If a child had hurt another child, the parent could not discipline that child at because there was no way of identifying the child.

### **Decision**

- 1) Special schools colleagues to e-mail Alex Ramage if they had anything to raise at Committee.
- 2) To check out data protection legislation to confirm if it was possible to give information about children who were in class and bring this back to the next meeting.

### **South West Locality Group**

Naomi Barton reported that there were three schools in the South West Area. They were deciding what was the best way of working together and what benefit it would bring. Discussion had taken place and there was a need to build trust between the three schools.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- Whether there were specific issues of rising rolls and catchment, or more general issues.
- There were issues regarding the new schools builds, such as did they get a swimming pool.
- For each school, there would be focus on specific staff and pupils, but there would also be wider community engagement.
- The Authority would ask the school community what facilities there should be and how they could be shared better.
- There should be more discussion regarding the possible benefits of sharing facilities and it was essential to ensure the correct use of resources.
- The Authority was primarily building education facilities, however, the best people to decide how to spend funding were those in the community.
- The Authority had to take account of what was available in that locality what added benefits a school would have. For PPP schools, there was quite cross fertilization of ideas at the design stage, of how physical spaces might be used. The specification of a school was usually standard, but there was scope for some changes.

- Some schools should be allowed to specialise in certain activities, such as football or music. Some parts of the school could be used for different activities at different times.
- The statutory consultation process had started and would last until the end of the year. The following Friday, there would be an information session.
- The facilities management booking system was working reasonably well, however, sometimes when people tried to attend events after 6.00 pm, they were “accosted” by a member of staff.
- A school fair was being organised. In the cluster there a few issues, such as inflatables not being allowed by the Council. With CONNECT there was insurance with inflatables, therefore, some clarification was required.
- Clarification was being sent to schools regarding the use of bouncy castles. It was not acceptable for schools to use these in curriculum time, but for school fairs, it should be possible to consider their use. However, there were safety issues and there had to be supervision.
- The Authority was providing some risk assessment in advance to ensure that the Council had exercised its duty of care. Accidents had happened, and the Council could be held liable if it did not have clear procedures.
- All of PC’s were members of CONNECT which meant they had insurance. They also had detailed instructions about what was permissible with bouncy castles. This information was on the website, but if there were any queries, people should contact Eileen Prior.
- PC’s were trying to give help to parents for excursions. This was a concern as the number of requests from parents unable to afford excursions was increasing.
- There were too many expensive trips abroad which might be excluding some children from going on these.
- PC’s should be aware of how well they represented parents. One issue was parents not attending events as they might be asked for a donation. Building the school community was more important than raising money.
- There was concern about the changes to catchment and if head teachers had to change their safety plans.
- It had been recommended that Safe Routes to Schools would be developed in conjunction with Transport.
- There would be an audit carried out on routes to school, which would indicate if measures were required.

## **Decision**

- 1) To check out the choices for the allocation of resources for new school builds and this to be brought back to the next meeting.
- 2) To have discussions about the requirements of the school curriculum.
- 3) To consider permitting schools to specialise in certain activities and be flexible in the use of school areas.
- 4) To check out the issue of staff questioning parents who were trying to attend events after 6.00 pm.

## **North West Locality Group**

Paul Millan indicated that there were not many local issues to raise at this stage.

### **Submission of Hours**

Maria Plant indicated that when people/parents had submitted their hours, they had been given their hours for allocation.

- Parents would like to know when learning supported hours would be offered.
- It was explained that there was a massive project to extend the hours. The 1140 hours would be delivered, but not necessarily in the new buildings that it was hoped for. The new buildings would help with flexibility. Ideally, it was hoped to have every school to be open from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm and for every parent to be allowed to choose their hours they wanted. However, the more options that were offered, the more expensive it was to deliver them. It might be necessary for people to travel further to get the options suited to them.
- At Fox Covert Primary School, they were already “trailing”.
- This was being discussed in the localities. Some of the schools already had 1140 hours. This was difficult to organise as there were large numbers of people coming and going.

### **Decision**

To note the update.

## **South East Locality Group**

Alex Ramage indicated that in local areas outside Edinburgh, parents were allowed to be involved in the interviewing of teachers. In Edinburgh the unions would allow this. How would this be resolved?

It was explained that this was an unfamiliar practice, but if this should be common practice in other local authorities, then the Head of Schools and Lifelong Learning should be informed.

The Scottish Teachers negotiating committee had a set of procedures for recruitment and selection. However, local arrangements were locally agreed. It was beneficial to use teaching as a way of testing the applicant, however, it was necessary to ensure fairness for all applicants as it might favour internal candidates. It was necessary to have the support of the teaching unions, have checks and balances, to have experienced observers and to ensure that the process was compliant with employment law.

The Authority was working with the unions to establish this as part of the mechanism for selecting teachers, to ensure that the right people carried out the selection. The process also had to be compliant with employment law.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- A number of schools has expressed an interest in digital learning and a working group had been set up for this.
- This was a complex issue. At James Gillespie’s High School, it was found that there was a number of different devices.

- The Authority was trying to create a system that was suitable for both secondary and primary schools, to ensure fairness and to decide what technology to use. The teacher at Tynecastle who was leading on this would report back in six months. It was hoped to roll this policy across Edinburgh.
- The parents were concerned about the time this was taking and the need to clarify the success criteria in the trial. Other schools would like to be involved, however, some schools could not afford to equip classes in up-to-date digital devices. Teachers had to sometimes teach in a non-digital way because the devices were no longer available. It would be beneficial to try to use pupils' devices as much as possible and help the other pupils.
- It was necessary to define what was meant by teaching with digital devices and to get the teaching profession up to speed. This was not a simple issue.
- The system was working well in Tynecastle where there was a digital learning strategy and no additional funding had been allocated. The staff engaged in this at Tynecastle were being involved in the roll out of this. There would soon be an approach to digital learning in the city that was sustainable and equitable. Once that strategy was developed it would come to the council.

### **North East Locality Group**

David Sterratt reported on the North East Locality Group and indicated that there were various issues. This included discussions about homework, the consultation, the need to put information on the Council Website, and issues with the transition arrangements.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- It would be helpful to get a pack made up. There had been discussions about updating the web.
- There had been discussions about parental involvement in localities about the role of the parent forum and the PC's. It was necessary to define what they did and to get more engagement.
- Regarding the learning process in special schools, PC's should be given more clarity and information sharing had to be much better. This was not just in respect of the localities group, but of information on the PC network. There should be a better information flow and it should be decided if that information should be put on the CEC website. This did not just concern the information flow but parental involvement. There should be effective documentation for the handover to the next generation.
- Good work was taking place to make these connections.
- There was a template for PC's to handover to the next generation.
- Some parents did not know that Connect existed. It was just a knack of easy access to information.
- There was a work in progress to get parents within an online group.
- In Braidburn School there was officer job description.

### **Decision**

- 1) Maria Plant to circulate the officer job description.

- 2) The Convener thanked David Sterratt for his invaluable contribution to the Consultative Committee as this was his last meeting.

## 7. Connect

Eileen Prior gave an update on a number of issues currently under consideration by Connect. She explained that the handover pack template and the job description of the officer holder were available on the website. The lecture in March include discussions on resilience and anti-bullying. There was a Scottish parental involvement network and there was guidance on data protection. They were circulating a member survey to get information from parents about what they should be doing. Also, a stakeholder survey was being circulated tonight.

Discussion took place regarding parental involvement guidance programs. There should be more focus on equality and the role of the PC's in relation to the parent forum. The parent forum was the main body and the PC's was there to support it. The other key aspect was the issue of standardised assessment.

### Decision

To note the update.

## 8. National Parent Forum

Andy Gray indicated that Cosla had ratified the teachers' pay settlement. Also, as part of the settlement, 2 days were added to the session for the next year. The Authority had to know what these dates would be and how best these should be added. There was no easy way of doing this and to decide what was best for improving teaching. 22 October 2019 and 8 January 2020 were possible dates. The Authority would let head teachers know about that.

There had been some discrepancies across the Authority regarding school hours.

### Decision

Andy Gray to carry out some comparisons of for local authorities in in Scotland regarding the time of school opening on Friday pm.

## 9. Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.