

Note of meeting

Consultative Committee with Parents

6.00pm, Thursday 25 February 2021

Virtual Meeting - via Microsoft Teams

Present (As taken by Roll call at the start of the Teams Meeting)

Elected Members

Councillors Ian Perry (Convener). Councillor Steve Burgess, Councillor Laidlaw and Councillor Louise Young.

Parent Representatives

Alex Ramage (Education Children & Families Committee Parent Representative)

Kevin Kealy

Naomi Barton

Alison Nicolson

Sarah Matheson

Musarah Junaid

Kate Morris

Tina Woolverton

Gareth Oakley

Gail Guest

Karen Galloway

Sarah Scott

Seamus Spencer

Sandra Dargie

External Officer Representatives

Eileen Prior (Connect Representative)

Damien Hayes (National Parent Forum of Scotland)

Council Officers in Attendance

Andy Gray, Head of Schools and Lifelong Learning

Arran Findlay, Senior Education Officer

Jack Simpson, Senior Education Officer
Anna Gray, Senior Education Officer
Crawford McGhie, Senior Manager, Estates
Lynn Patterson, Senior Education Manger
Lorna French, Senior Education Manager, Quality Improvement and Curriculum
David Maguire, Principal Officer for Engagement
Natalie Le Couteur, Committee Services
Gillian Kennedy, Service and Policy Adviser to the Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children and Families

Apologies

Councillor Scott Douglas
Councillor Alison Dickie

1. Note of Meeting

Decision

To approve the note of Meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents (CCWP) of 10 December 2020.

2. Schools Reopening and Council Budget Update

The Chief Education Officer's provided a summary of the reports which would be considered by the Education Children and Families committee on 15 December 2020.

Primary one, two and three had returned to school alongside some senior stage pupils and parents and children had welcomed this return. Schools had responded well to the return and infection control and social distancing measures were in place.

Asymptomatic testing was underway in schools which was identifying small numbers of positive cases however the overall numbers were low. Senior phase pupils were able to attend school for practical work which was undertaken by prior arrangement and the focus was to keep numbers as low as possible within secondary schools. The indication is that primary schools would return on the 15 March 2021, with the possibility of the return of upper primary school children and then all secondary school children. The government had expressed the desire to keep schools open. Senior school pupils and staff were expected to keep a two-metre distance.

The City of Edinburgh Council had agreed its 2021/22 budget on 18 February 2021. In spite of Covid and the financial difficulties for Councils, Edinburgh's budget situation was better than anticipated there was some additional money to invest £14 million in addition to budget commitments. £2 Million of additional spending had been approved for education to facilitate 1:1 devices for pupils from primary 6 upwards. This strategy was now in its implementation strategy stage to enable digital learning to take place. Edinburgh would be in a good place when this was implemented. The Council would Will be commencing this from the beginning of the new session. 1:1 devices from

primary 6 to secondary 6 and would take approximately two years to undertake. There were a few budget savings that schools would be required to meet, as a result of previous Council decisions and there were no new savings required. In relation music to tuition, this was a previous decision to achieve £500,000 of savings, the first stage of this would amount to £150,000 of savings to be delivered through vacancy controls, rather than impacting too negatively current provision of music tuition. There would be a consultation this year to inform the saving of £350,000.

Questions were invited from which focussed on the following matters:

1:1 Devices for pupils

- It was asked what devices would be purchased and it was confirmed that the planned purchase was for iPads and that the iPads would be funded both from school budgets and also centrally funded. The key would be how the council did this in a strategic way to ensure a greater good outcome. The resources directorate, were leading the procurement and Headteachers would be consulted.
- To note that a primary school had ordered 16 iPads with their PEFF funding allocation and that the delivery of these ipads was required to take place within the current financial year for the money to be taken from the DSM budget for this financial year, however these devices has been significantly delayed. If they arrived in the new financial year the money would be taken from next financial year, and enquiries were made as to whether there could be any concessions on this matter. It was advised that this was a live issue each year. 2.5% of the school budget could be carried forward and this issue was under discussion with finance, as the ordering of IT equipment was a potential Covid impact however there were no guarantees at present. Most of the money to fund 1:1 devices was provided centrally. Within two years primary 6 to secondary 6 pupils would all have ipads. Currently 9 schools in secondary have 1:1 devices and the aim was to roll 1:1 devices out as equitably as possible however it was recognised that not everyone would benefit to the same extent.
- It was questioned whether the Council was planning to roll devices out year group by year group and how were staff being engaged with so that staff knew what was coming to allow for them to plan the following year and academic activity to support digital? It was advised that plans were still at an early stage although engagement and communication would be worked through quickly. The strategy would be presented to the May 2021 Education, Children and Families Committee.

Senior Staff Vacancies

- The current vacancies within the council was highlighted relating to the vacant Executive Director of Communities and Families post. It was advised that the Council's senior management team was under review and that discussions were underway to consider how the Council would organise itself moving forward. There would be interim arrangements in place in due course with permanent arrangements in place likely by early Autumn 2021.

Decision

To note the Chief Education Officer's Update.

3. Education Children and Families Committee Report Update

The reports which would be submitted to the forthcoming Education, Children and Families Committee were summarised. An equalities report into the matter of racism in schools was being brought forward which had input from independent experts on issues of race. It had been a very challenging issue for some young people and there were significant findings and there were changes that the Council wished to address, to avoid any forms of racism in schools.

The lifelong learning plan was an opportunity to share ambitions for how education was for throughout life and there were lots of good news stories, and stories of how this had continued during the past year.

Also to be submitted to committee was a child protection report, a report on Scottish Government mental health funds, and a report on holiday support for children with disabilities.

There was a discussion to be had at Committee on amending the school session dates for Christmas 2021. This was to allow children to end the term on 17 December 2021 and to return to school on 4th January 2022. The duration of the holiday would be the same as previously proposed. It had been discussed with various groups and it would allow for three weekends of a holiday for Christmas. The reason for the change was that these dates were agreed previously however as a community in Edinburgh the opinion had changed. This would represent a change of one day. It has been raised at CCWP and the Union meetings with teaching and non-teaching groups. The consultation for 2022-25 term dates would go live on Monday 1 March 2021.

Sciennes parent council had flagged concerns on the dates which were proposed and welcomed the changes which had been presented. If parent council's had views on the dates Councillor Burgess indicated that Parent Council and Parent opinions were welcomed.

Questions were invited from parent representatives focusing on the following topics:

- It was asked if lateral flow tests for Covid testing had been delivered to school within the last three-week period. A second batch which would be a triple bath of the previous order was expected and each test set has a serial number attached to a member of staff in school.
- The rising rolls report. 2021 was the planned date for the Darroch refurbishment of James Gillespie's High School (JGHS) however 2022 was now the likely timescale. Crawford McGhie and Lorna French had attended Parent Council

meeting at JGHS and this was welcomed where rising rolls was discussed. The requirement for the Council to present plans to address the accommodation gap between 2021 and 2022 which would result from the delay to the Darroch refurbishment was highlighted as JGHS was shortly due to exceed capacity. It was advised that there was no plan to include temporary accommodation by providing fewer in classroom placements and instead flexible digital learning for senior secondary pupils. Parents were keen for accommodation being available for pupils and specifically coming back from a period where there had been an elongated disrupted period to learning due to closures of schools due to Coronavirus. Any plans to deliver remote learning were felt to adversely impact secondary 6 and secondary 5 pupils and it was advised that parents did not want to see children engaging in remote learning and stressed that it was the duty of the Council to provide accommodation for the extent of the school roll. It was advised that the Council was working on a response to the matters raised by JGHS, and a response would be expected.

Decision

To note the Committee report update.

4. Remote Learning and In School Learning

Lorna French explained that health and wellbeing sat at the heart of the return to school plans and that the mood was buoyant from staff and pupils. There was movement toward more pupils being back in school and in terms of at home or in school learning there were three live surveys underway with school leaders one of which was capturing the current picture for home learning.

Most infant stages of learning used Learning Journals for home learning and most early stages used Microsoft Teams, however there was also a learning platform called ClickView which was used by teachers and this had the ability for teachers to record and borrow content, and it was the City of Edinburgh Council who had pioneered its use. 98% of teachers were using ClickView where teachers uploaded content and many children could access this content. Interestingly, schools in Edinburgh which had evolved with their use of this technology had been those schools which were already at the top of this list for ClickView use, with well-established 1:1 learning approaches prior to the pandemic but many schools had made huge advances with Information Technology and their teachers had become proficient in their use of digital, as reflected in the ClickView use statistics for the city of Edinburgh. It was acknowledged and commended how hard teachers had worked hard to make advancements in this area. Currie High School, Castleview primary and Tollcross had content sharing underway and Tollcross. Headteachers were grateful of this approach and for hearing from one another.

The Council has undertaken self-evaluation for Education Scotland who had set different themes for review, and the Council had wished to submit content on parental engagement, which would inform case studies which and also inform the national picture. As part of this there was invitation to senior leaders to watch the teaching that

was taking place. The Council was pleased with the good practice that has been shared.

Questions were invited on the remote learning and in school learning update which focused on If the government accelerated the return to school, how prepared the Council was for this. It was noted that this would cause significant work for teachers however it was accepted that responding to change had become the new normality, however the return wouldn't be without burdens on teachers who had invested a lot of time in remote learning.

Decision

To note the update.

5. Locality Representatives - Key Issues

Special Schools

A good discussion had taken place around movement of more children into mainstream education from special school settings. There would be a consultation and parents were keen to feed into this.

The ability to attract teachers into the special school estate, and the inadequacies in teacher training to provide for preparedness to work in special schools was highlighted. There was a request whether the Council could reach out to colleges and teacher training settings to ensure that newcomers to the teaching profession had the requisite skills to enter into special schools environments from their training. The Council was seeking to improve relations with Moray House, and the national providers and agreed to take this matter forward.

There was a request for the rollout of Covid vaccinations to the teaching teams within special schools to be undertaken by the school nurse, to minimise downtime for teachers, now that more children were back to school.

South West and North West

The community was delighted to see the proposals for Currie High School come forward and the communities were excited about this. The communities had sought an active travel plan to support the high school development, if not before the development was underway.

Crawford McGhie confirmed that Active Travel colleagues were working on plan, and part of the process would reflect the Council's 20-minute neighbourhood priority. There would be a consultation with community councils and ongoing engagement was hoped for as coronavirus restrictions eased.

South East and North East

The crossing guide issue and ongoing vacancies at Bruntsfield Primary school was highlighted. When the children returned to school, it would be helpful to have guides in place. The Council had met with the team which recruited crossing patrols, and a creative approach was underway with the jobs were being advertised locally and efforts underway to identify whether students may be willing to take up these paid posts.

Decision

To agree to take forward discussions with Further and higher Education institutions to progress teacher readiness for work in Special Schools settings.

6. Connect

Decision

To note the update from the Connect representative was circulated with the papers for this meeting.

11. National Parent Forum

The chair of the National Parent Forum, Margaret Wilson, was inviting parents to join a question and answer session Tuesday 2 March at 8pm. She and a number of Parent forum people had supported the Scottish Government with representing the parent view during the pandemic. Margaret was a member of the Scottish Government's Education Recovery Group and could feed viewpoints from parents in Edinburgh to Government.

The national parent website had summary guides written by parents for parents which were a useful repository of information for parents. There were also webinars which were organised where parents could ask Government Ministers questions.

A discussion followed about funding promised by the Depute First Minister for outdoor shelters and it was noted that the council had made an application for these funds and was awaiting a response. The Council would share this funding bid information with Damien Hayes if possible and commercial sensitives allowed in order to progress the matter and Damien was the Edinburgh representative on the national parent forum for Scotland.

Decision

- 1) For the city of Edinburgh Council to share details on the funding bid for outdoor shelters, if this information was suitable to share given commercial data within the bid.
- 2) To note the update from the National Parent Forum.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 13 May 2021 at 6:00pm via Microsoft Teams.