

## **Note of meeting**

### **Consultative Committee with Parents**

**6.00pm, Thursday 7 October 2021**

### **Virtual Meeting - via Microsoft Teams**

#### **Present**

##### **Elected Members**

Councillor Perry (Convenor), Councillor Mary Campbell, Councillor Laidlaw and Councillor Louise Young.

##### **Parent Representatives**

Alex Ramage (Education Children & Families Committee Parent Representative)

Billy Samuel

Karen Galloway

Amanda Collins

Andrea

Kevin Kealey

Kate Morris

Sarah Scott

Naomi Barton

Arran Gopinath

Damien Hayes

Gail Morris

Linda Graham

Rosie O'Halloran

Sandra Dargie

Sandy Bennet Haber

##### **External Officer Representatives**

Eileen Prior (Connect)

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

Jack Simpson, Senior Education Officer

David Bruce, Senior Education Manager

Arran Findlay, Senior Education Officer

Lynn Patterson, Senior Education Manger for Early Years and Primary  
Lorna French, Acting Head of Schools and Lifelong Learning  
Natalie Le Couteur, Committee Services  
Julien Kramer – Interim Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

## **Apologies**

Councillor Dickie  
Councillor Laidlaw

## **1. Note of Meeting**

### **Decision**

To approve the note of Meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents (CCWP) of 19 August 2021.

## **2. Director's Update**

The Interim Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, highlighted that the infection levels were dropping, and the vaccination programme was being rolled out to older children in senior schools.

The Council remained anxious and vigilant for the autumn season.

There were a number of known risks such as Covid, staff wellbeing, prospect of strike action and the impact of COP 26, with a focus on ensuring safe arrangements for pupils during this period.

A new Executive Director of Education and Children's Services had been appointed by the Council named Amanda Hatton who would join The City of Edinburgh Council in November 2021.

### **Decision.**

To note the update.

## **3. Education, Children and Families Committee Report Update**

The Interim Executive Director of Education and Children's Services advised that the themes of the reports being presented to Committee centred on strategy, equalities performance and health.

The Edinburgh Learning Estates Strategy 2021 was highlighted. The Scottish Government had outlined guiding principles for how future school expansions and new builds should be developed which resonated with Council policies and objectives, particularly around sustainability and inclusion. The report outlined guiding principles for the learning estate and beyond, not just to reflect national principles but also to reflect the Council's Business Plan.

The themes which were embedded within the Strategy were:

- 1) Digital

- 2) Inclusion
- 3) Community
- 4) Sustainability
- 5) Teaching and Learning

The Strategy was based around culture and service delivery, rather than physical assets. It was ambitious and set out aspirations, to look at developing a generic brief for all educational sectors in order to deliver the learning estate in line with both Council's and Community's wishes.

Questions were invited from the Committee which focussed on the following topics:

- Safer routes to schools and the 20-minute neighbourhood team;
- Active Schools, and that the reopening of this being welcomed and the communication associated with the changes proposed;
- Musical tuition and further information from Scottish Government on future funding arrangements;
- Safer routes to school at Nether Currie Primary School.

The changes which the Council was seeking to implement for Active Schools would bring the Council in line with the national policy on Active Schools however there was not shared agreement that the new arrangements were met with universal favour, would target the pupil equity issues and allow for a resumption of activity in line with Active Schools activity prior to the pandemic.

### **Decision**

- 1) To agree to feed back to the 20-minute neighbourhood board that there was interest from parents in the south West to be consulted upon and involved in discussions around safer routes to school and cycle way improvements.
- 2) A supplementary paper on Active Schools to dovetail with agenda item 7.5 of the Education, Children and Families (EC&F) committee agenda to be shared with Consultative Committee with Parents and EC&F committee:
  - To share the data which The City of Edinburgh Scotland supplied to Sports Scotland to demonstrate the wide impact of Active Schools.
  - To describe how new arrangements with Active Schools would be robustly evaluated.
  - To share the level of Active Schools prior to the pandemic and now.
  - To advise whether an equalities impact assessment had been undertaken for the changes to Active Schools.
- 3) To agree that Kevin Kealey and Arran Findlay would discuss safer routes to school at Nether Currie Primary School.
- 4) To agree that Councillor Ian Perry and Rosie O'Halloran would discuss arrangements for Active Schools directly.

## **4. Update on Communications**

A recurring theme emerging from the CCWP was that of communication to parents and the need for the Council to improve the effectiveness of this. It was advised that efforts to improve parent communications was an ongoing endeavour for the Council and in response to a previous CCWP meeting, a communications Subgroup had been created to review parent communications, particularly around Active Schools and School Lets and future work was planned to review broader communication issues.

Parents with communication expertise would be invited to be involved in the reshaping of the Council's efforts to improve mechanisms to communicate with parents.

### **Decision**

To note the update and the intention to work in partnership to deliver improved communications to parents.

## **5. Special Schools**

There had been a recent BBC report in the press which had indicated that in 2019/20 that The City of Edinburgh Council, had the lowest level of spend per capita of all Scottish Local Authorities for children in special school settings. Parents expressed concerns.

The Council advised that the report by the BBC had sourced data from across Scottish Local Authorities, however there were variances with how data had been presented by constituent local authorities, with some including funding streams which other Local authorities had excluded, such as pupil support assistant spend and transport spend which had in turn led to significant disparities between the per capita spend between different local authorities. When the City of Edinburgh Council had reviewed this matter, the data variances were discovered and it was understood that the BBC's reporting on funding per capita was not as low as reported, when additional funding streams were considered in the per capita spend. It was agreed to provide an up-to-date comparative summary funding for Special Needs in Edinburgh to evidence and inform a discussion at the next meeting of the CCWP on 9 December 2021.

It was highlighted that play schemes for pupils with special needs which ran in Summer 2021 did not provide the expected level of cover to parents as was anticipated. Parents advised that for special needs children the offer of two days was insufficient.

The Council had met with parents prior to summer to assess demand for the service, and agree the model which was deliverable, under the Covid restrictions.

It was agreed to reflect upon the summer playscheme and for attendance numbers to be shared with the locality groups for their review.

### **Decision**

- 1) To agree to provide an up-to-date comparative summary funding for Special Needs in Edinburgh to evidence and inform a discussion at the next meeting of the CCWP on 9 December 2021.
- 2) To reflect upon the summer playscheme and for attendance numbers to be shared with the locality groups for their review.

## 6. North East and South East Locality Group

The following matters had been raised at the Locality Committee:

- Canaan Lane new primary school;
- Platinum Jubilee arrangements;
- Computing Teacher Shortage

### Decision

To note the update.

## 7. North West and South West Locality Group

The following matters had been raised at the Locality Committee:

- Active Schools;
- Communications;
- Guidance for children identifying as transgender.
- Parent Council use of teams and whether zoom would resume as an appropriate method for parent council meetings.
- Nether Currie primary one capacity issues for new catchment children.
- The delays to the delivery of the Nether Currie nursery, associated with Covid delays and supplier and staff shortages.
- Embargo with purchase of digital devices for Nether Currie primary school.
- How pupil absences at the parent's behest, due to Covid concerns would be unauthorised absence, however the Council would work with each family to resolve any concerns and give reassurances that Covid mitigations were in place.
- Support for home schooling, for Covid concerns or for quarantine periods during self-isolation.
- Ongoing shortages with computing teachers.
- Promoting attendance for pupils.

### Decision.

- 1) To agree that Robbie Crockatt would discuss with Kevin Kealey plans for addressing the cluster catchment issues in the South West, particularly around schools being full in primary one and having no capacity for catchment children moving into area not having to be offered local school places in adjacent schools.
- 2) To agree that the Council would work with Nether Currie Primary School to clarify and resolve the issue of not being able to proceed with using parent council funds for the acquisition of digital devices.

## 8. Connect Update

A written summary of work underway was shared. Connect had been invited to take part in the Council's induction for parent councils, and there was a new staff member who would become the key contact for the CCWP moving forward.

Connect was welcoming new volunteers as trustees and invited those interested to present themselves for this opportunity.

The review of Education Scotland was underway and Connect had been invited to be part of a consultative group. Connect would be speaking with parents and parent councils and school leaders to take part in this consultation. It was advised that written submissions could be submitted to the Review Group which had been set up by the Scottish Government.

### **Decision**

To note the update which was provided in advance of the meeting and shared with the meeting papers.

## **9. National Parent Forum**

The National Parent Forum was meeting weekly with the Scottish Government, due to Covid recovery discussions in schools therefore if parents had any questions, they were welcome to highlight these issues to Naomi Barton and Damian Hayes as the National Parent Forum representatives, for a direct way to make an approach to the Cabinet Secretary.

The future of the Scottish qualifications Authority and the onward plans for examinations alongside maintaining education for children and changes for music provision were also matters for which the National Parent Forum was progressing discussions with the Scottish Government.

### **Decision**

To note the update.

## **9. Any Other Business**

An overview of actions progressed since last CCwP in relation to the Parent Council Chair Survey were shared which had included.

- Setting up of the new Locality Group for parents of children who had special needs and attended mainstream school settings.
- Induction course for new Parent Council chairs
- Support from Connect
- Budding and cluster links would be the next focus.

### **Decision**

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 9 December 2021 at 6pm via Microsoft Teams.