

**City of Edinburgh Council
Children and Families Department**

Consultation with Parent Council Chairs – Tynecastle High School, 8th March 2011.

Chair; Councillor Maclaren

Officers in attendance: Gillian Tee, Director of Children and Families; Mike Rosendale; Billy MacIntyre; David Wright; David Robertson; Lindsay Glasgow

1. Councillor Maclaren welcomed Parent Council representatives to the meeting and confirmed the 2 agenda items as the Children and Families budget, 2011-14 and consultation on proposals for the future of Primary Gaelic Medium Education (GME).
2. David Robertson presented to the meeting an outline of the **budget** context; the reductions in the C&F budget approved by Council; the areas protected from budget reductions and the impact of earlier consultations with parents on the final budget decisions. (A copy of the presentation will be circulated separately.)
3. Mike Rosendale outlined current progress on implementation of the principal reductions with direct impact on schools: Business Support Review – scope of reductions has been broadened to focus on business support in schools rather than exclusively on the Bursar post. A working group, led by David Robertson and including Head Teachers and the trade unions is taking this forward: Service Support Officers (Janitors) - Having listened to feedback from parents, Head Teachers and janitors, a working group, led by Audrey Palmer, has prepared a series of options in addition to the original cluster model and these will be circulated to staff for consultation. Again, the Working Group includes Head Teachers and the trade unions: Secondary school management structures – David Wright is leading a working group with Head Teachers and the trade unions to agree a new management model which will reduce the number of promoted posts while protecting classroom teaching. The application of the model will be considered by each Head Teacher over the next 2-3 weeks and agreement reached on an implementation timetable.
4. In response to questions and comments from parents, the following points were made.
 - Any changes to janitorial arrangements will take full account of Health and Safety implications
 - The reduction in Primary School management costs will be discussed with each Head Teacher. The proposal ensures that there is a minimum management time allocation of 1.1FTE to each school.
 - Then proposed changes in secondary management arrangement will enable improved leadership development for promoted staff who will have a stronger role in wider school management

- It was confirmed that interest in voluntary severance from all staff affected by the proposed reductions was being established
 - The Director indicated that our priority has been to protect front line services. Senior management arrangements in schools have not been reviewed for several years and we have a number of schools in which more than 50% of staff are in promoted posts. We have looked at other authorities and these proposed changes reflect changes made elsewhere although we do not propose to create a faculty model as some other authorities have done. The reductions will be achieved over a 2 year period and the Director confirmed that any gap between the approved budget reduction of £2.4m and the savings achieved would not be found from school budgets but rather from elsewhere in the department
 - Billy MacIntyre explained that officers had set a 3 year budget which is balanced in 2011-12, shows a small surplus in 2012-13 and a small deficit in 2013-14. Councillor Maclaren confirmed that elected members had only approved the 2011-12 budget.
 - Secondary Head Teachers are fully engaged in the planning of these reductions
 - Officers are completely confident that the Curriculum for Excellence can continue to be developed with the new management model as it has been in other authorities already operating in this way
 - Over 50% of pupils in positive action schools are in classes of 18 or less and we will continue to put resources into this as it is a long term Council commitment
 - Increase in class contact time is contingent on the outcome of national negotiations
 - Officers confirmed that the secondary management arrangements would be shared with parents following agreement with Head Teachers on changes in individual schools
5. Councillor Maclaren explained that this meeting was part of the **consultation on the expansion of Primary Gaelic Medium Education** and Lindsay Glasgow made a presentation on the options under consideration and their implications. (The presentation will be circulated separately.)

Parents asked a number of questions and made a number of comments which are summarised below with responses from officers.

- The Chair of the Tollcross Parents' Council indicated that they had carried out a survey of all parents at the school. When analysis is complete, the survey results will be fed into the consultation
- Officers confirmed that Tollcross GME pupils currently feed into James Gillespie's High School but that this was not sustainable as pupil rolls increase and therefore secondary GME provision may be relocated
- Lindsay Glasgow confirmed that capacity at centrally located secondary schools had been assessed and that only Tynecastle High School would be able to accommodate anticipated numbers

- Councillor Maclaren acknowledged that expansion of provision at a time of unprecedented budget reductions was contentious but that decisions had to be made now because of the pressure on the Tollcross accommodation
- Councillor Maclaren clarified that this matter was on this agenda because we are carrying out a statutory consultation and we need to hear as many views as possible. The Director reinforced this and encouraged parents to discuss the options with other parents and send their views through the consultation channels
- Councillor Maclaren confirmed that a separate consultation would be required in relation to a change in secondary provision and that a cross party working group was currently considering transition issues associated with a move to Tynecastle High School
- Lindsay Glasgow confirmed that the Tollcross GME unit had a city wide catchment
- Some parents indicated that these proposals would incur significant additional costs for one group of children at a time when school budgets are being stretched
- Billy MacIntyre explained that the additional costs associated with expansion had been calculated on the basis that GME pupils, if enrolled at their catchment schools, could be absorbed in current classes with no additional teachers requiring to be deployed whereas dedicated GME provision requires the employment of additional teachers
- Lindsay Glasgow confirmed that the current Council cost (in addition to the Scottish Government specific grant) is £441,000 per annum
- Councillor Rose pointed out that this is not only a financial issue but also concerns the future of the Gaelic language and the educational benefits of GME. He also confirmed that GME supporters have disputed the additional costs
- Billy MacIntyre explained that the position of Scottish Government funding to support expansion was not yet clear but should be before the Council meeting to consider this matter in June.

Councillor Maclaren thanked everyone for attending, reminded parents that the consultation was open until the 21st March and encouraged everyone to contribute.