



Highland Parent Council Partnership Meeting

10am, Friday 24th June 2016

Care and Learning Meeting Room, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness

Attendees:

Kate Macdonald	Inverness Royal Academy
Giles Baker	Grantown Grammar School
Jon Greenhowe	North Kessock Primary School
Liz Green	Culloden Academy
Alli Twitchin	Reolis Primary
Samantha Blyth	Dingwall Academy
Ann Urquhart	Inverness high
Linzi Ross	Milton of Cadboll Primary
Stina Sangster	Milton of Cadboll Primary
Jill Fryer	Crown Primary
Barbara Gray	Fortrose Academy
John Whitfield	Golspie High School
Fergus Weir	Kirkhill
Kate Morris	Charleston
Ros Bell	Education Dept HC
Jim Steven	Head of Education Services HC
Bernadette Cairns	Strategic Manager for ASN HC
Ann Gilles	Opportunities for All Co-ordinator HC

Apologies:

Liz Lernan	Lochaber
Andy MacKenna	Lochaber
Ena	Grantown Grammar
Jane Scott	Inshes Primary
Debbie Strang	Grantown Grammar School

1. Welcome

Fergus introduced the background to the newly constituted HPCP. There are two big issues; the budget in general and ASN provision and the effect of changes due to the budget. We also need to elect a representative for the National Parent Forum for Scotland (NPFS) perhaps at the November conference.

2. Confirmation of Minutes from 14th April 2016

The minutes were proposed by Liz Green and seconded by Fergus Weir. It was noted Jane Scott also attended.

3. HPCP/National Parent Forum Scotland Update

Fergus informed the group that there is a new Chair of the National Parent Forum for Scotland. Joanna Murphy which is supported by the Scottish Government. The NPFS support 32 representatives from the across Scotland who meet four times a year. There are be two paid part time roles, but the Executive is voluntary and selected from the 32 regions.

The Named Person initiative and legislation is going live soon, Highland has been acting as a pathfinder and the experience has been very positive in Highland. Fergus will send round detail about the Named Person Act and the No-to-Named-Person campaign. The Scottish Parent Teacher



Council are on record as supporting the No-to-Named-Person campaign. Kate raised concerns regarding the Named Person Act and the lack of checks and balances in it, and that parents have no legal right to be made aware of what their child's Named Person is up to in respect of their child. The Act is not limited to children at risk, but is applicable to all children and must be applied if there is an unmet well being need not being met by another intervention. It was proposed to raise awareness of both side of the Named person argument at the Conference but not to take any position. Sam may help provide balance regarding the Named Person arguments.

Education Committee Representation - Fergus has met with Drew Miller (Head of HC Education committee) regarding the parents on that committee. There is some concern about parent representation voting rights having but more positivity regarding observation and the ability to speak at the committee. Fergus has met with Margaret Davison (leader of Highland Council) and it was recognised that our communication strategy can help improve our political clout.

4. Developing Young Workforce

The Inverness Chamber has won a tender for Developing Young Workforce. It is difficult for employers to create opportunities for young people. There was a letter from the Chamber regarding DYM sent to all PC chairs. Giles will distribute a Highland Council Policy on Work Experience. Kate Macdonald and Kate Morris will attend as Parent Representatives on the Employer Board. Giles and Fergus are to write a 1 page document on how employers can get onto the list held by Highland Council of approved employers for work experience.

5. Parent Council Conference – 12th November 2016

Kate Morris, Giles, Eva, and Kate Macdonald are on the working committee for the conference on 12th November 2016. Fergus has invited John Swinney, Education Minister, along as keynote speaker. Fergus will distribute the date to the HPCP. The working agenda is to be discussed on the telephone. Fergus will invite a member of the Education Committee to the conference. Bill Alexander will provide evidence of the impact of the cuts now and over the last ten years.

Facilities Management Jon gave an update. There will be a consultation on Facilities Management and cleaning a school office function. There are six work streams within the Strategic Future Schools Management programme (schools support). He is active representing HPCP and will keep us informed.

6. HPCP Communication Strategy Update

Fergus wants to find a way to support Parent Councils on using *Googlemail* to help communication. Kate and Fergus are to discuss this. We should use generic parent council *Gmail* addresses supported by Highland Council IT Services in case of a password change. There is a desire to enable Parent Council Chairs to communicate across a parent forum using a something like Mail Chimp. However, we need to access parents email addresses during enrolment (data protection may be an issue) so that parent council can email individual parents. Fergus has asked for the enrolment annual data check forms have a tick box to enable us to do this, but there are issue why this is difficult to do in practice (around how the data from the forms is entered onto HC systems). Kate will provide easy to use guides regarding the vision for communication.

7. Insight Data



Clarification was sought on availability of Insight Data for parents. Parents do not have access. There are moves for a dashboard on the attainment gap. Highland Council are reporting on pupil performance in Primary and early Secondary school. Insight data is not for public circulation but HT should be reporting on local school performance. However, there are headline figures that we could look for by school.

Every secondary school will get an attainment visit. Jim said it may be possible to look at common headline figures that parents should look for. The focus should be on areas of strength, areas of weakness and individual school improvement plans to address the issues. Jim will provide some guidance to provide headline figures and templates to help provide understanding and discussion.

Jim explained that the new inspection model will look at how schools engage with parents. Several reports, including the report from Highland Council sent to the Scottish Government and from Education Scotland on school performance, are not available to parents.

Kate asked for the whole HPCP and Highland Council to help parents understand the difference with National 4 and National 5 and for the legal definition to which the Highland Council will be held accountable for the attainment gap. Jim said he is hoping that the definition of the attainment gap will be broadened but, yes, the back stop legal definitions will be made available. He will try and get this.

8. Clarification on the Highland Council Policy over School Estate Usage

The school estate is used by non-school groups for consumables. There are moves to link facilities up with Highlife Highland. In times of plenty this is less of an issue. There is a review of lots of school estate to develop consistency. Brian Parker, Head of Resources, is part of the Schools Management program.. Jon is on facilities management workstream (there is a seminar on the 29th June on this). The recommended option of Highlife Highland was not adopted by members. There is an ongoing Consultation with recommendations expected by January 2017. Some schools have janitors, FM, or nothing. The differences are quite marked. There is an issue around how facilities and access to schools are arranged and who pays for consumables.

9. 2016/2017 Secondary Teacher Staffing Budget Cut Impact

Fergus had collated several concerns from many different secondary schools that had been in touch with the HPCP (e.g. Dingwall and Fortrose) over the impact on curriculum choice and delivery for S4,5 and 6 pupils in Highland, with some schools concerned that certain subjects (e.g. advanced higher biology) might not be an available option for some pupils leaving them disadvantaged. It was also highlighted that the reduction in budget would also have a detrimental impact on teacher morale and resources resulting in fewer teachers being asked to do more with less resources,

There will be closer management of budgets and the levels of debt that some schools have acquired in the past will not be allowed. Schools have had the ability to carry 5% forward and used to be able to carry 3% debt but this has to be put right for next year. Therefore, the £1 million that was kept back centrally will be available to add into the budget. There is some additional money for 5 Primary Schools and 5 Secondary Schools based on deprivation.

The aim is to try to keep schools in communities but that is difficult to do in rural areas.



Jon asked if procurement procedures have been unlocked. It appears that there is about £20 per pupil for all purchases (books, consumable etc). Fergus will distribute a document about secondary school concerns and will send to members, press etc. Anne asked if this communication could be distributed to all PCs including primary.

10. ASN (Additional Support Needs) Staffing Budget Cut Impact

Bernadette gave a through helpful explanation of how ASN provision has and is being provided to be as equitable as possible. There is concern over the ASN reduction so in 2010/11 a piece of work was undertaken to understand where the need was (rather than who shouted loudest). In around 2012 pupil support assistant and learning auxiliaries were combined to help streamline and support consistently. Next the requirement for support on student dB (what students were where) was developed. Next, approval was received from Highland Council for this *resource allocation model* to understand resource allocation e.g. some learning needs are averaged out across the population (so no need to assess all students, a calculation can be used based on the number of pupils). Allocation of free school meals and the rural index can be used as indicators of deprivation e.g. level 1 or 2 and can be provided on the basis of the school role, whereas level 3 or 4 is on a student basis (targeted need). Pupils are identified by school staff and if they are level 3 and 4 this results in an allocation of support (teacher, class assistant etc). This *model* was approved by the Education Committee in September 2012 and this has not been changed by members since. In 2010/11, ASN received an extra £1 million, in 2012, ASN received an extra £1 million. In total, ASN received £5 million to support transition to the new ASN model (on need rather than how loud you can shout).

There is also a moderation exercise sampling the needs identified by schools (i.e. checking of schools' understanding of need was not so accurate, but the percentage of agreement is now improved and staff are better at correctly identifying need) e.g. Level 3 in Lochaber is Level 2 in elsewhere. We need to make sure the level of need is applied the same everywhere. Resources need to be re-allocated to more staff to allocate to appropriate needs. This has not been done consistently, however, and there has been an overspend in three areas. In February, the decision was to reduce the ASN budget by £600-900k and Bernadette was very clear there could be no overspend this year and posts could not be advertised until reallocation was done. Bernadette argued we could not accept voluntary redundancy from PSAs half way through a session but we did need to take an equivalent budget cut. Members said they would only take £600k (some central ASN staff took redundancies and retirement) so £300k was saved from the other side of the budgets. This week, members have said they are not going to take the last £300k from the area ASN budget, which is good news and shows the members support of ASN.

Since 2010 had an extra £5million in total, now it is at a standstill budget, the other £300k was to come from the PSA and learning support but that does not now need to happen.

Looking forward, with better healthcare there is therefore an increasing ASN need, Highland Council members have indicated that if they find pockets of money, they will want to use it to support ASN. Clearly, as Bernadette explained, previously over-resourced schools have asked for review but where this has happened no inequity has been found although extra students moving in is looked at. The ASN Manager and Office will do a moderation on rolling basis to moderate/review allocation over the year. On occasion, where there is a significant reduction in staff and where there is real concern about those reductions it is possible to do this in a stepped



way to allow Head Teachers to come to terms with it. This is where the £300k can be used to ease the transition.

ASN provides ASN support for all pupils (even those who are part time or attending college) if the pupil requires it.

Fergus asked where schools may have 40-50% reduction in staff, what checks and balances were in place? Bernadette replied that moderation helps to provide the check and balance, if a child moves in mid-term with level 4 needs then the Head Teacher must discuss with the ASN. If a small school might struggle, a larger school can usually absorb, but there is no contingency so practically a PSA may need to be taken out of a secondary school to supply need in a primary school.

Fergus asked what the shortfall would be for full provision. Bernadette replied that probably 90% of need is being met, but sometimes that means some might get 200% (e.g. small school level 4 child that needs 2 PSAs) and another school had less. She explained that it is not a formula but sometimes we are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Members are aware that the budget has stood still and the need has risen. Yes, there are disagreements over allocated need. Usually moderation is down e.g. level 3 to level 2 but on occasion it is up (level 3 to 4). A large piece of work is taking place with preschool and there were fewer children with emotional and behavioural problems entering P1 which is good news.

A parent raised the issue of children looking after other children during lunchtime and issue of ASN child using child as a punch-bag. Bernadette replied that she is speaking with Head Teachers and raising the issue of upskilling staff to improve practice across Highland to nip issues in bud and provide advice and support.

Fergus summarised that the headline is 10% need across Highland but bigger effect in some schools. If issues are ongoing in individual schools then that needs to get fed back to the ASN. Bernadette explained that issues are not always about adding staff or money sometimes it is about upskilling staff.

11. Presentation on Opportunities for All by Ann Gilles

Ann introduced her role as Highland Council Co-ordinator for Opportunities for All to provide positive destinations for young people (it may be re-named Skills for Life, Learning and Work). Her role includes the following:

- 16 + meetings in schools
- running the hi-hope.org.uk website which has been established for 4 years and developed in association with NHS Highland and others – www.hi-hope.org.uk
- S3 onwards aspirations
- working with DYW
- CPD for teachers
- Transition from school
- Work Placements – list of all live vacancies and production of a Process Guide.

Ann explained that the My World of Work website will be the key thing in schools. The new work experience page will go live in August.



12. AOCB

Hiring – According to legislation Parents should be in interviews as short list of Depute and Head Teacher and interviewer. Jim said that was not the case if it is an internal move. Highland Council's approach to recruitment of Depute and Head Teacher is part of work plan. John said the legislation is clear about PC being involved in Depute Head / Head Teacher. DHT is slightly different from the Head Teacher and is done in consultation with the parents. John explained Regulation 132 on SG website outlines the Depute and Head Teacher appointment process. Jim explained the process in part and we all agreed that we need to work in partnership to support the recruitment process. Ross explained it will be discussed and we agreed to develop a consistency of approach and advice to PCs regarding the Highland Council policy on recruitment.

13. Date for Next Meeting

To be confirmed for later in 2016. Fergus will use the doodle format for dates