

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE:	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE:	<b>15 September 2011</b>
DIRECTOR:	<b>Annette Bruton</b>
TITLE OF REPORT:	<b>Parent Involvement in Education – Inclusion of a parent representative on the committee responsible for education services.</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/11/060</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide elected members with information to enable them to consider the most appropriate way to include parents in the work of the main council committee with education responsibilities, and the relevant subcommittees and consultation processes.

As requested by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee in June 2011 this report includes the following:

- (i) information about the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 Act and the current arrangements to include external representatives on the committee in Aberdeen;
- (ii) a summary of the arrangements to include parents views in other Scottish local authorities;
- (iii) a description of the mechanism that the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum (ACPCF) proposes to take to appoint the parent representative;
- (iv) the current committee composition and changes that may be required should committee agree to a parent representative with or without voting rights; and
- (v) Advice on the formal processes required to secure a change in committee representation should the committee agree to include a parent representative on the Committee.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) note the background information and the position in other local authorities in Scotland;
- (ii) note the options for adding a parent representative to the Committee and approve Option 2 (to add a parent representative from the ACPCF to the Committee, with voting rights) using the powers of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to give this effect and referring the necessary changes to Standing Orders to the Council for approval.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Any allowances or costs associated with adding a parent representative will be met from within Education Culture and Sport budget. This additional cost will be met from within the Parent Council Budget allocation.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

The Council is currently required to have the three church representatives on the Committee by virtue of the legislation, and the two teacher representatives by virtue of the standing orders (this is at the discretion of each local authority). A decision to appoint a parent representative will require a change to the current Standing Orders.

The process to be followed in the event of a decision to appoint a parent representative is outlined at section 8 below.

Should option three be agreed, the two existing teacher representative places will be reduced to one, and a process will require to be followed to appoint a single representative to that place.

### **5. BACKGROUND**

5.1 The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 requires Scottish Ministers and Education Authorities to promote the involvement of parents in children's education at publicly funded schools. The purpose of the Act is to help all parents to:

- be involved with their child's education and learning;
- be welcomed as active participants in the life of the school;
- work in partnership with the school; and
- be encouraged to express their views on school education more generally.

5.2 Committee approved the parent involvement strategy and action plan on the 2nd September 2008 Article 9 and supported the development of parent forum and parent council in all local schools.

5.3 All parents are automatically members of the parent forum at their child's school. As a member of the parent forum they are encouraged to support events and activities at the school and to get involved in their child's learning. Each forum is encouraged to set up a parent council. The parent council is expected to work in partnership with pupils, the head teacher and the local authority in the interests of their school.

The role of a parent council is to:

- support the school in its work with pupils;
- represent the views of all parents;

- encourage links between the school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community; and
- report back to all the parents in the school (Parent Forum).

5.4 The authority also arranges meetings once a term with the parent council of all mainstream and special schools in the city. These meetings provide an opportunity for the authority to communicate effectively with all parent councils; allow us to identify parent council support and training needs; and enable us to engage in discussions with parents on city wide strategic issues. Parent councils have a small operating budget, have been given city council group wise email access to improve communication systems and are offered regular support and training.

5.5 Councillor Cormack submitted a motion to the Policy and Strategy (Education) Committee (28 April 2009, Article 3) asking the committee to consider the involvement of a parent representative on the committee with education responsibility. The agreed motion was as follows:

‘That this council agrees to promote further and continue to develop parental, guardian and carers involvement in the Council decision making process and that a report is therefore produced with recommendations for including parents in the work of the main council committee with education responsibilities, relevant subcommittees and consultation processes.’

5.6 As parents are customers of the education services in the city the committee were minded to consider Councillor Cormack’s notice of motion.

## **6. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973**

6.1 Section 124 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (as amended by the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994) requires local authorities to appoint to any committee which it establishes to discharge the functions of the education authority, or advise on those functions, one representative of the Church of Scotland to be appointed by the General Assembly of the Church, one representative of the Roman Catholic Church to be appointed by the Scottish Hierarchy of the Church, and one person appointed by the Council having regard to (a) the comparative strength within the City of all the churches and denominational bodies having duly constituted charges, or regularly appointed places of worship, and (b) the representation already provided for through the other two church representatives.

6.2 The Act also enables local authorities to appoint people who are not elected members of the authority to be members of the committee, and it is in exercising this discretion that the Council has appointed two teacher representatives. This is reflected in the Council's Standing Orders. The two teacher representatives Mr Grant Bruce and Mr Stewart Duncan were nominated by the Teacher’s Consultative Forum (TCF) the representative group of all Aberdeen City Council teachers. The legislation used to appoint teacher representatives would also allow the appointment of a

parent representative to the main council committee with education responsibilities, relevant subcommittees and consultation processes. It is at the local authority's discretion whether it wishes to give voting rights to any of its external members. Aberdeen City Council has always exercised this discretion to give voting rights to its religious and teacher representatives, and could do so for a parent representative also.

## **7. Parent representation in other local authorities in Scotland**

A summary of the arrangements other local authorities make to include parents' views in council committees with education responsibilities is attached at appendix 1. Analysis suggests the following:

Eight local authorities have parent representatives on their committee; five of them appear to have voting rights.

Some local authorities that do not have stand alone education committees have very clear arrangements to encourage parental representation on educational matters. For example, East Ayrshire Council uses its standing orders to move agenda items to allow discussion by parent and teacher representatives before progressing other general council business.

Two local authorities have no external representation; Clackmannanshire, which is a very small authority, runs a 'cabinet' style administration and deals with education within this structure as individual agenda items. Shetland has recently re-structured and in the first cycle of their new Education and Families Committee had no external representatives but in line with the legislative requirement to have religious representatives, they are currently consulting about the appointment of religious representation.

The remaining authorities have religious representation, most have voting rights.

Twenty three local authorities also have teaching representatives on their committees, some have voting rights and some do not as this is at the discretion of local authorities.

Generally if the teaching representatives have voting rights other local representatives on the committee also have voting rights. Moray Council has a parent representative and a pupil representative as ex-officio members.

## **8. Parent representative selection process and role.**

- 8.1 The Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum (ACPCF) was established with two representatives from each associated schools group (ASG). The forum has been meeting regularly. It has established its terms of reference, office bearers and has been fulfilling its representative and communication role effectively with all parent councils. Its constitution is attached at Appendix 2.

- 8.2 Should the committee agree to appoint a parent representative to the committee with education responsibilities, relevant subcommittees and consultation processes the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum (ACPCF) has designed a protocol which describes the role and remit of the nominated representative, including how they will be elected, how they will fulfill their representative function, how long they can remain in office and should the need arise the process of removing them from office. The parent representative proposed protocol is attached at Appendix 3.

In common with other external representatives, a parent member would be asked to sign a statement confirming that they would adhere to the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct issued under the Ethical Standards in Public Life Etc (Scotland) Act 2000 in the undertaking of their duties associated with the appointment.

## **9. Education Culture and Sport Committee representation.**

- 9.1 In appointing members to committee, the council shall, so far as is possible, give effect to the principles regarding political balance set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for its own members.
- 9.2 The membership of the Education Culture and Sport Committee agreed at Full Council on the 17 August 2011 is as follows:
- |      |                            |
|------|----------------------------|
| Six  | Scottish National Party    |
| Six  | Liberal Democrats          |
| Four | Labour                     |
| One  | Independent Alliance       |
| One  | Conservative and Unionists |
| Five | External Members           |
- 9.3 There are three ways that parent representatives could be included on the main council committee with education responsibilities, relevant subcommittees and consultation processes as follows:
- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Option 1 | To add a parent representative from the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum (ACPCF) to the committee without voting rights.                         |
| Option 2 | To add a parent representative from the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum (ACPCF) with voting rights.   |
| Option 3 | To replace one of the teacher representatives with a parent representative from the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum (ACPCF) with voting rights. |
- 9.4 In order to improve the involvement of parents, guardians and carers in the education decision making process as set out in Councilor Cormack's notice of motion it is recommended that Committee agree to option 2.

## **10. Process to change standing orders and timescales to implement the decision.**

The proposal is to implement the changes to the committee as soon as the standing orders are amended. Standing Order 28 (2) (i) will require to be amended to permit a parent representative to be appointed, which will require a recommendation to be made to Council. The earliest that this could be done would be at the Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2011, and the change would be effective for the following meeting of this Committee.

## **11. IMPACT**

- 11.1 Corporate - Developing and implementing ways of further enhancing parent involvement helps to support community engagement with local communities and to develop a strong partnership with parents. The new forum is a substantial development for enhancing the “voice” of a key stakeholder group within Aberdeen.
- 11.2 Public - This report will be of interest to the general public but particularly parents, guardians and carers who have children and young people of school age.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- (i) Policy & Strategy (Education) Committee Report September 2008 Article 9 (The Parental Involvement Strategy)
- (ii) Education, Culture & Sport Committee Report May, 2009
- (iii) Policy and Strategy (Education) 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009 Notice of Motion Article 3
- (iv) Policy & Strategy (Education) Committee Report June 2009  
(The Background Report)
- (v) Education, Culture & Sport Committee Report November, 2009
- (v) Education Culture and Sport Committee November 2010.
- (vi) The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006
- (vii) Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (as amended by the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994)
- (viii) Standing Orders and Orders of Reference November 2009

## **13. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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**APPENDIX 1**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>External Representatives</b>
Aberdeen City Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives voting members
Aberdeenshire Council	5 external members - teacher/religious with voting rights
Angus Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives voting members
Argyll and Bute Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives on Executive Committee (undertakes legal responsibilities for Education) voting
Clackmannanshire Council	Presently no Education Committee; educational matters discussed at Council meetings, no external reps.
Dumfries and Galloway Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives voting members
Dundee City Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives voting members
East Ayrshire Council	3 religious reps, 1 teacher rep, 1 parent rep Part of Cabinet when it deals with Education functions. voting rights for those agenda items
East Dunbartonshire Council	7 appointed representatives, incl. 3 religious representatives and others from teachers, Head Teachers, parents and local businesses non voting
East Lothian District Council	3 religious representatives, 1 teaching rep voting members
East Renfrewshire Council	3 religious representatives, 1 teacher representative voting members
Edinburgh City Council	3 religious reps, 2 teacher reps all with voting rights
Falkirk Council	3 religious representatives with voting rights: 2 teachers, 2 parents, 2 pupils representatives, none with voting rights.
Fife Council	3 religious representatives appear to have voting rights, appointed by committee.
Glasgow City Council	3 religious representatives on Executive Committee, 1 co-opted member on Children and Families Policy Development Committee
Highland Council	3 religious representatives, 1 youth convener (appointed and paid by Council on annual basis)
Inverclyde Council	3 religious representatives, 1 teacher representative, 1 parent representative
Midlothian Council	3 religious representatives
Moray Council	3 religious representatives, 1 primary rep, 1 secondary rep, 1 ex-officio pupil rep, 1 ex-officio parent rep
North Ayrshire Council	3 religious representatives
North Lanarkshire Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives.
Orkney Islands Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives
Perth and Kinross Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives, 2 parent representatives (one from Primary School Board, one from Secondary)
Renfrewshire Council	3 religious representatives
Scottish Borders Council	3 religious representatives, 2 teacher representatives
Shetland Islands Council	New Education and Families Committee from June'11, at present no co-options but discussion re religious reps.
South Ayrshire Council	Leadership Panel meets twice each council cycle; 2nd on deals with Education functions 3 voting religious reps; 1 non voting teacher rep
South Lanarkshire Council	Education Resources Committee 3 religious reps, 2 teacher reps and 2 Parent Council reps.
Stirling Council	3 religious reps with voting rights, 1/2 teacher reps without voting rights attend Executive meetings for the Education part of agenda.
West Dunbartonshire Council	3 religious reps; 2 teacher reps, 2 parent reps permanently plus 1 Nursery Head, 1 Primary head and 1 Secondary head on ad-hoc basis
West Lothian Council	3 religious representatives, 1 teacher representative
Western Isles Council	3 religious representatives

**Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum  
Constitution**

1. The group will be known as the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum.
2. The Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum (The Forum) means the nominated representatives of each Associated School Group (ASG) across the Aberdeen City Council area.

Forum Aims and Objectives

3. The Forum will work in partnership with Aberdeen City Council and other organisations involved in education (e.g. Aberdeen ASN Forum) and child welfare issues to represent parents in the pursuit of our aim to help every child maximise their potential.

Specifically, the Forum will:

- Provide a parents perspective at both a local and national level with a view to ensuring that all children receive the best and most appropriate education possible;
- Work in partnership with Aberdeen City Council Education Culture and Sport Directorate;
- Identify common educational issues of concern across Aberdeen City and raise these issues with the appropriate bodies;
- Provide parental representation to the National Parent Forum Scotland;
- Provide parental representation to any appropriate organisation within the educational sector across Aberdeen City where Aberdeen City educational policy is being designed or discussed; and
- Communicate with its members, the educational community and the wider community on educational related issues.

Forum Membership

4. The members of the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum shall consist of parents or carers from the Aberdeen City Education Authority ASG area in which that member has a child at school.
5. Members are encouraged to nominate a deputy who will be the likely successor to the member. Deputies are eligible to attend Forum meetings along with members. Should a vote be required, the ASG will have one vote irrespective of the number of representatives attending.
6. If the deputy is attending in place of the regular member they will have that member's full rights and responsibilities.
7. A member will serve on the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum for a maximum of four years, except where no other representative from the



relative ASG is forthcoming. A new member will be appointed by the outgoing member contacting all other chairs of Parents Council in their ASG and asking for a volunteer.

8. If a member leaves the forum, that retiring member will initiate the process of finding a replacement member., in line with any local arrangements.
9. A member may be asked to retire from the forum if they have a vote of no-confidence from 66% of the Forum members attending a meeting. Written notice must be given to all members of any no confidence motion four weeks before the meeting.

#### Forum Meetings

10. The Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum shall meet on a quarterly basis, subject to arising issues which demand more frequent meetings. The first meeting of the year will be aligned with the first academic session of the year. A quorum shall consist of 3 different ASG areas.
11. The Forum may establish any sub-committee or sub-groups as it sees fit in order to assist in its work. Any such sub committee or sub-group must be chaired by a member of the Forum and will report to the Leadership Team.
12. Where any matter requires a vote from the Forum then each ASG shall have only one vote.

#### Leadership team

13. A leadership team shall be elected from members of the Forum. It will consist of at least four members who may perform functions such as Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.
14. Each post holder will serve for a maximum period of two years before re-election is required. Each nominee must be capable of remaining in post for two years and should therefore have a child whom will remain in education within the nominees ASG for that period.
15. Members of the leadership team are nominated for position by a proposer; they must be seconded by a forum member from a different ASG than the proposer. Should the numbers be over subscribed then a ballot system will apply. Each ASG will be able to cast only one vote for each vacancy.
16. Each post holder will have one vote.
17. The leadership team can co-opt any person or persons to the team. Such co-opted persons will not have a vote at Leadership team meetings.
18. A member may be asked to retire from the forum if they have a vote of no-confidence from 66% of the forum members attending a meeting. Written notice must be given to all members of any no confidence motion four weeks before the meeting.

## Audit

19. Accounts will be published each year, prepared by the leadership team for ratification by the forum at the AGM.

## Forum AGM

20. The leadership team will arrange an Annual General Meeting once a year. It will make its annual report, including account details available at that time. The constitution of the forum can only be changed at the Annual General Meeting (or at a Forum EGM (see below)) . Any proposal for change requires a proposer and seconder from a different ASG than the proposer and must then be put to the vote of all ASGS represented at the Annual General Meeting. A majority vote carries the motion.

## Forum EGM

21. An Extraordinary General Meeting can be called only after the representatives of four different ASG's support a written request to the Leadership team to hold an EGM. The grounds for that request must then be circulated within two weeks and a meeting called within six weeks from receipt of the request. All members of the Forum are entitled to attend an Extraordinary General Meeting.

## Forum Dissolution

22. If the forum, by a two thirds majority of the total voting membership, decides at any time that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve, it shall agree a date for a public meeting to be held to discuss the proposed resolution to dissolve. It is a requirement that not less than ten days prior to the date of such meeting a public notice be given by means of notification in a recognised Aberdeen City Scotland newspaper. If the resolution is supported by a majority of those persons present and qualified to vote, the forum shall be deemed to be dissolved and all assets remaining, after the satisfaction of any proper debts or liabilities shall transfer to a similarly constituted body.
23. If no constituted body is in place at the time of dissolution, all assets remaining, subject to approval of Aberdeen City Council, after the satisfaction of any proper debts or liabilities shall transfer to the Aberdeen City Council who shall hold same in trust for any future Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum.

**PARENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL  
EDUCATION, CULTURE & SPORT COMMITTEE**

**Role**

The Parent Representative must be able to commit to attending all meetings (during the working day and any emergency meetings out with normal working hours) of the Aberdeen City Council Education, Culture & Sport (EC&S) Committee and to represent the views of parents with school children within Aberdeen City Council's jurisdiction.

The Parent Representative will receive directions from and feed back to the Aberdeen City Parent Councils Forum (ACPCF).

The parent representative will be required to adhere to the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct issued under the Ethical Standards in Public Life Etc (Scotland) Act 2000 in the undertaking of their duties associated with the appointment.

The Parent Representative must be capable of remaining in post for two years and should therefore have a child whom will remain in education within Aberdeen City Council's jurisdiction for that period.

The Parent Representative will be required to receive EC&S Committee papers, read them and make the Chair of ACPCF aware of any agenda items which he / she considers require to be discussed by ACPCF prior to the EC&S Committee meeting.

The Parent Representative will be required to attend any meetings called by the Chair of ACPCF to discuss items prior to the ECS Committee meeting and will require to carefully note the views which ACPCF decides it wishes to put forward at the EC&S Committee.

The Parent Representative will e-mail all members of ACPCF informing them of their understanding of the major decisions taken at the meeting at an early course. Each ACPCF member will then be responsible for cascading the information to the parent council chairs within their ASG group. The Parent Representative will attend the next ACPCF meeting to provide members with a full report on the decisions taken at the EC&S Committee meeting. Approved minutes will be circulated to members when these become available.

## **Election**

The Parent Representative must have parental responsibility, be a guardian, and or be liable to maintain or have parental responsibilities (within the meaning of section 1 (3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) in relation to a child or has care of a child or young person and who is currently receiving education and expected to do so for at least two years, within Aberdeen City Council schools.

The Parent Representative will be a member of the ACPCF.

The Chair of ACPCF will give members of ACPCF two weeks' notice of his intention to invite nominations for the position of Parent Representative. Nominations must be proposed and seconded.

Once all nominations have been received, the Chair will make members of ACPCF aware of the nominees. The members of ACPCF will then have a further two weeks to consult with the Chairs of all of the Parent Councils in their respective ASGs regarding the nominees and the use of the ASG's vote.

The Parent Representative will be elected by the ASG representative on the ACPCF casting a vote on behalf of his/her ASG. The ASG representative is expected to take into account the views of the Chairs of Parent Councils in his/her ASG when using his/her vote. There will be two votes per ASG.

The successful nominee will be required to obtain over 50% of the vote.

In the event that there is a tied vote or no clear winner, the following procedure will follow: -

- Nominee with the least votes will be withdrawn from the contest and votes recast for the remaining nominees.
- This procedure may be repeated as required.
- In the event of only two nominees remaining and the vote still being tied, the ACPCF chair will have the casting vote.

### **Time in Office**

The Parent Representative will be eligible to hold office for two years.

Each Parent Representative nominee must be capable of remaining in post for two years and should therefore have a child who will remain in education within Aberdeen City Council jurisdiction for that period.

### **Removal from Office**

The Parent Representative may be asked to retire from the Committee if they have a vote of no confidence from 66% of the Aberdeen City Parent Council (ACPCF). Such a vote of confidence can only take place at a constituted ACPCF meeting. Written notice must be given to all ACPCF members of any no confidence motion four weeks before the date of the proposed meeting.