

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Educational Services Committee: 11 September 2013

Subject: Proposal Paper and launch of statutory consultation for the construction of a new schools and early education campus in Bellsmyre

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's approval for the launch of the statutory consultation process, as required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, for the construction of co-located primary schools and an Early Education and Childcare Centre (EECC) within Bellsmyre to replace the current St Peter's Primary School, Aitkenbar Primary School, Andrew B Cameron EECC and St Peter's EECC.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Committee:
- a) approve the launch of statutory consultation by the Executive Director of Educational Services under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to construct co-located replacements for St Peter's Primary School and Aitkenbar Primary School, together with a new EECC to replace Andrew B Cameron and St Peter's EECCs, the new campus to be located on the site of the current St Peter's Primary School;
 - b) approve a recommendation that the consultation period should run from Monday 16 September 2013 to Friday 8 November 2013, a total of 32 days when the schools are open for pupils; and
 - c) agree that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a future meeting of the Educational Services Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1** On 6 February 2013, Council approved a ten year capital plan which included an allocation of £9.311m for the Bellsmyre schools/EECC project, £0.600m from the Scottish Government's enabling fund via the Scottish Futures Trust and £8.711m from the Council's Capital Programme. Maps showing the locations of the four educational establishments are included as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.2** On 15 May 2013, the Educational Services Committee agreed to:

- 1) approve the construction of new buildings and campus to replace the existing Aitkenbar Primary School, St Peter's Primary School, St Peter's Early Education and Childcare Centre (EECC) and Andrew B Cameron EECC;
- 2) note that the project will be procured through Hub West Scotland;
- 3) note that the present St Peter's site has been identified as the most appropriate site;
- 4) authorise that site investigations be undertaken on the St Peter's site;
- 5) note that, following completion of site investigations, a further report will be tabled at a future Educational Services Committee detailing the results of the site investigations and seeking authority to commence statutory consultation under terms of the Schools (Consultation) Scotland) Act 2010; and
- 6) authorise the Executive Director of Educational Services, in consultation with the Executive Director of HEEDS, the Head of Finance and Resources and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services to procure the necessary technical, legal and financial support through the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) Framework Agreement.

4. Main Issues

Site Investigations

- 4.1** Site investigations at the St Peter's Primary School site have now been completed and revealed no issues which would prevent the construction of the new campus on that site.

Consultation

- 4.2** Because this proposal, if enacted, would involve the re-location of Aitkenbar Primary School to the St Peter's site, the Council is required to carry out a consultation process as detailed in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 4.2.1** The 2010 Act requires the education authority to publish a "proposal paper" which sets out the details of the relevant proposal. The Proposal Paper for this project is provided as Appendix 1 to this report. The final form of the proposals paper may differ slightly from that attached, but only to a minor extent and as far as is necessary to provide clarity for the consultees. No principal facts or opinions will differ from those contained in the enclosed paper. It should be noted that the terms of this Proposals Paper are couched based upon the assumption that the recommendations in this report have been accepted. It should not therefore be assumed that the outcome of any discussion at committee has been prejudged.

- 4.2.2** The 2010 Act also requires the education authority to publish an “educational benefits statement” in relation to any proposal which falls under the terms of the act. The Educational Benefits Statement in relation to the Bellsmyre proposal is included in the Proposal Paper which forms Appendix 2 to this report.
- 4.2.3** The Act defines the statutory consultees for a proposed relocation. All these groups will be invited to respond to this consultation, as will the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church, as the proposal affects a denominational primary school.
- 4.2.4** The Act requires a consultation period of at least 6 weeks which must include at least 30 school days. It is proposed that the consultation period for this project should run from Thursday 19 September to Wednesday 13 November 2013, a total of 32 school days.
- 4.2.5** The education authority is required, as part of the consultation process, to hold a public meeting to discuss the relevant proposal. The public meeting for this proposal will be held at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 2 October 2013 in St Peter’s Primary School.
- 4.2.6** The 2010 Act requires the involvement of HMIE (now Education Scotland) in the process. Education Scotland must be provided with the Proposal Paper, the Educational Benefits Statement and the submissions made to the education authority during the consultation period (or, by agreement, a summary of these submissions). Education Scotland then prepares a report on the educational aspects of the proposal.
- 4.2.7** The education authority is then required to publish a “Consultation Report” containing a record of the total number of submissions received, a summary of those submissions and of any oral representations made during the public meeting, a copy of the Education Scotland report and a statement of the authority’s response to the written and oral submissions and to the Education Scotland report. Providing all necessary procedures can be undertaken in time, it is planned to present the Consultation Report on the Bellsmyre project to a future meeting of the Educational Services Committee.

The Proposals and Timescales

- 4.3** This report is proposing the following timescales in relation to the Bellsmyre project:

16.9.13 – 13.11.13 Statutory Consultation

9.12.13 Comments by Education Scotland on Proposal

January 2014 Report to special meeting of Educational Services Committee on outcome of consultation.

1.9.13 – 31.3.14 Design of new campus

7.4.14 – 18.4.14	Decant of St Peter's Primary School and EECC into Aitkenbar building
1.5.14 – 31.7.14	Demolition of St Peter's buildings
1.8.14 – 31.12.15	Construction of new campus
January 2016	New schools/EECC open
1.1.16 – 31.3.16	Demolition of Aitkenbar and Andrew B Cameron buildings

Co-location

- 4.4** If this proposal is accepted, it will be the first time that West Dunbartonshire Council has co-located a denominational and a non-denominational primary school, although such projects have been successfully undertaken in other local authorities.
- 4.4.1** It is important to stress that the new St Peter's Primary School and Aitkenbar Primary School will continue to be separate establishments, with their own classrooms, staff and head teachers, although some internal and external facilities, including the dining room, the gym/assembly area and external play areas will be shared.
- 4.4.2** The Archdiocese of Glasgow has developed a protocol for campuses which are shared between denominational and non-denominational schools. This document formed the basis of design work which was previously carried out. The protocol will continue to inform on-going discussions between the Council and the Catholic Church's representative on the Educational Services Committee.
- 4.4.3** There is already a very strong tradition of joint working between Aitkenbar Primary and St Peter's Primary school. Over recent years, there have been several excellent examples of the schools working together on anti-sectarian and sports projects. The co-location will facilitate the further development of such work, while allowing the two schools to retain their individual identities.
- 4.4.4** With regard to the Early Education and Childcare Centre, the proposal is to create a new, single EECC with one head of centre, to replace the two existing centres. The new centre will be managed separately from the two schools and will have its own entrance, although it will benefit from sharing some facilities with the schools.

Decant

- 4.5** Following a previous evaluation and informal consultation, it was agreed that the present St Peter's site was the best available site for the new campus. The main reason for this was that St Peter's Primary School is located next door to St Peter's Church, with which the school has very close links. In

addition, the Aitkenbar site is likely to be a more attractive site for housing and therefore has greater potential for generating a substantial capital receipt for the Council.

4.5.1 In order to ensure the most efficient use of the site for the new campus, it will be necessary to clear the site before the commencement of construction. It will therefore be necessary to decant pupils and staff from St Peter's Primary School to Aitkenbar Primary School and the staff and children from St Peter's EECC to temporary accommodation on the Aitkenbar Primary site for a period of 21 months from April 2014. There is adequate space in the Aitkenbar building and campus to accommodate these temporary arrangements and the costs of minor adaptations have been factored into the project.

4.5.2 The head teachers of both schools and the head of St Peter's EECC have been fully consulted on the decant arrangements and are confident that they can be managed with no educational or social detriment to the young people affected.

5. People Implications

5.1 If the proposals are accepted, there will be some effect on staffing levels within the new campus, particularly within cleaning and facilities management services and there would be only one head of centre for the EECC, as opposed to two heads at present. Any changes would be managed via the Council's policies for managing such changes. The timescales involved mean that any reduction in staffing levels will be managed in a planned way.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The capital budget for this project is £9.311m, £0.600m from the Scottish Government's enabling fund via the Scottish Futures Trust and £8.711m from the Council's Capital Programme.

6.2 The cost of construction and hire of temporary hatted accommodation to house St Peter's EECC for a period of 21 months during the construction programme will be £0.150m. This cost will be covered within the overall budget for the project.

6.3 The Council's capital programme assumes a capital receipt of £0.950m from the sale of the Aitkenbar site.

6.4 The business case for this project identified that the project should generate a revenue saving of £0.190m per annum following the opening of the new campus. This sum has been utilised in the Council's capital plan to support prudential borrowing to help fund the capital programme to the value of £2.8m.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 Failure to continue to regenerate the educational estate would mean that the condition of the school buildings would continue to deteriorate, leading to

increased inequalities for young people and reputational damage for the Council. The educational benefits to young people which arise from a move to a modern school building have been obvious in all eight of the new educational establishments opened by West Dunbartonshire Council over the last four years. Failure to proceed with this project would mean that the young people of Bellsmyre would not receive benefits of a similar nature.

7.2 The risks of failing to complete the project on time and within budget will be controlled via robust project management based on the Council's substantial and successful recent experience in delivering schools projects. The expertise of hub West Scotland Limited and the Scottish Futures Trust will also help to control this risk.

7.3 It is essential that the revenue savings of £0.190m referred to in 6.3 above are realised as a significant amount of prudential borrowing is riding on the delivery of these savings. Close monitoring by officers will ensure that the savings are realised.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 This project will improve the quality of educational experience for young people in Bellsmyre and no negative impacts relating to equality issues were identified in a screening. A further EIA/Screening will be undertaken when the recommendation report is submitted to a future meeting of the Educational Services Committee.

9. Consultation

9.1 This project has been the subject of extensive discussion by the Strategic Asset Management Group and the Corporate Management Team as well as by Council and the Educational Services Committee.

9.2 Legal Services, the Section 95 Officer, the Executive Director of HEEDS and the Corporate Asset Manager have been consulted on the content of this report.

9.3 As detailed in section 4.2 of this report and in appendix 1, consultation with all statutory consultees will be conducted on the proposals in this report in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 The Bellsmyre project will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities of Economic Regeneration and Improved Outcomes for Children and Young People.

Executive Director of Educational Services

Date: 12 August 2013

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Appendices: Appendix 1: Location Maps
Appendix 2: Proposal Paper, incorporating Educational Benefits Statement

Background Papers: Council Report 6 February 2013: 10 Year Capital Programme
Educational Services Committee Report 15 May 2013: Regeneration of the Schools Estate: Bellsmyre Schools and EECC Co-location
Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
Equalities Impact Assessment

Wards Affected: Ward 3