

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Education Officer

Educational Services Committee –16 March 2022

Subject: Response on Statutory Consultation for the construction of a new community campus in Faifley

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform the Educational Services Committee of the outcome from the statutory consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the formal consultation on the construction of a new community campus in Faifley on the site of the current St. Joseph's Primary School.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

(i) agrees the findings from the statutory consultation exercise and the content of the associated Education Scotland report.

3. Background

- 3.1** At the meeting on 21 September 2021, the Educational Services Committee approved the launch of the statutory consultation on the proposal to construct co-located replacements for St. Joseph's Primary School, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and Edinbarnet Primary School, together with a new ELCC to replace Auchnacraig and Lennox Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELCCs), and also provide a Community Library and Community space within a new community campus to be located on the site of the current St Joseph's Primary School.
- 3.2** Committee further agreed that a report outlining the results of the consultation and appropriate recommendations be presented to the meeting of the Educational Services Committee to be held on 16 March 2022.
- 3.3** The consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and copies of the proposal document were made available to all stakeholders as prescribed by the Act. The consultation ran from Thursday 30 September 2021 until Wednesday 17 November 2021.

4. Consultation Process / Considerations

- 4.1** The statutory consultation process was undertaken with a Proposal Paper

setting out the proposal on which the Council was consulting being published on the Council's website and stakeholders invited to participate in the consultation exercise. An electronic link to the consultation page and Proposal Paper, was issued by email to the consultees listed within the document and was also published on the Council's website and publicised via the Council's social media channels.

4.2 As part of the Council's consultation process we undertook the following activities:

- Publicising the consultation and dates of public meetings through the Council's website, through public notices in local newspapers and on social media.
- Advising relevant stakeholders by email of the consultation and providing an electronic link to the website.
- Holding an online virtual public consultation meeting, and arranging a public socially distanced consultation meeting at St. Joseph's Primary School on 5 October 2021.
- Utilising the Council's consultation web page to make documentation on the proposal, link to the online survey, background information and details on how to participate in the survey available.
- Setting up a direct telephone line and email address to deal with queries.

4.3 Two public consultations meetings were held on 5 October 2021 to allow Officers to explain the proposal and enable interested parties to ask questions regarding the proposal.

4.4 A total of 2 parents attended the online virtual public meeting which took place at 4.00 p.m. A representative from Education Scotland was also in attendance, as part of their role in the statutory consultation process. A total of 11 people attended the public meeting held in the evening, and this included parents, staff and members of the local community. Minutes were taken at both meetings (Appendix 1) and these minutes were made available on the consultation pages of the Council's website.

4.5 An online survey was available during the consultation period, with 78 respondents registering. In answer to the question "*Are you in favour of the proposal to co-locate Edinbarnet Primary School, St Joseph's Primary School, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and a new Early Learning and Childcare Centre comprising Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs on the St Joseph's site?*" 41 were in favour, 32 were not in favour, and 5 did not answer.

4.6 The main issues raised by participants in the survey have been grouped into headings below and the education response to the points raised are detailed within the Consultation Report.

- Introduction of campus model
- Site location, suitability and size
- Traffic congestion/volume of traffic
- Insufficient entrances

- Concerns about impact of ongoing building works on children’s learning.
- Impact on outdoor learning/Forest School
- Further travel for some pupils
- Impact on staffing levels
- There were also some positive comments related to investment within area and comments in favour of St. Joseph’s site

4.7 One written response was made to the public consultation. The written response supported the proposal.

Education Scotland Report and Considerations

4.8 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires HM Inspectors from Education Scotland to be involved in the formal consultation proposal. The full report from Education Scotland (Appendix 2) was published on their website and also published as part of the Consultation Report.

4.9 As part of this process HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspect of the proposal:

- attendance at the online public consultation meeting held on 5 October 2021 in connection with the Council’s proposal;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the Council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement, related consultation documents, and written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- virtual visits to the site of Edinbarnet Primary School, St. Joseph’s Primary School, St. Joseph’s Rainbow Base and Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs, including discussion with relevant consultees.

Education Scotland Summary and Recommendations

4.10 Education Scotland produced a report on the consultation undertaken by the Council on the proposed construction of a new campus in Faifley on the site of the current St. Joseph’s Primary School.

4.11 Within the report, Education Scotland has expressed the following opinion on the education benefit arising if this proposal is implemented.

“The council has set out a reasonable case in support of its proposal. There will be a number of potential educational benefits for children and staff should the proposal go ahead. The provision of a modern, purpose built campus offers an improved learning environment designed to suit the demands of a 21st century curriculum. Children will have access to enhanced internal and external sports and play facilities. External areas of the site will be designed and developed to provide safe, secure and educationally stimulating outdoor environments, to support recreation and play. They intend to include suitable areas of soft and hard landscaping incorporating seating and an all-weather sports pitch. Included are plans to have areas capable of being developed by staff and pupils as part of

'grounds for learning' initiatives and other environmental education and outdoor learning opportunities. The plans include latest Information and communications technology to enhance learning. There would be a specially designed general purpose and library area to encourage independent and collaborative learning. In the case of the Rainbow Additional Support Needs Base, the proposal includes providing a range of modern and appropriate facilities for the educational, support and care needs of children with complex needs."

- 4.11** Education Scotland also stated, *"While Edinbarnet Primary School and St Joseph's Primary School will continue to operate as separate establishments, sharing a campus will facilitate the development of similar projects and embed collaborative working. There will also be educational benefits from the professional dialogue among staff from the two primary schools and ELCC being enriched by the fact that they share the same campus. Transition from pre-school to Primary 1 will be enhanced by the fact that the two schools will share their building with a large ELCC. The fact that the new ELCC will be much larger than the two ELCC establishments it is replacing will afford the management team greater flexibility in the deployment of staff and the grouping of children. In addition, having children in the one large ELCC removes the need to move children at 3 years of age to alternative provision, therefore providing better continuity of learning.*
- 4.12** Education Scotland noted that *"Staff in the St Joseph's Primary School, Edinbarnet Primary School, Lennox ELCC and Auchnacraig ELCC who met with HM Inspectors were positive, overall, about the proposal. They can see benefits for children working in a building that is fit for purpose. They were enthusiastic about the benefits of shared working and ease of transition in learning for children. Staff all raised concerns regarding parking and traffic management for the numbers accessing the site, including the general public using the shared community facilities. They would like clarification that the design of the building will meet the needs of all children, including those with particular barriers to learning. Staff also queried how the new site will replicate the well-developed outdoor learning areas presently used to deliver Curriculum for Excellence in their current schools and settings".*
- 4.13** Staff in both Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCC indicated they would like clarification on the leadership structure of the new ELCC and reassurance about staff job security. Parents of children at Edinbarnet Primary School and Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCC are concerned about traffic management and road safety issues at the new site. A few stakeholders are not aware of options about the proposed site location. As a result, they are unclear why St Joseph's Primary School site is West Dunbartonshire Council's preferred location and if there is an alternative. Concerns about the amount, use and governance of community space at the new site were shared with HM Inspectors. Responses to these issues are contained within the Consultation Report.
- 4.14** Children from Edinbarnet Primary School and St Joseph's Primary School

who met with HM Inspectors were very positive about the proposal. They shared ideas about the improvements for children's learning emphasising that *"they want to share learning opportunities and social spaces with children from the other primary school"*.

- 4.15** Education Scotland recognised that the Archdiocese of Glasgow supports the proposal in relation to the educational benefits it will bring to children of St Joseph's Primary School and the wider community. *"Whilst they accept the proposal for the shared campus, they ask that the council engage with them regularly during the process regarding the design of the building"*. Education Officers have worked effectively with the Archdiocese during previous new builds and an initial meeting in relation to the Faifley Campus took place in January 2022.

Consultation Report

- 4.16** The Council is required to prepare and publish its final Consultation Report when the consultation exercise has been concluded. In preparing the report, the Council must consider the report from Education Scotland and other responses to the consultation. The consultation report must explain how the Council has reviewed the proposal, a summary of the points raised during the consultation and the Council's response to them. Responses to comments received from the consultation were published as part of the Consultation Report (Appendix 3).
- 4.18** The Council is required to publish the Consultation Report and Educational Services Committee cannot take a decision on whether to formally implement a proposal until 3 weeks have elapsed from the date it publishes the Consultation Report. The Consultation Report was published on the website on Monday 14 February 2022.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** If the proposal is accepted, there will be some effect on staffing levels within the new campus, particularly within cleaning and facilities management services and as two ELCCs will be merged to form one ELCC, the leadership will be reviewed to ensure that it meets service needs. Any changes would be managed via the Council's policies for managing such changes and in consultation with staff and Trade Unions. The timescales involved mean that any reduction in staffing levels will be managed in a planned way.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial or procurement implications associated with this report, as there were no associated costs for undertaking the statutory consultation. Costs associated with the development of the Faifley campus were presented to committee on 21 September 2021.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There are no risks in adopting the recommendations contained in this paper and HM Inspectors believe the proposal is of educational benefit and the statutory consultation process was followed.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** This report was considered under the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment process and was assessed as relevant for the purposes of Equality Impact Assessment, as the development will improve the provision of support for those with Additional Support Needs. The Equalities Impact Assessment is included as Appendix 4.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Consultation on the proposed changes was undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 9.2** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted on the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The improvements in the learning environments in the new builds and other educational establishments promotes and encourages imaginative and innovative learning and teaching thereby increasing attainment and achievement. This in turn leads to the strategic objective of a strong local economy and increased employment opportunities.
- 10.2** The proposal on the Faifley Campus were fully consulted upon and support the Council's strategic priorities of meaningful community engagement and open, accountable and accessible local government.

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Minutes from Public Meetings

Appendix 2 – Education Scotland Report
Appendix 3 – Consultation Report
Appendix 4 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Papers: Report and Proposal Paper submitted to Education Committee on 21.09.2021

Wards Affected: Equalities Impact Assessment No.346
Ward 4 Kilpatrick

