

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee – 8 March 2023**

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**Subject: Response on the Consultation Proposal to open an additional support needs school at former Riverside Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC)**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform the Educational Services Committee of the outcome and findings of the statutory consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the formal consultation on the proposal to open a new additional support needs school in the site of the former Riverside ELCC on the St. Martin's Primary site.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) Agrees the findings from the statutory consultation exercise and notes the content of the associated Education Scotland report.

**3. Background**

- 3.1** At the meeting on 28 September 2022, Educational Services Committee agreed to commence formal consultation on a proposal to establish a new additional support needs school to be located in the former Riverside ELCC site within the campus of the current St. Martin's Primary School.
- 3.2** 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 3 October 2022 to 11 November 2022, a total of 33 days when schools were open for pupils (reflecting the October holiday week).
- 3.3** 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 8 March 2023.

**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 a public consultation meeting at St. Martin's Primary School on 25 October 2022.
  - 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 25 October 2022 to allow Officers to explain the proposal and enable interested parties to ask questions regarding the proposal.
- 4.4** No interested parties attended the online virtual public meeting which took place at 4.00 p.m. A total of 15 people attended the public meeting held in the evening, and this included parents, staff and members of the local community and a representative from Education Scotland was also in attendance, as part of their role in the statutory consultation process. 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 7 respondents registering. In answer to the question "*Are you in favour of the proposal to redevelop the former Riverside Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC) to form a new school, supporting ASN needs, on St. Martin's Campus?*" 6 respondents were in favour of the proposal and 1 respondent was not.
- 4.6** The majority of the respondents were in favour of the proposal and a number of positive comments were received. Details of comments submitted and the Council's response is outlined within the Consultation Response Report (Appendix 2).
- 4.7** One written response was made to the public consultation. The written response supported the proposal.
- 4.8** The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires HM Inspectors from Education Scotland to be involved in the formal consultation proposal. As part of this process HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspect of the proposal:
- attendance at the public consultation meetings held on 25 October 2022 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
- visits to the site of St. Martin's Primary School, including discussions with relevant consultees; and engagement with the Archbishop of Glasgow's representative.

**4.9** Education Scotland produced a report on the consultation undertaken by the Council on the proposal for the establishment of a new school to support additional support needs at the former Riverside ELCC. The full report from Education Scotland (Appendix 3) was published on their website and also published as part of the Consultation Report.

**4.10** Within the report, Education Scotland has expressed the following opinion on the education benefit arising if this proposal is implemented. *"HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential to bring clear educational benefits for young people with additional support needs attending the new school. A shared campus will create joint learning opportunities for both the new school and the existing primary school"*.

**4.11** Education Scotland also stated, *"HM Inspectors agree that the new facility will enhance the current provision for children and young people with additional support needs across West Dunbartonshire. The shared campus will ensure that the building that is currently empty, is put to good use."*

**4.12** The report also commented that *"In order to alleviate any concerns that stakeholders may have about the layout of the building, the council should share proposed plans as soon as is practicable. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should ensure that all stakeholders are kept fully up to date with developments"* If the proposal goes ahead education services is committed to including all stakeholders in the planning and design stage, and will continue to use effective communication strategies to ensure continued engagement with all stakeholders throughout the development

**4.13** Almost all stakeholders who spoke with HM Inspectors or who responded in writing are supportive of the proposals and recognise that it will enhance the current provision and provides an option for children to be educated locally. Staff and children from St. Martin's Primary School also welcomed the development and recognized the educational benefits of working collaboratively and sharing resources.

**4.14** A few stakeholders expressed some reservations in terms of safety regarding car parking and access at the school at busy times. The Council is aware of known problems at the site with car parking, and drop off points and the turning area. Response to this issue is contained within the Consultation Report.

- 4.15** Education Scotland recognised that the Archdiocese of Glasgow welcomes the fact that the co-location of the two schools will be in accordance with the Catholic Church's protocols for co-located establishments. Response to the issues raised in relation to separate entrances and connecting doors within the school, and shared use of facilities are contained within the 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.
- 4.17** 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 2023

## **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 as there will be two establishments on the premises to be supported. There is potential to create a number of teaching and support staff posts. Any changes would be managed via the Council's policies for managing such changes. The timescales involved mean that any additions or recruitment of staff will be managed in a planned way.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 6.1** The additional staffing costs will be met from the agreed budget for approved expansion of the school learning estate to meet projected needs of the Additional Support Needs (ASN) sector.

## **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.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the proposal and was reported to Educational Services Committee on 22 September 2022. The project will improve the quality of the educational experience for young people in West Dunbartonshire who have severe and complex learning needs and there are therefore no negative impact relating to equality issues.

## **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 adaptation of the former ELCC 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.

Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer

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<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Minutes from Public Meetings on 25.10.22 Appendix 2 – Consultation Report Appendix 3 – Education Scotland Report
<b>Background Papers:</b>	Education Services Committee Report 28 September 2022
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All council Wards

