

West Dunbartonshire Council

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Council: 24 February 2010

Subject: The Results of the Formal Consultation on the Proposals in Respect of the Co-location of Primary Schools in the Faifley Area

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to report the outcomes of the formal consultation for the proposed co-location of a newly built Edinbarnet Primary School and St. Joseph's Primary School, together with an Integrated Early Years and Family Support Centre.

2. Background

- 2.1** At the meeting of Council on 30 September 2009, the report entitled "Strategic Plan for the Regeneration of West Dunbartonshire Schools' Estate: "Phase 2" included a proposal to build a new co-located Edinbarnet Primary School and St. Joseph's Primary School with an integrated Early Years and Family Support Centre.
- 2.2** At the meeting Members instructed that further formal consultation should take place on the proposals in respect of proposals for schools in the Faifley area.

3. Main Issues

Edinbarnet Primary School

- 3.1** A public consultation meeting took place in Edinbarnet Primary School on 18 November 2009. Letters had been issued to parents and public notices were posted in the local library in Skypoint.
- 3.2** Approximately 35 people attended the meeting comprising parents, staff, elected members and members of the member/officer working group on schools' regeneration. Questionnaires were issued at the end of the meeting. None were returned on the evening.
- 3.3** A note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 1
- 3.4** Thirty six submissions were received through the post. Nineteen returns were in favour of the new build co-located schools proposals, fifteen were against and two were unsure. Some of the salient points noted in the posted returns are listed below.

- a) If there were to be a co-located new school building, all thirty six returns expressed the wish that Edinbarnet should be the preferred site.
- b) Edinbarnet Primary School (EPS) is the only school with multiple accesses from the main road.
- c) If the schools were to be sited elsewhere EPS would lose pupils to neighbouring schools.
- d) Concerns were expressed over traffic congestion around the St. Joseph's and Skypoint areas.
- e) Safety of the children should come first.

St. Joseph's Primary School

- 3.5** A public consultation meeting took place in St. Joseph's Primary School on 30 November 2009. Letters had been issued to parents and public notices were posted in the local library in Skypoint.
- 3.6** Approximately 50 people attended the meeting comprising parents, staff, elected members and members of the member/officer working group on schools' regeneration. Questionnaires were issued at the end of the meeting.
- 3.7** Forty four questionnaires were returned on the evening. Five returns were in favour of the new build co-located schools proposals, thirty eight were against and one was unsure. Some of the salient points noted are listed below.
 - a) If there were to be a co-located new school building, thirty four returns expressed the wish that St. Joseph's should be the preferred site. One return suggested an alternative site.
 - b) Concerns raised that parents unable to attend the meeting would not have a proper say in the consultation.
 - c) Concerns that sharing facilities would result in less availability of the facilities.
 - d) Co-location will be detrimental to the children's education.
 - e) Parents would have increased stress trying to take their children to school where there are more pupils attending than they are used to.
 - f) There was no evidence presented as to the positive or negative outcomes of children's education in a co-located school.
 - g) There was no report presented on how the operations of co-located schools would work.
 - h) Exact timescales are required.

- i) Will the budget cover any teething issues?
- j) Concern expressed over potential job losses.
- k) None of the sites are suitable with regard to road safety.
- l) Good luck.
- m) Happy to stay at current St. Joseph's site.
- n) Safety, security and wellbeing of children should be uppermost in consideration of any plans.
- o) At present St Joseph's offers excellent advantages in being a friendly, close knit community feel, as well as providing a very high standard of teaching.
- p) The majority of parents from both sides are opposed to this proposal.
- q) No valid arguments were made as to why it would be advantageous for the schools to be co-located other than financial.
- r) It is very important that the school remains in close proximity to our church.

3.8 A note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 2.

3.9 Ninety one submissions were received through the post from a group calling themselves "The St. Joseph's Parent Council Consultation Group". One return was in favour of the new build co-located schools proposals, eighty eight were against and two did not know. In response to the question "Do you wish St. Joseph's to remain a separate school?" ninety said "yes" and one said "no".

Issues facing the Council

3.10 Public opinions aired at the Faifley consultation meetings were mixed. A small majority who attended the EPS meeting were in favour of a new build co-location whereas the vast majority attending the St. Joseph's PS meeting were against any new build co-location.

3.11 Current rolls are 266 (Edinbarnet PS) and 157 (St. Joseph's PS). The projected rolls for Edinbarnet PS and St Joseph's PS are 240 and 162 respectively. Should they not be co-located, the schools' respective continued running capacities would be 49.5% and 46.8%.

- 3.12** There has been considerable investment in both Edinbarnet and St Joseph's primary schools in recent years. However, since significant issues remain in terms of both condition and suitability it is considered that co-location would represent the best solution in terms of value for money.
- 3.13** The intention is that a new build co-location would include an Integrated Early Years and Family Support Centre. The Centre would deliver early education and childcare support. In addition to this there would be opportunities to support vulnerable families through integrated service provision, using a partnership model between Educational Services, health, social work and other agencies.

The preferred location of a new build co-located school

- 3.14** The advantage of a new build at St. Joseph's PS site would be that there is sufficient open ground adjacent to the existing school for a new build to take place without the need for any initial decant of the existing primary school. The site is easily accessed from the main road for contractor's deliveries. The disadvantage would be that the site is on the extreme eastern boundary of the Faifley area. Environmental Protection Services has confirmed that there is contaminated land along the path outside of the north boundary line of the school. Whilst the land within the school site is not earmarked as being contaminated, further detailed survey work would be required prior to any construction works within the area in order to fully ascertain whether there has been any migration of gas below the ground. This would not automatically prevent development of the site, but there may be some additional cost implications in order to decontaminate the area.
- 3.15** The Edinbarnet PS site also has sufficient open ground adjacent to the existing school for a new build to take place without the need for any initial decant of the existing primary school. However, the presence of electricity pylons and overhead high voltage cables on and around the site could hamper building operations, thereby resulting in additional costs. The site is more centrally located within the Faifley area but is less easily accessed from the main road for contractor's deliveries and operations. There are currently two entrances to the school grounds and this would allow separate access between children/other school users and construction traffic.
- 3.16** Estimated costs for the various options are noted below. It should be noted that costs have not been given for the option of constructing the schools on the Skypoint site. Costs for this option are more difficult to calculate, given the additional factors such as the fact that the Skypoint building is currently occupied by various organisations for which alternative accommodation would have to be found. Further detailed work on the costing would be required if there was a desire to pursue this option.

3.16.1 New Build Costs

	<u>Colocation Edinbarnet site</u>	<u>Colocation St Joseph's site</u>	<u>Separate New Build Edinbarnet</u>	<u>Separate New Build St Joseph's</u>
All-in cost to build school	£ 10.64m	£10.14m	£ 6.35m	£ 5.80m
Professional Fees	£ 1.17m	£ 1.12m	£ 0.70m	£ 0.64m
	£ 11.81m	£ 11.26m	£ 7.05m	£ 6.44m
All-in cost to build Integrated Early Years and Family Support Centre (incl. fees)	£ 3.50m	£ 3.40m	£ 3.50m*	£ 3.40m
	£ 15.31m	£ 14.66m	£ 10.55m	£ 9.84m
<u>Deduct</u> Receipt for land	£ 0.80m	£ 0.80m	£ NIL	£ NIL
Total Approx. Capital Cost	£ 14.51m	£ 13.86m	£ 10.55m*	£ 9.84m

* Only 1 Integrated Early Years & Family Support Centre required

Additional transport costs – Nil

It should be noted that the costs quoted above use prices which were accurate in the first quarter of 2008 (ie just prior to the downturn in the construction industry). Using these figures allows accurate comparisons to be made with the costs reported in the September 2009 Report to Council on the Strategic Plan for the Regeneration of West Dunbartonshire Schools' Estate: "Phase 2" which also used costs from early 2008. Recent experience (eg with Bonhill and Goldenhill primaries) suggests that, were we to go to the market now, costs would be considerably lower. However, it should also be noted that costs are almost certain to rise again as the country emerges from recession.

3.16.2 Major Remodel and adaptations to both existing schools

In the event that no new build co-location were to be approved, major refurbishment costs, including fees, would be as follows (prices at 4th quarter 2009):-

Edinbarnet PS	£ 5.39m
St Joseph's PS	£ 3.68m
Total approx. Capital Cost	£ 9.07m

These refurbishment works would be introduced into the Capital Programme as and when sufficient funding becomes available.

3.17 Whilst we have received a majority of responses that are clearly not in favour of co-locating the primary schools, other factors need to be considered.

3.17.1 The existing schools are too large for the school rolls (see 3.11). To ensure efficient use of the buildings surplus spaces would need to be filled by other Council services, thereby incurring additional capital expenditure to ensure adequate and safe separation of all users.

- 3.17.2** The schools are in need of major capital investment to attempt to make them appropriate for the delivery of education which is appropriate for the 21st century (e.g. fabric and installation upgrades, remodelling, full accessibility). Examples of new school preferences would be break-out spaces from classrooms, appropriate circulation and social spaces and full accessibility for all users.
- 3.17.3** Even if we invest in major refurbishment, the buildings would still be inferior to any new bespoke establishment.
- 3.17.4** The provision of a new build co-located school would also ensure the long term retention of good quality schools within the Faifley area.
- 3.18** Taking all factors into consideration, it is the view of officers that, to ensure best value for money to the Council, the preferred option should be a newly built co-located Edinbarnet Primary and St Joseph's Primary with an Integrated Early Years and Family Support Centre. This would not impinge on the childrens' education and, with careful and proper design considerations, should improve community involvement.
- 3.19** The contents of this report were endorsed by the Member/Officer Working Group on Schools' Regeneration at its meeting on 3 February 2010. At this meeting, the Catholic Church's representative on the Council's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee indicated that the Archdiocese of Glasgow's preference would be to build any co-located school adjacent to or nearby St. Joseph's Church.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** Staffing in schools is based upon a formula which takes into account, amongst other things, pupil rolls and the formula would be similarly applied to take account of the two schools being co-located onto one campus.
- 4.2** Staffing levels and the management structure would need to be reconsidered in the event of the merger of the Early Education and Childcare Centres (EECCs). Such levels would reflect ratios required by legislation and the Care Commission.
- 4.3** There may be a change to numbers of facilities management staff (i.e. janitorial, cleaning, catering, grounds maintenance and property maintenance), in which case the established Council policy on the deployment of staff in closing or amalgamating schools and EECCs would apply.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Capital costs are noted in 3.14.1 and 3.14.2 above.
- 5.2** Revenue savings would accrue from the amalgamation of the EECCs into the co-located school building. However, staffing and management arrangements for the new establishment would require to be considered and discussed with

the relevant trade unions. It is not therefore possible to quantify the revenue savings at this stage.

- 5.3** The estimated capital receipt for the sale of either of the sites is included in those costs reported in 3.14.1 above. A further capital receipt (around £75,000) could be realised through the sale of Lennox EECC.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** The retention of two separate older buildings could prove unsustainable, particularly bearing in mind the ongoing financial strain on the Council budgets. The delivery of a developing educational curriculum in surroundings which are not appropriate to modern education will be more difficult to achieve over each succeeding year.

7. Equalities Impact

- 7.1** Equalities legislation requires that new or significantly changing policies or services should be subject to an assessment of their impact on the wellbeing of certain groups of people. This is to avoid discrimination against such groups.

- 7.2** A screening analysis was carried out and identified that there could be an impact on religious and disability groups. Pro-formas were completed and the outcomes are summarised below:

- 7.2.1** Religious groups: the Catholic Church is satisfied that it will not be impacted so long as a new build co-located school is built adjacent to or nearby the local St. Joseph's Church. However, if the preferred site were to be at Edinbarnet the Archdiocese has stated that the resulting impact would be to disadvantage Catholic children since they would need to travel a distance of about 0.5 mile in order to participate in the sacraments in the local church.

- 7.2.2** Disability Groups: Any new build schools will be designed to fully comply with all appropriate legislation and the buildings will be fully accessible throughout to all groups.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1** The public response to the consultation generally reflects a desire to retain separately located schools in the Faifley area, although the view of the Archdiocese of Glasgow is that it would agree to a co-located school provided it were built on an acceptable and agreed site and assuming appropriate protocols for the collocation had been agreed between the Council and the Archdiocese.

- 8.2** A new build bespoke establishment would provide effective and efficient use of Council resources and would be best suited to provide appropriate surroundings for the delivery of the curriculum for a modern education.

- 8.3** Improved affordability gained through a new build co-located school would ensure the long term retention of good quality schools within the Faifley area.
- 8.4** The costs incurred in running two schools that are running under-capacity are becoming increasingly unsustainable. Value for money is questionable.
- 8.5** The project is currently listed as priority 6 within the Strategic Plan for the Regeneration of West Dunbartonshire Schools' Estate Phase 2
- 8.6** It is recommended that Council should agree that the following proposals should be adopted for future Statutory Consultation to be carried out when appropriate capital funding is available to commence the project:-
- 8.6.1** that primary education in the Faifley area should be provided through co-located primary schools;
- 8.6.2** that the Lennox and Auchnacraig Early Education and Childcare Centres should amalgamate to become an Integrated Early Years and Family Support Centre, also co-located on the same site as the proposed primary schools; and
- 8.6.3** that the preferred site of the new co-located school should also be subject to consultation

Terry Lanagan
Executive Director of Educational Services

Person to Contact: Dave Clarke, Head of Service (Resources).
Tel: 01389 737306.
e-mail: dave.clarke@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1: Notes of Formal Consultation Meeting:
Edinbarnet Primary School.
Appendix 2: Notes of Formal Consultation Meeting: St.
Joseph's Primary School.

Background Papers: Report to Council: 30 September 2009 "Strategic Plan for
the Regeneration of West Dunbartonshire Schools'
Estate: "Phase 2""

Equality Impact Assessment Summary.

Wards Affected: Ward 4.