

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services

Children's Services Committee: 16 August 2006

Subject: Statutory Consultation on the relocation of Bonhill Primary School

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To seek the approval of members of the Children's Services Committee for the launch of a consultation process proposing the construction of a new Bonhill Primary School on a Council-owned, green field site on Main Street, Bonhill, opposite the school's present site.

2. Background

- 2.1** At the meeting of Council on 22 February 2006, the allocation of Schools Fund monies to a number of capital projects was approved. Among these projects was the construction of a new Bonhill Primary School as a direct replacement for the present school building.
- 2.2** Although there is no proposal to alter the catchment area of Bonhill Primary School, current legislation requires that stakeholders be consulted if there is a proposal to rebuild a school outwith the curtilage of its existing campus.
- 2.3** Since the existing campus of Bonhill Primary School is too small to accommodate a new school building unless the present school were to be demolished first, and since this would necessitate the decanting of the school population to another site for the duration of the construction process, it is proposed that the new Bonhill Primary School be constructed on the Council-owned, green field site on Main Street Bonhill opposite the school's existing site.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Bonhill Primary School is a single stream non-denominational primary school serving the Riverside area of Bonhill. Its current roll is around 200 pupils, but it is anticipated that this figure will rise over the coming years to around 230 pupils as a result of a significant amount of house building in the area.

- 3.2** The present Bonhill Primary School was constructed in 1874 and is the second oldest school building in West Dunbartonshire. It is in a poor state of repair and is expensive to heat, light and maintain. Two classes are housed in temporary huddled accommodation which has been in use for over 10 years.
- 3.3** Although the theoretical capacity of the building is 330 pupils, in reality the school feels overcrowded and there is very little room for flexibility in the use of space. Office space is entirely inadequate; the Depute Head's office, for instance, is a windowless former bookstore. External play space is also limited in size and inadequate in nature.
- 3.4** In short, the present school building is no longer fit for purpose for the delivery of modern primary school education.
- 3.5** The Appendix to this report comprises a consultation paper to be issued to all stakeholders proposing the construction of a new Bonhill Primary School on a site opposite the present school building.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues arising from these proposals. Existing school staff would transfer to the new building.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** It is estimated that the cost of the new building will be approximately £3.99 million at July 2006 prices. This is almost one million pounds more than the original figure quoted in the motion passed by Council on 22 February 2006. This increase is the result of three factors:
- an anticipated rise in the school roll as a result of significant housing developments planned for the area;
 - ongoing high levels of inflation in the construction industry;
 - a desire to ensure equality of standards for schools constructed under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) programme and schools whose construction is financed by more conventional means.
- 5.2** It is estimated that sale of the land on which the present Bonhill Primary School is sited would generate income of approximately £375,000 at July 2006 prices.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The case for building a new Bonhill Primary School has already been made.
- 6.2** The site opposite the present school building is convenient and suitable.
- 6.3** Formal consultation on these proposals should be launched as soon as possible via the consultation paper contained in the Appendix to this report, with a view to reporting the outcome of the consultation to the Children's Services Committee at its meeting on 11 October 2006.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1** Members of the Children's Services Committee are asked:
- i. to adopt for consultation purposes the proposal that a new Bonhill Primary School be constructed on the Council-owned, green field site on Main Street Bonhill opposite the school's existing site;
 - ii. to approve the issuing of the consultation document included as an appendix to this report to all statutory consultees at the earliest opportunity;
- and
- iii. to note that a report outlining the results of the consultation process will be presented to the Children's Services Committee on 11 October 2006.

Liz McGinlay
Director of Education and Cultural Services

Person to Contact: Terry Lanagan, Head of Service, Schools Estate Unit,
Braidfield High School, Queen Mary Avenue,
Clydebank G81 2LR. Tel: 0141 952 5140.
E-mail terry.lanagan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Background Papers: Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 22
February 2006

Wards Affected: Riverside