

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
ECONOMY AND SKILLS
EDUCATION**



**Report on the Responses to the Public Consultation on
the Proposed Future Education Provision for Pupils at
St Sophia's Primary School**

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Economy and Skills**

This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council in terms
of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010



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EDUCATION**

**CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR THE
PROPOSED FUTURE EDUCATION PROVISION FOR PUPILS AT
ST SOPHIA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:

Education provision at the current location of St Sophia's Primary School should be discontinued with effect from June 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter;

The children and young people attending St Sophia's Primary School should transfer to a campus co-located with Galston Primary School and Galston Early Childhood Centre with effect from August 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter;

Views are also sought on the proposal that St Sophia's Primary School should transfer to a campus co-located with Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre on the current Galston Primary and Early Childhood Centre site

This proposal therefore also has implications for:

- Galston Primary School and Galston Early Childhood Centre

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Report by the Depute Chief Executive & Chief Financial officer
Economy and Skills

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Set out a record of the total number of written representations made to the Council by any person during the period of the public consultation exercise;
- Set out a summary of those written representations;
- Set out a summary of the oral representations made to the Council at the public meeting held at:
 - **St Sophia's Primary School on Tuesday 24 February, 2015**
- Set out a statement of the Council's response to:
 - Those written and oral representations; and
 - Education Scotland's report.
- Provide a copy of Education Scotland's report;
- Set out a statement explaining how the Council reviewed the above proposal in terms of section 9(1) of the Schools (consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, having had regard (in particular) to :-
 - The relevant written representations received by the Council during the public consultation period;
 - Oral representations made to it at the public meetings detailed above; and
 - Education Scotland's report
- Provide details of any alleged omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper (including a statement of the Council's opinion on it);
- Provide a statement of the action taken in respect of the omission or inaccuracy, or if no action has been taken of that fact why this is the case; and

SECTION 2: THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

2 East Ayrshire Council's Cabinet approved the recommendation to issue a Proposal Document (attached as Annex 1 of this report) on the future of education provision at St Sophia's Primary School, at its current location, for public consultation at its meeting of Wednesday, 28 January, 2015. The formal consultation period ran from Thursday 12 February 2014 to Friday, 27 March 2015 and written representations on the Cabinet's proposals were

sought from interested parties in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

- 3 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following individuals and groups were consulted:

Statutory Consultees

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools;
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools;
- Parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document;
- The pupils at the affected schools;
- The teaching and ancillary staff, at the affected schools;
- The trade union representatives of the above staff;
- The Community Councils;
- Relevant users of the affected schools;
- South Ayrshire Council;
- North Ayrshire Council;
- The Bishop of Galloway Diocese

Non-statutory Consultees

- Relevant Community Associations;
- The constituency MSP;
- List MSPs for the area;
- The Constituency MP;
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Police Scotland;
- Chief Executive, NHS Ayrshire and Arran;
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT);
- Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;
- Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, East Ayrshire Council;
- Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support, East Ayrshire Council;
- Skills Development Scotland;
- Community Planning Partnership Board;
- Principal of Ayrshire College

Note: There are approximately 10,000 possible respondents to this proposal

- 4 The Proposal Document was also advertised in the press and copies were made widely available locally and to local interest groups. Additional copies of the document were obtainable from the Department of Educational and Social Services, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, from the schools involved and through the Council Website at www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk. Copies were also available at public libraries and Council offices in the areas affected. A copy was also sent to Education Scotland, who under the 2010 Act are statutory consultees and a notice of the proposal was sent to all parents of pupils attending the schools directly affected and associated establishments.

- 5 It has always been the practice within East Ayrshire to consult directly with the young people and this good practice is now enshrined in the 2010 Act, which includes the pupils as statutory consultees. The Council followed the Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People guidance on the processes to be followed when consulting with pupils. The task of obtaining the views of the children, at both primary schools, was undertaken by appropriate independent consultants, from **Common Ground Mediation**.
- 6 A public meeting was arranged by East Ayrshire Council and advertised in the local press and on the Council website. The school also sent reminder messages to parents by letter and via the Group Call system. The meeting took place in:
- St Sophia's Primary School on 24 February 2015
- 7 Approximately 30 individuals attended the meeting, representing parents, staff and others with an interest in the consultation of the future of the primary school. Education Scotland was also represented at the meeting.
- 8 The meeting offered an opportunity for discussion and clarification of the proposals, as well as a forum for people to express their views on the consultation proposals. It included a presentation on the proposals and the consultative process. A written record of the meetings was kept, published on the Council's website and included as part of the final consultative responses within Section 3 of this document.

SECTION 3: THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD

- 9 A total of 49 responses were received from a range of interested parties and stakeholders. The responses and comments are extensively categorised to provide accessibility to the information.

SECTION 4: FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS

- 10 A key aspect of the process of engaging stakeholders is to hold public meetings at which issues and concerns can be raised directly with officers of the council
- 11 The following paragraphs summarise the issues raised at the meeting in response to the Proposal Document. Every effort has been made to summarise views as accurately as possible. A copy of the written submissions is available to be viewed at Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU.
- 12 Education Scotland, in addition to attending the public meeting, were also provided with the notes taken for each meeting and a copy of every submission received in response to the consultation proposals. On 13 May, 2015, a report was received from Education Scotland on the proposals. A full copy of the Education Scotland report can be found at section 7 of this document.

Public Meeting

- 13 The public meeting was chaired by the Executive Director of Education and Social Services. He was accompanied by senior officers from Education and Social Services and Corporate Infrastructure Services as well as the Head Teachers of the schools affected. Approximately 30 individuals were present at the meeting and Education Scotland was also represented at the meeting.
- 14 At the meeting, officers from Educational and Social Services presented information on the consultation options and the process that would be followed.
- 15 Following the officer presentations members of the public were provided with an opportunity to raise issues or seek further information on the consultation. The paragraphs below summarise the main issues raised and statements made by those attending the various meetings.

Summary of the Public Meeting – St Sophia’s Primary School

- 16 A presentation was made to provide the audience with information about the proposals and details of how a response could be made. The information below explains the content of the presentation, the issues raised by members of the audience and the responses provided by officers.
- Education provision at the current location of St Sophia’s Primary School should be discontinued with effect from June 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - The children and young people attending St Sophia’s Primary School should transfer to a campus co-located with Galston Primary School and Galston Early Childhood Centre with effect from August 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - Views are also sought on the proposal that St Sophia’s Primary School should transfer to a campus co-located with Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre on the current Galston Primary and Early Childhood Centre site.
- 17 Mr Ward advised that:
- Proposal clearly states that St Sophia’s Primary School will retain its identity as a separate establishment.
 - Proposal is based on educational benefit.
 - Consultation process is subject to the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.
- 18 The consultation process was explained as follows:
- Proposal document discussed and decided upon at Cabinet on 28 January 2015.
 - Approval to open consultation would be advertised in the media on 5 February with formal opening date 12 February.

- Consultation would be open until 27 March, which would allow more than 30 school-day minimum.
- Public meetings will be held within that period with all interested groups informed of dates and times.
- All comments, queries and questions would be recorded and responses provided at the meeting where possible, or with an assurance of a follow-up response. The record of the meeting will be published on the East Ayrshire Council website.
- All responses to the consultation would be recorded and are acknowledged.
- Queries about specific factual issues would get an individual response.
- Responses will be available to elected members.
- At the close of the consultation all comments and records will be provided to an Education Scotland officer to verify East Ayrshire Council's process. This includes visits to establishments to speak to parents and staff.
- Common Ground Mediation is an independent organisation which will be employed to speak with a broad sample of pupils about the proposals. The results will be published as part of the process.
- Education Scotland will compile a response which comments on East Ayrshire Council's process and this too is included in the final consultation report.
- East Ayrshire Council will provide a consultation report which includes information and feedback from all aspects of the process.
- The published report will be publically available online and in hard copy for a period of 3 weeks before going to Cabinet for a decision on the report's recommendations.
- If a merger or closure is involved the Executive Director writes to the Scottish Government Ministers for their consideration. This stage can take up to 8 weeks and can lead to the whole process being called-in.

19 Mr Ward advised that a pre-consultation meeting had been held which at which the following concerns had been raised:

- Identity of schools.
- Capacity of dining facilities.
- Capacity and range of PE facilities.
- Loss of play areas if there is additional build.
- Traffic issues.
- Separate facilities for St Sophia's Primary.
- Flood potential locally.
- Traffic movement around school.

Mr Ward pointed out that there is no issue of school closure at all. St Sophia's Primary will have its own unique identity.

20 Mr Ward explained that East Ayrshire action points would be as follows:

- Feasibility study.
- Concept design.
- Legal checks.
- Traffic impact study.

- Flood risk assessment.
 - Further discussions with interest groups.
- 21 Mr Ward went on to explain the educational benefits with specific reference to:
- Raising attainment.
 - Equality, inclusion and diversity.
 - Design which supports child-centred learning.
 - Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC).
 - Disadvantage is acknowledged.
 - Balancing advantage and disadvantage.
- 22 The following transport and travel issues were explained:
- Increase in number of vehicles.
 - No increase in East Ayrshire Council transport.
 - School Travel Plan review.
 - Traffic Impact Assessment to identify impact on the local community.
- 23 Mr Ward went on to explain the management of proposals:
- From concept to plan.
 - Bringing communities together.
 - Planning for change.
 - Ethos of new campus.
- 24 The meeting group were encouraged to submit a response to the proposal, using one of the methods below by 4 pm on Friday 27 March 2015:
- To the Executive Director in writing by letter to
Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU
by e-mail:
- education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
- or by response form attached as Appendix 1 of the proposal document.
- 25 Alan Ward drew everyone's attention to drawings displayed in the room. He explained the outline of the plans, which are conceptual at this time, to give an idea of what the new school could look like. It was stressed that the school would have its own unique identity, and that there are many educational benefits to be had from co-locating with Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre.
- 26 Mr Ward advised that all comments made at the meeting will be recorded and made available on the council's website, and he encouraged everyone to submit responses to the council so that they would be formally recorded. Any issues raised in responses will be fully answered.
- 27 Graham Short emphasised that the future of St Sophia's is secure, and that the proposal is to relocate only. He noted that Kilmarnock Standard had

recently ran the headline that St Sophia's Primary was closing, which was not true, and that the Council has fully briefed the Kilmarnock Standard about this.

- 28 Mr Short stated that plans are schematic at this stage to show what would be possible. If Cabinet agree to go ahead following consultation, then designs will be looked at, council officers will engage with parents, staff and children about the design of the new school – all key stakeholders will be involved. He advised that all ideas and requests will be taken into account and that all members of the community are welcome to make a response. For your comments to count responses have to arrive at Council Headquarters before 4 pm on Friday 27 March.

Issues Raised

Community Issues

- 29 Hugh McNeillie, Galston Youth Football Club (YFC) stated that part of the consultation process for Galston Primary School 3 pitches were to be built, to date we have no pitches in a playable state. As a club has 150 kids, biggest in Irvine valley and find it financially crippling having to use Loudoun Academy. The club has expressed an interest in asset transfer of two grass pitches at western road, cost of sorting pitches expensive. He stated that, he could see on plans that there will be a 7 a side astro- turf pitch at the new school, but he feels that an 11 a side pitch is needed and asked if this could be built next to the pavilion changing rooms.

Mr Short stated that he was really sorry to hear about situation and that it had not been resolved yet.

Mr Ward advised that the pitch proposed is age specific to 11 and under. Discussion has taken place with Sports Scotland and it has been identified that there are not very many fixed sized pitches for this age group in the country. Mr McNeillie stated that if there is a pitch set out permanently, it would be there for pupils and as a training pitch for teams. Mr Ward advised that he will meet with Katie Kelly to discuss concerns and relay information back. He assured Mr McNeillie that the team's situation will be taken into consideration.

Mr Short encouraged Mr McNeillie to put his concerns in writing which will be formally acknowledged and considered.

Parent/resident stated that his friend lives near to the entrance to Galston Primary School who has had problems with flooding and sewerage since the school was built. He stated that when it rains heavily, the area floods and sewerage comes into his garden. He expressed concern that an increased build would cause further problems. Councillor Brown advised that the problem had been identified as a Scottish Water problem, the sewerage capacity is not sufficient for the area. Meetings have met with representatives from Scottish Water and Roads Department to try to resolve the issue. Kerr Chalmers stated that he will get an update from Roads Department. Parents

stated that the problem has been reported by the Community Council on numerous occasions to Councillor Brown.

Councillor Mair stated that it would be helpful to explain basic rules for new build to the meeting, e.g. separate entrances etc.

Graham Short explained that the authority already has one joint campus in Patna, where St Xavier's Primary and Patna Primary School & ECC share a campus, which has worked very well. He advised that if any parent wishes to visit the campus this could be arranged. He further advised that in planning a multi-denominational campus, the Diocese has guidelines on the sorts of features they would like to see, and at design phase it is helpful to have comments from both school communities as to what they want to see in the school. He noted that parents who had previously wanted separate entrances and facilities have now changed their mind and feel shared facilities are ok.

Father Martin Chambers stated that one of the things he was proud of was the way the Catholic Church is welcome in the community. He stated that there has been a Catholic school in the area since 1880 and that this was the first time in his experience as a priest that he has been involved in anything like a shared educational campus. He asked how the council see themselves specifically providing Catholic education. Graham Short replied that when relocating schools the authority try to maintain a balance of heritage and new. He stated that it is important to maintain the Catholic ethos, and advised that in the shared Patna/St Xavier's Campus e.g. there is a reflection room.

Alan Ward advised that it is important to consult all parents/staff/pupils when bringing two communities together, and that this was something that we would want Head Teachers to be very much involved in. He stated that he understands things that are required in Catholic education, e.g. areas for mass, and would make sure that this would be a feature of the new school. He noted that the Catholicity of the new school would not be a question and advised that the authority want to assure the future of Catholic education in Galston. Mrs Heron stated that it is very achievable to have the best educational facilities and links but at same time for a school to have their own identity. She advised that Father McGrattan was delighted with how well the Patna/St Xavier's campus had developed and how the children had integrated well together.

Councillor Primrose stated that the authority meet regularly with the Bishop of Galloway and without any shadow of doubt this will continue.

Resident stated that she hoped the campus would not get left to become derelict when empty.

Mr Bell advised that vacated premises that become surplus to requirements are demolished if no-one is interested in taking the building on. He further advised that while vacant the building would be properly secured and monitored.

Parent expressed concern at having separate front doors for pupils with different beliefs and felt that she could not send her child to a school where

there is that division. She felt that the authority should be bolder and that integration was needed, not co-location. She stated that there must be a way for children to be integrated and still have their catholic education.

Mr Short stated that in multi-denominational schools in other areas, both establishments use all areas and the authority will try to get best fit for everyone.

Resident – would new building be used for election purposes, given that St Sophia's Primary is presently used?

No decision yet on that issue.

30 **School Rolls and Capacity Issues**

Alan Ward advised that there is surplus capacity in Galston Primary School at the moment. He explained that the maps show possible ideas for building of shared areas, separate entrance if wished, areas for staff room, admin office, multi-purpose area etc. Dining and PE facilities could be increased. He stated that issues that have been raised at previous meetings will be addressed. He also advised that ideas are being looked at for outdoor play to stimulate young minds, with the possible extension of the playground. Want young people to engage and be inspired by the facilities around them to get as much enjoyment out of education as possible.

Parent asked if projected roll for Galston Primary School had been looked at.

Calum Maxwell advised that generally projected rolls are going down, but rolls can increase over time, however, if you take the building as a whole as it is, there is a capacity that was built into the school to take account of this. Four classes could be included without any problem.

Graham Short stated that at a recent rezoning proposal meeting, roll projection was very important to the parents. He advised that roll projection is taken into account by looking at various avenues such as NHS births, baptisms etc are taken into account, but people move around more now, the best figure possible is taken.

Parent asked whether parents would have a say in whether classrooms would be open plan or closed.

Mr Ward advised that the proposed classes are semi open plan in nature and have been successfully used in East Ayrshire and around the country. Parents stated that they have concerns for children moving from a closed classroom to open plan room. Mr Ward advised that good education has been witnessed in these areas. He offered the opportunity for parents to visit a school with semi open plan classrooms.

Galston Parent expressed concern that 25% of teaching space is being taken away from Galston Primary, the areas in question are being used.

Mr Ward advised that the school will be used more effectively.

Parent asked if Galston Primary is only using 75% capacity of school at the moment. This was confirmed.

Parents stated that Galston PS parents have expressed concern already about the dining area size.

Andrew Kennedy advised that designs are indicative and can be looked at. Galston Primary is below 75% capacity and those spaces identified are being underutilised. He stated that the authority would want to maximise use of money available, the dining area and gym hall area is a pressure that's been identified, suggestions and ideas can be tailored and developed, gym hall and dining areas can be extended out into external areas. Looking to make school more efficient and effective.

31 **Concept Design**

Parent asked what the areas on the map were that hadn't been discussed. It was explained that these areas were meeting room and classroom. Areas identified for use were pointed out.

Parent asked if there will be any impact on class sizes at Galston Primary School, should the proposal be agreed. Mr Ward advised that there is a possibility that class sizes could increase, however there are national guidelines on class sizes that have to be adhered to. He further advised that in his opinion the number of pupils in a class does not necessarily affect the progress of the class. Mr Short agreed, stating that it's the quality of learning and teaching that affects progress.

Parent expressed concern that there may not be enough space for all classes. Mr Ward advised that the authority would work closely with both head teachers, and will look at roll projections again.

Parents expressed concern about shared gymnasium space and scheduling use of space. It was stated that nursery shows have been cramped into small areas in the past which would be a fire evacuation risk. Mr Ward advised that the authority would be expecting the head teachers to sit down together and look closely at the management of shared areas. He advised that two quality PE sessions per class should be provided, using both outdoor and indoor areas. Parents stated that they feel that the current facility is not suitable for purpose and that the 2 hours PE provision is a factor causing a pressure on the use of facilities. Mr Ward advised that this will be taken into account when looking at designs with the architect, and that they will work closely with both schools.

32 **Management of Proposals and Design**

Parent expressed concern about pupils being in school while building work was going on. Simon Bell advised that recent building projects have been successfully completed while pupils attended school and that contractors are

used to working around operational schools. He advised that health and safety is of the utmost importance to the authority and the contractor. Graham Short advised that consideration is given by the contractors to plan any noisy work out with the school day to minimise disruption to pupils and he reassured local residents that any work that raises noise levels will be done out with anti-social hours.

Parent asked if all the money available would be used for St Sophia's only. Mr Short replied that the money available would be used to benefit the whole campus.

Parent asked if the design of the gymnasium could be looked at again. Simon Bell advised that plans are only conceptual at this stage and all comments and concerns regarding the building will be looked at in great detail.

Parent stated that the sound quality is not good in Galston Primary at the moment. Andrew Kennedy stated that this could be looked at in new design.

Parent asked if there were any plans to increase capacity of the car park. Kerr Chalmers stated that traffic management is a sensitive issue in all schools. He advised that a traffic impact analysis was done at Galston Primary School when planning for their new build and that it has more car parking than normal. However, should proposals go forward, there will be a review of traffic management. He further advised that the authority is keen to try to promote walking to school and would want to minimise the number of children being transported to school by car.

Parent asked if there would be enough space in the school to accommodate a library and IT suite.

Mr Ward advised that the authority would want to move away from having an IT suite in the library and consideration may be given to pupils using portable IT facilities. He further advised that supplementary spaces would also be available for use. Mr Maxwell advised that the authority have a few pilot projects in place using tablet technology, Promethean boards are being used. The authority have an ongoing rollout programme to upgrade IT in schools, every 3 or 4 years.

Parents asked if there would be separate gates into the school for each school or just one school entrance.

Mr Short advised that his feeling is that access to school grounds should be shared.

Mr Maxwell advised that he visits St Xavier's Primary/Patna Primary on a regular basis, and has witnessed no division, children naturally come together at playtime and with good organisation by heads of establishment, co-location works very well. Mrs Heron stated that joint activities with pupils and staff from both schools were held and pupils played very well together at break times because they knew each other. Staff had joint groups, joint meetings and there were a lot of opportunities for pupils to play, learn and go to activities together.

33 **Learning and Teaching**

Parent asked if curriculum followed by Catholic school was any different. Mr Short advised that both schools will follow same curricular guidelines, but it is the Head Teacher's decision to prioritise who teaches what, and what topics. One difference is in Catholic ethos, which is counter balanced by RE in non-denominational schools. A discussion followed regarding religious education in schools. It was identified that all schools deliver religious education looking at all faiths and backgrounds.

Mr Short thanked everyone for attending and encouraged everyone to submit written responses to Council Headquarters by 4 pm on Friday 27 March.

SECTION 5: FEEDBACK FROM PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRES & FOCUS GROUPS

- 34 As stated earlier in this document East Ayrshire Council prides itself on the level of engagement with young service users.
- 35 An explicit part of the process outlined in East Ayrshire Council's Proposal Document is that children and young people at all the affected schools are to be consulted. In line with guidance published by the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP), East Ayrshire Council asked Common Ground Mediation, an independent organisation, to complete this piece of work.
- 36 Contact was made with the St Sophia's Primary School and Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre via the Head Teachers to make arrangements to meet the pupils. SCCYP Guidance recommends that children and young people are informed about any proposed changes and understand what this may entail. With this in mind, a presentation about the council's proposal was prepared and delivered at assembly at both primary schools.
- 37 A questionnaire was devised and distributed to pupils at both schools. A total of 326 questionnaires were returned (52 from St Sophia's Primary School and 274 from Galston Primary School). The school rolls are currently 60 at St Sophia's Primary School and 306 at Galston Primary School (October 2014). The consultant also met with a number of focus groups to discuss the proposals in more depth:
- 3 focus groups at St Sophia's Primary School, comprising 22 pupils from P1-P7.
 - 2 focus groups at Galston Primary School, comprising 39 pupils from P1-P7.
- 38 It was agreed with the Head Teacher at Galston Primary School not to seek the views of the young children at the Early Childhood Centre, because it could be too difficult for them to understand the proposals, and perhaps cause anxiety.
- 39 The following paragraphs provide an extract from the Common Ground Mediation's full report on consultation with the children at both schools.

2.6 Analysis of children's questionnaire responses

326 questionnaires were returned, and the responses were analysed. To answer questions 1, pupils were asked to tick one box. To answer questions 2, 3 and 4 pupils could tick as many boxes as they wished. Question 5 asked pupils if they had any good ideas about the council's plan.

Question 1: What do you think about the idea of St Sophia's Primary School moving to share a building with Galston Primary School?

	St Sophia's		Galston		Total	
I like the idea	27	52%	110	40%	137	42%
I'm not sure	9	17%	71	26%	80	25%
I don't like the idea	16	31%	93	34%	109	33%

Question 2: What would you like about this change? (tick any you might like)

The question was adapted for each of the 2 schools; St Sophia's Primary School pupils would be moving to a more modern building, whereas Galston Primary School pupils would be staying put.

	St Sophia's		Galston		Total	
Modern building	19	36%	n/a	n/a	19	36%
May be improvements to building and grounds	n/a	n/a	112	41%	112	41%
I'm not sure	13	25%	76	28%	89	27%%
New friends	35	67%	138	50%	173	53%%

Question 3: What would you not like about this change? (tick any you might not like)

	St Sophia's		Galston		Total	
Sharing with another school	14	27%	95	35%	109	33%
I'm not sure	20	38%	82	30%	102	31%%
Too many people	24	46%	174	64%	198	61%%

Question 4: How would the change to your school make you feel?

	St Sophia's		Galston		Total	
Happy	16	31%	85	31%	101	31%
Nervous	25	48%	115	42%	140	43%
Excited	11	21%	98	36%	109	33%
Confused	16	31%	102	37%	118	36%
Sad	20	38%	107	39%	127	39%%
Calm	8	15%	72	30%	80	24%%

Feelings expressed were mixed; however the 2 highest scores were 'nervous' (43%) and 'sad' (39%)

Question 5: Do you have any good ideas about the council's plan? Or maybe some thoughts or feelings you'd like to share with us?

Some P7 Galston Primary School pupils wrote down a number of questions they have for the council:

2.7 Groups

In total 5 focus groups were facilitated at St Sophia's Primary School and at Galston Primary School. The groups comprised a total of 61 P1 – P7 pupils (39 at Galston Primary School and 22 at St Sophia's Primary School). The format comprised:

- 1) Introduction and check on the children's understanding of the Council's proposals;
- 2) Mapping activity with pictures of the two schools to demonstrate locations;
- 3) Carousel activity where participants travelled round 4 stops in small groups to discuss and answer the following questions:
 - What do I like about my school?
 - What could be better at my school?
 - What is exciting about the council's idea?
 - What worries me about the council's idea?

The purpose of the first two questions was to encourage participants to focus on their school's strengths and what they would not like to lose.

4) Closing activity: 'My important message to the council.....' Following discussion and reflection on the proposals, we asked participants to write down the most important message from pupils that the Council should take into consideration.

2.8 Predominant themes from the focus groups

What do I like about my school?

- Kind and friendly teachers and support staff
- Good facilities including ICT suite, toilets etc (Galston PS)
- Lots of space and good friends (St Sophia's PS): *'I can name everyone in the school and it is a very small school.'*
- Positive and collaborative ethos at both schools: *'It feels like one big family'* (Galston PS)

What could be better at my school?

- Bigger playground with a separate football pitch (Galston PS)
- Improved resources, eg PE equipment, swings for the playground etc
- Closed classrooms: *'it's more difficult to concentrate in open-plan rooms'* (Galston PS)
- Condition of the school building (St Sophia's PS): *'A lot of things like litter from outside places such as glass bottles and beer.'*

What is exciting about the council's idea?

- Opportunity to see more of existing friends and to make new ones
- Opportunity for more resources and equipment, eg picnic benches and playground equipment, new football pitch and perhaps even a

swimming pool: *'maybe we will get a bigger playground'; 'we might get a shelter over the outside lunch courtyard'*

What worries me about the council's idea?

- Overcrowding and too many people – leading to potential problems in the lunch hall, gym hall, playground and car park: *'if they extend the gym hall there won't be enough room for our bikes and scooters'*
- Potential for fighting and rivalry between the schools: *'people not being nice in the playground'*
- Loss of space and classrooms (Galston PS): *'the pupils in Base 3, where would they go?'*
- What will happen to the empty St Sophia's building? *'what will be left, I'll tell you what will be left.....memories.'*

Section 3

Conclusion and Recommendations

The SCCYP Guidance advises that good quality feedback is an essential part of children and young people's involvement in the consultation process. Without this, pupils may feel that their involvement has been tokenistic. The SCCYP Guidance also advises that pupils should be informed when a final decision is made, and that this should be done sensitively and as simultaneously as possible with other affected people. It should be explained to pupils why the decision has been taken, how their views were taken into consideration, and what will happen next, with particular reference to the children's questions listed above in Section 2.2, page 3.

It is recommended that members of the education authority consider how best to fulfil this last point. If the decision is made to go ahead with the proposal, it will be necessary to continue with a process of consultation and participation with pupils, to develop a high quality transition programme based on pupil's needs and concerns.

Morag Steven, Common Ground Mediation
6 April 2015

Officer Comment

- 40 Almost half of the children were in favour of the proposal. The main potential benefits of the proposal identified by the children are making new friends and seeing more of existing friends, and possible improvements to the school building and grounds. The main potential drawbacks identified are overcrowding (particularly in the lunch hall, playground and car park), and possible rivalry between the two schools. A number of children asked the council for more detailed information about the practical implications of the proposal. East Ayrshire Council officers are committed to support children during any transition process and have publicly made a commitment to continue to support the process through extensive consultation and support during the design phase.

SECTION 6: ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 41 There were 49 written submissions received. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of these submissions by group and gives some perspective to the scale of response to the consultation process.

1. TABLE 1 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

Total Number of Responses	49
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1a. INTEREST GROUP DEFINITION AS DETERMINED BY RESPONDER

St Sophia's PS Parents	12
St Sophia's PS Staff	2
Galston PS Parents	17
Galston PS Staff	2
Galston ECC Parent	1
Galston ECC Staff	1
Parent Council Member	1
Community Planning Partner	2
Residents	4
Others	7
Total	49

2. OVERALL RESPONSE

	AGREE	DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
Total Number of Responses	28	13	8
Responses as a % of total responses	57%	27%	16%

3. RESPONSES BY INTEREST GROUP

	AGREE	DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
St Sophia's PS Parents (12)	11	0	1
St Sophia's PS Staff (2)	1	0	1
Galston PS Parents (17)	7	10	0
Galston PS Staff (2)	1	0	1
Galston ECC Parent (1)	0	1	0
Galston ECC Staff (1)	1	0	0
Parent Council Member (1)	1	0	0
Community Planning Partner (2)	1	0	1
Residents (4)	3	0	1
Others (7)	2	2	3
Total (49)	28	13	8

4. ISSUES RAISED IN CONSULTATION

ISSUE	NUMBER
The facilities will not be big enough to meet the need of St Sophia's i.e. Gym hall, Dining Hall and Parking	18
There will be no room to expand either school should new children arrive from proposed housing developments/ haven't taken account of school roll projections	14
Do not like open plan classroom set up at Galston PS / Don't like closed classrooms	13
Galston PS Site is not suitable or big enough for a new St Sophia's / future expansion of both schools	11
Would like separate entrances, to clearly define they are separate schools	11
Loss of a base / Teaching rooms, DHT Room others / only 13 classroom available to Galston PS/ class sizes will increase for Galston PS	11
The current school facilities are stretched adding more children to the school will make this worse and could cause resentment / concerns from Galston PS parents	9
Traffic congestion around the new school	8
Insufficient parking at and around school	8
Want the new school to have its own identity / ethos	8
School and facilities won't be big enough / safe enough to house 3 schools	8
Want new St Sophia's to have its own multipurpose hall for award ceremonies and masses etc.	8
St Sophia's and Galston PS will continue to separate on the campus	7
£1.8m Not enough money available to develop the new school / don't believe that the new school extension will cost £1.8m	7
Bus St Sophia's to St Andrew's in Kilmarnock or Mount Carmel it would be more cost effective	6
The Patna / St Xavier's co-location is not an appropriate example of such as project as this was a purpose built / new build	6
Would like alternative designs for the extension and to be included in the design decision	6
There is no place for religion in schools, this leads to the problem of bigotry	4
St Sophia's will be able to create closer links with the ECC	4
St Sophia's and Galston PS will be able to socialise and take part in joint activities	4
Would like thought to be given to better out-door facilities for the children.	4
Integrate the schools and forget about the denominational / non-denominational spilt	4

Breach of the Human Rights Act / it is a form of discrimination	3
The accommodation being offered to St Sophia's at Galston PS would be at the detriment of Galston PS	3
St Sophia's would like to fund raise to add specific design finishes e.g. stain glass window, school emblem in the floor etc.	3
Would like Green space equal to that left at St Sophia's at the new school	3
The proposal document implies the creation of one school community and I feel this denies St Sophia's history, identity and mission.	3
Flooding / sewerage problem at Galston PS Site	3
Why is there only one site proposed for the new school / Not fair that there is only one site to choose from	2
Replace / refurbish existing St Sophia's schools and forget about a shared campus	2
Range of school layout suggestions from St Sophia's and Galston PS staff i.e. classrooms, gym and outdoor space	2
Loss of acoustically friendly closed rooms in Galston PS is not good for teaching deaf children (no. of issues)	2
Staffing issues	2
While integration takes place all kids will suffer from the loss of education time, due to building work noise and mess	2
Increased number of car journeys / less walking to school / worse for the environment	1
Galston ECC Would like guaranteed access to the new gym hall and a fence built at the outdoor area	1
Would like access to new sports pitches for community use in the evenings and weekends	1
Will ensure the continued existence of St Sophia's and will increase the school roll due to the ECC	1
Budget cannot be the driver for this change over the human rights of the communities	1
Would like a new build school for St Sophia's at the Galston PS site	1
85% Occupancy level in the SEMP is the main driver for this development	1
Total	216

NB: Whilst there were 49 responses, those responses may have raised more than 1 issue.

42 Summary of Responses

Of the written responses received 57% agreed with the proposal. Responses differed between parents from both schools in regard to the proposal. The majority of those who responded from St Sophia's Primary (12) agreed with the proposal whereas the opinions from Galston Primary and parents was divided (7 agreed and 10 disagreed). A parent from Galston Early Childhood Centre (1) disagreed with the proposal. Staff responses from Galston Primary (1) Galston

Early Childhood Centre (1) and St Sophia's Primary (1) all agreed with the proposal. Responses (8) also indicated that the schools should maintain their own identity.

A number of responses from the residents in the community and the majority of those agreed with the proposal. A Community Planning Partner response (1) indicated agreement of the proposal.

Others (7) whom responded were of mixed opinion ranging from agreeing (2), disagreeing (2) and making no comment (3).

The largest number of responses related to the facilities not being big enough to meet the needs of St Sophia's Primary School. Specific mention was made about the gym hall, dining hall and parking. There was also some concern (11) about the numbers of children who could potentially attend the school in the future from a nearby housing development. There were also concerns raised (13) that open plan and closed classrooms were not liked.

There was suggestion that the alternative designs be considered as part of the process. Other returns (11) requested that both schools should have separate entrances. Responses
Other Responses (4) indicated the benefits of children being able to get to know one another.

However, there was a suggestion that additional outdoor facilities would be available to the community in the evenings and weekends. Responses (4) suggested that further thought should be given to the outdoor facilities.

SECTION 7: REPORT BY EDUCATION SCOTLAND

- 43 Education Scotland have played an active, independent role in this process and have produced the report below. In section 8 details can be found of the Council's response to this report.

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Ayrshire Council that education provision at the current location of St Sophia's Primary School should be discontinued with effect from June 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter. The children attending St Sophia's Primary School should transfer to and be co-located with Galston Early Childhood Centre and Galston Primary School on their current site with effect from August 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East Ayrshire Council's proposal to discontinue education provision at the current location of St Sophia's Primary School with effect from June 2016, or as soon as

possible thereafter. The children attending St Sophia's Primary School should transfer to and be co-located with Galston Early Childhood Centre and Galston Primary School on their current site with effect from August 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school;
- any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date
- of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities: attendance at the public meeting held on 24 February 2015 in connection with the council's proposals;

- Consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;
- Visits to the sites of St Sophia's Primary School, Galston Early Childhood
- Centre and Galston Primary School including discussion with relevant consultees; and

- a discussion with a representative of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Galloway.

2 Consultation Process

2.1 East Ayrshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. East Ayrshire Council formally consulted stakeholders between 12 February 2015 and 27 March 2015. A public meeting was held on 24 February 2015 in St Sophia's Primary School. The council received 49 written responses by the close of the formal consultation period. Of the 49 responses, 28 stakeholders were in favour of the proposal, 13 were against and eight were undecided. The responses included written submissions from the Diocese of Galloway and community groups. Pupils in both schools were given the opportunity to contribute their views during the formal consultation period.

2.2 East Ayrshire Council's proposal document section 39 states that should this proposal be accepted and implemented, a new school will be created and located on a co-located campus with Galston Primary School and Galston Early Childhood Centre. Some stakeholders are strongly opposed to the council's intention to use the funding which is available to build an extension to the existing dining and gymnasium accommodation and not a new school as described in the proposal document.

3 Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 East Ayrshire Council's proposal to discontinue education provision at the current location of St Sophia's Primary School and transfer pupils to a co-located campus on the current Galston Primary School and Galston Early Childhood Centre will support the council's vision to deliver Curriculum for Excellence in buildings which are suitable for that purpose. East Ayrshire Council sets out clearly the need to improve occupancy rates in its schools. St Sophia's Primary School is operating at 40.8% which is well below the average occupancy target of 85% set by the council. Extensive public engagement with stakeholders also suggests there is support for rationalising the school estates to provide buildings which are fit for purpose and can be used by the community. Galston Primary School currently has a roll of 307 and a planned capacity of 467. The primary school and Galston Early Childhood Centre were opened in 2008 providing modern purpose-built accommodation. Given the current roll and projected roll there is capacity to accommodate the pupils from St Sophia's Primary School in available open-plan teaching areas. The council during its pre-consultation period noted that concerns were being raised about pressures within the current campus on specialist spaces such as the gymnasium and dining hall. The delivery of two hours high-quality physical education can only be accommodated if two classes use the gymnasium and adjoining dining space at the same time. At lunchtimes

some children eat at tables set up in the gymnasium and if weather permits they also access a secure outside picnic area. Should the proposal go ahead there is likely to be further pressure on these areas and the loss of other specialist rooms within the existing building. For example, the nurture room, information and communications technology suite, a classroom and office spaces used by visiting professionals and agencies, which may be adapted to become administrative areas. In its final consultation report, the council needs to set out how it will address the reasonable concerns stakeholders have to provide children with a positive dining experience and ensure children receive a minimum of two hours high-quality physical education each week.

3.2 East Ayrshire Council already has experience of co-locating schools, including denominational and non-denominational co-located schools and is well placed to use this experience to bring about a smooth transition should the proposal be accepted.

Open and transparent engagement with parents, children, staff, the community and the church will be an essential element of bringing about a successful co-location on a single site. The council in its proposal intends to involve key stakeholders in the design of new facilities and at important stages to identify and resolve any emerging issues. Should the proposal be accepted it will be important to explore with stakeholders other solutions to alleviate the pressure on existing specialist accommodation.

3.3 East Ayrshire Council rightly suggests there are educational benefits for the pupils of St Sophia's Primary School. Moving from the current location which has been rated as a building which has major defects, to a modern building with access to a range of facilities has the potential to better support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. By being part of a wider community children will have increased opportunities to play and learn with their peers. Staff will have more opportunities to take forward shared priorities and work more closely with colleagues in the Galston Early Childhood Centre at points of transition. Staff will be able to focus more closely on achieving continuity and progression in children's learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. The children of St Sophia's Primary School and Galston Primary School will have greater opportunities to build on existing friendships, learn together, and take part in joint activities at appropriate times in the school day. Positive staff and community links already exist between the two schools and the Galston Early Childhood Centre and these will continue to develop should the proposal go ahead. The proposal sets out an intention to improve the Galston campus facilities. Currently problems with drainage and sewage limit children's and community members' access to the sports fields reducing the availability to these educational facilities. It will be important to also include community groups and the churches in the development of these facilities, including any upgrading of outdoor sports and play space

3.4 HM Inspectors met with school and early childhood centre staff, representative groups of pupils and parents from all establishments affected by the proposal, a group of parishioners and a representative from the Diocese of Galloway. Most of those who met with HM Inspectors expressed some opposition to the proposal and a few were strongly opposed to the proposal. The children who met with HM Inspectors were generally positive about the proposal. Parents from both schools and the Galston Early Childhood Centre who met with HM Inspectors understood and accepted that East Ayrshire Council needed to make the best use of its resources and that all children should learn in an environment that was fit for purpose and supported the delivery of a high-quality learning experience. The parents and parishioners from St Sophia's Primary School and parents from Galston Primary School and Galston Early Childhood Centre who met with HM Inspectors expressed a number of concerns. These included criticism of the lack of transparency regarding what was being proposed and that the offer of a new school was changed to an extension of the existing accommodation. Parents from both schools were worried about children's health and safety related to an unresolved sewage and drainage issue near the entrance to the school. Those from Galston Primary School and Galston Early Childhood Centre raised concerns about the variation in class sizes between the two schools. They felt this was unfair that some children would be in much larger classes and that this might lead to tensions between parents and children. They did not think it necessary to have two separate schools. Staff who met with HM Inspectors expressed a range of views about the proposal. They recognised the educational benefits of all children experiencing a high-quality learning environment. Staff and some parents from St Sophia's Primary School were concerned about the potential loss of identity as a distinctive community of faith. In taking the proposal forward, it will be important for the council to take account of stakeholders' concerns.

3.5 The Diocese of Galloway has submitted a written response to the council stating that it is broadly supportive of the proposal. The Diocese acknowledges that in a small number of exceptional circumstances, the provision of a Catholic school co-located on a campus with a non-denominational school may be the only viable context for the provision of Catholic education in the local area. However, the Diocese raises some concerns about the accommodation in its written response. In taking forward its proposal the council will need to engage with the Diocese to address these concerns.

4. Summary

The proposal has a number of positive educational benefits for children who may attend the campus in the future. These include learning in modern facilities and the potential to add to children's curriculum experience through more flexible opportunities to work alongside their peers and being part of a wider community. There will be increased opportunities for staff to work together, to further develop the

curriculum, to improve progression and achieve greater consistency in children's learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. It will also assist the council to make efficient and effective use of its resources by addressing under-occupancy issues. In its final consultation report, the council needs to clarify its reasons for proposing an extension to the existing accommodation and to engage with stakeholders about the final design of the buildings within the campus. The council needs to resolve the issues raised regarding problems associated with drainage and sewage.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
April 2015**

SECTION 8: EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIONS MADE DURING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

During the consultation period there were a number of comments submitted, either verbally at the public meetings or within the written submissions. The Council's response to these is set out in the following paragraphs in the form of responses to frequently asked questions. The information is designed to supplement the details provided in the formal proposal document issued by the Council under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act, 2010, as amended. The topics about which questions were often asked are set out below in alphabetical order.

44 Additional Support Needs

The Authority has clear responsibilities to individual children under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended. Having assessed a child's needs under this Act then the requirement is that these needs must be met. A rationalisation proposal does not alter these rights or entitlements.

If your child's needs are of a nature that the change may raise particular issues, then the authority has responsibilities to ensure that this is addressed as part of the plan for the move to the new site. Should you have concerns about this then you should not hesitate to discuss this with your child's headteacher or head of centre.

Please note that if your child works with a particular member of staff, it cannot be guaranteed that this colleague will transfer to your child's new school or early childhood centre. However, if your child's needs are of a particular nature, it may be important that this personal relationship continues, in which case the Authority will have due regard to this consideration as part of the transition plans to the new site.

45 **Bullying and Pupil Welfare**

Parents and children often express concerns about bullying before the move to the new establishment. Such concerns almost invariably prove groundless. In fact, children at both establishments involved become excited at the prospect of meeting new people and making new friends.

While no guarantee can be given that bullying or poor behaviour will not occur, experience has shown that such events are exceptionally rare.

46 **Class Sizes**

School or early childhood centres are staffed in relation to the number of children. Bigger establishments have more staffing. The fact that your child is moving to a bigger school or early childhood centre does not automatically mean they will be in a bigger class or group. Class sizes have clearly defined legal limits, which cannot be exceeded, as do adult : child ratios in early childhood centres under national regulations.

The only qualification to this is that larger schools are more able to work on a single stream basis. Single stream classes are permitted to be larger than composite classes, with the exception of P1 which also can only have a maximum class size of 25.

47 **Establishment Design**

Where a new school or early childhood centre building is being created, East Ayrshire Council seeks to involve staff, parents, children and the community in its design. Our experience is that by so doing, a much better design emerges, and the children in particular can literally think of it as “their” school or early childhood centre

48 **Furniture and Equipment Surpluses**

Wherever possible any surplus equipment resulting from the rationalisation is offered to other educational establishments and services. The first offer goes to the school or early childhood centre to which the young people will transfer, and then to other establishments in the same learning community. Thereafter, all other establishments and services are offered what is left. Any residual furniture or equipment that is of possible future use is put into storage.

49 **Heritage Issues**

So far as possible where a school or early childhood centre closes or merges with another, the Authority tries to conserve heritage issues. This can involve the transfer of artefacts such as dux boards or war memorials to the new building if possible. Similarly, it is possible that trophies, prizes and bequests move to the new location with the children. Any artefacts that cannot be accommodated, or valuable records such as log books are offered to the Ayrshire Archive, or local museums if appropriate.

If a new school or early childhood centre is being created it is important that a balance is struck between the importance of heritage, which contributes to the ethos of the establishment, and the need to create a modern, 21st Century learning environment.

50 **Managing Transition**

The Authority has extensive experience of managing transition.

The date of school or early childhood centre closure and transfer tends to be tied to a holiday and particularly the summer break so that children can start at their new establishment along with the other children. Sometimes this is not possible however, for example if there is a delay in any new building work.

Opportunities are taken for school or early childhood centres to work together prior to the change, for example by:

- Visits of staff and pupils, children and young people.
- Joint sports days.
- Reciprocal invitations to school or early childhood centre shows and fetes.
- Special events involving team work between children.
- Designing a new school or early childhood centre uniform or badge.
- Appointment of buddies and befrienders
- Joint parents events

At time of transition staff carefully monitor how children are socialising.

Parent Councils can play a key role here by working together and ultimately combining to assist children and the staff.

Much work also has to be done to ensure that the transition proceeds easily from the perspective of learning and teaching. Headteachers, heads of centres and staffs will therefore work together to harmonise the curriculum, exchange best practice on learning and teaching methods and plan for best use of educational resources. The records of individual children, with any associated learning plans are also transferred as the basis of planning the young people's experiences.

51 **Name of School or Early Childhood Centre**

If the school or early childhood centre is a "new" establishment, that is one that is the result of a merger rather than a closure. Then a new name is necessary. Parents and children from the schools or early childhood centres that are merging are consulted on the new name and involved in the process. The decision on the new name remains however the prerogative of the Council.

52 **Placing Requests**

A parent/carer's right to apply, and to be considered for, a placing request is unchanged by a rationalisation proposal.

53 **Resourcing**

School and early childhood centres are resourced according to the number of pupils, children and young people. Indeed the greater availability of resources at a bigger school or early childhood centre should allow the head of establishment to have more flexibility to manage resources for the benefit of children.

54 **Staffing Implications**

The Authority consults trades unions and staff on rationalisation proposals. As a major employer, the Council has the flexibility to absorb staffing declared surplus as a result of school or early childhood centre rationalisation. There are different conditions for different groups of staff however:

Unpromoted teachers: the teaching staff of a school is determined by the pupil roll. An enlarged school has a requirement for more teachers and therefore this group of staff tend to move with the children to the new school. This assists transition, but it is not necessarily the case that your child will be taught by the former members of staff of their old school. If the combined roll of the newly created school is lower than that of its predecessors, then there will be a reduction in teaching staff with the possibility of surplus staff being redeployed. Any such redeployments are by individual negotiation with the members of staff concerned under a process agreed with the teachers' unions.

Promoted staff, including headteachers : If a new school, or early childhood centre, is being created then the promoted posts, including those of headteacher or centre manager will be subject to open advertisement for which the present post holders will be welcome to apply. If one school or early childhood centre is closing then promoted staff from that school or early childhood centre may be surplus. In this latter case, or where staff do not secure a post through the open recruitment process in the former situation, then the Authority has a redeployment policy agreed with the trades unions.

Ancillary Staff: similarly, a bigger school or early childhood centre will have an increased requirement for ancillary staffing, but this may be less than the total for the former schools. Some staff will therefore transfer to the new school or early childhood centre, subject to consultation. For staff who do not transfer to the new school or early childhood centre, there is a redeployment policy and individual discussions take place with colleagues.

55 **Transport Entitlement**

The Authority's transport policy is universal and is determined by the distance a child lives from the school and the availability of a safe walking route. If there is a safe walking route from your home to school and the distance is

less than the Authority policy on entitlement, then transport will not be provided.

56 **Safe Walking Routes**

The safe walking routes to school or early childhood centre, including the ones involved in any rationalisation proposal, are assessed by the Road safety section of the Council. To assess the route, colleagues use nationally set criteria. Each route is individually assessed. If you have concerns about the safety of a particular route then you can ask for it to be assessed, and you are entitled to see the results of that assessment.

It is important for you to know that the assessment is based on the young person being accompanied by a responsible adult, and that this approach is established in law.

57 **Uniform**

If a new establishment is being created then the opportunity exists to create a new uniform and badge. This is an excellent project for staff, children and parents and helps create the ethos of the new establishment.

If one establishment is going to close, then the uniform of the remaining school or early childhood centre will be automatically adopted. However, the option still remains to create a new uniform.

Where parents have already invested in a uniform of a closing school, then it is perfectly in order for your child to wear this uniform at their new establishment.

Response to Main Issues Raised in Written Responses

The issues raised with the council from pre-consultation onwards have been addressed in a number of ways and, at all times reinforces the message of willingness on the part of the council to continue to work closely with all stakeholders. The following paragraphs have specific focus on issues for St Sophia's and Galston Primary Schools.

Physical Education /Dining / Parking

Officers have clarified that existing facilities such as dining and P.E. will be adapted and upgraded to provide a substantially improved service to users. Parking will be reviewed at the formal planning stage

Roll Projections

Predicting roll projections is not scientifically based but there is a consistent approach used by councils all across Scotland which includes a factor for new housing. Officers have calculated that rolls will not exceed the capacity of the proposed campus.

Classroom Design

There has been a mixed response to the question of class room layout. The existing Pod of classrooms intended for St Sophia's is open plan but provides excellent flexibility in layout. There will be significant new additional space for St Sophia's pupils as a major part of the design. Pupils parents and staff will be consulted about these new spaces. There will be more than adequate teaching and preparation spaces for all staff and pupils including those at Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre.

Entrance Points

The new teaching and learning spaces for St Sophia's will have an entrance and exit point to the school play areas which will allow St Sophia's Primary School to operate as a separate establishment and which will address emergency exit provision.

Assembly Space

The concept designs for St Sophia's included a substantial space for assembly purposes as requested.

Funding for the new build and adaptations

The £1.8 allocated will provide for all requirements including outdoor learning areas and sports areas which will offer community use at night.

Refurbish v New

The money allocated to the project could not provide refurbishment to the level and quality of specification from new build. Additionally the adaptations being undertaken will offer a new level of facility to users including those outdoors.

Occupancy levels

East Ayrshire Council has in place a comprehensive Transformation Strategy. One element of this is to reduce under-occupancy of schools across the authority, moving towards an average of 85% occupancy in the future. This proposal for St Sophia's to form a new campus helps to achieve that aim and to make our delivery of educations provision to young people more effective.

East Ayrshire Council Response to Education Scotland Report

- 58 The report provided by Education Scotland in Section 7 of this report indicates full and positive support for the council's proposal and while acknowledging concerns raised during the consultation period Education Scotland at the same time endorses the conduct of the process so far by encouraging the officers of the council to continue to provide the level of detail and support being offered up to this point.

- 59 In section 2 of the report there is confirmation that the council has complied with all aspects of the consultation process as indicated in the Act including pre-consultation. Section 2 also highlights that different interest groups have shown concerns over a number of issues but a majority were in favour of the proposals. Education Scotland also note throughout the report that the council has been able to provide re-assurances about ongoing consultation in the years ahead to mitigate the concerns raised.
- 60 In Section 3, concerning educational benefit Education Scotland confirms support for the council's vision through the transformation strategy, quoting occupancy rates and confirming that there is space to undertake the proposals as planned. East Ayrshire Council has gone on record to confirm that stakeholder concerns will be addressed through ongoing consultation.
- 61 Education Scotland notes East Ayrshire Council's experience in campus development and identifies in sections 3.2 and 3/3 of its own report that pupils, parents and staff will all feel the benefit of this proposal. In particular the planned sports facilities and outdoor learning areas will add substantially to the quality of the pupil experience.
- 62 In section 3.5 of the Education Scotland report the Diocese of Galloway has indicated a level of support for the proposal and again has requested ongoing consultation which the council is happy to provide regarding accommodation and design.
- 63 Colleagues from roads have already been alerted to the issues raised which are external to the school regarding drainage and sewage.

SECTION 9: COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

- 64 Having received Education Scotland's report on 13 May 2015, Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, requires the Council to review the relevant proposal having had regard (in particular) to the written representations that have been received by it during the consultation period; oral representations made to it at the public meeting held on 24 February 2010 and Education Scotland's report. In terms of Section 10(2) (e) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Consultation Report requires to contain a statement explaining how the Council complied with its duty under the above Section 9(1) of the Act.
- 65 On 22 May 2015 Council Officers convened a special meeting for the purposes of reviewing the relevant proposal having had regard to the written representation received by the Council during the public consultation period; the verbal representations made to it at the said public meeting, and Education Scotland's report, all of which is summarised in sections 3-8 above. When reviewing the proposal against the written and verbal responses as well as the terms of the Education Scotland report, Council officers concluded that their attitude to the preferred option had not substantially changed and that the preferred option should therefore be implemented.

- 66 The reasons for recommending this option are that there are clear education benefits to do so given the potential to add to children's curriculum experience through more flexible opportunities to work alongside their peers and be part of a wider community. It would also allow staff the opportunity to work together to further develop the curriculum and allow progression and greater consistency in children's learning in modern facilities.

SECTION 10: ALLEGED OMISSIONS OF RELEVANT INFORMATION AND ALLEGED INACCURACIES CONTAINED WITHIN THE PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

- 67 No responses asserting allegations of omissions or inaccuracies within the Proposal Document were received during the consultation period. Points raised with the council during all aspects of the consultation period have been responded to including feedback to questions raised at public meetings and written responses are detailed in Sections 3-8

SECTION 11: REVIEW OF THE PREFERRED OPTION

- 68 The proposal document expressed the preferred option of officers which was to discontinue education provision on the current St Sophia's Primary School site and to re-locate to a campus to be formed with Galston primary School and Early Childhood Centre. The consultation exercise asked for a response to the following questions:-

Were respondents in favour of discontinuing education on the existing site?

Were respondents in favour of co-locating with Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre?

- 69 Responses were mixed with 28 of the 49 received in favour and with some concerns raised about the practical arrangements which officers believe have been noted and addressed.
- 70 Having considered the above information and all of the comments received verbally and in writing during the consultation period, it is the view of officers that there have been no arguments submitted that would cause a reconsideration of the proposal.

SECTION 12: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The following paragraphs detail the arrangements to be put into place should the council decide to implement the proposal to relocate St Sophia's Primary School.

71 **Design Specification**

To ensure the successful completion of the build by August 2016 will require early completion of the design specification. The Council is committed to following the good practice achieved in its *Building Learning Communities* project and seek input from pupils, staff, parents and the wider communities. It is through such involvement that staff, young people and parents engage with the concept of the new school and assume a sense of ownership and this assists in the development of the new schools' ethos.

72 **School Management and Staff**

Primary School and Early Childhood Centre

The education authority will work in partnership with the two management teams of St Sophia's Primary School and Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre to prepare the groundwork for a new campus. It is anticipated at this stage that officers from the Schools Delivery Team will work closely with managers and staff from the establishments involved.

73 **Parent Councils**

In this instance there is no need to form a joint parent Council since there is no merger or closure. However it would be vitally important for sustained, good relations to have constructive, joint-working between the two schools at a number of levels including parental engagement through Parent Councils.

74 **Staff**

The Council is committed to ensuring staff are informed and involved in planning activities. Following the standards set during the *Building Learning Communities* project effective communications will be maintained throughout the process. This will commence with input into the design brief and the opportunity to influence the building design.

The staff complement from St Sophia's will move with the school to its new location should the proposals go ahead

75 **Involvement of Pupils**

Our children and young people will be a key part of the success of these proposals should they be approved. It will be vital to involve young people from both schools in the progress of the project as it moves through planning and design into implementation.

76 **Identity of the Schools**

There are no issues pertaining to re-naming of either establishment since this is a co-location and not a merger. It was agreed from the beginning of the process that a key issue for St Sophia's pupils, parents and staff has been the

need to retain the identity of St Sophia's through establishing appropriate working practices in shared and individual areas.

SECTION 13: CATCHMENT AREAS

- 77 This will not affect the delineated area of St Sophia's Primary School, the destination school for these pupils.

SECTION 14: PROCEDURES FOR MINISTERIAL CALL- IN

- 78 Since this proposal has no implications for St Sophia's Primary School as an establishment other than the site location there are no call-in procedures to Scottish Government involved for the school. At this stage, it is anticipated that Cabinet will be asked to make an initial decision on the proposal for St Sophia's Primary School on 17 June 2015. If Cabinet agree to the said proposal, the Council's Governance and Scrutiny Committee will be asked to review that document on 18 June 2015. The Governance and Scrutiny Committee will then refer the proposal back to the Cabinet to consider any matters relevant to the proposal accordingly, the Cabinet will make a final decision on the proposal at Cabinet on 24 June, 2015.
- 79 Should Cabinet make a final decision in favour of the proposals, there would be no requirement to submit the cabinet decision for further scrutiny to Scottish Ministers.

SECTION 15: COUNCIL MANAGEMENT TEAM ROLE IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 80 The proposal to re-locate St Sophia's from its existing site and to then subsequently co-locate with Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre on the existing Galston Primary site has been discussed fully and regularly at the highest level of Officer Management of the Council. This included reviews of the Proposal Document prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 28 January, 2015, and consideration of the Consultation Report prior to its publication. The outcome of this involvement, in part, is a set of recommendations by the Depute Chief Executive Economy and Skills, supported and endorsed by the Corporate Management Team.

SECTION 16: THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

- 81 The foregoing subsections of sections 3-8 (above) detail the Council's considerations of all issues as originally defined in the Proposal Document and importantly, all of those, both educational and non-educational, raised through the detailed consultation responses and the public meetings. The Council allocated time beyond the statutory minimum (42 calendar days, to include a minimum of 30 school days) consultation period for response.
- 82 Of the 49 responses received, the issues raised have been addressed in Sections 3-8 of this report.

SECTION 17: RISK MANAGEMENT

- 83 Any reduction in the property portfolio will reduce the risk to which the Council is exposed in terms of issues such as infrastructure failure, vandalism and threats to security. Any property that is vacated, however, is likely to be exposed to an increased level of risk requiring additional security measures until a decision is taken as to its future use.
- 84 By implementing the relocation proposal, officers will ensure the quality of educational experience for the young people attending, or due to attend, these educational establishments is maintained or improved.

SECTION 18: LEGAL ISSUES

- 85 By virtue of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which consultation forms the subject matter of this report. It is a legal requirement that the Council shall not reach any formal decision without:
- having reviewed the relocation proposal having regard in particular to:
 - (a) Relevant written representations received from any person during the consultation period;
 - (b) Oral representation made to it by any person at the public meeting held on 24 February, 2015; and
 - (c) The Education Scotland report;
 - Preparing this Consultation Report; and
 - Waiting until a period of 3 weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.
- 86 As provided for in section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, it is the duty of the Council to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education within East Ayrshire. Such education to be directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of children or young persons to their fullest potential (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 section 2). That said, as with all Council duties, the Council has a duty to make arrangements to secure best value and in securing best value the Council is required to maintain an appropriate balance between, inter alia, the quality of its performance of its functions and the cost to the authority of that performance (Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 section 1). In coming to any decision, members should balance the foregoing duties.
- 87 Article 2 of the first protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights, incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998 provides that:
- “No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions”*

- 88 The principle in the second sentence is accepted into UK law only so far as it is compatible with the provisions of efficient instruction and training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. The right to education is a general right and the relevant provisions of the 1980 Act and the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc (Scotland) Act 2000 go beyond what is required by the provision in the first protocol. Accordingly, provided the Council complies with these duties. A successful Human Rights challenge to a properly considered decision will be minimised.

Title Implications

- 89 There are no subsisting title conditions restricting the use of the site of Galston Primary School. Should the co-location proposal be accepted and implemented, with the St Sophia's Primary School site being declared surplus to requirements, the Council could dispose of these on the open market.

SECTION 19: CONCLUSION

- 90 Having carefully reviewed St Sophia's Primary School's co-location proposal, with the creation of a new campus located on the existing Galston Primary School site and having had regard to:

- (a) Relevant written representations received by the Council from any person or groups during the consultation period;
- (b) Oral representation made to it by any person at the public meetings held on 24 February 2015; and
- (c) The contents of the Education Scotland report

It is therefore concluded that the decision to proceed with the consultation proposal remains valid.

SECTION 20: RECOMMENDATIONS

- 91 It is therefore recommended that cabinet agrees that:
- i) Education provision is discontinued at St Sophia's primary School in June 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - ii) The children and young people attending St Sophia's Primary School should transfer to a campus, co-located with Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre, with effect from August 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter, on the Galston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre site; and
 - iii) That consultation with relevant interested parties should continue during the design, construction and delivery phase to ensure that concerns raised are considered, and responded to appropriately
 - iv) Otherwise note the contents of this report.

Alex McPhee
Depute Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer

Economy and Skills

LIST OF ATTACHED PAPERS

- i) Proposal Document issued 12 February, 2015

Members wishing further information should Alan Ward, Head of Education telephone (01563) 576126.

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

An electronic version of the Proposal Document can be found at the link below:

www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk