

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

KNOCKROON ENTERPRISE AND LEARNING CAMPUS

**POINTS COMING FROM THE PRE CONSULTATION NOVEMBER 2014 –
JANUARY 2015**

Updated 22 January 2015

This document is intended to assist in the consultation process associated with proposals to rationalise the school estate. It should be read in association with the formal Proposal Document which is published through the Cabinet of East Ayrshire Council and any other relevant documentation published through the Council web-site www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk

KNOCKROON ENTERPRISE AND LEARNING CAMPUS

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This part of the document has been compiled as a result of the pre-consultation meetings held with headteachers, parent councils, and community groups during November 2014 January 2015. Discussion also took place with trades unions. The heading for each paragraph gives an indication of the issue raised, and the paragraph responds to that issue. For ease of reference matters that are in similar or related areas have been grouped together within each main heading

AUTHORITY LEVEL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Other Associated Schools

It is clear that the children on campus will experience considerable benefits from transition. There is a responsibility on all staff, but particularly on the secondary school to ensure that the transition of all children is well managed. Best practice indicates that this process should start as early as possible with children of P4 age being invited to the campus to see it facilities and to use the services on offer. Teachers from the campus should visit all associated primary schools. There should be dissemination of good practice developed on the campus to all schools. Similarly, there should be a clear transition plan for all early years children coming to the primary school, and the early childhood centres will work together in ways that will help transition. Children with additional support needs have particular requirements in this respect and all such children and young people will require specific consideration to be given to their transition to the new campus. This latter arrangement is no different, however, in terms of process than that which exists already.

Placing Requests

The Authority will be required to consider placing requests to the new campus against the statutory criteria established for that purpose. Should the campus become oversubscribed then there are legal mechanisms in place including capping the roll and reserving places which the Authority can use to control the number of placing requests to the schools concerned.

Property Maintenance in the Transition Phase

If these proposals are accepted, the schools concerned will continue to be maintained to a standard that is compatible with the provision of a proper learning environment. Particular attention will be given to any health and safety issue, or anything that interferes with the delivery of effective learning or course requirements.

Savings

There will be savings in terms of both capital and revenue from this project. These are set out in the proposal document using the format that has been agreed between the Scottish Government and the local government representative body, COSLA. However, the reason for bringing forward this proposal is the educational and community benefits – it is not to secure revenue or capital savings. In any event, any financial savings, as the proposal document explains will release budgetary pressures allowing the resulting finance to be put back to improving general educational and service provision.

BUILDING AND CAMPUS DESIGN

After school care – will it be included, and will this still be at Yipworld?

There are no plans to change the current arrangements for out of school care.

Architecture

The building will be designed in a way that is sympathetic to the existing and surrounding architecture in the community. The Great Steward of Scotland's Trust has offered architectural assistance to the Council which will help develop a unique design for the campus that accords with the local built environment.

College Facilities and Adjacencies to Younger Children

Any Further Education facilities provided on the Campus will be clearly separated for security reasons. This is no different to that practised on present campuses where different establishments are allocated different areas of the building. The young people who will attend the College will mainly be from the school having progressed to the further education provision. The experience from the Kilmarnock area where there is close adjacency between Kilmarnock Academy, Loanhead Primary School and the present Kilmarnock Campus of the Ayrshire College has not produced any difficulties. In fact, the joint campus should be able to allow those young people studying college courses who wished to enter the caring professions to have better access to work experience opportunities and so be able to support children and younger students.

There will also be advantages in particular for children and young people with additional support needs.

Dining Arrangements

The Authority will use its experience from existing campus arrangements in East Ayrshire and from other authorities where there are large numbers of children and young people and more than one establishment involved. Of paramount importance will be safeguarding the interests of children with additional support needs. Modern eating areas are more flexible in use than traditional dining halls and more attractive to young people. Careful timetabling of intervals will ensure that all children will have access to a quality meal, or facilities to allow them to consume a packed lunch.

Decant

This project as proposed can be delivered without the need for decanting children.

Energy efficiency

The building will be required to comply with the most modern requirements on energy efficiency and will have an established energy efficiency rating. Consideration will be given to green technologies and matters such as great water recycling.

Numbers of Children

It is envisaged that this campus will, upon completion, hold approximately 2,000 children. These numbers will not affect class sizes which are governed by aspects of law of education in Scotland. A size of campus of this magnitude is not unexceptional and is for example very close to the size of the present Grange Campus. In the historic past also, there have been this number of children at East Ayrshire Schools, again without any detriment to the education or the welfare of the young people concerned.

One Building, or a Number of Buildings?

There is no final design of the building as yet. It is likely that the three schools will be contained within one building as this delivers the highest possible efficiency in terms of energy and facilities management. Equally a design involving three or more, "wings" might be possible. However, even if all three schools are within the same building, each will have distinct areas with controlled access.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

Inter-Community Relations

Some parents have expressed concerns regarding rivalries between parts of the community, generally based on football affiliations. The pre-consultation phase identified that this was of greater concern to some groups of parents than for other. It is noted that there is already extensive joint working going on between Auchinleck and Cumnock Academies in the co-operation that is being undertaken on the business enterprise and skills centres. These examples have been positive with children from both schools working well together. There has been other joint work beyond this. The experience of the Authority gained for example in the recent decant of one primary school in to another and through the merger of St Conval's High School with St Joseph's Academy is that such inter-community rivalries however perceived initially, do not materialise in practice. In contrast, the young people concerned regard the merger as an opportunity to make new friends. The experience of the Authority with other mergers is that by careful planning for example by structured programme of joint activities, starting long before the physical merger of the two establishments, any possibilities of rivalry can be reduced to a minimum.

Name of the Site as Knockroon or Broomfield

There is no fixed view on the name of the site. Experience with the construction and merger of new schools elsewhere in the Authority has given the community including the parents and the children, a role in determining the eventual name of both the schools concerned and the campus as necessary.

Other Primary Schools Being Able to Access the Facilities

At present, throughout the Authority, there is a mixture between primary schools which are on campus and those which are not present on the campus. So, this challenge exists whether or not the Knockroon enterprise and learning campus proceeds or not. It will be the responsibility of the Head Teachers concerned to develop meaningful and focussed transition programmes for primary aged children as they approach secondary school age and this includes those primary schools not presently on site. Similarly, there will require to be a programme of staff and children visiting the associated primary schools so that everyone is familiar with one another prior to the children moving to the new site. This programme requires to start from P4 age onwards. The desire of the Authority is that all young people in the area will get the benefits of this excellent facility.

Recreation Facilities

The school will be designed to modern specifications. This will include social and dining areas being explicitly planned in to the building. There will therefore be a range of communal areas and those which allow smaller groups to meet and talk together. There will be a modern provision in terms of information communication technology which will be available to all young people and most importantly of all, the games and sports facilities will be of the highest possible standard.

Site Mitigation Measures

The intention is to ensure that the facilities currently provided at the Broomfield site will be available to children and young people and the community. There will, however, be some disruption to the Broomfield site during the construction phase. Staff from Vibrant Communities and the Leisure Trust will work with local clubs and the community to ensure that there are alternatives available.

Sports Facilities at Broomfield Already in Existence

It is the vision of the Council that this campus will be developed with an eye to maintaining, or improving, the present sports facilities at Broomfield. The health and wellbeing of children is of paramount concern in educational planning and it is therefore really important that children get access not just to sports facilities but those which are well planned and offer a quality experience. Any sports facilities that are overtaken by the footprint of the new buildings will be replaced either at Broomfield or at another adjacent location.

The Council is very much aware of the excellent work done by the local Rugby Club and other sports organisations and their plans for development. As a result, there is

recognition that the campus design needs to be such as to give maximum possible support to these organisations in terms facilities and access.

Sports Developments in the Area

Both Cumnock Juniors Football Club and Cumnock Rugby Club have well developed plans for how they wish to develop their sports in the area. Meetings have taken place with both organisations. The commitment is for the Council to work with the community, including the Rugby Club and Cumnock Juniors to develop the campus in a way which complements their planned developments. In this way it is envisaged that across the area a range of sports and recreation opportunities will emerge benefitting everyone.

Swimming Pool

Hillside School will include a state of the art hydrotherapy pool. The campus will be adjacent to the Visions Leisure Centre and it is hoped that the children of the campus will be able to make maximum use of this facility. The pool at Auchinleck Leisure Centre will be retained along with the other facilities there. It is therefore not envisaged that the school would require to include a swimming pool.

CONSULTATION

Can The Project Go Ahead Without The Secondaries Merging?

Yes. If it does, then there would be one single primary and special school campus. The only remaining option would be the status quo.

Consultation with parents who children are not attending the new campus?

The children of all associated primary schools and their parents will be consulted as part of the campus development. There will also be a series of public meetings which will be open to anybody to attend.

Local Authority Response to the Consultations

The Authority takes, as it is required to do by law, all of the comments received during the consultation seriously and it is required to have regard to those comments. The extension of the present Barshare and Greenmill consultation is a clear example of the Authority listening to the views that are given to it as part of the formal consultation exercise.

STAFFING AND WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Head of The Early Years Establishment Because of its Size?

The Authority keeps the management structures of all of its establishments under review. Here the paramount concern is ensuring that the needs of the children

served by the establishment are being met. Any developments in terms of size or complexity would in the first instance give rise to a review of management structures below the level of headteacher.

Staffing effects

The proposal document will contain information on the Authority's established procedures for managing staffing and workforce issues as a result of a merger. These processes and procedures have been agreed with the unions concerned. In the past, it has been possible to manage such mergers without any loss of jobs for the staff who wish to continue in the Authority's service. Schools are staffed according to their role which means that in terms of teaching staff, any job reduction is in the management posts, most notably since only one Head Teacher per establishment is needed.

Staffing Levels

Schools are staffed to agreed standards. There will be no reduction in teaching or early years staff in front of children and young people in the schools concerned either in the new campus, or the transitional phase. Opportunities will be taken, as they arise, to streamline management structures. But this will only be done at the appropriate time, and will not be to the detriment of classroom staffing standards. Any staff redeployed as a result of this proposal will have their rights protected under the national agreements existing at the time of redeployment.

The Authority's policy on managing the effects of school rationalisations is set out in Standard Circular 101 which is available on the staff intranet, or on application. This sets out the human resources processes and timescales in such circumstances. In cases of school merger (as distinct from closure) the filling of promoted posts is by open advertisement with applications welcome from present incumbents. This is the approach that has been agreed with the unions and has been in place since 1996 and before. In the past it has been possible to manage the workforce implications of all such mergers without the need for compulsory redundancies in any group of staff.

The first appointment is that of headteacher which generally will occur about one year from the physical merger of the establishments concerned.

Staff supporting children with additional support needs will generally be unaffected as a result of any proposal on school rationalisation where their position is direct support of individual young people or children.

Temporary Staffing

Unpromoted posts will always be filled on a permanent basis unless there are operational reasons arguing against this. As the time for merger approaches, it is likely that promoted posts will be filled on a temporary basis in the existing schools until the new management structure has been consolidated. The needs of the school and its children will, however always be paramount.

The employment rights of staff who are on secondment, or who are otherwise absent from their substantive post, for example on maternity/paternity leave are unaffected.

Workforce Management

The positive working conditions that will be offered by the new campus will assist greatly in staff recruitment and retention. Its modern, state of the art facilities will be some of the most attractive for teachers, early years workers and ancillary staff. Transition to the new campus will be managed using the Council's existing human resources policies and arrangements recently introduced by the General Teaching Council in relation to continuing professional development. Our experience from similar projects is that staff gain motivation by the prospect of the new build and their role in its design and delivery. The commitment colleagues have to children and young people ensures continuity of quality in service delivery.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Travel Distances and safe walking routes

The formal proposal document includes detail and commentary not just on travel distances but on safe walking routes to schools. The assessment of safe walking routes is done by nationally agreed criteria and by professionals from the Roads Department who are qualified to carry out such assessments. Wherever necessary, free school transport will be provided and parents will be given to the Authority's concessionary transport scheme.

Travel arrangements for children and young people attending specialist provision will not be affected.

Volume of Traffic at start and finish times

The construction of the new school will require a detailed traffic management plan. Currently it is envisaged that the present site of Cumnock Academy will be at the core of that plan creating sufficient car parking spaces, movement areas and drop off points. There will also require to be separate access to the main campus for direct pedestrian traffic and for mini buses and taxis delivering children with additional support needs. Fuller details are included in the relevant section of the proposal document.