

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

TUESDAY 10 MARCH 2015
MUIRKIRK PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDING:

Alan Ward, Acting Head of Service: Schools
Carole McConville, Senior Education Manager
Dot Grieve, Service Manager Sustainable Communities
Sally Whittet, Head Teacher, Muirkirk Primary School
Councillor Stephanie Primrose
Councillor David Shaw
Councillor Neil McGhee
Lyne Johnstone, Vibrant Communities
Lynne Buchanan, Communications Manager
Fiona Lees, Chief Executive

6 parents/carers/staff

Mr Ward welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers.

He went on to explain the reason for the meeting as:

Part 1 Consultation on the proposed new learning campus

Part 2 New build in Muirkirk

He explained that the public consultation was being held to discuss the following proposals:

- Education provision at Auchinleck Academy be discontinued with effect from June 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Education provision at Cumnock Academy and Supported Learning Centre be discontinued with effect from June 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- The children and young people attending these establishments transfer to a new merged secondary school with effect from August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The site of that school will be in the area of Cumnock presently occupied by Broomfield Playing Fields.
- That the delineated area of the new secondary school be created from August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter, from the amalgamation of the delineated areas of the present Auchinleck Academy and Cumnock Academy and Supported Learning Centre.
- Views are sought on the newly merged Secondary School and Supported Learning Centre should be co-located with a newly merged Primary School, Early Childhood Centre and Supported Learning Centre resulting from the

amalgamation of Greenmill Primary School and Early Childhood Centre and Barshare Primary School, Supported Learning Centre and Early Childhood Centre, and a new build Hillside School on the Broomfield site.

Mr Ward then advised that this proposal also has implications for:

- Hillside School
- Greenmill Primary School and Early Childhood Centre
- Barshare Primary School and Supported Learning Centre and Early Childhood Centre

He went on to explain that:

- Proposal document clearly indicates that this consultation is a merger between the two academies and which affects associated schools.
- Proposal is based on agreed, mutual, educational benefit.
- The consultation process is subject to the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

Mr Ward explained the changes to legislation as follows:

- Restriction on repeating a school merger proposal for 5 years.
- Requirement to provide financial information in closure proposals.
- New requirements regarding corrections to proposal papers.
- Extension of the period for Ministers to consider call-in from 6 to 8 weeks.
- Duty for HMIE to provide advice to Scottish Ministers when they are considering call-in or determining a case which has been called in.
- Power to make regulations regarding the establishment of the School Closure Review panels.

He then went on to explain the consultation process as follows:

- Proposal document discussed and decided upon at Cabinet on 28 January 2015.
- Approval to open consultation is advertised in the media on 5 February with formal opening date 12 February.
- Consultation is open until 27 March, which allows more than 30 school-day minimum.
- Public meetings held within that period with all interested groups informed of dates and times.
- All comments, queries and questions will be recorded and responses provided at the meeting where possible, or with an assurance of a follow-up response. The record of the meeting is published on the East Ayrshire Council website.
- All responses to the consultation are recorded and are acknowledged.
- Queries about specific factual issues will get an individual response.
- Responses are available to elected members
- At the close of the consultation all comments and records are provided to Education Scotland officers 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 are 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 produces a consultation report which includes information and feedback from all aspects of the process.
- The published report is 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 of East Ayrshire's decision. This stage can take up to 8 weeks and can lead to the whole process being called-in.

Mr Ward advised that following recent pre-consultation meetings the following concerns had been noted:

- Concerns about primary schools other than those directly affected by the proposals being able to access the facilities
- Placing Requests to the new schools
- What about existing sports facilities on the Auchinleck site?
- What recreation facilities will there be in school?
- Will there be a swimming pool?
- How does the public know that concerns are being listened to?

He went on to explain that:

- Educational Benefits are:
 - Raising Attainment
 - Equality, inclusion and diversity
 - Design which supports Child-centred learning
 - Getting it Right For Every Child
- Disadvantage is acknowledged
- Balancing advantage and disadvantage

Mr Ward the advised on ways to respond to the consultation as follows:

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 12 of the proposal document.

Part 2 – Your School, Your Community, Your Future

Mr Ward then went on to advise on the new build planned for Muirkirk Primary School and Early Childhood Centre as follows:

- A new Muirkirk Primary School and Early Childhood Centre
- Situated on the existing site

- Bringing a fully inclusive learning experience to children and young people and to serve this and future generations of the Muirkirk community.
- This new build will provide an inspirational learning environment which will raise the aspirations of children and young people, staff and the wider community.
- Parent, staff and pupils will be consulted on the design of the new school.

He went on to advise on the following:

Project Management: site assessment

- Restrictions due to size, layout, access
- Consequent Health and Safety requirements
- Decant required

Options considered

- Maintain Early Childhood Centre (only) on site during build period
- New build on Victory Park

Decant Options considered for ECC – no final decision made as yet

- Library Building in Burns Ave
- Victory Park Pavilion
- Games Hall
- St Thomas' Hall
- Temporary Modular Accommodation
- Day Centre, Furnace Rd

Mr Ward advised that the Care Inspectorate will be involved in the final decision, but at the moment the day centre looks like the best option. He went on to advise that flooring, toilets, outdoor areas, will all have to be of a certain standard and that cleanliness important. If the building meets the set standards required early childhood centre pupils would not need to be decanted out if the area during the build.

He then went on to advise on the following:

Decant Options considered for P1-7

- Transported to Greenmill Primary for the build period
- Additionality provided to school to support transition period (e.g. management/classroom assistant support)

Mr Ward then advised on the timescales for the project as:

Timescales

Mar 2015	Consultations begin
June 2015	Planning Application lodged
Aug 2015	Tenders issued
Jan 2016	Decants begin
Jan 2016	Preparation for demolition
Mar 2016	Demolition begins (3 Months)
July 2016	Construction begins

July 2017 Construction Completed
Aug 2017 New school opens

He went on to explain that it is important to consult with everyone involved to achieve the following:

- Shared ambitions for Pupils, Parents, Staff and Community
- Inclusive approach, collaborative working throughout.
- Sustained benefit from a whole community approach

Mr Ward advised that the new school building will also have facilities for use by the community. He further advised that the Council's architects understand that good design can improve learning and teaching.

ISSUES RAISED:

Mr Ward asked if anyone had any questions.

Councillor McGhee asked if there were any artists imagery available at the moment. Mr Ward advised that there are a lot of discussions to be had before this can be provided.

Parent asked if the two consultations presented were linked. Mr Ward advised that they weren't linked.

Parent asked if P1-3 could be put in porta cabins, because she was worried about pupils so young travelling 10 miles to Greenmill Primary. Mr Ward explained that pupils have been decanted from other schools to allow builds to be completed and this had worked well.

Councillor Shaw asked that if pupils were decanted, would the pupils be separate from the rest of school. Mr Ward advised that the two schools would work independently from each other, with their own head teacher and maintaining their own identity, perhaps having shared activities at certain times. Councillor Shaw advised that parents of Sorn Primary had the same concerns about decanting pupils, but it worked well.

Mr Ward advised that staff would be supervising pupils on the bus. Parent asked what would happen if children were unwell. Mr Whittet advised that the procedure would remain the same, parents would be called to pick pupils up from the school or they would be transported home in taxi with the classroom assistant. She also advised that she would supervise pupils going on and off the buses. Mr Ward advised that the buses would be single decker buses with seatbelts. Mr Whittet advised that she understood parents' anxieties regarding difficult driving conditions on winter roads, but advised that if she is at all worried about roads the buses won't leave the school.

Mr Ward stated that health and safety is of the utmost importance, and that a set of guidelines would be in place.

Parent asked if there were any perceived delays? Mr Ward stated that he could not say no for definite but the way builds are conducted now he would hope not, corporate infrastructure colleagues have gained a lot of experience in this area, and some designs have been superb. He went on to advise that Onthank Primary School's new building went up well, teachers and pupils are delighted, and everything was pretty much on time.

Cllr Primrose advised that parents could visit Onthank Primary to see new build. Mr Ward also stated that parents are able to go online and google new school builds, they would be able to see the range of builds available nowadays. He went on to advise that parents would be kept fully informed of any updates required.

Parent asked what the size of the new campus school would be. Mr Ward advised that there could be 440 pupils in primary, and at the very most 1,680 in secondary, however, he would expect the numbers to be lower, he also advised that there would be 100 fulltime places in the early childhood centre. Mr W advised that each school in the proposed new build would have their own area, pupils not able to wander around campus, he advised that campus schools in the authority have worked well, staggered start and finish times, as well as staggered break times to ensure not everyone mixing at same times.

Parent asked if there would be security on site in the evening, because she knew someone who has just bought a house in the area.

Mr Ward advised that traffic management assessments would be completed to look at traffic in the area and that £1 has been set aside also to look at improving roadways.

Member of the community expressed concern that residents haven't been notified of the proposal. Mr Ward advised that this is the proposal stage only, and that planning colleagues would notify residents if the decision was made to take the proposal forward. He also advised that the proposal and public consultation meetings were advertised in local press, and that local community associations and community councils have also been fully informed.

Member of the community advised that she did not want a school on her doorstep and was concerned that her house price would fall.

Mr Ward was asked if campus police officers would be on site at the new campus, as they have made a difference to order in other schools. Mr Ward advised that this may be possible and was pleased to hear that campus police are welcome and work well in the area.

Mr Ward was then asked why timescales stated were different for primary and secondary schools, there is a year of difference. Mr Ward advised that that if the proposed academies merger does not go ahead the build will still go ahead, but would hope to have primaries in the building first, as the pupil moves need to be a phased.

Parent asked if class sizes would increase, as this will cause a difference in teaching. Mr Ward advised that there may be a slight increase in class sizes but there are national guidelines on how big a class can be, that the authority can not exceed.

Grandparent expressed concern that the upheaval of moving pupils could cause difficulties for pupils. Mr Ward advise that when he was Head Teacher at St Joseph's Academy, he spoke to parents/pupils/staff about the best time to make the move, and the decision was made to move after the spring break, which worked well. He advised that staff would work closely with pupils to familiarise them with the new build, and that their focus would be on raising attainment.

Concern was expressed that the advert in the paper was for consultation on new campus only, and that the turnout at today's meeting may have been better if it was advertised that the Muirkirk new build was also going to be discussed. Mr Ward advised that he is happy to attend a further meeting if required.

Mr Ward thanked everyone for attending and reminded them to respond to the consultation using one of the methods highlighted in the presentation before 4 pm on Friday 27 March 2015.