

**NOTE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2015 AT ONTHANK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

In Attendance

Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
Andrew Kennedy, Acting Head of Facilities Management
Councillor Eoghann MacColl
Carole McConville, Senior Education Manager
Kerr Chalmers, Road Alliance
Kirsty McCartney, Head Teacher
Glynis Findlay, Depute Head Teacher
Rona Lindsay, Head Teacher, Kilmaurs Primary School
Councillor Eoghan MacColl, Spokesperson, Lifelong Learning
Councillor Maureen McKay
Jackie Livingston, Cabinet Parent Representative

Graham Short introduced himself and the officers in attendance at the meeting. He explained the format of the presentation to encourage discussion and understanding of the full consultation process.

Andrew Kennedy provided an overview of the consultation process by powerpoint and then invited questions from the meeting.

The following points were raised:

A parent asked 'present children in the streets affected, do they need a placing request?'

Response – Andrew Kennedy explained that Head Teacher had to process new pupils into schools as normal in line with current policy and existing catchment lines.

The chair of Onthank Parent Council raised the issue of the experience the children would have, if more children were added to the school. He felt they would be affected particularly in relation to interval, playgrounds, toilet provision, lunchtime experience and traffic management".

Response – Graham Short responded that there was no direct link between the size of the school and any impact on learning. The school at present held 620 but the school was designed to hold 800. The Gaelic Medium Unit would move out to the new Kilmarnock Learning Campus which would create extra space in Onthank. It was also noted that there would be continuing reviews of school capacities done annually to minimise future pressures.

Kerr Chalmers responded with regards to the traffic management issues raised. Each school has travel plans in place and any issues raised are supported by activity of the Journey to School Working Group and the Road Safety Team. Kerr informed the meeting that children from the immediate streets are encouraged to walk to school. The Roads Department are aware of the issues that have been raised. Andrew Kennedy also noted that both Onthank and Mount Carmel parent councils and schools had supported a range of initiatives to improve the situation and the accident record around schools is very low, although working together will continue to assist in addressing the situation at all schools.

Andrew Kennedy informed the meeting that funding had been agreed at Cabinet in January to invest further in the toilet provision and standards across the estate including at Onthank.

Andrew Kennedy informed the meeting that with the introduction of P1 – P3 free school meals additional meals were currently being provided with a number of changes including additional staff supported through Scottish Government funding. The Authority is looking to enhance the current provision with other eating areas such as (canopies for outside areas). The school does also have a separate dining and assembly hall that many schools do not have therefore there is some additional flexibility. Kirsty McCartney, Head Teacher informed the meeting that 1057 school meals had been served in the last week with no issues of hurrying children through the dining hall and that the children would still get the same positive dining experience.

A parent asked about the impact of the future Northcraigs development in terms of numbers being added to the school roll at Onthank.

Response Graham Short explained that with regards to new housing it is very difficult to determine exactly the numbers that can come from new houses and we would require to know number of rooms in each house, if they were denominational / nondenominational and placing requests. It is also uncertain in terms of when developments may actually happen even if they have planning permission.

Andrew Kennedy informed the meeting that housing developments had been looked at as part of the projected school roll and is based on figures from a range of other Local Authorities with a ratio of approx 15 children per 100 homes being used for planning purposes. It was further explained in terms of children transferring with the Authority area for example the Hillhead development showed not all children are attending Hillhead Primary School, with children attending other schools or moving into houses from other parts of Kilmarnock and staying in their existing school. It was also noted that the maturity of an estate also reduces the overall long term impact as families grow up but don't always move once their education is complete. It was further noted the Council was reviewing

the process of predicting school rolls and will require to manage this more closely as we move towards buildings being used to their maximum capacity.

A Parent asked if there was additional children would existing supplementary spaces such as IT rooms have to be given up to accommodate them.

Response Andrew Kennedy responded that when the Gaelic provision would move to the new Learning Campus this would create more free teaching space bringing the capacity up to around 800. It was also noted that the occupancy levels are based on the number of rooms specifically allocated for teaching and not including the additional supplementary rooms.

A member of the community asked why the 74 children (in the Southcraigs area identified as Kilmaurs catchment) could not attend Kilmaurs Primary School as Kilmaurs is still under capacity.

Response: Graham Short responded that Kilmaurs Primary school the houses mentioned are much closer to Onthank Primary School with substantial advantages of convenience for children and families.

A member of the community asked why do you want Kilmaurs to be smaller in terms of drawing the new line for the catchment area. Why was it not just including the urban boundary?

Response: Graham Short stated that there was no intention to make Kilmaurs smaller, such an intention could not and should not be read into, nor taken out of this proposal. Andrew explained the catchment areas as outlined on the maps in the consultation documents. Obvious landmarks, such as railways, roads etc are ideally what is used to ensure the community boundaries are intact, however where this is not possible lines are drawn from specific points. From the A735 there is no clear boundary and therefore the line has been drawn to retain the separation between the urban boundary and the rural farm houses. The examples were also given where the Hillhead catchment follows a railway line and the proposal is to continue to follow a road to ensure the urban boundary remains intact. Many catchments between urban and rural areas do cut through fields and may historically be old Parish boundaries.

A question was asked regarding the Southcraigs development and the proposal to connect a road between Southcraigs drive and Kilmaurs road.

Response Kerr Chalmers responded that this was suggested to be a distributor road at the beginning of building the estate, however it was not assessed as needed as the development grew. It was also noted the access road to the Northcraig development would not be accessed through Southcraigs Drive but via the Industrial Estate access.

A Parent asked "Whether Fenwick was being considered"

Response: Fenwick is not being considered as part of this consultation as the catchment area for Fenwick does not impact on this part of Kilmarnock. It was noted on the map that Onthank PS has an extensive rural area to the north of Kilmarnock and Silverwood and New Farm also extend east into the rural area before the Fenwick catchment is reached.

Councillor McKay noted that Fenwick Primary School was also zoned to Loudoun Academy.

A parent asked “What would happen at the end of the Consultation process if it was not accepted, would we remain as we are”?

Response: Graham Short informed the meeting that if the consultation was not accepted in its current proposal and a different set of proposals were suggested then this would require to be considered again by Cabinet and for a further full consultation process would be required

A member of the community asked “why the boundary for Northcraigs was taken so far”

Response: Andrew Kennedy responded that it was clearly part of the urban development areas already identified for development and the proposed catchment line clearly separates the urban and rural housing. Graham Short referred to the proposal and that it was an exercise to tidy up the anomalies. Discussion at Council level highlighted the importance of retaining distinctions between rural and urban communities.

A parent asked “What capacity would Onthank have to be for developers to contribute to the school”

Response: Graham Short informed the meeting that the school would require to be at 100% occupancy and so would other schools in the area. Andrew Kennedy also noted that the main development at Northcraigs previously had planning permission therefore we could not retrospectively ask for a contribution. It was also noted that attempts had been made for recent developments in the area however there were tight criteria that would be required and space in surrounding schools would also need to be considered.

A parent asked “about the timetable for the consultation and would parents be contacted on the final decision”

Response: Graham Short informed the meeting that once a decision had been made by Cabinet, which was likely to be in June a letter would be issued to all with the final decision.