

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING
TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2015
GREENMILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDING

Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
Alan Ward, Acting Head of Service: Schools
Andrew Kennedy, Acting Head of Facilities Management
Alex McPhee, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support
Calum Maxwell, Senior Education Manager
Janie Allen, Senior Manager (Early Learning & Childcare)
Simon Bell, Capital Programme Manager
Kerr Chalmers, Traffic and Road Safety Manager
Ian Burgoyne, Senior Manager (Opportunities for All)
Christine Wilson, Head Teacher, Greenmill Primary School & ECC
Kerr Chalmers, Traffic and Road Safety Manager
David Mitchell, Head of Legal, procurement and Regulatory Services
Councillor Menzies
Councillor Eoghann MacColl
Antony McGuinness, Planning Officer
Jackie Livingstone, Parent Representative on Education Cabinet
30+ parents/carers/staff

Graham Short welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers and elected members.

Alan Ward introduced himself to everyone and advised that the public consultation was being held to discuss the following proposals:

- Education provision at Barshare Primary School, Supported Learning Centre and Early Childhood Centre be discontinued with effect from June 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Education provision at Greenmill Primary School and Early Childhood Centre be discontinued with effect from June 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- That young people attending these establishments transfer to a new non-denominational primary school, supported learning centre and early childhood centre with effect from August 2018 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 primary school be created from August 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter, from the amalgamation of the delineated areas of the present of Greenmill Primary School and Early Childhood Centre and Barshare Primary School and Supported Learning Centre and Early Childhood Centre.

- Views are also sought on the proposal that the newly merged Primary School, Early Childhood Centre and Supported Learning Centre should be co-located with a new build Hillside School on the Broomfield site.
- Views are also sought that the newly merged Primary School, Early Childhood Centre and Supported Learning Centre should be co-located with a new build school resulting from the merger of Auchinleck Academy and Cumnock Academy and Supported Learning Centre on the Broomfield site.

He further advised that this proposal also has implications for:

- Hillside School
- Cumnock Academy and Supported Learning Centre
- Auchinleck Academy

Mr Ward explained that the:

- Proposal document clearly indicates that this consultation is a continuation of an existing process opened in January 2014
- Proposal is based on agreed, mutual, educational benefit.
- The consultation process is subject to the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

He then went on to explain changes to legislation:

- Restriction on repeating a school closure/merger proposal for 5 years.
- Requirement to provide financial information in closure proposals.
- New requirements regarding corrections to proposal papers.
- Revised arrangements for rural school closure proposals.
- Requirement for an education authority to publish a notice regarding representations to Scottish Ministers.
- 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.

Mr Ward 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 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 are published as part of the process.
- Education Scotland 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.

He advised that pre-consultation meetings had been mainly positive with some concerns raised as follows:

- Concerns regarding college facilities and young children
- Concerns about other primary schools being able to access the facilities
- The size of the secondary school
- What happened to the original proposals?
- Concerns about placing requests
- What about existing sports facilities on the Broomfield 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?
- Travel to school distances for Greenmill parents and pupils
- Concern about the name of the site
- Will there be a separate Head Teacher?
- Will staff lose their jobs?

These concerns were answered by Mr Ward as follows –

- The college facility would not be next to the early childhood centre.
- There is a need to look at transition arrangements and outreach programme to allow all schools to have a share of the campus.
- Maximum no of pupils would be 1,680
- Original proposals were not agreed, this is a continuation of that proposal with amendments
- Placing request concerns – spaces can be capped. The authority already have campus schools and have learned from this experience.
- Existing sports facilities – contact has been made with the Cumnock Rugby Club, Cumnock Juniors, and a meeting has been arranged with staff from Visions

Centre. The authority do not want to lose the community feel, and would want facility to be for community use.

- Outdoor areas will be used for learning
- Swimming programme will be organised at Visions Centre
- Hillside will have hydrotherapy pool in new campus building
- Listening to people – consultation meeting, taking notes, listening to you
- Name of site – no decision, working title only, each separate establishment will have separate name and own head teacher
- Staff jobs – have sound, well used HR processes – should member of staff become surplus, they will be redeployed elsewhere.

Andrew Kennedy explained the following points:

- School Transport Policy
- Traffic Management Considerations
- Traffic Impact Assessment
- Investment in improved pedestrian routes

He went on to explain the school transport policy which includes assessments with the road safety team and adherence to national guidelines. Problems highlighted around traffic management last year have been taken into account in the new proposals with site access routes being considered.

Mr Kennedy advised that a traffic impact assessment will be completed for the Broomfield site to identify if the area could cope with the volume of traffic expected. He also advised that the Council has committed an additional investment of £1m towards improving streets around Auchinleck and Cumnock to provide sustainability of walking routes, eg expanding narrow pavements and improving crossing points.

Mr Kennedy went on to explain:

Map 1 – showing proposed site and main walking routes. He advised that transport that is in place for pupils at the moment will remain, and ASN transport will remain.

Map 2 – from secondary school perspective, of all pupils going to school, about 1000 will receive transport. He advised that if pupils lived over 3 miles from the school they would receive free transport, if they live between 1.5 – 3 miles away subsidised transport is available at a cost of £1.20 per day for first child in family, 60p for 2nd child, no payment for any additional children. He also advised that pupils receiving free school meals who are entitled to subsidised transport would continue to do so free of charge.

Map 3 – part of the outcome of the transport assessment identified a couple of areas, although meeting national guidelines, as areas that would benefit from improvement, which the council are willing to consider, eg by improving lighting, erecting barriers, widening pavements and improving school crossing areas.

Mr Ward explained the main focus of the proposal as:

- The opportunity for co-location on a fully inclusive learning campus for children and young people of all ages, irrespective of any additional support need, to serve the Cumnock and Auchinleck communities;
- The need to develop inspirational learning environments which raise the aspirations of children and young people, staff and the wider community;
- The need to have a state of the art, fit for purpose educational environment for children and young people of all learning abilities
- The need to address significant under occupancy in the school estate and create a sustainable school estate for future generations;
- The need to retain separate school stage identities
- Specialist facilities and equipment replicated
- Expertise of staff will transfer and be both retained and enhanced
- Partnership working will be improved

He further advised that the:

- Educational Benefit will be:
 - 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 then highlighted the ways to respond to the proposal:

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.

Graham Short advised that following the consultation last year, indication was received from Scottish Government of additional funding to support our schools. This is a continuation of the first consultation, but this consultation is quite complex, there are effectively 3 sets of proposals, one about Barshare Primary and Supported Learning Centre and Greenmill Primary and Early Childhood Centre, one about the relocation of Hillside School and one about the merger of Auchinleck and Cumnock Academy. He advised that to understand the full process, it is important to read all proposal documents, and that everyone is welcome to respond to all documents. He went on to say that the Council is excited about the potential of being able to provide 2-18 education in the one campus, with college facility and possible interest from business partners. He advised that what is being offered to the Cumnock and Auchinleck areas, which is a huge investment in the area, will attract people and increase the prosperity of the area.

ISSUES RAISED

Parent asked if there will be a walkway for secondary pupils. Andrew Kennedy advised that the plan would be to utilise parts of Cumnock Academy site for transport drop off and in addition to that there would be walkways to the Broomfield site.

Parent expressed concern about the use of the road where the ambulance station and bus station is. Kerr Chalmers advised that a walking assessment will be done for all possible routes. Additionally, a questionnaire to parents can be issued to ask what they feel the area requires. He also advised that traffic management surveys will be completed, looking at junctions, crossings, traffic flows etc, which can be improved by making amendments.

Mr Short advised that there will be a number of consultations on different parts of the proposal and if the proposals are agreed to go ahead, all major stakeholders will be consulted when designing the campus.

Parent asked where access would be to the site if the Cumnock/Auchinleck Academy proposal did not go ahead, but the primary merger did. Kerr Chalmers advised that all access routes would be assessed before any decision is made.

Parent asked if the additional £1m would still be used for improving routes if the build was for the merged primary and early childhood centre and Hillside School only. Mr Ward advised that there would still require to be traffic management assessments done and work to improve identified areas of concern.

Parent asked which way the construction traffic would enter the site. Kerr Chalmers advised that this has not been decided at this stage, however, a detailed plan would be put in place to ensure construction traffic would not conflict with movement of pupils and residents.

Graham Short advised that Grange Academy Campus is in a confined residential area, which was built while the old schools remained open on the site. He advised that a traffic management phase was completed, following which lights, crossings and roundabouts were completed. He stated that the first principle is to ensure health and safety of staff and pupils.

Mr Ward advised that a project team would be formally assigned to the project and will co-ordinate what will happen and at set times.

Parent asked what shared facilities would be in the new campus. Mr Ward advised that the primary school and early childhood centre and Hillside School would have a designated gymnasium and changing rooms, as will the secondary school. He further advised that the authority are dedicated to improving the standard and quality of PE in East Ayrshire. He went on to advise that the three heads of establishment will work together to ensure that movement around the campus works well. Lunch times, breaks and finish and start times will be staggered. He also stated that when

secondary pupils are not using science labs, art rooms, music rooms etc, there would be opportunities for primary pupils to share facilities for STEM subjects, Science technology and engineering, as traditionally primary schools don't have science labs.

Mr Short advised that Hillside School has children with complex learning difficulties, the Supported Learning Centre at Barshare and Cumnock Academy have children with moderate difficulties, primary schools will also have pupils who require additional support, and in this campus specialist equipment and staff will be on the one campus, a sharing of expertise in terms of support for learning across the campus.

Calum Maxwell advised about security in a joint campus. He stated that whilst in the one building, each individual establishment is in its own space, security can be manned with key fobs for doors, and if primary classes are going to visit in secondary school they will be accompanied by a teacher. He further advised that shared timetables are achieved by head teachers working closely together. Mr Maxwell advised that he visits joint campuses on a regular basis and has witnessed good practice.

Parent stated that although Grange Academy is a great campus, they have experienced difficulties sharing the gym hall, the 2 hours per week PR causes difficulty. Mr Ward advised that the authority have learned a lot from campuses that have already been completed, and would want the new campus to have a dedicated gym hall for primary/ECC use.

Grandparent asked if it is true that under new legislation, if this proposal fails, it can't be readdressed for 5 years, this building stands as a failure to education – pupils and staff deserve better.

David Mitchell was invited to explain the changes to legislation. He advised that should the proposal not be taken forward, it could not be readdressed within 5 years. He went on to explain that the proposal went out to consultation last year and after listening to parents, has now been continued this year, there is now an opportunity this year that wasn't available last year, a vision for a new project.

Parent asked what would happen if proposal doesn't go through. Alex McPhee advised that the money that's available wouldn't be there after 5 years, it will be reallocated to another project. He advised that the ongoing maintenance of buildings costs £3.5m. Parents expressed concern that parents of other schools don't want the new school, which leaves Greenmill PS in a vulnerable position.

Councillor Menzies stated that there were three options at the last proposal, this time just the one option. Parent asked if academies don't merge, does that mean it will all fall through. Mr ward advised that consultation guidelines put in place make sure that separate proposals are required, if Auchinleck and Cumnock Academy proposal doesn't go through, the others will remain. He noted that the added value of being able to work across traditional P7 to S1 while on the same campus is very good.

Parent stated that he has watched a lot of investment in the Kilmarnock area, while none in Cumnock area, which is detrimental to son's education. Mr Short advised that there has been massive investment in schools in New Cumnock, Mauchline, Logan etc, He explained that any savings made in the Kilmarnock areas are available for all pupils in the whole of East Ayrshire Council..

Mr Ward advised that in speaking to business partners in the area they were excited about the prospect of the new project.

Parent asked what a centre manager is. Janie Allen explained that the ECC head would be in charge, below that would be a management structure.

Parent stated that she has heard of difficulties in other campuses in getting use of shared areas, in practice how would shared facilities be able to work.

Mr Ward advised that there would be the opportunity for science, music, art facilities to be used by primary school in the secondary area as these are areas that are not used all day. He also noted that there is no reason why pupils couldn't have a dedicated STEM room in the school. Parent expressed concern about how this would be achievable, with the number of secondary pupils and rotation between classes. Mr Ward advised that the authority would put officers in place to look at the design of the new campus and would work with teachers on how timetables would work, and what they want in their new school.

Jackie Livingston, Parent Representative for Cabinet stated that she has seen her own children come through early childhood to primary and secondary on the one campus. She advised that this was a positive experience for the children, and that on the whole the schools are managed very well. She further advised that Mr Ward has had experience in this area, he was head teacher at St Joseph's Academy when he had to bring together two primary schools, a nursery class and secondary school into the one campus. She advised that she did have concerns as a parent initially, but not now.

Parent expressed concern at size of the proposed school. She stated that she chose to settle in this area because she wanted a smaller school in the community where her child would be known.

Mr Ward advised that there would be a different atmosphere in new school, it would be bright and airy, with covered outdoor areas for use. Staff would ensure that they work closely to ensure all pupils are known.

Parent asked if all staff will be consulted in the design process. Simon Bell advised, yes.

Parent asked why the authority could not consider having separate campus for Auchinleck and Cumnock Academy with a primary and early childhood centre attached to each, why have such a big school. Mr Short advised that one of the educational issues is that rolls have gone down by 25-30% in recent years, schools are staffed due to number of pupils and head teachers have to aim their staff at

curricular areas, when rolls go down, schools can't run a full range of courses, if you have a bigger school roll, bigger range of courses can be run.

Mr Ward advised that he has visited a number of large shared campuses, the size doesn't become an issue, staff are there to work and support pupils. He advised that the authority want to spend their money as effectively and efficiently as possible, want to reduce the carbon footprint and number of buildings. He went on to say that there is a massive lift for a learning community when given the opportunity to move into a new facility. This is an opportunity to get as many pupils as possible to experience a quality learning experience.

Janitor stated the he didn't manage to attend the meeting for janitorial and cleaning staff, and asked who decides who will move to new building. Mr Kennedy explained that there would possibly be surplus staff, the council have policies and procedures in place to manage this. There would be the opportunity to link staff to vacant posts in other establishments.

Parent stated that she felt that the project was very positive, but asked if the money still be ringfenced for the primary schools if secondary proposal didn't go ahead.

Mr Mitchell advised that the decision making at Cabinet will be taken on the overall responses, what is for the overall benefit of all. If good reasons not to proceed, these will be listened to do. There is a positive educational project available, of a £63m investment in the area.

Parent asked if IT, furniture etc will be included in the budget. Simon Bell advised that the money set for the project is based on a matrix of space per pupil, but the authority are not at the stage of putting budget against furniture at the moment. Allowance of £1m has been set against a hydro therapy pool for the special school.

Parent stated that it is not fair to compare Kilmarnock to the Cumnock and Auchinleck area because the authority are talking about merging two different communities together.

Parent asked if class sizes would be bigger in the new campus. Mr Ward advised that there are class size legislation which dictates the size of classes which can be exceeded.

Alex McPhee advised that parents could visit campuses in other areas, and can also request an opportunity to speak at Cabinet.

Mr Short thanked everyone for attending and encouraged everyone to submit a formal response using one of the methods identified before 4 pm on Friday 27 March 2015.