

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION**

#### **A PROPOSAL DOCUMENT**

**THE DISCONTINUATION OF THE WILLOWBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL WITHIN  
THE EXISTING WILLOWBANK SCHOOL AND ITS RELOCATION TO THE  
CURRENT ONTHANK CAMPUS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN  
ADDITIONAL EARLY YEARS TRANSITION FACILITY WITHIN THE RELOCATED  
WILLOWBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**THE FORMAL INCORPORATION OF THE EXISTING INCLUSION RESOURCE  
AT ONTHANK CAMPUS AS A SUPPORTED LEARNING CENTRE**

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE AT MOUNT  
CARMEL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**The following schools are affected by this Proposal Document:**

**WILLOWBANK SCHOOL**

**ONTHANK PRIMARY SCHOOL and ONTHANK EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE  
MOUNT CARMEL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council for Proposal in terms of, and having regard to, the  
Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.**

## DISTRIBUTION

A summary copy of this document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools and ECC
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools and ECC
- Parents of children expected to attend the affected schools 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 and ECC
- The trade union representatives of the above staff
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- The related Community Councils/Community Associations
- Depute Chief Executive: Communities and Economy
- Head of Facilities and Property Management
- The Constituency MSP
- List MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP
- The Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Galloway
- Ayrshire College
- Sub-Divisional Commander, Police Scotland
- Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Chief Executive, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- Chief Executive Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
- South Ayrshire Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- Community Planning Partnership Board
- PEACE Childcare

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU
- The schools and ECC affected by the proposal
- <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/consultations>

This document is also available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply in writing to the Education, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU, by telephone on 01563-576000; or by e-mail:

[education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL DOCUMENT**

### **Consideration by the Cabinet of East Ayrshire Council**

1. This Proposal Document has been approved by the Cabinet in order to undertake a statutory consultation on proposals for:
  - (i) The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank campus.
  - (ii) The establishment of an additional early years transition facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School.
  - (iii) The formal incorporation of the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre.
  - (iv) The establishment of an Early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School.

As an overall implementation date, this is anticipated as no earlier than August 2027 for completion of works, if consultation leads to said bid being placed. However, it is noted that above recommendation (iii) does not require works to the extent of this timeline and if a Supported Learning Centre is approved for Onthank PS, then this would likely be incorporated by August 2023 at the latest, as a formal replacement for the current provision.

Whilst proposals (i) and (iii) above require to be consulted upon in terms of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"), as amended, the other proposals are considered to relate to either the establishment of nursery classes or schools as defined by the 2010 Act. Accordingly, proposals (ii) and (iv) do not formally require to form part of the statutory consultation process under the 2010 Act. Notwithstanding this, the Cabinet have agreed that those proposals should be consulted in the same way as proposals (i) and (iii) above. They will therefore follow the same statutory consultation process.

### **A Summary of the Consultation Process**

2. A summary version of this document will be issued free of charge to the consultees listed on the preceding page. A full version and summarised version will be published on the Council website: <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/consultations> If requested, copies of both the full and summary versions will also be made available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

### **Notice of the Consultation Period**

3. An advertisement will be placed in the Kilmaronock Standard in the week commencing 25 April 2022 and on the East Ayrshire Council website, Facebook and Twitter pages advertising the start of the consultation period. The consultation will, thereafter, run from 25 April 2022 until close of business on 9 June 2022, which includes a period of 30 school days.

## Public Meetings

4. The Scottish Government have suggested that these are meetings that require attendance of persons physically within a venue and at a publicised date and time. We therefore require to risk assess this and give regard to relevant medical advice, government guidance and legislation and proceed with due care, acting reasonably and ensuring the safety of all.
5. Therefore, having considered matters carefully, the most sensible way to proceed is via a virtual meeting (video conference) with Parent Council Chairs, appropriate Senior Officers from the authority and parents/carers joining the virtual meeting remotely.
6. The meeting will be held remotely from each of the affected schools. Additional colleagues can be present; the Council Officer or personnel from IT who need to be in attendance from a technical support will also be present.
7. The formal public meetings will be supported via a video conference. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting will be invited to do so and be provided with appropriate login details from the Head Teacher of the affected school. The meeting will be convened by East Ayrshire Council and will be addressed by the Head of Education.
8. In order to facilitate this meeting parents/carers will be asked to confirm in advance with the Head Teacher of their child's school that they wish to participate so that appropriate login details can be distributed to all interested parties.

**It is hoped that the video conference will reach a wider audience and enable some parents/carers who may have struggled to attend such meetings in the past because of e.g. childcare commitments to participate more easily.**

The meeting will be an opportunity to:

- Hear more about the proposal.
- Ask questions about the proposal.
- Have your views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.

**The remote public meetings will be held as follows:**

<b>Willowbank School</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 5.30-7pm</b>
<b>Onthank PS and Onthank ECC</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 5.30-7pm</b>
<b>Mount Carmel PS</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 5.30-7pm</b>

A note will be taken of comments, questions and officer responses. These notes will be

published on the Council website, and a copy will be made available on request. These notes will also be forwarded to Education Scotland along with all other submissions and comments that are received by the Council during the consultation process.

## **Responding to the Proposal**

9. Interested parties are invited to respond to this Proposal document by making written or electronic submissions on the proposal to:

- The Chief Education Officer and Head of Education, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU; or
- [education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

For the convenience of those wishing to respond, a form is provided at Appendix 1 and is also available on the council's website at:

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/consultations>

Those wishing to respond are invited to state their relationship with the school – for example, “Pupil of XXX Primary School”, “Parent of a child at XXX Primary School”, “Grandparent of a child at XXX Primary School”, “Former pupil of XXX Primary School”, “Teacher of XXX Primary School”, “Member of the Community” etc. Responses from the Parent Councils, staff, and Pupil Councils are particularly welcome.

Those submitting a response, whether by letter or electronically, should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to elected members and council officers of East Ayrshire Council.” Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available.

## **Analysis of Written responses to the Consultation Exercise**

10. Comments submitted, either verbally at public meetings or within the written submissions will be responded to by the Council within the body of a future Consultation Report and Cabinet Report.

## **Questionnaires and Focus Groups**

11. An explicit part of the process is that children and young people at all the affected schools are to be consulted. In line with guidance published by the Commissioner for Children and Young people (SCCYP), East Ayrshire will ask Common Ground Mediation, an independent organisation, to complete this piece of work.
12. 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 will be prepared and delivered to the affected schools by Common Ground Mediation in a way that takes account of each child and young person's needs and abilities.

13. A questionnaire will be devised and distributed to children and young people at all the schools mentioned within the proposal. The independent consultant will also meet with a number of focus groups to discuss the proposals in more depth.
14. Senior Leaders across all the schools will support appropriate differentiation of materials and where necessary support children and young people to participate actively within the discussions. This is to reduce anxiety for some of our children and young people and ensure that their voices are heard.
15. 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, children and young people may feel that their involvement is 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 children and young people why the decision has been taken, how their views were taken into consideration, and what will happen next, with particular reference to the children and young people's responses to the questionnaire and within the focus groups.
16. If the decision is to go ahead with the proposal, it will be necessary to continue with the process of consultation and participation with the children and young people, to develop a high quality transition programme based on their needs and concerns.

### **Analysis of children and young people's questionnaire responses**

17. All responses will be recorded and published in a future Consultation Report and Cabinet Report alongside the thematic responses from focus groups.

### **Involvement of Education Scotland**

18. A copy of the Proposal Document will be sent to Education Scotland. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period or, if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Education Scotland will further receive a summary of any oral representations made to the Council at the public meetings that will be held and, as available (and so far as otherwise practicable), a copy of any other relevant documentation.

Thereafter, Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 3 weeks after the Council has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above. However, for the avoidance of doubt, the 3 week period will not start until after the consultation period has ended. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make

reasonable enquiries of such people there and any others as is considered appropriate.

### **Preparation of the Consultation Report**

19. The Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meetings. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in the Kilmarnock Standard. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, public libraries and local offices in the vicinity of the named schools, free of charge.
20. Anyone who made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to all representations and the Education Scotland Report. A copy of the Education Scotland Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled, will be included in the final consultation report. The Report will also contain a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the Education Scotland Report and representations (both written and oral) received. The Consultation Report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of 3 weeks.

### **Note on Corrections**

21. If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal Document either by the Council or any person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, there has been an inaccuracy. It may then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal Document or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In such an event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised. The person, or persons, who have raised concerns will receive an individual response to their submission.

### **Decision**

22. The consultation report, together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by the Council's Cabinet who will come to a decision. This decision will also be the subject of further scrutiny by the Governance and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Commission for the Delivery of Rural Education**

23. From 1 August 2014 there is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This proposal does not relate to a closure of a rural school.

### **Scottish Ministers Call-in**

24. The Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended, makes provision for referral to Scottish Ministers where a closure proposal is approved by the Council. The proposal to extend Willowbank School at the current Onthank Campus to incorporate a new Willowbank Primary School involves the discontinuation (closure) of the primary school stage at the current Willowbank School so that it can be relocated to the Onthank Campus.

Accordingly, in the event that this proposal is approved, the Council will be required in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision, in so far as it relates to the discontinuation (closure) of the primary school stage of education within the Willowbank School, and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in relation to that proposal.

The Scottish Ministers have an 8 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first 3 weeks of that 8 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the 8 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, they will not proceed to implement the proposal if approved by Cabinet. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse to consent to the proposal or may grant their consent to the proposal either subject to conditions or unconditionally. Until the outcome of the call-in has been notified to the Council, they are unable to proceed to implement the proposal if approved at Cabinet.

### **PROPOSAL**

25. That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise, a decision will be made on whether or not to take forward the following proposals:

- The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank campus.
- The establishment of an additional early years transition facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School.
- The formal incorporation of the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre.
- The establishment of an Early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School.

As an overall implementation date, this is anticipated as no earlier than August 2027 for completion of works, if consultation leads to said bid being placed. However, it is noted that proposal iii.) above does not require works to the extent of this timeline and if a Supported Learning Centre is approved for Onthank PS, then this would likely be incorporated by August 2023, as a replacement for the current provision.



Whilst proposals i. and iii. above require to be consulted upon in terms of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”), as amended, the other proposals are considered to relate to either the establishment of nursery classes or schools as defined by the 2010 Act. Accordingly, proposals ii., and iv. do not formally require to form part of the statutory consultation process under the 2010 Act. Notwithstanding this, the Cabinet have agreed that those proposals should be consulted in the same way as proposals i. and iii. above. They will therefore follow the same statutory consultation process.

## BACKGROUND

26. East Ayrshire Council monitors and reviews its school estate on an ongoing basis, to ensure that it is flexible and responsive to both changes in demand for school places and to learners’ and teachers’ needs.

The drivers for the future school estate in East Ayrshire are:

- (i) East Ayrshire Community Plan;
- (ii) The Local Development Plan;
- (iii) The School Estate Management Plan;
- (iv) The Asset Management Framework and Capital Investment Plan;
- (v) Strategic Objectives for Education;
- (vi) Delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence;
- (vii) East Ayrshire Council’s Transformation Strategy; and
- (viii) The Scottish Government / COSLA Commitment for the National School Estate as set out in the 2009 document “Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future”.

### **(i) East Ayrshire Community Plan**

Community Planning is about a range of partners in the public and voluntary sectors working together to better plan, resource and deliver quality services that meet the needs of people who live and work in East Ayrshire. The Community Plan is recognised by all partners as the sovereign strategic planning document for the delivery of public services in East Ayrshire over the 15 years from 2015 to 2030 and sets out the overall vision for the local area.

*“East Ayrshire is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs.”*

### **(ii) The Local Development Plan**

The Local Development Plan aims to actively promote and enhance the economic, social and physical environment of East Ayrshire as a means of improving the quality of life of all residents of the area. The plan has been designed, in particular, to help achieve the aims and aspirations of the Council’s Community Plan, especially with regard to the improvement of opportunities and the environment. In addition, the plan identifies a range of development sites for housing, industry and other uses to meet

future anticipated demands and outlines the Council's policy and physical framework for future development throughout the authority area.

The Council is committed to developing strong and vibrant communities by ensuring that they have access to a full range of services and facilities to support local populations and to cater for the needs of all residents and visitors to the area. To achieve these objectives, the local plan aims:

- To provide an adequate supply of effective housing land and associated leisure, recreational, community and other facilities and services to meet anticipated demand; and
- To strengthen and improve the viability and vitality of the retail and economic base of East Ayrshire.

Whilst the Local Development Plan is now more than 5 years old, and the Council is progressing a new Local Development Plan, the existing Local Development Plan is still considered relevant in relation to the above matters

### **(iii) The School Estate Management Plan**

The School Estate Management Plan (SEMP) provides details of the school estate and highlights issues such as the projected over/under occupancy of schools, condition and suitability. In summary the plan sets out to:

- re-state the Council's vision for the school estate and the policy context;
- provide an update on the current status of the school estate;
- identify current investment and progress made; and
- detail the principles for the Council to achieve its desired standards.

### **(iv) Asset Management Framework and Capital Investment Plan**

The Asset Management Framework and Capital Investment Plan provides a framework whereby investment is aligned with the Council's asset management aspirations and designed to support the objectives of both the Community Plan and Transformation Strategy.

The priorities are focused on making a significant and sustained contribution towards the Council achieving its strategic priorities whilst contributing significantly to the local economy and construction industry and continue to focus on the following key investment areas:

- delivery of new schools, extensions and a programme of refurbishment;
- plans to deliver 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3-5 year olds and eligible 2 year olds from August 2020;
- provision of first class sporting and leisure facilities to encourage active lifestyles and make a positive impact on the wellbeing of our children;
- proposals to provide industrial units and address derelict buildings to promote economic growth and town centre regeneration;
- reduce our carbon footprint and improve the environment with the implementation of a range of new energy efficient technologies; and

- housing adaptation grants to support independent living and invest in telecare schemes.

## **(v) Strategic Objectives for Education**

The vision for the Community Plan (2015-30) is for East Ayrshire to be a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs.

The three 3-year delivery plans for Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing take forward the actions that have been shown to make the biggest difference and will bring about real change for local people and communities. Through each of these plans are cross-cutting elements of lifelong learning, tackling inequalities and early intervention and prevention.

These elements underpin the key strategic objectives for the Education Service which align to the priorities of the National Improvement Framework:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations.

## **(vi) Delivery of Curriculum for Excellence**

Curriculum for Excellence is well embedded within all East Ayrshire schools and seeks to provide a coherent, flexible and rich curriculum from 3 - 18. The curriculum includes the totality of experiences that are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated.

Curriculum for Excellence aims to ensure that all young people develop knowledge, skills and attributes for learning, life and work, which are encapsulated in the four capacities:

- successful learners;
- confident individuals;
- responsible citizens; and
- effective contributors.

## **(vii) East Ayrshire Transformation Strategy**

To ensure clarity and consistency across the Council's strategic priorities, the Transformation Strategy is aligned with the vision, principles and timeframe of the Community Plan 2015 - 2030.

On 27 June 2018, Cabinet endorsed project plans for the work-streams to take forward the latest Transformation Strategy, approved by Cabinet on 25 October 2017.

- Workstream 1 - a fairer, kinder and connected East Ayrshire
- Workstream 2 - workforce planning - cultural change and service redesign
- Workstream 3 - a digitally connected East Ayrshire
- Workstream 4 - a vibrant and empowered East Ayrshire
- Workstream 5 - property and estate
- Workstream 6 - income and commercialisation

Workstream 5 relates to the school estate and notes the following key tasks:

- *Ensuring best use of the existing estate; identifying opportunities for further rationalisation and developing a shared strategic approach across the Community Planning Partnership to future developments; and*
- *Identifying property rationalisation or disposal opportunities aligned to the Capital Programme.*

Rationalisation, where appropriate, in addition to the development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in the facilitation of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and teaching. The Council believes this will significantly contribute to meeting the themes of the Community Plan.

#### **(viii) Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future**

The Scottish Government's commitment and vision for its school estate was expressed jointly with COSLA, and resulted in the development of a new school estate strategy that was published in 2009.

The document, Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future, sets out national and local government's shared vision, aspirations and principles for the efficient and effective management of the school estate. The key aspirations for the school estate are:

- A school estate that is efficiently run and that delivers maximum value for money;
- A school estate which is flexible and responsive - both to changes in demand for school places and to learners' and teachers' requirements and wishes, and where the beneficial impact of change is maximised by thorough engagement with users and stakeholders;
- Schools are integral parts of the communities they serve, with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities;
- Schools accommodate and provide a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to people's health and wellbeing, to sustaining economic growth and to the strength and vibrancy of communities;
- All children and young people will be educated in, and community users will use, schools that are 'fit for purpose' in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency; and

- Schools are well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environments that inspire and drive new thinking and change and which support the delivery of high quality educational experiences through Curriculum for Excellence.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE WILLOWBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL WITHIN THE EXISTING WILLOWBANK SCHOOL AND RELOCATE IT TO THE CURRENT ONTHANK CAMPUS**

27. East Ayrshire Council Capital Investment Programme includes an allocation of £32m in relation to North West Kilmarnock schools. This is for indicative purposes only as the final capital costs will not be fully known until the project is developed further to support a funding bid to the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP).

The capital investment associated with the construction of a new school requires to be financed by the Council in full. It is anticipated that any funding allocated through LEIP will be revenue support grant rather than direct capital funding. This is paid annually over a 25 year term and it is estimated that this will be equivalent to approximately 50% - 60% of the overall capital investment cost.

## **EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS**

28. There is an incredibly strong educational rationale for the proposals noted, outside of concerns in regards to capacity, suitability and condition of buildings. These will be considered in turn and directly linked to each establishment to consider the pupils, staff, families and communities on both an individual and collective basis.

## **A CAMPUS FOR THE FUTURE**

29. When considered together the four proposals for statutory consultation provide an opportunity to consolidate a large area of learning estate and consider more opportunities for both inter-school and community working. The proposals would develop a "campus" feel to the area, which reflects the vibrant and inclusive nature of the community in which the site is proposed, but also the diversity and range of needs of the young people in attendance in such establishments.

### **Onthank PS, SLC and Onthank ECC**

Onthank PS incorporating a Supported Learning Centre:

The proposal to establish specialist provision for children with additional support needs within Onthank Primary School is of clear educational benefit. If implemented, the proposal will establish additional support needs specialist provision within a deep refurbishment/retrofit of Onthank Primary to ensure high-quality accommodation and facilities. It will result in additional specialist provision and enhance East Ayrshire Council's capacity to meet the learning needs of children with significant additional support needs within mainstream school settings and their locality. The Supported Learning Centre will include a dedicated drop off area; separate entrance for children

using the facility; three additional support needs classrooms; specific purpose designed rooms and outdoor spaces, and shared areas within the school including a personal care room and outdoor play area. The specialist provision is intended to accommodate up to 30 children.

The vision to create a Supported Learning Centre within the Onthank Primary campus is based on a number of reasons, we believe, and can evidence, that the request to create such provision is needs led.

An analysis of data on children currently accessing specialist provision shows that a high proportion of children accessing both Park School and Crosshouse not taken cognisance, until now, of the significant population spread in the North West Kilmarnock area. This new resource seeks to address this issue and would allow more young people to be educated in their home area.

This may be perceived to be an inequity of access to specialist resource, as children are required to be transitioned out of their local school community to receive the type of educational provision that they require. There is significant practitioner expertise within Onthank Primary School. The school has undertaken a significant journey over the last 4 years in order to fully understand the needs of children with a range of additional support needs, including Autism and Social Communication needs, and is now at a point where it could ably support the establishment of a Specialist Supported Learning Centre.

The need to ensure suitable ASN provision and this growing need has been evidenced, for example, by Psychological Services Relationships Framework Needs Analysis, data on Psychological Services involvement with individual children & projected Special School Placements, and our Local Authority Staged Intervention process.

Onthank Primary School has undertaken a hugely successful pilot study in regards to the development of an inclusion resource onsite to allow almost all young people to attend and succeed in their own environment. This enhanced school provision was created in strong collaboration with the expertise of teachers, specialist staff, and the school's Parent and Pupil Council. As a large primary with over 600 pupils, 25% pupils have Additional Support Needs and 7% attend the provision in a flexible range of ways. The aim was to address the needs of children experiencing trauma, dysregulation, displaying distress and who can find it challenging to access the school curriculum and whole class environment on a full-time basis. The 'Centre' as pupils call it is at the heart of the school and has evolved to support children who require a more developmentally appropriate learning experience, than can be offered within a full-time mainstream class.

Developing this enhanced provision further and incorporating it formally into the education estate as a Supported Learning Centre, namely Onthank SLC, will match the needs of children now and the in the future. Furthermore, it will ensure that the resource is formally recognised and resourced, and that young people requiring to attend can access it via the Team Around the Child (TAC) process, that allows the

assessment of their needs and supports to be fully discussed underpinned by the GIRFEC Framework.

Scottish Government (2019) state:

*“Inclusive education in Scotland starts from the belief that education is a human right and the foundation for a more just society. An inclusive approach which recognises diversity and holds the ambition that all children and young people are enabled to achieve to their fullest potential is the cornerstone to achieve equity and excellence in education for all of our children and young people”*

The ASL Review (Scottish Government, 2020) states:

*“The concept of 'mainstream' needs to be redefined and repositioned for the profile of children and young people as they are now and are projected to be in the future, not as they were in the past “*

Therefore this new resource would be created in order to meet the following goals:

- To meet the needs of learners experiencing significant additional support needs that currently mean they are unable to fully access the curriculum in a mainstream setting.
- To provide 25 hours per week of educational resource to a small number of children whose needs are so great that they are unable to cope within a mainstream class setting
- To provide learners with a flexible spectrum of support within a mainstream school which allows them depth of progression and may involve a package of mainstream and SLC supports, as appropriate.
- The resource would have permeable & flexible boundaries in keeping with the 2020 ASL Review (Scottish Government). We are keen to ensure that the resource is truly inclusive, meets individual learner need and does not operate as a ‘school within a school’. We are confident that Onthank are in a position to implement a new integrated model of special education and ensure that it does not become a fragmented resource
- To offer children high expectations of themselves and others, within an equitable educational provision
- To ensure that learners’ needs are met within the Scottish legislative and policy frameworks, with particular regards to the Additional Support for Learning Act (Scotland) 2004, Children and Young People’s (Scotland) Act 2020, Included Engaged and Involved Parts I & II (Scottish Government, 2019 and 2017)
- To create a full spectrum of inclusive provision on the campus.

With specific regard to how the proposal to incorporate a SLC onto the campus, there will be positive effects for young people in associated schools and ECCs. A flexible model, with permeable boundaries would allow improvement in the depth, breadth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment provided by the curriculum.

Children would continue to be educated as members of an inclusive educational community, with their peers, avoiding stigmatisation and offering them self-respect, dignity and confidence.

All children will have access to mainstream resources, offering the widest learning opportunities through a range of approaches suited to individual learning styles. In particular there is open access to specialist curricular resources in the primary sector in support of basic skills.

It will create opportunities for greater personalisation and choice for children and young people with improved continuity and progression in their learning as it will allow specialist and mainstream teachers to collaborate in developing an exciting and flexible curriculum underpinned by research, which supports development of children's knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and wellbeing.

Children and families will be given the opportunity to remain within their local school community. This will ensure children are fully included, engaged and involved in the life of the school, benefit from relationships with local peers and reduce potential stigma of travelling to a different school out with their catchment.

As identified in the ASL Review (2020, Scottish Government), the physical environment can create a barrier for some of our learners. This is particularly true for some children with sensory issues. While a refurbishment of Onthank Primary School overall can take cognisance of this, a more specialist built environment in this location would allow an increased number of children to be present, achieving, supported and participating within their local school.

ASL Review (Scottish Government, 2020) states:

*"The physical environments of many schools create significant difficulties for children and young people with particular conditions and increase the likelihood of distressed behaviour. Many of the improvements and solutions in physical environments would appear to be of benefit to all children and young people".*

The building will be modernised to deliver the vision of personalised learning. It will meet the needs of today's learners and will ensure a more effective environment for learning and teaching. Children will have access to additional accommodation which will help ensure a learning experience that is relevant, meaningful and challenging for them.

The modernised accommodation will comply fully with equalities legislation and will be accessible to people with mobility difficulties and additional support needs. This will help support the Council's aim to develop a fully integrated education service which meets the needs of all learners. The external areas will also be developed to create flexible spaces which encourage learners to socialise and improve their health and wellbeing.

Through being in receipt of additional funding, Onthank PS has greatly reduced both exclusions and Health and Safety incidents. By creating integrated specialist provision, this would further improve staff morale and confidence and cement the truly inclusive ethos of the school. It is hoped that including specialism within an overall spectrum of inclusive educational supports, would ensure equality of opportunity for all within an inclusive educational experience.



The school's own self-evaluation demonstrates current positive impact on meeting the needs of learners with significant additional support needs. Leadership of this change across the school community, at all levels, would become further embedded. This clearly benefits learners at both universal, targeted and specialist levels.

The resource would allow children to access appropriate provision in their own local community and allow progression and access to mainstream classes and school in line with their skills and aptitudes.

With specific reference to the full community, East Ayrshire Council places a strong emphasis on school/community partnerships. The modernised facilities will provide a high quality learning environment which children and the community can enjoy. The facilities will also encourage continuous engagement with learning and provide an accessible range of services and opportunities which will enrich the local community and lives of learners and their families. The accessible nature of the new facilities means there are fewer limitations on who can use the facilities which makes them available to a wider range of community users.

In respect of future learners, the creation of the resource would allow children with a range of significant additional support needs to transition from their current Early Childhood provision into their catchment primary school and remain in their local community. This proposal will ensure that future learners have access to modern accommodation, facilities and resources which can best support their learning needs.

Should children in the Kilmarnock Education Group require the level of provision that Onthank can offer, the Onthank resource would replace Park School as their closest specialist provision. This would allow children to remain in their local education group in the North of Kilmarnock. Over time, this may require a similar resource to be considered in Kilmarnock Academy to allow children to continue to be supported in their local secondary school with specialist support.

A key facet of consideration has been the potential impacts on other young people in the council area. The resource would not have an adverse impact on children outwith the North Kilmarnock area as we already have a suite of appropriately located specialist and integrated specialist provisions across the council. It also may reduce the numbers of children requiring to access Crosshouse and Park schools, freeing up capacity in these provisions.

Our Inclusion Redesign activity seeks to allocate additional targeted resource to schools where there is an identified pattern of need. Where a child's needs within the Kilmarnock Education Group are greater than a mainstream school can currently offer, a place within Onthank SLC could be considered.

### **Expansion of Onthank Early Childhood Centre**

Whilst not subject to formal statutory consultation, Onthank Early Childhood Centre is currently undertaking a test of change to explore how enhanced provision can more effectively meet the needs of a group of children with a range of additional support needs. Findings from this will be used to inform planning for inclusive provision for this age group in Onthank ECC and across East Ayrshire Council.

The Scottish Government has announced its intention to provide funded early learning to all 1 and 2 year olds starting in the course of this Parliament with children from low-income households. This will require an increase in the number of places currently available for this age group. Onthank ECC will be reconfigured to provide additional places for children aged 0-2 but with no overall increase in the total number of children attending.

The benefits to young people and their families of undertaking the developments at Onthank PS and Onthank ECC are listed but not limited to:

- Enhanced learning environment for all young people.
- Many young people would be able to attend their local school/ ECC, rather than one outside of their community.
- Enhanced attainment due to more young people spending time in ECC, who may not have had opportunity to do so previously.
- More specialist support for families of children with additional support needs, on their doorstep and within easy reach.
- Young people to have more opportunity to mix with others from other backgrounds due to campus nature of combined proposals.

### **Willowbank School**

Willowbank School provides excellent resources for children and young people with severe and complex needs, some who may require interventions to support their individual complexities in medical and physical profiles. When the school was first opened it was anticipated that the roll would be capped at 50.

Due to increasing numbers of young people requiring the educational provision at Willowbank the current roll is 96 with 100 anticipated in August 2022. This has resulted in internal modifications to the building to create additional classes which has led to the removal of a number of additional learning spaces such as: music room, drama room, early years room, physiotherapy room, speech and language therapists room, medical room, 2 conservatories, parents' room, meeting room and the partners' room that allowed specialists to become part of the Willowbank team on campus. The personal care and toilet facilities that are essential for life skills and for the enhanced dignity of our young would be greatly improved as there would be less pressure on their use.

The school staff team work hard to ensure that the curriculum remains wide and accessible, however the pressures around space are resulting in children and young people spending most of the day within their core classroom and unable to benefit from accessing other areas of the school. This leaves them at a disadvantage to their mainstream peers as there is no accessible spaces to experience specialist subjects. As there is limited access and huge demand on the PE hall, this results in a reduction in physical interventions.

A new primary with specific resources for this purpose will allow pupils increased physical activity on both campuses such as PE, Rebound therapy and physiotherapy out with of the classroom spaces.

Many of the pupils experience sensory difficulties and allowing for the additional space would ensure that those young people who are dysregulated are able to access a quieter, less stimulating environment. The opening of a new primary facility would enable such spaces to again be available to pupils in the secondary department which would enhance their learning experiences and better prepare them for life after school. This would allow colleagues from a range of agencies to provide early intervention for transition planning to adult services and would allow enhanced community links.

The new purpose-built primary facility would also be designed to allow more access to additional learning spaces and would also facilitate better links with a mainstream primary school to support any particular pupils who may benefit from some of the facilities there. These strong links with a mainstream primary school would also benefit the other children on the Campus as the leadership teams could work collaboratively to provide some inclusive experiences to develop the understanding and empathy of mainstream pupils and provide rich learning experiences involving all pupils on the Campus.

There is pressure on ASN provision across the authority and the additional capacity created at Willowbank School (both primary and secondary) will also mean that children whose needs are assessed as requiring this specialist level of educational provision may be able to move there from other provisions thus freeing up capacity there, for example for a very small number of children who currently attend Park School.

Willowbank School staff will work with families and the staff team to ensure that the transition of children and staff from the existing building to the new provision is carefully planned and managed. This will involve sharing plans and photos as the development is being built and planned visits as the building becomes accessible. This process was done 10 years ago with the move to the new school and was extremely successful in preparing the young people for transition to a new building. They will also work with our School Transport service to ensure that plans are in place to transport the children to the new location. Almost all children who attend Willowbank School are currently provided with ASN Transport so this will be a straightforward change of destination and collection point still in the Kilmarnock area.

### **Early Years Transition Base at Willowbank School**

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision in East Ayrshire is wholly inclusive and is planned on the basis of a range of types of provision in each geographic area, i.e. full day, part day, full year, school year in Local Authority, independent sector and child-minding provision.

The number of children with additional support needs accessing ELC is growing as is the complexity of needs.

This proposals seeks to reflect the findings of 'Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential' which reports a strong view in favour of responsive child centred provision; *'This requires a system that has flexible and permeable edges. It must be rooted in the ethos of inclusion, rather than constraining and defining children*

*and young people by building locations and a hard edge separation between “mainstream” and “specialist” .’*

The provision for pre-school children with significant additional support needs in the ‘Early Years Transition Base’ in the new Willowbank Primary will help create such flexible and permeable edges and will provide the following benefits;

- It will help promote children’s health, development and learning by providing a place, resources and specialist staff that can be accessed for specific sessions, such as hydrotherapy or rebound therapy, augmenting the ELC provision accessed in the child’s local area. This will benefit children living across the Local Authority, almost all of whom will eventually transition to Willowbank for their Primary Education. It is envisaged that access to these services will be tailored to meet individual needs, so for some children, visits may start in their ante pre-school year.

*“Early or timely planning is required to ensure continuity and progression between stages or breaks in education as well as effective collaboration and liaison between schools” (Scottish Government, 2004).*

These specialist facilities will provide opportunities for children that are not currently available within our ELC establishments therefore allowing greater opportunities to more effectively meet these children’s needs.

- Visits will also form part of an enhanced transition process for children going on to attend Willowbank Primary thus providing opportunities for children and their families to become familiar with the school and staff. We know that parents and carers of children with complex additional support needs can feel isolated and anxious about their child starting school and providing a place and opportunities for support for families is an important element of the Transition Base.

*“Parents should be part of the planning process, and their views should be sought, and taken account of, and they should receive support, as required, during the transition process” (Scottish Government, 2004).*

Scottish Government (2020) advocates an *‘induction programmes include inputs from relevant health care specialists and others who can provide targeted and universal support for parents of children with additional support needs’*

- The Base will provide an ideal space for multiagency work, as encapsulated in the East Ayrshire Council ‘Helping Everyone at The Right Time’ (HEART) approach, to be effective and benefit children and families.

*‘For almost all children and young people, strong collaborative work across stages and schools will support good transition arrangements.’ (Scottish Government, 2004)*

The Base will allow greater opportunities for early learning and childcare staff to work more closely with primary and specialist professionals. This will promote the development of their knowledge and skill in meeting the needs of children with

complex additional support needs, helping to improve the quality of service and better meet their needs in future.

### **Early Childhood Centre expansion at Mount Carmel Primary School Site**

Once again recognising that this particular early years expansion is outside of statutory consultation, it is still of note to recognise some of the most basic educational benefits in this proposal.

Existing capacity for early learning and childcare within the North West Kilmarnock area will not be sufficient to meet the increased demand for places. This is due to several factors; the projected population increase, increased entitlement to 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare for greater numbers of children aged 0-3 and the extension of entitlement to an additional year of funded early learning and childcare to children who will not be 5 at the start of the school year from August 2023.

Onthank ECC is a large establishment with a capacity of 151 places in total and further expansion on that site would not be possible or advisable in terms of the ability to offer a high quality experience.

An additional Early Childhood Centre on the Mount Carmel site would provide additional capacity and help meet the increased requirement for eligible early learning and childcare places.

#### **Appendices:**

An exemplar response form for this consultation is shown as Appendix 1.

References aligned to this proposal are shown in Appendix 2.

**Linda McAulay-Griffiths**  
**Chief Education Officer and Head of Education**

## APPENDIX 1

An example of a proposal response form is available online at:

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/consultations>

That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise, proposals relate to:

- The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank campus.
- The establishment of an additional early years transition facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School.
- The formal incorporation of the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre.
- The establishment of an Early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School.

<b>MUST BE COMPLETED FOR A VALID RESPONSE</b>	
Name (Please Print)	Address
	Postcode
<b>CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESPONSE</b>	
I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to elected members and council officers of East Ayrshire Council <input type="checkbox"/>	

PLEASE CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE READ THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (FULL DOCUMENT) BY TICKING THIS BOX ☐

<b>YOUR INTEREST:</b> Please tick the most relevant box below					
<b>Willowbank School</b>	Parent Carer <input type="checkbox"/>	/	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Child <input type="checkbox"/>	Former Pupil <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Onthank PS/Onthank ECC</b>	Parent Carer <input type="checkbox"/>	/	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Child <input type="checkbox"/>	Former pupil <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mount Carmel PS</b>	Parent Carer <input type="checkbox"/>	/	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Child <input type="checkbox"/>	Former pupil <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other</b>	Parent Council Member <input type="checkbox"/>		Elected member MSP / MP <input type="checkbox"/>	Community Planning Partner <input type="checkbox"/>	Member of Community Council <input type="checkbox"/>
	Resident East Ayrshire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>			

**SUMMARY OF REPORT** – Please refer to the statutory consultation document for the full details of the proposal

Response:

## APPENDIX 2

### References

Scottish Government (2020) Realising The Ambition: Being Me. Scottish Government. Available: [realisingtheambition.pdf \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended 2009, Available: [Microsoft Word - asp 7 text.doc \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Scottish Government (2020) Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential. Scottish Government. Available: <https://webarchive.nrsotland.gov.uk/20210417223507/https://www.gov.scot/groups/additional-support-for-learning-review/>

Scottish Government (2019) Presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting: guidance. Scottish Government. Available: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-presumption-provide-education-mainstream-setting/documents/>

Scottish Government (2019) Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1. Scottish Government. Available:

[Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Scottish Government (2017) Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2. Scottish Government. Available:

[Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Children (Scotland) Act 2020, Available: [Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)