

### **NOTICE OF PROPOSAL (Summary Version)**

- 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.

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

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

## NOTICE OF PROPOSALS

This document is a summarised version of the Proposal Document which has been issued in relation to the options noted in Paragraph 6.

A full version of the Proposal Document can be found on the Council's website at:

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

## BACKGROUND

1. A crucial consideration in reaching the final proposals for this consultation has been around the clear need for additional capacity in ASN provision across the council. The recent paper on Education Service redesign signposts a clear direction of seeking to educate more of our young people in their own localities and near their own families and friends.
2. Clearly Willowbank Campus has already been highlighted in regards to lack of available space. In addition, there is no transitional ECC provision at this stage to support children who have significant and complex additional support needs. A current trial of enhanced ECC provision for young people with ASN is currently underway within Onthank Early Childhood Centre and has formed the basis of this part of the proposal.
3. In regards to the ongoing issues around space and capacity around Willowbank, we are continuing to see significant increases in young people requiring access to the excellent support and facilities that Willowbank School provides. However, in respect to equity of access and experience, the young people attending Willowbank currently attend an "all-through" educational experience and do not have the opportunity to participate in the transitions and activities around moving through ECC to primary to secondary school, experienced by their counterparts in mainstream education and some other specialist provisions.
4. Over the past two years Onthank PS has piloted an additional resource for young people who require significant additional support, guided by our Educational Psychologists, reflecting trauma informed practices and nurture principles. The positive outcomes of this pilot provision are likely to provide a template for introduction of further resources across the authority in line with the recent Education Service Redesign. Given the success of this setting, it is deemed appropriate, particularly in aligning with our plans for inclusion to formalise this additional resource into a Supported Learning Centre. This would ensure that these children and young people would be supported in a specialist provision in their own community with the benefit of access to inclusion in the mainstream school. It would also address the need we currently have for further specialist provision in the North of the authority for the growing number of children who require significant support to access education and ensure their right to an education which meets their additional support needs.
5. Given the ongoing expansion of Early Learning and Childcare, it is also pivotal that we use all available space, in surrounding buildings to provide the extra spaces and hours necessary to accommodate 1 and 2 year olds going forward. To this end, the extra accommodation available to us in Mount Carmel Primary School is now under formal consideration.

## PROPOSAL

6. 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.

## CONSULTATION PROCESS

7. An advertisement will be placed in the Kilmarnock 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.
8. The consultation will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to present their views on all four aspects of the proposal and also to consider the joint effects of the proposals when considered together in potentially forming a new learning campus.

## HOW CAN YOU RESPOND TO THIS CONSULTATION?

**Attending Remote Public Meetings:** 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>

9. The meetings will take the form of a virtual meeting (video conference) with Parent Council Chairs physically present with appropriate Senior Officers from the authority, and with parents/carers joining the virtual meeting remotely. Given the ongoing transmission of Covid-19 in our communities and the need to include as many people as possible in the public meetings it was considered that the safest and most inclusive option was to proceed with virtual meetings (video conference) with appropriate Senior Officers from the authority, and with parents/carers and other interested parties joining the virtual meeting remotely

Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting will be invited to do so, or can request attendance via the Headteacher of the relevant school/ ECC and will be provided with appropriate login details. The meeting will be convened by East Ayrshire Council and will be addressed by the Chief Education Officer and Head of Education.

10. 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.
11. The meetings will be an opportunity to:
- Hear more about the proposal;
  - Ask questions about the proposal; and
  - Have views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.
12. 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.

### **Electronic and written responses**

13. Interested parties are invited to respond to this proposal by making written or electronic submissions between: 25<sup>th</sup> April and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to:

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

14. 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>

### **Questionnaires and Focus Groups**

15. 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 Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young people (SCCYP), East Ayrshire Council will ask Common Ground Mediation, an independent organisation, to complete this piece of work.

16. 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.

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

17. 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, by prior arrangement, and the named schools, free of charge.
18. 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.

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

19. 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.

### **Decision**

20. 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.