East Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION SERVICE

Consultation Report on the Proposals:

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.

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- 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, subject to bid funding. However, it is noted that in relation to the proposal to formally incorporate the existing inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre, it does not require works to the extent of this timeline, and if approved, would likely be incorporated by August 2023 at the latest.

CONSULTATION PERIOD:

Monday 25 April 2022 and ended on Thursday 9 June 2022

IMPLICATIONS:

The above proposals have implications for the following schools and centres:

- Willowbank School
- Onthank Primary School and Onthank Early Childhood Centre (ECC)
- Mount Carmel Primary School

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this report is to:

- Set out a record of the total number of written representations made to the Council by any person during the period of the public consultation exercise in relation to each proposal;

- Set out a summary of those written representations;

- Set out a summary of the oral representations made to the Council at the virtual public meetings held on:

  - **Wednesday 11 May 2022** for Onthank Primary School and Onthank ECC
  - **Wednesday 18 May 2022** for Willowbank School
  - **Wednesday 25 May 2022** for Mount Carmel Primary School

- Set out a statement of the Council's response to:
  - Those written and oral representations; and
  - Education Scotland's reports.

- Provide a copy of Education Scotland's reports;

- Set out a statement explaining how the Council reviewed the relevant proposals in terms of section 9(1) of the Schools (consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, having had regard (in particular) to :-

  - The relevant written representations received by the Council during the public consultation period;
  - Oral representations made to it at the public meetings detailed above; and
  - Education Scotland's report

- Provide details of any alleged omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper (including a statement of the Council's opinion on it);

- Provide a statement of the action taken in respect of the omission or inaccuracy, or if no action has been taken of that fact why this is the case; and

- Provide an explanation that the proposal to discontinue the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School and to relocate it to the current Onthank Campus is a closure proposal, and that there is an opportunity for making representations to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15(4) of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

SECTION 2

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

2. East Ayrshire Council's Cabinet approved the recommendation to issue a Proposal Document (attached as appendix 1 of this report) on the following proposals:

   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.

3. As an overall implementation date, this is anticipated as no earlier than August 2027, subject to bid funding. However, it is noted that in relation to the proposal to formally incorporate the existing inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre, it does not require works to the extent of this timeline, and if approved, would likely be incorporated by August 2023 at the latest.

4. In accordance with statutory requirements, the following individuals and groups were consulted:

   Statutory Consultees
   - 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 the 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
   - Community Planning Partnership Board
   - South Ayrshire Council
   - North Ayrshire Council

   The following were also consulted:

   Non Statutory Consultees
   - 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)
- PEACE Childcare
- Depute Chief Executive
- Head of Facilities and Property Management
- East Ayrshire Council Executive Management Team

5. The Proposal Document was advertised in the press and on the East Ayrshire Council website, Facebook and Twitter pages advertising the start of the consultation period. A summary version of this document was issued free of charge to the consultees listed on the preceding page. The consultation period commenced on 25 April 2022 and ran until close of business on 9 June 2022, which included a period of 30 school days.

6. Copies were also made widely available locally and to local interest groups. Additional copies of the document were obtainable from the Education Service, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU; the schools and ECC affected by the proposal and through the Council Website at https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/consultations

7. The document was also available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English by: applying in writing to the Education Service, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU, by telephone on 01563-576000; or by e-mail: education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

8. It has always been the practice within East Ayrshire to consult directly with the young people and this good practice is now enshrined in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) 2010 Act, which includes the pupils as statutory consultees. The views of the children and young people were gathered through Pupil Councils, questionnaires and focus groups.

9. The Council considered relevant medical advice, government guidance and legislation and the health and safety of all prior to arranging Public Meetings. Having considered matters carefully, it was agreed that the most sensible way to proceed was via virtual meetings (video conferencing) with Parent Council Chairs, appropriate Senior Officers from the authority and parents/carers joining the virtual meetings remotely. The meetings were convened by East Ayrshire Council and addressed by the Chief Education Officer and Head of Education.

10. Public meetings were arranged and advertised in the local press, Council website, Facebook and Twitter pages. The meetings were held remotely from each of the affected schools. Additional Council Officers were present to either provide technical support or support the meeting. Dates of the virtual meetings were as follows:

    - **Wednesday 11 May 2022** for Onthank Primary School and Onthank ECC
    - **Wednesday 18 May 2022** for Willowbank School
    - **Wednesday 25 May 2022** for Mount Carmel Primary School

    The following number of individuals attended the meetings, representing parents, staff and others with an interest in the Proposals set out in the document:

    - Onthank: 15 Officers representing the Council and 27 interested parties including school/ECC staff and parents

- Willowbank: 18 Officers representing the Council and 17 interested parties including school staff and parents
- Mount Carmel: 13 Officers representing the Council and 10 interested parties including school staff and parents

11. The meetings offered an opportunity for discussion and clarification of the proposals as well as a forum for people to express their views on the consultation proposals. It included a presentation on the proposals and the consultative process. A written note of the meeting was kept, published on the Council's website and is included as part of the final consultative responses; and a copy made available on request. These notes were also forwarded to Education Scotland along with all other submissions and comments received by the Council during the consultation process. Notes of the meetings are shown at appendices 2, 3 and 4.

SECTION 3

TOTAL NUMBER OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED DURING THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE FOR EACH PROPOSAL

12. The Council received a total of 19 responses to the Consultation Proposals. The breakdown of which is detailed below:

- The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School, its relocation to the current Onthank Campus and establishment of an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School – 5 written responses received.

  In this section it is recognised that there were 2 proposals being consulted upon in relation to Willowbank School. Firstly this was in relation to the discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank Campus, and secondly, establishment of an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School. However, the responses received during the consultation process were intrinsically linked to both proposals and therefore the responses are summarised under the one heading throughout the report.

- Formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre – 6 written responses received.

- Establishment of an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School – 8 written responses received.

SECTION 4

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM EACH PROPOSAL

13. Of those 19 written responses received, the majority were in support of each proposal. The following provides a summary of concerns raised under each proposal. These have been framed using common topics where possible:

i) The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School, its relocation to the current Onthank Campus and establishment of an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School

- **School Capacity and Future Growth:** A few stakeholders sought reassurances that any new school building would have sufficient capacity for future growth in school roll.

- **Traffic and Safety Issues:** A few stakeholders sought assurances that there would be adequate parking for cars and buses for all attending and visiting the site.

- **Stakeholder Involvement and Participation:** A few stakeholders would welcome the opportunity to be involved from the inception in helping to plan, design and inform the future additional support needs and specialist provision.

- **Facilities:** A few stakeholders sought reassurances that the new facilities would meet the requirements of all children and young people with regards to indoor spaces and outdoor spaces, including green areas accessed by the local community.

- **Transition and Integration:** A few stakeholders queried how Willowbank, Onthank and Mount Carmel would be integrated and operated as one Campus.

- **Contingency Planning:** A few stakeholders questioned alternative arrangements should funding/investment on the proposals not be successful.

- **Staffing:** Some stakeholders requested reassurances that the right, skilled and experienced staff would continue to support the children and young people and that these staff would be sufficient in numbers.

It was also noted that a representative spokesperson on behalf of NHS Ayrshire and Arran, expressed their thanks for the opportunity to work in partnership to support the planning and development of the project should it proceed. They believe that continued engagement will be key in providing clinical and operational expertise throughout this process, most notably NHS Departments who currently provide support services to Willowbank School.

ii) Formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre

- **School Capacity and Future Growth:** A few expressed concern about capacity; the lack of space within classrooms and staffing, and ensuring children in the existing inclusion resource were not adversely affected.

- **Traffic and Safety Issues:** A few raised concerns about car parking and the increased traffic to the site, and highlighted the need to risk assess potential hazards. Some noted that parking is already inadequate. Suggestions were made to turn green areas into additional car parking making it safer for children, parents/carers and visitors.

- **Facilities:** A request was made for the Council to guarantee a long term commitment to the SLC facility by providing specialist staffing and adequate funding to ensure that it does not impact negatively on the mainstream provision on campus.

iii) Establishment of an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School

- **School Capacity and Future Growth:** A few stakeholders sought reassurances that there would be sufficient capacity for future growth in school roll.

- **Traffic and Safety Issues:** A few stakeholders sought reassurances that risk assessments would be reviewed prior to additional occupancy from ECC particularly in relation to safety to/from and between schools due to traffic.

- **Stakeholder Involvement and Participation:** A few stakeholders stated that they do not want the addition of the early childhood centre to be detrimental to the primary department and would welcome the opportunity to be involved from the inception in helping to plan, design and inform the future ECC provision and its use and the proposed retrofit of the whole school.

- **Facilities:** A few stakeholders queried whether there would be sufficient investment to develop indoor and outdoor areas to the same standard as Onthank's ELC.

- **Contingency Planning:** A few stakeholders sought further information about the project and in the wider context of the North West Kilmarnock plans, distribution of funding and alternative arrangements should funding/investment on the proposals not be successful.

- **Staffing:** Some stakeholders requested reassurances that the right, skilled and experienced staff would continue to support the children and young people and appropriate levels of management to cover all areas of the ELC and the Primary School.

SECTION 5

SUMMARY OF ORAL REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETINGS IN RELATION TO EACH PROPOSAL

14. Linda McAulay-Griffiths, Chief Education Officer and Head of Education opened the virtual public meetings and, along with colleagues from Early Years, Facilities and Property Development, Psychological Service and Schools, presented each proposal to those in attendance at the meetings. She explained that specific details around each proposal/project was not available but that plans on each proposal would form the next stage of the consultation. She explained that the purpose of the meetings was to ascertain the level of support and for participants to raise any issues/concerns or comments that they would wish addressed. A powerpoint presentation was utilised for the purposes of the meetings and was shared afterwards.

15. As referred to in paragraph 9 above, a full note of each meeting is shown at appendices 2, 3 and 4. A summary of issues raised and comments made at individual meetings are shown below, along with the responses given by the appropriate council officer:

- **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 – Meeting held on Wednesday 18 May 2022**

Question/Issue or Comment	Council Officer Response
Functionality is more important than design we don't want a leaking roof ie. water running into a gathering channel that still sits on the roof and can cause overflow causing PE hall to be out of commission costing unnecessary money and time in repairs that possibly not work. Waterproof storage space is very important for equipment inside and outside.	Discussion around design, functionality etc will be part of the wider separate non-statutory consultation at a later date.
If the bid was to be unsuccessful for the northwest campus plan, is there a plan to still build a new school for Willowbank as it's at double its intake now?	We are 100% focused on maximising the bid. Any further opportunities for investment through East Ayrshire Council or Scottish Government or elsewhere would be explored but priorities are the North West of Kilmarnock, Stewarton and additional support needs at present.
We do all already work our own jobs does this mean more staff to facilitate the connection between services/schools?	The main point to make is that the final details are yet to be worked out. It is not an additional support needs Early Childhood Centre, but children who would attend their own ECC and access specialist provision in Willowbank. It would be the intention that the child's key worker would accompany them, which would have funding implications. Care Inspectorate adult:child ratios must be adhered to.

Question/Issue or Comment	Council Officer Response
	This would also be echoed in the school environment regarding allocation of staff.
My child was previously at Park School and now at Willowbank. I would hope that lessons would be learned from that Campus. It would be more difficult at Willowbank as they have more severe/profound difficulties?	That is a very important question. The needs of all would be considered. It is not an amalgamation but a co-location proposal where access to mainstream would be available if appropriate to the needs and abilities of the individual young people. This will be looked at in more depth if we get to the next phase.

- **Formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre - Meeting held on Wednesday 11 May 2022**

Question/Issue or Comment	Council Officer Response
Will the building be made more accessible for all?	Yes, absolutely. This would be a key priority, e.g. Loanhead PS now has a lift. It is hoped that level access would be available in all areas of the building.
How would the impact of a refit impact running of the school?	If the bid is successful, physical work required would have a big impact. One positive would be that staffing etc would be formalised and the SLC would not be an 'add on'. Support is tailored to the child and not the school. There will be some impact but the changes can be minimised by staff.
How many children will the SLC be able to have and will children be coming from outside catchment?	This very much depends on the needs of young people. The SLC will predominantly be for children in Onthank but over time there may be a small number of children who would access the resource. The hope is that there would not be a big change in that respect.
Are we allowed to ask about the building of the new proposed Willowbank facility within the Onthank Campus and how would this affect the staff and pupils at Onthank when this happens? Or is that a discussion for another night?	Ultimately, when we get to the end of the consultation, we will have ascertained the level of support for all three proposals. We would then begin to see design briefs which will depend on the best interests of young people both in Willowbank and Onthank. Linda acknowledged that Onthank parents will be keen to see how the establishment of the primary element of Willowbank will impact Onthank.
Will children who attend other specialist establishments outwith our catchment be moved to the new learning centre?	We would not be expecting this to happen.

Question/Issue or Comment	Council Officer Response
Are the new building developments locally i.e. Northcraigs being taken into consideration when thinking of size of school buildings/placement numbers available in centre/playground areas etc.?	In terms of the design brief, work will be ongoing over the next 6 months re capacities, learning spaces etc. Through that process we will define what that design will be. All factors will be taken into account once we have an indication that the bid will be successful.
How can we get access to the Willowbank non statutory meetings?	Links to meetings will be made available. Once views have been gathered from the public and decisions taken in relation to the proposals subject to the current consultation, further consultations on matters including design will go back out for separate consultation. This is likely to take the form of smaller workshops with key groups initially. Statement from staff member - The Centre has had a massive positive impact on our school community because it has been so focused on the needs of each individual. Expansion and resourcing in relation to budget, concrete materials and staff would be well spent here in Onthank in my opinion. There has been a marked difference in wellbeing in the whole building throughout the journey.
Will the SLC be the same in terms of support provided for social, emotional and behavioural needs as The Centre? Will the SLC gain more space at all?	Dramatic changes are not anticipated but this is dependent on the needs of the children. It would be hoped that staffing will be relative to this.
If the bid is given the green light, how long does the process take? I was really wondering when everything would be finished and all young people are in their new learning spaces.	Looking at examples from previous funding and the model Scottish Government are looking at, they would look to complete the project within 5 years. This would depend on the development and the design.
How will this be staffed when staff are being cut as it is? Cuts via funding sorry.	The SLC would come under a different staffing ratio/formula to mainstream school. Not aware of any staff cuts. No statutory cuts as such but would have to go to consultation re use of Pupil Equity Funding.
Will Willowbank have specialist equipment provided at this new site like they currently have? If this is a campus idea would the facilities be available for selected pupils of Onthank that may benefit from, for example, a sensory room/ play space/swimming? This would be in line with experiences that our	This would be covered during the Willowbank consultation. Specialist equipment would absolutely be required. The aim is to provide educational provision within a primary environment as opposed to being combined with all age groups in Willowbank.

Question/Issue or Comment	Council Officer Response
families have had in our equally brilliant ECC!	The timeline for work in terms of the SLC would allow this to be undertaken before the major refurbishment.
If the retrofit for Onthank goes ahead, would children have to decant to another place in the meantime.	Absolutely. The extent of the works would require young people to be decanted.
Which area is earmarked for the Willowbank build?	I am unable to confirm this at present. This will be decided through the next stages of the process.
Will there be a bigger consultation, before this all moves on, covering Onthank, Mount Carmel and Willowbank, the roads, the site and the campus as a whole?	Yes, that will be part of the much wider non-statutory consultation. The school have done much of the work already in relation to the SLC consultation.

- **Establishment of an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School Meeting held on Wednesday 25 May 2022**

Question/Issue or Comment	Council Officer Response
Is it an all or nothing bid? Would parts be rejected or the whole bid?	It's hard to answer at this stage. The Council has committed funds to address North West Kilmarnock. The potential may be that Campus funding would not get funding. The Council would then look at the next phase of funding to approach in a different way. It wouldn't be the end of the road, but our focus is on winning this and we would not consider any other options until the results are known. All elements through this process are just trying to firm up community support etc. Priorities are around the investment in schools in North West Kilmarnock and we are looking to maximise available funding.
So there is already commitment from East Ayrshire Council but funding helps the process?	Yes
Everyone recognises the need for provision in North West Kilmarnock. In terms of capacity for Mount Carmel ECC, and new houses under development, how do you model that in terms of 700 new houses with 15% children? What happens if we hit that	There is a formula for estimating the numbers of children by year group which is used across Scotland for new builds which helps to determine capacity and needs across areas. Work done already shows that Scottish Government will begin with increasing entitlement to low income families. Data will be provided by Scottish Government. Experience

Question/Issue or Comment	Council Officer Response
capacity? Would the ECC be extended again? This was a popular question from parents.	shows that 25% of the 2 year old population is likely to be in a family that qualifies as low income. The formula that colleagues in infrastructure and planning use has been adapted by Education into its own formula.
Is this influencing the decision not to expand Onthank ECC?	The two main things are capacity around the school and build intentions for that site. It is more about the size of the establishment. We are learning more about implementation of bubbles during lockdown. Anecdotally, the bubble method of caring for children in groups of 8, or bigger, facilitates deeper relationships between children and staff. There may be more concrete evidence available in future. Aileen Hollywood noted that the formula used is not an exact science to any of this. The formula used by East Ayrshire Council is similar to that used across the country. It is used around the demographics of families who may move into new houses. What's happening is that families may be moving around but it will depend on location, e.g. Northcraigs is close to Glasgow. Aileen advised that her team is looking at the impact of Northcraigs on school rolls to look at future provision. Linda McAulay-Griffiths noted that this is like predicting levels of additional support needs; we are always trying to refine the model.
I'd like to clarify the report/proposal regarding 1 & 2 year olds. I am unsure of the timeframe but I know Scottish Government are looking to increase hours. From an ECC point of view, are we looking at accommodating 3 & 4 years olds also? This is a grey area in the proposal.	It is not just facility for younger age groups. Although the programme for government is specifically increasing the programme for 1 & 2 year olds, this is just the beginning. Dorothy noted that we are awaiting guidance or an indication in the very near future as to how the new entitlement will be resourced. We are able to estimate the date regarding low income families but unable to plan for the entire population. It is likely to be 0-5 years. The authority need to increase 3-5 year old provision as there are likely to be more deferred entries to primary school and an increase in the population. We will look at low level adaptations/considerations to Onthank ECC. We also need to look at the suitability of the building as younger children need different facilities to 5 year olds.

Question/Issue or Comment	Council Officer Response
Regarding the retrofit of the nursery, would it be considered an addition to Mount Carmel or would it have to be the current building at present?	There are two elements to consider going forward. There is a need to identify what we need to put into the buildings. We also need to look at space requirements. This will identify the need for expansion. Consideration will also be given to whether there are parts of the building we need to extend; accessibility and space planning. Retrofit modelling taking into account the size and shape of building improves energy efficiency. Adding sections to the building may add better shape and mass. We will also take into account where the sun is in relation to outdoor space. Outdoor space is a massive investment and may be better if south facing. Environmental considerations may shape the building. We are aware of future increases in roll so don't want to use up all space at present. We will look at where dining hall is, and where P1 & P2s are in relation to the Early Childhood Centre is important. We will look at everything in more depth over the next 6 months to a year. Linda reiterated that there is a possibility that there could be add-ons and extensions which is exciting. She encouraged colleagues or friends to share their comments and opinions.

SECTION 6

FEEDBACK FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON EACH PROPOSAL

16. The paragraphs below provide the feedback from the children and young people of the schools and centres affected by the proposals.

- **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**

  Children and young people from Willowbank School shared aspects of the school that are important to them. The pupils were provided with two consultation documents to allow them to have their voice heard in a relevant and meaningful manner. There were two versions - Flipchart for use on their ActivPanel and a PDF to print or chop up into a Talking Mat, eye gaze board, put into a QuickTalker or AAC device to suit pupil levels.

  Staff engaged by supporting the pupils to complete these where appropriate and took some photos of them engaging with them, especially if they are using eye gaze (manual or tech) or other AAC devices. Notes were made of what pupils said, signed or photos/symbols given to staff.

Staff tried to keep them as simple as possible, and to avoid upsetting the pupils and causing unnecessary anxiety, they did not mention the new campus. Instead, they tried to capture what is good or bade about our current school.

Below demonstrates the findings:

- In the garden
  All pupils liked hiding places and things to climb on
  Most pupils liked planting areas and seating
  Almost all pupils liked sensory trails

- In the school
  All pupils liked the PE hall and having space in areas
  Almost all pupils liked the cookery room
  Some pupils liked quiet places and breakout areas

- In my class
  All pupils liked using a range of technologies and having chill out zones when and if required
  Most pupils liked the kitchen area within classes
  Almost all liked having work areas
  Some pupils liked the library

Some pupils found it difficult to respond to a specific thing so were supported by giving choices but some pupils were very definite in the things they liked, as shown below:

- Pool, (2 pupils)
- friends, (2 pupils)
- lunch,(3 pupils)
- playground/garden,(11 pupils)
- Outings (2 pupils)
- PE (1 pupil)
- Science (1 pupil)
- Smart boards (2 pupils)
- Soft play/ sensory (9 pupils)
- Therapies including dog and rebound (6 pupils)

- **Formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre**

  At Onthank Primary, the children were consulted and asked their views through Pupil Council meetings, focus groups, and a questionnaire.

  The Council's proposal was shared with the pupil council who with support from their class teacher shared the information with the class they represented. The questionnaire was shared on an individual basis with pupils in the upper primary via a Microsoft form and class teachers completed a class response for the younger classes.

- Upper Primary response - 86 % of pupils who completed the questionnaire agreed that 'The Centre would formally become a Support for Learning Centre', 3% disagreed and 11% were unsure.
- Question 2 stated 'Onthank Primary should have a deep retro-fit' 47% of upper primary children agreed, 43% disagreed and 10% were unsure.
- Question 3 stated 'Willowbank Primary would move to the Onthank campus' 38% of pupils agreed, 25% of pupils disagreed and 37 % were unsure.
- The response for the younger classes was 75 % of pupils agreed that 'The Centre would formally become a Support for Learning' 7% disagreed and 18% are unsure.
- 74% agreed that Onthank Primary should have a deep retro-fit, 20% disagreed and 19% were unsure.
- 50% agreed that 'Willowbank Primary would move to the Onthank campus', 37% disagreed and 15% were unsure.

To conclude most children thought the Centre should formally become a Support for Learning Centre and the majority thought Onthank Primary should have a deep retro-fit. Half thought Willowbank Primary should move to the Onthank campus, 15% said they were unsure, with the remainder disagreeing.

- **Establishment of an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School**

The Pupil Council within Mount Carmel sought the views of all the children in the school in relation to the educational benefits of the proposal. These views were recorded and a summary was presented to Education Scotland. The children could explain that they thought it would be good to have an ECC within the school:

- It would help families as all of the children would be in one building
- Children would find starting in primary 1 easier as they would already know the building
- Other children in the school could have more responsibility as they could be buddies for the ECC children
- Friendships would be better as they would know each other longer
- Starting school would be easier as they would already know the adults
- Our school would be made better
- There would be more children in the school

SECTION 7

REPORT BY EDUCATION SCOTLAND ON EACH PROPOSAL

17. The reports from Education Scotland was prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of each individual report was to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East Ayrshire Council's proposals to:

- **Discontinue the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank Campus and establish an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School**

HM Inspectors agree that there is clear educational benefits in building an early years and primary campus for children attending Willowbank School. HM Inspectors agree that school roll capacity issues can be alleviated. An early years and primary campus has the potential to meet better the educational needs of all children and young people. In delivering an early years and primary campus there is an opportunity to reintroduce the range of indoor and outdoor education spaces that have been diminished since 2013. Where possible, the Council should ensure the proposed early years and primary campus meets potential future increases to the school roll of Willowbank School. HM Inspectors recommend that children and young people are active participants in the design of the proposed new campus. Careful consideration must be given to children and young people currently attending or likely to attend Willowbank School. Their access to high-quality learning and teaching opportunities should not be diminished while waiting for a new early years and primary campus to be opened. The Council should provide reassurance to children, young people, families and staff of how they plan to meet additional support needs during this interim period.

- **Formally incorporate the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre**
  HM Inspectors agree that there are clear educational benefits to this proposal. In particular, it has potential to allow children to access appropriate specialist provision closer to their own local community. The proposed learning centre would provide children with specialist facilities and access to mainstream classes. If the proposal is agreed and taken forward, there are plans to refurbish the classroom spaces that children will use for learning. This will result in future learners accessing updated and modern accommodation, facilities and resources that support their learning needs. The proposal builds on well-established nurturing approaches and inclusion of learners at Onthank Primary School. There is potential to share this expertise with other schools and settings to develop staff capacity across other establishments. If the proposal goes ahead, the council should ensure a high-quality transition programme based on the needs of children. The Council should also be very clear about the referral processes and criteria for support within the supported learning centre. It is important to ensure that the capacity of the centre is able to meet demands. This includes consideration of support for children who already access the existing inclusion resource

- **Establish an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School**
  Education Scotland reported that the council's proposal is of clear educational benefit. All children, parents and staff who met with HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. The Council's proposal, should it proceed, should see children benefit from strengthened transition between early years and primary. It will increase opportunities to strengthen learning and teaching across the early level. An improved school environment has the potential to support further the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence and improve outcomes for all learners. In taking the proposal forward, the Council would benefit from involving staff and parents in the final design and layout of the proposed retrofit.

18. Section 2 of the individual reports sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the reports sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposals, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section

4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposals, as set out above. The three individual reports from Education Scotland are shown at appendix 5.

SECTION 8

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIONS MADE DURING THE CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE REPORTS FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND)

19. During the consultation period there were a number of comments submitted, either orally at the public meetings or within the written submissions as set out above. The Council's response to these is set out in the following paragraphs and are set out alphabetically regarding each grouped topic covered.

20. East Ayrshire Council's response to specific issues under each proposal are shown below:

The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School, its relocation to the current Onthank Campus and establishment of an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School

- **School Capacity and Future Growth:** Given the unpredictability of numbers of young people requiring ASN support in the future, reassurance can be offered that the new building will clearly alleviate and resolve current capacity issues and allow for growth in both primary and secondary sectors of Willowbank School. This will be continually monitored using concrete forecasts.

- **Traffic and Safety Issues:** If the financial bid is approved and taken forward, it is always incumbent upon us to have adequate parking that reflects the complement required by the school and also provide same for visitors and school transport.

- **Stakeholder Involvement and Participation:** As has been the case in all new school/renovation projects, it is absolutely the case that a wide range of stakeholders' views and opinions will be sought in designing provisions in all areas.

- **Facilities:** The views and needs of stakeholders will be taken into account, within the geographical and financial parameters of the project.

- **Transition and Integration:** The geographical location of all three establishments will lend themselves to joint working. All will have separate entrances and facilities as is the case now, but there will be opportunities for joint working across the establishments due to their proximity and in line with the aim of providing all young people an inclusive and engaging educational experience.

- **Contingency Planning:** Regarding alternative arrangements should funding/investment on the proposals not be successful. This cannot be

covered in the report response, given that there are several alternatives that would require to be considered at the highest level. Should this bid not be successful, a new paper will be required to be presented to Elected Members and stakeholders for further consideration of these proposals.

- **Staffing:** Staffing is set according to staff:pupil ratios across the council and these will be adhered to in any establishment in the council in accordance with the needs of the young people and the ratio guidance available nationally.

Formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre

- **School Capacity and Future Growth:** The designs specifically relating to Onthank SLC would be fully consulted on and discussed with staff, pupils and parents. There is no anticipation of detriment to any young person, however it is recognised that the building works themselves will require to be effectively managed and discussed before implementation, and will likely result in some disruption or possible decant. However, assurances can be given that any disruption or possible decant will be minimised as far as possible so as not to adversely impact on children attending the campus.

- **Traffic and Safety Issues:** If the financial bid is approved and taken forward, it is always incumbent upon us to have adequate parking that reflects the complement required by the school and also provide same for visitors and school transport.

- **Facilities:** Staffing of the SLC will be addressed in a manner aligned to the needs of the young people therein regarding skillset of staff, funding and staff:pupil ratios.

Establishment of an Early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary Schools

- **School Capacity and Future Growth:** The School roll will be continually monitored as will numbers in the proposed ECC.

- **Traffic and Safety Issues:** If the financial bid is approved and taken forward, it is always incumbent upon us to have adequate parking that reflects the complement required by the school and also provide the same for visitors and school transport.

- **Stakeholder Involvement and Participation:** As has been the case in all new school/renovation projects, it is absolutely the case that a wide range of stakeholders' views and opinions will be sought in designing provisions in all areas.

- **Facilities:** At this stage, this is difficult to address, it would be important during the further non statutory consultation and design phase that

stakeholders get involved with inputting these suggestions as to what the developments might look like both internally and externally.

- **Contingency Planning:** Regarding alternative arrangements should funding/investment on the proposals not be successful. This cannot be covered in the report response, given that there are several alternatives that would require to be considered at the highest level. Should this bid not be successful, a new paper will be required to be presented to Elected Members and stakeholders for further consideration of this proposal.

- **Staffing:** Staffing is set according to staff:pupil ratios across the council and these will be adhered to in any establishment in the council in accordance with the needs of the young people and the ratio guidance available nationally.

21. The Education Scotland Reports were overall very positive about the educational benefits of each proposal. East Ayrshire Council's response to the Education Scotland Reports and the specific issues under each proposal are shown below:

- **The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School, its relocation to the current Onthank Campus and establishment of an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School.**

  In summary the Education Scotland Reports acknowledged that almost all stakeholders were in favour of the proposal. However, a few raised concerns about the increased traffic to the site, and highlighted the need to risk assess potential hazards and a few expressed concern about staffing, and ensuring children in the existing inclusion resource were not adversely affected.

  The Council's response, in regards to traffic management, and if the bid is successful, is that it would be project-incumbent that the safe ingress, movement and egress of traffic would be a clear priority. In respect of staffing, all areas of education must comply with the staffing standard and no young person could suffer detriment as a result of these proposals.

- **Formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre.**

  In summary the Education Scotland Reports acknowledged that almost all responses received during the consultation were strongly in support of the proposal. A few stakeholders sought reassurances that any new school building would have sufficient capacity for future growth in school roll.
  The Council's response is that whilst we will never be in position to forecast ASN school rolls with complete accuracy, the proposal seeks to both address current capacity concerns and also to offer the young people an experience on a collective campus.

- **Establishment of an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary Schools.**

  In summary the Education Scotland Reports acknowledge that those who responded regard the proposal as a positive investment in Mount Carmel Primary

School and of benefit to children and families. They raised several points for consideration should the proposal be successful. In particular, they do not want the addition of the early childhood centre to be detrimental to the primary department. They seek further information about the distribution of grant funding, the rationale behind the proposed retrofit and the design process.

The Council's response is that the space likely to be used in regards to ELC expansion has not been in use by the primary school for several years, it is absolutely not intended to remove space from the school to allocate to a new ECC.

22. An analysis of the responses received has been included in this consultation report for the proposals. Similarly, comments made by young people who were consulted, have been published for transparency and scrutiny by interested parties. Council officers acknowledge that concerns have been raised with the Council by stakeholders, covering a range of issues.

23. It is the view of officers that, having concluded the consultation process, the concerns raised with us by stakeholders has been acknowledged and addressed. There has been an acknowledgement of the Council's vision and the education benefits this will bring.

24. The education benefits of those proposals is not in doubt and has been welcomed. The concerns raised tended to be community based and officers have taken every opportunity to reassure stakeholders that a priority for the Council is to continue consultation into the future on those issues.

SECTION 9

COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

25. Education Scotland's reports were received on 8th July 2022. Section 9 (1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, requires the Council to review the relevant proposals having had regard (in particular) to the written representations that have been received during the consultation period; oral representations made at the virtual public meetings held on 11th, 18th and 25th May 2022, and Education Scotland's reports. In terms of Section 10 (2) (e) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Consultation Report requires to contain a statement explaining how the Council complied with its duty under the above Section 9 (1) of the Act.

26. Council Officers reviewed the proposals having had regard to the written representation received by the Council during the public consultation period; the oral representations made at the virtual public meetings, and Education Scotland's reports, all of which are summarised in paragraphs 19-24 above.

27. Having carried out the review mentioned above, Council Officers concluded that the recommendation to Cabinet should be to progress with the proposals, as follows:

- The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School, its relocation to the current Onthank Campus and establishment of an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School.
- Formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre.
- Establishment of an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary Schools.

28. As an overall implementation date, this is anticipated as no earlier than August 2027, subject to bid funding. However, it is noted that in relation to the proposal to formally incorporate the existing inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre, it does not require works to the extent of this timeline, and if approved, would likely be incorporated by August 2023 at the latest.

SECTION 10

ALLEGED OMISSIONS OF RELEVANT INFORMATION AND ALLEGED INACCURACIES CONTAINED WTHIN THE PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

29. No responses asserting allegations of omissions or inaccuracies within the Proposal Document were received during the consultation period.

SECTION 11

CONCLUSION

30. Having carefully reviewed the proposals and having had regard to:

    (i) Relevant written representations received by the Council from any person or groups during the consultation period;
    (ii) Oral representations made to the Council by any individual at the virtual public meetings;
    (iii) and the contents of the Education Scotland Reports

31. In summary, officers are satisfied that:
    - There is no material omission or flaw in the proposals or the final Proposal Document;
    - Education Scotland did not identify any procedural flaws in the consultation process;
    - The educational benefits that will arise are clear and recognised by Education Scotland;
    - Implementation of the proposal will address objectives set in the Council's Transformation Strategy and School Estate Management Plan, and
    - There are no significant counter argument was developed against the proposals.

32. It is therefore concluded that the decision to proceed with the consultation on the proposals remain valid, as follows:

- The discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School, its relocation to the current Onthank Campus.
- The establishment of an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School.
- Formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre.
- The Establishment of an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary Schools.

33. As an overall implementation date, this is anticipated as no earlier than August 2027, subject to bid funding. However, it is noted that in relation to the proposal to formally incorporate the existing inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre, it does not require works to the extent of this timeline, and if approved, would likely be incorporated by August 2023 at the latest.

SECTION 12

PROCEDURES FOR MINISTERIAL CALL-IN

34. 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 discontinue the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank Campus involves the closure of the primary school stage at the current Willowbank School so that it can be relocated to the Onthank Campus.

35. Accordingly, in the event that the proposal is approved, the Council will be required in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to notify the Scottish Ministers within six working days starting with the date the decision is made. At the same time as the Scottish Ministers being notified, the Council will require to publish this fact on its' website together with confirmation that there is an opportunity for representations to be made to Ministers within the first 3 weeks of the 8 week period mentioned below. Once notified, Ministers will be involved in the following ways:

    - Ministers have the power to call in a closure decision, but only where it appears to them that the Council has failed in a significant regard to comply with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended, or failed to take proper account of a material consideration. Ministers have up to eight weeks to decide whether or not to issue a call-in notice.
    - During the first three weeks of this period, anyone is able to make representations to Ministers on whether the decision should be called-in. Ministers may reach a decision earlier than the eight weeks but this must not be within the first three weeks.
    - During the call-in period the Council cannot proceed with the proposed closure.
    - Education Scotland must provide such advice as to the educational aspects of the closure proposal as the Ministers may reasonably require of Education Scotland for the purpose of considering whether to issue a call-in notice.

36. Proposals for the formal incorporation of the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Support Learning Centre, the establishment of an additional Early Years Transition Facility within the relocated Willowbank Primary School, and the establishment of an early Childhood Centre at Mount Carmel Primary School are not school closures and as such do not require to follow, or comply with, the call-in procedures to Scottish Ministers.

SECTION 13

THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

37. The foregoing subsections of sections 3-8 of this report detail the Council's considerations of all issues as originally defined in the Proposal Document and importantly, all of those, both educational and non-educational, raised through the detailed consultation responses and public meetings. The Council allocated time (to include a minimum of 30 school days) from Monday 25 April 2022 to Thursday 9 June 2022 as a consultation period for responses in recognition of the significance of those proposals. All issues raised have been addressed in this report. Cabinet will therefore have before it in this paper, full and detailed consideration of the proposals by officers.

SECTION 14

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM ROLE IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

38. The proposals have been discussed regularly at the highest level of Officer Management of the Council. This included reviews of the Proposal Document prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 20 April 2022, and consideration of the Consultation Report prior to its publication on 26 August 2022. The outcome of this involvement, in part, is a set of recommendations by the Chief Education Officer and Head of Education, and Head of Facilities and Property Management and endorsed by the Council Executive Management Team.

SECTION 15

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

39. The Consultation Report will be presented at Cabinet for discussion and determination on 21 September 2022.

40. 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 discontinue the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank Campus involves the closure of the primary school stage at the current Willowbank School so that it can be relocated to the Onthank Campus.

41. Accordingly, in the event that the proposal is approved, the Council will be required in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to notify the Scottish Ministers

within six working days starting with the date the decision was made. At the same time as the Scottish Ministers being notified, the Council will require to publish this fact on its' website together with confirmation that there is an opportunity for representations to be made to Ministers within the first 3 weeks of the 8 week period mentioned below. Once notified, Ministers will be involved in the following ways:

- Ministers have the power to call in a closure decision, but only where it appears to them that the Council has failed in a significant regard to comply with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended or failed to take proper account of a material consideration. Ministers have up to eight weeks to decide whether or not to issue a call-in notice.
- During the first three weeks of this period, anyone is able to make representations to Ministers on whether the decision should be called-in. Ministers may reach a decision earlier than the eight weeks but this must not be within the first three weeks.
- During the call-in period the Council cannot proceed with the proposed closure.
- Education Scotland must provide such advice as to the educational aspects of the closure proposal as the Ministers may reasonably require of Education Scotland for the purpose of considering whether to issue a call-in notice.

42. However, in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the decision of the Cabinet may be called-in by the Governance and Scrutiny Committee. Notwithstanding this, the Cabinet may instruct that a decision is implemented ahead of any consideration by the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency given the scheduled Governance and Scrutiny Committee, following the above Cabinet, is on 29 September 2022 (more than 6 working days after the date of the Cabinet). Accordingly, the Cabinet will be asked to implement the decision in advance of any potential call-in to protect the Council's position given the above statutory time limit. However, for the avoidance of doubt, this will not prevent the proposals being called-in to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee, and in the event that they were called-in, the merits of the proposals could still be considered.

43. As an overall implementation date, it is anticipated to be no earlier than August 2027, subject to Scottish Government bid funding, and conclusion of the above statutory processes. However, it is noted that in relation to the proposal to formally incorporate the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre, it does not require works to the extent of this timeline, and if approved, would likely be incorporated by August 2023 at the latest.

44. In the event that the proposals are agreed at Cabinet, and subject to successful funding big to the Scottish Government as part of the Learning Estate Investment Programme Phase 3, the intention would be to appoint a Project Manager to take forward the agreed recommendation. This will involve a scoping exercise and he/she will liaise with all stakeholders and internal/external consultants to establish an initial programme of works.

45. A Project Board will be established and will be the conduit for any decision-making processes. The Project Board will be attended by key stakeholders including, for example, the Head Teacher or Teachers, Project Manager, Service Manager: Architecture & Asset Planning and the Project Planning & Resource Manager.

46. Further, notification of the consultation outcome will also be issued to those families directly affected by the proposal and information will be communicated via the relevant schools, on the Council's consultation website and through social media.

SECTION 16

RISK MANAGEMENT

47. Financial implications are not known at this time. If the consultation is successful a potential bid would be made to the Scottish Government Futures Trust in regard to the national Learning Estate Investment Programme.

48. In addition to the statutory consultation process covered in his report, there will also be further consultation of a non-statutory nature in relation to matters including the design of the development proposed should this be approved.

49. It should be noted that there is an inherent risk in that funding may not be granted for the project by the Scottish Government, in which case, we would return to Cabinet with an alternative proposal.

50. By implementing the proposals, a Project Team will ensure the quality of educational experience for the young people attending, or due to attend, the affected educational establishments is maintained or improved.

51. The Project Team will also ensure that objectives associated with each proposal are monitored and costs are managed.

SECTION 17

POLICY/COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

52. The Community Plan has a commitment to empower communities across East Ayrshire providing opportunities for meaningful, sustained and effective engagement. This has been evidenced by the number of responses received, and the number of attendees at the virtual public meetings. Further, it should be noted that Community Planning Partners were part of the statutory consultee group for the Council regarding this proposal. If the proposals are implemented, it will assist the Council in delivering the three strands of the Community Plan:

- Wellbeing
- Safer Communities
- Economy and Skills

SECTION 18

LEGAL ISSUES

53. The Consultation exercise was conducted in full compliance of the 2010 Act in relation to the proposals that relate to (1) the discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank Campus; and (2) the existing Inclusion Resource at Onthank Campus being formally incorporated as a Supported Learning Centre.

54. Whilst the other two proposals relate to either the establishment of nursery classes or schools as defined by the 2010 Act, they do not require to form part of the formal statutory consultation process. Notwithstanding this, Cabinet agreed on 20 April 2022 that they would also follow that consultation process, and this has been complied with.

55. Therefore, in the event that Cabinet is minded to agree the recommendations contained within paragraph 61 below, the Council would be making a decision on the proposals in so far as they are required by Section 11 (1) of the said 2010 Act on that date.

56. As one of the proposals involve the discontinuation of the Willowbank Primary School provision within the existing Willowbank School and its relocation to the current Onthank Campus, the Council will require to notify the Scottish Ministers of its decision within a period of 6 working days starting with the day in which the decision is made, in the event that the proposal is approved, in terms of Section 15(2) of the said 2010 Act.

57. However, in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the decision of the Cabinet may be called-in by the Governance and Scrutiny Committee. Notwithstanding this, the Cabinet may instruct that a decision is implemented ahead of any consideration by the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency given the scheduled Governance and Scrutiny Committee, following the above Cabinet, is on 29 September 2022 (more than 6 working days after the date of the Cabinet). Accordingly, the Cabinet will be asked to implement the decision in advance of any potential call-in to protect the Council's position given the above statutory time limit. However, for the avoidance of doubt, this will not prevent the proposals being called-in to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee, and in the event that they were called-in, the merits of the proposals could still be considered.

58. Further, as provided for in section 1 of the 1980 Act, it is the duty of the Council to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education within East Ayrshire. Such education to be directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of children or young persons to their fullest potential (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 section 2).

59. Section 47 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 also places a statutory duty on education authorities to ensure that the funded early learning and childcare entitlement is made available for eligible children who reside in their local area.

60. That said, as with all Council duties, the Council has a duty to make arrangements to secure best value and in securing best value the Council is required to maintain an appropriate balance between, inter alia, the quality of its performance of its functions and the cost to the authority of that performance (Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 section 1). In coming to any decision, members should balance the foregoing duties.

SECTION 19

RECOMMENDATIONS

61. It is recommended that Cabinet:

(i) agree that the existing primary school provision at Willowbank School be discontinued and relocated to the current Onthank Campus with effect from the beginning of the 2027/28 academic session in August 2027, or as soon as possible thereafter;

(ii) agree that an additional early years transition facility be established within the relocated Willowbank Primary School with effect from the beginning of the 2027/28 academic session in August 2027, or as soon as possible thereafter;

(iii) agree that the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus be formally incorporated as a Supported Learning Centre with effect from the beginning of the 2023/24 academic session in August 2023, or such earlier date as may be agreed;

(iv) agree that an Early Childhood Centre is established at Mount Carmel Primary School with effect from the beginning of the 2027/28 academic session in August 2027, or as soon as possible thereafter;

(v) agree that the decision of Cabinet be implemented in advance of any call-in of the proposals to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency in relation to recommendation (i) above in order to comply with the statutory timescale set out in paragraph 56;

(vi) agree to remit to the Chief Education Officer and Head of Education to refer the discontinuation and relocation of Willowbank Primary School to Scottish Ministers, in terms of Section 15(2) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and to take such further action as may be necessary in conjunction with the Chief Governance Officer to protect the interests of the Council;

(vii) agree that consideration be given to submitting a formal bid for funding to the Scottish Government in regard to the national Learning Estate Investment Programme Phase 3; subject to confirmation that LEIP Phase 3 key selection criteria, funding outcomes and grant terms and conditions can be met. This will be presented to a future Committee;

(viii) agree that consultation with relevant interested parties will continue during the design, construction and delivery phases to ensure that concerns raised are considered and responded to appropriately; and

(ix) Otherwise, note the contents of this report.

Linda McAulay-Griffiths
Chief Education Officer and Head of Education
August 2022

LIST OF ATTACHED PAPERS

The Proposal Document
Notes from virtual meetings (11th, 18th and 25th May 2022)
Education Scotland Response to each of the proposals

Appendix 1

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION

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

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 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.

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 Council Chambers, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock. 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 Chief Education Officer and 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:

Willowbank School	**18th May 2022 5.30-7pm**
Onthank PS and Onthank ECC	**11th May 2022 5.30-7pm**
Mount Carmel PS	**25th May 2022 5.30-7pm**

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

   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), Head Teachers of each of the affected schools will consult with their children and young people.

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 the Head Teachers and staff of each of the affected schools, 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.

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 Reports, 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 Reports. A copy of the Education Scotland Reports 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 Reports 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 21st 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.

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 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 is 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.

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MUST BE COMPLETED FOR A VALID RESPONSE		
Name (Please Print)	Address	
		Postcode
CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESPONSE		
I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to elected members and council officers of East Ayrshire Council ☐		

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

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

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.nrscotland.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)

Appendix 2

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EDUCATION SERVICE

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING – WEDNESDAY 11 MAY 2022

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

Present:
Linda McAulay-Griffiths, Chief Education Officer and Head of Education
David Mitchell, Chief Governance Officer
Andrew Kennedy, Head of Facilities and Property Management
Gary Johnstone, HMIe
Caroline Craig, Interim Business Assistant: Education
Nicola Stewart, Principal Educational Psychologist
Ruth Miller, Depute Principal Educational Psychologist
Julie Hope, Interim Strategic Leadership Manager: Education
Julie McCulloch, Education Manager: Inclusion Hubs
Aileen Hollywood, Programme Manager – Architecture & Asset Planning
Simon Bell, Strategic Lead: Asset Investment
Alistair Kidd, Project Planning & Resource Manager
Ian Aston, ICT Security Manager
Alison Wright, Head Teacher, Onthank Primary School
Maggie McKechnie, Service Support Assistant (Note)
27 interested parties including school/ECC staff and parents

Linda McAulay-Griffiths welcomed all to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. Linda thanked everyone for attending.

Linda assured everyone that the aim of the consultation was to provide the best educational provision at Onthank Primary School.

A powerpoint presentation was utilised for the purposes of the meeting and will be shared afterwards. Linda invited colleagues to speak to this.

<u>Andrew Kennedy, Head of Facilities and Property Management</u>

- Provided background information regarding the Scottish Government bidding system and funding. He hoped this would give an indication of timelines for the proposed plans to upgrade and redesign the Campus.
- The main focus of the meeting is the statutory consultation in relation to the establishment of a Supported Learning Centre at Onthank.
- The Council has invested around £250m in the school estate over the last 10 years. The Learning Estate Investment Programme is an alternative source of funding which involves a bidding process.
- Doon Academy and St Sophia's Primary School were successful bids in Phase 2.
- Phase 3 will be slightly different in approach to Phase 2 to include e.g. climate change considerations, energy use and place-based services for the community.

- Recycling materials and facilities already available seen as key to strengthen bid and therefore maximise funding.
- Bids to be submitted by September and results should be made available by the end of the year.
- Schools in North West Kilmarnock have been identified as a priority for upgrade/extension.
- Exploring place-based approaches is seen as key to success of the bid for North West Kilmarnock.
- Following statutory meetings, more in-depth engagement with school and community will start to take place on the design brief.

Linda clarified that the bid relates to Onthank Primary School as a whole as well as the inclusion of the SLC, but the SLC proposal is not dependent on the bid.

Ruth Miller, Depute Principal Educational Psychologist

- Discussed the definition of a Supported Learning Centre (SLC).
- School staff believe that Onthank would benefit from this resource.
- SLCs have been in place in the south of the authority for a number of years and have been very successful.
- SLCs allow flexibility of support and are child centred.
- Location in Onthank PS has been driven by data gathered and assessment.
- Having a smaller, specialist environment within a school can allow children with additional support needs to access education in their own community.

Alison Wright, Head Teacher, Onthank Primary School

- Staff have been on a journey to set up an SLC within the school.
- Teachers and parents felt there was a need to address the needs of children who were not coping in mainstream.
- The aim was to have a resource that was at the heart of the school and 'The Centre' was formed.
- Looking to have the benefits of what is in place at present but hoping to formalise and improve the provision available through specific funding.

Linda noted that young people's lives have been transformed through access to 'The Centre' and wished to acknowledge the exceptional work involved in this.

Linda invited commentary on any thoughts or comments attendees wished to make.

Linda advised that the presentation will be sent to the Head Teacher to be shared.

Questions/Comments

Question 1: Will the building be made more accessible for all?
Andrew Kennedy – Yes, absolutely. This would be a key priority, e.g. Loanhead PS now has a lift. It is hoped that level access would be available in all areas of the building.

Question 2: – How would impact of refit impact running of the school?
Linda McAulay-Griffiths - Because the school has been on the journey Alison spoke of, impact should be minimised. If the bid is successful, physical work required would have a big impact.

Alison Wright – One positive would be that staffing etc would be formalised and the SLC would not be an 'add on'. Support is tailored to the child and not the school. There will be some impact but she is sure the changes can be minimised by staff.

Statement from Onthank staff member: – Has a child in the class he has who has had partial access, and the support from The Centre has been invaluable in keeping him motivated and he has thrived academically. He is able to access support when needed.

Question 3: – How many children will the SLC be able to have and will children be coming from outside catchment?
Linda McAulay-Griffiths – This very much depends on the needs of young people. A rough figure has been discussed however.
Ruth Miller – The SLC will predominantly be for children in Onthank but over time there may be a small number of children who would access the resource. The hope is that there would not be a big change in that respect.

Question 4: – Are we allowed to ask about the building of the new proposed Willowbank facility within the Onthank Campus and how would this affect the staff and pupils at Onthank when this happens? Or is that a discussion for another night?
Linda McAulay-Griffiths – Ultimately, when we get to the end of the consultation, we will have ascertained the level of support for all three proposals. We would then begin to see design briefs which will depend on the best interests of young people both in Willowbank and Onthank.

Linda acknowledged that Onthank parents will be keen to see how the establishment of the primary element of Willowbank will impact Onthank.

Question 5: – Will children who attend other specialist establishments outwith our catchment be moved to the new learning centre?
Linda McAulay-Griffiths – We would not be expecting for this to happen.

Question 6: - Are the new building developments locally i.e. Northcraigs being taken into consideration when thinking of size of school buildings/placement numbers available in centre/playground areas etc.?
Andrew Kennedy – In terms of the design brief, work will be ongoing over the next 6 months re capacities, learning spaces etc. Through that process we will define what that design will be. All factors will be taken into account once we have an indication that the bid will be successful.

Question 7 - How can we get access to the Willowbank non statutory meetings?
Linda McAulay-Griffiths - Links to meetings will be made available.
Alistair – Once views have been gathered from the public, we will go back out to consultation. This is likely to take the form of smaller workshops with key groups initially.

Statement from staff member - The Centre has had a massive positive impact on our school community because it has been so focused on the needs of each individual. Expansion and resourcing in relation to budget, concrete materials and staff would be well spent here in Onthank in my opinion. There has been a marked difference in wellbeing in the whole building throughout the journey.

Question 8 - Will the SLC be the same in terms of support provided for social, emotional and behavioural needs as The Centre? Will the SLC gain more space at all?

Julie McCulloch – I don't there will be dramatic changes but this is dependent on the needs of the children. It would be hoped that staffing will be relative to this.

Question 9 - If the bid is given the green light, how long does the process take? I was really wondering when everything would be finished and all young people are in their new learning spaces. Thanks.
Andrew Kennedy – Looking at examples from previous funding and the model Scottish Government are looking at, they would look to complete the project within 5 years. This would depend on the development and the design.

Question 10 - How will this be staffed when staff are being cut as it is? Cuts via funding sorry.
Linda McAulay-Griffiths – The SLC would come under a different staffing ratio/formula to mainstream school. Not aware of any staff cuts.
Alison Wright - No statutory cuts as such but have to go to consultation re use of Pupil Equity Funding.

Question 11 - Will Willowbank have specialist equipment provided at this new site like they currently have? If this is a campus idea would the facilities be available for selected pupils of Onthank that may benefit from, for example, a sensory room/ play space/swimming? This would be in line with experiences that our families have had in our equally brilliant ECC!
Linda McAulay-Griffiths – This would be covered during the Willowbank consultation. Specialist equipment would absolutely be required. The aim is to provide educational provision within a primary environment as opposed to being combined with all age groups in Willowbank.
Andrew Kennedy – The timeline for work in terms of the SLC would allow this to be undertaken before the major refurbishment.

Question 12 - If the retrofit for Onthank goes ahead, would children have to decant to another place in the meantime.
Linda McAulay-Griffiths – Absolutely. The extent of the works would require young people to be decanted.

Question 13 - Which area is earmarked for the Willowbank build?
Linda McAulay-Griffiths – I am unable to confirm this at present. This will be decided through the next stages of the process.

Question 14 - Will Onthank benefit from extra playground space?
Linda – There will be a lot to consider and this will be included.

Linda McAulay-Griffiths – Next steps will be of crucial importance. The report following consultation will be considered at Cabinet and will be provided to Parent Council. Education Scotland will also provide a view on the report. Non-statutory consultation forms a massive part of the bid. Feedback will be provided by Scottish Government around December to advise on the status of the bid. Consultation officially closes on 9th June so please contact central staff or Alison Wright with anything further.

Question 15 - Will there be a bigger consultation, before this all moves on, covering Onthank, Mount Carmel and Willowbank, the roads, the site and the campus as a whole?
Aileen Hollywood - Yes, that will be part of the much wider non-statutory consultation.

Linda McAulay-Griffiths – The school have done much of the work already in relation to the SLC consultation.

Statement - Thank you, very exciting prospect ahead of getting things right for ALL our children and young people.
Linda McAulay-Griffiths – Thank you.

Linda wished to thank everyone present for their support in taking this proposal forward.

Appendix 3

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EDUCATION SERVICE

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING – WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2022

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

Present:
Linda McAulay-Griffiths, Chief Education Officer and Head of Education
David Mitchell, Chief Governance Officer
Andrew Kennedy, Head of Facilities and Property Management
David McKellar, HMIe, Education Scotland
Liz Angus, HMIe, Education Scotland
Caroline Craig, Interim Business Assistant: Education
Nicola Stewart, Principal Educational Psychologist
Julie Hope, Interim Strategic Leadership Manager: Education
Ian Burgoyne, Strategic Education Manager
Aileen Hollywood, Programme Manager – Architecture & Asset Planning
Simon Bell, Strategic Lead: Asset Investment
Alistair Kidd, Project Planning & Resource Manager
Ian Aston, ICT Security Manager
Catherine Rodger, Acting Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion
Gwyneth Quinn, Service Manager: Early Years Development
Dorothy McAvoy, Service Manager: Early Years Development
Jane Slider, Parent Council Chair
Maggie McKechnie, Service Support Assistant (Note)
17 interested parties including school staff and parents

Apologies:
Councillor Maureen McKay

Linda McAulay-Griffiths warmly welcomed all to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. Linda thanked everyone for attending.

Linda wished to clarify what is being consulted on and advised that she is aware that there is much excitement around this proposal. The two main things being discussed this evening are a new Willowbank Primary School co-located on the existing Onthank Primary School site, and enhanced transition support for young children with complex additional support needs attending early learning and childcare. Details of what this will actually look like are not available tonight but will form the next part of the consultation. Tonight's meeting is more around ascertaining the level of support.

A powerpoint presentation was utilised for the purposes of the meeting and will be shared afterwards. Linda invited colleagues to speak to this.

Andrew Kennedy, Head of Facilities and Property Management

- Andrew wished to give background around the overall project which this consultation is one part of.
- The details will be developed as we go through the consultation into the design stages, and will involve engagement with users and wider community.
- Bid process is through Learning Estate Investment Programme which was launched in 2019.
- We have been through two phases and the Council was successful in the second phase of bidding (for Doon Campus and St Sophia's Primary School).
- We are aware that a third phase is in development. A programme board at a national level will decide on this around June and will contact local authorities to invite them to submit bids. We expect to hear by the end of the year whether successful.
- From the School Estate Management Plan, the North West area of Kilmarnock was identified, as well as Stewarton. With the upward trend of young people with additional support needs, this was the third area identified.
- The Council are looking at maximising the bid to get the most out of the funding.
- As part of a number of other areas, it was felt the biggest impact would be looking at Onthank and Mount Carmel campuses to see if they would meet requirements.
- Climate change and low energy use, as well as IT developments and place based supports are key to success.
- A number of areas are not covered specifically within discussions this evening but will begin to take shape if people are happy with proposals.
- A deep retrofit of Onthank Campus is proposed. Details would not be seen until after Christmas if the bid is successful.
- It is proposed to maximise the use of the existing footprint and extend the campus to include provision for Willowbank Primary School.
- A place based approach would maximise the community and campus opportunities this would bring together.
- Once meetings have taken place, we will look at how to work together to maximise aspirations around layouts etc.

Questions/Comments

Question 1: Functionality is more important than design we don't want a leaking roof ie water running into a gathering channel that still sits on the roof and can cause overflow causing PE hall to be out of commission costing unnecessary money and time in repairs that possibly not work.
Waterproof storage space is very important for equipment inside and outside.

Aileen Hollywood – Discussion around design, functionality etc will be part of the wider non-statutory consultation at a later date.

Question 2: If the bid was to be unsuccessful for the northwest campus plan, is there a plan to still build a new school for Willowbank as it's at double its intake now?

Andrew Kennedy – We are 100% focused on maximising the bid. Any further opportunities for investment through East Ayrshire Council or Scottish Government or elsewhere would be explored but priorities are the North West of Kilmarnock, Stewarton and additional support needs at present.

Gwyneth Quinn, Service Manager: Early Years Development

- Gwyneth was delighted to outline Early Years transition support provision in the proposal.
- More children with additional support needs are attending Early Childhood Centres every year.
- The proposal will help to support their needs more effectively during transition to school.
- Noted that this isn't a one size fits all model but will be tailored to young people and their families.
- Intention is to enhance existing provision to include accessing therapies not normally available.
- There are three key aspects of the proposal:
  - The environment will provide space for multi-agency work.
  - Will allow greater opportunities for Early Years staff to work closely with other therapists to meet children's needs.
  - Developing this provision will allow consideration of developing another facility in the south of the authority.
- It is hoped to more effectively meet the needs of children with complex needs and their families.

Linda noted that there is a lot of excitement around this proposal which doesn't exist at present.

Linda advised that the consultation is available online and a link can be provided following the meeting.

Linda stated that the next part is developing Willowbank Primary School which is a large part of the consultation. Jennifer Craig, Depute Head Teacher has produced some information around the educational benefits of this.

Linda has noted the space demands around Willowbank School and that specialist spaces have been made into classrooms. We are looking to reach a more sustainable solution and a fantastic provision.

Linda referred to the presentation around the benefits of the proposal. It is hoped that there is a sharing of facilities in Onthank Campus. Access to specialist facilities is very important. Physical activities on both campuses and access to physiotherapy outwith the classroom noted as preferable.

By creating a bespoke Willowbank Primary School, transition to secondary would be enhanced. Bringing staff together across the campus is felt to be beneficial.

In terms of the 2 aspects being looked at, Linda advised that she was happy to take questions.

<u>Questions/Comments</u>

Question 3: We do all already work our own jobs does this mean more staff to facilitate the connection between services/schools?

Linda McAulay-Griffiths – If we reach success in the bid, staffing will be looked at.

Dorothy McAvoy – The main point to make is that the final details are yet to be worked out. It is not an additional support needs Early Childhood Centre, but children who would attend their own ECC and access specialist provision in Willowbank. It would be the intention that the child's key worker would accompany them, which would have funding implications. Care Inspectorate adult:child ratios must be adhered to.

Linda advised that this would also be echoed in the school environment regarding allocation of staff.

Question 4: My child was previously at Park School and now at Willowbank. I would hope that lessons would be learned from that Campus. It would be more difficult at Willowbank as they have more severe/profound difficulties?

Linda McAulay-Griffiths – That is a very important question. The needs of all would be considered. It is not an amalgamation but a co-location proposal where access to mainstream would be available if appropriate to the needs and abilities of the individual young people. This will be looked at in more depth if we get to the next phase.

Linda noted that the consultation is open until 9 June so comments and questions can still be put forward.

Next steps will be to feed in views from tonight into the full consultation report. HMIe will also consider the report and will feed back. Report would then go to Cabinet for approval. If approved, the bid would then be submitted to Scottish Government and feedback would be provided. Engagement with the community and young people would take place thereafter. Jennifer Craig is working with the young people at Willowbank School at present to gather their views.

Linda spent an hour with the Chief Executive today at Willowbank School and wished to thank staff, Senior Leadership Team and parents for the work they do. Linda hopes that this consultation is positive and will provide a sustainable solution.

Linda hoped that tonight was helpful and asked those present to complete the online consultation with any views.

Linda thanked everyone for attending.

Appendix 4

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EDUCATION SERVICE

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING – WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2022

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

Present:
Linda McAulay-Griffiths, Chief Education Officer and Head of Education
Craig Young, Solicitor, Legal Services
Andrew Kennedy, Head of Facilities and Property Management
Councillor Maureen McKay
Pamela Anderson, HMIe, Education Scotland
Aileen Hollywood, Programme Manager – Architecture & Asset Planning
Simon Bell, Strategic Lead: Asset Investment
Alistair Kidd, Project Planning & Resource Manager
Ian Aston, ICT Security Manager
Gwyneth Quinn, Service Manager: Early Years Development
Dorothy McAvoy, Service Manager: Early Years Development
Andrea Fergusson, Head Teacher, Mount Carmel Primary School
Maggie McKechnie, Service Support Assistant (Note)
10 interested parties including school staff and parents

Linda McAulay-Griffiths warmly welcomed all to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. Linda thanked everyone for attending.

Linda advised that it was decided to have the meeting virtually. Linda advised to use chat or hand up to ask a question or comment. Linda noted that submissions can be made until Thursday 9 June.

Linda noted that meetings have been very open and supportive in nature thus far.

A powerpoint presentation was utilised for the purposes of the meeting and will be shared afterwards. Linda invited colleagues to speak to this.

Linda noted that East Ayrshire Council are not strictly required to consult on ECC provision given Scottish Government's Early Learning & Childcare expansion progamme. However, as the Council are looking to undertake the project through funding from the Learning Estate Investment Programme, it seemed right to do this the same way as it is part of larger North West Kilmarnock project. Further process will come later around what a refreshed Mount Carmel PS will look like following refurbishment.

Linda invited colleagues to speak to relevant parts of the presentation.

<u>Andrew Kennedy, Head of Facilities and Property Management</u>

- Andrew advised process began around Council bid into Learning Estate Investment Programme.

- Scottish Government launched a second phase of the Learning Estate Investment Programme with a total of £2bn available to develop school estates.
- The Council was successful in Phase 2; securing funding for PS & Doon Campus.
- The funding provides 50% of the costs required to build/refurbish schools.
- Phase 3 is in development and the Council are looking at their priorities. North West Kilmarnock schools are included in this.
- The main criteria around the success of the bid is about the condition of the existing estate.
- The School Estate Management Plan reviews this on a regular basis.
- Community support would put us in a much stronger position.
- Improving and upgrading the fabric of existing buildings and resources is key.
- Climate change and low energy use, as well as IT developments and place based supports are also key to success.
- East Ayrshire Council are expecting an invitation to bid around June.
- The Council will make the decision at that point as to which bids to submit.
- Submission of bids will take place around September.
- The Council will look at design principles to try to ensure we are as successful as possible.
- If through consultations, no matter the outcome, we would look to develop/define non-statutory consultations which would look at the design and involvement of partners.
- We would look at requirements around the school and community. We have done a lot of engagement with previous projects.
- Once the announcement is made, we would look at a more detailed design. Questions in this regard would be further down the line.
- A lot would depend on potential funding and budgets.
- All of the consultees will come together in terms of wider consultation meetings.

<u>Question 1</u>
Is it an all or nothing bid? Would parts be rejected or the whole bid?

Andrew – It's hard to answer at this stage. The Council has committed funds to address North West Kilmarnock. The potential may be that Campus funding would not get funding. The Council would then look at the next phase of funding to approach in a different way. It wouldn't be the end of the road, but our focus is on winning this and we would not consider any other options until the results are known. All elements through this process are just trying to firm up community support etc. Priorities are around the investment in schools in North West Kilmarnock and we are looking to maximise available funding.

<u>Question 2</u>
So there is already commitment from East Ayrshire Council but funding helps the process?

Andrew – Yes.

Linda – thanked Andrew for explaining the information on the presentation and reiterated that more consultation would take place later.

Linda handed over to Dorothy and Gwyneth.

Dorothy noted that she would answer questions and Gwyneth would speak to the presentation.

Gwyneth Quinn, Service Manager: Early Years Development

- Noted that we are looking at the key factors around the provision of an ECC in Mount Carmel PS.
- The increase in funded entitlement for ECC places is key. All 1 & 2 year olds in low income families will be entitled to places at end of the next parliament.
- House building is increasing and will lead to the need for more places.
- The increase in entitlement to another year of funded ELC for deferred entry places is also a consideration.
- Key considerations around quality Early Learning and Childcare are guiding principles around provision in East Ayrshire.
- Environments, flexible, responsive, skilled and knowledgeable practitioners and family partnerships are key.
- East Ayrshire are now offering 1140 hours of ELC to entitled children. Funding follows the child and the national standard was due to be implemented by August 2020 but was pushed back because of Covid-19.
- Full implantation of high quality National Standard to be in place by August 2023.
- East Ayrshire Council is proud of its record of our ECCs and the quality of ELC offered.
- Outdoor learning is really important and is encapsulated in the National Standard criteria in that children must have access to outside play.
- Effort and money is being invested into ensuring high quality outdoor spaces available.
- In East Ayrshire, we offer a variety of models e.g. term-time places, long afternoon places in some establishments.
- 2.5 & 3 full days are available in some establishments.
- Parents can also opt for time with childminder or with funded provider.
- Children can also have a snack or meal as part of their entitlement.

Linda asked for any questions.

Question 3

Everyone recognises the need for provision in North West Kilmarnock. In terms of capacity for Mount Carmel ECC, and new houses under development, how do you model that in terms of 700 new houses with 15% children? What happens if we hit that capacity? Would the ECC be extended again? This was a popular question from parents.

Linda noted that this is a crucial question.

Dorothy requested that Aileen help to respond to this. Dorothy advised there is a formula for estimating the numbers of children by year group which is used across Scotland for new builds which helps to determine capacity and needs across areas. Work done already shows that Scottish Government will begin with increasing entitlement to low income families. Data will be provided by Scottish Government. Experience shows that 25% of the 2 year old population is likely to be in a family that qualifies as low income. The formula that colleagues in infrastructure and planning use has been adapted by Education into its own formula.

Question 4

Is this influencing the decision not to expand Onthank ECC?

Dorothy advised that the two main things are capacity around the school and build intentions for that site. It is more about the size of the establishment. We are learning more about implementation of bubbles during lockdown. Anecdotally, the bubble method of caring for children in groups of 8, or bigger, facilitates deeper relationships between children and staff. There may be have more concrete evidence available in future.

Aileen noted that the formula used is not an exact science to any of this. The formula used by East Ayrshire Council is similar to that used across the country. It is used around the demographics of families who may move into new houses. What's happening is that families may be moving around but it will depend on location, e.g. Northcraigs is close to Glasgow. Aileen advised that her team is looking at the impact of Northcraigs on school rolls to look at future provision.

Linda noted that this is like predicting levels of additional support needs; we are always trying to refine the model.

Question 5
I'd to clarify the report/proposal regarding 1 & 2 year olds. I am unsure of the timeframe but I know Scottish Government are looking to increase hours. From an ECC point of view, are we looking at accommodating 3 & 4 years olds also? This is a grey area in the proposal.

Dorothy advised that she was able to confirm that it is not just facility for younger age groups. Although the progamme for government is specifically increasing the programme for 1 & 2 year olds, this is just the beginning. Dorothy noted that we are awaiting on guidance or an indication in very near future as to how the new entitlement will be resourced. We are able to estimate date regarding low income families but unable to plan for the entire population. It is likely to be 0-5 years. The authority need to increase 3-5 year old provision as there are likely to be more deferred entries to primary school and an increase in the population. We will look at low level adaptations/considerations to Onthank ECC. We also need to look at the suitability of the building as younger children need different facilities to 5 year olds.

Linda thanked everyone for their questions thus far and noted that , at this stage, we are seeking to ascertain support and to share among networks to ascertain feelings.

Questionn 6
Regarding the retrofit of the nursery, would it be considered an addition to Mount Carmel or would it have to be the current building at present?

Andrew noted that there are two elements to consider going forward. There is a need to identify what we need to put into the buildings. We also need to look at space requirements. This will identify the need for expansion. Consideration will also be given to whether there are parts of the building we need to extend; accessibility and space planning. Retrofit modelling taking into account the size and shape of building improves energy efficiency. Adding sections to the building may add better shape and mass. We will also take into account where the sun is in relation to outdoor space. Outdoor space is a massive investment and may be better if south facing. Environmental considerations may shape the building. We are aware of future increases in roll so don't want to use up all space at present. We will look at where dining hall is, and where P1 & P2s are in

relation to the Early Childhood Centre is important. We will look at everything in more depth over the next 6 months to a year.

Linda reiterated that there is a possibility that there could be add-ons and extensions which is exciting. She encouraged colleagues or friends to share their comments and opinions.

Linda alluded to next steps and noted that there is a long way to go in collating thoughts. Reports will then be submitted to Cabinet & Education Scotland. Once the statutory consultation closes, we will be looking at the non-statutory aspects. If the results of consultations look like we will proceed, further planning will commence.

Linda wished to say a huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in the process, especially those in the Mount Carmel community.

Appendix 5

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Ayrshire Council to 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.

July 2022

Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of
Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East Ayrshire Council's proposal to 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. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the 2010 Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; and children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper.
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 18 May 2022 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of Willowbank School and Onthank Campus, including discussion with relevant consultees.

Consultation process

2.1 East Ayrshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 The consultation period ran from 25 April 2022 until 9 June 2022. The consultation was advertised across a range of social media platforms. Electronic copies of the proposal were made available to consultees. Paper copies of the proposal were made available from council headquarters, Willowbank School, Onthank Primary School and Mount Carmel Primary School. Stakeholders were invited to attend the public meeting on 18 May 2022 using a video conferencing digital platform. This was in line with current government health advice. Officers shared a presentation outlining the proposal. They committed to answering questions from the 18 public attendees.
2.3 Almost all responses received during the consultation were strongly in support of the proposal. A few stakeholders sought reassurances that any new school building would have sufficient capacity for future growth in school roll. Children and young people from Willowbank School shared aspects of the school that are important to them.

Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Willowbank School is a specialist additional support needs (ASN) school. It is located in a modern and purpose built building, opened in 2013. This can be for children and young people identified as having severe and complex needs. All children and young people are in their primary or secondary school stages of education. The school provides education for children and young people across East Ayrshire. The proposal proposes to relocate the primary aged children to a new and purpose built early years and primary campus on the grounds of Onthank Primary School. This is to address the significant increase in children and young people requiring specialised additional support in Willowbank School.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree that the proposal to develop an early years and primary campus has strong potential educational benefits. The council originally predicted that the school would have a maximum of 50 children and young people attending. Since then, numbers of children and young people attending the school has approximately doubled. The school roll is currently nearing 100 pupils. As a result, the current building has had several modifications to accommodate the significant increase in school roll. This includes changing the use of specialist additional support rooms into general classroom spaces. A new building will alleviate the pressure on classroom and other learning spaces for all children and young people.

3.3 If the council moves forward with the proposal, a new and purpose built school has potential to significantly improve the availability of high-quality learning areas for all children. A new early years and primary campus has the possibility to reinstate the specialist additional support rooms for all pupils. These spaces will be important to meet individual needs ensuring dignity, high-quality additional support, emotional support and important work supported by allied health professionals.

3.4 Children and young people expressed their views on what aspects and areas of school are important and of value to them. These include: physical education spaces; gardening zones; quiet reflection areas; access to reading areas; things to walk and climb on; equipment to help children and young people be more independent; and a swimming therapy pool. Many of these areas in the current school are less accessible due to timetabling pressures. Should the proposal progress, there is greater capacity for children and young people to have access to these valued spaces more frequently. It is important

for the council to include children, families and staff when designing a school building if the proposal progresses.

3.5 If the proposal does progress, children moving from primary to secondary will experience an additional transition. This has both benefits and risks. For some children, the transition will be a key step in continuing their independence, regulation and resilience skills as relationships change. For other children, they may find the loss of key relationships more challenging. The change of school building to a less familiar building will also present challenges for some children. It is essential that the council work closely with children, families and staff to ensure transitions are planned carefully and child-centred. They should work to reduce disruption where possible.

3.6 HM Inspectors agree that the introduction of an early years transition base has educational benefits. The specialised support and assessment proposed may provide younger children an improved transition to Primary 1. Children from across the authority with severe and complex needs would have potentially enhanced access to specialist resources and professionals. The co-location of an early years transition base within the primary campus, may reduce unnecessary transitions for very young children. It provides potential for early years staff and primary staff to work closely to meet children's needs.

Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there is clear educational benefits in building an early years and primary campus for children attending Willowbank School. HM Inspectors agree that school roll capacity issues can be alleviated. An early years and primary campus has the potential to meet better the educational needs of all children and young people. In delivering an early years and primary campus there is an opportunity to reintroduce the range of indoor and outdoor education spaces that have been diminished since 2013. Where possible, the council should ensure the proposed early years and primary campus meets potential future increases to the school roll of Willowbank School. HM Inspectors recommend that children and young people are active participants in the design of the proposed new campus.

Careful consideration must be given to children and young people currently attending or likely to attend Willowbank School. Their access to high-quality learning and teaching opportunities should not be diminished while waiting for a new early years and primary campus to be opened. The council should provide reassurance to children, young people, families and staff of how they plan to meet additional support needs during this interim period.

HM Inspectors
July 2022

Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Ayrshire Council to formally incorporate the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus as a supported learning centre.

July 2022

Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of
Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East Ayrshire Council's proposal to formally incorporate the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus as a supported learning centre. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees.
Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the 2010 Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children at the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 11 May 2022 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visit to the site of Onthank Primary School and its existing inclusion resource, including discussion with relevant consultees.

Consultation process

2.1 East Ayrshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 The statutory consultation period for this proposal ran from 25 April 2022 until 9 June 2022. The council made copies of the full and summary versions of the consultation

proposal available to statutory consultees. This included copies being available on the council website and through social media channels. The council made copies of the proposal available in alternative formats, or in translated form for readers whose first language was not English. Senior leaders at the school involved children in the consultation process through pupil council meetings, focus groups and questionnaires. A public meeting took place on 11 May 2022. Due to the COVID-19 mitigations that were in place at the time, the public meeting took place virtually. There were 27 public attendees.

2.3 Almost all stakeholders are in favour of the proposal. A few raised concerns about the increased traffic to the site, and highlighted the need to risk assess potential hazards. A few expressed concern about staffing, and ensuring children in the existing inclusion resource were not adversely affected.

Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The proposal to develop a supported learning centre within Onthank Primary School has clear educational benefits. It will potentially enhance the council's capacity to meet the additional support needs of children in the north Kilmarnock area. Children placed at the centre will benefit from maintaining relationships with their local peers.

3.2 If the council agrees to progress the proposal, the refurbishment of the rooms used by the supported learning centre will provide high-quality classroom accommodation and facilities to support learning across the campus. Refurbishment creates potential to provide an appropriate environment for children who require specialist support. Children may benefit from having access to more developmentally appropriate learning facilities and experiences. This includes a personal care room, access to sensory support and outdoor play areas. A dedicated drop-off area with a separate entrance to the provision will preserve the dignity of children.

3.3 Locating the supported learning centre in Onthank Primary School will provide opportunities for children placed there to access learning experiences in a mainstream setting. Children could have opportunities for greater personalisation and choice across all areas of the curriculum. This has the potential to improve continuity and progression in their learning, and to develop their wellbeing and skills.

3.4 The council should continue to work with stakeholders in taking forward this proposal. This includes considering issues related to increased traffic and parking, and ensuring the safety of children who attend the school. It also includes considering the capacity of the provision.

Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are clear educational benefits to this proposal. In particular, it has potential to allow children to access appropriate specialist provision closer to their own local community. The proposed learning centre would provide children with specialist facilities and access to mainstream classes. If the proposal is agreed and taken forward, there are plans to refurbish the classroom spaces that children will use for learning. This will result in future learners accessing updated and modern accommodation, facilities and resources that support their learning needs.

The proposal builds on well-established nurturing approaches and inclusion of learners at Onthank Primary School. There is potential to share this expertise with other schools and settings to develop staff capacity across other establishments. If the proposal goes ahead, the council should ensure a high-quality transition programme based on the needs of children. The council should also be very clear about the referral processes and criteria for support within the supported learning centre. It is important to ensure that the capacity of the centre is able to meet demands. This includes consideration of support for children who already access the existing inclusion resource.

HM Inspectors
July 2022

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Ayrshire Council to establish an early childhood centre at Mount Carmel Primary School.

July 2022

Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of
Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (Modification) Regulations 2017. This removed the requirement to carry out a statutory consultation on proposals to establish a new nursery school or new nursery class and proposals to establish a new nursery school or nursery class under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). Despite this, East Ayrshire Council wanted to consult on this proposal in the same way as the statutory consultations being run in conjunction with it. HM Inspectors provide this report on that basis.

The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East
Ayrshire Council's proposal to establish an early childhood centre at Mount Carmel Primary School. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. The council's final consultation report may include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 25 May 2022 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- virtual visit to the site of Mount Carmel Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

Consultation process

2.1 East Ayrshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 The proposal to establish an early childhood centre at Mount Carmel Primary School was one of three consultations grouped together. All three proposals form part of East Ayrshire's bid for funding from the Learning Estate Investment Programme.

2.3 The consultation process ran between 25 April 2022 and 9 June 2022. Notification of the commencement of the consultation was advertised in the local press and on social media. A copy of the council's proposal document was posted on the council's website. Separate virtual public meetings were held for each of the three proposals. The public meeting specific to establishing an early childhood centre at Mount Carmel Primary School was held on 25 May 2022. Ten interested parties attended. Those in attendance were generally in favour of the proposal. Discussion focused on the process to secure funding and the capacity and design of the proposed early childhood centre. The council received eight online responses in relation to the consultation. These indicated overall support for the proposal. Those who responded regard the proposal as a positive investment in Mount Carmel Primary School and of benefit to children and families. They raised several points for consideration should the proposal be successful. In particular, they do not want the addition of the early childhood centre to be detrimental to the primary department. They seek further information about the distribution of grant funding, the rationale behind the proposed retrofit and the design process. East Ayrshire Council has also consulted with children attending Mount Carmel Primary School. Children welcome the proposal and feel it will improve their school.

Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 East Ayrshire Council identified the need to increase its capacity for early learning and childcare within north west Kilmarnock. The establishment of an early childhood centre within Mount Carmel Primary School would provide additional capacity. This will help meet the increased requirement for early learning and childcare places in the local area. The roll of Mount Carmel Primary School has fallen over the past few years. As a result, there is available accommodation within the school building to accommodate the addition of this new facility. The school also benefits from expansive grounds, which would support the provision of outdoor learning.

3.2 HM Inspectors believe that the addition of an early childhood centre to Mount Carmel Primary School has the potential to bring considerable educational benefits to the school community. All parents, children and staff who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. They identified a number of clear benefits should the proposal be successful. The opportunity for children to transition from nursery to primary within the same establishment is seen as a significant benefit. Staff and parents feel this will help establish relationships, improve continuity in learning and improve attainment. They also believe it will help stabilise the school roll. Staff see opportunities to strengthen approaches to learning and teaching across the early level. It will expand the range of expertise across the staff team and provide a range of additional opportunities for professional learning. Children welcome the potential to be buddies and work alongside younger children. Parents of children at both pre-school and primary stages will benefit from having their children attend a single establishment.

3.3 The proposal will result in a retrofit of Mount Carmel Primary School. Staff and parents appreciate that children currently benefit from a range of additional accommodation and space across the school building. While supporting the proposal, they are keen to ensure that it is not to the detriment of children in primary classes. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should liaise closely with staff and parents to inform the design process.

3.4 Representatives from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Galloway are in favour of the proposal. They believe it will strengthen children's transition into primary school, build capacity within the school community and strengthen the school as a whole.

Summary

The council's proposal is of clear educational benefit. All children, parents and staff who met with
HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. The council's proposal, should it proceed, should see children benefit from strengthened transition between early years and primary. It will increase opportunities to strengthen learning and teaching across the early level. An improved school environment has the potential to support further the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence and improve outcomes for all learners. In taking the proposal forward, the council would benefit from involving staff and parents in the final design and layout of the proposed retrofit.

HM Inspectors
July 2022

APPENDIX 2

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