

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION SERVICE
CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ENHANCED
LEARNING RESOURCE AT HARESTANES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Consultation Report

17th January 2019

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND

- 1.0** As part of the Council’s strategy for Additional Support Needs (ASN), East Dunbartonshire Council is considering a proposal to develop an Enhanced Learning Resource (ELR) base in Harestanes Primary School. Review of Provision for Children with Additional Support Needs Strategy document is attached as **Appendix 2**

This proposed base will better support and effectively meet the needs of primary and early years aged children with a range of additional support needs.

As part of the Review of Provision for Children with Additional Support Needs and following statutory consultation last year, Enhanced Learning Resource bases (ELRs) were opened in Wester Cleddens Primary School and Castlehill Primary schools to support primary and early years aged children.

- 1.2** This proposal will take effect from school session 2019/20.

SECTION 2 - CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 2.1** This proposal considers changes to the current provision in place to support primary and early years’ children. As such, a consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 is required. A process for consultation was established as below:

- 2.2** A proposal document was developed that included information on:
- The proposal;
 - The consultation process;
 - The public meeting;
 - Educational benefits; and
 - Issues anticipated in the proposal.

The document also provides information on how to respond to the consultation. The consultation document is attached as **Appendix 3**.

- 2.3** The proposal document was sent to all consultees identified (see section 2.10). The pack included a consultation document, a letter from the Acting Chief Education Officer explaining the process and how to respond.
- 2.4** In addition to the paperwork being distributed, a press release was issued publicising the launch of the consultation. The press release can be found in **Appendix 4**.
- 2.5** The proposal documentation was also issued to the Head Teacher and the Parent Council of Harestanes Primary School.

2.6 The consultation period commenced on Monday 22nd October 2018 and concluded on Friday 30th November 2018. The proposal information was distributed by email on the Monday 22nd October 2018 and information was available on the website for that date. See **Appendix 5** for a consultation timeline.

2.7 Details of the proposal were made available on a dedicated section of the Council's website (www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/consultations).

2.8 A public meeting was held in Harestanes Primary School on Tuesday 6th November 2018. (see section 3.4)

2.9 Pupils who attend Harestanes Primary School were consulted and their views were gathered and recorded. (see section 3.5).

2.10 **Consultees**

Consultees were identified according to Schedule 1 of the Act, under the schedule for 'Establishment', the consultees contacted included:

2.11 **Parent Council**

The Parent Council of Harestanes Primary School were sent the consultation information.

2.12 **Parents of pupils at affected schools**

Main contact details for pupils within Harestanes Primary School were collated using information provided by the school office and each parent / carer was sent the consultation information.

2.13 **Staff at affected schools**

All staff within Harestanes Primary School were notified of the consultation. Local and partnership nurseries were also notified of the consultation.

2.14 **Any body which has been established by a local authority, whether formally or informally, for the purpose of assisting it in carrying out its functions under Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2003**

Members of the Community Planning Partnership Board were sent the consultation information.

2.15 **Trade Unions**

All relevant Trade Union Convenors were sent the consultation information.

2.16 **Pupils**

A consultation with pupils was held within Harestanes Primary School, see section 3.5 for details.

SECTION 3 – RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

3.1 Consultation information was sent to 269 consultees and 18 representations received.

3.2 Of the 18 representations received, 17 agreed with the proposal and 1 disagreed.

3.4 **Public meetings**

A public meeting was held on Wednesday 6th December 2017 in Harestanes Primary School. A presentation was given introducing the proposal, and a question and answer session was held.

The presentation and a note of the issues discussed at the meeting are attached as **Appendix 6**.

3.5 **Pupil consultation**

In accordance with the Act, East Dunbartonshire Council planned and engaged in a consultation with the pupils affected by this proposal within Harestanes Primary School.

The consultation process for pupils involved the completion of a response form in school house groups of 25 pupils.

SECTION 4 – EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Dunbartonshire Council to establish an enhanced learning resource at Harestanes Primary School

1. 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 Dunbartonshire Council’s proposal to establish an enhanced learning resource at Harestanes 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 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

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 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:

- 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 Harestanes Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation period ran from 22 October 2018 until 30 November 2018. A public meeting was held at Harestanes Primary School on 6 November 2018 which was attended by six members of the public. Responses could be made electronically or in writing, posted to the Council headquarters. There were 18 responses to the consultation. Of those who expressed a preference, 17 were in favour of the proposal and one was against it.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The Council believes that this proposal will ensure local, accessible provision to meet children's needs, which will reduce the time required for transport to and from school and offer opportunities for inclusion within the local community. This is in line with the council's strategy for provision for children with additional support needs which proposes that an Enhanced Learning Resource Base should be provided in each locality area and is a potential educational benefit.

3.2 The Council also believes that the proposal will lead to a greater flexibility of provision which can be adapted to meet the needs of each child. The new provision, should it deliver the anticipated greater flexibility of provision locally, is likely to be an educational benefit.

3.3 The council thinks that the proposal will develop staff capacity to meet a wider range of needs. Whilst details have yet to be finalised, current school staff are aware that more training and development opportunities about meeting a wider range of learning needs are going to be made available to them as a result of this proposal. This is therefore a potential educational benefit.

3.4 The Council believes that implementation of the proposal will result in a greater range of experiences and opportunities for all children within the school. The Council envisages that children from the rest of the school will work with children from the enhanced learning resource and that these children will also work as appropriate within classrooms with their peers. This is therefore an educational benefit and is likely to result in all children having a more inclusive understanding of the needs of other learners.

3.5 Staff from Harestanes Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors are generally in favour of the proposal. They welcome the inclusion of an enhanced learning resource and would now be keen to get more detail about what is proposed and to visit similar provisions. They would like more clarity about traffic management on the new site and also the location of the current community centre building which sits on school grounds. They would also welcome more detail about the role of clerical staff relating to the new provision.

3.6 Children from Harestanes Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors are enthusiastic about the proposed new provision. They can see the advantages of having a resource like this situated in their school. They have also generated a number of questions about this proposal which they would now like answered.

3.7 Parents of children who attend Harestanes Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. However, they would like reassurance about levels of staffing, training and transition arrangements for new pupils, as well as a review of school security arrangements. They would prefer the community centre was relocated elsewhere. They realise that appropriate awareness raising for staff, children and their parents about the needs of pupils in the enhanced learning resource will be key to its success.

Summary

Overall, there is a range of potential educational benefits to this proposal. Parents, children and staff are generally agreed about the educational benefits of the proposal. In taking the proposal forward, the Council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and to address their concerns. In taking its proposal forward, an effective communication strategy and an action plan will be essential for the Council to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged. The Council should include details of these in its final report.

**HM Inspectors
December 2018**

SECTION 5 – SUMMARY OF ISSUES

5.1 While the number of responses received to the consultation was low, a number of issues were raised through the consultation and the Education Scotland visit to the school. These included:

Design and Consultation

The Education Scotland report suggests that the council should consider further consultation with staff, parents and pupils when developing the provision. As part of the design and consultation, officers will meet with staff and the parent council to review the proposed design of the base and also the procedures for day-to-day operation of the base. Please see attached **Appendix 7** communication and action plan for feedback sessions on design development for staff and the parent council.

Officers will also arrange for the opportunity for staff and the Parent Council to visit another ELR for reference.

Traffic management

Education Scotland advised that there was some concern over the traffic management with additional pupils accessing the school site. As part of the proposed provision, the number of pupils expected to attend the base will be approximately 18 in the primary base and approximately 6 for the nursery. Nursery pupils will not attend the base on a full time basis and may only attend morning or afternoon sessions as part of an assessment of needs.

Pupils who are expected to attend the base will reside within the Kirkintilloch area and would not travel long distances and may walk / cycle to school. However, if appropriate school transport will be accessible if required.

Once officers are aware of pupils who would attend the proposed base, locations and travel arrangements can then be reviewed. Officers will feedback on traffic management with school staff and the parent council during feedback sessions.

Officers will work with the internal travel teams to ensure all necessary measures are taken to minimise disruption to the current school population.

Transition and arrangements for pupils

Parents of pupils who currently attend Harestanes Primary School questioned the process for transition for new pupils. A working group, comprising educational psychologists, head teachers including those who have experience of leading similar resources, have been working together to plan the development including transition arrangements and a professional learning programme. A detailed training and development plan, as well as

guidance for staff, has been developed. This professional learning programme builds on the good practice that exists within the authority and will be designed to meet the needs of mainstream staff and specialist staff in the new bases. The professional learning programme has already commenced in some settings and will be on-going in preparation for the new bases as well and beyond.

The provision would be a separate secure area of the school that would be used to accommodate children, who require enhanced support. These areas would be staffed in addition to the mainstream school staffing complement, and these staff would be specialists in ASN education. There would be additional management capacity allocated to the resource also. The staff: child ratio would be dependent on the needs of the individual children. In line with SNCT guidance a ratio of 1:6, teacher to pupil ratio is allocated with additional support staff according to the needs of children.

The Enhanced Learning Resource would be self-contained, including separate outdoor space and social spaces, and some children may spend the majority of their school day within the resource. However, where appropriate in terms of individual children's needs, children from the resource would access mainstream classes or activities. However, when this occurred, children would be supported by specialist staff. These interactions would be carefully considered and risk assessed on a case by case basis to ensure that they were suitable for all children involved. EDC has developed detailed training and guidance for staff on how to manage pupil interactions.

Role of current clerical staff within the school and level of staffing

The Education Scotland report noted some concern from staff about their role in the proposed provision. The role of the current administration and clerical support in the school will remain unchanged. There will be a separate office within the proposed base for the ELR.

Questions generated by pupils

Education Scotland noted that pupils provided questions regarding the proposed ELR during the pupil consultation. School staff and EDC officers will work together to provide a response to pupils on the questions raised. School staff and officers will arrange for a feedback session with pupils to ensure their queries are answered. Please see attached **Appendix 7** communication and action plan for details on feedback sessions with pupils.

Location of the community centre

It was noted in the Education Scotland report that consultees queried the location of the current community centre which is currently situated on the primary school site. There is no plan to relocate the community centre and access to the school will remain unchanged.

Review of school security arrangements

Within the Education Scotland report it was noted that some consultees have requested a review of the school security arrangements. As part of the development of a new base within the school, officers will review the school security arrangements with staff. Officers will review the access points for the mainstream school and base with senior management staff to ensure the safety of all pupils and will make any adaptations which may be required. Once the design for the base has been developed, officers will meet with school staff and the Parent Council to review the security arrangements for the school. Please see attached **Appendix 7** communication and action plan for feedback and review dates.

SECTION 6 - ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES

4.1 No inaccuracies or omissions were identified.

SECTION 7 – FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

7.1 The response to the consultation was relatively limited, however the majority of responses agreed with the proposal.

7.2 EDC believe the proposal to have clear educational benefit, and Education Scotland note that:

“Parents, children and staff are generally agreed about the educational benefits of the proposal”

7.3 The report by Education Scotland suggest that the Council should consider comments made from parents, pupils and staff. In order to address the issues raised in the consultation, and in particular to support parents’ confidence in the implementation of the proposal, it is proposed that the actions proposed in section are implemented. If these actions were to be implemented, there would be no barrier to the implementation of the proposal.

SECTION 8 – LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 2 Review of Provision for Children with Additional Support Needs Strategy

Appendix 3 Proposal Document

Appendix 4 Press Release

Appendix 5 Consultation Timeline

Appendix 6 Public Meeting and Note of the meeting

Appendix 7 Communication and Action Plan