

City of Edinburgh Council Plans for Primary School Capacity Pressure in South Edinburgh

Paper for the Education, Children and Families Committee, Tuesday 19th May 2015

James Gillespie's Primary School Council

The JGPS Parent Council welcomes all the efforts of the City Council to help plan for the pressures the school has felt from Rising Rolls. The new building, currently under construction, will help with classroom and General Purpose provision for 2015/16 and 2016/17. We note the report "Primary School Capacity Pressure in South Edinburgh" suggests the new 2 class & 1 GP-room building will increase provision from 16 classes to 19 rather than 18. The additional GP space is essential to cope with the 2 additional classrooms and the school will not have capacity without it.

We also welcome the prospect of a Statutory Consultation into the possible long term solutions to combat the pressure from rising rolls in South Edinburgh including the provision of a new Primary School for the area.

However, we remain very concerned that JGPS will not be able to cope with the current trend of Rising Rolls beyond 2017 and do not believe it is realistic to assume numbers will fall in line with analysed birth rates. As well as the pressure on the school for classroom, General Purpose, dining and gym accommodation the prospect of Rising Rolls is placing a great deal of pressure on parents and prospective parents who are very worried about the likely effects on the welfare and education of their children.

We would like to open formal discussions with the City Council about how Rising Rolls are likely to affect the school after 2017 and what contingency the City Council has made should numbers not fall sufficiently for the 2017/18 academic year.

Our request to the Committee today is that:

- 1) The record is amended to reflect capacity at JGPS as 18 classes after completion of the new building, not 19.
- 2) JGPS is recognised as one of the "Schools Facing Accommodation Pressures for August 2017 and Beyond " as mentioned in Primary School Estate Rising Rolls (3 March 2015) - 3.9.
- 3) A working Group is established to meet and engage with the JGPS Parent Council and School Management to discuss concerns and prepare for expected pressures in 2017

From: Billy MacIntyre
Sent: 18 May 2015 14:34
Subject: RE: Education, Children and Families Committee submission
Importance: High

In response to the paper provided by the James Gillespie's Primary School Parent Council and the three items which they have request from Committee I would respond as follows:

1) "The record is amended to reflect capacity at JGPS as 18 classes after completion of the new building, not 19."

In October 2014 the Scottish Government released new guidance for all local authorities providing recommendations on how to determine the capacity of a primary school. The principal objective of the "Determining Primary School Capacity" guidance is to provide a consistent approach to school capacity modelling at a national level. The City of Edinburgh Council has begun the process of reviewing the capacity of its entire primary school estate by reassessing the classroom capacity of all primary schools based on the space definitions and General Purpose space requirements set out in the new guidance. This process is ongoing. However, through its involvement in the Rising Rolls Programme and other recent capital projects, sufficient information about room sizes and room usage is available for James Gillespie's Primary School for the Scottish Government's new guidance to be applied. The outcome is a reduction in the number of General Purpose spaces required and a corresponding increase in the number of classrooms available. Accordingly, following the completion of the new Rising Rolls building in August 2015, the school's capacity will increase to **19 classes** - future projections have been based on this capacity and there is no necessity to change this.

2) "JGPS is recognised as one of the "Schools Facing Accommodation Pressures for August 2017 and Beyond " as mentioned in Primary School Estate Rising Rolls (3 March 2015) - 3.9."

This is not necessary. JGPS was recognised as one of the schools facing accommodation pressures for August 2015 and beyond hence its inclusion in the current phase of the rising rolls programme for this year. This process, and the agreed solution of delivering a new four-class stand alone extension at the school for August 2015, is designed not just to address the anticipated accommodation pressures for 2015/16 but also beyond that.

Following the now well established process any schools facing accommodation pressures for August 2017 and beyond will be identified in the Rising Rolls report to the Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2016.

3) "A working Group is established to meet and engage with the JGPS Parent Council and School Management to discuss concerns and prepare for expected pressures in 2017"

See above, this is not necessary. A working group was already established at James Gillespie's Primary School to identify and deliver the agreed solution to respond to the anticipated

accommodation pressures for August 2015/16 and beyond. Once the agreed solution has been delivered in August 2015 the necessity for this working group to meet will cease.

James Gillespie's Primary School is affected by the proposed statutory consultation – Options to address Primary School Capacity and Accommodation in South Edinburgh. As part of this process Children and Families will continue to engage with school communities and where appropriate meetings with the school management team and parent council representatives will be arranged.

Regards

Billy