

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 5 September 2023

## Learning Estate Update: Statutory Consultations required for St Catherine's RC Primary School, a new Primary School in Queensferry and a new Kirkliston High School

Executive/routine  
Wards

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 That the Education, Children and Families Committee:
  - 1.1.1 Notes the summary of responses from informal engagement in Kirkliston on the Kirkliston Leisure Centre as the site for a new Kirkliston High School;
  - 1.1.2 Notes the summary of responses from informal engagement in Gracemount on potential sites for replacement of the St Catherine's RC Primary School building; and
  - 1.1.3 Approves that delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services to issue three separate statutory consultation papers, according to the requirements of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2014 as amended, proposing the following:
    - 1.1.3.1 The relocation of St Catherine's RC Primary School to a new site;
    - 1.1.3.2 The establishment of a new primary school at Builyeon Road in Queensferry with associated catchment changes; and
    - 1.1.3.3 The establishment of a new secondary school in Kirkliston at the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site with associated catchment changes.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

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## Learning Estate Update: Statutory Consultations required for St Catherine's RC Primary School, a new Primary School in Queensferry and a new Kirkliston High School

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report seeks approval to progress three separate statutory consultations. These consultations propose a new site for a replacement St Catherine's RC Primary School, a new primary school in Queensferry and a new secondary school in Kirkliston. All three have been the subject of various informal engagement processes, with the outcomes of recent engagement in Kirkliston and Gracemount reported in this paper.
- 2.2 Changes to the school estate are governed by the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2014 as amended and all three consultations would be conducted according to the requirements of the Act. The outcomes of the consultations would be reported back to Committee in January 2024.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 A new site for a replacement St Catherine's RC Primary School, establishing a new primary school in Queensferry and the future of secondary school provision in Kirkliston have been the subject of extensive informal engagement. The outcomes of the most recent engagement processes in relation to St Catherine's RC Primary School and secondary school provision for Kirkliston are attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. It is through this engagement work with affected stakeholders and communities that the proposals in statutory consultation papers will be shaped.

#### **St Catherine's RC Primary School**

- 3.2 Site investigations in the summer of 2018, undertaken as part of an upgrade project for St Catherine's RC Primary School's building, showed that a replacement, rather than an upgrade, was required. The Capital Investment Programme, approved by Finance and Resources Committee in February 2019, included a budget of £12.802m for the replacement school. This was increased to £20.3m in the Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy 2023-33 to reflect updated cost estimates. The school's condition makes it a priority for replacement and since securing

funding in 2019, repairs have continued to be undertaken where necessary, to allow the continued, safe, operation of the school.

### **A new primary school at Builyeon Road, Queensferry**

- 3.3 A new primary school at the Builyeon Road housing development was approved as part of the Local Development Plan in 2016. This is required to support the development of significant new housing in the Queensferry area, in particular at Builyeon Road and South Scotstoun.
- 3.4 The Council is now in possession of a site at Builyeon Road to allow the development of a new school and the process of appointing a design team is underway.

### **A New Secondary School in Kirkliston**

- 3.5 On 27 April 2023, a report to the Education, Children and Families Committee summarised the key message, arising from engagement with the Queensferry and Kirkliston communities, that there should be a new secondary school built in Kirkliston. Several consultees also suggested Kirkliston Leisure Centre as a potential site for a new high school.
- 3.6 The Leisure Centre site had not previously been considered as an option due to its small size; its proximity to the motorway and existing residential properties; its location on the west of Kirkliston; and the loss of Kirkliston's leisure facilities. However, as it is the only potential site in Council control, and in response to the feedback received through the engagement, an architect was appointed to advise whether a high school for 1,200 pupils could be built on the site. The feasibility report demonstrated that the site could accommodate a high school for 1,200 pupils along with publicly accessible leisure facilities.
- 3.7 A further informal engagement, in June 2023, asked the community in Kirkliston if the Leisure Centre site was a good site for a new secondary school. A summary of the responses received is also included in Appendix 1.

## **4. Main report**

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- 4.1 The outputs from the informal engagement processes have been considered and have informed the outline proposals that should now be the subject of statutory consultation prepared. For each of the three projects, these proposals are:

### **St Catherine's RC Primary School**

- 4.2 The proposal is for a new 11 class St Catherine's RC Primary School with a 64 place nursery to be established on the South Neighbourhood Office and disused former Leisure Centre pitches sites off Captain's Road.
- 4.3 The consultation paper will therefore set out proposals to relocate the school to the new site and consider relationships with the other adjacent Council owned properties. No change of catchment area is proposed.

- 4.4 An analysis of the 42 responses received to an engagement undertaken in May 2023, when three potential site options were presented, are set out in Appendix 2. These responses favoured rebuilding the school on its existing site.
- 4.5 However, it is considered that relocating the school to a new site presents the best value option, avoiding a costly and disruptive decant of the existing school during construction. Furthermore, this option provides the best opportunity to respond to the outcomes of the “My Gracemount” engagement (see section 9) and deliver on key aspects of the Council’s Business Plan and Corporate Property Strategy in relation to efficient use of Council resources and the creation of a community hub.
- 4.6 The new school would be designed with an expansion strategy, allowing up to a further four classroom spaces to be built at a future stage, if this should ultimately prove necessary.
- 4.7 The Council will consider alternative uses of the existing school site and make recommendations as part of the Outcomes of the Consultation Report to Committee in January 2024.

#### **A new primary school at Builyeon Road, Queensferry**

- 4.8 The proposal is that a new non-denominational primary school and nursery classes be established within the ‘Builyeon Road’ housing development by August 2026 at the earliest.
- 4.8 Community engagement to date has raised no concerns about the proposed establishment of a new school at Builyeon Road. However, a key element of the development of a new school is establishing the school’s catchment area and the impact this could have on neighbouring school’s catchments.
- 4.9 Queensferry Primary School has faced accommodation pressures due to pupils generated by the South Scotstoun development. While it will need to be extended, it cannot reasonably be extended sufficiently to continue to accommodate its existing catchment population and an expanding South Scotstoun. Accordingly, some parts of the South Scotstoun housing development and/or other areas of Queensferry Primary School’s catchment will have to be realigned with other schools. The statutory consultation paper will set out the catchment options that would reduce numbers at Queensferry Primary School sufficiently and make best use of the capacity offered by a new primary school at Builyeon Road.

#### **A New Secondary School in Kirkliston**

- 4.10 In Kirkliston, responses to the engagement undertaken to date suggest that while there is majority support for a secondary school in Kirkliston; the Leisure Centre site may not be an ideal location. The main objection to this site comes from residents living in the streets directly around the Leisure Centre who are concerned by the impact a new secondary school will have on traffic and parking. A full summary of the responses received is provided in Appendix 2.
- 4.11 While many of the comments concerning the limitations of the Leisure Centre site due to its size and proximity to the motorway have been considered, feasibility work

has now demonstrated it can be developed into a successful secondary school and community hub.

- 4.12 While acknowledging the concerns raised regarding the limitations placed on the Curriculum within a smaller school, it is clear that with a supported, creative and ambitious approach, working in partnership with stakeholders, a smaller school community can thrive equally well as a larger one. Much will depend on the effective leadership of the school and the positive culture and ethos that needs to be established.
- 4.13 A transport assessment was not able to be completed prior to the start of the school summer holidays. This assessment, which will model the impact a new secondary school could have on traffic in the area and make recommendations about any infrastructure changes that may be required, will be completed in parallel with the proposed statutory consultation.
- 4.14 Many respondents suggested alternative sites for a new school. These alternatives are shown in Section 3 of Appendix 2. All have been considered as potential school sites. However, most of these alternative sites were within the designated Greenbelt or Countryside areas and are protected by the Council's planning policy and local development plan.
- 4.15 Several of the sites suggested to the south of the village have been identified as areas at risk of flooding; while sites to the east are safeguarded for a second runway at Edinburgh airport. Using the primary school site was suggested, however the cost associated with building a new secondary school and a new primary school would be prohibitive.
- 4.16 Accordingly, the recommendation is that the best option currently available to secure a new secondary school in Kirkliston is at the Leisure Centre site. However, this site also presents a challenge as it will be necessary to demonstrate that appropriate pitch provision can be made available for school use. Investigations into how this requirement can be met are still ongoing.
- 4.17 The catchment area for the new school will be formed from the existing Kirkliston Primary School catchment area, which would be implemented from the November prior to the new school opening.
- 4.18 Kirkliston Primary School would be established as a feeder school to the new high school, with the catchment area boundary of Queensferry High School realigned so that it no longer includes the catchment area of Kirkliston Primary School.
- 4.19 The new school will be built with capacity for 600 pupils but will be extendable to 1,200 if required.

### **Summary**

- 4.20 Approval is sought for delegated authority to be granted to the Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services to issue three separate statutory consultation papers according to the requirements of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2014 as amended proposing the following:

- 4.20.1 The relocation of St Catherine's RC Primary School to a new site;
- 4.20.2 The establishment of a new primary school at Builyeon Road in Queensferry with associated catchment changes; and
- 4.20.3 The establishment of a new secondary school in Kirkliston at the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site with associated catchment changes.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 In advance of Committee, draft consultation papers for each of these proposals would be prepared and shared with local elected members. Should Committee approve the recommendations in this report, the finalised papers will be distributed to key stakeholders (as defined by the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2014 as amended) and be made publicly available on 11 September 2023. The consultations would be open from that date until they closed on 31 October 2023.
- 5.2 The outcomes of these consultation would be reported to the Education, Children and Families Committee at its meeting on 23 January 2024.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 This paper seeks approval to progress consultations only. The decisions taken by the Education, Children and Families Committee in approving the recommendations in this report do not commit the Council to any one course of action. Accordingly, there are no financial impacts arising directly from this report, beyond the cost of carrying out the consultation itself.
- 6.2 Should these consultations ultimately lead to a commitment or commitments to infrastructure investment, a Business Case would be developed for each project. Funding has been allocated in the Capital Programme for the replacement of St Catherine's RC Primary School, however, it is likely that this sum will require to be uplifted to reflect current market conditions. A new primary school at Builyeon Road would be funded from developers contributions although additional funding will be required to address a considerable budgetary shortfall. A new secondary school in Kirkliston is entirely unfunded.
- 6.3 Business cases for these projects will be presented to the appropriate Executive Committees once finalised, and progress will be measured against the action plan in the Corporate Property Strategy, reported annually to Committee.

## **7. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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- 7.1 Should Committee approve the recommendations in this paper, an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) will be undertaken as part of each consultation process. The consultation will elicit the views of a wide range of stakeholders including staff, parents, young people and the wider communities affected. These will be fed into the IIA process.

- 7.2 The outcomes of the IIA will be reported in and help inform the consultation Outcomes Report to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 23 January 2024. This will allow Committee to consider whether the process followed has met the appropriate equality standards, policies and legislation and how the recommendations made have considered these requirements.

## **8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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- 8.1 This paper seeks approval to progress consultations only. The decisions taken by the Education, Children and Families Committee in approving the recommendations in this report do not commit the Council to any one course of action. Accordingly, there are no Climate and Nature Emergency implications arising directly from this report. However, in the long-term, any new infrastructure required as an outcome of the consultation process would be constructed according to the Council's Net Zero principles, including Passivhaus or equivalent standard for any new build.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 This paper seeks approval to progress consultations that will allow local communities to have their say on the delivery of infrastructure in their area and school catchment areas. Accordingly, the recommendation that these consultations be approved to progress is consistent with the Council's commitment to ensuring that everyone's voices are heard and listened to.
- 9.2 All three consultations will be conducted according to the requirements of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This sets out the statutory consultation requirements for:
- The establishment of a new school;
  - The relocation of a stage of education;
  - Changes to existing admission arrangements (such as catchment change); and
  - The closure of a stage of education
- 9.3 The prescribed consultees vary for each of the above. Although a closure is not proposed in any of these consultations, the requirements for a closure encompass all the necessary consultees and it is this process that will be followed to ensure full compliance with all the requirements of the Act.
- 9.4 While this paper recommends that statutory consultations be progressed, these consultations are shaped by extensive informal engagement and reporting.

### **St Catherine's RC Primary School**

- 9.5 In summer of 2019, people living and working in the Gracemount area were asked to take part in the "My Gracemount" consultation. This engagement was undertaken with a view to considering how investment in the area, including the

£12.802m then allocated to rebuild St Catherine’s RC Primary School, could be used to improve local service delivery. In summary, key outcomes included a need to improve public space and the connectivity of public spaces in a way that supports walking and cycling, provides playparks and access to affordable physical activities.

- 9.6 Further engagement following the conclusion of the “My Gracemount” process was put on hold during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, in May 2023 a new engagement with the communities in Gracemount sought views on possible locations for the new school as well as building on the “My Gracemount” outputs by asking how the new school could best support wider use and provide additional community benefit and value for the local area. Analysis of the outcomes of this latest engagement are contained in Appendix 1.

### **A new primary school at Builyeon Road, Queensferry**

- 9.7 A Stakeholder Reference Group was established in March 2022 to consider how best to engage with the wider Queensferry community on this issue. The group, made up of parent representatives from all schools in Queensferry, the Community Council and other community groups, identified that the critical issue was whether South Scotstoun should feed to the new school or remain part of Queensferry Primary School’s catchment. Concerns were raised that crossing from the South Scotstoun area to the Builyeon Road site was a hazardous journey for young children.
- 9.8 The consultation paper will set out alternative catchment options for the new school. The consultation paper will also set out the measures that will be taken to mitigate concerns raised to date about travel to and from the new school site – particularly from South Scotstoun.
- 9.9 The community will be asked for their views on each of these options. There is not currently a preferred option for this school, with the options being prepared to reflect the most reasonable and appropriate ways of achieving the goal of sufficiently reducing pressure on Queensferry Primary School and providing all schools in Queensferry with sustainable catchment areas.

### **A New Secondary School in Kirkliston**

- 9.10 In late 2017, the Council consulted with the Kirkliston community on three alternative secondary school options for Kirkliston:
- A new secondary school in West Edinburgh at the International Business Gateway (IBG) site;
  - A new secondary school in Winchburgh;
  - A new secondary school at Ratho Station.
- 9.11 No clear preference was established however, through this engagement, a new school in Kirkliston was proposed as an alternative
- 9.12 In January 2023, an engagement process asked people in Queensferry and Kirkliston for their views on two potential solutions:



- Extend Queensferry High School to accommodate up to 1,800 pupils; or
- Build a new secondary school in Kirkliston or West Edinburgh for pupils from Kirkliston.

- 9.13 On 27 April 2023, a report to the Council’s Education, Children and Families Committee summarised that the key message arising from this engagement was that there should be a new secondary school built in Kirkliston. Several people also suggested Kirkliston Leisure Centre as a potential site for a new high school.
- 9.14 Informal engagement in June 2023 asked people in Kirkliston if the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site was a good site for a new secondary school. The engagement included a public information event and was advertised widely, including flyers to approximately 450 properties around the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site. A summary of the responses to this engagement are attached as Appendix 2.
- 9.15 A limited engagement with the Ratho and Ratho Station communities has suggested very little support for any proposal that would see either Hillwood Primary School or Ratho Primary School feed to a new secondary school in Kirkliston. Ratho Parent Council undertook their own online survey and received 144 responses, 131 (91%) were not in favour of any change and wished to remain part of Balerno High School’s catchment.

## 10. Background reading/external references

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- 10.1 [Report](#): Future Queensferry and Kirkliston Secondary School Provision Engagement Outcomes, Education, Children and Families Committee, 27 April 2023.
- 10.2 [Report](#): Learning Estate Update: 2022 based School Roll Projections and Secondary Capacity Review, Education, Children and Families Committee, 27 April 2023.
- 10.3 [Report](#): Capital Investment Programme 2019/20 to 2023/24, Finance and Resources Committee, 1 February 2019.
- 10.4 [Council Webpage](#): New Kirkliston high school on the Kirkliston leisure centre site
- 10.5 [Council Webpage](#): Future secondary school provision for Kirkliston and Queensferry areas
- 10.6 [Document](#): Edinburgh Local Development Plan Action Programme, April 2023, p17.

## 11. Appendices

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- 11.1 **Appendix 1**: Summary of Responses to the Informal Engagement on site options for St Catherine’s RC Primary School.
- 11.2 **Appendix 2**: Summary of Responses to the Informal Engagement on Secondary School Provision for Kirkliston.

## Appendix 1: Summary of Responses to the Informal Engagement on site options for St Catherine's RC Primary School

# New St Catherine's RC Primary School

## RESPONSES SUMMARY

### Purpose of this paper

Due to the poor condition of the St Catherine's RC Primary School building, its replacement was agreed in 2019. We asked parents of children at St Catherine's RC Primary School and people in the Gracemount area to give us their views on what they thought of proposed locations for the replacement primary school. The options considered were as follows:

- 1) *Redevelopment of the existing St Catherine's RC Primary School site*
- 2) *Redevelopment of the pitches behind Gracemount Leisure Centre*
- 3) *Redevelopment of the South East Neighbourhood Office*
- 4) *Other options*

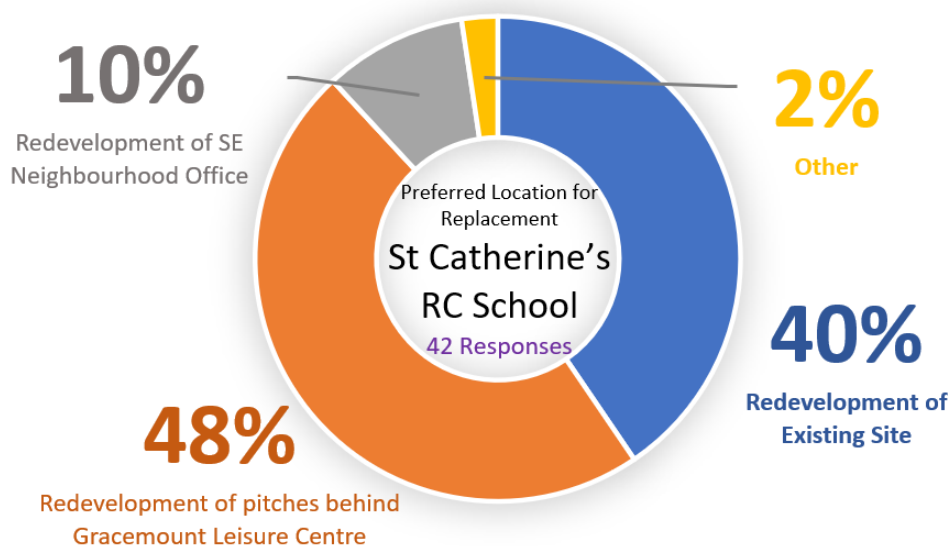
To understand the role a new St Catherine's Primary School building could have in improving community facilities and service provision, we also asked people about existing services in the area.

This paper summarises the responses we received.

### 1. Summary

#### 11.3 Response Summary

We received 42 responses to our online survey. We also received comments from our in-person engagement events. This chart shows what people told us from the survey the best solution would be:



## 11.4 Key Messages

These are the key messages that we took from the 42 responses we received:

a) *Redevelopment of the pitches behind Gracemount Leisure Centre*

This was the preferred option (48%) followed by redevelopment of the existing school site (40%).

b) *Local services in the area are reasonably well used but could work better for the community.*

Respondents indicated that they made good use of Gracemount Leisure Centre but very little use of Valley Park Community Centre.

Respondents reported that they occasionally accessed the library in the South East Locality Office but that they rarely accessed other services in that building.

## 2. Site Options and Considerations

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### 2.1 Identifying the preferred site option for the replacement St Catherine's RC Primary School

20 (48%) of all responses stated or indicated that building a replacement St Catherine's RC Primary School on the pitches behind Gracemount Leisure Centre would be their preferred solution. 31 (74%) of the people responding to the survey were parent/carers.

From our in-person engagement some of the reasons people supported the site on the pitches behind the Leisure Centre were:

1) Better access and less traffic

a. A separate access road to the school and better active travel links.

2) Direct link to Leisure Centre

a. Better links with the Leisure Centre and other services were considered benefits.

3) Sharing areas with Gracemount Primary

a. Sharing outdoor areas with Gracemount Primary and creating safe spaces

### 2.2 Redevelop the existing St Catherine's School Site

40% of respondents felt that it would be simpler to use the existing school site. However, others felt they would prefer a new build elsewhere as this would involve less disruption for the children.

### 2.3 Redevelopment of the South East Neighbourhood Office site

10% of respondents supported the idea of redeveloping the South East Neighbourhood office site. However, others raised concerns regarding the proximity to the busy Captain's Road.

### 2.4 Other options suggested.

2% of respondent suggested that an alternative site was required. Redevelopment of the Mansion House site was suggested as a possibility.

### 3. Understanding how services in the area are used

#### 3.1 Use of Key Council and Partner Buildings

We asked how frequently people used the nearby services/facilities, if at all. The table below highlights to what extent the services are used by the people responding to the survey.

How often do you use the following local services and facilities?

<i>Services/Facilities</i>	<i>Very often</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Not answered</i>
<i>Library (SE Locality Office)</i>	–	10%	31%	29%	29%	2%
<i>Other SE Locality Office facilities</i>	2%	–	14%	29%	48%	7%
<i>Valley Park Community Centre</i>	2%	17%	21%	21%	33%	5%
<i>Gracemount Leisure Centre</i>	26%	31%	26%	14%	2%	–

Reasons that were given for not using the facilities included:

- The Leisure Centre being too expensive.
- The library/facilities are too small
- Valley Park does not have classes of interest.
- Too busy
- Distance
- Opening hours

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*“They are my local facilities and it is very convenient to use sport centre especially for kids coaching classes.”*

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## **Comments from respondent on why the don't use some local services/facilities...**

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*“Gracemount Leisure Centre is nearest pool for local community and needed. Good spaces, good usage with a wider range of services offered inside. Centre could do more for Council & local area if funding available including more prevention activities to support NHS referrals. Return on investment known around the benefits of physical activity and its a cheaper method of support before people end up in hospital.*

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*“The prices for activities at the leisure centre are far too expensive, especially when you have more than one child. They only offer 30 minute blocks for swimming lessons, which by the time they are in and out the pool is only 20 minutes, and with one child with additional needs, its stressful getting them ready and in the pool just to be in it for 20 minutes. At around £25 per month per child, non service during holidays, it's too expensive for what they get. It's cheaper to go for a regular family swim for an hour. They always have really long waiting lists too as there are too many kids in the area wanting limited places.*

*We don't use the library as we use Kindle Unlimited. We are big readers, but for us it's more convenient to use Kindles.”*

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*“Library is small. I use Craigmillar instead with my young daughter. Valley Park does not have classes which interest me.*

*Gracemount Leisure Centre is not affordable to me.”*

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*“I would use the library at Gilmerton as it is bigger, more selection. I don't know what is available at Valley Park.”*

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*“Library has gone down hill over the last few years as staff are also dealing with members of the public using the other facilities.”*

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*“Opening hours”*

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*“Since the pandemic I have not left my house at all. Before then I was ready to start using the leisure centre pool. I have occasionally used the library and the south offices.”*

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*“The range of materials at the Central Library suits me better, the community centre I use depends on the activity taking place there and I take exercise in a variety of ways.”*

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*“Didn't know they were there”*

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*“Only use leisure centre for children's activities”.*

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#### 4. Priorities for a new St Catherine’s RC Primary School

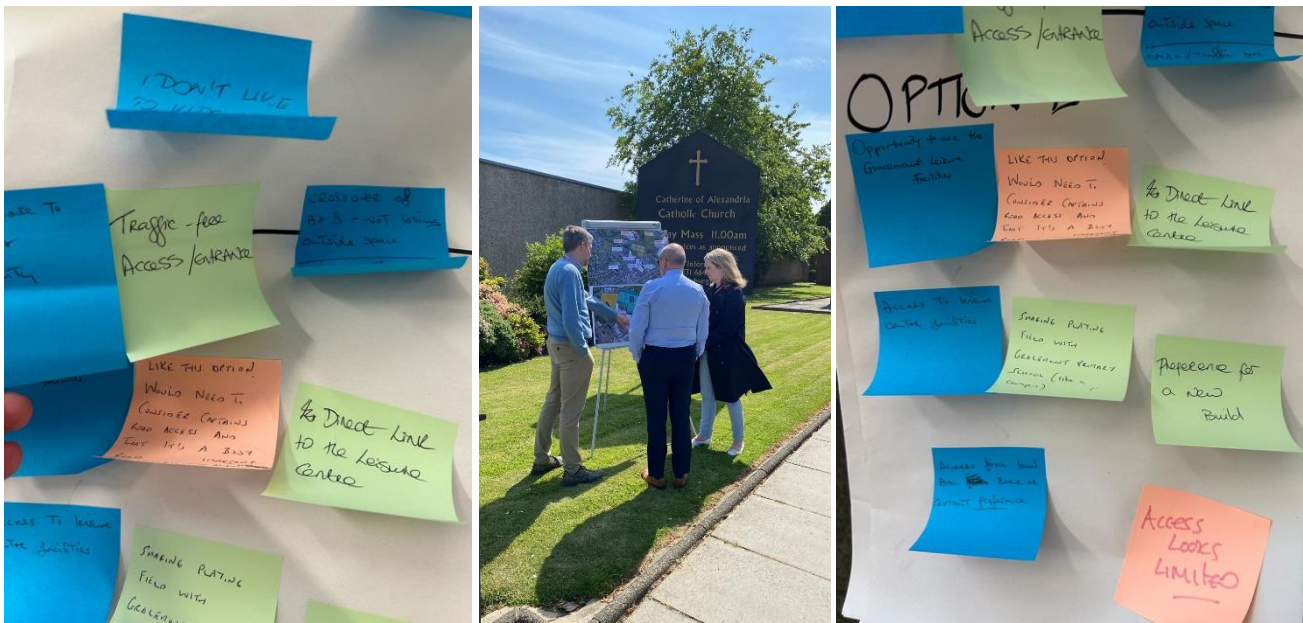
We asked people responding to the survey to provide 3 words that they would like to be able to use to describe the replacement school. The graphic below shows the responses:



#### 5. Engagement Events

Engagement events that took place included:

- Parent Forum engagement event at St Catherine’s RC Primary School– Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June 6pm to 7.30pm
- Drop-in coffee event at St Catherine’s Church Hall – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1pm to 4pm



# Future Secondary School Provision – Proposal to build a New High School on the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site.

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## **RESPONSES SUMMARY**

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### **Purpose of this paper**

In response to a previous engagement process regarding future secondary school provision in Queensferry and Kirkliston, City of Edinburgh Council received significant feedback expressing support for a new High School in the Kirkliston area. Several respondents highlighted the opportunity to redevelop the existing Leisure Centre site for this purpose. As a result of this feedback, we commissioned an Architect to develop a viability study for this site and asked people to give us their views on whether they thought this was a suitable site for a new High School, alongside the new Early Years and Primary School building currently under construction.

The questions we asked:

- Do you think Kirkliston Leisure Centre is a good site for a new High School?
- Are there other sites in or around Kirkliston we should be considering for a high School?
- How could we make a new school in the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site a facility for the whole community.
- What do you think about replacing older buildings like Kirkliston Leisure Centre, Kirkliston Library and Kirkliston?

This paper summarises the responses we received.

The Council's response to the feedback we received, and our next steps are set out in a separate report considered by the Education, Children and Families Committee on 5 September 2023. This report is called, "Learning Estate Update: Statutory Consultations required for St Catherine's Primary School, a new Primary School in Queensferry and a new Kirkliston High School".

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- 3.1 Alternative site suggestions in and around Kirkliston.



#### **4.0 A new High School as a facility for the whole community**

4.1 The needs and aspirations of the local community

#### **5.0 Replacement of older buildings: Leisure Centre, Library and Community Centre**

5.1 Potential to relocate facilities and services as part of a new High School campus.

#### **6.0 Other comments**

#### **7.0 Criticism of the Council**



# 1. Summary

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## 1.1 Key Messages

These are the key messages that we took from the responses we received:

### c) *Build A New High School in Kirkliston*

Most people support the need for a new high school in Kirkliston, just not on the leisure centre site. Key concerns about the redevelopment of the leisure centre site is that it would add to congestion, impact on local residents, reduce greenspace and sports provision, and that the overall site is too small.

### d) *Alternative Sites for a High School*

Many alternative sites were suggested for the development of a new school to the North, East, and South of the village that people felt would be less disruptive to residents and better serve the community's needs and aspirations.

### e) *Community Hub facilities*

There is support for locating all community facilities and services in one location. However, there were also concerns about the loss of much valued assets from the High Street that were deemed more accessible, as well as concerns about any reduction in services/activities during school hours.

## 1.2 Response Summary

We received 177 responses to our online survey. We also received 5 emails and 4 flyer returns. This chart shows what people think about the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site for a High School.

2%

EXPRESSED NO  
PREFERENCE

62%

NOT SUITABLE  
FOR A NEW  
HIGH SCHOOL



36%

SUITABLE  
FOR A NEW  
HIGH SCHOOL

Kirkliston  
Leisure Centre  
Site  
ALL  
186 responses

We used people's postcodes<sup>1</sup> to see if where they lived made a difference to their preference. A significant number of respondents who do not think the leisure site is a good site option came

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<sup>1</sup> 11 of the 186 responses did not indicate where they lived. 5 responses came from areas outside Kirkliston.  
Education, Children and Families Committee – 5 September 2023

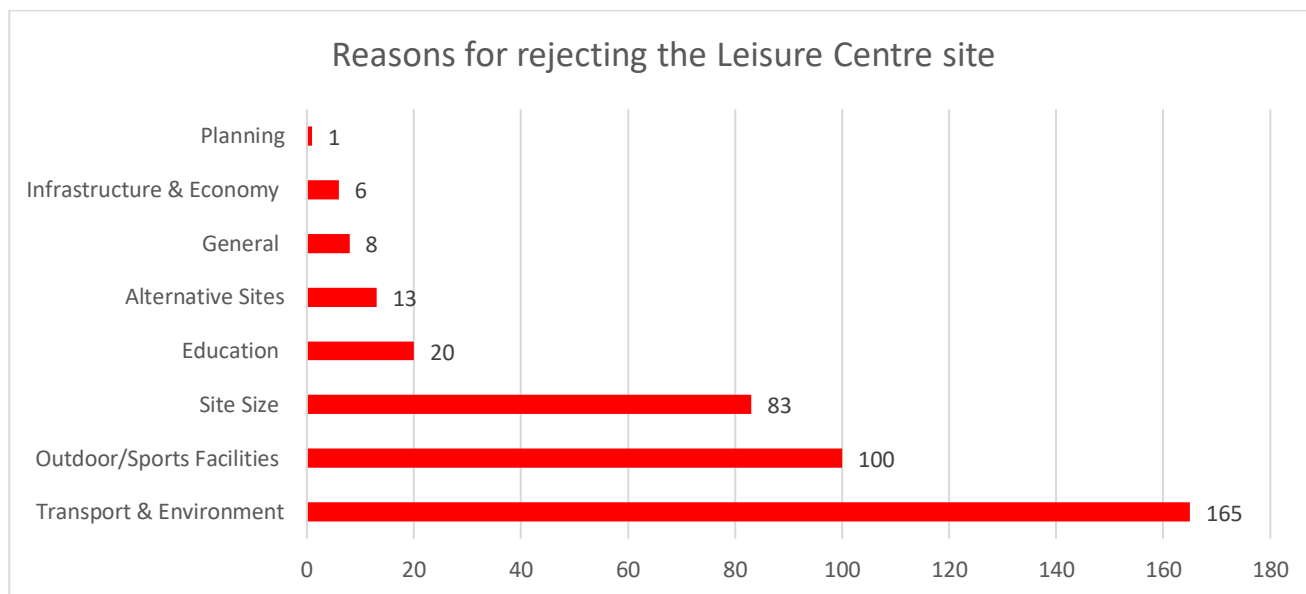
from residents around the area proposed for redevelopment. This is the area where a leaflet drop advertising the proposal targeted every home and so a greater response was anticipated from this area.

Outside of this area 58% of respondents felt that the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site was suitable for a new high school.

## 2. Suitability of Kirkliston Leisure Centre site

### 2.1 Majority do not support the redevelopment of the site for a new high school.

116 (62%) of all responses stated or indicated that they did not support the redevelopment of the Leisure Centre site for a new High School. The chart below shows the reasons given for rejecting this option:



#### 4) Increased traffic congestion and impact on the local environment.

People said that traffic congestion and lack of suitable infrastructure is a concern and building a high school on the leisure centre site would only make the situation worse, with insufficient parking for staff and school buses, and pupil drop-off. The new high school is too close to residential properties and would be noisy and disruptive for residents living in the surrounding area. People also thought noise from the motorway and historic flooding make this an unsuitable site for a new high school.

#### 5) Loss of greenspace and sports provision.

People said that the open green space and pitch is well used and valued by the local community. The loss of leisure facilities during the construction period would not be acceptable due to the lack of any other facilities available locally.

#### 6) Size of the proposed Leisure Centre site.

The site is below the recommend size and people felt there is insufficient space for everything required for a new school let alone community use as well and assumed that community access would be restricted to out of school hours.

Other reasons for not supporting a high school on the leisure centre site included:

- Too close to the new nursery/primary annexe which is deemed inappropriate.
- Better alternative sites available.
- Not deemed in the best interests of the village or local children.

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*“1. Traffic Congestion and poor road infrastructure would only add to the major issues with traffic in Kirkliston especially on main street, it can already take 20 minutes to travel from Leisure centre to crossroads at peak times.*

*2. As a nearby resident very concerned at the noise levels, congestion, and car parking in residential areas.*

*3. There appears to be complete lack of car parking spaces required for staff and visitors on the proposed plans. I object to this location.”*

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## **People who do not support a new High School on the Leisure Centre site said...**

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*“...regards to the potential loss of the 11 a side football pitch...Kirkliston & South Queensferry (KSQ)space is already at a premium. The club has grown significantly in the last 10 years...and now has more than 600 children from the community who play for KSQ.”*

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*“The site is too small, it will take the leisure facilities away during the day and the traffic will be horrendous at drop off and pick up times.”*

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*““Although I do not oppose the requirement for a new school in Kirkliston or surrounding area. I am of the professional opinion that the site is not suitable for either interim use of approx. 600 pupils or future 1200 pupils for the location and density of the indicative four storey on the site.”*

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*“The Leisure Centre site whilst the relatively speedy option, still does not tick all the needful. Understanding that the council does own the Leisure Centre property, we will still need to locate proper playing fields. Further to this, there are still infrastructure shortfalls such as an inordinate amount of traffic which would impact teachers and any potential pupils coming from other schools that will potentially be the catchment”.*

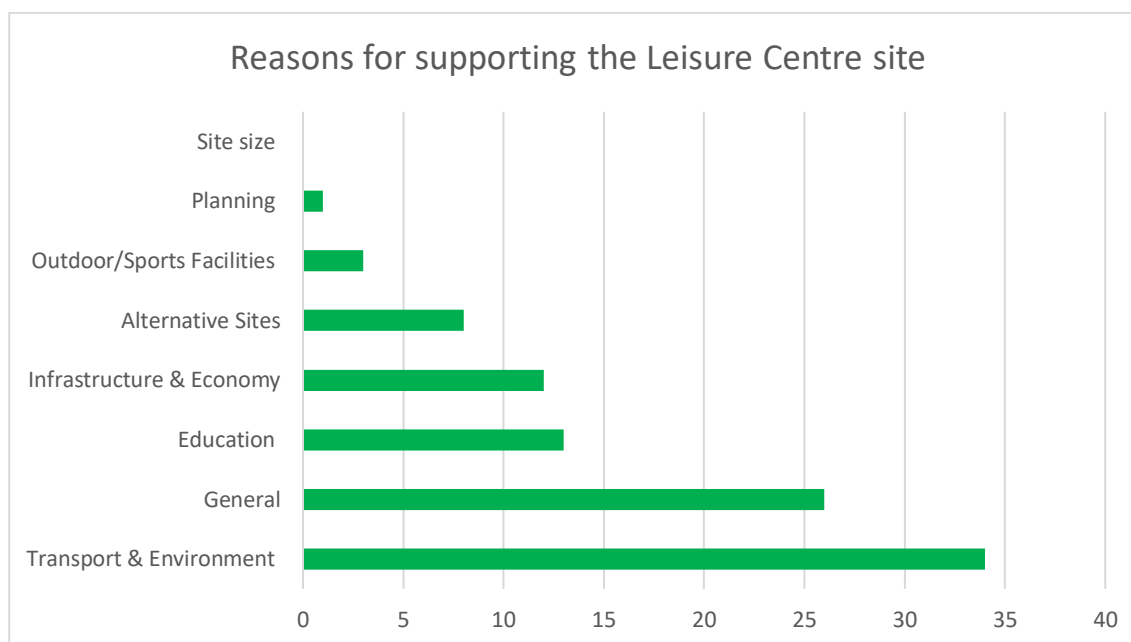
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*“Proximity to the motorway, inappropriate infrastructure, horrendous traffic management, removal of one of the only green areas Kirkliston has which is well used by local groups, families and children, existing pickup point for South Queensferry HS pupils, adjacent to local flooding area.”*

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## 2.2 Support for a high school on this site

67 (38%) of respondents expressed support for the redevelopment of the Leisure Centre site for a new High School. The chart below summaries the reasons why:



- 1) Easily accessible walking, cycling etc to school. Close to the Primary school, for ease of transition.
- 2) A sense of the Leisure Centre site being the only option as no alternative sites agreed or timescales determined.
- 3) Protects the greenbelt area from further development.

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*“Close to the primary school, would tie in early years, primary and high school together easing transitions and allowing flow through all sections”.*

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### People who do support a new High School on the Leisure Centre site said...

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*“By building on the leisure centre site it means a school can be built more quickly - ability to just get on with it as opposed to dragging out the process. Sense that if this isn't done at the leisure centre site it'll be far too many years before anything will get done”*

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*“It's a brilliant idea, it's so good for families in Kirkliston and near, walking distance, nice area, good for community, environment”*

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*“- the council currently own it  
- it doesn't build on green belt  
- no further building of house developments is likely with this option whereas it is likely with building on east side of town  
- it makes sense to replace the leisure centre with a community centre and sports facility.”*

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*“There doesn't seem to be anywhere else in the village which is a suitable site and a high school is definitely needed as the village continues to grow.”*

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## Appendix 2: Summary of Responses to the Informal Engagement on Secondary School Provision for Kirkliston

### 3. Alternative sites in and around Kirkliston

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#### 3.1 Many respondents felt there were better alternative sites more suitable for a new high school.

Of the 157 responses, 96 people suggested alternative locations for a new high school:

**1) In the village:**

The existing primary school site and/or Allison Park.

Play area as part of the new housing, previously proposed for a second primary school.

**2) North of the village:**

South of the Motorway near the railway track and dog run area.

North of the railway bridge heading towards Queensferry.

**3) South of the village:**

Below of the Scout Hut towards Newbridge.

Behind the car village at Newbridge.

**4) East of the village:**

One of the sites out the Burnshot Road including Almondhill.

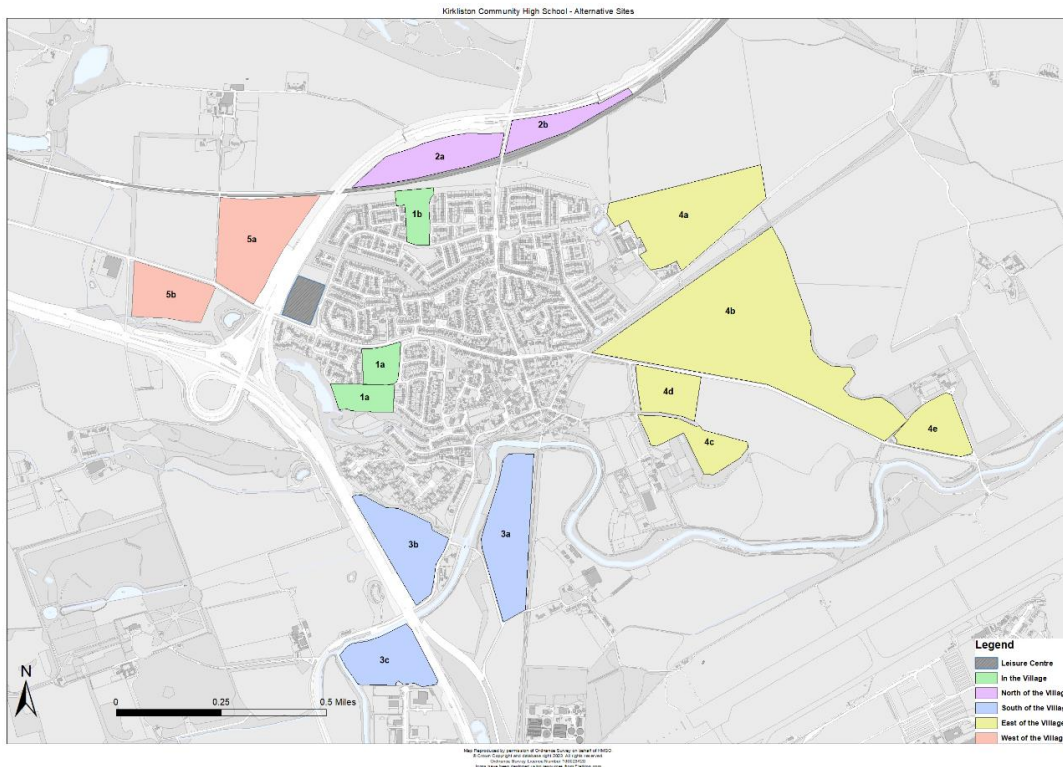
Lower fields opposite Conifox, next to Foxhall.

Out the Airport Road over the burn

**5) West of the village:**

Fields beyond the motorway heading towards Winchburgh

The map below highlights the locations suggested in and around Kirkliston:



- The former Ministry of Defence site at Craigiehall was also proposed as part of a West Edinburgh solution but has not been captured on the map due to the distance from the village.
- Utilisation of capacity within Winchburgh was also proposed, but not shown on the map.
- Sites at Foxhall and Ratho currently under development have also been excluded.

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*“A larger site, say off Burnshot road or at the north of the village would be preferable. One where a school with all the required footprint/facilities/transport links could be met without causing huge amounts of taxpayer’s money to be spent on a facility which is unsuitable.”*

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- “there’s a site in easy walking distance at the back(west) of the car village Newbridge on A8 and B800.*
- 2. B800 prior to entering village on left side(west) prior to Scouts Hut.*
  - 3. Old tyre factory Newbridge.*
  - 4. Field on Old airport Road.”*
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*“1. Demolish all/part of existing primary school and use this site and Alison Park, although this would still result in same traffic congestion issues*

*2. Burnshot Road”*

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## **Alternative site suggestions...**

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*““The land beside Foxhall or towards the North of the village. Conscious this will open up risk of developers and loss of green space...”*

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*“The road from Queensferry to Kirkliston  
The Road from Kirkliston to Carlowrie Castle  
The Road from Kirkliston to the Traffic Lights at Newbridge.”*

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## 4. A new High School as a facility for the whole community

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### 4.1 The needs and aspirations of the local community

Many people felt there was a lack of facilities and activities available in Kirkliston to support the needs of a growing community and welcomed the opportunity to improve what is on offer in the local area.

Feedback has been summarised below:

- Space for everyone with Open Access (daytime, evenings and weekends)
- Improved and Inclusive Sports and Leisure Facilities: Swimming Pool, Fitness Gym, Multi-purpose space for Dance, Gymnastics, Martial Arts, Racquet Sports etc.
- Pitches, Kick About and Play Spaces.
- Theatre, Performance and Events Space.
- Café and safe Social Spaces.
- Library, Wellness Hub and Community Spaces including meeting rooms and bookable facilities.
- Classes/Workshops/Clubs for all ages.

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*“Incorporate leisure facilities, library and Community Hub into the building in a manner that extends the opening hours and service offered by each individually, i.e. a positive sum outcome.”*

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### What people felt would make a High School a facility for the whole community...

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*“yes a good idea if the facility if available during school hours, properly built with a good sized gym with proper equipment - not just a set up for school children, similar to the SQH or recently built Winchburgh HS where there are restrictions on the type of equipment and free weights because it is available to school children, it needs to be designed for the community access in mind too. Some studios - 1 or 2 would be good for classes. The current leisure facility holds many popular classes with local residents and children's gymnastics, etc. we don't want to lose these!!*

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*“Good sport facilities that can be used by all. Addition of library with family classes - bookbug etc. - allow local groups to run classes in the evening eg scouts, guides etc.”*

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*“You need to ensure that members of the community have access to leisure facilities - the leisure centre is very heavily used and this should not be taken from us. The opportunity for any drama society that might already exist (or be created) to use a stage like facility at the new school would be appreciated, I would think. A café would also be good, especially as a social space were some of those individuals who live alone can meet others. Somewhere that parents can rent to hold birthday parties etc would be beneficial as I know the leisure centre is already used in this way...”*

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## 5. Replacement of older community facilities: Leisure Centre, Library and Community Centre

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### 5.1 Potential to relocate or share other facilities and services as part of a new High School campus.

Comments received were mixed, whilst many could see the benefit of having everything in one location, other people were concerned about the loss of facilities from the high street.

Overall, 92 (54%) responses were supportive of the idea of a Community Hub, if it did not compromise spaces or facilities required for the school, was available to the community during the school day, resulted in a net increase in affordable activities/services on offer, public transport to and from the hub was improved and the existing buildings were re-purposed.

However, approximately a third of the respondents above (32), although supportive of the principle of a Community Hub, felt the Leisure Centre site is not suitable for this purpose.

Key reasons given for supporting the idea of a Community Hub:

- New and modern facilities associated with a new High School
- Greater range of facilities and activities on offer in one location.
- A more sustainable option.
- Frees up existing buildings for other purposes.

59 (35%) of the respondents did not think the relocation of other services was a good idea.

Key reasons given for objecting to the relocation of other facilities:

- The Leisure Centre site is too small for a High School, with insufficient space for anything else.
- Existing historic buildings are part of Kirkliston's character, located in the heart of the village and easier to access.
- Sharing space and facilities with the High School will restrict community access to out of school hours.
- There is a shortage of community spaces and facilities in the village, a spread of assets also disperses traffic.
- A school environment is intimidating and a potential barrier for older people.

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*“In theory yes, but definitely not on that site. As stated, it is not big enough for a school, let alone additional facilities. Also moving those facilities provides not a single additional service to the community..... How about supporting the local Village Hall initiative, which is trying to build a multi-use space in the heart of Kirkliston. That would be actual new services that the Village desperately needs, instead of rehashing the existing services (and no doubt reducing them in the process). The Leisure Centre, due to the way it operates, provides little support to community groups in the area. The Community Centre team are fantastic, but fully booked in terms of the rooms they have to offer. Kirkliston is crying out for more community spaces provided at non-commercial rates!*

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*“Makes sense as long as it still retains all of the facilities. Would open up opportunities for businesses to move into existing buildings.”*

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*“That will be even perfect, one stop destination for all.”*

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*“I think we should continue to use the existing nursery as a community centre provision, the village lacks halls space and the nursery moving opens up opportunity to expand the community centre”*

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## **What people said about replacing existing facilities...**

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*“I think that’s a great idea, modernisation is key! Key for the future children to keep involved in these places. And if everything is in one place it’s easier for people to get there and maybe visit a few places rather than driving all over the place.”*

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*“I think this takes away from the community element of the village. It compresses opportunities and strains available space/equipment. It also removes current beloved elements of the village...”*

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## 6. Other comments about a new High School in Kirkliston

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As part of the online survey, we asked people:

**“Do you have any other comments or thoughts about a new Kirkliston High School?”**

This is a summary of the themes that people brought up in their responses:

### 1) High School design and capacity

- Build in sufficient capacity for a growing community. There are lessons to be learnt from West Lothian and their new Winchburgh schools.
- A 600-pupil capacity school is too small, with a single feeder primary school, examples of other successful models need to be provided and remote partnership models explored, to demonstrate pupils and families in Kirkliston will not be disadvantaged.
- Ensure the school design is inclusive and safe for neuro divergent pupils and other users.

### 2) Traffic/ Congestion

- Road infrastructure needs improved. A slip road to and from motorway would improve traffic management and reduce environmental impact.
- Public transport needs improved and the introduction of car sharing initiatives for teachers or a community e-bus.

### 4) Growth

- A new high school should have been delivered by developers as part of the additional housing growth.

### 5) Planning

- The Council is fighting its own planning policy and is being held to ransom by landowners/developers.

### 6) This is a matter for Kirkliston residents only and should not involve Ratho.

## 7. Criticism of the Council

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Several critical comments were received. Most of these related to the Council's planning, the decision-making process, and the time taken to progress the capacity required.

- The consultation document presents the Leisure Centre and as the only option, and is a 'done deal'.
- A 600 capacity High School is too small and will not deliver the required breadth and depth of curriculum choices or social interaction.
- It's taken too long to deliver a High School which is needed urgently.
- Lack of transparency and trust in the decision-making process.

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*"When the consultation for either an expansion for South Queensferry high school or a new school in Kirkliston was undertaken, the proposals clearly stated other preferred locations in Kirkliston for a new school, and not at the leisure centre. For this now to be the only option being pushed is incredulous.*

*There seems to be the view that a school at the leisure centre site is the only option available and will be built there regardless of how unsuitable it is.."*

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*"...Can I remind the council that some of the children in Kirkliston attend St Margaret's RC Primary School in South Queensferry. There is no mention of this school or thought for our children. The documents state that the High School will be for only one primary. What does this mean for the children of St Margaret's? Or have they been forgotten again?*

*I fear people are going to accept this not because it is the best option but because they are desperate. We are running out of time to sort this before our kids who have already lost so much education due to covid then find themselves without a high school to go to. This needs swifter action and a lot more thought..."*

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*"...you're building on the site now and that doesn't auger well for clarity integrity and trust in political decisions for what your planning. I don't want corrupt practices in anything the council does but recent events leave me uncomfortable with this process.."*

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### People criticising the Council said...

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*"The council is a disgrace in planning. Utterly disappointed beyond belief. It hasn't invested in Kirkliston for anything. Everything is a quick band aid. Shocking..."*

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*"For once do some proper planning and delivery that can include the infrastructure the village badly needs even at the cost of new houses. commit to a village bypass, new shops, high school, additional primary school, tram and or rail link to Edinburgh. Be bold and build for the future instead of a cheap option that ticks a box for today but not for tomorrow..."*

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*“I don't believe that the idea of a separate high school for Kirkliston is an acceptable solution, educationally or socially. Having a secondary school with a catchment area of a single village and single primary school would not expose the students to the variety and diversity that is crucial in developing well-balanced and worldly citizens. It is shocking that the Council seems to have backed itself into a corner in this, missing previous opportunities to ensure that there are adequate educational facilities in West Edinburgh to support all of the additional housing that the Council itself has approved.*

*Sadly, we've seen all this before, and the view of many local residents is that - despite protestations to the contrary - this is already a "done deal", and the Council will take the easy solution rather than the correct one. Time will tell.”*

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*“Once more. A 600 person school is a poor idea. Including other outlying communities being bused in is not great. You had an opportunity to include Kirkliston in the west Edinburgh plan, within the west Craig's development. You had the chance to find a site which would create a school for all communities in west Edinburgh and more importantly create an education provision for all. We all know that the smaller the school the less can be offered. I am 100% certain that the locals saying "build a wee high school in Kirkliston" know nothing about the education value, or lack thereof, in a small high school.*

*One other thing. Well done making a pig's ear of the new Kirkliston PS, the new QHS and the new nursery. Not sure why this would be any different!!!”*

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*“...Only CEC will know what they own where they can build what their options are. Also would have thought it would be their duty to have considered this whilst signing off the approval to build family homes, fully expecting those to bring families with children needing schools to the village...”*

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