

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 7 November 2023

Cameron House Nursery Closure Proposal

Executive/routine
Wards

Executive
15 – Southside/Newington

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to approve:
 - 1.1.1 Undertaking a statutory consultation, according to the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, proposing the formal closure of Cameron House Nursery School; and
 - 1.1.2 Giving delegated authority to the Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services to finalise and publish the draft statutory consultation paper (Appendix 1) proposing the formal closure of Cameron House Nursery School, subject to any changes agreed by this Committee.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Robbie Crockatt, Strategic Asset Planning Manager

E-mail: Robbie.crockatt@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3051

Cameron House Nursery Closure Proposal

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Cameron House Nursery School was registered as 'inactive' in 2019 as there were only four children due to attend. The four children moved to nearby Prestonfield Nursery and Cameron House has remained 'inactive' since. With capacity available at Prestonfield Nursery, Cameron House is now no longer required. The significant maintenance investment required for the Cameron House nursery building does not offer best value for the Council. No other Council service has expressed an interest in using the Cameron House nursery building.
- 2.2 Committee approval is sought to progress a statutory consultation proposing the formal closure of Cameron House Nursery School. The consultation will be conducted according to the requirements set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

3. Background

- 3.1 Cameron House Nursery School is located within the Prestonfield area of the city. Access to the building is via a steep staircase off Cameron House Avenue. There is no vehicular access to the site.
- 3.2 Cameron House Nursery School is located 300 metres from Prestonfield Primary School where there is recently expanded nursery provision.
- 3.3 In 2019, Cameron House Nursery's roll had dropped to four children who moved to the nearby Prestonfield Nursery. Cameron House Nursery was registered as 'inactive' and has not been in use since.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Cameron House Nursery was registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a maximum of 28 places.
- 4.2 Demand for nursery places in the area peaked in 2022 and is predicted to fall over the next two years, not reaching the levels experienced in 2022 for at least 10

years. Given current provision has met this peak demand, there is no need to mothball Cameron House Nursery for future capacity requirements.

- 4.3 Prior to becoming 'inactive' in 2019, the number of children attending Cameron House Nursery had been falling due to more accessible provision in the area including the newly expanded nursery classes at Prestonfield Primary School.
- 4.4 In September 2023, the Cameron House Nursery building was vandalised and suffered fire damage. There are concerns locally that the empty building will continue to attract anti-social behaviour.
- 4.5 Accordingly, with no requirement for the capacity offered by the Cameron House Nursery building; poor accessibility to the site; ongoing costs associated with an old building; the investment required to bring it into operational use; and the potential for it to attract anti-social behaviour; it is proposed that Cameron House Nursery be formally closed.
- 4.6 Enquiries to date suggest no interest from other Council services in retaining the building for other operational purposes. Final recommendations on the future use of the building will be made in the outcomes report following the statutory consultation process.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Should Committee approve the recommendations in this report and subject to any changes requested by Committee, the draft consultation paper, attached as Appendix 1, will be finalised for sign-off by the Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services. The paper would then be distributed to affected stakeholders as part of a statutory consultation process.
- 5.2 The consultation, which will be conducted according to the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, will run for a six week period from Monday 13 November 2023 to Friday 22 December 2023. During this time, people will be invited to give their views on the proposal either in writing or at a public meeting.
- 5.3 A report setting out the outcomes of this consultation would be returned to the Education, Children and Families Committee in April 2024.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 This paper seeks approval to progress a consultation. 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.
- 6.2 However, in the long-term, disposal of the Cameron House Nursery building as an outcome of the consultation process could result in a capital receipt for the Council

and a reduction in revenue costs, while retaining the building would commit the Council to the costs associated with upgrading and maintaining it.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 Should Committee approve the recommendations in this report, an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) will be undertaken as part of the 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 incorporated 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 16 April 2024. This will allow Committee to consider whether the process followed has met the appropriate equality standards, policies and legislation and how any recommendations have considered these requirements.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 This report seeks approval to progress a consultation only. The decisions taken by the Education, Children and Families Committee in approving the recommendations 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, disposal of the Cameron House Nursery building as an outcome of the consultation process could contribute to the Council's Net Zero targets.

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

- 9.1 This report seeks approval to progress a consultation that will allow the Prestonfield and other communities to have their say on the future of Cameron House Nursery. Accordingly, the recommendation that this consultation be approved to progress is consistent with the Council's commitment to ensuring that everyone's voices are heard and listened to.
- 9.2 The consultation 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 for a closure such as is proposed are set out in full in the Act.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 No background reading or references are available.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Draft Statutory Consultation Paper proposing the closure of Cameron House Nursery.

Appendix 1 - Draft Statutory Consultation Paper proposing the closure of Cameron House Nursery



Proposal to Close Cameron House Nursery.

Affecting Prestonfield Primary School Nursery

This consultation paper is divided into the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Background and Context
3. Roll Projections, Catchment Data and Capacity Analysis
4. Details of Proposal
5. Implications for Existing Early Years Provision
6. Educational Benefits
7. Financial Considerations
8. Indicative Timescales
9. Consultation Process

Appendices

1. Location Map
2. Response Questionnaire

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation paper sets out the rationale for, and implications of, the proposal to close Cameron House Nursery. The paper sets out the consultation process and the means and timescales for making representations.
- 1.2 In summary the proposal is to close Cameron House Nursery which has not been in use since 2019.
- 1.3 Comments on the proposal should be submitted by close of business on Friday 22nd December 2023. A response questionnaire is available online for this purpose which respondents are encouraged to use. The questionnaire can be completed online via the Council Consultation Hub:
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cameronhousenursery



A paper copy of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix 2 and this can also be submitted by e-mail or post to the addresses set out in Section 8 of this paper.

- 1.4 One public meeting will be held as follows.

Venue: Prestonfield Primary School, Wednesday 29th November 2023 6.30pm to 8.30pm

- 1.5 Further details of which are provided in Section 11.

2 Background and Context

- 2.1 In 2019, Cameron House Nursery's role had dropped to four children. The four children moved to the nearby Prestonfield Nursery and Cameron House Nursery was registered as 'inactive'. It has remained unused since. The map in Appendix 1 shows Cameron House Nursery's location and surrounding Early Years Facilities.
- 2.2 Prior to 2019, the number of children attending Cameron House Nursery had been falling due to more accessible provision in the area including the newly expanded Nursery at Prestonfield Primary School some 300 metres away.
- 2.3 Cameron House Nursery was registered with the Care Inspectorate, providing 28 places. It is accessed via a steep lane and steps which is not fit for purpose. There is no vehicular access to the site.
- 2.4 Cameron House Nursery was built in 1937 and has 'B' listing status due to the stained-glass panels, designed and made by renowned Scottish artist William Wilson.
- 2.5 A condition survey, carried out in July 2023, identified over £311k of required remedial and repair works. The majority of identified work is to deal with areas of the building scored as 'Poor' (C) or 'Bad' (D). Due to its age and listed status, it would also require significant investment to improve the building's efficiency and reduce its carbon footprint.

3 Roll and Capacity Analysis

- 3.1 This section considers the historic, current and predicted demand for nursery places in the Prestonfield area.
- 3.2 The Council's 20-minute neighbourhood principle which suggests journey times of 10 minutes to a destination.
- 3.3 Table 1 shows the nursery provision within 10 minutes' walk of Cameron House Nursery and their current occupancy. Appendix 1 shows a map of these locations.

Table 1: Current Nursery Capacity, Roll and Occupancy Percentage

Nursery	Registered Capacity	Funded Children	Occupancy Rate	Distance
Prestonfield	64	59	92%	5 mins
Little Monkeys	60	29	48%	7 mins
St. Margarets	121	74	61%	10 mins

- 3.4 Further afield are Craigmillar EYC, Arcadia, Newington, Strawberry Hill and Greendykes EYC.
- 3.5 Table 1 also illustrates there is sufficient capacity within the current area to meet current need. Every child will have access to 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare in the Prestonfield area.
- 3.6 In 2019, Cameron House Nursery only had four children registered. They subsequently moved to Prestonfield Nursery and Cameron House Nursery was registered as 'inactive'.
- 3.7 Demand for Nursery spaces in the area reached a peak in 2022 and is predicted to fall over the next two years (see Table 2 below). The prediction is that demand will not rise to the levels seen in 2022 over the next ten years. Given current provision has met this peak demand there is no requirement for Cameron House Nursery to deliver Nursery services.
- 3.8 There are no significant housing developments in the Prestonfield area planned.

Table 2 Historic and Predicted Demand for 3-4 year olds – Prestonfield Area

Historic max demand for places is as follows:

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
120	124	115	109	94	96	82	86	88

Projected demand for 3-4 year-old places is as follows:

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
57	61	79	80	80	80	80	80	80	80

4 Details of Proposal

Summary

- 4.1 The previous sections in this paper have established there is no requirement for the building as a nursery.
- 4.2 Given the above, it would not be best value to fund the remedial work and ongoing service costs the building requires.
- 4.3 It is proposed to formally close Cameron House Nursery.

5 Implications for Existing Nursery Provision

- 5.1 Cameron House Nursery has been unused since 2019 when the four registered children moved to Prestonfield Nursery. There is no further impact on Prestonfield Nursery from these proposals.
- 5.2 Cameron House had a limited number of registered spaces and access was difficult. It is no longer a building fit for use as a Nursery.
- 5.3 Previous sections in the paper have demonstrated there will be no impact on Nursery provision in the future.

6 Educational Benefits

- 6.1 There will be no impact on Nursery provision in the area, as previously illustrated.

7 Financial Considerations

- 7.1 A previous condition survey in 2017 reported £100,000 of essential works were required. In 2023, the essential works required is £311,000. With no predicted use for the building as a Nursery, it is not best value to carry out these works.
- 7.2 The £311,000 investment required are essential works and the building would require further investment to improve energy efficiency and meet modern Nursery standards.
- 7.3 In its last full year of operation, the building required £13,500 for services and general maintenance.
- 7.4 A fire was started on the Cameron House site on 1st September 2023 which resulted in minor damage. It is an ongoing concern that the empty building will continue to attract anti-social behaviour and the resultant costs this may incur.
- 7.5 By formally closing Cameron House Nursery, it will allow the future of the building to be determined.

8 Indicative Timescales

8.1 The timescales for the potential closure of Cameron House Nursery are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Indicative Timescales

Conclusion of consultation	December 2023
Education Scotland Review	January 2024
Outcomes Report to Education, Children and Families Committee	April 2024

8.2 If the proposals in this paper are approved by the Education, Children and Families Committee in April 2024 and the Scottish Government do not call-in the proposal then the Cameron House Nursery building would formally be closed in April 2024.

8.3 If the City of Edinburgh Council approves the closure of Cameron House, following the consultation period, it must notify the Scottish Government. A notice of the decision will appear on the Council's website with links for stakeholders wishing to make representations to the Scottish Ministers.

8.4 The Scottish Government can 'call in' a decision made by the Council for review. This could result in a delay in a final decision being made by 9 weeks up to a maximum of 17 weeks.

8.5 Scottish Ministers can approve, approve with conditions, refuse the decision or potentially ask the Council to repeat the consultation with measures taken to address any concerns in the process.

8.6 Full information on the process can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/schools-consultation-scotland-act-2010-statutory-guidance/pages/4/>

9 Consultation Process

9.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, 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 (including nursery).

9.2 The prescribed consultees vary for each of the above. 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. Accordingly, consultees will be as follows (where relevant):

- the Parent Council of any affected school and;
- the parents of the pupils at any affected school and nursery;
- the parents of any children expected to attend any affected school within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper;
- the staff (teaching and other) at any affected school and nursery;
- any trade union which appears to the education authority to be representative of the staff (teaching and other) at any affected school;
- the community councils (if any);
- the Roman Catholic Church;
- local residents, adjacent to the building
- any other users of any affected school that the education authority considers relevant.

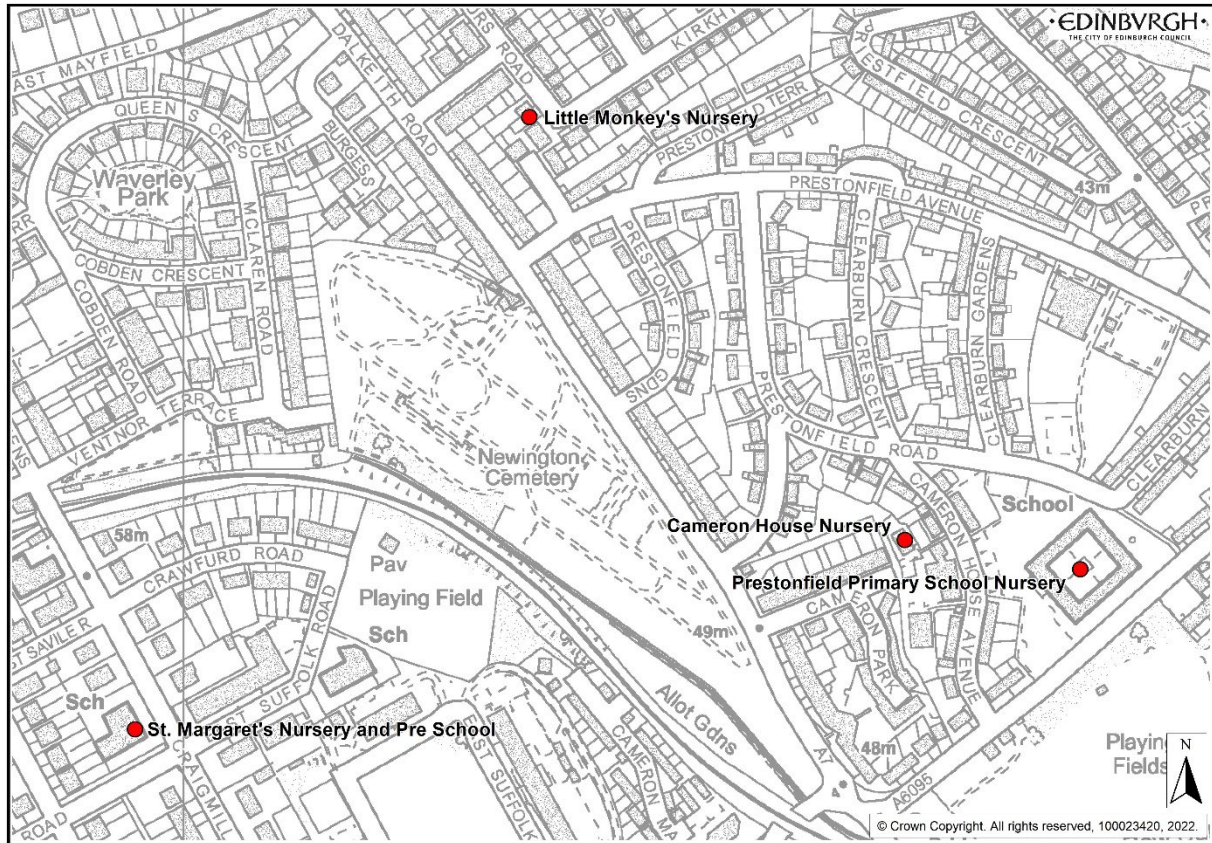
9.3 The consultation period will run for a 6 week period from Monday 13th November 2023 to Friday 22nd December 2023 and the paper will be made available electronically and in paper format and copies will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Waverley Court, at Newington and Central Library and at the schools affected by the proposals.

9.4 A public meeting will be held in respect of the proposal which will give interested parties a more formal opportunity to express their views. Representatives of the Council will be present at the meeting to outline the proposals, assist discussions and answer questions. A record of each public meeting will be taken by the Council.

Venue	Date	Time
Prestonfield Primary School	Wednesday 29 th November 2023	6.30pm – 8.30pm

- 9.5 All comments received will be recorded and represented in the final report regarding the outcomes of the consultation, along with the Council's response to those comments. Individual responses will not be provided to submissions made during the consultation.
- 9.6 The Council's Consultation Hub will contain information on the consultation and can be found here: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cameronhousenursery
- 9.7 Respondents are encouraged to use the response questionnaire which has been produced and is provided in Appendix 2. The response questionnaire can be completed online at: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cameronhousenursery
Responses can also be e-mailed directly to Cameronhousenursery@edinburgh.gov.uk or posted to the following address:
- Scott Campbell
Learning Estate Planning Officer
City of Edinburgh Council
Council Headquarters
Waverley Court
Level 1:3
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 8BG
- 9.8 All responses, whether by letter, e-mail or using the online questionnaire should be received by no later than close of business on Friday 22nd December 2023.
- 9.9 Once the public consultation phase finishes, details of the representations received will be issued to Education Scotland for their consideration of the educational effects of the proposals. Education Scotland will issue a report on their findings which will be included in the final Council report on the consultation.
- 9.10 Following the conclusion of the consultation period and after consideration of the representations received and the views of Education Scotland on the educational benefits of the proposal, a report on the Outcomes of the Consultation will be presented to the Council for consideration. The report will be made publicly available, and notification will be given to those individuals or groups that have made representations during the consultation period. The report will include a summary of written representations received during the consultation period and representations made at the public meeting along with the Council response to representations made and to any issues raised by Education Scotland.
- 9.11 It is anticipated that the consultation report, setting out recommendations, will be presented to a Meeting of the Council in January 2023. The report will be published three weeks in advance of the Council meeting.

APPENDIX 1 – Location



APPENDIX 2 – Response Questionnaire

Statutory Consultation on the Proposal to Close Cameron House Nursery in the Prestonfield area of the city.

Introduction

The full details of the proposal are available in the statutory consultation paper which you should read before completing this questionnaire. The statutory consultation paper is available online at: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cameronhousenursery and copies are available in the affected schools and local libraries.

Why we are consulting?

The Council has a legal obligation to carry out a statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The proposal put forward will have implications for families and we want to hear the views of anyone affected. All comments made during the statutory consultation period will be recorded and represented in a final report anticipated to be considered by Council in January 2023.

This questionnaire should be completed and returned by no later than close of business on Friday 22nd December 2023. All personal information in the questionnaire is for internal use only and will not be made public however the responses to questions 6 and 7 may be reflected either in whole, or in part, in the report to Council but on an anonymised basis. The questionnaire can be completed online at the following link: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/camerounhouse nursery or can be completed in the following pages and returned to the following address:

Scott Campbell
Learning Estate Planning Officer
City of Edinburgh Council
Council Headquarters
Waverley Court
Level 1:3, 4 East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Responses can also be made in writing to the address above or by e-mail to the following address cameronhousenursery@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Question 1

What is your name?

Name

Question 2

What is your email address? (Optional)

Email

Question 3

What is your postcode?

Postcode

Question 4

What is your main interest in the consultation?

Please select (tick) all items that apply:

- Parent/Carer of school child
- Parent/Carer of pre-school child
- School/Nursery Staff
- Pupil
- Local resident
- Local organisation
- Other

If you are answering on behalf of an organisation, or for other reasons, please explain below.

Question 5

Do you have a child or children in a nursery or school at the moment?

Please select (tick) only one item.

Yes

No

Undecided

If yes, please tell us the name(s) of their school or nursery classes.

Prestonfield Primary School

Prestonfield Primary School Nursery Class

Other (please specify below)

Question 6

Do you support the proposal as detailed in the statutory consultation paper?

Please select (tick) only one item.

Yes

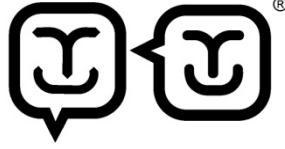
No

If you do not support the proposal, please give your reasons below:

Question 7

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Comments or suggestions can also be emailed to cameronhousenursery@edinburgh.gov.uk.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

আনন্দের সঙ্গে অনুবাদ করব ترجمہ کے لئے حاضر

يسعدنا توفير الترجمة MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ 很樂意翻譯

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