

Education, Children and Families Committee

10:00, Tuesday 1 March 2022

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) Update

Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
Council Commitments	36

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the contents of this report

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Report

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report is an update which provides further detail on the potential sites for a GME secondary school and why they are considered to not be appropriate. It also outlines the implications of the decision of Committee in January 2022 to not go to statutory consultation at this time.

3. Background

- 3.1 Reports on the future of GME in Edinburgh have been considered by the Education, Children and Families Committee in May, August, December 2021 and January 2022.
- 3.2 On 24 January 2022 the [report](#) to Committee recommended a statutory consultation on the future of GME in Edinburgh should be progressed. Committee did not approve this recommendation and asked for a further update report on GME to Committee in March 2022. The Committee requested:

To continue consideration of the matter to the next meeting of the committee on 1 March 2022 to allow for further discussions between the Council and the GME community and to request officers to provide further additional information on the present sites and any other sites that will support the quality of education as set out in the educational benefits section in the appendix to the report.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Since the Committee meeting on 24 January 2022 discussions have been held with the GME community.
- 4.2 The first meeting with parents was on the 2 February 2022. The parents who attended were seeking further clarification on sites and their suitability (which is covered in this report). In addition, it was agreed to meet with parents to go through the educational benefits statement and the rationale that sits beneath it.
- 4.3 Parents also requested to meet teaching staff to understand more about how the curriculum could be delivered. In particular, the implications of co located and stand-alone provision. The second meeting was scheduled after the deadline for completion of this report. However, a verbal summary of the key points discussed will be provided at the Committee meeting.

4.4 Further information on the sites considered and listed in the draft statutory consultation previously submitted to Committee on 24 January 2022 is provided in the table below:

Site	Reason for site being discounted	Further Information
Bus depot site adjacent to Drummond High School	Operational Lothian Buses depot with no current plans to relocate.	No further information available
Fettes Police Station	Operational Police HQ with no current timescales available for when the site would become available. Value of the site would also require to be met as part of a project to deliver a new GME secondary school which is financially unviable for the Council.	No further information available
Royal Victoria Hospital Site	Site currently being used as a temporary car park by NHS Lothian. The site has an estimated value of £20m which would require to be met as part of a project to deliver a new GME secondary school. This is financially unviable for the Council.	Scottish Government has confirmed that site will now be required by the NHS in the longer term.
Council's depot at Russell Road;	The site is not available for a school development due to a previous approval as part of the Council's depot strategy. It is also too small for a modern High School.	<p>For a modern secondary school – particularly one which is stand alone to enhance immersion – the school would require to have direct access to at least one full size all-weather pitch - an overall site of about 10 acres. The CEC ownership at Russell Road is approximately 6 acres. The site is also not currently available for a school due to the last F&R approval</p> <p>https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s31907/7.5%20-%20Depot%20Strategy%20-%20Phase%202.pdf as part of the depot strategy.</p> <p>Even if it were to become available it is not considered a suitable site for a school development. The CEC ownership has road access, but the street frontage is owned by others. The site is triangular in</p>

		<p>shape and located between and below the main railway line and the Western Approach Road.</p> <p>The site is also known to be contaminated.</p> <p>The closest secondary school is Tynecastle High School.</p>
Old Tynecastle High School	Not a suitable site due to ownership by the brewery, the associated health and safety issues and the small size of the site.	No further information available
Old Royal High School	Site too small and building not suitable for a modern High School.	No further information available
Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion	Still operational and no date for closure. Site too small for a modern High School.	No further information available

Further Implications of Delaying Statutory Consultation

- 4.5 Contingency plans need to be put in place as a consequence of the delay in statutory consultation. In particular, consideration requires to be given to how the pressure on places at James Gillespie can be managed. Options include a catchment review for James Gillespie and/or a placement policy which will ensure GME numbers can be managed within current capacity. Without the statutory consultation it is not currently possible to fulfil the ambitions to expand GME in the city.
- 4.6 The delay in progressing a statutory consultation also has implications for the timescale that a dedicated GME secondary school could be developed at the Liberton campus. The construction of the new Liberton High School followed by the demolition of existing high school building need to progress. It is no longer possible to construct the GME secondary school at the same time as the new Liberton High School and therefore the timescale for the GME construction element requires to be delayed until the end of the replacement Liberton High School project. An early indication of the earliest construction for a GME secondary school is that it could be completed is 2028.

- 4.7 As the expansion plan was contingent on improving and enhancing GME secondary provision in the interim, at Darroch, there now needs to be a decision about funding. Additional school staffing was proposed to support the expansion, including a full management team, additional teaching and support staff and the resources needed to develop the GME population at Darroch.
- 4.8 If this is to progress additional funding will require to be considered as part of the budget process as the current budget model only allows for basic demographic growth and minimal support structure with no allowance for the development of a separate management team. With no agreed next steps, in terms of a statutory consultation, a decision will need to be taken on whether these current plans are still viable.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Continue engagement with the GME community.
- 5.2 Based on the output of the engagement continue to consider options for the future of GME education in Edinburgh.
- 5.3 At an appropriate time present a report to committee outlining the future options for GME in Edinburgh and any necessary statutory consultations which are recommended to be progressed.
- 5.4 Consider the implications for accommodation at James Gillespie's High School and bring forward any solutions through the rising rolls process. Options considered in a rising rolls project include catchment change, introduction of timetabling efficiencies, internal reconfiguration of existing accommodation or, if possible, provision of additional accommodation.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 One implication of the delay in progressing with a statutory consultation is that the plans for the growth of GME at primary level will be delayed. Options to consider capping the number of pupils entering primary GME in the city need to be considered until the plan for growth is determined. A placement policy which restricts numbers of GME pupils may be required and as it will not be possible to expand GME in the manner anticipated less funding will be required.
- 6.2 The requirement to establish a capital budget for the delivery of a secondary school will need to wait until there is more clarity on the preferred future option and can then be given consideration through an appropriate budget setting process. Similarly, any revenue budget for staffing will need to be agreed when the model required is clarified.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Details of the ongoing engagement with the GME community have been provided in this report.

- 7.2 Any statutory consultation which does progress will be conducted in line with the procedures set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 7.3 All pre consultation engagement and any statutory consultation are considered part of the information gathering stage for an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) as required by the Equality Act 2010. The Council is under a duty to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and those who do not and to fostering good relations between such groups.
- 7.4 As such, any statutory consultation will be used as an opportunity for these matters to be raised and to invite comments regarding impacts. The full IIA will be completed once all responses to the consultation have been received.

8. Background reading/external references

n/a

9. Appendices

n/a