

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 20 September 2022

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) Update

Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
Council Commitments	36

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That 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 on Gaelic Medium Education (GME) provision in Edinburgh and provides further details requested by the Education, Children and Families Committee on 1 March 2022.

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, January 2022 and March 2022. On 24 January 2022 the [report](#) to Committee recommended a statutory consultation on the future of GME in Edinburgh should be progressed. The proposed statutory consultation was recommending growth of primary GME across the city and the creation of a dedicated GME secondary school on the same site as a replacement Liberton High School.
- 3.2 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.*
- 3.3 On the 1 March 2022 a [report](#) was considered by the Committee which provided further information on the sites considered in relation to secondary GME provision. After considering the report the Committee agreed and requested the following:
- 1) Recognises the potential impact of the decision not to proceed with the statutory consultation on the growth of GME in Edinburgh, as outlined in the report.
 - 2) Notes the council's policy and responsibility to expand GME provision and the pressure of rising school rolls at James Gillespie's High School.
 - 3) Notes the previous officer recommendations of the educational benefits of a co-located school and that the option with the strongest rationale is currently a dedicated GME secondary school on a shared campus with the replacement Liberton High School.

- 4) Council to continue to engage with the GME community, including finding opportunities to gather information from beyond Comann nam Pàrant, along with Chairs of the parent councils from Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce and James Gillespie's High School.
- 5) Agrees additional information is required to move forward to statutory consultation.
- 6) Requests a revised report in one cycle that contains the following information:
 - i) Details of the proposal for a standalone school on the site of the former Castlebrae Community High School
 - ii) Details of mitigation measures to address concerns regarding Liberton High School including public transport routes, possible provision of CEC supported bus networks and immersion challenges
 - iii) Regarding the sites 1,2, 3, 4 and 7 listed in the paper, additional detail to enable clearer rule-in/rule-out to include:
 - a) the level of nearby public transport connections
 - b) the nearest secondary school and the number of metres to walk to that school
 - c) what scale of secondary school provision could be provided on sites that has been listed as too small, including pupil capacity and ability to access shared sports facilities e.g. other schools, Edinburgh leisure facilities
 - d) Information on whether discussions have been had with current stakeholders regarding medium-term future of the following sites:
 - Russell Road depot
 - Royal Victoria Hospital Site
 - Drummond bus depot
 - Princess Alexandra Eye Pavillion
 - Police Scotland Fettes (details of decommissioning and indicative land value)

(7) The report to also include a timeline setting out key decision making milestones.

(8) Acknowledges that some information may not be able to be provided as the data doesn't sit within the Council and agrees that this will not hold up the decision on a statutory consultation but that explanation will be given to Committee on the reasons for this.

(9) Agrees that any alternatives that emerge as viable are discussed with the affected parents and carers and stakeholders prior to committee consideration.

3.4 The remainder of this report provides the further information requested by Committee.

4. Main report

Details of the proposal for a standalone school on the site of the former Castlebrae Community High School.

- 4.1 The proposal for delivering a school on the former Castlebrae Community High School site would follow a standard construction process. At the time this option was suggested the buildings on the site were due to be demolished once the replacement facility in the town centre was opened. The demolition is now in progress. The original plan for the next use of the site was new housing development as part of the wider regeneration plans for the Craigmillar area. The proposal put forward as part of engagement with the GME community was that the site could be used for a GME secondary school in the future instead of for housing development.
- 4.2 The design process for the new school, the requirement for budgets to be allocated for the construction project and all other aspects of project delivery would be progressed as they would be for any other learning estate project. Educationally, the closest secondary school that links would be made with to ensure full curriculum delivery would be the new Castlebrae Community Campus.

Details of mitigation measures to address concerns regarding Liberton High School including public transport routes, possible provision of CEC supported bus networks and immersion challenges

- 4.3 Details on public transport links to Liberton High School have been provided previously as part of the ongoing GME engagement. The estimated average public transport travel time from Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pairce to Liberton High School was estimated as 39 minutes. The estimated average public transport travel time from a likely city-wide catchment to Liberton was estimated as 37 minutes.
- 4.4 Average times were calculated using the Lothian Buses Journey Planner. The travel times are averaged and do not include a few minutes' walk either side of the bus journey.
- 4.5 It has also been previously confirmed that the Council would provide a direct bus service between Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pairce to Liberton High School for pupils.
- 4.6 In relation to immersion challenges, it has been explained during the GME engagement process that wherever a new GME secondary school was established there would need to be links with another secondary school to ensure full curriculum delivery. Also, all new schools will be designed for community access and it would not be possible to ensure all visitors converse in Gaelic. Similarly, subjects will not be able to be fully delivered in Gaelic due to a lack of resources and trained Gaelic teachers. Therefore, irrespective of where a new GME secondary school was established the issues with ensuring immersion would be present.
- 4.7 Immersion would be supported by the ethos of the school, which would include a focus on immersive pedagogy and positive encouragement of the use of Gaelic through cultural and wider achievement opportunities. Continual effort would be made to ensure the proportion of the curriculum delivered in Gaelic grows and

evolves as a secondary school expanded and in line with the needs and interests of learners.

Further Details on Sites

4.8 The further information requested on some of the sites listed in the report previously submitted to Committee on 1 March 2022 is provided in the table below:

Site	Nearby Public Transport Connections	Number of metres to walk to the nearest secondary school	Scale of school that could be provided and any supporting facilities	Discussions with Stakeholders on site availability
Bus depot site adjacent to Drummond High School	Estimated Walking time to: Bus: 3 minutes Rail: 19 minutes Tram: 9 minutes	This site is directly adjacent to Drummond High School. Walking distance would be minimal.	Site is approximately 6.5 acres. 10 acres required for full provision including sports. However, shape of site is rectangular and this combined with adjacency to Drummond High School could offer design solutions.	Operational Lothian Buses depot with no current plans to relocate.
Fettes Police Station	Estimated Walking time to: Bus: 3 minutes Rail: 31 minutes Tram: 25 minutes	Walking distance to Broughton High School is minimal as the site is directly across the road.	Site is approximately 14 acres so would be large enough for all required facilities.	Scottish Government and Police have confirmed site is not available.
Royal Victoria Hospital Site	Estimated Walking time to: Bus: 3min Rail: 32 minutes Tram: 27 minutes	Walking distance to Broughton High School is approximately 550m.	Site is approximately 14 acres so would be large enough for all required facilities.	Scottish Government and NHS have confirmed site is not available
Council's depot at Russell Road	Estimated Walking time to: Bus: 7 minutes Rail: 15 minutes Tram: 14 minutes	Walking distance to Tynecastle High School is approximately 300m.	Approximately 6 acres. 10 acres required for full provision including sports. Shape of site is triangular so would make design for all facilities difficult.	Council owned site. Site between road and railway. Poor access due to land owned by others. Potential contamination issues. Not considered a suitable site for education.

Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion	Estimated Walking time to: Bus: 2 minutes Rail: 19 minutes Tram: 19 minutes	Site adjacent to St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School. Walking distance minimal.	Site is approximately 0.5 acres and is too small for any reasonable scaled school to be delivered.	Site is still operational and not available.
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Timeline setting out Key Decision Making Milestones

- 4.9 There is currently no Committee approval to proceed with a statutory consultation and no budget in the Capital Programme to deliver a GME secondary school. Therefore, there are no key decision making milestones to be shared with Committee at this time.

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 and if required, 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 Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pairce and 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. A new placement policy would require a statutory consultation.
- 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 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 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/External Reading

None

9. Appendices

None