

Education, Children and Families Committee

10:00, Thursday, 27 April 2023

Future Queensferry and Kirkliston Secondary School Provision Engagement Outcomes

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Education, Children and Families Committee:-
- 1.1.1 Note the key message arising from engagement with the Queensferry and Kirkliston communities regarding the future of secondary school provision is that there should be a new secondary school built in Kirkliston;
 - 1.1.2 Note that options to deliver a Kirkliston High School on the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site or to the east of Kirkliston will continue to be developed and outcomes reported to Committee on 5 September 2023;
 - 1.1.3 Note that a fully costed educational operating model for a new secondary school in Kirkliston will be produced to inform future consultation and allow an assessment of the educational benefits and disbenefits of a new Kirkliston High School;
 - 1.1.4 Approve that engagement with the communities of Ratho, Newbridge and Ratho Station be undertaken during May and June to seek views on the realignment of Ratho Primary School and Hillwood Primary School with a new secondary school in Kirkliston;
 - 1.1.5 Note that Council officers and school management continue to plan a temporary expansion strategy for Queensferry High School should that requirement arise in future years.

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Report

Future Queensferry and Kirkliston Secondary School Provision Engagement Outcomes

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 An informal engagement process with the Queensferry and Kirkliston communities has concluded. Over 800 people responded to the engagement with overwhelming support expressed for a new secondary school in Kirkliston. This report summarises the responses and sets out next steps.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee in [March 2022](#) approved that an engagement process be undertaken in Kirkliston and Queensferry areas to seek people's views on the future of secondary education in these communities.
- 3.2 Queensferry High School will exceed its capacity as pupils from new developments in Queensferry are generated and a solution is required.
- 3.3 A Stakeholder Reference Group consisting of parent council representatives, head teachers, local elected members and Community Council representatives was formed to help shape a wider public engagement.
- 3.4 In November 2022 the engagement information in the [Background](#) section of this report was published. These documents set out the issues and invited people to comment on the potential solutions identified by the Council and submit their own ideas.
- 3.5 An online survey closed on 16 January 2023 with 738 responses received. A further 80 responses were received by email. An estimated 120 people attended four public information events. 13 pupils from Queensferry High School attended focus group discussions on 1 February 2023.
- 3.6 The feedback received via the online survey is attached to this report as [Appendix 1](#) while a summary of the pupil focus groups is attached as [Appendix 2](#). Responses from organisations BDW Trading and Taylor Wimpey, Kirkliston Community Council and from Kirkliston Primary School Association (KPSA) are attached as Appendices [3\(a\)](#), [3\(b\)](#) and [3\(c\)](#) respectively. The KPSA response includes the results of a separate survey that they undertook independently. The Appendix to the KPSA

survey is “Full text of parent survey comments on three tabled options” and, due to its size and respect for anonymity of individuals, is available to elected members on request.

4. Main report

Key Messages

- 4.1 The summary of the feedback received from the two communities in [Appendix 1](#), sets out what Council officers view to be the key messages received during this process:

Build A New High School in Kirkliston

There should be a new secondary school in Kirkliston because the village is big enough, needs the facilities and it is a greener, healthier and longer-term solution.

Do not Extend Queensferry High School

Queensferry High School should not be extended because it will make the school too big, it will be a short-term solution and will make traffic and parking issues in Queensferry much worse.

West Edinburgh is not an option for Kirkliston

Kirkliston children should not go to a school in West Edinburgh because it is too far away and unsafe for active travel, would add to congestion and would take too long to reach at peak times.

- 4.2 Overwhelmingly, 84% of responses included comments that indicated they were supportive of a new high school in Kirkliston. Also significant in the feedback was the rejection of the idea that Queensferry High School could be extended with 50% of respondents dismissing this as a desirable solution.

Council Response to Feedback

- 4.3 Based on the clear outcomes of the engagement process, further work on the development of a new secondary school in Kirkliston is being progressed. Strategically, a new school in Kirkliston does make more sense than the alternatives and it is also consistent with the Council’s 20 minute neighbourhood aspirations and the promotion of Active Travel. A new secondary school in Kirkliston also provides an opportunity to develop a valuable community hub.
- 4.4 Focusing available resources and officer time on the development of a single option will help expedite the process. A report to the Education, Children and Families Committee in September 2023 will set out the conclusions of feasibility and other work in the development of a new Kirkliston High School proposal. If this work finds that a new Kirkliston High School is feasible and viable, the report will recommend that a statutory consultation process be undertaken to allow the establishment of a new school in Kirkliston and set catchment boundaries.
- 4.5 However, should a new secondary school in Kirkliston ultimately prove not to be feasible or viable, the report will recommend that work to develop a permanent

extension of Queensferry High School progress. This would include engagement with the local community as part of the design development process.

- 4.6 The following sections provide comment on the key themes and comments made in the feedback received.

Build a New High School in Kirkliston

- 4.7 The responses in favour of a new secondary school in Kirkliston were principally focused on:

- Reducing travel time and increasing active travel.
- Improving facilities in Kirkliston.
- Long-term strategic planning.

Active travel and community benefit

- 4.8 A new school located directly within the community it serves would allow pupils greater opportunities to walk or cycle to school, remove the need for school buses and as a result reduce the amount of traffic on the road between Kirkliston and Queensferry. A new secondary school in Kirkliston would make it easier for pupils to attend after school activities and would provide the community with a significant community asset which could function as a hub for a range of Council and partner services.

- 4.9 A small number of responses raised concerns about the impact a new secondary school might have on traffic within Kirkliston. The location of a new school would be a key consideration in this respect and a traffic impact assessment would be necessary as part of any proposal brought forward.

The size of Kirkliston and the inevitability of growth

- 4.10 The need to future-proof secondary school capacity in the area was a key argument put forward for a new school in Kirkliston and also against extending Queensferry High School. Many people viewed extension of Queensferry High School as a short-term solution. Extending Queensferry High School to 1,800 pupils would not provide capacity for unplanned future growth.
- 4.11 The current Local Development Plan and the emerging CityPlan 2030 do not support further housing in or around Queensferry and Kirkliston. This will make it difficult, within the life of these plans for housing developers to secure Planning approval for new housing in these areas. However, CityPlan 2030 has not yet been adopted and is now under consideration by Scottish Government reporters who could decide that land around Queensferry and Kirkliston should be released for housing.
- 4.12 Regardless of the status of CityPlan 2030, the feedback received through this engagement process has been that new housing around Kirkliston is inevitable at some point in the future. If that were to be the case, then at some point in the future additional primary and secondary school capacity will be required in Kirkliston.

Accordingly, extending Queensferry High School may only delay an inevitable requirement and introduce capacity that may, in the long-term, not be required.

Projecting demand for a new Kirkliston High School

- 4.13 There are a considerable number of factors that may influence the roll of a new Kirkliston High School such as perception and performance of the new school, demand for Roman Catholic provision, placing requests to Queensferry High School or Winchburgh Academy, rises and falls in the birth rate and attendance at independent schools. Capturing these factors in any long-term projection is challenging. However, based on the data currently available it seems reasonable to assume that, if a new secondary school were to open in Kirkliston, it would eventually draw a roll of 330 to 515 pupils based solely on Kirkliston Primary School's catchment area.

Small Secondary Schools

- 4.14 The average roll in a public secondary school in Scotland in 2021 was 860 pupils. Accordingly, a projected roll of 330-515 pupils would make Kirkliston High School a small secondary school.
- 4.15 Only a small number of responses (14 out of 519) to the engagement suggested specific educational advantages of a new school in Kirkliston. In the main these were related to the perceived benefits of pupils attending a small secondary school. These benefits included more focused support, better transition and familiarity with other pupils and staff. However, a small school was also the principal reason cited by those rejecting a new secondary school in Kirkliston. The majority of these comments were concerned about a lack of investment, choice and opportunity for pupils and a limited social mix.
- 4.16 In 2021 85 secondary schools in Scotland (24% of all public secondary schools) had a roll of less than 600 pupils. Accordingly, small secondary schools are relatively common and City of Edinburgh Council has experience of operating schools with low rolls. However, while City of Edinburgh Council believe that the size of a school will not necessarily determine its success, it does think that larger schools provide more potential for learners to thrive. The [Q&A document](#) provides more detail on why this is the case.
- 4.17 As a small school, a new Kirkliston High School would need to develop strong partnerships with neighbouring schools to offer greater breadth of choice and opportunity. These partnerships may also be necessary in the growth of the school which, some feedback suggested may benefit from beginning as an annexe of an existing secondary school. Whether this could work in practise and the impact it could have on the operation of existing schools will require considerable analysis.
- 4.18 Accordingly, before consulting further on the establishment of a new school in Kirkliston an educational operating model for a new Kirkliston High School will be required to help inform people's views. This model will also help the Council to demonstrate the educational benefits and disbenefits of such a proposal and say how the school would be populated. The Council's Educational Benefits statement

is a requirement of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and it will be assessed by Education Scotland who will provide their views on the proposal.

Extending a new Kirkliston High School's catchment area

- 4.19 A new Kirkliston High School would be the only school in Edinburgh fed by a single primary school. This would mean that a pupil entering P1 at Kirkliston Primary School would be with the same cohort through primary and secondary. This limitation on social mixing and interaction has been raised as a concern about a Kirkliston High School in the feedback received during the engagement.
- 4.20 The best way to resolve this and grow Kirkliston High School's catchment population would be for additional primary schools to feed to the new school. Suggestions in the feedback received included aligning the areas of Ratho, Ratho Station and Newbridge with a new Kirkliston High School. This would affect Ratho Primary School and Hillwood Primary School.
- 4.21 It is proposed that limited informal engagement with the communities of Ratho, Newbridge and Ratho Station be undertaken during May 2023 and June 2023 to seek views from these communities. The outcome of this engagement would be reported to the Education, Children and Families Committee in September 2023.

Site Options for a new Kirkliston High School

- 4.22 While high numbers of people expressed support for a new school in Kirkliston, less than 20 commented on its potential site. Their responses can be summarised as follows:
- people generally dismissed sites around Newbridge.
 - people generally supported or suggested either:
 - One of the school sites in the north-east of the village around Burnshott Road (identified as sites G-J in the information pack);
 - the redevelopment of the Leisure Centre site on the west of the village;
- 4.23 Sites G-J are privately owned and the Council would need to negotiate to purchase the land or seek a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Legal advice will be sought on the likely success or otherwise of a bid to CPO any of these sites. This advice will be made available as part of the report to Education, Children and Families in September 2023.
- 4.24 The preferred option would be to reach agreement with the landowners and developers to allow the Council to purchase one of these sites. However, the current position of the landowners and their agents, as we understand it, is that they will not sell the Council land for a secondary school unless they are permitted to building housing as part of this release. A response to the engagement from BDW Trading and Taylor Wimpey who control site 'H' is attached as [Appendix 3\(a\)](#).
- 4.25 Sites G-J are designated as Greenbelt land in the current Local Development Plan and also in the emerging CityPlan 2030. This would make the development of any of these sites challenging for both housebuilders and the Council. While the proposals in CityPlan 2030 could be changed through the inquiry process, it is likely

to be the end of 2023 before Scottish Government Reporters make recommendations based on the feedback received to the CityPlan 2030 consultation. The release of land for housing to provide land for a new school was a concern raised in numerous responses – whether they supported a new school in Kirkliston or not.

- 4.26 The redevelopment of the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site had not been previously considered as an option because it is considerably smaller than legislative requirements for a school site. It also accommodates one of the few community facilities in Kirkliston.
- 4.27 Feedback received through the engagement process suggests that Kirkliston Leisure Centre is underused and the development of better facilities as part of a new secondary school would be welcomed by the community. The site, while not big enough to contain significant grounds or sports pitches, may be sufficient to support the necessary accommodation for the required 600 pupil capacity building. Due to the size of the site dispensation for its use as a school site would be required from the Scottish Government.
- 4.28 Several responses highlighted the close links a secondary school on the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site would offer with the primary school and the opportunity to create a true community Hub with a secondary school, primary stages and early years sharing a single site.
- 4.29 Acquiring the fields immediately on the other side of the underpass from the Leisure Centre to allow the development of pitches or other sports provision was suggested in several responses and this is something that will be investigated with landowners. These areas of land are not covered by Greenbelt policy and Planning may look more favourably on the development of these sites for pitch provision than the ones on the east of Kirkliston. Further discussions with Planning will be required to establish if this is the case.
- 4.30 A full feasibility study – including traffic impact assessment – has been commissioned to explore the development of the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site as a secondary school in Kirkliston and the conclusions of this study will be reported to Committee in September 2023.

Do not Extend Queensferry High School

- 4.31 Half (50%) of all responses received rejected the idea that Queensferry High School should be extended. This rose to 65% in the Queensferry area. The principal reasons for rejecting this as a solution were:
- Traffic on Station Road;
 - Loss of Parking at Queensferry High School;
 - The resulting school would be too big;
 - It could only be a short-term solution.

Traffic and Parking

- 4.32 The Council's Transport, Active Travel and Road Safety teams have established a working group to discuss with local residents and members of the community proposed improvements to Station Road and surrounding streets. This follows several traffic surveys of the area. The comments collected via this engagement process have been passed to Transport officers to help inform their discussions and the work of the group.
- 4.33 Officers from the Council's Learning Estate Planning Team will continue to liaise with Transport officers as plans for the temporary expansion of Queensferry High School develop. Following the feedback received this will be focused on developing temporary accommodation at the rear of the school, avoiding loss of parking spaces at the front of the school.
- 4.34 Should a new secondary school in Kirkliston not be feasible, a transport impact assessment will be undertaken in the development of any permanent extension proposals.

Big School

- 4.35 The Council's views on the right size for a school are set out in the [Q&A document](#) released as part of the engagement documentation. In summary, the Council believe that, irrespective of its size, any school can provide a high-quality learning and teaching experience for all its pupils so long as the right elements are in place.
- 4.36 While the Council believe that league tables are far from the only indicator of the success of a school, it is worth highlighting that the top two schools in The Times 2023 "performance" tables were Jordanhill School in Glasgow which has a secondary roll of 590 pupils and St Ninian's High School in Giffnock that had a roll of 1,837 in 2021. "School of the Year 2023" was Williamwood in East Renfrewshire which had a roll of 1,654 pupils in 2021.

West Edinburgh is not an option for Kirkliston

- 4.37 The suggestion that pupils from Kirkliston could attend a school in West Edinburgh drew comparatively little comment; however, the comments received were generally in favour of such a proposal. Further analysis suggests that support for the West Edinburgh option came mostly from residents in Queensferry, 29% of whom expressed support for multiple solutions including a West Edinburgh High School to avoid the need to extend Queensferry High School. Only 3% of responses from Kirkliston supported multiple solutions and only 4% of responses from Queensferry supported only the West Edinburgh High School as a solution.
- 4.38 The principal reasons for rejecting a West Edinburgh High School option were related to the distance of the proposed school site from Kirkliston and the existing transport infrastructure between Kirkliston and Newbridge and along the A8 between Newbridge and the indicative West Edinburgh High School site. Several responses pointed out that pupils from Kirkliston attending a school in West Edinburgh would be contrary to the Council's 20 minute neighbourhood and net-zero ambitions. This was also an argument *against* extending Queensferry High School and *for* a new Kirkliston High School.

- 4.39 A similar solution proposing that pupils from Kirkliston attend a new West Edinburgh High School on the International Business Gateway site was the subject of a consultation with the Kirkliston community in 2017 and was widely rejected at that time for the same reasons. While the CityPlan 2030 proposes some upgrade of active travel routes along the A8 there are no timescales or commitments to deliver this and no details of what these upgrades may include.
- 4.40 Strategically, a West Edinburgh High School may make sense in the short-medium term. Pupils from Kirkliston would help more quickly establish a school population in West Edinburgh and would likely remain the main source of pupils in a new West Edinburgh High School for a number of years. However, in the long term, continuing growth in West Edinburgh could put pressure on a new West Edinburgh high school and potentially take it well beyond a roll of 2,000 pupils. Additionally, if growth around Kirkliston is inevitable, then at some point in the future additional primary and secondary school capacity will be required in Kirkliston.

Criticism of the Council

- 4.41 Some responses received were focused on criticism of the Council. The most significant criticism of the Council related to planning for housing growth and a failure to provide infrastructure while continuing to approve new housing.
- 4.42 The response to this is that planning for the new Queensferry High School did take account of all the new developments in Queensferry. However, its design did not include for pupils from Kirkliston. When the funding for the replacement school was approved by Council in November 2016, it was on the basis that a catchment change would be required so that pupils from Kirkliston would go to a different secondary school.
- 4.43 A new school in West Edinburgh was originally due to open in August 2023 on the IBG site between Edinburgh airport and the Royal Bank of Scotland headquarters at Gogarburn. However, the new school was dependent on the landowner's development of the IBG site which did not take place.
- 4.44 In late 2017 the Council consulted with the Kirkliston community on three alternative secondary school options for Kirkliston. However, no clear preference was established.
- 4.45 In 2018 a new school in Kirkliston was proposed. The problem has been finding a site for a new secondary school in or around Kirkliston as most of the land is privately owned. The other issue has been that the release of 'greenfield' sites around Kirkliston has not been supported by Planning policy. During the preparation of the Council's CityPlan 2030 an option to expand Kirkliston was considered. However, CityPlan 2030 was delayed due to the COVID pandemic and, when the draft plan was published, the option for the growth of Kirkliston was not included.
- 4.46 Unless the CityPlan 2030 is changed through the Scottish Reporters Inquiry process, the options for a new school site in Kirkliston are limited. The only site the Council has control of and that may be capable of supporting a significant building is the Kirkliston Leisure Centre.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 A report will be returned to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 5 September 2023. This report will include a detailed assessment of the viability of a new secondary school in Kirkliston based on:
- progress securing a site in the east of Kirkliston;
 - the outcome of detailed feasibility work on the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site;
 - the development of a model for the operation of a new Kirkliston High School;
 - the outcome of engagement with the Ratho, Ratho Station and Newbridge communities; and
 - a review of the financial viability of a new secondary school in Kirkliston.
- 5.2 If the report concludes that a new secondary school in Kirkliston is viable and deliverable, the report will also include a draft statutory consultation paper and propose that a statutory consultation progress prior to Christmas 2023 based on the option or options identified through the above workstreams.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of this report. The recommendations and actions being progressed do not commit the Council to any one solution or any investment.
- 6.2 It should be noted, however, that a solution to the accommodation pressures at Queensferry High School is currently unfunded. Whichever solution is finally identified will require to be funded from the Council's own capital budgets.
- 6.3 Feasibility work currently being progressed is funded from existing Rising Rolls budgets.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The engagement process undertaken between November 2022 and January 2023 was informal and the recommendations arising from it do not confirm the delivery of one solution or another. The establishment of a new school or a change of catchment areas would require Committee approval following a formal consultation undertaken according to the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) 2010 Act ("the Act") as amended. While not governed by requirements of "the Act", a significant extension of Queensferry High School would necessitate detailed consultation with the Queensferry community and the development of detailed plans before progressing.
- 7.2 This informal engagement process has been undertaken to understand the issues important to the affected communities when considering how best to resolve capacity issues at Queensferry High School. The feedback received will focus options development and inform the delivery of future consultation in the area.

8. Background reading/external references

8.1 Engagement Information:

- Webpage: <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/kirkliston-queensferry>
- Document: [Information Pack - Future Secondary School Provision for Kirkliston and Queensferry Areas \(PDF\)](#)
- Document: [Questions & Answers – Future Secondary School Provision for Kirkliston and Queensferry Areas \(PDF\)](#)

8.2 Education, Children and Families Committee report, 1 March 2022: “[Learning Estate Update: School Roll Projections and West Edinburgh Engagement](#)”

8.3 Education, Children and Families Committee report, 7 December 2021: “[Learning Estate Update](#)”

9. Appendices

- [Appendix 1: Responses Summary](#)
- [Appendix 2: Pupil Focus Group Summary](#)
- [Appendix 3\(a\): Response from BDW Trading and Taylor Wimpey](#)
- [Appendix 3\(b\): Response from Kirkliston Community Council](#)
- [Appendix 3\(c\): Response from Kirkliston Primary School Association](#)

Future Secondary School Provision for Kirkliston and Queensferry Areas

RESPONSES SUMMARY

Purpose of this paper

Queensferry High School does not have capacity to accommodate new housing developments in Queensferry. We asked people in Kirkliston and Queensferry to give us their views on what the best solution would be. We suggested two possible 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.

We also asked people if there are community services or facilities they think could be provided by a new building.

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 which you can find here:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/kirkliston-queensferry

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- 2.3 Concerns about a new Kirkliston High School

3.0 Do not extend Queensferry High School

- 3.1 Significant rejection of Queensferry High School extension
- 3.2 Why some people supported extending Queensferry High School

4.0 West Edinburgh not an option for Kirkliston

- 4.1 Kirkliston rejects West Edinburgh option

5.0 Alternative Solutions and other considerations

- 5.1 Build a new school in Kirkliston on the Leisure Centre site
- 5.2 Accommodate Kirkliston pupils in the new Winchburgh Academy
- 5.3 Deliver all three suggested solutions

6.0 Opportunities

7.0 Criticism of the Council

1. Summary

1.1 Key Messages

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

a) *Build A New High School in Kirkliston*

There should be a new secondary school in Kirkliston because the village is big enough, needs the facilities and it is a greener, healthier and longer-term solution.

b) *Do not Extend Queensferry High School*

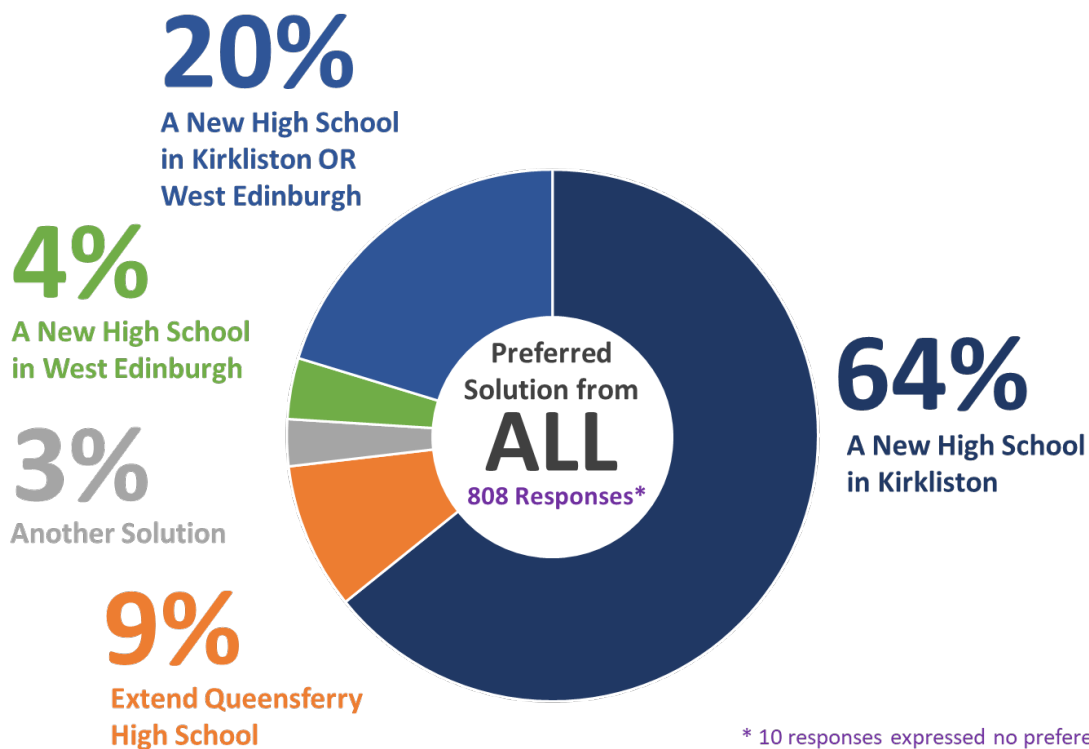
Queensferry High School should not be extended because it will make the school too big, it will be a short-term solution and will make traffic and parking issues in Queensferry much worse.

c) *West Edinburgh is not an option for Kirkliston*

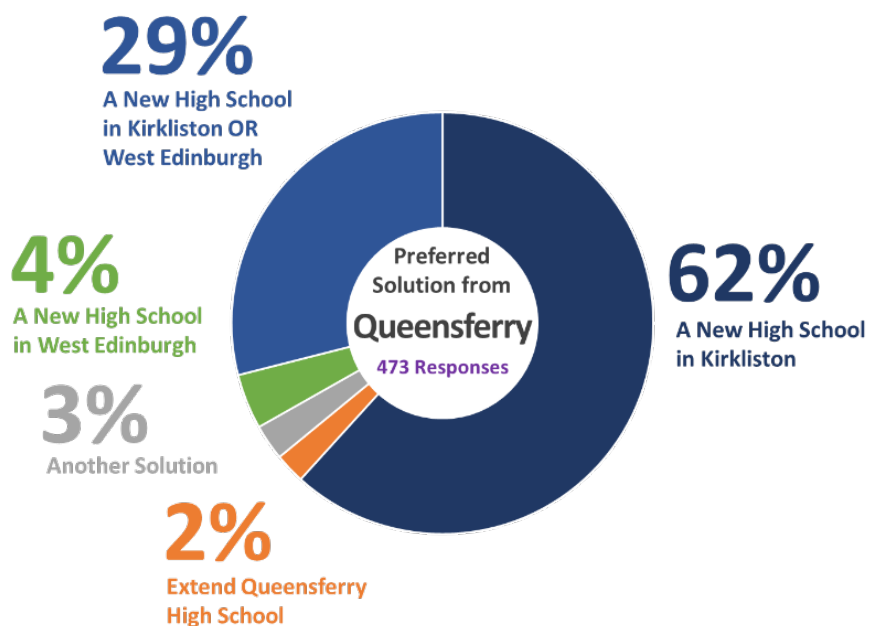
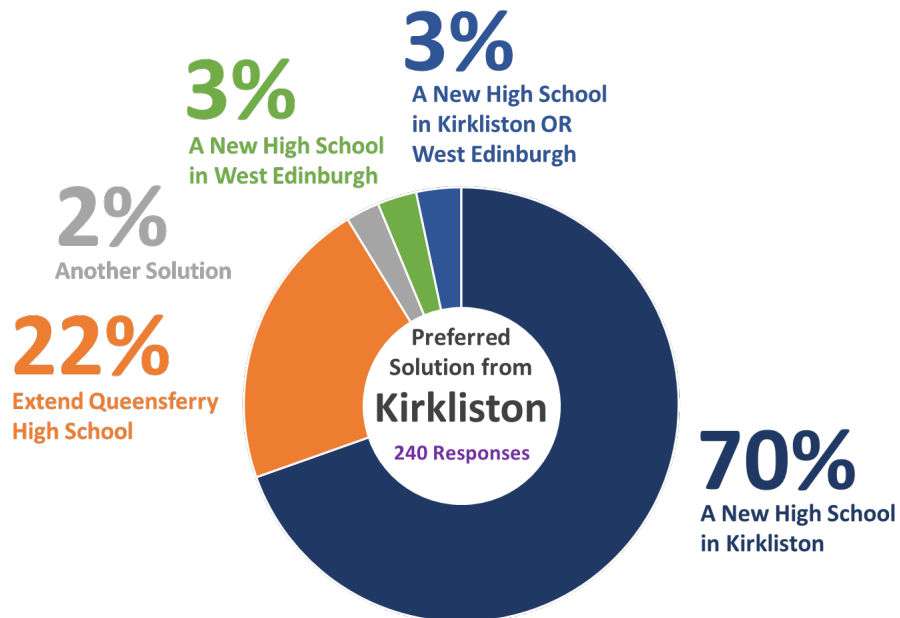
Kirkliston children should not go to a school in West Edinburgh because it is too far and unsafe for active travel, would add to congestion and would take too long to reach at peak times.

1.2 Response Summary

We received 738 responses to our online survey. We also received 80 emails. This chart shows what people told us the best solution would be



We used people's postcodes¹ to see if where they lived made a difference to their preference. The most notable difference in people's preferences was between the Queensferry and Kirkliston areas². However, the charts on the next page show that regardless of where people lived, a new High School in Kirkliston was still a clear preference.



¹ 89 of the 818 responses did not indicate where they lived. 6 responses came from areas outside the Queensferry or Kirkliston areas.

² For the purposes of this analysis, the Queensferry area is defined as the catchment areas of Dalmeny, Echline and Queensferry Primary Schools. The Kirkliston area is defined as the catchment area of Kirkliston Primary School.

2. Build A New High School in Kirkliston

2.1 Majority support for a new high school in Kirkliston

519 (63%) of all responses stated or indicated that a new Kirkliston High School would be their preferred solution. 238 of these responses provided a reason or justification for this preference. The main reasons why people supported a new high school in Kirkliston were:

1) Reduce travel time and increase active travel.

People said that having a local school would reduce the number of bus and car journeys being made. This would reduce congestion on the roads and be better for the environment. They also highlighted the health and wellbeing benefits this could have.

2) Improve facilities in Kirkliston.

People said that a new school could provide the community with better facilities. Access to better sports facilities, community spaces and services and easier access for pupils to after school activities were all considered benefits.

3) Long-term planning.

People said that Kirkliston is now big enough to merit its own secondary school. People also felt that it is inevitable that in the future Kirkliston will grow again.

Other reasons for supporting a new high school in Kirkliston included:

- The educational and social benefits a small school may offer;
- A stronger sense of community identity and cohesion;
- Jobs and investment in the local economy;
- Easier transition from primary to secondary.

“There is currently a significant lack of amenities for the size of the village [Kirkliston]. A school with sports centre and space that could be used by groups would be a massive boost to the village.

Transport and traffic within the village is a significant problem and bussing large numbers of children to school outside of the village adds to this. It is also difficult for children from the village to partake in extra curricular (sic) activities, attend clubs and to meet up with friends outside of school hours due to these problems.”

People supporting a new Kirkliston High School

“I am of the firm belief Kirkliston already needed better (any!) facilities before the school question is even considered... Community facilities are desperately needed for kids and adults - spaces for breakfast clubs, after-school and study clubs, youth clubs, beavers, sports facilities, community classes (languages, crafts etc), meeting room spaces - the village lacks for all of these things... the leisure centre is not fit for purpose, the village desperately needs a large community hub with variety facilities... it would need this regardless of the need for a high school and so combining both essential needs is actually an efficient investment.”

“A secondary school in Kirkliston seems the best solution for our local children. Somewhere they are safe to walk to and where they can engage in extra curricular activities near home. This will help their overall well-being, creating better outcomes for young people in our area.”

“...while there is currently no new housing planned for Kirkliston, most residents believe that at some point in the not-to-distant future, there likely will be more housing which increases the need for a High School in the area.”

“Transport and traffic within the village is a significant problem and bussing large numbers of children to school outside of the village adds to this.”

“A high school in Kirkliston could provide access to a community gym, classes for extracurricular, an opportunity for those without transport to have the benefits of after school clubs that they currently can't attend. It would open up jobs from cleaning to catering, office to teaching. Local shops within Kirkliston would have the footfall at lunch and after school boosting local businesses and generating more economy for all.”

2.2 Identifying a site for a new Kirkliston High School

While high numbers of people expressed support for a new school in Kirkliston, less than 20 commented on its potential site. Their responses can be summarised as follows:

- People generally dismissed sites around Newbridge.
- People generally supported or suggested either:
 - one of the school sites in the north-east of the village around Burnshott Road (identified as sites **G-J** in the information pack);
 - the redevelopment of the Leisure Centre site on the west of the village;
- Those who supported a site in the south of the village (sites **E or F** in the information pack) did so to encourage links with Newbridge and Ratho and expand the catchment area of the new school.

“...discount a new school site in the Ratho options A-E... it would actually hinder after school activities, as children would have limited ways of getting back to Kirkliston. Hardly any buses, and current pavements etc very dark.”

People said about the site for a new Kirkliston High

“My favoured location are north of village crossroads G & H... close to village. Easy access for most of village & the areas currently under development. Going by previous planning consultations/applications made they are closest to the areas near village most likely to be developed on in future. Thus getting easier support from housing developers/builders & land owners?! It is the safest option for pupils walking to school. Ground there reasonably flat & outwith main flood risk areas.

“...consideration should be given to repurposing of the currently underutilised Kirkliston Sports Centre. This area could be levelled and rebuilt as a school for Kirkliston secondary students. Whilst this may not offer sufficient space for both a school and services such as playing fields and parking, consideration should be given to purchasing part of the field on the other side of the motorway and using this for such services. As there is already a tunnel underneath this could be used as access.”

“The council has the ability to build where the existing Kirkliston recreation centre is, if a new plot of land with Kirkliston cannot be purchased with a compulsory purchase order in the required time.”

2.3 Concerns about a new Kirkliston High School

28 (3%) of responses rejected the idea of a new school in Kirkliston. 23 of these responses were from people living in Kirkliston. The main reasons people gave for this view were:

1) Concerns about a small secondary school

People said that a small secondary school would limit choices and opportunities for pupils. Subject choices would be reduced and there would be limited after school activities and social opportunities.

2) A lack of infrastructure to support a new school

People said that Kirkliston lacks the transport infrastructure to deal with the traffic a new school would generate.

“My main concern is that I don't believe having a high school of 600 pupils would offer the breadth of subjects required and pupils would have little choice over their studies. I also believe that a school only taking children from Kirkliston will have a detrimental effect on pupils psychologically who will not have the opportunity to form new friendships with pupils from other schools or as many teachers as role models.”

“I would have concerns about the educational opportunities provided, particularly in its early years after opening. I think subject choice at the senior end of the school (particularly Advanced Highers in S6 or more vocational subjects), maybe limited in a school with such a small roll. This could possibly be mitigated if strong links and careful timetabling were to allow Seniors to access subjects at QHS, but this would still be unlikely to offer the full range of choices that a bigger school could offer as there would be limits to how this could be timetabled.”

People concerned about a new Kirkliston High School

“Several of the proposed locations lie on the outskirts of Kirkliston and so parents will be tempted to drive children to school. Kirkliston is already on the limits of tolerance of congestion at peak times and any additional pressure will become intolerable. Potential sites located on the east side of Kirkliston will lead to traffic crossing from the housing estates that are mostly located on the west side leading to chaos at the main crossroads. Burnshot Road already gets nearly 3000 vehicles a day mostly concentrated around the start and end of the school / working day. Adding a school at locations H or G will probably mean we'll regularly see traffic tailing back in front of Almondhill making access to west for residents there very difficult.”

3. Do not extend Queensferry High School

3.1 Significant rejection of Queensferry High School extension



411 (50%) of all responses stated or indicated that extending Queensferry High School should be ruled out. Nearly all of these responses gave a reason or justification for this view. The main reasons were:

1) Traffic on Station Road

35% of all responses raised concerns about the impact extending Queensferry High School would have on traffic around the school. People said that Station Road is dangerous for pedestrians, that the condition of the road is poor and highlighted the congestion at peak times. People felt that more pupils and staff at the school would make this worse.

2) Loss of Parking

People said that the congestion on Station Road is partly caused by people parking in the street because the school carpark is too small. They felt that removing parking places in the school carpark would compound this problem.

3) School too Big

People said that a capacity of 1,800 pupils was too big. They pointed out that the existing building was designed specifically for 1,200 pupils. They were concerned by a lack of space, pressure on facilities and a lack of support for individual children, particularly those with Additional Support Needs. They felt that a school of 1,800 pupils would mean larger class sizes and would not be attractive for new staff.

4) Short-term Solution

People said that extending Queensferry High School was a short-term solution because it is inevitable that in the future Kirkliston and Queensferry will grow again. The original plan had been for pupils from Kirkliston to go to another school and the Council should stick to that plan.

Other reasons for ruling out extending Queensferry High School included:

- Disruption caused to the education of children by noise, pollution and changes during construction of the extension;
- Disruption caused to residents and the local area caused during construction;
- Additional traffic on the route between Kirkliston and Queensferry;
- The visual impact of an extension in the conservation area and the impact of a new building on neighbour privacy;

- An increase in anti-social behaviour around the school;
- Loss of outdoor space.

“The traffic pressure, parking, congestion and pollution issues on Station Road as a major road artery through Queensferry has always been substantial, and has grown in recent years from the expansion of Queensferry High School, Queensferry Primary School and St Margarets Primary, the reduction in access along the High Street diverting traffic along Station Road, the closure of the Ferrymuir Junction for private vehicles to the A90, and growth in commuter numbers accessing Dalmeny Station. The roads around the school are already gridlocked at either end of the school day and parking spread to adjacent streets causing access issues to roads and private driveways alike. Expansion of the school will exacerbate this issue significantly.

The construction of a new building in the north car park area will reduce the parking available on site and more parking will be displaced to adjacent streets causing even more congestion and negative impact on the residential amenity of the area.”

“The current High School was planned around the expansion of Queensferry not the expansion of Kirkliston, any temporary solution like extending the current school does not seem to have any future proofing relating to any expansion of Kirkliston and so a bigger school may still fail to provide for the future.”

“The diminishing footprint of the High School as is, would be detrimental not only to the pupils and staff but to the residents of Queensferry and Kirkliston. It would also be detrimental from a sustainability and carbon perspective. Socially and environmentally, an extension to the existing school would be damaging.”

People ruling out extending Queensferry High School said...

“I would be very unhappy if the school was extended to accommodate 1800 pupils. This is too big. I would worry that the community feel would be lost, teachers can't possibly know 1800 pupils. Pupils with additional needs would be overwhelmed with so many people, the opportunities to take part in sports and clubs would be reduced and local infrastructure can't support that many people.”

“I can't help feeling that having this 'option' on the table is a result of miss planning and poor decision making. It appears a desperate measure, putting the convenience of site ownership ahead of the impact on the local community, the health and safety of residents and user, and most importantly, the quality of the education to current and future pupils.”

3.2 Why some people supported extending Queensferry High School.

72 (9%) of all responses stated or indicated that Queensferry High School should be extended. 52 of these responses came from people living in Kirkliston. The main reasons given were:

1) Quickest option

People said that extending Queensferry High School seemed like the quickest solution.

2) Bigger schools provide more opportunities

People said that a bigger school would provide greater choice and opportunity for pupils and for staff.

3) Maintain community links

People said that they valued the links between Queensferry and Kirkliston and that any solution other than extension would weaken those links.

4) Queensferry High School's performance and facilities

People said that Queensferry High School is a good and well established school with excellent facilities and they were concerned about any alternative.

People supporting extending Queensferry High School said...

"Extend Queensferry High School. The high school already offers excellent facilities for the school and community, extension seems like the most achievable option in the time frame before capacity is exceeded."

"I feel extending Queensferry High would be the best option - maintaining strong bonds between Kirkliston and SQ. This also increases the diversity of children feeding into the high school and opens up a chance for new friendships and experiences. SQ much easier to get to than new school at Maybury - an already traffic jammed A8 would be flooded with more cars. I am not against a High School in Kirkliston but feel new opportunities increased with blending communities."

4. West Edinburgh not an option for Kirkliston

4.1 Kirkliston rejects West Edinburgh option

194 responses supported a West Edinburgh High School solution. However, 85% of those also expressed support for a school in Kirkliston. Only 15 responses expressing support for Kirkliston pupils attending a school in West Edinburgh came from people living in Kirkliston.

58 of the 74 responses rejecting West Edinburgh High School as an option for pupils from Kirkliston, came from people living in Kirkliston.

1) Poor transport and active travel links.

People said that the route from Kirkliston to a new West Edinburgh High School was too long and would require a bus service. No safe active travel routes exist. The route would take a long time due to traffic congestion at peak times and would add to environmental concerns.

2) No community link with West Edinburgh.

People said that Kirkliston has a distinct identity and no connections to the West Edinburgh area. The poor transport links would make it difficult for pupils to attend after school activities.

“The west Edinburgh high school is not a viable option. There is no community there as there is with Kirkliston/ Queensferry, it would be a considerable commute for students and through some of Edinburgh’s heaviest traffic areas.”

People ruling out West Edinburgh as an Option for Kirkliston said...

“West Edinburgh option seems completely at odds with any sustainability agenda, significant transport infrastructure will be required and walking/cycling to school will not be an option.”

“Whilst a new West Edinburgh school may have great facilities, it feels too far away and again would exacerbate traffic problems in an already busy area. Public transport out of Kirkliston is poor/very unreliable so school buses would need to be provided but after school clubs etc could be difficult to get back from.”

“...children, building relationships (sic) with kids who could feasibly live at the gyle/maybury, they'd need lifts/public transport to see their friends, similarly parent who don't drive trying to access the school will be an issue... add to that trying to access school during the highland show and other events would be problematic.”

5. Alternative Solutions

23 of the responses we received suggested alternatives or variations on the solutions we suggested. These were:

- Build a new school in Kirkliston on the Leisure Centre site.
- Accommodate Kirkliston pupils in the new Winchburgh Academy;
- Deliver all three suggested solutions.

5.1 Build a new school in Kirkliston on the Leisure Centre site

This was covered in Section 2.2, “Identifying a site for a new Kirkliston High School”.

5.2 Accommodate Kirkliston pupils in the new Winchburgh Academy

Some people supporting a new school in Kirkliston compared Kirkliston’s growth to that of Winchburgh. They pointed to the new Winchburgh Academy and its community facilities and commented that Kirkliston now deserved similar.

13 people suggested that Kirkliston pupils should be accommodated in the new Winchburgh Academy. The significant majority of people suggesting this were Queensferry residents.

5.3 Deliver all three suggested solutions

A small number of people suggested that all three of the Council’s suggested solutions – a new secondary school in Kirkliston, an extension of Queensferry High School and a new West Edinburgh High School – would be required. The reason given for this was the demand that would arise from future development in Kirkliston, Queensferry and West Edinburgh.

6. Opportunities

As part of the online survey, we asked people:

“What opportunities might your preferred solution offer to improve other local services or facilities?”

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

A New High School in Kirkliston

a) Traffic Congestion/ Active Travel

People said that distributing pupils across both towns could ease the traffic congestion around Queensferry High School. They suggested it could reduce the number of buses, cars, and the need for parking, which has been raised as a significant health and safety concern by local residents and parents. However, people also said that further assessment of traffic congestion in Kirkliston, particularly through the Main Street, will need to be taken into consideration.

People said that building a school in the local community will improve active travel options for pupils and parents, which will improve health and wellbeing, reduce Co2 emissions by avoiding the reliance on cars/buses or public transport, noise pollution and reduce transport costs.

People suggested further enhancement of wider active travel networks around Kirkliston: cycleways, pathways and crossings improving links into Queensferry and Edinburgh.

b) Improved Transport Infrastructure

People suggested improving the local bus services between Queensferry, Dalmeny and Kirkliston and into Edinburgh. They also suggested expansion of other public transport networks such as the Tram line, Park & Ride facilities and creating a new train station in Kirkliston.

c) 20 Minute Neighbourhood Facilities & Services

People suggested that a new Kirkliston High School could be designed as a community hub with local access to sports/leisure and community facilities during the day and out with school hours, similar to Winchburgh and Strathbrock. Suggested facilities included: a swimming pool, fitness gym, indoor courts, 3G pitches, athletics track, skate park, breakfast/after School clubs, extra-curricular activities, adult evening classes, expanded library, performance space, cinema, community café and meeting spaces.

People also suggested improving local provision of other key services such as GP, Dentistry, Police, Pharmacy, Wrap around Child Care, in line with 20-minute neighbourhood aspirations.

People said that expansion of services and facilities in Kirkliston could release pressure on the limited Queensferry resources and facilities and improve community access for the local community, reducing the need to travel.

People also suggested improvements to public realm, access to open green spaces and the creation of a village square.

d) Rationalisation/Redevelopment

People suggested that once the new primary and early years annexe is completed adjacent to the existing Kirkliston leisure centre, the vacated nursery and community centre could be developed into a new community hub.

People said that the existing Leisure Centre is rarely open and is no longer fit for purpose. Redevelopment of this site for a new high school could create an opportunity for a new learning and community campus including the new primary and early years facility. Alternatively, the leisure centre could be repurposed or knocked down to provide commercial premises, if the sports and leisure facilities were relocated on another Kirkliston site.

e) Sense of Community

People said that a new high school in Kirkliston would improve the sense of community, belonging and involvement in the area.

f) Economic Growth

People said that a new high school would bring growth and investment opportunities for local businesses and that this would improve employment opportunities within the school and wider community.

g) Additional capacity/ flexibility and curriculum choice

People said that the new school design could include an expansion strategy for beyond 600 pupils, providing a future proofed solution, as further housing growth is anticipated in future years.

Develop strong links and transition between primary and secondary if part of the same community.

People suggested that the new school capacity could include pupils from Dalmeny/ Craighall and Ratho, widening the mix from feeder schools and releasing pressure on Queensferry and Craigmount High Schools.

People suggested that cross authority collaboration could provide interim capacity in Winchburgh High School for some Kirkliston pupils rather than temporary accommodation at Queensferry, as well as a longer-term option.

People suggested that maintaining strong links between Queensferry High School and a new Kirkliston High School population provides an opportunity to deliver a wider choice of subjects and activities across both facilities, for all pupils and both communities.

People suggested that a new Kirkliston High School was an opportunity to create another Additional Support for Learning support base and facility in the local area.

A New West Edinburgh High School:

a) Transport Network

People said that a New West Edinburgh High School would provide an opportunity to improve transport links in and around Newbridge.

b) Sport & Leisure Facilities

People said that a New West Edinburgh High School could provide additional leisure and sports facilities in the local area for the new housing developments.

c) Future capacity

People said that a New West Edinburgh High School would create additional capacity and a future proofed solution for further growth.

7. Criticism of the Council

The Council drew criticism in some of the responses. This was for a variety of reasons:

- 8% (69) of responses criticised the Council for poor planning, saying that the housing that lead to the growth was predictable.
- 5% (43) of responses criticised the Council for continuing to approve new housing and for a lack of infrastructure to support it.
- 3% (23) of responses felt that Kirkliston was overlooked in terms of investment in infrastructure such as education and transport.
- 2% (20) of responses commented that these problems have arisen due to inaction by the Council.
- 2% (14) criticised the Council for not making Queensferry High School bigger when it was first designed.

Other critical comments received were:

- A lack of confidence that the Council would listen.
- A lack of detail in the documents provided by the Council.
- Poor advertisement of the consultation.
- The documents provided by the Council are misleading.

“We are deeply concerned that so much time has already been lost and have no confidence that City of Edinburgh Council have properly considered the secondary education needs arising from the expansion of Queensferry and Kirkliston. We feel that the community needs an explanation as to how the lack of planning that has resulted in the shambles we now find ourselves has happened.”

“The council needs to think carefully about approving new housing developments without the necessary infrastructure in place to support it. The fact that we have a brand new High School that will exceed its capacity so soon after being built is a failure on the Council's part.”

APPENDIX 2: Pupil Focus Group Summary

Queensferry High School pupil focus groups 1 February 2023

Focus Group 1: Eight S1-S3s from 8.40 – 9.30am

Focus Group 2: Five S4-S6s from 9.30 to 10.20am

Focus Group 1

Proposal to extend Queensferry High School:

Might be harder to get in and out, the school already feels busy. The cafeteria is busy just now and might be worse – that would need to be looked at/moved/extended.

Might be issues with the teachers' car park – it's busy just now and it would struggle to cope with more.

Traffic is already busy outside the school at the beginning and end of the day.

Might create more opportunities for the community – there is already access to the gym and swimming pool but an extension could allow the gym to be extended/improved.

New secondary school in Kirkliston:

Takes about half an hour to get to and from Queensferry for pupils who live in Kirkliston (there were two in the group). Can limit taking part in after school clubs, societies and activities – need to make special arrangements to get picked up etc.

New West Edinburgh Secondary:

Even further away, so will involve more travelling time and impact on after school activities.

- Seven pupils had heard about the issue, most heard about it through a letter to parents and one had discussed in a business class.
- All agreed that it was good to involve pupils in the discussion, maybe through an online survey. Good to ask the wider community too.

Focus Group 2

Proposal to extend Queensferry High School:

Good to extend the school rather than build a new one in Kirkliston as it allows people from both areas to form friendships etc.

It does feel quite full at the school already – especially at the start of the day and getting around in the corridors (often 'shoulder to shoulder'). Extending it could make it even busier.

Cafeteria can seem busy, but this is often to do with the way seating is set out.

There would have to be an extension to the car park too.

Traffic isn't that much of an issue.

New secondary school in Kirkliston:

Travelling to Queensferry at present is time-consuming. Can be difficult to get back as bus service finishes early – difficult for pupils staying on for after school activities (example of pupil who is doing Higher Art and having difficulties getting back when staying later).

Would be good to have a small school there and might help pressures on capacity at the other two schools.

New West Edinburgh Secondary:

You might face the same problem with rising school numbers here – might just be moving it from one place to another.

Will still take a long time to get to from Kirkliston.

Possible alternative suggestion: Winchburgh

Might be worth looking at as it's nearby but potential difficulties with different holidays between Edinburgh and West Lothian.

- General feeling that there's not a lot to do for teenagers in Kirkliston and Queensferry so anything that increases activities/facilities for young people would be welcome.
- Most of the group had heard about the issue, one pupil's dad had attended a public meeting, others had seen comments on the Kirkliston Facebook page
- All agreed that it's good to involve pupils in the discussion, maybe with bigger groups in the school or online surveys

APPENDIX 3(a): Response from BDW Trading and Taylor Wimpey

Tell us what you think the best solution would be.

A new Primary and Secondary School should be built in Kirkliston as part of the proposals for the site at Almondhill, as proposed in the designs prepared by Barratt Homes (A trading name of BDW Trading) and Taylor Wimpey.

These proposals have been prepared in consultation with planning and education officers and provided as part of formal submissions to the Cityplan2030 'Choices' Main Issues Report consultation in 2020 and Proposed Plan consultation in 2021 as well as having been provided directly to Education and Estates Officers following a meeting in November 2022.

The Almondhill site was identified as a development option for a Secondary School and residential development in Cityplan2030 'Choices' Main Issues Report consultation. Site H in the map of sites provided at page 3 of this consultation forms part of the Almondhill site.

Why locate the new school in Kirkliston?

A new Secondary School should be built in Kirkliston as this will support the aims of Cityplan2030 and NPF4 in terms of sustainability and 20 minute neighbourhoods. A Secondary School located within Kirkliston would mean that pupils could walk or cycle to school. Currently pupils from Kirkliston must travel at least 2.1 miles and up to 3.2 miles to reach Queensferry High School. It is a maximum of 1.1 miles from any Kirkliston home to the Almondhill site.

The alternative of locating the catchment High school on the potential West Edinburgh site identified (IBG) would double the current distance from Kirkliston homes to Queensferry High and the route would be significantly busier and more dangerous. The provision of a new school at IBG would also be reliant on the agreement of the landowner and delivery of the wider site and associated infrastructure, both of which could cause significant delay. The proposals for Almondhill already include a school within the site and the land could be provided when development commences. The landowner and two proven national developers are already committed to delivering the proposals at Almondhill.

Alternative site options in Kirkliston

Initially it should be noted that the developer and landowner at Almondhill have been committed to delivering a new Primary and Secondary School as part of their proposals for over 3 years. Site H on the map included in this consultation forms part of the Almondhill site.

We would note that in terms of the other sites identified on the map:

- Walking distances from residential areas of Kirkliston to sites A, B, C, D and E are further than to Almondhill and the walking routes to these sites are alongside main B800 road. Safer separate pedestrian routes are available to the Almondhill site, through pathways through open spaces, residential areas and via the off road cycle route and core path CEC10 that runs parallel to Burnshot Road.
- SEPA Flood maps indicate that there are major flood risk areas covering parts of sites C, B and F. Site A is covered by the Airport safety and exclusion zone. These are major restrictions to development.

- Sites A, B, C, D and E are separated from Kirkliston by the M9 motorway and are more connected to the industrial area of Newbridge. These sites would not therefore logically form part of the community area in Kirkliston, this limits the effectiveness for the school as a community facility for uses other than education, such as sport clubs and group meeting spaces.
- With regard to site J- this site is separated from Kirkliston by the railway line and M90 motorway. Site J is owned by the landowner of Almondhill who advocates for the proposals at Almondhill.

These sites are therefore all either unfeasible options for locating a school and/or less favourable than the site at Almondhill.

What opportunities might your preferred solution offer to improve other local services or facilities?

The proposals for the site at Almondhill include Primary and Secondary School campuses incorporating space for community facilities, public open space including play and exercise spaces, public realm, village square and community woodland along with new housing.

Locating a Secondary School in Kirkliston would reduce the need for car journeys to school for pupils travelling to South Queensferry or elsewhere in West Edinburgh, promoting active travel and reducing traffic through the village. Incorporating the school campus as part of the wider development proposal at Almondhill will also allow for the provision of the surrounding additional facilities outlined above.

Technical studies have already been carried out to prove the suitability and deliverability of the site at Almondhill and to inform the design proposals. These include studies on flood risk, ground conditions, access, landscape impact and design. Scope to incorporate other facilities and urban realm around the school areas have been incorporated into the designs through his process. The proposals were also prepared with input from Education Officers as to the land area required and the best location for a school within the site.

Importantly, the site was identified as an option for development in Cityplan 2030 Choices report in 2020. As noted, there is a willing landowner and two national developers committed to delivering the proposals at Almondhill.

APPENDIX 3(b): Response from Kirkliston Community Council

Tell us what you think the best solution would be.

I enclose for your attention the submission on the above on behalf of Kirkliston Community Council

The Community Council have discussed at length the subject of Secondary School provision as it affects Children from Kirkliston

Over the years there is no doubt that the Children from Kirkliston attending the High have been disadvantaged due to the travel arrangements involved with the Bus Transport Companies

I would say without fear of contradiction our children were denied access to after school activities because of the School Transport issues

This issue can be addressed if Kirkliston had its own High School

With a new High School in Kirkliston the Secondary School Curriculum could also be offered to Secondary pupils from Newbridge and Ratho station which would include the new Taylor Wimpey Development

This would ease the pressure on Craigmount High

It's inevitable that within future years in Kirkliston pressure will be brought to bear on future housing developments within the Parish of Kirkliston

As it is well known there have been possible sites for a new High in Kirkliston identified where the cost of a site would be required to be met by the Local Authority.

It has been suggested from a number of quarters that a new High School in Kirkliston could be classified in the first instance as an Annex of the Queensferry High until numbers grew

Having a Secondary School in Kirkliston does open up the opportunities for the Community of Kirkliston and other Communities neighbouring Kirkliston to take advantage of the facilities associated with the new School

What opportunities might your preferred solution offer to improve other local services or facilities?

[No response provided]

APPENDIX 3(c): Response from Kirkliston Primary School Association



16th January 2023

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of the parent body please find below the Kirkliston Primary School Association's response to the consultation on the future of high school provision for our community.

Background

As a parent council, the KPSA always looks to be fair, balanced and pragmatic about the realities of enacting substantial change and the competing priorities and budgetary restraints that we recognise the Council is working under. However, it would be disingenuous of us not to acknowledge that we as a parent body, and our children, have been let down by inaction in this space. We first presented to the CEC Education, Children and Families Committee in December 2017 about how time was of the essence in reaching a resolution to the fact KPS pupils had no certainty over their high school education and feel that minimal progress has been made to date.

Instead of using the delays in house building from the Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequent breathing space over capacity at QHS to enable a more strategic and timely solution to be reached it simply meant all progress was paused and now we are in 'emergency' situation again. **There is no solution which can be offered in time to avoid overcrowding in the interim period.**

The consultation process

The Information Pack and Q&A provided as part of the consultation do not provide any real insight into the practicalities of options which would allow anyone to make a fully informed decision or balanced choice and we therefore question how much use can be gained out of the results of this process and there is a danger that further time is just being squandered. All options are being presented with a caveat that additional work is required to determine if they are possible should community option be behind them but it would have been far more meaningful to have fewer, realistic and appropriately investigated options where the limitations of each can be fairly weighed up.

At a meeting with Council officials in June 2022 we specifically asked that the QHS extension option be properly evaluated as quickly as possible to determine if this was even an available option as, given it is the catchment status quo we anticipated this would be the preferred option for a number of people. If this option was not available it would enable a swifter and greater focus on identifying a site for a Kirkliston High School – a process which is expected to be protracted. It appears from the information document that whilst a potential location has been identified which is sufficiently big enough to house the required extension to QHS it is not yet backed up by indicative approval from pre-planning advice or the roads department. We have asked for clarity on this matter.



Similarly, discussions regarding a potential site in and around Kirkliston have been ongoing for many years now. In 2018 the KPSA were advised that a number of the sites included in the current consultation were unsuitable because of significant flood risk and / or proximity to the airport. The CEC Education, Children and Families committee set a task to identify appropriate sites in 2018 and it is difficult to understand why there has been no progress over the last four years to narrow down these options to ones which are most practical and likely to receive approval. This is very disappointing to us.

We therefore request that further investigation is undertaken on both these issues alongside the progression of the public consultation to avoid yet more delay and allow a more expedient and confident move to the next step.

Commentary on options

Notwithstanding our comments above, as representatives of the Kirkliston Primary School parent body we have canvassed opinion from as many parents and carers as possible on the options as currently presented in the consultation. We note the following summarised comments around the viability and desirability of each option below:

- **Extension of QHS**

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains existing community links between Kirkliston and South Queensferry • Potentially shortest timeframe (assuming no planning issues) • Bigger school may mean more choice of subject (when established) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of current outdoor space around existing school • Zero capacity for further growth to accommodate future need • Concern around ensuring wellbeing / adequate supervision / tackling bullying may be more difficult in this stretched site • Safety of pupils and nearby residents from additional traffic. The surrounding residential roads are narrow and struggle to cope at present • Impact on local area if lose such a large area within the car park at same time as increasing the school size by 50% • Expect strong local objections to planning application in immediate vicinity which may extend the timeframe • Traffic implications for Kirkliston, South Queensferry and B800



Critical Areas to be answered

- Is a school of such a significant size appropriate for the location – significant impact on the surrounding area (parking, traffic, potential for anti-social behaviour, adequacy of indoor and outdoor space for sport, recreation, dining etc)
- What possible solutions there are for transporting children there safely given surrounding roads are narrow and residential
- Confirmation required as to extent to which pre-planning advice has been sought from Planning and Roads departments.
- There are only a handful of schools greater than 1,800 in Scotland, there is discussion in the paper around the benefits of a larger school. Is this substantiated by performance in these schools?

Local Kirkliston High School

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives Kirkliston its own clear, long-term pathway • Future proofs for growth in either Kirkliston or South Queensferry • Enables easy sustainable travel to school – walking and biking is accessible to all • Reduced traffic load on Kirkliston and South Queensferry • Smaller school (1800 is seen as too large) • Gives local alternative high school choice for children in both catchments • Building could potentially provide leisure or other facilities which would benefit the whole community • Participation in extracurricular activities is easier when no transport is necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic sites are limited and possible compulsory purchase could extend time frame; • KPS will be vast majority of intake so social aspect of going to a multi-feeder school is lost • Possibly restricted subject choice in a smaller school – most likely advanced higher and the provision of more vocational subjects • Ability to attract staff to a new school given size and limited transport options • Is pupil roll sustainable in the long term (20+ years) from Kirkliston alone

Critical Areas to be answered

- Realistic and researched site needs to be identified as a priority - taking into account practical factors such as flood risk and the high pressure gasline and also interest of landowners in selling the sites.
- Would there be opportunity to share non-core subject choice with QHS ensuring all ends of academic spectrum are catered for?
- Are there any other schools which could potentially be included in this catchment?
- Taking a long term view beyond the 2030 city plan, how realistic is it that there will be no further housing in and around Queensferry or Kirkliston over the next 10-20 years?



- **West of Edinburgh option**

We are extremely opposed to this option and very limited positives were identified in our consultation with parents.

The issues we raised in 2017/18 with the logistics of Kirkliston feeding to a West Edinburgh high school still stand:

- There are no community links with this area of Edinburgh and the extended catchment area and limited public transport would make it very difficult to build friendships and attend out of school activities.
- Traffic issues in Kirkliston can be very significant, particularly at rush hour periods and the additional pressure of transporting 500-600 children daily via crossroads would be significant.
- There are very limited opportunities for sustainable travel options and development would require significant improvement and investment
- Glasgow road is prone to significant delays so the impact on wellbeing of these extended commute times is a concern – including the opportunity for safeguarding issues such as bullying.

The last time this option was considered the Education, Children and Families Committee asked for road study to be completed and upon review concluded other options should be sought. We believe that no fundamental factors have changed since then. However, we do note the following further issues:

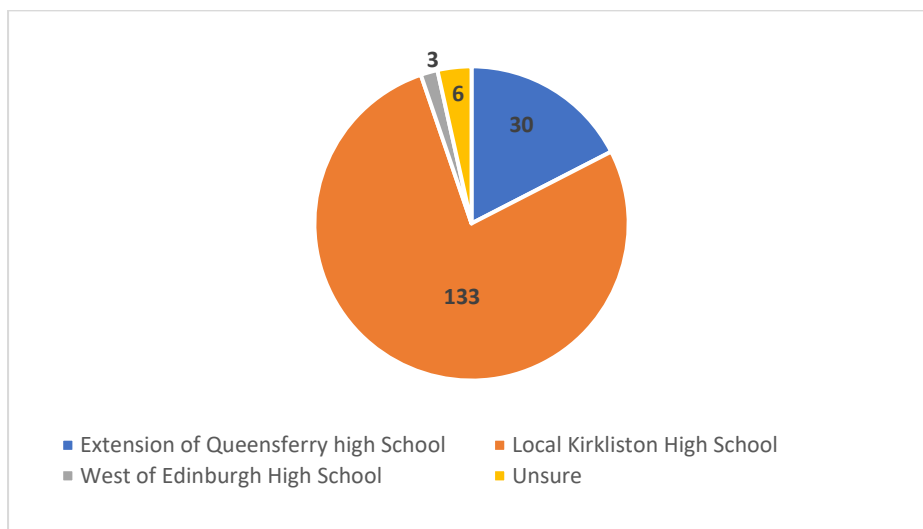
- There is absolutely no certainty around timescales on this – the city plan is yet to be approved and there is no indication of how long it will take till a new high school is complete.
- This high school will be part of a significant expansion in that area and would likely be surrounded by a building site around it for a very long time
- As noted in the Q&A document ‘we would anticipate that Kirkliston would be the biggest cohort in the new West Edinburgh High School for many years’ so the perceived benefits (subject choice and social) of a larger school are a very remote proposition

Outcome of KPSA parent survey

We have surveyed the parents of Kirkliston Primary School on the current consultation to inform our recording of perceived positives and negatives as noted above and also to provide a clear indicator of ranked preference. We have received 172 responses as of the time of this submission and the outcome is as follows:



1) When respondents were asked to select their preferred option:



2) When asked to rank the three options in order of preference:

	QHS extension	New KHS	West Edinburgh
1 st choice	33	135	4
2 nd choice	112	31	29
3 rd choice	27	6	139

Other options:

We note the following options have been discussed at previous meetings and working groups and have been raised by parents which are not included in the consultation and may be of merit in considering final outcomes.

- A larger Queensferry Campus – have any other sites in Queensferry been identified for potential to create an annex to the existing school. Parental feedback has raised the issue of potentially incorporating ‘The Hub’ which is immediately adjacent to the school.
- Twinned schools / annex – Is there potential twin the existing Queensferry High School with a Kirkliston High School which would initially act as an annex but be built with capacity to expand to a stand-alone high school if there is further growth which demands it. This is particularly practical should the KHS be located in one of the two proposed sites to the north of the village as these avoid the Kirkliston Crossroads, lead directly onto the B800 and as such are just a 5 minute drive / 15 minute cycle apart. This would future proof for growth in the area whilst giving pupils the social and staffing related benefits of a bigger school.

Kirkliston Primary School Association



Conclusion:

The balance of opinion from local parents who responded appears strongly in favour (77%) of a local Kirkliston High school with the primary drivers being the impact of travel / transport on wellbeing and extracurricular activities, a lack of belief that there will be no further development in and around the area and that an 1,800 'super school' is unpalatable.

We note there is no ideal solution which can deliver in a guaranteed and expedient time frame and the number of unanswered questions / variables make it difficult to have a definite opinion between Queensferry and Kirkliston options. Short term solutions will be required in all cases so this is our chance to get it right for the medium to long term.

To conclude we ask the council to please hear our plea to expedite the processing and prioritising of actual options, years have been wasted and quality of children's education is at stake.

With regards

Kirkliston Primary School Association

Enc – full commentary from parents on presented options