

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Education Officer

Educational Services Committee: 28th September 2022

Subject: Proposal Paper and launch of statutory consultation for the establishment of a new school to support additional support needs at former Riverside Early Learning and Childcare Centre.

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's approval for the launch of the statutory consultation document by the Chief Education Officer under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to open a new additional support needs school in the site of the former Riverside ELC on the St Martin's Primary School site.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- a) approves the launch of the statutory consultation document by the Chief Education Officer under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to establish a new additional support needs school to be located in the former Riverside ELC site within the campus of the current St Martin's Primary School and;
- b) agrees that the consultation period should run from Monday 3rd October 2022 to Friday 11th November 2022, a total of 33 days when the schools are open for pupils and reflecting the October holiday week and;
- c) agrees that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to the meeting of the Educational Services Committee provisionally scheduled to be held on 16th March 2023.

3. Background

3.1 On 16th March 2022, Council approved the expansion of the school learning estate to meet projected needs of the Additional Support Needs (ASN) sector.

3.2 On 16th March 2022, the Educational Services Committee:

- a) Agreed the suggested phases of development and associated capital works and;

- b) Agreed that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a future meeting of the Educational Services Committee and;
- c) Agreed to allocate funding from the unallocated school improvement capital plan and;
- d) Noted the progress of the work of the ASN Strategy and identified growth needs.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Because this proposal, if enacted, would involve the opening of a new school, the Council is required to carry out a consultation process as detailed in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

4.1.1 The 2010 Act requires the education authority to publish a “proposal paper” which sets out the details of the relevant proposal. The Proposal Paper for this project is provided as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.1.2 The 2010 Act also requires the education authority to publish an “educational benefits statement” in relation to any proposal which falls under the terms of the act. The Educational Benefits Statement in relation to the ASN Estate proposal is included in section six of the Proposal Paper which forms Appendix 1 to this report.

4.1.3 The Act defines the statutory consultees for a proposed school opening. All these groups will be invited to respond to this consultation, as would the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Catholic Church. The proposal question provided at paragraph 7.17 of Appendix 1 to this report will form the basis of the written consultation and may be submitted by hand, by post or electronically to the council.

4.1.4 The Act requires a consultation period of at least 6 weeks which must include at least 30 school days. It is proposed that the consultation period for this project should run from Monday 3rd October 2022 to Friday 11th November 2022, a total of 33 days

4.1.5 The education authority is required, as part of the consultation process, to hold public meetings to discuss the relevant proposal. The public meetings for this proposal will be held on Tuesday 25th October 2022 - online at 4pm, and in-person at St Martin’s Primary school at 7pm.

4.1.6 The 2010 Act requires the involvement of Education Scotland in the process. Education Scotland must be provided with the Proposal Paper, the Educational Benefits Statement and the submissions made to the education authority during the consultation period (or, by agreement, a summary of these submissions). Education Scotland then prepares a report on the educational aspects of the proposal.

4.1.7 The education authority is then required to publish a “Consultation Report” containing a record of the total number of submissions received, a summary of those submissions and of any oral representations made during the public meeting, a copy of the Education Scotland report and a statement of the authority’s response to the written and oral submissions and to the Education Scotland report. Providing all necessary procedures can be undertaken in timescale outlined in section 4.3 below, it is planned to present the Consultation Report on the ASN learning estate expansion to the meeting of the Educational Services Committee provisionally scheduled to be held on 8th March 2023.

4.2 Work to redevelop the vacated ELC will take place whilst education in the St Martin’s site continues. This will be planned to ensure minimal disruption to the school and facilities at their disposal. Plans will be implemented to ensure effective communication with all stakeholders, health and safety procedures and risk assessments.

5. People Implications

5.1 If the proposals are accepted, there will be some effect on staffing levels within the new campus, particularly within cleaning and facilities management services and as there will be two establishments on the campus to be supported. There is potential to create a number of teaching and support staff posts. At time of writing, this is being developed. Any changes would be managed via the Council’s policies for managing such changes. The timescales involved mean that any additions or recruitment of staff will be managed in a planned way.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no associated costs for undertaking the statutory consultation. Time to complete the activities would be covered by central officers.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 Failure to continue to expand the ASN learning estate would lead to increased inequalities for young people and reputational damage for the Council.

7.2 The risks of failing to complete the project on time and within budget will be controlled via robust project management based on the Council’s substantial and successful recent experience in delivering schools projects.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this proposal (Appendix 2). This project will improve the quality of educational experience for young people in West Dunbartonshire who have severe and complex learning needs and there are therefore no negative impacts relating to equality issues.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** This project has been the subject of extensive discussion by the Strategic Asset Management Group and the Corporate Management Team as well as by Council and the Educational Services Committee.
- 9.2** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted on the content of this report.
- 9.3** As detailed in section 4.2 of this report and in appendix 1, consultation with all statutory consultees will be conducted on the proposals in this report in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The improvements in the learning environments in the adaptation of the former ELC promotes and encourages imaginative and innovative learning and teaching thereby increasing attainment and achievement. This in turn leads to the strategic objective of a strong local economy and increased employment opportunities.

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Appendices: Appendix 1: Proposal Paper, incorporating Educational Benefits Statement

Background Papers: Educational Services Committee Report 16th March 2022
Expansion of the School Learning Estate.
Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Wards Affected: All wards