

MEETING:	Statutory consultation public meetings on the proposal to Close Merkland and Campsie View schools, and establish a new build Additional Support Needs school in Kirkintilloch
VENUE:	Campsie View School
DATE/TIME:	8 th May 2018 - 3:30pm-5pm and 6:30pm – 8pm
OFFICERS ATTENDING	Thomas Glen - Depute Chief Executive Jacqueline MacDonald - Chief Education Officer Jan Pollok - Education Officer Alan Bauer - Strategic Lead - Assets & Facilities Fraser Robb - Capital Programme Manager Samantha Burke - Project Officer
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	80 attendees

Two meetings were held in Campsie View School; one at 3.30 and the other at 6.30. The meetings had the same format and the issues raised at both meetings have been summarised.

The meeting was opened by the Chair, Thomas Glen, who welcomed those present and introduced panel members. He then gave details of the agenda and the format of the meeting in terms of questions and answers.

Jacqueline MacDonald provided a short presentation on the proposal.

The Chair invited questions from the floor. These have been summarised below. Questions have been grouped around the main topics discussed.

Size of the school

A number of questions were raised with regard to the expected roll of the school. Participants queried the current roll, the expected decline in numbers attending the new school, and asked what would happen if the school needed to expand in the future.

Officers advised that school roll projections have been carefully considered in developing this proposal. It is anticipated that two factors will affect the future school roll – changing school populations and council's ASN strategy.

It was discussed that the joint school roll is expected to be around 200 in 2018/19. The roll at Merkland is expected to decline in future years as the majority of pupils are in the senior stages of the school, and enrolment at the lower stages has reduced. However, at Campsie View, enrolment at the lower stages has increased, and the majority of pupils are in the primary and early years age groups.

It is expected that the Council's ASN strategy will also reduce the number of children requiring specialist school provision. In particular the new enhanced learning resources in primary and secondary schools, and the new assessment criteria for placement will ensure there is more support provided within mainstream schools. While there are a large group of pupils that will always need to be educated in specialist school, the Council

believes that with appropriate support, more pupils can be supported in mainstream environment, or in an enhanced learning resource in their local area. The Council believes this is beneficial for young people and families.

However, it was emphasised that no pupils currently attending Merkland and Campsie View will be asked to move to a mainstream or enhanced learning resource place – this is about getting the most appropriate placement for pupils in the future.

Based on this, it was explained that 200 was anticipated to be the right size to meet the needs of the population. It was also noted that, having visited many other schools around Scotland, it was very unusual to have a specialist school larger than this. The Education Service is clear that the needs of the population are such that the complex needs of the children would mean that a larger school may not be advisable.

A number of questions were asked about the model of the provision at the new school, including:

- **Will pupils be able to access new enhanced learning resources and continue to attend specialist provision?**

Officers advised that robust assessment criteria would be used to determine the most appropriate support for each pupil, and that specific support arrangements would be based on individual needs. In addition to the new specialist provision, every secondary school has a wellbeing base and we have established enhanced support bases in two of our primary schools. Recently there have been more resources provided to secondary schools to support for pupils attend the Merkland base in St Ninian's. In addition work is underway to build the capacity of the ASN provision in each secondary school.

A teacher who currently works within the Kirkintilloch High School base commented that these models of provision are different but work incredibly well. As long as the bases are run well, the pupils would be in a safe area and are in a safe environment. This will be developed further and giving young people the opportunity to learn in their local community is a great benefit.

- **Campsie View has an autism accreditation - will the new school have this?**

Officers advised that accreditation is hugely important and this would be encouraged for the new school .

- **Will Campsie View pupils be in the same classes as Merkland pupils?**

With regard to class composition, this would be a decision for the school staff. Officers have visited other schools that have been brought together a similar range of needs. The new school would have flexible learning spaces, as well as separate areas for individual learning to allow the school to arrange classes to meet the needs of the young people.

- **Will the number of children in each class change in the new school?**

Officers advised that this will be a decision for the staff in the new school, and that class sizes will be based on the needs of each pupil. The new building would provide the flexibility to support all pupils' needs.

- **Will there be an increase in staffing for medical support?**

Officers advised that the NHS clinical services have advised that they will provide support in the new school and officers will work with colleagues from NHS and Social work to ensure all of the correct support is in place.

- **Will there be a respite facility in the new school?**

Officers advised that this isn't something that has been talked about at the moment for the new school. We will involve social work during the design process.

- **How will staffing at the school be affected by the proposal ?**

Officers advised that all teaching and support staff will transfer to the new school. The new school will have a new management team appointed. This proposal is not designed to provide a financial saving and as with other new build schools it is likely to be overstaffed to start with.

Both schools currently ask for staff each year to meet needs and they have always been allocated this. The level and skill of staff required will also be required for the new school and it is the highly trained staff that are key to this working.

The design of the new school was discussed.

Officers advised that there is no design for the school at present, and any outline work had been to assess feasibility only. If the proposal goes ahead, there will be a detailed design process that will involve staff, parents, pupils and the community, and will build on the work already carried out with the school working group. Officers advised a new build school will be on one level due to accessibility for all pupils.

The consultation process was discussed, including discussion of what would happen if the proposal is not taken forward, and on what grounds a proposal could be rejected.

Officers explained the consultation process. It was discussed that once the consultation period was completed, all of the responses and a report on the consultation would go to Education Scotland. Education Scotland would provide an independent assessment of the educational impact of the proposal. Following this, the Council would prepare and publish a consultation report, laying out the findings of the consultation, discussing the issues raised, and considering potential changes to the proposal. Following this, the Council would meet to decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal. Following this, there would be consideration by the Scottish Government to decide whether to consent to the proposal, or to call it in for review. The grounds for review by the Scottish Government were discussed.

Officers advised that if a consultation report was published and the Council decided not to proceed with the proposal, or if the Scottish Government did not consent to the proposal, there would be a five year period before the Council could consult again on the closure of the two schools.

Members of the audience stated that pupils in the schools could not wait another five years.

Traffic and transport links to the new school were discussed.

Parents raised concerns about current traffic management arrangements at both schools and hoped that a new school would provide more suitable pick up and drop off arrangements. Residents from Waterside expressed concern that the new school would increase traffic in the area and that this would be detrimental to residents.

Officers advised that the design of the new school had not been developed, but that a fundamental requirement of feasibility assessment had been the inclusion of dedicated pick up and drop off areas, visitor parking, and staff parking. Staff and parents would be involved in the detailed design process to agree this. If the proposal were to go ahead, the planning process will involve a full transport assessment, including a traffic impact assessment. This gives to opportunity to improve transport management in the school site and surrounding area.

The transition to the new school was discussed.

Parents asked how pupil transitions would be managed, and how the two schools would come together. Officers advised that there is a lot of experience within the Council of managing transitions from other new build

schools, as well as a great deal of experience within the two schools of managing transitions for young people with additional support needs. It will be important that the Council, schools and parents work together to manage this. Each pupil will have an individual transition plan based around their needs.

It was discussed that currently the two schools have different ways of working, but both have an absolute commitment to meeting the needs of pupils. Staff in the two schools already work closely together, and that this joint working, planning and practice sharing would be developed further if the proposal were to be agreed. The Council and the schools have met with other ASN schools in other parts of Scotland who have been through this process, and would make use of their experience and good practice.

Members of the audience asked if staff at Campsie View were in favour of the proposal.

Staff advised unanimously that they are.

The choice of site was discussed. Residents of the Waterside community raised a number of questions and concerns, including:

- **Loss of green space in the Waterside area**

Residents commented that the pitches at Waterside represented the only green space available for the community to use. The pitches are used for sports, and are used for the social events such as the Waterside gala. If the proposal goes ahead, there will be no space available for these activities, and this would have a negative impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of all the residents of Waterside. It was also suggested that the loss of green space would be contrary to planning policy. It was also noted that the Council had previously invested significant resources in the Waterside pitches.

Officers advised that it is part of the consultation and design process to create something that works for the community and the school. There is a commitment from the Council to try and satisfy as many competing needs as possible. The Council would want to involve staff, parents, young people and the community in the development of the design, to ensure this. This could include developing shared resources at the new school that the community could use for sports, galas, community events and other activities.

With regard to the planning process, officers advised that would a separate process following detailed design development, and would provide opportunity for everyone with an interest to raise any concerns that they have.

- **Choice of the Waterside site**

Residents asked how the Waterside site was chosen, and why various other sites were not proposed. Residents were clear that they understood the need for the new school, but questioned why it needed to be on the Waterside site.

Officers advised that a comprehensive options appraisal was carried out. Based on the initial design brief developed with the working group, a set of feasibility requirements was established. All sites in East Dunbartonshire that met these requirements were assessed – 13 sites in total. A number of sites raised by members of the audience were not assessed either because they were not in Council ownership, or because they did not meet minimum size requirements. Due to the requirements of the school, including the need for the provision for pupils to be on the same level, a large site area is required.

Of these 13 sites, only two were found to be viable – the previous site of Auchinairn Primary School, and the Waterside site. Of these, the site at Waterside was considered more suitable for an ASN school. In particular, the Auchinairn site would require the school to be on two levels due to the size of the site. This would not be suitable given the range of needs for the pupils who would attend the new school and would need ramps to be fitted.

Links with the local community were discussed.

Staff at Campsie View emphasised that the school had very strong links with their local community, and were very keen to build links with the Waterside community. They felt that the school and the young people could be an asset to the community, and invited Waterside Residents to visit the school for events to meet the school community. The school made clear that they would welcome design that provided opportunities for the community to use the school facilities, as appropriate.