

Consultation on Changes to the Catchment Area for Gaelic Medium Education

Statutory Meeting 29 November 2017

Who are we?

- Greg Bremner, Education Officer – Primary and Early Years
- Simon Mair – School Improvement and Planning Manager
- Yasmin Ashby – Quality Improvement Manager

Why are we here?

- The Council is consulting on a proposal to change the catchment area for Gaelic Medium Education.
- This requires a formal consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- The act requires that the council:
 - a) Publishes a proposal document, including a statement of educational benefits, and invites comments from interested stakeholders;
 - b) Holds a public meeting to discuss the proposal;
 - c) Invites Education Scotland to comment on the proposal; and
 - d) Publish a report on the consultation, and considers issues raised.

What are we proposing?

- To better support and promote GME in East Dunbartonshire Council, it is proposed that the catchment area for admission to Gaelic medium education at is changed to include the whole of East Dunbartonshire.
- These proposals will take effect from school session 2018/19.

What are the educational benefits?

- This proposal will ensure that all pupils in East Dunbartonshire are able to access GME without the barrier of having to submit a placing request. This will support the delivery of the Councils statutory duties, and will help to meet parents' right to request GME.

What is the impact on Meadowburn PS?

- This proposal is looking to change the admission for the Gaelic Unit and will not directly affect pupils in mainstream provision. The current provision is considered separate from the mainstream in terms of teaching capacity.
- For pupils living within the Meadowburn Primary School catchment areas, there will be no impact.
- For pupils making a placing request to Meadowburn Primary School, the proposal may increase the likelihood of places being granted, as there will no longer be competition for places with Gaelic unit pupils.

What happens next?

- The consultation will close on 8 December 2017.
- Officers will record comments, and collate response forms. These will be used to provide a report to Education Scotland.
- Education Scotland will produce a report on the proposal, and may ask to speak to parents, staff or pupils.
- The Council will publish a report on the consultation.
- The Council's Education Committee will decide whether or not to proceed with the proposals.

Gaelic Consultation event – 29th November 2017 - Public Meeting

Officers provided a short presentation (attached)

Parents queried if there was a possibility to extend Gaelic Education within EDC.

The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 placed a duty on local authorities to promote and support Gaelic Education. Currently the provision within Meadowburn Primary School has capacity however, if demand were to change, the Council would look at where the demand was coming from and additional capacity may be investigated.

There were questions regarding the current Gaelic nursery provision and if this has been accounted for within this proposal. There was concern regarding the current capacity of the nursery.

The current nursery provision within Meadowburn Nursery is morning sessions. There is currently provision for afternoon places. The Council is committed to supporting Gaelic Education in Primary learning and we are currently reviewing our nursery provision with the introduction of 1140 hours. The council regularly review capacities of education facilities, however roll projections for nursery places is harder to predict as parents are not required to use nursery provision.

Currently there are no plans to expand GME, as capacity is sufficient. If capacity becomes an issue, this would be reviewed as at any school, taking account of provision in the CYP act.

Parents queried the placing request process for the Gaelic nursery.

Officers advised that the Gaelic nursery is treated as other nursery and there is no process for placing requests to nurseries.

With regards to placing requests, currently any parent who wishes to attending the Gaelic provision and who live out with the Meadowburn catchment area are required to submit a placing request. The placing request received are all ranked within certain criteria. Currently placing requests for the Gaelic provision are placed under the same criteria for the school.

The physical and functional capacity of Meadowburn Primary School was queried.

Officers advised that the Gaelic provision is a separate provision to the primary school. Calculations on the capacity are reviewed on a yearly basis and this is due to the numbers of pupils attending. The physical capacity of the provision does not change however, if the numbers change of pupils attending, this can be classified through the class structures.

Officers explained how the capacity of a school and classroom are calculated and teacher ratios which are determined by legislation.

There was concern about recent demand and future demand for local schools in the area and how this will be accommodated.

Officers advised that very rarely are pupils unable to attend their catchment school. The Council are committed to maintain the excellent education currently provided.

The council also have a duty to provide Gaelic medium education. If the school roll increases, officers will review this and may consider expanding the school, or where the patterns of the demand are coming from the council may consider additional provision.

Parents queried if the placing request policy should be changed to be more accommodating of GME.

Officers advised that if the full policy were to be changed, this would also involve a statutory consultation. The proposed change would be for the whole of East Dunbartonshire Council and not just for those living in the Meadowburn catchment area. However, as Meadowburn provides GME for the whole of EDC, it is considered more fair to remove the barrier of placing requests.

Parents questioned the effect on the tax payer on this proposal with regard to school transport.

Officers advised that there would be an automatic entitlement to transport because the Gaelic provision within Meadowburn will serve the whole of East Dunbartonshire Council residents.

There was a question in regarding to what provision other local authorities provide.

Officers advised that several local authorities do not provide a Gaelic Medium provision. East Dunbartonshire Council has a long standing commitment to Gaelic Medium Education. The Council ensures there is equity for all pupils in EDC.

Parents questioned small provision within Bishopbriggs Academy and will this proposal affect placements to the secondary school.

Officers advised that this proposal will not change admissions policy for Bishopbriggs Academy, but may provide some additional priority for placing requests for children who have attended Meadowburn GME. It was noted that there were no placing request refusals to Bishopbriggs Academy for the past few years for those living within East Dunbartonshire Council.

Questions were raised regarding the projected change in demand.

Officers do not see a significant issues regarding change in underlying demographics. However, as GME is a choice, and people's choices may change over time, it can be difficult to project demand with confidence. Officer advised that this proposal may change perception. Officers advised that it is not possible to project people's choices and parents chose Gaelic education for various reasons.

Parents asked that if there was an increase in uptake to the point of capacity, how East Dunbartonshire Council would decide which pupils get in as with placing requests there is a waiting list.

Officers advised that placing requests are rarely refused if resident to East Dunbartonshire Council. Officers and School manage capacity by looking at staffing and if required, increasing psychical capacity.

Parents advised that some parents may be put off attending the Gaelic provision if they were unable to place their child within the nursery as afternoon or full day sessions may be more suitable for more parents.

The current demand for the nursery is for morning sessions and there is an ongoing issue with staffing and the recruitment of Gaelic teachers.

1140 hours is being looked at the moment and this will deliver nursery provision in a more flexible way. Officers are currently reviewing demand throughout East Dunbartonshire Council.

Parents queried if there was any Intention of Gaelic secondary education?

Officers advised that there are no plans at the moment however that there was recently a Principle Teacher for Gaelic appointed in Bishopbriggs Academy. Currently there is a legal requirement in primary stage. East Dunbartonshire Council want to ensure equity and parity for all pupils.

Current number for pupils for 2018 is not yet known. Class sizea will depend on the make-up of the classes and it is a bit early to say at the moment. Maximum class sizes are fixed by legislation. It depends on the classification of the building. This changes every year.

There was a question about how East Dunbartonshire Council promote Gaelic education.

Officers advised that there is a dedicated area within the EDC website which provides all of the information regarding Gaelic Education and explains about the assessment area. Also, as part of the Primary 1 enrolment paperwork, parents are made aware of the provision.

Attendance list.

Lyndsay Murray

Margaret Riddell

Yvonne Scott.

Michael Goff

Tracy Macmillan

Joanne Maciver.

Kirsty Mackinnon

Michahada Dene

JAIME STEEL

PAUL SMITH

Lorraine Pollock.

KIRSTIN SMITH

Julie Cunningham

Anne MacDermid

Ghona Graham

Julie Watson

Sam McLean.

