

East Renfrewshire Council : Education Department

Meeting with Parent Council Members of St Thomas' PS  
Tuesday 22 May 2018 at 7pm in St Thomas' PS

Re. Future Non-Denominational Education Provision for Children of Neilston Primary and Madras Family centre; and Future Denominational (Roman Catholic) Education Provision for Children of St Thomas' Primary, Neilston

Present:

Councillor Tony Buchanan, Leader of the Council  
Councillor Paul O'Kane, Deputy Leader and Convener for Education & Equalities  
Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education  
Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision & Resources)  
Colin McMenemy, Admissions & Development Manager  
Mary Hart & Evelyn Hunter (Note Takers)

Councillor O'Kane welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the panel members. He explained that Fiona Morrison would be delivering a presentation which would provide further information on the consultation and there would then be an opportunity for questions from parents.

#### Learning in Neilston : Consultative Proposal

Miss Morrison explained the rationale behind the proposal and said that she would be outlining the current position, the proposal itself and what happens next.

She gave an overview of the current provision, indicating that St Thomas' Primary School is older than Neilston Primary School and was extended about ten years ago. However, both buildings are not up to modern standards and the Department is seeking investment to provide schools more suited to the modern curriculum. Both schools are proud community schools and the learning and teaching going on in both is not matched by the school estate. This consultation is an important and necessary stage in that journey. The outcome of the consultation will inform the next steps which are conditional on necessary approvals and resources being available.

There is joint agreement between COSLA and the Scottish Government to provide additional money through the auspices of the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) to support new school buildings and the department wants to be ready to take advantage of any such funding. The department has previously received funding to build the new Barrhead and Eastwood High schools and refurbish Crookfur Primary School.

Parents were advised of the condition of both schools which are rated as 'C' – poor in terms of condition and suitability. Madras Family Centre, which is a separate building, is rated 'B' - satisfactory, although it is recognised that there is a need to refresh school estate in the village.

(School buildings are rated on a scale of A-D).

Miss Morrison provided information on the demand, pupil numbers and planning capacity over the last 10 years in each establishment. St Thomas's PS serves Neilston and Uplawmoor and is a 1-stream school with a capacity of 210 places. The current occupancy is 62%. Taking into account future demand, it is anticipated that the roll will steadily increase with occupancy reaching 71%. The school would, however, remain a 1-stream school.

In Neilston PS, the roll has been more stable in recent years at around 290+. The current role is 295. Neilston is a 2-stream school with a capacity of 420 pupil places. The current occupancy rate is 70%. Again, taking into account future demand, it is anticipated that the roll would increase and reach an occupancy rate of 73%. However, it will retain its 2-stream provision.

Madras Family Centre is part of the early years community of Barrhead, Neilston and Uplawmoor, principally serving Neilston and Uplawmoor. The current entitlement is 600 hours of free early learning and childcare. Madras FC was extended in 2016 to include 80 places for 3 & 4 year olds and 15 places for 2 year olds. It is proposed to increase the number of 3 & 4 year old places to 100.

#### Gauging Interest.

In an effort to find out if there was an appetite for change in the local community, officers met informally with parent councils in 2017. Parent councils consulted at that time with the wider parent forum and the department also consulted with Neilston Town Centre Advisory Group. The informal consultation received positive interest.

#### Scoping : Estate Management Feasibility Study.

A detailed condition survey of all 3 educational establishments and the 3 Trust operated facilities was carried out and this indicated that all properties were in need of investment. There followed a site option appraisal to ascertain if there was a suitable site for a new campus. St Thomas' PS was considered unsuitable as the site was too small to accommodate the 2 schools and the family centre. The Current site of Madras and Neilston offered an opportunity to develop a campus approach. With additional resources, it may be possible to include library and learning centres in this proposal.

Miss Morrison indicated that it is possible that the project would be undertaken in stages, i.e. it may be that Learning in Neilston could be established as Stage 1 with the leisure and library facilities taking place at a subsequent stage. It was highlighted that there is no funding available at present should there be a positive response to this consultation.

#### The Proposal.

Miss Morrison referred to Paragraph 57 of the consultation document which details the five themes of the proposal.

#### Educational Benefits.

Again, Miss Morrison referred to Paragraphs 58-85 of the consultation document which outlines the educational benefits of the proposal. In summary, they are:

- to increase the number of early learning and childcare places
- investment in facilities
- new provision which would be more environmentally sustainable and efficient, with better physical accessibility to comply with the Equality Act 2010
- improve learning environments and experiences. Indoor and outdoor spaces to help further excellence and equity
- supports transition : early years
- campus approach facilitates staff from both schools and the family centre working together, improving learning, teaching and achievement
- campus approach allows further opportunities to foster good community relations

- better facilities designed from the outset, including improved traffic management to encourage community use

#### Implications.

Miss Morrison emphasised that they would continue to operate as 2 separate schools, with their own head teachers and designated parent councils. They would all benefit from the new build and shared facilities.

School admission arrangements would be unaffected with St Thomas' continuing to feed into St Luke's and Neilston to Eastwood. Madras FM would continue to serve the same early years community area. There would be no change to walking/cycling distances to school for pupils.

The need to improve traffic management is recognised, for cars, pedestrians and cyclists. This would be well considered to improve this for the schools and the community in general.

Miss Morrison explained that, if approved, the results of the consultation would be submitted for elected members' consideration of the report. This would then put the Council in a position to accept any funding opportunity that comes along.

When the report is considered by Education Committee on 4 October and, if approved, it will be pending monies being available to progress the proposal. The department would write a report back to Cabinet and they would consider the implications for the Council and any funding they would have to contribute.

A consultation on the ultimate design on any new facility would take place with stakeholders and the community to establish new provision.

#### What Next?

Miss Morrison outlined the timescales. The Education Committee considered and approved the proposal to go out for consultation at its meeting on 10 May. The consultation started on 11 May and will last until midnight on 26 June 2018. She explained that it is necessary to consult with key stakeholders. These include parents/carers, pupils, staff, the Catholic Church, community councils, elected members, MPs, MSPs. She advised that there will also be consultation with pupils through the engagement of independent consultants who are experienced in consulting with young people to seek their views. Pupil contribute valuable input to such consultations. In addition, Education Scotland have a statutory role in the process.

A public meeting will be held on 5 June 2018 in Glen Halls, Neilston.

It was explained that Education Scotland (formerly HMIE) had a statutory role in the consultation and a representative would attend the public meeting as an observer and would be given copies of all the responses. A representative would visit both schools early in the new session and meet with key groups, staff, parents and pupils to gauge their views. Education Scotland will then write a report in which there may be recommendations to consider or points to reflect on.

Following the consultation period, a report will be submitted to Education Committee at its meeting on 4 October 2018. Should approval ultimately be given, the next stage of the journey is securing investment to realise the Learning in Neilston project or, possibly, the larger project, Learning and Leisure in Neilston.

Miss Morrison reminded parents of the ways in which they can respond to the consultation – in writing/by email to the Council Offices, via the Council website or by completing the response form attached to the consultation document.

Councillor O’Kane then invited questions from the audience.

A parent said that, although she would not be affected by the proposals as her son is moving on to high school, she is in favour of the plans, should funding be available. She feels that it can and will work and will be very beneficial for the village. She asked what would happen if funding is received - what would happen to the land – would it be used for housing?

Miss Morrison explained that, as it would be surplus to requirements, it would be for the Environment Department to consider what would happen to the land according to the local development plan.

Mrs Shaw added that, in terms of the master plan for Neilston, we are in the process just now of the preparing the Local Development Plan and there is an opportunity for people to have their views heard as part of that process in making sure they help to shape Neilston for the future. Councillor Buchanan said that it’s about getting the balance. There is significant need for more council housing in Neilston and indeed across East Renfrewshire but the council owns very little land. We need affordable housing to allow families to remain in the area which would in turn sustain the school rolls. We also need to ensure green space and play areas

Councillor O’Kane said there is supplementary planning guidance.

Another parent asked if Madras would continue to be managed by the head teacher of Neilston Primary School on the new campus.

Mrs Shaw responded that there are no plans to change its name at the moment.

Another PC member said that the parent council has done a lot of promotion this year in relation to highlighting that St Thomas’ PS is an option for pupils moving on from Madras. . They have been proactive and made themselves known. One of the parents has become an ambassador and has got parents on board. Some parents think that if a child goes to Madras they automatically go to Neilston PS and maybe it should be highlighted that Madras serves both schools. She added that there were discussions last year about the 2 schools having their own identity but would share dining areas and Science labs. They would benefit from a bigger playground and better art and science space.

Someone else raised the issue of security when the schools would be sharing a campus with libraries and leisure.

Miss Morrison explained that design in the beginning can help and can overcome issues such as these. They will look carefully at access to the building for the sports centre part. There would be a different access to the leisure facilities from the school. Security of the building is important too. There would be certain parts they wouldn’t want pupils to access and others which would be separate so that classes are not disturbed when having Mass, for example.

There was concern expressed around the issue of vandalism. The village experiences a number of youths hanging around and there is a lack of police presence. She feels it would be aa case of spending money just for them to come in and destroy the building. There are no security cameras working.

Miss Morrison replied that they want people to use the facility and respect it. Her experience is that youngsters appreciate the new buildings and stand up for the school and there is a sense of community and ownership. With regard to the CCTV, Miss Morrison said that this will be reported back to ensure that the school is protected as much as it can be.

Mrs Shaw added that if leisure and learning are on the same site, buildings will be open later. This offers its own security.

There was a question raised regarding what would happen about janitors.

Miss Morrison advised that she doesn't foresee narrowing down to one janitor.

Someone else added that a lot of children look up to their janitor and they are a key part of the school.

Councillor O'Kane stated that the teachers at Calderwood and St Clare's collaborate about supervision.

A parent asked if it would be possible for parent council members to visit the joint campus.

Miss Morrison said that arrangements will be made for a visit to take place.

Mrs Shaw added that a visit to Calderwood and St Clare's might help to answer some of the questions parents have. They will be able to see what happens around religious opportunities and how it operates. However, she doesn't envisage the proposed campus having separate dining areas as they have in the joint campus but this would be considered in the design process.

A question was raised in relation to Pig Square and if this is earmarked for a particular use.

Mrs Shaw replied that, if the project goes ahead Pig Square would be needed for traffic management while the facility is being built and there would be a need for additional car parking.

A parent asked if there was space on the Neilston PS site for everything that is planned and someone else asked if there were plans to close Glen Halls.

Miss Morrison said yes – there is space to build, as per the options in the consultation document.

Someone commented that neighbours at the top of the road have concerns about potential noise levels as the number of children will be doubling. In addition, there may be litter problems and issues with parking at the end of the day.

Mrs Shaw commented that we always end up with much better parking facilities. It's a key consideration.

A parent asked if the consultation is just available at the moment to the two schools.

Mrs Shaw said that it is now in the public domain. However, this is an education statutory consultation. There would be another process in terms of statutory planning requirements.

Councillor Buchanan added that around any new builds traffic management is a consideration and that control of that is much improved.

Miss Morrison said that the new build facility would be a 2 storey building as there is more value by building upwards and it makes it easier to travel around the school.

It was confirmed that there would be no disruption to St Thomas' during the build.

There was a question asked in relation to the benefit of an all-weather pitch when Kingston Park is just up the road.

Miss Morrison replied that the Council could let the pitch. It would also provide an opportunity to have more after school activities on campus.

Councillor O’Kane said that there is a long journey around design and planning.

Mrs Shaw explained that local residents who are not parents are not statutory consultees. Parents, staff and pupils etc. views carry more weight. However, residents would be statutory consultees in relation to a planning application.

A parent council member asked how long the two schools could survive in their current states should funding not become available.

Miss Morrison replied that it would be just a case of keeping the buildings wind and watertight and that anything more would essentially be throwing good money after bad.

In response to a question about the likelihood of money being available and when this is likely to be, Councillor O’Kane said that the Council has benefited from funding in most years and they are hopeful. However, it is important to have their case ready.

Councillor Buchanan commented that if investment is made and money becomes available it is essential to have a good sound business case. That’s why we want to be ready to go. We are looking at having a shared campus idea here, which would be creating a community facility. That is being innovative and that is what is looked for. The more innovative we are, the more likely we are to get the funding.

Someone asked about the process used to choose which option to progress.

Miss Morrison replied that they would do a topographical survey analysis about what can be put on what grounds. However, the design would be in consultation with stakeholders - staff, parents, pupils, would all be involved and would work with the architects.

There was a question about the Church hall (Church of Scotland) and what would happen if they did not want to sell it.

Miss Morrison replied that, following the outcome of consultation, those kind of discussions could take place.

Councillor O’Kane thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, reminded them of the ways in which they can respond and encouraged as many people as possible to respond. He advised that the public meeting will take place on 5 June 2018 and everyone is welcome to attend that.

## East Renfrewshire Council : Education Department

Meeting with Parent Council Members of Neilston PS  
Wednesday 23 May 2018 at 7pm in Neilston PS

Re Future Non-Denominational Education Provision for Children of Neilston Primary and Madras Family centre; and Future Denominational (Roman Catholic) Education Provision for Children of St Thomas' Primary, Neilston

Present: Councillor Tony Buchanan, Leader of the Council  
Councillor Paul O'Kane, Deputy Leader and Convener for Education & Equalities  
Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education  
Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision & Resources)  
Colin McMenemy, Admissions & Development Manager  
Mary Hart & Evelyn Hunter (Note Takers)

Councillor O'Kane welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the panel members. He explained that Fiona Morrison would be delivering a presentation which would provide further information on the consultation and there would then be an opportunity for questions from parents. He advised that the meeting will be minuted. He advised that there will also be a public meeting which everyone is welcome to attend. The same presentation will be given at that meeting.

Learning in Neilston : Consultative Proposal

Miss Morrison explained the rationale behind the proposal and said that she would be outlining the current position, the proposal itself and what happens next.

She gave an overview of the current provision, indicating that St Thomas' Primary School is older than Neilston Primary School and was extended about ten years ago. However, both buildings are not up to modern standards and the Department is seeking investment to provide schools more suited to the modern curriculum. Both schools are proud community schools and the excellent learning and teaching going on in both is not matched by the school estate.

This consultation is an important and necessary stage in that journey. The outcome of the consultation will inform the next steps which are conditional on necessary approvals and resources being available.

A paper was submitted to Council in June 2015 "Influencing the Future of ER" and, at that time, refreshing the estate in Neilston was a priority area. Miss Morrison advised that funding may not just come from the Scottish Futures Trust but that there may be other ways of engineering money into the school estate. She added that it is necessary to consult if a school is being replaced, relocated, building a brand new provision, or if changing the delineated catchment areas. Such a consultation would take a period of 6 months.

Elected members will make the decision in October. However, if everyone said no, then the Council would need to decide the way forward. Miss Morrison explained that school buildings are graded in terms of their condition, their state of repair, their suitability and if they are fit for purpose in addressing modern curricular needs. This school was built in the 1960s. The recognised assessment criteria ratings are A-D, i.e. good to unsatisfactory. There are no East Renfrewshire educational establishments in category D, due to the investment that has been made, although there are some in category 'C'. Both Neilston and St Thomas' are rated 'C' (poor) in terms of condition and suitability. With regard to Madras Family Centre, it serves the wider area. It had a satisfactory rating of 'B'. The building was extended in 2016 and has newer provision. However, it too would benefit from being within the campus. This would improve transitions. Miss Morrison added that we need to consider best value and to ensure that schools match demand.

Miss Morrison provided information on the demand, pupil numbers and planning capacity over the last 10 years in each establishment. St Thomas's PS serves Neilston and Uplawmoor and is a 1-stream school with a capacity of 210 places. The current occupancy is 62%. Taking into account future demand, it is anticipated that the roll will steadily increase with occupancy reaching 71%. The school would, therefore, remain a 1-stream school.

In Neilston PS, the roll has been more stable in recent years at around 290+. The current roll is 295. Neilston is a 2-stream school with a capacity of 420 pupil places. The current occupancy rate is 70%. Again, taking into account future demand, it is anticipated that the roll would increase and reach an occupancy rate of 73%. However, it will retain its 2-stream provision.

Madras Family Centre is part of the early years community of Barrhead, Neilston and Uplawmoor, principally serving Neilston and Uplawmoor. The current entitlement is 600 hours of free early learning and childcare. Madras FC was extended in 2016 to include 80 places for 3 & 4 year olds and 15 places for 2 year olds. It is proposed to increase the number of 3 & 4 year old places to 100.

### Gauging Interest

In an effort to find out if there was an appetite for change in the local community, officers met informally with parent councils in 2017. Parent councils consulted at that time with the wider parent forum and the department also consulted with Neilston Town Centre Advisory Group. The informal consultation received positive interest, although concern was expressed about traffic management.

### Scoping : Estate Management Feasibility Study.

A detailed condition survey of all 3 educational establishments and the 3 Trust operated facilities was carried out and this indicated that all properties were in need of investment. There followed a site option appraisal to ascertain if there was a suitable site for a new campus. St Thomas' PS was considered unsuitable as the site was too small to accommodate the 2 schools and the family centre. The current site of Madras and Neilston offered an opportunity to develop a campus approach. With additional resources, it may be possible to include library and learning centres in this proposal.

Miss Morrison explained that sometimes money comes with certain conditions. For example, for the worst condition schools, and/or has to be spent with a certain timescale. She said that that is why the Council is trying to be 'shovel ready'.

Miss Morrison indicated that it is possible that the project would be undertaken in stages, i.e. it may be that Learning in Neilston could be established as Stage 1 with the leisure and library facilities taking place at a subsequent stage. It was highlighted that there is no funding available at present should there be a positive response to this consultation.

She reiterated that the site investigation process found that St Thomas' site was not big enough to accommodate the needs of the two schools. However, the Neilston / Madras site offered the opportunity to relocate both on a campus approach. In addition, the use of Pig Square has been considered, perhaps for parking.

### The Proposal.

Miss Morrison referred to Paragraph 57 of the consultation document which details the five themes of the proposal

Miss Morrison emphasised that the principle proposal is 'Learning in Neilston' and the wider proposal would be the addition of leisure and library facilities.

### Educational Benefits.

Again, Miss Morrison referred to Paragraphs 58-85 of the consultation document which outlines the educational benefits of the proposal. In summary, they are:

- to increase the number of early learning and childcare places
- investment in facilities
- new provision which would be more environmentally sustainable and efficient, with better physical accessibility to comply with the Equality Act 2010
- improve learning environments and experiences. Indoor and outdoor spaces to help further excellence and equity
- supports transition : early years
- campus approach facilitates staff from both schools and the family centre working together, improving learning, teaching and achievement
- campus approach allows further opportunities to foster good community relations
- better facilities designed from the outset, including improved traffic management to encourage community use
- there would be separate schools, with some separate areas and some shared areas. For example, science room, drama and music facilities.
- Teachers could work together and plan for improvement with better facilities, for example traffic management

It would be designed in cooperation with stakeholders – pupils, teaching staff and other staff. Synergies.

#### Implications.

Miss Morrison emphasised that they would continue to operate as 2 separate schools, with their own head teachers and designated parent councils. They would all benefit from the new build and shared facilities. There would be no change to admission or transfer arrangements, with St Thomas' feeding into St Luke's and Neilston into Eastwood. There would be no change to walking distances to school for pupils.

Miss Morrison explained that, if approved, the results of the consultation would be submitted for elected members' consideration of the report. If approved, this would then put the Council in a position to accept any funding opportunity that comes along.

When the report is considered by Education Committee on 4 October and, if approved, it will be pending monies being available to progress the proposal. The department would write a report back to Cabinet and they would consider the implications for the Council and any funding they would have to contribute.

A consultation on the ultimate design on any new facility would take place with stakeholders and the community to establish new provision.

#### What Next?

Miss Morrison outlined the timescales. The Education Committee considered and approved the proposal to go out for consultation at its meeting on 10 May. The consultation started on 11 May and will last until midnight on 26 June 2018. She explained that it is necessary to consult with key stakeholders. These include parents/carers, pupils, staff, the Catholic Church, community councils, elected members, MPs, MSPs. She advised that there will also be consultation with pupils through the engagement of independent consultants who are experienced in consulting with young people to seek their views. Pupils contribute valuable input to such consultations. In addition, Education Scotland have a statutory role in the process.

A public meeting will be held on 5 June 2018 in Glen Halls, Neilston.

It was explained that Education Scotland (formerly HMIE) had a statutory role in the consultation and a representative would attend the public meeting as an observer and would be given copies of all the responses. A representative would visit both schools early in the new session and meet with key

groups, staff, parents and pupils to gauge their views. Education Scotland will then write a report in which there may be recommendations to consider or points to reflect on.

Following the consultation period, a report will be submitted to Education Committee at its meeting on 4 October 2018. Should approval ultimately be given, the next stage of the journey is securing investment to realise the Learning in Neilston project or, possibly, the larger project, Learning and Leisure in Neilston.

Miss Morrison reminded parents of the ways in which they can respond to the consultation – in writing/by email to the Council Offices, via the Council website or by completing the response form attached to the consultation document. She added that people can respond whether or not they are statutory consultees but responses from statutory consultee hold more weight. It was noted that petitions are one considered as one response. Parent councils can send a response as a group but can also respond individually.

Councillor O’Kane thanked Miss Morrison for her details presentation and invited questions from the audience.

One of the parent council members advised that they had a meeting last week when everyone had indicated that they were in favour of the proposals. However, they are slightly worried about the outdoor aspects of the proposals as it would be a shame to lose the areas they currently enjoy.

Miss Morrison replied that this would be taken on board. There would be improved outdoor space with an all-weather pitch etc. to ensure that the facilities are useable all year round, both for the school and for the community. The outdoor facilities would conform to all guidelines in terms of SportScotland and will be given particular attention. She advised that, at last night’s meeting of St Thomas’ parent council, there was a suggestion that parent council members be invited to visit the joint campus of Calderwood Lodge and St Clare’s. She confirmed that arrangements will be put in place for this to take place for the parent council members of both Neilston and St Thomas’. The joint campus has great outdoor equipment. Parents should not be concerned that they will be losing the space they currently enjoy.

A parent expressed concern that the site at Calderwood and St Clare’s has 50% bigger space than here on the Neilston site and therefore would have a bigger footprint.

Miss Morrison explained that the drawings/plans in the consultation document are merely possible designs and structures. External consultants are used to build these facilities. It does work and will work. There are creative things than can be done. The site here is quite steep but can create a design that appears to be 2-storeys but can actually be 3. These are just indicative plans. For example, spaces for buses are not required here as they are the joint campus and that takes up space. The needs of the local community will be considered.

In relation to the plans, a parent said that there is a difference between being in line with guidance and the opportunity we have here. What is unique about this campus is the amount of forest space and the amount of grass. Of course, the council will follow guidance but will an opportunity be missed? It’s too much of a squeeze to fit everything on this site and too much green space will be lost, not just active green space but space for children to explore. There are a lot of mental health issues in this country. Nature has a massive influence on that.

Mrs Shaw replied that outdoors does not just mean on the school site. The expectation is that all pupils will get out and about in the wider community and beyond.

The head teacher, Gerard Curley, commented that the site is quite extensive. They are fortunate that they have a mini forest for outdoor adventures. Children spend a lot of time in the family centre and the school. They take classes to Kingston Park and do some outdoor learning there. Staff were trained on forest schools and making the best use of spaces they have.

A parent commented that his family moved to Neilston because of its location as it allows them to go for walks in the country. There are opportunities for the children. We're talking here about a lot of green space, but on site, on accommodation.

Mrs Shaw responded that there needs to be a balance taking into account what it is the greatest benefit to learning. There are 3 other sites that have been considered but some of that will be dedicated to housing.

There's also green area around St Thomas'. All of these areas in the wider sense of Neilston are not going to disappear into concrete. The parent said that his concern relates to it being on campus.

The chair of the parent council asked if consideration had been given to Kingston Park as an option.

Miss Morrison responded that the Council wants to deliver this project as soon as possible. The Council has limited land, limited council ownership. The Council wants to be in a state of readiness. Timing would be a problem if Kingston Park was to be considered. Councillor O'Kane said that in the first plan there was talk about Kingston Park but people felt they wanted to keep the status of the park.

Why, given that St Thomas' would be demolished, could the leisure centre and library not be built there?

Miss Morrison advised that money comes into everything. There would be people of all ages outside hours as well as during school hours using the facility. It would be more protected because the leisure centre would be open at night.

Councillor Buchanan said that it would be difficult if was not all on site. It would mean that it would not be an innovative a proposal and therefore less likely to get money. By ticking more boxes and having the library and leisure facilities on site it would be seen as being more innovative projects.

Mrs Shaw commented that there is research that shows that a community's use of the library increases literacy and a community's value. Having them on the same site makes it more of a viable service to the whole community and could boost literacy levels.

The parent said that she is just worried about the size of the site and the amount of space these things take up. It just doesn't seem to marry up.

Mrs Shaw responded that maybe things don't need to be the same size as things are just now. Most libraries can be accommodated within other building. The architects can make the best use of the space available, taking on board the wishes being expressed about outdoor spaces. It would be a busy site but a more used site.

Miss Morrison added that modern schools are much tighter and the design footprint is much smaller.

Mrs Shaw explained that there are two different processes. The Council wants to seek parents' views as to whether they agree that the Neilston village would benefit from having learning on one site. Parents will be heavily involved in the next stage which is the design stage. Those involved in establishing the Calderwood and St Clare's campus have much more of a sense of ownership of their building.

A gentleman said that everyone is in favour of that and Miss Morrison urged the parent council to explain all of this to the wider parent body.

The Chair of the parent council asked where the data came from in relation to the number of children coming from new house building. Miss Morrison pointed out that St Thomas' PS covers Uplawmoor too.

She added that the safety of children is the main concern during construction. She explained that the council and the department are very experienced in such things. Crookfur PS, which is a full 2 stream school with a 90 capacity nursery, was build round about the existing site. It was also rated 'C'. It had to be built within a tight timeframe. The pupils were in the school during construction, albeit some temporary accommodation was erected.

Mrs Shaw said that the above was managed very well. They had good partners and the children were included. It worked beautifully. Kids fed back at an event on their experience post-occupancy and were quite clear about what their fears had been but of the benefits of being on the site during construction. She added that it is important to understand that all of these aspects are taken into consideration by the Council and the construction company.

Councillor O'Kane commented that the phasing of the whole operation is important. For example, some works can take place over the summer when pupils are on holiday.

A parent asked about one of the options which would result in decanting. Mrs Shaw replied that, unfortunately there are no schools lying empty, and so there is nowhere to decant to. However, there may be some temporary accommodation as was the case at Crookfur. Temporary accommodation is expensive and so would not be the preferred option. It would be preferable to use that money more creatively.

Someone else asked if the temporary accommodation would be on the Neilston site, as there had been talk a number of years ago about pupils being bussed to schools in Barrhead. Councillor O'Kane highlighted that this is just one of the options and it is just indicative of what could be done.

In relation to Pig Square, someone asked if parents will be involved in what they would like to see on the site. Mrs Shaw replied that, for previous new school builds, the architects brought parents together and separately. The same was done with groups of pupils and staff.

A parent asked if there would be access to the framework and Miss Morrison said that the procurement process would be followed in terms of quality and cost. Builders that have been used in the past have been quality builders. There would be a separate tender exercise.

Another parent said that, in terms of the sports facilities, he would welcome these as people often have to travel elsewhere for such facilities. However he is concerned in terms of the use of the sports facilities in the evenings as this might attract vandalism. The facilities, as with other local authority sites, would be open to lets. However, he wondered if the income from those lets is ring fenced and passed back to the school or is it swallowed and used elsewhere.

Mrs Shaw explained that it is the Trust who lets the facilities and that's part of their income, as part of the management fee we pay to them. The new school would offer opportunities but there is not a school in Scotland that operates like that.

The parent added that if the money came back to the school it would make them more self-sufficient.

Mrs Shaw explained that the department works closely with the department's Property & Technical Services and if there is a particular issue, then that will be taken up with them. However, the minimum we expect our schools would be is wind and water tight. She said that she expects vandalism would be tackled speedily. However, there will be more evening use of the facilities and the adult presence would act as natural security around the site.

There was some further concern that the Council was 'getting big on facilities' to the detriment of green space and that there is a feeling that it's more about maximum income rather than the loss of green space

Mrs Shaw responded that schools are not profit making facilities. They operate on the basis of DSM (Delegated School Management) and any fund raising is not about income generation.

Mrs Shaw referred to their meeting with the advisory group. There is a process whereby the master planning of the village has to be looked at and this proposal is a huge part of that. It will be to the benefit of the community but sight will not be lost of the picture of Neilston. She said that the LDP (Local Development Plan) will be out after the summer and the Council will be gathering views around that for all of East Renfrewshire's communities.

Someone asked about evening clubs and if a timetable would be worked out for during the day so that the schools could use the facilities at certain times but open to the public at others. In addition, someone referred to Mrs Shaw's comment about the cost of membership etc. and this would mean that children attending, for example, a football group, would be expected to pay because the football group has to pay. Neilston has already been identified as an area of deprivation and yet people will be expected to pay a fortune.

Councillor Buchanan explained that all clubs have their charges and they are fighting for space and lets.

Mrs Shaw reminded parents that pupils will also be consulted.

Councillor O'Kane thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, reminded them of the ways in which they can respond and encouraged as many people as possible to respond. He said that the parent council can respond as a group and also as individuals. He advised that the public meeting will take place on 5 June 2018 and everyone is welcome to attend that.

## East Renfrewshire Council : Education Department

Public Meeting  
Tuesday 5 June 2018 at 7pm in Glen Halls, Neilston

Re Future Non-Denominational Education Provision for Children of Neilston Primary and Madras Family centre; and Future Denominational (Roman Catholic) Education Provision for Children of St Thomas' Primary, Neilston

Present: Councillor Tony Buchanan, Leader of the Council  
Councillor Paul O'Kane, Deputy Leader and Convener for Education & Equalities  
Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education  
Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision & Resources)  
Colin McMenemy, Admissions & Development Manager  
Councillor Charlie Gilbert  
Brendan Docherty, Head Teacher, St Thomas's PS  
Gerard Curley, Head Teacher, Neilston PS  
Mary Hart & Evelyn Hunter (Note Takers)

Councillor O'Kane welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the panel members and other members of the audience. He explained that this meeting forms part of the statutory consultation process as set out in the Schools Education Act 2010 and is in relation to the future education provision in Neilston and the proposal for a joint site in the locale of Neilston and Madras. He advised that Fiona Morrison would be delivering a presentation which would provide further information on the consultation and there would then be an opportunity for questions from parents. He advised that the meeting will be minuted.

He emphasised that this is not about the design of any new building or decisions on sites or outdoor facilities. It is about gathering the views of the local community and parents on whether or not this would work in principle or if they can and should share a site. He added that funding is not available at the moment but that it is important for the Council to be prepared should funding come along and this proposal is approved. Councillor O'Kane advised that there is a representative present from Education Scotland (formerly HMle) as they too have a statutory role in the process.

#### Learning in Neilston : Consultative Proposal

Miss Morrison explained the rationale behind the proposal and said that she would be outlining the current position, the proposal itself and what happens next.

Miss Morrison explained that it is about the principle of establishing a joint campus and whether or not people are for or against the schools coming together on a joint site. She said that a consultation meeting had taken place informally with the parent councils separately to seek their views on the proposals and they would be responding officially.

Journey from the Current State to Improvements. Schools and Madras Family Centre.  
Fiona Morrison gave an overview of the current provision, indicating that St Thomas' Primary School is older than Neilston Primary School and had been extended about ten years ago. However, both buildings are not up to modern standards and the Department is seeking investment to provide schools more suited to the modern curriculum. Both schools are proud community schools and the excellent learning and teaching going on in both is not matched by the school estate. East Renfrewshire want to ensure opportunities and experiences are further

improved by the provision we make available to them. We want the building and facilities to be excellent to support their learning further.

This consultation is an important and necessary stage in that journey. The outcome of the consultation will inform the next steps which are conditional on necessary approvals and resources being available.

Miss Morrison spoke about the condition of the current buildings. She advised that the Scottish Government and COSLA have a joint commitment to improve school estate for young people in respect of condition and suitability. It is the Council's intention to improve that. Eight key areas have been identified in terms of opportunities for the wider ERC area. One of these was to improve school estate, particularly in Neilston. The Council has made considerable investment in improving the school estate, through particular pots of money which have been made available. There needs to be sufficient provision to ensure there are sufficient places. The Council also has to ensure best value and will continue to seek investment. We need to ensure building matches demand and that there are not too many places. However, we need to be 'shovel ready' in order to take advantage of any funding that comes along.

Miss Morrison explained that school buildings are graded in terms of their condition, their state of repair, their suitability and if they are fit for purpose in addressing modern curricular needs. The recognised assessment criteria ratings are A-D, i.e. good to unsatisfactory. There are no East Renfrewshire educational establishments in category D, due to the investment that has been made, although there are some in category 'C'. Both Neilston and St Thomas' are rated 'C' (poor) in terms of condition and suitability. With regard to Madras Family Centre, it serves the wider area. It had a satisfactory rating of 'B'. The building was extended in 2016 to include 80 places for 3 & 4 year olds and 15 places for 2 year olds. It is proposed to increase the number of 3 & 4 year old places to 100. However, it too would benefit from being within the campus. This would improve transitions.

Miss Morrison provided information on the demand, pupil numbers and planning capacity over the last 10 years in each establishment. St Thomas's PS serves Neilston and Uplawmoor and is a 1-stream school with a capacity of 210 places. The current occupancy is 62%. Taking into account future demand, it is anticipated that the roll will steadily increase with occupancy reaching 71%. The school would, therefore, remain a 1-stream school.

In Neilston PS, the roll has been more stable in recent years at around 290+. The current roll is 295. Neilston is a 2-stream school with a capacity of 420 pupil places. The current occupancy rate is 70%. Again, taking into account future demand, it is anticipated that the roll would increase and reach an occupancy rate of 73%. However, it will retain its 2-stream provision.

Madras Family Centre is part of the early years community of Barrhead, Neilston and Uplawmoor, principally serving Neilston and Uplawmoor. The current entitlement is 600 hours of free early learning and childcare. Madras FC was extended in 2016 to include 80 places for 3 & 4 year olds and 15 places for 2 year olds. It is proposed to increase the number of 3 & 4 year old places to 100.

### Gauging Interest.

In an effort to find out if there was an appetite for change in the local community, officers met informally with parent councils in 2017. Parent councils consulted at that time with the wider parent forum and the department also consulted with Neilston Town Centre Advisory Group. The informal consultation received positive interest, although concern was expressed about traffic management.

### Scoping. Asset Management Feasibility Study.

A detailed condition survey of all 3 educational establishments and the 3 Trust operated facilities was carried out and this indicated that all properties were in need of investment. There followed a site option appraisal to ascertain if there was a suitable site for a new campus. St Thomas' PS was considered unsuitable as the site was too small to accommodate the 2 schools and the family centre. The current site of Madras and Neilston offered an opportunity to develop a campus approach. With additional resources, it may be possible to include library and leisure centres in this proposal.

Miss Morrison explained that sometimes money comes with certain conditions. For example, for the worst condition schools, and/or has to be spent with a certain timescale. She said that that is why the Council is trying to be 'shovel ready'.

Miss Morrison indicated that it is possible that the project would be undertaken in stages, i.e. it may be that Learning in Neilston could be established as Stage 1 with the leisure and library facilities taking place at a subsequent stage. It was highlighted that there is no funding available at present should there be a positive response to this consultation.

She reiterated that the site investigation process found that St Thomas' site was not big enough to accommodate the needs of the two schools. However, the Neilston / Madras site offered the opportunity to relocate both on a campus approach. She added that there is currently a backlog of maintenance of £1.7m (St Thomas') and £1.1m (Neilston).

Miss Morrison advised that all the properties could do with more investment but that we have to be realistic and be ready to have a proposal. Within the Council, other sites have timescales and other conditions attached which would delay the ability to progress as and when money became available whereas the Director of Education can remodel current school curtilages.

Miss Morrison informed the meeting that the Scottish Government, under the auspices of the SFT, provide monies and this had allowed Crookfur PS to be remodelled/extended and Barrhead HS to be replaced. Crookfur had also been graded as a 'C'. The build had to be completed within a set timeframe and, as it was being built on site, there was no requirement to undertake a statutory consultation. A consultation is required if an authority wishes to make changes to school estate, for example change to delineated catchment areas, relocation to another site.

#### The Proposal.

Miss Morrison referred to Paragraph 57 of the consultation document which details the five themes of the proposal.

She said that the principle proposal is 'Learning in Neilston' and the wider proposal would be the addition of leisure and library facilities. She emphasised that there would be two schools, with two head teachers and two parent councils. The school would not be merging together – they would be two separate schools on the same site. She added that if it was found to be possible to include the library and leisure facilities these current buildings and St Thomas' PS would be closed and declared surplus. This would open up an opportunity for the Council in terms of master planning.

#### Education Benefits.

- Education benefits would be realised, not just improvement to the fabric of the building.
- to increase the number of early learning and childcare places
- investment in facilities
- new provision which would be more environmentally sustainable and efficient, with better physical accessibility to comply with the Equality Act 2010
- improve learning environments and experiences. Indoor and outdoor spaces to help further excellence and equity
- supports transition : early years

- campus approach facilitates staff from both schools and the family centre working together, improving learning, teaching and achievement
- campus approach allows further opportunities to foster good community relations
- better facilities designed from the outset, including improved traffic management to encourage community use
- there would be separate schools, with some separate areas and some shared areas. For example, science room, drama and music facilities.
- Teachers could work together and plan for improvement with better facilities.

If approved, the building would be designed in cooperation with stakeholders – pupils, parents, teaching staff and other staff. It would provide opportunities for adult learning and community learning. Even without library and leisure facilities on site, it would allow additional multipurpose rooms, for example science, drama, music and Art and everyone would benefit from common shared facilities. It would be up to the head teachers to decide what would best meet the needs of their learners and staff. Miss Morrison said that these buildings were built in the 1960s when there was no Equalities Act and we would like them to be more physically accessible.

#### Implications.

Miss Morrison said that proper cognisance would be taken of traffic managements issues. These schools were built when there were fewer cars. Nowadays, pedestrian traffic has to be separate from cyclists, cars, parking, drop-off areas etc. Any proposal taken forward would take all of this into account. There would be no change to walking distances to school for pupils and no changes to admission or transfer arrangements, with St Thomas' continuing to feed into St Luke's and Neilston into Eastwood High School.

Madras would still serve the same early years community.

Miss Morrison emphasised that they would continue to operate as 2 separate schools, with their own head teachers and designated parent councils. They would all benefit from the new build and shared facilities.

When the report is considered by Education Committee on 4 October and, if approved, it will be pending monies being available to progress the proposal if funding does become available. The department would write a report to Cabinet and they would consider the implications for the Council and any funding they would have to contribute.

A consultation on the ultimate design on any new facility would take place with stakeholders and the community to establish new provision.

Miss Morrison explained that this statutory consultation is about Learning in Neilston, although library and leisure facilities may be included, albeit this may not happen in the first phase. The results of the consultation would be submitted for elected members' consideration of the report. If approved, this would then put the Council in a position to accept any funding opportunity that comes along.

#### What Next?

Miss Morrison outlined the timescales. The Education Committee considered and approved the proposal to go out for consultation at its meeting on 10 May. The consultation started on 11 May and will last until midnight on 26 June 2018. She explained that it is necessary to consult with key stakeholders. These include parents/carers, pupils, staff, the Catholic Church, community councils, elected members, MPs, MSPs. She advised that there will also be consultation with pupils through the engagement of independent consultants who are experienced in consulting with young people to seek their views. Pupils contribute valuable input to such consultations. In addition, Education Scotland have a statutory role in the

process. Notes of all meetings and responses are passed to Education Scotland. They then look and ensure we have followed due process.

It was explained that a representative from Education Scotland (formerly HMIE) would visit both schools early in the new session and meet with key groups, staff, parents and pupils to gauge their views. Education Scotland will then write a report in which there may be recommendations to consider or points to reflect on.

Following the consultation period, a report will be submitted to Education Committee at its meeting on 4 October 2018. The report is available for public scrutiny 3 weeks in advance of the meeting. Should approval ultimately be given, the next stage of the journey is securing investment to realise the Learning in Neilston project or, possibly, the larger project, Learning and Leisure in Neilston.

Miss Morrison reminded parents of the ways in which they can respond to the consultation – in writing/by email to the Council Offices, via the Council website or by completing the response form attached to the consultation document. She added that people can respond whether or not they are statutory consultees but responses from statutory consultee carry more weight. It was noted that petitions are considered as one response. Parent councils can send a response as a group but can also respond individually.

Councillor O’Kane thanked Miss Morrison for the very full presentation which had given the context of this statutory consultation and invited questions or comments from the floor.

Jonathan Kerr, resident and parent, referred to Councillor O’Kane’s comment that this public meeting is to gather views on the proposal and asked if there would be an opportunity to ask questions about the design of the building etc. He feels that this has been kept quite narrow.

Miss Morrison responded that we want to make sure we are ready, in particular for the school part of it first. Any other sites considered could have conditions attached and this would not only add time to the project but possibly additional costs. What the Council wants to do is to identify how the project can be delivered quickly and then the planning and design process would come into play.

Alan Walker, resident, commented that he is fully supportive of the concept of a joint campus but it is his opinion that the process is flawed. He feels that this could compromise the master planning process. Fiona Morrison had mentioned that traffic management has to be considered but why did the Council not ask the planners to have a look at the master plan in relation to the school being on a particular site.

Miss Morrison replied that she can’t speak for the planning department. Consideration was given to the use of Pig Square and the Church Hall but the potential loss of the site at St Thomas’ and the sports centre has to be considered as part of the master plan. That has been thought about. Those in planning know about the proposal, but it’s done through another parallel process. There is a due statutory timeframe and process. That helps with the LDP and the local plan.

Mr Walker said that the report doesn’t say what will happen if the full proposal goes ahead – what will happen to the library, sports centre and St Thomas’ PS – will they be left to rot and become derelict over the years or will they be demolished? That’s where the master plan would come in.

Fiona Morrison said that this will be fed back. The principle is about the two schools coming together. This is what this part is about. There is a separate process considered as part of the master plan.

Frances Boyle resident, said that, until June of last year, she taught in a joint campus. She said that the design of the campus is crucial to its success. Her niece, who was also at the meeting, works in that campus. Their experience has not been a good one. There have been difficulties because of flaws in the design. She expressed concern about how the shared facilities would work, particularly if the gym hall and computer suite were shared. She feels that gym time is crucial and doesn't think that it works timetable wise. She thinks that the campus would require two separate entrances. In their campus there is only one front entrance and it causes congestion with children trying to get down the corridor and parents waiting to speak to someone at the office. They have found it to be very inflexible. There is also a shared conference room which has to be pre-booked.

Mrs Shaw commented that the scenario they are painting is not one that she has experienced in East Renfrewshire. All of these issues were taken into consideration with staff, parents, pupils and faith leaders all involved in the initial design. The architects were then able to take it all on board. As far as the joint campus is concerned, she has had very successful news stories from St Clare's and Calderwood Lodge so it has been a different experience. She informed the lady that she was a head teacher at Mearns PS for 4 years. The school also had a nursery and they managed to get everyone in one gym hall. She reassured the lady that it does work.

Councillor O'Kane said it was a fair point. However, it is his view that we are not comparing apples with apples. He agrees that the design is crucial and we do learn from experiences.

Miss Morrison advised that, before schools are built, officers go to other authorities and learn from others' experiences. She said that the design is uppermost and she gave her assurance that this does work. She added that the parent councils of both Neilston and St Thomas' primary schools will be visiting our joint campus to allow them to speak to staff and hear about their experiences.

The other lady who works at the joint campus in another authority said that we need to be careful that this is not just about a money saving exercise. Schools can very easily lose their own identity. It's not just about children coming together – head teachers struggle to have their own space.

The head teacher of St Thomas' commented that he has visited our joint campus and they have their own entrances and very much their own identity. The head teacher of Neilston agreed, saying he is aware of the school the lady is referring to and it is an entirely different model. The schools in our campus have their own identity but have the opportunity of working together when possible.

A local resident commented that he feels it strange that the Council is trying to bring the library and leisure centre onto the same site and expressed concern in relation to security issues for the school, parking and traffic etc.

Miss Morrison stressed that, again, design is key. There can be parts of buildings sectioned off for parts of the day but can be accessible for the public at certain times. She said that lessons can be learned from others, for example Midlothian, which ER worked in partnership with when the new Eastwood High School was being built. However, facilities can be on the same site but in separate buildings.

Councillor O'Kane highlighted that Eastwood High School has leisure facilities which are open to the public but it is in a separate building. However he reiterated that these discussions are for later on at the design stage.

A gentleman in the audience commented that he thinks the site of our current joint campus is about twice the size of the Neilston site. Fiona Morrison responded that the typography of

these sites is important to what can be achieved. Architects are quite inspirational and very experienced to ensure that they get the best fit out of a site.

A local resident, referred to the Neilston Feasibility Study. She asked if options 1-6 were the only ones being considered and what is the least likely. Are there alternatives and how would people find out about them?

Miss Morrison replied that the study determines if everything can fit on the site. The study has shown that the Neilston site is a suitable size. The architects have just included the drawings in the feasibility study to show people possible options. The building can be any shape or size and the actual design will be taken forward at a later stage. She added that they could have consulted and just said we don't where the school is going to be, but the site and the various options were shown to give reassurance to parents and residents.

A gentleman said that he had attended a Community Council meeting last week and they had expressed disappointed that option 7 had not been included in the document. He understands that we need to be ready when funding is available. However, it's important as a Neilston resident that the best option for the village is carried through. He asked if there could be a longer term option to incorporate option 7 that the Community Council has prepared. Officers indicated that they were unaware of option 7.

Mrs Shaw responded that, as a statutory consultee in the process, the Community Council's considerations will carry some weight and they can put their views forward in their response.

Elaine Hutchison, parent, commented that it is a really good idea to put everything on the one site as this would provide a lot of opportunities. However, she wishes to advise caution in relation to the design as they would want to ensure that the Council don't do too much to the detriment of the pupils and teachers. She would rather have a playground than a library and leisure centre.

She added that, when Crookfur was remodelled, it was very difficult for pupils and teachers. It was very noisy and disruptive. There have been some schools built on site that were managed well, for example a lot of work was carried out during the holiday period. She feels that it is important not to try and squeeze everything in when money is available to the detriment of education.

Fiona Morrison replied that she is surprised at these comments as the evaluations received from the young people, staff and parents at Crookfur indicated that they thought it had been managed exceptionally well. She said that while you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, there were no health and safety issues and no interruption to learning at Crookfur. In addition, there had been opportunities for pupils to engage with the builders at very stage. It all went exceptionally well and was very well thought through in advance with the designers. It's all about the planning and designing. In relation to this proposal, the Council will want to minimise any disruption.

In relation to the issue raised about the playground, Miss Morrison advised that there are statutory guidelines and requirements around outdoor play and legislation must be followed. Youngsters learn in and outwith school grounds as part of their wider curricular experiences. The school grounds that she would envisage at Neilston would be very much enhanced.

John Scott, resident, and member of the Community Council, asked about the possibility of utilising land at Kingston Road which is being developed by Dawn Homes for housing. The land there is bigger and it would make more sense. This would also release land for housing for the centre of the village.

If Scottish Government release a pot of money and you build the library and leisure centre in one would they stay open and who would pay the transfer costs? It was confirmed that they would remain open until the campus is ready and the Council and the Trust would have responsibility for transfer costs.

Sue Mathers, a grandparent and local resident, asked a question in relation to the figures quoted in the document in terms of the increase in pupils from new housing. She said she is aware of a number of proposed developments and can the Council confirm how the numbers were calculated in the presentation. How many is it based on?

Miss Morrison advised that, taking account of the Uplawmoor area, there are 180 units planned until 2023. Thereafter, there are a further 380 units planned. However, this does not generate a lot of pupils. She highlighted that the planning figure after 2023 is indicative at the moment.

The lady said that demographics can change dramatically. Often schools are built and very rapidly become too small. Councillor O'Kane responded that East Renfrewshire schools are busy places. However, officers are well versed in terms of planning for capacity. No decision has been taken on the planning principles alluded to.

Miss Morrison said that, even if additional housing is built that no one knows about there would still be scope in the schools to include that additional housing. These situations are regularly reviewed as demographics change, birth rates change etc. During the whole process officers will always monitor things and decisions will be taken as and when appropriate.

Neil Wilson, parent and resident, referred to both schools retaining their head teacher. He asked if there was the same commitment to retaining other staff, for example pupil support staff.

Mrs Shaw replied that, essentially, staffing is based on the number of children coming into schools in terms of ASN. There are criteria for that based on pupil needs. Pupils are well looked after in East Renfrewshire. However, head teachers in the future, will have responsibility for doing their own staffing models and looking after their own schools and staffing. It's based on pupil needs but within a particular envelope of resources. She can say at the moment that staffing models will stay as they are. However, if the Education Bill goes through parliament in the Autumn, head teachers will make those decisions.

Councillor O'Kane said that different schools will make different decisions.

There was a question in relation to timescales and how long it is likely to take from receiving funding to having a fully functional school.

Miss Morrison said that the process from beginning to end takes approximately 4 years. There would be a tendering process and a project of this scale would take around 18 months to 2 years. If the proposal is agreed, then it would be built into the planning cycle of the Council.

Councillor O'Kane explained the funding and how it all works. The Scottish Government has a school building programme which they deliver to councils to enable them to build new schools. under the auspices of the SFT. They have periods of commitments of money. The enabling money comes from the Scottish Government and then the Council has to look at its money as it may be necessary to contribute to the cost. The Scottish Government is committed to a school building programme to be delivered in the lifetime of this Parliament by 2021. 32 authorities would be competing for funding.

Miss Morrison added that it would be a bidding process. The project would need to be considered attractive in that it met the criteria in terms of addressing the poor condition of schools, supporting community aspects and joint facilities, for example.

A gentleman referred to the backlog of maintenance in the schools. He asked if, after 2021, that backlog will be cleared or would it be a case of within 4 years there would be no school. Miss Morrison explained that the Council is required to do the best possible to ensure that schools are maintained in line with health and safety guidelines and that they are wind and watertight.

Councillor O’Kane thanked everyone for their attendance. He reminded everyone of the ways in which they can respond to the consultation and added that a hard copy of the consultation document can be made available if required.