

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

**CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE CONSULTATIVE PROPOSAL:
FUTURE SPECIALIST ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING PROVISION FOR
CHILDREN OF EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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BACKGROUND

1. On Thursday 23 June 2022, the Education Committee approved the issue of a consultative document on the proposal to establish further provision for children and young people with additional support needs (ASN). This would be through the establishment of a Pre School Assessment and Development Unit and Primary Communication Service in Carolside Primary School and moving the current Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Outreach Service to Carlibar Communication Centre to an enhanced nurture classroom. A copy of the original consultative document is attached as Appendix 1.

2. The consultative document shares that in East Renfrewshire there are between 23% - 28% of school-aged children with a recorded ASN and that Autism and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs are the second and third most common additional support need. There continues to be an increase in the number of pupils who require specialist provision to support their additional support needs.

3. The consultative document notes that current specialist provision in East Renfrewshire is effective in supporting children with autism and social communication needs and includes the Pre School Assessment and Development Unit (PSADU), Carlibar Communication Centre (CCC) and outreach service, Williamwood Communication Support Service (WCSS) and Isobel Mair School. It notes that they are reaching full capacity.

4. East Renfrewshire's Review of ASN (Appendix 2), in response to the *National Review* of the implementation of additional support for learning in schools included a key recommendation to 'Increase the current capacity of specialist provision through expanding the specialist services across the authority' Accordingly it was proposed to increase capacity of ASN specialist provision, whilst ensuring the high quality experiences children and young people who attend the current specialist provisions receive are maintained.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

5. The Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 and amendments in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

6. The formal consultative document was shared with statutory consultees along with an accompanying letter explaining the process and inviting views. It was also made publicly available at the Council office and online. The information included prior notice of a public meeting to discuss the proposal. The consultation was well publicised on the Council's website and engagement through its social media feed. Interested parties were encouraged to provide feedback on East Renfrewshire Council's website:
<https://getinvolved.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/education/additional-support-for-learning->

[provision/](#) or alternatively by other means such as completing and returning the consultation response pro forma.

7. In accordance with statutory requirements, parents/ carers of all children/ young people in the affected settings; parent councils of the affected settings; parents/ carers of any child(ren)/ young person (people) expected to attend an affected setting within the next 2 school years; staff (teaching and otherwise) of each affected setting; and trade unions representing staff employed in the affected settings were invited to respond to the proposal. Copies of the consultation material were also issued to members of the Education Committee and local elected members. Education Scotland was advised of the consultation and a copy of the consultation pack was shared.

8. Head teachers of affected schools were asked to ensure that they included the consultation on a staff meeting agenda and advise staff of the consultation period and that they could submit an individual and/or a group response or respond through their union representative(s).

9. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended, requires that pupil voice is heard on this matter in so far as the authority considers them to be of suitable age and maturity. The Education Department followed the guidance for local authorities on pupil consultations provided by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, with the assistance of Children in Scotland, under the 2010 Act. The Education Department ensured that children's rights were upheld throughout the consultation by ensuring children's views were taken into account. An independent educational consultant was brought in to conduct the consultation exercise with children and young people in all the affected primary schools. This was done in an inclusive way through the creation of a Social Story, which can be found in Appendix 3, to ensure that the voice of children with Additional Support Needs were heard. The consultant independently managed the pupil consultation exercise and produced a report of all the results of the pupil consultations which is attached as Appendix 3.

10. The consultation period was from Wednesday 17 August 2022 to midnight on Friday 30 September 2022. However, due to school closure related to an additional public holiday following the death of Her Majesty the Queen, the consultation was extended to midnight on Monday 3rd October. All relevant consultees were notified of this change of date.

11. The existence of the consultative document was publicised via social media and copies were made available in both the Council Offices and in affected schools. A dedicated page on the Council's website was established to facilitate information and invite interested parties to respond to the proposal. Responses were invited to be submitted by completing an online form (<https://getinvolved.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/education/additional-support-for-learning-provision/>), or by posting a hard copy of the response form or by writing to the Education Department. Appendix A of the original consultative proposal document in Appendix 1 shows the pro forma to help consultees submit a response if they wished to use it.

12. Consultees were asked to be clear about who they were, where they lived and why they were interested including their relationship with the affected schools (e.g. parent of pupil in an affected school, member of staff at an affected school, relative of a pupil at an affected school etc.). They were also asked whether or not they agreed with the proposal, offered the opportunity to give reasons for their agreement or otherwise or if they had any additional comments. Consultees were advised that petitions would be treated as a single response.

13. To provide further background about the consultative proposal a public meeting was held at 7pm on 14 September 2022 in Eastwood High School. At the time of writing the consultation paper, this was scheduled for 7 September 2022 but as it coincided with an East

Renfrewshire Full Council Meeting, the date was changed and all consultees were notified. Three meetings with Parent Councils of the affected schools were arranged. Carlibar Parent Council meeting was held on 13 August at 1.30pm in Carlibar Primary School, CCC on 1 September at 5pm in CCC base within Carlibar Primary School and Carolside on 13 September at 7.00pm in Williamwood High School.

14. The main purpose of the meetings was to set out the proposal and provide further background and clarification. The same presentation was made at all meetings. Representatives from Carlibar, CCC and Carolside Parent Councils responded positively during their respective meetings. Parents discussed possible benefits and had an opportunity to ask questions specific to them. The meetings were well attended and the notes of these meetings are attached as Appendix 4.

15. All responses to the consultation were logged, numbered and acknowledgements sent.

THE CONSULTATION: NUMBER OF RESPONSES

16. This section of the report provides information on the number of written responses. Details from the consultation with pupils undertaken by the consultants are considered first, followed by all other written responses. The consultant notes that valid returns are all returns excluding any spoilt/ incomplete returns.

17. The actual number of valid returns by pupils is shown below:

Number of Pupil Responses: Valid Returns by School			
Carolside Primary	Carlibar Primary	CCC	Total
471	147	33	651

18. As noted, a copy of the consultant's report is provided in Appendix 3, and outlines the process of engaging pupils in Carolside, Carlibar and CCC. It summaries all responses and provides details on pupils' views expressed, which will be discussed later.

19. A total of 100 responses were made to the public consultation (all responses were received via the digital online survey); there did not appear to be any submission made by more than one person (other than by clearly recorded groups) and there did not appear to be any duplicate submissions received. This was in addition to the 651 pupil responses noted above in paragraph 17.

20. Table 1 shows the number of written responses including those submitted by pupils and whether or not the response is from a statutory consultee.

Total Number of Responses: Statutory/ Non-Statutory			
Respondent	From Statutory Respondents	From Non-Statutory Respondents	Total
Pupil	651	NA	651
All Other Respondents	41	59	100
Total	692	59	751

Table 1

22. Including pupils there were therefore 751 responses in total as shown in the table above. 94 % of all responses were from statutory consultees and of those 94% were from pupils and 6% from other individuals/groups.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED: SUMMARY OF VIEWS

23. This section provides a summary of the views within the written submissions.

24. As noted in paragraph 9, the views of pupils are recorded in the independent consultant's report in Appendix 3. Table 1 provides a summary of the views in the consultant's report in addition to an overall pupil total. It shows the percentage of pupils who made a valid return, who agreed with the "Specialist Provision" proposal and those who disagreed with the proposal. The consultant notes that 230 pupils chose not to make a response.

Pupils	Total Agree	% Agree	Total Disagree	% Disagree	Total Unclear	% Unclear	Total No Response	% No Response
Carolside PS	471	65%	49	8%	8	1%	163	26%
Carlubar PS	147	71%	14	7%	1	0.2%	46	22%
CCC	33	54%	6	10%	0	0%	21	36%
All Pupils	651	68%	69	7%	9	1%	230	24%

Table 2

25. The highest rate of return was in in Carlubar Primary School with a 78% return. Of the valid returns made. Overall most pupils' responses are in favour of the proposal (90%), 89% in Carolside, 91% in Carlubar and 85% in CCC.

26. Table 3 provides an analysis of the views of all respondents, other than pupils, showing whether they are statutory or non-statutory.

Respondent (other than pupil)	Number of Responses by View		
	Agree	Disagree	Total
Parent/Carer*	30	3	33
Future Parent/Carer*	0	0	0
Group	1	0	1
Staff	7	0	7
Other	0	0	0
Statutory Total	38	3	41
Relative/Carer	6	2	8
Resident	45	5	50
Group	1	0	1
Other	0	0	0
Non-Statutory Total	52	7	59

Table 3

(* where a carer means the responsible adult with whom the affected young person lives)

27. 93% of statutory respondents agreed with the proposal. Of the total number of parents/carers, 91% agreed with the proposal; and of 7 staff who responded, all agreed with the proposal. Overall, 90% of respondents agreed with the proposal.

28. Table 3 also shows the total number of non-statutory responses received (52), 88% agreed with the proposal and 12% disagreed.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED: MAIN POINTS

29. This section details the main points raised at the public meeting and within the written submissions. All submitted written responses were read by officers to ensure that the main points from respondents were included in this report.

Main Points – Pupils

30. The consultant's report (Appendix 3) provides the results of the written responses by pupils to the consultation and records any oral views that were expressed by pupils to the consultants.

31. The following is a summary of the main points arising from the written responses submitted by pupils in each school to the Future Additional Support for Learning Provision proposal. In the consultant's exercise of the views expressed by pupils in favour of the proposal, the main themes are paraphrased below:

Carolside Primary School

- It will provide support to children who need it/ improve inclusion / support children with disabilities / help children who are struggling;
- It will be good for people who live far away from Carlibar Communication Centre/children will spend less time on buses;
- It will help children enjoy their right to an education/right to communicate with each other/right to play; and,
- Carolside is a warm and welcoming space/Carolside would support others/space is available in Carolside.

Carlibar Primary School

- Other schools need CCCs/only fair for other schools to get this support/people further away can get this support;
- We need more nurture space/it would benefit children needing nurture/it would help pupils behave and work; and,
- It includes everyone/ people with special needs should get same opportunities as everyone.

Carlibar Communication Centre

- Good to have more space/less children/quieter.

32. Pupils who disagreed with the proposal shared concerns about Carolside becoming too busy/distracting; behaviour of children; how new children would interact with current pupils in Carolside; and that children are better supported within their mainstream class than in a specialist provision.

Main Points – Of All Statutory Respondents Other than Pupils

33. Various themes were highlighted by respondents to the proposal. The most popular themes were those expressed by statutory and non-statutory respondents in favour of the proposal.

34. Of the views expressed in favour of the proposal, the main themes by respondents are paraphrased below:

- Entitlement to specialist support;
- Need to increase ASN provision for children with Autism/ Increasing number of children with ASN/Autism;
- Importance of early intervention;
- Increasing number of children with ASN/Autism leads to increased demand; and,
- Will support more trained/inclusive staff.

All these reasons were cited by 10 or more statutory respondents. Any other issues expressed by respondents in favour of the proposal were raised by under 5 respondents.

35. The main concerns and issues raised by respondents who disagreed with the proposal can be paraphrased into the following reasons:

- Carolside is unsuitable environment and doesn't have enough space;
- Need to develop a culture of 'Autism Acceptance' in every mainstream school/shouldn't be a culture where it is the view that only 'specialist units' can manage children with Autism;
- Capacity will not increase enough.

All these reasons were raised by 3 or more respondents. Any other issues expressed by respondents against the proposal were raised by single respondents.

COMMENTS ON THE VIEWS EXPRESSED/ ISSUES RAISED

36. The points recorded in paragraph 35 are noted below with comment.

A. *Issue:* Carolside is an unsuitable environment and does not have enough space

Discussion

As highlighted in the consultation paper, Carolside has a planning capacity which equates to a 4 stream school (4 classes at each stage, planning capacity of 840 places) with a school roll recorded in the annual school pupil census in September 2021 of 691. Over the past 5 years the school roll in Carolside has steadily decreased and pupil projections do not indicate any new pupils taking up residence within the school's catchment area over the next 7 years as a consequence of planned new residential property developments.

The layout of the Carolside Primary School is conducive to the creation of a specialist service whilst supporting the integration of the specialist service to whole school activities and accessing shared resources. It is proposed that the service would be located in the enclosed area within the ground floor of the school where there are 3 classrooms, a pod space and access to toilets in a self-contained area.

B. *Issue:* Need to develop culture of 'Autism Acceptance' in every mainstream school/shouldn't be culture where it is view that only 'specialist units' can manage children with Autism

Discussion

The Education Department is committed to the presumption of mainstream and teaching children and young people in their local mainstream schools with additional support being provided where appropriate. However, we recognise the need for more specific support and different special education provision to ensure some children and young people benefit from specialist teaching approaches and environments.

The demand for additional support for learning has grown significantly across the country with 30.9% of children and young people identified as having an additional support need, as recorded by the Scottish Government in the annual School Pupil census. This increase is evident within East Renfrewshire and has resulted in increased demand for specialist provision.

In East Renfrewshire we are committed to ensuring our workforce have the right values, knowledge and skills to support children with ASN, and that they understand inclusion is responsibility of all in order to create the right conditions for our learners.

In addition to increasing specialist provision within East Renfrewshire, the Education Department will continue to provide professional learning opportunities to ensure that the workforce has the appropriate values, knowledge and skills.

C. *Issue:* Capacity will not increase enough

Discussion

East Renfrewshire is committed to providing high quality support to children and young people with ASN in order to ensure that the East Renfrewshire Education Department vision of Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences is realised. As part of the review of ASL in East Renfrewshire Council an in depth analysis of the current and potential needs for specialist provision was carried out. This data has informed the consultation and includes account of the pattern of increased numbers and the growing number of full time placements within CCC.

The establishment of an additional support service within Carolside, along with a commitment to ensuring high quality inclusive practice within all schools, will ensure that the needs of learners are met.

The Education Department will continually track and monitor learners' needs and experiences through the Education Department's self-evaluation and the Education Resource Group. Educational places for children and young people with ASN will be kept under review.

ALLEGED OMISSIONS AND INACCURACIES

37. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the consultative document, which has been either discovered by the Education Department or suggested by any other person. The Education Department would then determine if relevant information has been omitted or if there has been an inaccuracy and then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the proposal paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period as appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland would be advised.

A. *Inaccuracy: Date of Public Meeting*

The initial consultation paper indicated that the public meeting would be held at 7pm on 7 September 2022 in Eastwood High School. As this coincided with an East Renfrewshire Full Council Meeting, the date was changed to 14 September and all relevant consultees and Education Scotland were notified.

B. *Inaccuracy: Consultation Period*

The consultation period was initially from Wednesday 17 August 2022 to midnight on Friday 30 September 2022. However, due to school closure related to an additional public holiday following the death of Her Majesty the Queen, the consultation was extended to midnight on Monday 3rd October. All relevant consultees and Education Scotland were advised.

38. Officers believe having considered the above, that they have complied with the 2010 Act and its 2014 amendments.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED BY EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMIE) AND RESPONSES OFFERED

39. In line with the requirements of the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, a report was provided by Education Scotland in relation to the proposal.

40. The full report submitted by Education Scotland with regard to the proposal is provided as Appendix 5. The department notes that Education Scotland has stated in their feedback that *“Overall, the proposal is welcomed by almost all stakeholders who recognise an immediate need to increase capacity across specialist provision within East Renfrewshire.”*

41. The report's summary also notes that *“HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has potential educational benefits. The proposal will, if approved, provide much needed additional capacity to meet the increasing number of children with additional support needs in East Renfrewshire.”*

42. A Summary of issues raised in section 3 of the Education Scotland Report and the department's responses is noted below:

A. *Issue: Equivalent high quality learning environment in Carolside.*

Discussion:

East Renfrewshire has committed to ensuring that the new service will have high quality resources that meet the needs of ASN learners. This includes resources to meet their sensory and language needs. The expertise and experience of staff within CCC will be utilised to support the development of the new Carolside service. Staff will be provided with professional learning to ensure they have the appropriate skill set to meet learners' needs. A Specialist Support Services Network will be established in order to enhance and develop collegiate working between the various specialist support services and there will be secondment opportunities for staff within CCC to support the establishment of the service.

B. *Issue: Impact on mainstream primary school.*

Discussion:

As highlighted in the Consultation Document, Carolside school roll has reduced over time resulting in a number of available spaces. The space identified for the specialist

service is accessed from an area which has separate toilet and playground access and is located beside a separate corridor to the rest of the mainstream classrooms. There are still a number of additional spaces for the pupils of Carolside. Both parents and pupils in Carolside raised concerns that a recently developed 'Quiet Room' which supports children within Carolside, would be removed to accommodate the new provision. This room will remain in place for the use by Carolside Primary pupils. Additional staffing and management support will be provided to support the children within the specialist service. The Education Department is keen to involve the parents of Carolside in the design and development of the specialist service.

C. *Issue:* Lack of awareness of the educational benefits of enhanced nurture classroom

Discussion:

All schools employ nurturing approaches to meet the needs of their pupils however it is recognised that for a small number of pupils, more intensive support is required. Developing an enhanced nurture classroom will provide early intervention and support to primary pupils demonstrating social, emotional, behavioural needs and provide benefit to pupils within their own local authority. It is anticipated that following intensive support pupils will be able to successfully transition back to their mainstream school.

The outreach service is valued by schools, pupils and parents. It is proposed that the enhanced nurture classroom will operate alongside the already established SEBN Outreach Service and not replace it. It will be staffed by one of the SEBN teachers and an additional Pupil Support Assistant.

Parents/Carers and staff highlighted a lack of understanding of the proposal and how a nurture classroom would operate. The Education Department will ensure that there are clear lines of communication with all stakeholders.

The Education Department has committed to providing appropriate resources to create a nurture based classroom within CCC. The creation of a specialist provision within Carolside will create some additional space within Carlibar of which 1 classroom will be used to support nurture. Views of pupils, staff and parents will be taken into account when designing the layout and resources in the space.

D. *Issue:* Traffic management

Discussion:

Education authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide and finance the transport of school pupils who live specified distances from school under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended. There is no specific legislative requirement that covers Additional Support Needs Transport, with the above legislation covering all children in education. However, within East Renfrewshire free transport is provided if a child lives more than 2 miles away from his or her local primary school by the shortest, safe walking route. As this is likely to take the form of a school bus and apply to a number of children who are allocated a place within the service, it is unlikely that traffic will increase in and around the school.

EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS

43. In making this proposal an equalities impact assessment has been carried out and is provided as Appendix 6.

44. The Council is aware of the Public Sector Equality Duty articulated in the Equality Act 2010 scheme which came into force on 6 April 2011. This provision requires that the Council in exercising its functions has regard to the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and,

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

1. 45. In summation the EFRIA evaluated the proposal as: having no adverse impacts; has the potential to advance equality and foster good relationships; and has the potential to advance children's rights. Paragraph 4 of the report by Education Scotland (Appendix 5), also commented upon the increased specialist provision meeting the needs to the growing number of children with ASN.

PROCEDURES FOR MINISTERIAL CALL-IN

46. Under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and amendments in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 this proposal is not subject to ministerial call in. As such the final decision on the proposal will be taken by East Renfrewshire Council's Education Committee, having due regard to the view of stakeholders expressed through the consultation exercise.

CONCLUSION

47. It is accepted by the vast majority of respondents that the proposal will lead to benefits for the children of East Renfrewshire.

48. Of the children who responded to the consultation, 91% in Carlibar Primary School, 85% in Carlibar Communication Centre and 89% in Carolside Primary School were in favour of the proposal. The council received 100 responses from stakeholders to their online questionnaire. Ninety percent of respondents were in favour and 10% were against.

49. The Education Scotland report records that the *Future Specialist Additional Support for Learning Provision* has potential educational benefits and is welcomed by almost all stakeholders.

50. Taking full account of the views expressed during this consultation, the following recommendations are made.

RECOMMENDATION

51. To take forward:

- The establishment of a Pre School Assessment and Development Unit and Communication Service in Carolside Primary School; and,

- Move the current Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Outreach Service to Carlibar Communication Centre to an enhanced nurture classroom.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
November 2022