

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 9 MARCH 2011**

### **SORN PRIMARY SCHOOL CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE AND DECANT ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **Joint Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services and Finance and Corporate Support**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet on the current project to upgrade Sorn Primary School and to outline the decant arrangement for pupils during the construction phase of the project.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following the Better Schools Better Learning Consultation exercise, Cabinet of 19 March 2008 agreed to retain Sorn Primary as a separate establishment in its current accommodation.
- 2.2 As part of the 10 year capital programme agreed on 11 February 2009, a provisional sum of £1.72m was allocated for the refurbishment.

#### **3. PROGRESS OF DESIGN AND REFURBISHMENT**

- 3.1 Progress has been reported through the period Finance and Service Strategy reports during 2010/11.
- 3.2 All design work has been completed and it is anticipated that the tender for construction will be issued by end of February with an award in April.
- 3.3 The Planning Application was approved on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011, listed building consent and bat licenses have been granted and the project is now anticipated to progress as planned.
- 3.4 With the anticipated construction hand over date being early May 2011 arrangements have therefore been progressed to accommodate the school in an alternative Education Establishment for the duration of the build from Easter 2011 to Easter 2012.

#### **4. EDUCATION PROVISION AT SORN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

- 4.1 For academic session 2010/11 Sorn Primary School is operating a 3 class structure comprising of a primary 1 and 2 class of 12 children, a primary 3,4 and 5 class of 18 children and a primary 6 and 7 class of 18 with a total of 48 children. It is expected that this class structure will be retained in 2011/12 with class sizes of 9, 16 and 16.

4.2 In addition to the accommodation requirements of the 3 classes consideration is required for management and support staff accommodation, storage of items that will be required during the decant and when the school returns, plus access to additional school amenities such as a gym hall, dinner hall and playground.

## **5. REVIEW OF DECANT OPTIONS**

5.1 A review of available accommodation has been undertaken and the following outlines the preferred decant solution having taken into account a range of factors and the principle that the most appropriate temporary accommodation will be within an existing primary school building as this offers the best fit for the requirements of continuing the education of Sorn Primary school pupils. The Factors considered are:

- Distance from Sorn
- Availability of sufficient space
- Association with existing learning community
- Opportunity to maintain school as a single entity
- Educational impact and additional facilities
- Additional costs for refurbishment and opportunity for betterment of receiving school
- Other planned capital work on potential receiving schools

5.2 From the experiences of previous decants the importance of maintaining as much consistency in the educational arrangements and management supports to the school is seen as a high priority. Maintaining the class structures, having easy access to management and support staff for Parents and building on organisational links for the school within their Learning partnership all strengthen the potential success of a decant.

5.3 Transporting pupils from the existing school to the decant school offers a range of challenges and the Council have an obligation to provide transport arrangements to continue the education of the pupils attending the decanted school. It would be normal that a muster point be identified near to the existing school where transport will be arranged for all children to be transported to the decant location. As part of the consideration the aim would be transport distances are kept to a minimum therefore reducing the time, inconvenience and cost.

5.4 With any decant it is important to consider the impact on the receiving school and have cognisance of any additional issues that could restrict the potential use of space or if, for example, property work is required it offers the opportunity to provide longer term benefits to the receiving school as well as to the short term decant needs.

5.5 The review of educational establishment options has confirmed that the preferred decant location is Auchinleck Primary School. The review also considered Catrine Primary, Greenmill Primary, Mauchline Primary, St John's Primary, St Patrick's Primary.

- 5.6 Auchinleck Primary school offers the most suitable accommodation for the decant as it is only 3.2 miles from Sorn, currently has available capacity and in particular offers flexible teaching spaces that will allow the requirements of both Auchinleck and Sorn to be accommodated successfully. The school offers modern well appointed spaces and facility to accommodate management and administration staff to support Sorn Primary. Due to the flexible nature of the accommodation it will offer opportunities for Sorn Primary pupils to maintain a single identity and offer opportunities to integrate with their peer group from Auchinleck. This has been well received during previous decants and the Head Teachers will work closely to match timetables to facilitate this. There is no requirement to alter the building to accommodate Sorn Primary however some consideration will be required on the traffic management arrangements, some difficulties currently exist and additional support will be provided to ensure the decant does not add to the existing situation. Auchinleck Primary is within the same learning community as Sorn and therefore will continue to offer consistent management support.
- 5.7 Mauchline Primary does offer many of the same strengths as Auchinleck with a modern facility, a slightly further distance, available capacity, and within the learning partnership. However the PPP requirements add extra challenges due to different management arrangements with restrictions on the use of existing Sorn furniture and the allocation of janitorial staffing for pupil supervision, Mauchline has similar traffic management concerns. The main difference however is the accommodation at Mauchline is fixed classrooms therefore would require greater compromise with the learning environment for both schools.
- 5.8 Catrine Primary, although the closest, does not offer sufficient free space to accommodate the Sorn classes as a separate entity with only one teaching space available. There is also limited additional accommodation for management and administrative staff. Traffic Management again would require consideration with concerns being raised as part of the consultation on relocating Catrine Nursery to Catrine Primary.
- 5.9 St Patricks Primary and St John's Primary were also considered as again space is available within the building, however both these locations are within the St Josephs learning partnership and therefore does not offer the same management links, additional consideration would be required on the Catholic Church guidelines for co-location. St John's Primary is also considerably further away and is currently being used for storage of materials from New Cumnock Primary during the refurbishment of the Castle site. St Patricks would likely need some property work due to the layout of the accommodation, which also would not benefit the school in the longer term. Both schools have also recently had a joint Head Teacher appointed.
- 5.10 Greenmill Primary again offers the available space, however again is a further distance away, is out with the Auchinleck learning partnership and overall has the lowest condition and suitability ratings.

## **6. DECANT IMPLEMENTATION**

- 6.1 With the Sorn Primary site anticipated to be handed over to the successful tenderer in May 2011/June 2011 with initial site investigations required prior to construction start it would be the expectation that the transition of the decant to Auchinleck Primary School would take place for the start of summer school session in April 2011. It would be anticipated that the construction phase would take less than a full calendar year allowing the school to return to Sorn Primary School for April 2012.
- 6.2 A number of transitional issues will require to be confirmed prior to the end of the spring school session in March 2011.
- 6.3 School staff are in the process of indentifying resources required to be transferred for the continuation of education provision during the decant, with other equipment and materials being stored for future return to Sorn Primary.
- 6.4 The reorganisation the existing spaces and consideration of issues around timetabling will require to be reviewed in detail to ensure the best use of the building. As with previous decant arrangements this will be progressed through discussions with staff from both schools.
- 6.5 Communication with Parents of Sorn Primary and Auchinleck Primary will be organised to provide information and allow clarification of any issues regarding the decant. A public meeting will be arranged prior to the end of the March term and parent and pupil visits would also be arranged for all Sorn Primary children to see the facilities and spaces within Auchinleck Primary school, with appropriate practical information being available regarding transport, lunch times, play times etc.
- 6.6 The transport arrangements will be agreed and put in place to ensure a muster point is identified, timing of pick up and drop offs are clear, and appropriate supervision is in place. Additional support will be provided by the Authority to ensure the Traffic Management arrangements at both Sorn and Auchinleck are assessed and any potential risks are minimised.
- 6.7 To facilitate the effective transfer and set up of the new arrangement it is anticipated that 2 exceptional closure days will be requested for Sorn Primary and 1 exceptional closure day for Auchinleck Primary to allow staff to ensure all classrooms and resources are appropriate prior to the children attending.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Allocation of costs associated with the decant will be part of the Capital project however, anticipated additional costs for 1 years would be;

Transport	£ 47,500
Staffing	£ nil
Property	£ nil

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **10. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **11.1** It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) note the progress to date of the project;
- (ii) endorse the decant proposals for the continued education of the Sorn Primary school pupils;
- (iii) otherwise, note the contents of this report.

Graham Short  
Executive Director  
Educational and Social Service

Alex McPhee  
Executive Director  
Finance and Corporate Support

AK/JW  
24February 2011

### **List of Background Papers**

1. Cabinet report 19 March 2008  
Cabinet report 11 February 2009

Members wishing further information should contact Andrew Kennedy, Acting Head of Facilities Management, Tel: (01563) 576089.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: ANDREW KENNEDY**

APPENDIX A – COMPARISON OF DECANT OPTION LOCATIONS

Location	Roll / Capacity	Education Spaces available	Building Condition	Building Suitability	Learning Partnership	Distance	Other issues
Mauchline Primary	285/448	2 of 15	A	A	Auchinleck	4.0 miles	PPP school
Catrine Primary	122/201	1 of 7	B	B	Auchinleck	2.2 miles	
Auchinleck Primary	224/366	2 of 12	A	B	Auchinleck	3.2 miles	
St Patricks Primary	72/199	3 of 7	B	B	St Josephs	4.2 miles	New shared head teacher
St Johns Primary	33/215	3 of 7	B	B	St Josephs	6.1 miles	Currently used for additional storage from New Cumnock. New shared head teacher
Greenmill Primary	274/476	7 of 20	C	C	Cumnock	5.2 miles	Poor condition of building,

Building Condition and Suitability ratings are based on the existing building and not taking into account the decant.