

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 7 NOVEMBER 2007

### BETTER SCHOOLS: BETTER LEARNING : A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL ESTATE

#### Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for formal public consultation on a range of proposals to strengthen the quality of learning and teaching in East Ayrshire.
- 1.2 These proposals are based on an evaluation of the distribution of resources in relation to the present and likely future distribution of pupils. Their focus is to improve and strengthen school education, particularly in rural areas, by creating viable educational communities that will endure into the future, in quality, modern accommodation and with in-built capacity to deliver, develop and strengthen curricular provision.

**1.3 This report and its appendices is about best use of available resources and ensuring these are directed to improve learning and teaching and the environment in which it takes place**

**The proposals in this report are specifically designed to strengthen and improve education.**

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under the Education (Scotland) Act, 1980, an education authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure “adequate and efficient” provision in its area. This same Act also establishes the principle that such provision should be made against a background of the need to avoid “unreasonable public expenditure”. These responsibilities were further developed in the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act, 2000 where an obligation was placed on authorities to secure improvement. There are further duties to ensure that services are provided within the context of both Best Value and Community Planning. It therefore follows from these statutory responsibilities that Education Authorities have a responsibility to review their provision from time to time and ensure that there is a best fit between the sustainable quality of provision and available resources. Clearly such reviews can only be conducted in a strategic way and against a wider background of factors such as the Community Plan and changes in demography.

**2.2** Further, it has been established that any review of provision requires to be conducted within an atmosphere of meaningful consultation with the key stakeholders – most particularly parents, children and young people and the staff affected. At particular points, the Scottish Government has produced guidance on some of the main issues. Most recently, the Cabinet Secretary, Fiona Hyslop, issued renewed guidance in October 2007. A copy of this guidance is available in the Members' Information Point and will be made available to any member of the public who wishes to consult it. Taken together, any proposal to review school provision requires a major effort by the Authority through:

- Advertisements in the newspapers read in the areas affected.
- Providing parents, young people and others with an interest with sufficient information to inform their views.
- Making the documents appended to this report widely available to all those potentially affected, and through public libraries and Council Offices.
- Through public meetings.

**2.3** Elected members would wish to be aware that any decision flowing from these proposals might require to be referred to the Scottish Ministers which in summary are:

- The school affected is more than 80% occupied;
- If children will have to travel an additional 5 miles; or
- If there is a change to denominational education

### **3. VISION FOR THE IMPROVED SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT IN EAST AYRSHIRE SCHOOLS**

**3.1** East Ayrshire Council has an established vision for its school estate, which will ensure the delivery of a modern curriculum in school buildings that are suitable for purpose. This vision further states:

“East Ayrshire Council’s Department of Educational and Social Services: committed to providing choice, maximising opportunity for all, developing the potential of individuals and meeting needs through inclusion”

This statement covers every aspect of the Department’s work including the management and development of educational establishments. The Council’s 2004 School Estate Management Plan states that development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in the facilitation of the learning and teaching process.

**3.2** The Cabinet, at its meeting of 22 August 2007 has also approved the Education Service’s objectives for achieving its aims. These are detailed below :-

- reducing surplus capacity;
- addressing maintenance issues;

- meeting statutory requirements of DDA legislation; and
- improving property flexibility.

These objectives to improve the school estate are bedded firmly within the framework of the Community Plan and the themes of Improving Opportunities and Promoting Community Learning.

**3.3** At the core of our approach is the basic truth that in order to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, children must be educated in an environment that is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This is, about modern accommodation – the provision of, for example, educational computing, technology, ICT and power networking, and flexible learning bases. It is also about ensuring that pupils are taught in accommodation free from basic fabric problems and which are well maintained. Further, however, it is also about ensuring that they are educated in a stimulating and rich environment with maximum exposure to new ideas, a variety of skills with the best opportunities for the personal and social development that comes from encountering a range of peers and staff. Such a position is entirely consistent with the current national vision for a “Smarter Scotland”. East Ayrshire Council can be proud of its long standing consensus on the need to continually review the environment in which learning takes place and the resulting support for initiatives that result in improvements in this key outcome. The educational arguments are described in more detail in the appendices to this report.

**3.4** Experience suggests that, when educated in the sort of conditions described above, children not only learn better, they take a pride in their surroundings, they learn to behave responsibly and they show respect for their environment.

#### **4. PAST PROGRESS**

**4.1** In 1996 East Ayrshire Council was one of the first education authorities to address over-capacity in schools following local government re-organisation. During this process, a number of primary schools were closed or amalgamated in an attempt to rationalise surplus accommodation.

**4.2** Since this initial work a number of further rationalisation exercises have been implemented. These include the merger of the twin campuses of St. Joseph’s Academy in 2005, which resulted in the closure of the Cumnock campus. Surplus accommodation within St. Columba’s, Onthank and St. John’s Primaries has been developed for either administrative office space or as bases for peripatetic staff. The “Building Learning Communities” Public Private Partnership (PPP) project will also see a reduction of approximately 1,000 more spaces by August 2008.

**4.3** As a result of this approach, the Council can evidence a range of highly successful projects which have resulted in improved provision for young people. These include, for example:

- The formation of New Farm Primary School and Nursery Class on the campus of James Hamilton Academy

- St Matthew's Primary School and Nursery Class
- Dalmellington Primary School on the campus of Doon Academy

**4.4** The Schools Estate Management Plan (SEMP) has clearly identified the long-term objective of reducing excess capacity, which will then link to an improvement in the school environments. The most recent SEMP was approved by Cabinet on 22 August 2007. Based on the best possible information the diminishing school roll projections for primary education, increases the urgency of addressing this issue. This issue is particularly acute in some local areas.

## **5. THE ISSUES**

**5.1** Over recent years, the general population of East Ayrshire has fallen. This trend is reflected in the school population, particularly in the primary sector. In 2006/07, East Ayrshire is presently carrying 4691 surplus places in primary schools. According to information presently available this will rise 5248 surplus places by 2010 and 7877 surplus places by 2015. Surplus places absorb resources in terms of staffing, building costs and fixed overheads. These resources could be much better put to use to directly improve the education of the children in under-occupied schools, and that of the school population more generally.

**5.2** For some schools, the roll has fallen to such a level, or will soon fall to a level, where all of the economies of scale and advantages of a larger establishment are lost. It is possible to identify some educational advantages from provision made in such establishments (these mainly arise from their smaller family atmosphere with all of the personal knowledge of children that this facilitates). These advantages are in the view of most informed educational opinion more than offset by the richer and educationally more secure environment of a larger establishment where there is a larger pool of ideas, expertise and resources.

**5.3** This issue is compounded because, although acknowledged as a national problem, years of under-funding from central government, has restricted the Council's ability to repair and maintain schools to an appropriate standard, there is a need to continue the process of refurbishing and replacing schools. It is estimated that the current primary, secondary and special schools' estate requires in the region of £100 million of capital investment to bring all schools into a condition which would be considered appropriate for learning and teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**5.4** Taking these factors in combination it is possible to identify a number of establishments the future of which requires to be reviewed in order to ensure that children are educated in the best possible environment these are set out below. The detailed arguments in relation to each establishment are set out in the relevant appendices.

## **6. RESPONDING TO THE ISSUES**

- 6.1** An examination of current and future trends in terms of pupil roll, housing developments and general population has been conducted. This work has enabled identification and prioritisation of a number of possible projects which should be considered for inclusion in the next phase of the regeneration of the schools' estate.
- 6.2** Initial consultations have taken place with colleagues within other Council departments to evaluate proposals in the context of known likely planning developments, changes to population and housing stock and traffic impacts. These consultations will continue as a formal part of the next stage of the exercise.
- 6.3** The proposals are described in more detail in the appendices. In summary, the proposals are focused on:

### **PROJECT 1: A proposed merger of Woodstock and Witchhill Schools**

The pupil rolls at September 2007 were Witchhill: 5, and Woodstock: 30. Both buildings are in need of extensive refurbishment to bring them up to an acceptable standard. At present, their conditions are not conducive to fully meet the complex needs of the children who attend these schools.

This proposal recognises that for some young people there is a need for specialist provision to meet their needs and takes account of an earlier formal consultation in which parents expressed a desire for a single unified school on one campus.

This proposal will result in the creation of a unified quality provision for the most disadvantaged young people in a single establishment, specially designed for the purpose.

### **PROJECT 2: Crossroads Primary School**

At September 2007, Crossroads primary school had a pupil roll of 55 pupils against an operational capacity of 75. This roll is projected to fall to 44 in 2010 and 39 in 2014. The building is in need of extensive refurbishment, requiring £430,000 to bring it up to an acceptable standard.

This proposal is aimed at securing the education of children in a modern and rich educational environment within a well maintained and modern building.

### **PROJECT 3: Primary Schools and Nursery School in New Cumnock**

Cairnhill Primary School had a pupil roll of 84 at September 2007. This is projected to decline to 57 by 2010 and to 50 by 2014, against an operational capacity of 383. Castle Primary School had a roll of 172 at September 2007, projected to decline to 155 by 2010 and 149 by 2014, against an operational capacity of 284. This represents a serious level of excess capacity.

The capital costs necessary to bring both establishments up to a satisfactory condition for the delivery of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum is approximately £1.49 million for Castle, and £1.62 million for Cairnhill. It is estimated that to bring New Cumnock Nursery to an ideal standard would be in the region of £785,000.

This proposal is designed to consolidate educational provision in New Cumnock into a single all-through campus, strengthening the quality of education for the young people of the community as a whole.

#### **PROJECT 4: Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Class**

Littlemill Primary School had a roll of 32 pupils at September 2007. This is projected to remain steady through to 2014, against an operational capacity of 75. The estimated cost of bringing Littlemill Primary up to a standard fit for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning and teaching is £560k. This proposal offers the opportunity to upgrade the fabric of other educational establishments in the local area.

This proposal is aimed at securing the education of children in a modern and rich educational environment within a well maintained and modern building.

#### **PROJECT 5: St Xavier's Primary School**

St. Xavier's Primary School building would require considerable investment of approximately £670,000 to bring it up to an acceptable standard. It is the only school in the Council's educational property portfolio with a condition rating of "D". This means that it is beyond its economic lifespan and major components may fail at any time. This proposal offers the opportunity to upgrade the fabric of other educational establishments in the local area.

St. Xavier's is a small school, with a roll of 37 pupils at September 2007 against an operational capacity of 132. However, the roll is set to remain relatively constant through to 2014.

This proposal is aimed at securing the education of children in a modern and rich educational environment within a well maintained and modern building

The possibility also exists for the children to be educated at St Ann's Primary School, in South Ayrshire.

Elected Members should note that a previous consultation, in 1998, on the future of St Xavier's resulted in a decision by the Education Committee to continue with the status quo. However, the present condition of the school building requires to be taken into consideration during this public consultation exercise.

## **PROJECT 6: Sorn Primary School**

Sorn Primary School had a pupil roll of 67 at September 2007. This is projected to decline to 47 in 2010 and 37 in 2014, excluding placing requests. The operational capacity of the school is 92 pupils.

It should be noted also that 25 of Sorn Primary School's current roll are placing requests from other schools.

This proposal is aimed at securing the education of children in a modern and rich educational environment within a well maintained and modern building.

### **6.4 Future proposals**

It is intended to produce a report to Cabinet for future consideration to address issues relating to school and community learning and development provision in the Cumnock and Auchinleck areas. These proposals will be developed in the light of other strategic issues that will emerge as part of the wider planning framework.

## **7. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**7.1** In addition to the detailed proposals included at the appendix other documentation has been prepared to explain the consultation process.

**7.2** Any decisions taken as a result of these proposals will be the subject of consultation with the trade unions in relation to the interests of the staff affected.

**7.3** If agreed by Cabinet the formal consultation process on each of these proposals will commence immediately, with an end date of Monday 21 January 2008.

## **8. POLICY / LEGAL / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1** These proposals if eventually accepted will assist the Council in fulfilling its legal obligations to:

- secure school improvement
- adequate and efficient educational provision,
- best value; and
- to avoid unreasonable public expenditure

**8.2** The financial implications will emerge once the preferred options have been agreed. There is no presumptions of savings, indeed it could be the case that additional expenditure will be required. All capital receipts will be available for reinvestment in the rationalised school estate in line with the Council's financial reserves strategy.

## **9. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** As previously indicated, active engagement with all the Council's Community Planning Partners will be sought. The proposals will assist the Council in meeting the following aspects of the Community Plan:-

- Promoting community learning;
- Improving opportunities;
- Eliminating poverty;
- Improving community safety
- Improving the environment; and
- Improving health.

## **10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

**10.1** These proposals if eventually accepted will reduce the property portfolio of the Department of Educational and Social Services. The buildings vacated will be declared surplus by the Department. The risk manager will be consulted regarding the implications of eventual disposal.

**10.2** If adopted, these proposals have the potential to significantly improve the Council's risk profile by reducing the number of sites, some of which have high maintenance costs. By consolidating provision into larger units, there will also be a minimisation of educational and operational risks.

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**11.1** The Cabinet are recommended to :

- (i) to instruct the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to issue consultation documents for the projects listed in Section 4 of this report;
- (ii) to agree that a series of public consultation exercises be conducted, commencing in November 2007, with the results being reported to the Executive Cabinet, early in 2008;
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services  
EC/JW  
19 October 2007

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Community Plan  
School Estates Management Plan, Cabinet 22 August 2007  
Letter from Cabinet Secretary issued October 2007

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services, Tel: (01563) 576003 or Euan Couperwhite, Head of Resources, Tel : (01563) 576090.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : GRAHAM SHORT  
EUAN COUPERWHITE**

Appendices: Consultation documents for individual projects



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION AT WITCHHILL AND  
WOODSTOCK SCHOOLS**

**The following schools are affected by this Consultative Document:**

- **Woodstock School**
- **Witchhill School**

**This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council's Executive Cabinet for consultation in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulation 1981 and Amendment Regulation 1987, 1988 and 1989.**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**Proposal :**

**That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-**

- **Current education provision in the existing Witchhill and Woodstock Schools and their current buildings be discontinued with effect from June 2009, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Further that the schools should merge and that a new special school be created from the merger.**
- **Further that the new school be situated in a new or refurbished building to be located in Kilmarnock, in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined**

**Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

**1. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR THE SCHOOL ESTATE**

1.1 East Ayrshire Council has an established vision for its school estate which will ensure the delivery of a modern curriculum in school buildings that are suitable for purpose. This vision further states:

“East Ayrshire Council’s Department of Educational and Social Services: committed to providing choice, maximising opportunity for all, developing the potential of individuals and meeting needs through inclusion”

1.2 This statement covers every aspect of the Department’s work including the management and development of educational establishments. The Council’s 2004 School Estate Management Plan states that development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in facilitating the learning and teaching process.

1.3 The Council has also approved the Department’s objectives for achieving its aims. These are as follows:

- to reduce surplus capacity in primary schools;

- to address property maintenance issues;
- to meet statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); and
- to improve property flexibility.

1.4 East Ayrshire Council also subscribes to the vision for Scotland's children as set out in 2004 by The Curriculum Review Group in the document *A Curriculum for Excellence*, which states that "Our aspiration is to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society".

1.5 The proposals set out in this document will ensure that all these issues are addressed in a manner which will achieve improvements for all the pupils and staff of Woodstock and Witchhill schools, whilst also obtaining best value for the Council.

## **2 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT WOODSTOCK AND WITCHHILL SCHOOLS**

### **2.1 Overview**

2.1.1 The buildings occupied respectively by Witchhill and Woodstock schools no longer meet the Council's vision for its schools' estate. They do not meet the needs of the pupil population, they are not in good repair, they are not DDA compliant and their design is not best suited to the delivery of the modern school curriculum.

### **2.2 Witchhill School**

2.2.1 Witchhill School provides co-educational, non-denominational education for pupils with profound learning and physical difficulties.

2.2.2 The school has a current pupil roll of 5, as at September 2007.

2.2.3 The current school building fabric requires significant refurbishment to bring it up to a standard capable of meeting the complex needs and curricular requirements of pupils. Since 2000 East Ayrshire Council has invested £61,000 in maintenance and improvements at Witchhill School. The total cost of improvement work to bring the school building to a condition consistent with the Council's vision is estimated to be approximately £611,000. This level of investment would not yield best value for East Ayrshire Council.

### **2.3 Woodstock School**

2.3.1 Woodstock School provides co-educational and non-denominational education for pupils with profound learning and physical difficulties.

2.3.2 The school has a current pupil roll of 29, as at September 2007.

2.3.3 The existing school building fabric requires significant refurbishment to bring it up to a standard capable of meeting the complex needs and curricular requirements of pupils. Since 2000 East Ayrshire Council has invested £169,000 in maintenance and improvements at Woodstock School. The total cost of improvement work to bring the school building to a condition consistent with the Council's vision is estimated to be approximately £670,000. This level of investment would not yield best value for East Ayrshire Council.

## 2.4 Educational issues

2.4.1 Despite the shortcomings of the accommodation, the management and staff at both establishments have worked tirelessly since 1996 to ensure that the pupils attending these schools receive the best possible educational experience and the highest standard of care.

2.4.2 However, this effort is being expended in the face of increasing pressure. The unsuitability of the accommodation affects learning and teaching. The reducing numbers in attendance at Witchhill School means that staff deployment is not as effective as it might be and the small size, does nothing to enhance social aspects of pupils' educational development. Woodstock School, on the other hand, levels adequate and suitable space to meet the needs of its young people to a satisfactory standard.

## 3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 **It is for the reasons outlined in section 2.1 to 2.4 (above) that East Ayrshire Council wishes to consult on the proposal to discontinue educational provision at Witchhill and Woodstock Schools and to merge these schools to create one fit-for-purpose special needs establishment at a suitable location in Kilmarnock.**

## 4. OPTIONS FOR THE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF PUPILS CURRENTLY ATTENDING WITCHHILL AND WOODSTOCK SCHOOLS

4.1 In addition to receiving comment on the proposal the Council wishes to receive feedback on site options for a new school as outlined below. Comments on the identification of other suitable sites are also welcome.

### 4.2 Option 1 – Status Quo: maintain both schools as they currently exist

4.2.1 If approved this option would result in the two schools being maintained as separate educational establishments, being located within their present accommodation.

#### 4.2.2 Benefits

- would provide continuity with no disruption to pupils' current educational experience.

#### **4.2.3 Issues to consider:**

- both buildings are presently unfit for purpose;
- refurbishment of both buildings would not represent best value;
- ongoing property costs for both buildings would not represent best value;
- even if refurbished, the basic design of these buildings is less than ideal;
- pupils would lose out on the opportunity to be educated in a modern, state-of-the-art school building;
- decreasing numbers of pupils receiving non-inclusive education would mean that the roll of both schools would continue to fall and long-term sustainability would be an issue.

#### **4.3 Option 2 – Locate a merged school on the current Witchhill site**

##### **4.3.1 Benefits:**

- the school would be situated centrally in Kilmarnock;
- the site is already known as the location of a special school and is close to the location of the present Woodstock School;
- some children are familiar with the current location and accommodation;
- existing buildings could be refurbished and extended, thereby reducing the cost of the merger and the timescale for completion;
- merger of the two schools would bring together the best of each in terms of resources and talents.

##### **4.3.2 Issues to consider:**

- refurbishment would cause difficulties in terms of ongoing service delivery for the pupils currently attending Witchhill School;
- the site of the school is cramped and would restrict design options for the refurbished school.

#### **4.4 Option 3 – Locate merged school on the current Woodstock site**

##### **4.4.1 Benefits:**

- the school would be situated centrally in Kilmarnock;
- the site is already known as the location of a special school and is close to the location of the present Witchhill School;
- some children are familiar with the current location and accommodation;
- existing buildings could be refurbished and extended, thereby reducing the cost of the merger and the timescale for completion;
- merger of the two schools would bring together the best of each in terms of resources and talents.

#### **4.4.2 Issues to consider:**

- any refurbishment would cause difficulties in terms of ongoing service delivery for the pupils currently attending Woodstock School;
- the site of the school is cramped and would restrict design options for the refurbished school.

#### **4.5 Option 4 - Locate merged school on the site of the present Park School**

##### **4.5.1 Benefits:**

- the school would be situated centrally in Kilmarnock;
- the site is already known as the location of a special needs school;
- the new school would be close to the new St. Joseph's campus on Grassyards Road and Kilmarnock College and therefore to the facilities located at these establishments;
- a new school would allow for specialist facilities to be created without any disruption to pupils' current routine in either establishment;
- a new build would feature state-of-the-art facilities, design and technology;
- the site curtilage provides more than sufficient space for the development;
- merger of the two schools would bring together the best of each in terms of resources and talents.

##### **4.5.2 Issues to consider:**

- the site is located on a main road which would require traffic management;
- pupils would be unfamiliar with this site.

#### **4.6 Option 5 - Locate merged school on the site of the present St. Matthew's Primary School**

##### **4.6.1 Benefits:**

- the school would be situated relatively centrally in Kilmarnock;
- the new school would be relatively close to the new St. Joseph's campus on Grassyards Road and Kilmarnock College and therefore to the facilities located at these establishments;
- a new school would allow for specialist facilities to be created without any disruption to pupils' current routine in either establishment;
- a new build would feature state-of-the-art facilities, design and technology;
- the site curtilage provides more than sufficient space for the development;
- merger of the two schools would bring together the best of each in terms of resources and talents.

#### **4.6.2 Issues to consider:**

- the site would require to be spilt creating a special school and ground for other use;
- pupils would not be familiar with this site;
- the school would be further out from the centre of Kilmarnock than existing or alternative sites.

### **4.7 Option 6 - Locate merged school on a site to be identified in the Kilmarnock area**

#### **4.7.1 Benefits:**

- a new school would allow for specialist facilities to be created without any disruption to pupils' current routine in either establishment;
- the site could be chosen to ensure the optimum benefit for pupils;
- a new build would feature state-of-the-art facilities, design and technology;
- merger of the two schools would bring together the best of each in terms of resources and talents.

#### **4.7.2 Issues to consider:**

- if not in Council ownership the purchase of land would require negotiation and would increase the overall cost of the project;
- pupils would not be familiar with this site;
- a suitable site may not be available for development in the desired timescale.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Staffing Implications**

5.1.1 The proposal as outlined in Section 3 would have implications for teaching and ancillary staff in the schools affected. Whilst there would eventually be staffing reductions in terms of the combined total of staff at the two existing schools, this will be achieved without compulsory redundancies. It would also be achieved without compromising the staffing standard, the ratio of staff to pupils. Pupils would have exactly the same or better level of support, geared to their individual needs, as at present.

5.1.2 All members of staff would be fully consulted about their future as would the appropriate trade unions representing all grades of staff affected. The particular wishes of each member of staff would be taken into consideration.

5.1.3 If any of Options 2 – 6 is chosen, the merged school would be entitled to a staffing enhancement for a period of upto two years, in order to ease the

transition. The school would also receive additional clerical support and resources over this period.

## **5.2 Financial Implications**

5.2.1 Staffing costs, property costs, the costs associated with the provision of supplies and services, janitation and cleaning costs and administration costs would be very significantly reduced by the merger of the two schools.

5.2.2 Further savings would accrue from the reduction from two establishments to one and from the fact that the new building would be 'greener' more energy efficient and requiring less maintenance. In addition, experience has shown that the increased security of new buildings makes them less vulnerable to break-ins and vandalism.

5.2.3 If the proposals for a merged Special School are accepted and in accordance with current Council policy, all the funds realised from the sale of either or both sites would be used to enhance educational provision.

## **5.3 Transport implications**

5.3.1 Transport for all pupils attending the new, relocated school would be provided in line with Council policy. The current policy is to provide free transport for all pupils who attend special schools.

5.3.2 A key part of the development will be the management of transport in the school vicinity and this will include the highest possible standards for safe pupil transport.

## **5.4 Name of new school**

5.4.1 If any of the Options 2 - 6 is chosen, a further consultation exercise will be undertaken to choose a name for the new merged school.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet agree to adopt for the purpose of consultation the proposal that:-

i) That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-

- Current education provision at the existing Witchhill and Woodstock Schools and their current buildings be discontinued with effect from June 2009, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Further that the schools should merge and that a new special school be created from the merger.

- Further that the new school be situated in a new or refurbished building to be located in Kilmarnock, in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined

6.2 It is also recommended that :-

- i) interested parties be invited to make written or electronic submissions on the proposal to the following addresses :-

By post :Executive Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU.

By e-mail: [educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**Written submissions should be returned no later than Monday 21 January 2008.**

- ii) the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services prepare a report on the results of the consultative process for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

## **THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

### **CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**The following schools are affected by this Consultative Document:**

- **Crossroads Primary School**
- **Galston Primary School**
- **Bellfield Primary School**
- **Mauchline Primary School**
- **Hurlford Primary School**

**This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council's Executive Cabinet for consultation in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulation 1981 and Amendment Regulation 1987, 1988 and 1989.**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**Proposal**

**That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise :-**

- **Current education provision in Crossroads Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Further that the Crossroads Primary School pupils continue their primary school education at another establishment, in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined.**

**Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

**1. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR THE SCHOOL ESTATE**

- 1.1 East Ayrshire Council has an established vision for its school estate which will ensure the delivery of a modern curriculum in school buildings that are suitable for purpose. This vision further states:

“East Ayrshire Council’s Department of Educational and Social Services: committed to providing choice, maximising opportunity for all, developing the potential of individuals and meeting needs through inclusion”

- 1.2 This statement covers every aspect of the Department’s work including the management and development of educational establishments. The Council’s 2004 School Estate Management Plan states that development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in facilitating the learning and teaching process.

- 1.3 The Council has also approved the Department’s objectives for achieving its aims. These are as follows:

- to reduce surplus capacity in primary schools;
- to address property maintenance issues;
- to meet statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); and
- to improve property flexibility.

- 1.4 East Ayrshire Council also subscribes to the vision for Scotland’s children as set out in 2004 by The Curriculum Review Group in the document *A Curriculum for Excellence*, which states that “Our aspiration is to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society”.
- 1.5 The proposals set out in this document will ensure that all these issues are addressed in a manner which will achieve improvements for all the pupils and staff of Crossroads Primary School, whilst also obtaining best value for the Council.

## 2 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL

NOTE: In order to develop this document, the Council has used school roll projections. These are the best estimate of pupil numbers at the time the document was produced. Readers of the document should be aware that the prediction of school rolls into the medium and long term future cannot be done precisely. Figures given in the document should therefore be read with caution and the Council acknowledges this feature of the consultation process.

### 2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Despite the best efforts of staff, parents and pupils, and recognising the excellent work that continues in Crossroads Primary School, the school does not accord with East Ayrshire Council’s vision for its schools’ estate. Even if the building were to be brought up to a modern standard, the design of the building and the small school roll would still not afford staff the flexibility and facilities to deliver *A Curriculum for Excellence* to best effect. The falling roll calls into question the long term viability of the school as a separate establishment.

### 2.2 Crossroads Primary School

2.2.1 Crossroads Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from the hamlet of Crossroads and surrounding area. The school has a working capacity of 75 pupils with a current pupil roll of 55, at September 2007.

2.2.2 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a steady decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 1 : Crossroads Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	60
2005/06	59
2006/07	52
2007/08	55
2008/09	47

2009/10	46
2010/11	44
2011/12	45
2012/13	43
2013/14	41
2014/15	39

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

2.2.3 There are currently 25 pupils on a placing request in the school.

## 2.3 Educational issues

2.3.1 Because of the small numbers of pupils and limited resources, it is difficult for small schools to provide the breadth and variety of experience available to pupils in a larger school. This is because:

- in a small school, in this case with a population of fewer than 60 pupils across the age range P1 to P7, more of the pupils have to be taught in classes made up of more than two separate stages, that is, multiple composite classes;
- resource management is particularly difficult in a multiple composite situation;
- the *Curriculum for Excellence* is geared to enabling all children to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Confidence, responsible citizenship and the opportunity to contribute effectively are more readily nurtured in a larger school with a mix of pupils of all abilities and a wide range of opportunities and learning situations in which to take part;
- modern teaching methods which make use, for example, of self assessment and peer assessment depend for their effectiveness on interaction between pupils of similar age and stage;
- management of the curriculum presents problems in a smaller school; it is difficult to ensure progression, continuity and pace in a multi-composite situation; it is the peer group that provides children with challenge and motivation and enables the teacher to accelerate the pace of learning;
- a small school, whilst providing a secure and caring environment, lacks the variety of 'extra-curricular' activities and the social mix that pupils experience in a larger school. Team games, for example, are more difficult to organise, pupils are less likely to experience the thrill of 'playing for the school' and some pupils have inadequate opportunities fully to develop their social skills;

- many pupils coming from a small school tend to find the move to secondary school more difficult, having come from a small and relatively sheltered background.
- It can prove difficult to recruit and retain staff in small schools, which lack many of the career advantages of larger establishments.

2.3.2 The issues summarised above are made more urgent by the fact that Crossroads Primary has a falling school roll, projected to fall to under 40 pupils by 2014. Falling rolls makes staff deployment more complex, fewer pupils means fewer members of staff and instead of providing greater continuity of teaching and support for pupils, the effect can be the opposite.

## 2.4 **Buildings issues:**

2.4.1 Since 1996 East Ayrshire Council has invested £16,000 in maintenance and improvements at Crossroads Primary School. The condition of the building is unsatisfactory and unsuited to the delivery of the modern primary school curriculum. The total cost of improvement work to bring the school building to a satisfactory condition, compliant with the requirements of the DDA, is estimated to be approximately £430,000.

## 3 **THE PROPOSAL**

3.1 **It is for the reasons outlined in section 2.1 to 2.4 above that East Ayrshire Council wishes to consult on the proposal to discontinue educational provision at Crossroads Primary School and to transfer the pupils to another establishment to continue their primary school education.**

## 4 **OPTIONS FOR THE CONTINUING PRIMARY EDUCATION OF CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

4.1 In addition to receiving comment on the proposal the Council wishes to receive feedback on options for the continuing primary education of children currently attending Crossroads Primary School, as outlined below. Suggestions as to other suitable options are also welcome.

4.2 **Option 1 - Status Quo: retain Crossroads Primary School as a separate establishment and located in its current location**

4.2.1 Benefits of Option 1:

- involves no disruption at present;
- children are familiar with their school and happy there.

#### 4.2.2 Issues to consider in relation to Option 1:

- fails to address accommodation issues;
- fails to address educational issues;
- fails to address social issues;
- fails to address issue of falling school roll;
- unlikely to be sustainable in the long term.

#### 4.3 **Option 2 - Close Crossroads and transfer children to Bellfield Primary School**

##### 4.3.1 **Bellfield Primary School**

4.3.2 Bellfield Primary School provides non-denominational education for pupils from the Bellfield area of Kilmarnock.

4.3.3 The school has a working capacity of 380 pupils with a current pupil roll of 177, as at September 2007.

4.3.4 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts that the roll will remain stable until 2012 after which a decline is expected, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 1 : Bellfield Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	202
2005/06	203
2006/07	196
2007/08	177
2008/09	202
2009/10	199
2010/11	195
2011/12	191
2012/13	183
2013/14	176
2014/15	174

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.3.5 The fabric of the building is broadly satisfactory although some upgrading would be necessary in order to accommodate Crossroads pupils.

4.3.6 Crossroads pupils were to transfer to Bellfield Primary School the joint roll in session 2008-09 would be in the region of 250, that is, well within Bellfield's working capacity of 380 pupils.

#### 4.3.7 Benefits of Option 2:

- reduces the number of surplus places at Bellfield Primary School;
- benefits Crossroads Primary School pupils educationally;
- benefits Crossroads Primary School pupils socially;
- resolves problems related to condition of Crossroads school building;
- reduces surplus capacity of primary school places.

#### 4.3.8 Issues to consider in relation to Option 2:

- this option is further away from Crossroads than others (see options below) and will require longer bus journey times for pupils;
- Bellfield Primary does not offer a completely modern standard of accommodation, which is available in other options;
- this removes community resource from Crossroads;
- Crossroads pupils will require to be transported to school.

#### 4.4 Option 3 – Close Crossroads and transfer children to the new build Galston Primary School

4.4.1 Galston primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from the Galston area.

4.4.2 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a steady decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 1 : Galston Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	342
2005/06	335
2006/07	323
2007/08	306
2008/09	285
2009/10	271
2010/11	250
2011/12	251
2012/13	259
2013/14	250
2014/15	253

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.4.3 Galston Primary School's current building is old and in need of substantial upgrading. However, as part of the Council's capital investment programme, it was agreed that Galston Primary School would be rebuilt on a new site at Western Road, on the western side of Galston. Work commenced in March

2997 and the new school is scheduled to open to pupils and staff in August 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.

- 4.4.4 The new building which will accommodate both the existing Primary and Nursery Schools as separate establishments will have a working capacity of 520 pupils.
- 4.4.5 If Crossroads pupils were to transfer to Galston Primary School the joint roll in session 2008-09 would be in the region of 320, well within Galston's working capacity of 520 pupils.
- 4.4.6 Benefits of Option 3:
- addresses issues associated with falling roll in both schools;
  - benefits Crossroads Primary School pupils educationally;
  - benefits Crossroads Primary School pupils socially;
  - ensures pupils educated in a bright, attractive, well equipped new school;
  - resolves problems related to condition of Crossroads school building;
- 4.4.7 Issues to consider in relation to Option 3:
- involves short term disruption for staff and pupils of Crossroads Primary School;
  - removes community resource from Crossroads;
  - Crossroads pupils will require to be bussed to their new school.
- 4.5 **Option 4 – Close Crossroads and transfer children to Mauchline Primary School**
- 4.5.1 **Mauchline Primary School**
- 4.5.2 Mauchline Primary School provides non-denominational education for pupils from in and around the community of Mauchline. The school has been completely refurbished and extended as part of the Council's Public Private Partnership programme, thus creating an excellent school building.
- 4.5.3 The refurbished school will have a working capacity of 460 pupils with a current pupil roll of 312, as at September 2007. The combined roll in 2008-09, if this option were chosen, would be around 370 pupils, which would represent efficient but not cramped use of the building.
- 4.5.4 It should be noted that a separate consultation could result in a further 60 pupils transferring from Sorn Primary School to the refurbished Mauchline Primary School. If both of these proposals were approved, the roll of Mauchline Primary School around the time of amalgamation would be in the region of 430 pupils, still comfortably within Mauchline's working capacity and set to decline in the future.

#### 4.5.5 Benefits of Option 3:

- addresses issues associated with falling roll in both schools;
- benefits Crossroads Primary School pupils educationally;
- benefits Crossroads Primary School pupils socially;
- ensures pupils educated in a bright, attractive, well equipped newly refurbished school;
- resolves problems related to condition of Crossroads school building;

#### 4.5.6 Issues to consider in relation to Option 3:

- involves short term disruption for staff and pupils of Crossroads Primary School;
- removes community resource from Crossroads;
- Crossroads pupils will require to be bussed to their new school;
- because Mauchline is just over 5 miles away from Crossroads, this proposal would require the approval of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning at the Scottish Government.

### 4.6 Option 5 - Close Crossroads and transfer children to Hurlford Primary School

4.6.1 Hurlford Primary School provides non-denominational education for pupils from Hurlford and surrounding area.

4.6.2 The school has a working capacity of 429 pupils with a pupil roll of 265, as at September 2007.

4.6.3 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts that the roll will remain relatively stable for the foreseeable future:

**Table 1 : Hurlford Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	261
2005/06	263
2006/07	266
2007/08	265
2008/09	284
2009/10	281
2010/11	291
2011/12	292
2012/13	292
2013/14	286
2014/15	281

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.6.4 If Crossroads pupils were to transfer to Hurlford Primary School the joint roll in session 2008/09 would be in the region of 330, that is, well within Hurlford's working capacity of 429 pupils.

4.6.5 The fabric of the building is in need of upgrading and the transfer of Crossroads pupils to Hurlford would accelerate the Council's plans for this to be carried out.

4.6.6 Benefits of Option 5:

- addresses issues associated with falling roll at Crossroads Primary School;
- benefits Crossroads Primary School pupils educationally;
- benefits Crossroads Primary School pupils socially;
- upgrading of Hurlford will ensure pupils educated in a bright, attractive, well equipped school;
- resolves problems related to condition of Crossroads school building.

4.6.7 Issues to consider in relation to Option 5:

- involves short term disruption for staff and pupils of Crossroads Primary School;
- removes community resource from Crossroads;
- Crossroads pupils will require to be bussed to their new school.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Staffing Implications**

5.1.1 Options 2 - 5 would result in the majority of the staff at Crossroads transferring to a new school with the pupils. It may be necessary for a small number of staff to transfer to other duties in another school. There would be no compulsory redundancies for permanent staff.

5.1.2 This would be achieved without compromising the staffing standard, the ratio of staff to pupils. Pupils would have exactly the same level of support, geared to their individual needs if necessary, as at present.

5.1.3 Staff will be fully consulted about their future as will the appropriate trade unions representing all grades of staff affected. The particular wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration.

5.1.4 If any of Options 2 to 5 are chosen, the receiving school would be entitled to a staffing enhancement of 2.0 FTE (full time equivalent) for a period of two years, in order to ease the transition. The school would also receive additional clerical support and resources over this period.

## 5.2 Financial Implications

- 5.2.1 Staffing costs, property costs, the costs associated with the provision of supplies and services, janitation and cleaning costs and administration costs would be very significantly reduced by the closure of Crossroads Primary School. This is partly related to the reduction from two establishments to one and partly to the fact that the new building would be 'greener': more energy efficient and requiring less maintenance. In addition, experience has shown that the increased security of new or refurbished buildings makes them less vulnerable to break-ins and vandalism.
- 5.2.2 A revenue budget saving in the region of £125,000 can be expected. This sum would vary according to which of the Options 2 to 5 is chosen. At present it costs approximately £4,000 per year to educate each child at Crossroads Primary School. After merger with another school, this should reduce to under £3,000, whilst providing every child with a better learning environment, better resources and better equipment than they have access to at present.
- 5.2.3 If it were to be sold off, and in accordance with Council policy, all the funds realised from the sale of the Crossroads site would be used to enhance educational provision.

## 5.3 Transport implications

- 5.3.1 East Ayrshire Council operates a policy of providing free transport to school for any primary school pupil living more than one mile away, by the shortest safe walking route, from their zoned school.
- 5.3.2 If any of Options 2 to 5 is chosen, most if not all of the Crossroads pupils would therefore qualify for free transport on a dedicated school bus.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet agree to adopt for the purpose of consultation the proposal:
- i) That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-
- Current education provision at Crossroads Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.
  - Further that the Crossroads Primary School pupils continue their primary school education at another establishment, in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined.
- 6.2 It is also recommended that:

- i) interested parties be invited to make written or electronic submissions on the proposal to the following addresses :-

By post :Executive Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU.

By e-mail: [educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**Written submissions should be returned no later than Monday 21 January 2008.**

- ii) the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services prepare a report on the results of the consultative process for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

## **THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

### **PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND NURSERY SCHOOL PROVISION IN NEW CUMNOCK**

**The following schools are affected by this Consultative Document:**

- **Cairnhill Primary School**
- **Castle Primary School**
- **New Cumnock Nursery School**

**This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council's Executive Cabinet for consultation in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulation 1981 and Amendment Regulation 1987, 1988 and 1989.**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**Proposal**

**That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-**

- **Current education provision in Cairnhill Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Current education provision in Castle Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Current education provision in New Cumnock Nursery school and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Further that a new non-denominational primary school be created from the merger of Cairnhill and Castle Primaries, incorporating a separate Nursery School.**
- **Further that the primary pupils and nursery children transfer to the new primary school and nursery school when it opens in August 2008 or as soon as possible thereafter, in accordance with one of the options set out within the report, as yet to be determined**

**Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

**1. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR THE SCHOOL ESTATE**

- 1.1 East Ayrshire Council has an established vision for its school estate which will ensure the delivery of a modern curriculum in school buildings that are suitable for purpose. This vision further states:

“East Ayrshire Council’s Department of Educational and Social Services: committed to providing choice, maximising opportunity for all, developing the potential of individuals and meeting needs through inclusion”

- 1.2 This statement covers every aspect of the Department's work including the management and development of educational establishments. The Council's 2004 School Estate Management Plan states that development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in facilitating the learning and teaching process.
- 1.3 The Council has also approved the Department's objectives for achieving its aims. These are as follows:
- to reduce surplus capacity in primary schools;
  - to address property maintenance issues;
  - to meet statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); and
  - to improve property flexibility.
- 1.4 East Ayrshire Council also subscribes to the vision for Scotland's children as set out in 2004 by The Curriculum Review Group in the document *A Curriculum for Excellence*, which states that "Our aspiration is to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society".
- 1.5 The proposals set out in this document will ensure that all these issues are addressed in a manner which will achieve improvements for all the children, pupils and staff of Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools and New Cumnock Nursery School, whilst also obtaining best value for the Council.

## **2. EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT CAIRNHILL AND CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND NEW CUMNOCK NURSERY SCHOOL**

Note: In order to develop this document, the Council has used school roll projections. These are the best estimate of pupil numbers at the time the document was produced. Readers of the document should be aware that the prediction of school rolls into the medium and long term future cannot be done precisely. Figures given in the document should therefore be read with caution and the Council acknowledges this feature of the consultation process.

### **2.1 Overview**

- 2.1.1 The buildings occupied by Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools and New Cumnock Nursery School no longer meet the Council's vision for its schools' estate. Both primary schools are greatly oversized for their pupil population, are not in good repair, neither accords with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation and they are not suited to deliver the 21<sup>st</sup> Century primary school curriculum.
- 2.1.2 In addition to the condition of the school buildings, the small and declining rolls at both Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools makes it important that the Council considers options for future educational provision for primary aged pupils in New Cumnock.

2.1.3 It is recognised that early education plays a vital part in a child's development and therefore the Council wishes to consider the provision currently made in New Cumnock. The Council will continue to provide Early Education at a separate pre school establishment in New Cumnock.

## **2.2 Cairnhill Primary School**

2.2.1 Cairnhill Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from the areas of New Cumnock which are generally to the south of the A76. The school was initially constructed in 1960 and is a two storie building located on Lanehead Terrace, in New Cumnock.

2.2.2 The school has a working capacity of 383 pupils with a current pupil roll of 84, as at September 2007, and the present structure comprises 4 composite classes. In total there are 14 teaching rooms available in the building, with an additional 3 supplementary rooms for general purpose activities.

2.2.3 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a steep decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 1 : Cairnhill Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	114
2005/06	102
2006/07	94
2007/08	84
2008/09	74
2009/10	65
2010/11	57
2011/12	56
2012/13	54
2013/14	52
2014/15	50

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

2.2.4 There is currently 1 pupil on a placing request in the school.

## **2.3 Castle Primary School**

2.3.1 Castle Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from the northern part of New Cumnock and the areas surrounding Knockshinnoch and Burnside. The school was initially constructed in 1870 and is located in the centre of the town, to the east of the A76.

2.3.2 The school has a working capacity of 284 pupils with a current pupil roll of 172, as at September 2007. The present structure comprises 8 classes, single

stream with the exception of Primary 7 where there are two classes. In total there are 9 teaching rooms available in the building, with an additional 2 supplementary rooms for general purpose activities.

2.3.3 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a steady decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:-

**Table 2 : Castle Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	198
2005/06	191
2006/07	171
2007/08	172
2008/09	163
2009/10	157
2010/11	155
2011/12	156
2012/13	149
2013/14	150
2014/15	149

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

2.3.4 There are currently 64 pupils in placing requests in the school.

## 2.4 **New Cumnock Nursery School**

2.4.1 New Cumnock Nursery School, which is co-located with Castle Primary School, provides nursery education for children from the New Cumnock area. The maximum capacity of the facility is 48 children in the morning and 48 children in the afternoon. The current attendance is 29 pre school aged children and 10 three year olds.

## 2.5 **Educational issues:**

2.5.1 Because of the small numbers of pupils and limited resources, it is difficult for small schools to provide the breadth and variety of experience available to pupils in a larger school. This is because:

- in a small school, in these cases with populations respectively of 83 and 172 pupils across the age range P1 to P7, more of the pupils have to be taught in classes made up of more than two separate stages, that is, multiple composite classes;
- the *Curriculum for Excellence* is geared to enabling all children to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Confidence, responsible citizenship and the

opportunity to contribute effectively are more readily nurtured in a larger school with a mix of pupils of all abilities and a wide range of opportunities and learning situations in which to take part;

- modern teaching methods which make use, for example, of self assessment and peer assessment depend for their effectiveness on interaction between pupils of similar age and stage;
- management of the curriculum presents problems in a smaller school; it is difficult to ensure progression, continuity and pace in a multi-composite situation; it is the peer group that provides children with challenge and motivation and enables the teacher to accelerate the pace of learning;
- small schools, whilst providing a secure and caring environment, lack the variety of 'extra-curricular' activities and the social mix that pupils experience in a larger school. Team games, for example, are more difficult to organise, pupils are less likely to experience the thrill of 'playing for the school' and some pupils have inadequate opportunities fully to develop their social skills;
- many pupils coming from a small school tend to find the move to secondary school more difficult, having come from a small and relatively sheltered background.
- It can prove difficult to recruit and retain staff in small schools, which lack many of the career advantages of larger establishments.

2.5.2 The issues summarised above are made more urgent by the fact that Cairnhill and Castle Primaries have falling school rolls, projected to fall to 50 (Cairnhill) and 149 (Castle) pupils by 2014. Falling rolls makes staff deployment more complex, fewer pupils means fewer members of staff and instead of providing greater continuity of teaching and support for pupils, the effect can be the opposite.

## **2.6 Buildings issues:**

2.6.1 Since 1996 East Ayrshire Council has invested £337,227 in maintenance and improvements at Cairnhill Primary School and £236,462 at Castle Primary School, including the New Cumnock Nursery School area of the building.

2.6.2 Further capital investment of approximately £1.623 million is required to bring the school buildings up to a standard capable of meeting the demands of the modern primary/nursery school curriculum for Cairnhill Primary, with £1.494 million for Castle Primary and £800,000 for New Cumnock Nursery School. Even if this money were spent, the basic design of the buildings is not in keeping with modern primary school design concepts.

2.6.3 As detailed in the previous two paragraphs continued expenditure on these buildings does not represent good value for money.

## **2.7 Advantages of a new or extensively refurbished building**

- 2.7.1 A new or extensively refurbished building would be more energy efficient, 'greener' and more economical to run and maintain. Security measures would make it less vulnerable to vandalism and intrusion. In addition, experience has shown that children tend to take a pride in a new or 'as new' building and look after it, an important aspect of learning to become responsible citizens.
- 2.7.2 A new or extensively refurbished building would incorporate state-of-the-art design, equipment and technology, ideally suited to 21<sup>st</sup> century education and the delivery of *A Curriculum for Excellence*.
- 2.7.3 Any proposals to refurbish present buildings or develop new school buildings would have as one of its key objectives the promotion of wider community use. This aim will assist the Council in achieving best value as facilities would, hopefully, be used out of school hours, at weekends and during school holiday periods. The Education Service believes that schools are the heart of the local community and should be an example of civic pride.

## **3. THE PROPOSAL.**

- 3.1 **It is for the reasons outlined in section 2.1 to 2.7 above that East Ayrshire Council wishes to consult on the proposal to discontinue educational provision at the existing Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools and New Cumnock Nursery School and merge the Primary Schools into one building at a suitable location.**
- 3.2 **Early Education provision would be continued to be provided in a separate New Cumnock Nursery School.**

## **4 OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE EDUCATION OF PUPILS CURRENTLY ATTENDING CAIRNHILL AND CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND NEW CUMNOCK NURSERY SCHOOL.**

- 4.1 In addition to receiving comments on the proposal the Council also seeks comment on the options as outlined below. Comments on alternative sites or possibilities are also welcome.
- 4.1.1 It should be noted that, if the proposal to merge these schools goes ahead, there will need to be a further consultation at a later date to determine the name for the new school.
- 4.2 **Option 1 – Status quo: retain both Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools and New Cumnock Nursery as separate educational establishments in their present accommodation.**
- 4.2.1 Benefits of Option 1:
- would involve no disruption, in the short term, to education at any of the establishments involved;

- current catchment areas would be preserved;

#### 4.2.2 Issues to consider in relation to Option 1:

- Research has clearly demonstrated that the status quo would be educationally disadvantageous to the pupils at all establishments;
- Would fail to address the buildings related and financial issues in relation to these establishments;
- This option would fail to address over-capacity issue;
- The status quo would fail to address DDA issues, without major investment;
- The capital investment required to bring both buildings into a fit state is very significant investment and could not be justified on best value grounds;
- The long term viability of both primary schools could not be maintained;
- There is no ability to enhance wider community use of the properties..

#### 4.3 **Option 2 - Close Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools and New Cumnock Nursery School and merge in a new-build or extended and totally refurbished school, plus separate Nursery School provision, on the Castle Primary School site** (whether this would be a new build or a refurbishment would depend on a technical assessment, but the standard of the finished project would not be compromised).

##### 4.3.1 Benefits of Option 2:

- A merged school would result in one local primary school and one nursery school in New Cumnock, with a viable future, better placed to deliver *A Curriculum for Excellence*;
- The relocation to a new-build or extended and refurbished school would meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum in full, in terms of design, flexibility of use, technology and equipment;
- A new or refurbished building would be fully DDA compliant;
- The Castle Primary School site is in a central location in New Cumnock;
- This option would also assist in the regeneration of the centre of the town;

##### 4.3.2 Issues to consider in relation to Option 2:

- The physical size of site is limited and may impact upon design options, unless additional ground is acquired;
- The current size has resulted in a playground of limited size;
- The location is close to the A76, trunk route, and careful road traffic management would be important;
- Some pupils would have further to travel from Cairnhill Primary School;
- The building works would cause serious disruption to Castle Primary School and New Cumnock Nursery School for a period of up to one year and are likely to involve decanting both establishments for the construction duration.

#### **4.4 Option 3 - Close Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools and New Cumnock Nursery School and merge in a new-build school, plus separate Nursery School provision, on the Cairnhill Primary School Site.**

##### 4.4.1 Benefits of Option 3:

- A merged school would result in one local primary and nursery school, in New Cumnock, with a viable future, better placed to deliver *A Curriculum for Excellence*;
- The relocation of pupils and staff to a new-build school would meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum in full, in terms of design, flexibility of use, technology and equipment;
- A new or refurbished building would be fully DDA compliant;
- extensive site would accommodate a new build and increase design options;
- It may be possible to co-locate other community facilities, such as health service provision or library.

##### 4.4.2 Issues to consider in relation to Option 2:

- less central than Castle site;
- some pupils would have further to travel
- building works might cause some disruption to Cairnhill Primary School for a period of up to one year.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Staffing Implications**

5.1.1 The proposal as outlined in Section 3 would result in the majority of the staff at Castle and Cairnhill Primary Schools and New Cumnock Nursery School transferring to the new merged campus with the pupils and children. It may be necessary for a small number of staff to transfer to other duties in another school. There would be no compulsory redundancies of permanent staff.

5.1.2 This would be achieved without compromising the staffing standard, the ratio of staff to pupils. Pupils would have exactly the same or better level of support, geared to their individual needs if necessary, as at present.

5.1.3 Staff will be fully consulted about their future as will the appropriate trade unions representing all grades of staff affected. The particular wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration.

5.1.4 If any of Options 2 – 3 is chosen, the relocated schools would be entitled to a staffing enhancement of 2.0 FTE (full time equivalent) for upto two years, in order to ease the transition. The school would also receive additional clerical support and resources over this period.

## **5.2 Financial implications**

- 5.2.1 If any of options 2 – 4 is chosen, revenue budget savings in the region of £154,000 per annum might be anticipated. Savings would be made on areas such as rates, furniture and fittings, cleaning, janitorial services, staffing costs and health and safety expenditure.
- 5.2.2 The cost of repairs and maintenance of the new building would be extremely low for many years to come.
- 5.2.3 If the proposals for a merged Primary School are accepted and in accordance with current Council policy, all the funds realised from the sale of either site would be used to enhance educational provision.

## **5.3 Transport implications**

- 5.3.1 East Ayrshire Council currently operates a policy of providing free transport to school for any primary school pupil living more than one mile away, by the shortest safe walking distance, from their zoned school. Any primary aged pupil living within the catchment area of the new Primary School and more than 1 mile away from the school would therefore qualify for free transport to school.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet agree to adopt for the purpose of consultation the proposal that:-
- i) That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-
- Current education provision at Cairnhill Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.
  - Current education provision at Castle Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.
  - Current education provision at New Cumnock Nursery school and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.
  - Further that a new non-denominational primary school be created from the merger of Cairnhill and Castle Primaries, incorporating a separate Nursery School.
  - Further that the primary pupils and nursery children transfer to the new primary school and nursery school when it opens in August 2008 or as soon as possible thereafter, in accordance with one of the options set out within the report, as yet to be determined

6.2 It is also recommended that:-

- i) interested parties be invited to make written or electronic submissions on the proposal to the following addresses :-

By post :Executive Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU.

By e-mail: [educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**Written submissions should be returned no later than Monday 21 January 2008.**

- ii) the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services prepare a report on the results of the consultative process for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

## **THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

### **LITTLEMILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LITTLEMILL NURSERY CLASS**

**The following schools are affected by this Consultative Document:**

- **Littlemill Primary School**
- **Littlemill Nursery Class**
- **Patna Primary School**
- **Patna Nursery Class**
- **Drongan Primary School**
- **Drongan Nursery School**
- **Doon Academy**
- **Auchinleck Academy**

**This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council's Executive Cabinet for consultation in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulation 1981 and Amendment Regulation 1987, 1988 and 1989.**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**Proposal**

**That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise :-**

- **Current education provision in Littlemill Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Further that education at Littlemill Nursery Class be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Further that the children currently attending both establishments should thereafter continue their primary and pre-school education at another establishment, in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined.**

**Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

**1. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR THE SCHOOL ESTATE**

- 1.1 East Ayrshire Council has an established vision for its school estate which will ensure the delivery of a modern curriculum in school buildings that are suitable for purpose. This vision further states:

“East Ayrshire Council's Department of Educational and Social Services: committed to providing choice, maximising opportunity for all, developing the potential of individuals and meeting needs through inclusion”

- 1.2 This statement covers every aspect of the Department's work including the management and development of educational establishments. The Council's 2004 School Estate Management Plan states that development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in facilitating the learning and teaching process.

- 1.3 The Council has also approved the Department's objectives for achieving its aims. These are as follows:

- to reduce surplus capacity in primary schools;
- to address property maintenance issues;

- to meet statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); and
- to improve property flexibility.

- 1.4 East Ayrshire Council also subscribes to the vision for Scotland's children as set out in 2004 by The Curriculum Review Group in the document *A Curriculum for Excellence*, which states that "Our aspiration is to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society".
- 1.5 The proposals set out in this document will ensure that all these issues are addressed in a manner which will achieve improvements for all the pupils and staff of Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Class, whilst also obtaining best value for the Council.

## **2 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT LITTLEMILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS**

**Note:** In order to develop this document, the Council has used school roll projections. These are the best estimate of pupil numbers at the time the document was produced. Readers of the document should be aware that the prediction of school rolls into the medium and long term future cannot be done precisely. Figures given in the document should therefore be read with caution and the Council acknowledges this feature of the consultation process.

### **2.1 Overview**

2.1.1 Despite the best efforts of staff, parents and pupils, and recognising the excellent work that continues in Littlemill Primary School, the school does not accord with East Ayrshire Council's vision for its schools' estate. Even if the building were to be brought up to a modern standard, the design of the building and the small school roll would still not afford staff the flexibility and facilities to deliver *A Curriculum for Excellence* to best effect. The small roll calls into question the long term viability of the school as a separate establishment.

### **2.2 Littlemill Primary School**

2.2.1 Littlemill Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from the village of Rankinston and surrounding area.

2.2.2 The school has a working capacity of 75 pupils with a current pupil roll of 32, at September 2007.

2.2.3 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a relatively stable roll, increasing slightly in 2008 and 2009 and decreasing slightly thereafter, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 1 : Littlemill Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	28
2005/06	34
2006/07	36
2007/08	32
2008/09	40
2009/10	40
2010/11	39
2011/12	38
2012/13	34
2013/14	34
2014/15	32

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

### **2.3 Littlemill Nursery Class**

2.3.1 Littlemill Nursery Class provides pre-5 education for pupils from the area. At present it operates in afternoons only with a capacity of 16, with between 4 and 8 children attending on most afternoons.

### **2.4 Educational issues:**

2.4.1 Because of the small numbers of pupils and limited resources, it is difficult for small schools to provide the breadth and variety of experience available to pupils in a larger school. This is because:

- in a small school, in the case of Littlemill Primary with a population of fewer than 40 pupils across the age range P1 to P7, more of the pupils have to be taught in classes made up of more than two separate stages, that is, multiple composite classes. In the current year, Littlemill Primary School has a P1-3 multiple composite class and a P4-7 multiple composite class.
- resource management is particularly difficult in a multiple composite situation;
- the *Curriculum for Excellence* is geared to enabling all children to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Confidence, responsible citizenship and the opportunity to contribute effectively are more readily nurtured in a larger school with a mix of pupils of all abilities and a wide range of opportunities and learning situations in which to take part;

- modern teaching methods which make use, for example, of self assessment and peer assessment depend for their effectiveness on interaction between pupils of similar age and stage;
- management of the curriculum presents problems in a smaller school; it is difficult to ensure progression, continuity and pace in a multi-composite situation; it is the peer group that provides children with challenge and motivation and enables the teacher to accelerate the pace of learning;
- a small school, whilst providing a secure and caring environment, lacks the variety of 'extra-curricular' activities and the social mix that pupils experience in a larger school. Team games, for example, are more difficult to organise, pupils are less likely to experience the thrill of 'playing for the school' and some pupils have inadequate opportunities fully to develop their social skills;
- many pupils coming from a small school tend to find the move to secondary school more difficult, having come from a small and relatively sheltered background.
- It can prove difficult to recruit and retain staff in small schools, which lack many of the career advantages of larger establishments.

## 2.5 **Buildings issues:**

2.5.1 Since 2000 East Ayrshire Council has invested almost £100,000 in maintenance and improvements at Littlemill Primary School and, despite this, the condition of the building remains unsatisfactory. The total cost of improvement work to bring the school building to a satisfactory condition, compliant with the requirements of the DDA, is estimated to be approximately £560,000.

## 3. **THE PROPOSAL**

3.1 **It is for the reasons outlined in section 2.1 to 2.4 above that East Ayrshire Council wishes to consult on the proposal to discontinue educational provision at Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Class and to transfer the pupils to another establishment to continue their primary school/nursery education.**

3.2 The options for the future education of Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Classes children are listed in the following section, with a summary of the advantages and issues to consider in each case.

## 4 **OPTIONS FOR THE CONTINUING PRIMARY EDUCATION OF LITTLEMILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS CHILDREN**

4.1 In addition to receiving comment on the proposal, the Council wishes to receive feedback on identified options for the future primary and nursery education of pupils currently attending Littlemill Primary School and Nursery

Class, as outlined below. Comments on other suitable alternatives are also welcome.

#### **4.2 Option 1 – Status quo: retain Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Class as a separate establishment in its present accommodation**

4.2.1 This option would result in Littlemill Primary School and its nursery class being retained in its present location to serve its current catchment area.

4.2.2 Benefits of Option 1:

- would involve no disruption at present;
- children are familiar with their school.

4.2.3 Issues to consider in relation to Option 1:

- fails to address accommodation issues;
- fails to address educational issues;
- fails to address social issues;
- fails to address issue of small school roll;
- unlikely to be sustainable in the long term.

#### **4.3 Option 2 - Close Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Class and transfer pupils to Drongan Primary School and Nursery School.**

##### **4.3.1 Drongan Primary School**

4.3.2 Drongan Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from Drongan and surrounding area. It is 2.7 miles distant from Littlemill.

4.3.3 The school has a working capacity of 584 pupils with a current pupil roll of 270, at September 2007.

4.3.4 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a slight decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 2 : Drongan Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	275
2005/06	265
2006/07	272
2007/08	270
2008/09	272
2009/10	280
2010/11	274
2011/12	262
2012/13	264

2013/14	261
2014/15	256

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.3.5 If Littlemill Primary School pupils were to transfer to Drongan, the combined roll in session 2008-09 would be approximately 312 pupils, a healthy school roll and well within Drongan Primary School's working capacity of 584 pupils.

4.3.6 If the transfer were to take place, Drongan Primary School would benefit from some upgrade and refurbishment in order to provide the required standard of accommodation for all pupils.

#### 4.3.7 **Drongan Nursery School**

4.3.8 Drongan Nursery School, co-located with Drongan Primary School, provides early years education for 40 children from the Drongan area.

4.3.9 If Littlemill Nursery Class children were to transfer to Drongan Nursery School the combined roll in 2008-09 would be in the region of xx children.

4.3.10 Benefits of Option 2:

- transfer of Littlemill children to Drongan Primary School/Nursery School would strengthen a school with a viable future, better placed to deliver *A Curriculum for Excellence*;
- refurbished school would meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum in terms of design, flexibility of use, technology and equipment;
- refurbished building would be fully DDA compliant;
- merger would benefit Drongan pupils as well as Littlemill pupils, ensuring a healthy school roll into the foreseeable future;
- Littlemill pupils would benefit socially as well as educationally.

4.3.11 Issues to consider in relation to Option 2:

- some pupils who presently walk to school would have to travel by bus;
- nursery provision would be less convenient for some parents;

#### 4.3.12 **Secondary Education Issues Associated with this Option**

4.3.13 If this option were to be accepted a rezoning of the catchment areas of Doon Academy and Auchinleck Academy would be required. At present pupils from Littlemill Primary attend Doon Academy for their secondary education. If pupils were to attend Drongan Primary the associated secondary school is Auchinleck Academy. If Doon Academy was to lose the pupils from Littlemill its roll would reduce by up to 40 children in the coming years. This is likely to have longer-term consequences for secondary education in the Doon Valley.

#### 4.4 **Option 3 – Close Littlemill Primary School and Nursery Class and transfer pupils to Patna Primary School and Nursery Class**

##### 4.4.1 **Patna Primary School**

4.4.2 Patna Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from the village of Patna and surrounding area. It is 4.6 miles distant from Littlemill.

4.4.3 The school has a working capacity of 290 pupils with a current pupil roll of 173, at September 2007.

4.4.4 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a steady decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 3 : Patna Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	183
2005/06	183
2006/07	164
2007/08	173
2008/09	172
2009/10	172
2010/11	165
2011/12	162
2012/13	156
2013/14	154
2014/15	152

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.4.5 If pupils from Littlemill Primary School were to transfer to Patna Primary School the combined roll in 2008-09 would be in the region of 212, that is, well within Patna Primary School's working capacity of 290 pupils.

4.4.6 If the transfer were to take place, Patna Primary School would benefit from upgrade and refurbishment in order to assist in providing the required standard of accommodation for all pupils.

##### 4.4.7 **Patna Nursery Class**

4.4.8 Patna Nursery Class provides pre-5 education for pupils from the area and has a capacity for 30 children.

#### 4.4.9 Benefits of Option 3:

- transfer of Littlemill children to Patna would strengthen a school with a viable future, better placed to deliver *A Curriculum for Excellence*;
- refurbished school would better meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum in terms of design, flexibility of use, technology and equipment;
- refurbished building would be fully DDA compliant;
- merger would benefit Patna pupils as well as Littlemill pupils, ensuring a healthy school roll into the foreseeable future;
- Littlemill pupils would benefit socially as well as educationally.

#### 4.4.10 Issues to consider in relation to Option 3:

- some pupils who presently walk to school would have to travel by bus;
- nursery provision would be less convenient for parents.

#### 4.4.11 **Secondary Education Issues Associated with this Option**

4.4.12 There would be no change to secondary catchment areas required from this option as Patna Primary also links to Doon Academy

### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

#### **5.1 Staffing Implications**

5.1.1 The proposal as outlined in Section 3 would result in the majority of the staff at Littlemill Primary School and Littlemill Nursery Class transferring to Patna Primary School/ Nursery Class or Drongan Primary School/Nursery School with the children. It may be necessary for a small number of staff to transfer to other duties in another school (However, para. 5.1.4 below should be noted). There would be no compulsory redundancies.

5.1.2 This would be achieved without compromising the staffing standard, the ratio of staff to pupils. Pupils would have exactly the same level of support, geared to their individual needs if necessary, as at present.

5.1.3 Staff will be fully consulted about their future as will the appropriate trade unions representing all grades of staff affected. The particular wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration.

5.1.4 If Option 2 or 3 is chosen, the receiving school would be entitled to a staffing enhancement upto 2.0 FTE (full time equivalent) for upto a period of two years, in order to ease the transition. The school would also receive additional clerical support and resources over this period.

#### **5.2 Financial Implications**

5.2.1 Savings overall, in the region of £70,000 per annum would be anticipated if Littlemill primary School were to close and the pupils transfer to Patna or Drongan. This figure includes, among other things, rates, furniture and

fittings, cleaning, janitorial services and health and safety expenditure. Against this, there would be increased transport costs in transporting the Littlemill pupils to their new school.

5.2.2 The cost of repairs and maintenance of the refurbished school would be relatively low for many years to come.

5.2.3 If it were to be sold off, and in accordance with Council policy, all the funds realised from the sale of the Littlemill site would be used to enhance educational provision.

### 5.3 **Transport implications**

5.3.1 East Ayrshire Council operates a policy of providing free transport to school for any primary school pupil living more than one mile away, by the shortest safe walking distance, from their zoned school. Any pupil living within the catchment area of the new Primary School and more than 1 mile away from the school would therefore qualify for free transport to school.

## 6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet agree to adopt for the purpose of consultation the proposal:

i) That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise :-

- Current education provision at Littlemill Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Further that education at Littlemill Nursery Class be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Further that the children currently attending both establishments should thereafter continue their primary and pre-school education at another establishment, in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined.

6.2 It is also recommended that:

i) interested parties be invited to make written or electronic submissions on the proposal to the following addresses :-

By post :Executive Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU.

By e-mail: [educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**Written submissions should be returned no later than Monday 21 January 2008.**

- ii) the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services prepare a report on the results of the consultative process for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

## **THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

### **ST XAVIER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**The following schools are directly affected by this Consultative Document:**

- **St Xavier's Primary School**
- **Patna Primary School**
- **Bellsbank Primary School**
- **St. Ann's Primary School, South Ayrshire Council**

**This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council's Executive Cabinet for consultation in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulation 1981 and Amendment Regulation 1987, 1988 and 1989.**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**Proposal**

**That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-**

- **Current education provision in the existing St Xavier's Primary School building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Further, that alternative arrangements be made for the future education of the St Xavier's pupils from August 2008 or as soon as possible thereafter, in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined.**

**Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

**1. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR THE SCHOOL ESTATE**

- 1.1 East Ayrshire Council has an established vision for its school estate which will ensure the delivery of a modern curriculum in school buildings that are suitable for purpose. This vision further states:

"East Ayrshire Council's Department of Educational and Social Services: committed to providing choice, maximising opportunity for all, developing the potential of individuals and meeting needs through inclusion"

- 1.2 This statement covers every aspect of the Department's work including the management and development of educational establishments. The Council's 2004 School Estate Management Plan states that development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in facilitating the learning and teaching process.

- 1.3 The Council has also approved the Department's objectives for achieving its aims. These are as follows:

- to reduce surplus capacity in primary schools;
- to address property maintenance issues;
- to meet statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); and
- to improve property flexibility.

- 1.4 East Ayrshire Council also subscribes to the vision for Scotland's children as set out in 2004 by The Curriculum Review Group in the document *A Curriculum for Excellence*, which states that "Our aspiration is to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society".
- 1.5 The proposals set out in this document will ensure that all these issues are addressed in a manner which will achieve improvements for all the pupils and staff of St Xavier's Primary School, whilst also obtaining best value for the Council.

## 2. EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT ST XAVIER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Note: In order to develop this document, the Council has used school roll projections. These are the best estimate of pupil numbers at the time the document was produced. Readers of the document should be aware that the prediction of school rolls into the medium and long term future cannot be done precisely. Figures given in the document should therefore be read with caution and the Council acknowledges this feature of the consultation process.

### 2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The building occupied by St Xavier's Primary School no longer meets the Council's vision for its schools' estate. The fabric is beyond economic repair and urgent action is required to provide high quality accommodation for pupils and staff.

### 2.2 St Xavier's Primary School

- 2.2.1 St Xavier's Primary School provides denominational primary education for pupils from a wide area in the southern part of East Ayrshire.
- 2.2.2 The school has a working capacity of 132 pupils with a current pupil roll of 37, at September 2007 .
- 2.2.3 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts that pupil numbers will remain steady over the period, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 1 : St Xavier's Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	31
2005/06	37
2006/07	39
2007/08	37
2008/09	40
2009/10	35
2010/11	37
2011/12	37

2012/13	36
2013/14	35
2014/15	34

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

2.2.4 There are currently no pupils on a placing request in the school.

## **2.3 Educational issues**

2.3.1 Because of the small numbers and limited resources, it is difficult for a school as small as St Xavier's to provide the breadth and variety of experience available to pupils in a larger school. If there was another denominational school within a reasonable distance within East Ayrshire; the most advantageous solution would be to merge St Xavier's with that school. However, that is not the case and the Council must seek to find the best way to overcome the disadvantages of St Xavier's premises and roll, whilst preserving the ethos and unique identity of the denominational school.

2.3.2 It can prove difficult to recruit and retain staff in small schools, which lack many of the career advantages of larger establishments.

2.3.3 The roll of St Xavier's is considerably smaller than is desirable, it is nevertheless a relatively stable roll and, so long as it maintains at this level, it is likely that the school will remain viable for the foreseeable future.

## **2.4 Buildings issues**

2.4.1 St Xavier's school building is the only one of East Ayrshire's school buildings to have received a 'D' rating in the Council survey. This means that the economic life of the building has expired and there are no feasible options for refurbishment.

2.4.2 Basic repairs continue to ensure the health and safety of users. In 2006-07, for example repairs to the access road and gates were carried out at a cost of £36, 750. However, in the longer term, piecemeal repairs and maintenance is not seen as the solution and would not represent best value.

2.4.3 With a pupil population of under 40 in a building with a working capacity of 132, St Xavier's is operating well below its intended capacity. This is wasteful and compounds the cost issues in relation to this building.

## **3 THE PROPOSAL**

**3.1 It is for the reasons outlined in section 2.1 to 2.4 above that East Ayrshire Council wishes to consult on the proposal to discontinue educational provision at the existing St. Xavier's Primary School**

**building and to seek views on options for the continuing primary education of the pupils currently attending St Xavier's.**

#### **4 OPTIONS FOR THE CONTINUING PRIMARY EDUCATION OF ST XAVIER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

4.1 In addition to receiving comment on the proposal the Council wishes to receive feedback on options for the continuing primary education of children currently attending St Xavier's Primary School, as outlined below. Suggestions in relation to other suitable options are also welcome.

4.1.1 One obvious solution, to rebuild St. Xavier's Primary School on its existing site, has not been included as an option because it is not considered a feasible option on economic or practical grounds.

#### **4.2 Option 1 - Status quo – retain St. Xavier's Primary School as a separate establishment and located at its present location.**

4.2.1 This option would result in St. Xavier's being maintained as a separate educational establishment and kept with its current accommodation.

##### 4.2.2 Benefits of Option 1

- would involve no potential disruption caused by relocation for pupils currently attending St. Xavier's Primary School.

##### 4.2.3 Issues to consider:

- would be educationally disadvantageous to pupils;
- would fail to address the fact that the St. Xavier's building is failing and cannot continue in long term use;
- would fail to address over-capacity issue;
- would fail to address DDA issue.

#### **4.3 Option 2 - Move St. Xavier's Primary School to a new-building, co-located with Bellsbank Primary School**

4.3.1 It should be noted that co-location would involve the construction of an extension to Bellsbank Primary School building, linked to Bellsbank but still a separate school, retaining its name, with its own entrance and separate playground. The two schools would share some elements such as dining and PE facilities, timetabled for use at different times by each school. Co-location would in no way compromise the unique character and ethos of either school.

4.3.2 Bellsbank Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from the Bellsbank area of Dalmellington. It is 3.8 miles distant from St. Xavier's.

4.3.3 The school has a working capacity of 283 pupils with a current pupil roll of 116, at September 2007 .

4.3.4 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts that pupil numbers will decline gradually over the period, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 2 : Bellsbank Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	140
2005/06	133
2006/07	141
2007/08	116
2008/09	121
2009/10	123
2010/11	114
2011/12	115
2012/13	111
2013/14	108
2014/15	105

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.3.5 Benefits of Option 2:

- the relocated St Xavier's Primary School would meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum in terms of design, flexibility of use, technology and equipment;
- the new building would be fully DDA compliant;
- co-location would give both new schools access to better shared facilities than could be provided for two separate schools;
- joint purchase of shared equipment and resources would reduce revenue costs for both establishments;
- co-location and the building works necessary to enable it would secure the long term future of both schools.
- The Bellsbank campus also houses a nursery and family centre and other facilities.

4.3.6 Issues to consider in relation to Option 2:

- some pupils who currently walk to school would have to travel by bus;
- Council might face some additional transport costs;
- Bellsbank is further away from the existing St Xavier's than Patna (see Option 3).

#### 4.4 **Option 3 - Move St Xavier's Primary School to be, co-located with Patna Primary School and Nursery Class.**

4.4.1 It should be noted that co-location would involve the refurbishment of an area of the Patna Primary School building. There would be a physical link to Patna but St Xavier's would remain a separate school, retaining its name, with its own entrance and separate playground. The two schools would share some elements such as dining and PE facilities, timetabled for use at different times by each school. Co-location would in no way compromise the unique character and ethos of either school.

#### 4.4.2 **Patna Primary School and Nursery Class**

4.4.3 Patna Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from the village of Patna and surrounding area. It is 2.4 miles distant from St Xavier's.

4.4.4 The school has a working capacity of 290 pupils with a current pupil roll of 173, at September 2007.

4.4.5 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a steady decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 3 : Patna Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	183
2005/06	183
2006/07	164
2007/08	173
2008/09	172
2009/10	172
2010/11	165
2011/12	162
2012/13	156
2013/14	154
2014/15	152

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.4.6 Patna primary school is the subject also of a separate consultation which could result in pupils from Littlemill Primary School transferring to Patna. This would increase the roll of Patna Primary School by some 40 pupils.

#### 4.4.6 Benefits of Option 3:

- the relocated St Xavier's Primary School would meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum in terms of design, flexibility of use, technology and equipment;
- the new building would be fully DDA compliant;
- co-location would give both new schools access to better shared facilities than could be provided for two separate schools;
- joint purchase of shared equipment and resources would reduce revenue costs for both establishments;
- co-location and the building works necessary to enable it would secure the long term future of both schools;
- nursery provision currently available at Patna would be available to St Xavier's parents also.
- there is already a special needs base on the Patna Primary School campus.

#### 4.4.8 Issues to consider in relation to option 3:

- some pupils who currently walk to school would have to travel by bus;
- Council might face some additional transport costs.

#### 4.5 **Option 4 – Close St Xavier's Primary School and transfer all pupils to St. Ann's Primary School, South Ayrshire Council.**

4.5.1 St. Ann's Primary School, South Ayrshire Council is located in the village of Mossblown, at a distance of some 16 miles from St Xavier's.

#### 4.5.2 Benefits of Option 4:

- integration into a larger denominational school would benefit pupils educationally;
- integration into a larger denominational school would benefit pupils socially;
- St. Ann's Primary is associated with Queen Margaret Academy where the majority of St Xavier's pupils go to for their secondary education;

#### 4.5.3 Issues to consider in relation to Option 4:

- distance of pupil travel would be substantially further than other options
- all pupils would have to be transported over some distance to their new school;
- staff of existing school would require to be relocated.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Staffing Implications**

- 5.1.1 Because this is a proposed relocation of an existing school, implications for staff would be minimal, unless Option 4 were chosen, in which case all members of permanent staff would be relocated. If Option 2 or Option 3 were chosen, the staffing standard for the new school, the ratio of staff to pupils, would remain unchanged. Pupils would have exactly the same level of support, geared where necessary to their individual needs, as at present.
- 5.1.2 Staff are included in this consultation and would be fully consulted about their future as would the appropriate trade unions representing all grades of staff affected. The particular wishes of each member of staff would be taken into consideration.
- 5.1.3 If Option 2 or 3 is chosen, the relocated school would be entitled to a staffing enhancement 1.0 FTE (full time equivalent) for a period of upto two years, in order to ease the transition. The school would also receive additional clerical support and resources over this period.

### **5.2 Financial Implications**

- 5.2.1 Property costs would be reduced in a new fit-for-purpose school building. There would be significant savings on maintenance costs for many years to come.
- 5.2.2 If it were to be sold off, and in accordance with Council policy, all the funds realised from the sale of the St. Xavier's site would be used to enhance educational provision.

### **5.3 Transport implications**

- 5.3.1 East Ayrshire Council operates a policy of providing free transport to school for any primary school pupil living more than one mile away, by the shortest safe walking distance, from their zoned school. Any pupil living within the catchment area of the relocated St Xavier's Primary School and more than 1 mile away from the school would therefore qualify for free transport to school.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet agree to adopt for the purpose of consultation the proposal:

- i) That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-
- Current education provision at the existing St Xavier's Primary School building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.

- Further, that alternative arrangements be made for the future education of the St Xavier's pupils from August 2008 or as soon as possible thereafter, in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined.

6.2 It is also recommended that:

- i) interested parties be invited to make written or electronic submissions on the proposal to the following addresses :-

By post :Executive Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU.

By e-mail: [educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**Written submissions should be returned no later than Monday 21 January 2008.**

- ii) the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services prepare a report on the results of the consultative process for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

## **THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

### **SORN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**The following schools are affected by this Consultative Document:**

- **Sorn Primary School**
- **Catrine Primary School**
- **Mauchline Primary School**

**This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council's Executive Cabinet for consultation in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulation 1981 and Amendment Regulation 1987, 1988 and 1989.**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**Proposal**

**That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-**

- **Current education provision in Sorn Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- **Further that the future primary educational provision for pupils currently attending Sorn Primary School should be determined by the Council in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined.**

**Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

**1. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR THE SCHOOL ESTATE**

- 1.1 East Ayrshire Council has an established vision for its school estate which will ensure the delivery of a modern curriculum in school buildings that are suitable for purpose. This vision further states:

“East Ayrshire Council’s Department of Educational and Social Services: committed to providing choice, maximising opportunity for all, developing the potential of individuals and meeting needs through inclusion”

- 1.2 This statement covers every aspect of the Department’s work including the management and development of educational establishments. The Council’s 2004 School Estate Management Plan states that development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings is a key component in facilitating the learning and teaching process.

- 1.3 The Council has also approved the Department’s objectives for achieving its aims. These are as follows:

- to reduce surplus capacity in primary schools;
- to address property maintenance issues;
- to meet statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); and

- to improve property flexibility.

- 1.4 East Ayrshire Council also subscribes to the vision for Scotland’s children as set out in 2004 by The Curriculum Review Group in the document *A Curriculum for Excellence*, which states that “Our aspiration is to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society”.
- 1.5 The proposals set out in this document will ensure that all these issues are addressed in a manner which will achieve improvements for all the pupils and staff of Sorn Primary School, whilst also obtaining best value for the Council.

## 2 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AT SORN PRIMARY SCHOOL

NOTE: In order to develop this document, the Council has used school roll projections. These are the best estimate of pupil numbers at the time the document was produced. Readers of the document should be aware that the prediction of school rolls into the medium and long term future cannot be done precisely. Figures given in the document should therefore be read with caution and the Council acknowledges this feature of the consultation process.”

### 2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Despite the best efforts of staff, parents and pupils, and recognising the excellent work that continues in Sorn Primary School, the school does not accord with East Ayrshire Council’s vision for its schools’ estate. Even if the building were to be brought up to a modern standard, the design of the building and the small school roll would still not afford staff the flexibility and facilities to deliver *A Curriculum for Excellence* to best effect. The declining roll calls into question the long term viability of the school as a separate establishment.

### 2.2 Sorn Primary School

- 2.2.1 Sorn Primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from in and around the village of Sorn.
- 2.2.2 The school has a working capacity of 92 pupils with a current pupil roll of 67, at September 2007.
- 2.2.2 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a steady decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 1 : Sorn Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	88
2005/06	84
2006/07	75

2007/08	67
2008/09	63
2009/10	49
2010/11	47
2011/12	41
2012/13	39
2013/14	38
2014/15	37

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

2.2.3 There are currently 25 pupils on a placing request in the school, coming from Catrine, Auchinleck and Galston Primary Schools.

## 2.3 Educational issues:

2.3.1 Because of the small numbers of pupils and limited resources, it is difficult for small schools to provide the breadth and variety of experience available to pupils in a larger school. This is because:

- in a small school, in the case of Sorn Primary with a population of fewer than 70 pupils across the age range P1 to P7, more of the pupils have to be taught in classes made up of two or more separate stages, that is, composite or multiple composite classes.
- resource management is particularly difficult in a multiple composite situation;
- the *Curriculum for Excellence* is geared to enabling all children to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Confidence, responsible citizenship and the opportunity to contribute effectively are more readily nurtured in a larger school with a mix of pupils of all abilities and a wide range of opportunities and learning situations in which to take part;
- modern teaching methods which make use, for example, of self assessment and peer assessment depend for their effectiveness on interaction between pupils of similar age and stage;
- management of the curriculum presents problems in a smaller school; it is difficult to ensure progression, continuity and pace in a multi-composite situation; it is the peer group that provides children with challenge and motivation and enables the teacher to accelerate the pace of learning;
- a small school, whilst providing a secure and caring environment, lacks the variety of 'extra-curricular' activities and the social mix that pupils experience in a larger school. Team games, for example, are more difficult to organise, pupils are less likely to experience the thrill of 'playing

for the school' and some pupils have inadequate opportunities fully to develop their social skills;

- many pupils coming from a small school tend to find the move to secondary school more difficult, having come from a small and relatively sheltered background.
- It can prove difficult to recruit and retain staff in small schools, which lack many of the career advantages of larger establishments.

2.3.2 The issues summarised above are made more urgent by the fact that Sorn Primary has a falling school roll, projected to fall to under 40 pupils by 2012. Falling rolls makes staff deployment more complex, fewer pupils means fewer members of staff and instead of providing greater continuity of teaching and support for pupils, the effect can be the opposite.

## 2.4 **Buildings issues:**

2.4.1 Since 1999 East Ayrshire Council has invested over £100,000 in maintenance and improvements at Sorn Primary School and, despite this, the condition of the building remains completely unsatisfactory. The school has no staffroom, no gym hall and is cramped despite operating at less than its working capacity.

2.4.2 The cost of improvement work to bring the school building to a satisfactory condition, compliant with the requirements of the DDA, is estimated to be approximately £420,000. The condition of the building is such that works are required on almost all aspects of the building, including plumbing, roofs, windows and heating. Even if this work was carried the building would not be set out in a way which could deliver a modern curriculum. In addition there would still be no gym hall built within the school and the village hall would have to be used for dining and physical education.

## 3 **THE PROPOSAL**

3.1 **It is for the reasons outlined in section 2.1 to 2.4 above that East Ayrshire Council wishes to consult on the proposal to discontinue educational provision at Sorn Primary School and to transfer the pupils to another establishment to continue their primary school education.**

## 4 **OPTIONS FOR THE CONTINUING PRIMARY EDUCATION OF SORN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

4.1 In addition to receiving comment on the proposal, the Council wishes to receive feedback on options for the continuing primary education of children currently attending Sorn Primary School, as outlined below. Comments on the identification of other suitable options are also welcome.

4.2 **Option 1 – Status Quo: maintain Sorn Primary School as a separate establishment and in its present accommodation.**

#### 4.2.1 Benefits of Option 1:

- involves no disruption for current Sorn Primary pupils;
- retains the primary school within the Sorn community.

#### 4.2.2 Issues to consider in relation to Option 1:

- fails to address issues associated with Sorn Primary School building, which is can never fully meet the delivery of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum;
- more than 50% of Sorn Primary School pupils attend on placing request from outwith the school's delineated catchment area;
- Sorn Primary School building is not DDA compliant;
- investment in repairs and maintenance cannot be justified on best value grounds.

### 4.3 Option 2 – Close Sorn Primary School and transfer pupils to Catrine Primary School

#### 4.3.1 Catrine Primary School

4.3.2 Catrine primary School provides non-denominational primary education for pupils from in and around Catrine.

4.3.3 The school has a working capacity of 231 pupils with a current pupil roll of 116, at September 2007. The combined roll in 2008-09, if this option were chosen, would be around 200 pupils, which would represent efficient use of the building.

4.3.4 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts an overall decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 2 : Catrine Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	137
2005/06	142
2006/07	136
2007/08	116
2008/09	133
2009/10	132
2010/11	127
2011/12	125
2012/13	123
2013/14	118
2014/15	115

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.3.5 Catrine Primary School's existing building is basically sound but in need of upgrading to bring it to a standard suitable for the delivery of the modern curriculum and compliant with DDA legislation. This work will be undertaken and would ensure that, if this is the chosen option, the pupils and staff from both schools enjoy high quality accommodation.

4.3.6 Benefits of Option 2:

- improved accommodation and learning environment for all pupils and staff at both schools;
- better suited to the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence;
- pupils currently attending Sorn by placing request would now be at their zoned school, entitled to free travel if living more than 1 mile from the school;
- more efficient use of staffing and resources;
- refurbishment would ensure DDA compliance;
- reduced maintenance and property costs after refurbishment;
- addresses 'over capacity' issue at both schools.

4.3.7 Issues to consider in relation to Option 2:

- increased travel for some pupils;
- additional transport costs for the authority;
- loss of the primary school to the Sorn community;
- some pupils and parents likely to prefer the smaller school environment.

#### 4.4 **Option 3 – Close Sorn Primary School and transfer pupils to Mauchline Primary School**

##### 4.4.1 **Mauchline Primary School**

4.4.2 Mauchline Primary School provides non-denominational education for pupils from in and around the community of Mauchline.

4.4.3 The school has a working capacity of 460 pupils with a current pupil roll of 312, as at September 2007. The combined roll in 2008-09, if this option were chosen, would be around 375 pupils, which would represent efficient but not cramped use of the building.

4.4.4 The pupil roll projection through to 2015 predicts a gradual decline in pupil numbers, as indicated in the following table:

**Table 1 : Mauchline Primary School Roll Projections**

<b>Academic Session</b>	<b>Pupil Roll</b>
2004/05	389
2005/06	363
2006/07	328
2007/08	312
2008/09	323
2009/10	314
2010/11	301
2011/12	298
2012/13	303
2013/14	298
2014/15	293

\* This table shows actual pupil numbers, from the September census, for each year up to 2007, and projected numbers, taking account of proposed new house building and all other known factors, through to 2015.

4.4.5 Mauchline Primary School has been completely refurbished and extended, thus creating an excellent and modern school building.

4.4.6 Benefits of Option 3:

- 'state of the art' educational facility at refurbished Mauchline Primary School;
- vastly improved accommodation and learning environment for all pupils and staff;
- better suited to the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence;
- more efficient use of staffing and resources;
- very healthy school roll;
- fully compliant with requirements of the DDA;
- reduced maintenance and property costs;
- addresses 'over capacity' issue at both schools.

4.4.7 Issues to consider in relation to Option 3:

- increased travel for some pupils;
- additional transport costs for the authority;
- loss of the primary school to the Sorn community;
- some pupils and parents likely to prefer the smaller school environment.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Staffing Implications**

- 5.1.1 The proposal as outlined in Options 2 or 3 would result in the majority of the staff at Sorn Primary School transferring to Catrine Primary School or Mauchline Primary School with the pupils. It may be necessary for a small number of staff to transfer to other duties in another school (However, para. 5.1.4 below, should be noted). There would be no compulsory redundancies for permanent staff.
- 5.1.2 This would be achieved without compromising the staffing standard, the ratio of staff to pupils. Pupils would have exactly the same level of support, geared to their individual needs if necessary, as at present.
- 5.1.3 Staff will be fully consulted about their future as will the appropriate trade unions representing all grades of staff affected. The particular wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration.
- 5.1.4 If Option 2 or 3 is chosen, the receiving school would be entitled to a staffing enhancement of upto 2.0 FTE (full time equivalent) for a period of two years, in order to ease the transition, assuming the combined roll is over 200 pupils. The school would also receive additional clerical support and resources over this period.

### **5.2 Financial Implications**

- 5.2.1 Savings overall, from the revenue budget, in the region of £104,000 per annum would be anticipated if Sorn primary School were to close and the pupils transfer to Catrine or Mauchline. This figure includes, among other things, rates, furniture and fittings, cleaning, janitorial services and health and safety expenditure. Against this, there would be increased transport costs in transporting some of the Sorn pupils to their new school.
- 5.2.2 The cost of repairs and maintenance of the refurbished school would be relatively low for many years to come.
- 5.2.3 Any proposed disposal of the Sorn Primary School site would require resolution of an existing contractual restriction as to the use of the site and would involve negotiation with a third party. Subject to that process, all proceeds received by the Council from any subsequent disposal would be used to enhance educational provision.

### **5.3 Transport implications**

- 5.3.1 East Ayrshire Council operates a policy of providing free transport to school for any primary school pupil living more than one mile away, by the shortest safe walking distance, from their zoned school. Any pupil living within the catchment area of the combined school and more than 1 mile away from the school would therefore qualify for free transport to school.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet agree to adopt for the purpose of consultation the proposal:

i) That subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise:-

- Current education provision at Sorn Primary School and its existing building be discontinued with effect from June 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Further that the future primary educational provision for pupils currently attending Sorn Primary School should be determined by the Council in accordance with one of the options set out within this report, as yet to be determined

6.2 It is also recommended that:

i) interested parties be invited to make written or electronic submissions on the proposal to the following addresses :-

By post :Executive Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU.

By e-mail: [educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**Written submissions should be returned no later than Monday 21 January 2008.**

ii) the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services prepare a report on the results of the consultative process for consideration at a future meeting of the Cabinet

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services