

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 4 JUNE 2014

CONSULTATION REPORT – CREATION OF A NEW 3-18 PROVISION IN GAELIC EDUCATION INVOLVING THE RELOCATION OF GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION FROM ONTHANK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE, AND, GAELIC SECONDARY LEVEL EDUCATION FROM GRANGE ACADEMY, TO THE NEW CAMPUS TO BE OPENED IN AUGUST 2017 AT THE SITE OF THE CURRENT JAMES HAMILTON ACADEMY

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the responses and comments which have been received from stakeholders during the public consultation exercise on the creation of a new 3-18 provision in Gaelic education involving the relocation of the Gaelic Medium Education Unit from Onthank Primary School and Early Childhood Centre, and, Gaelic secondary level education from Grange Academy, to the new campus to be opened in August 2017 at the site of the current James Hamilton Academy and to recommend an appropriate course of action, having reviewed the proposal that:

- Pre School and Primary Gaelic education provision at Onthank Primary School and Early Childhood Centre be discontinued with effect from the end of the 2016/17 academic session in June 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- Secondary Gaelic education provision at Grange Academy be discontinued with effect from the end of the 2016/17 academic session in June 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the children and young people attending these educational establishments transfer to a new build Gaelic education provision to be sited within the new 3-18 campus on Sutherland Drive, Kilmarnock, with effect from the start of the 2017/18 academic session in August 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter.

1.2 Having had regard in particular to:

- (a) Relevant written representations received by the Council from any person during the consultation period;
- (b) Oral representations made to it by any person at the public meetings held on 30 February 2014; and
- (c) Education Scotland's report on the consultation proposal; and
- (d) Relevant responses received in the three week period following publication of the Consultation Report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting of 5 February 2014, Cabinet agreed to issue, for formal consultation, a Proposal Document which had been prepared on the creation of a new 3-18 provision in Gaelic education involving the relocation of Gaelic Medium Education from Onthank Primary School and Early Childhood Centre, and, Gaelic secondary level education from Grange Academy, to the new campus to be opened in August 2017 at the site of the current James Hamilton Academy.
- 2.2 Having considered the oral and written representations, and Education Scotland's Report, an advertisement was placed in the Cumnock Chronicle, Kilmarnock Standard and Ayrshire Post on 8 May, 2014 advising that the Consultation Report had been prepared and would be available for public scrutiny from 9 May, 2014, through the Council's website. All statutory and non-statutory consultees were contacted to make them aware of this development. Hard copies have been placed in schools and libraries.
- 2.3 This has allowed a full three week review of the document prior to Cabinet's consideration of the document and fully complies with section 9 (3) and section 11 of the 2010 Act. The Consultation Report is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

- 3.1 A total of 12 responses was received from a range of interested parties. Of these responses there was a combination of standard e-mail text, the Council's Response Form with the same standard text or the Response Form with a tick in the relevant box depending on whether the respondent agreed or disagreed with the proposal. In addition, comments submitted at the public meeting of 19 February, 2014 were recorded as part of the consultation response. Sections 3 and 4 of the Consultation Report provides a summary of the oral and written responses with the Council comments in reply to the issues raised detailed in section 5 of the Consultation Report.
- 3.2 Responses to the proposal document were very positive with full support from respondents for the relocation itself and the bringing together of the currently separate elements of Gaelic provision into one 3-18 context, within one campus.
- 3.3 Many of the individual responses had a focus on issues which were not specific to the proposals but were more generally related to learning and teaching issues or development of Gaelic more widely than through a school context. Officers have embraced these issues as part of the process and will take account of them in rolling out the management of proposals plan.
- 3.4 In its report to the Council, Education Scotland identified a number of key issues that would have to be addressed by the Council in the Consultation Report. These are summarised below:
 - The need to ensure that the profile of Gaelic is high and fully across the 3-18 campus;

- The importance of taking the opportunity to link East Ayrshire Council's Gaelic Language plan to what is proposed to be a new centre of excellence for Gaelic;
- The need to define the arrangements for leadership of Gaelic in the new 3-18 campus;
- Maintain good communication and consultation with pupils, parents and staff as the management of proposals process rolls out.

3.5 All of these issues have been addressed in section 5 of the Consultation Report.

3.6 Copies of the responses are available in the Members' Lounge.

4. REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT PROPOSAL

4.1 Relevant Council officers met on 1 May, 2014 to formally review the relocation proposal in light of all of the information that had been received during the consultation period. This meeting ensured that the Council met the requirements of sections 9(1) of the 2010 Act.

4.2 Having reviewed the proposal, officers have confirmed that their view on the proposal had not substantially changed and that the relocation of Gaelic Medium Education, currently provided at Onthank Gaelic Early Childhood Centre, Onthank Primary School and Grange Academy, should go ahead as proposed with effect from no later than the start of school session 17-18.

4.3 Following this review, the Consultation Report was prepared and issued, in hard copy, for public scrutiny on 9 May 2014, having also been electronically released through the Council's website on 8 May, 2014.

5. POLICY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The consultation exercise has been conducted in full compliance of the relevant statutory requirements, including the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Consultation Report has been publicly available for a three week period and Cabinet are now asked to consider the proposal which, following the review meeting on 1 May, 2014, is in the following terms. That;

- Pre-school and Primary Gaelic education provision at Onthank Primary School and Early Childhood Centre be discontinued with effect from the end of the 2016/17 school session in June 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter;
- Secondary Gaelic education provision at Grange Academy be discontinued in its current form with effect from the end of the 2016/17 academic session, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the children and Young people attending those educational establishments transfer to a new build Gaelic education provision to be sited within the new 3-18 campus on Sutherland Drive, Kilmarnock with effect from the start of academic session 2017-18, or as soon as possible thereafter;

- The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services prepare effective transition arrangements, in consultation with school staff and parents that will allow a seamless transition of pupils from current provision to a new centre of excellence for Gaelic education.

5.2 In the event that Cabinet are minded to agree the recommendations contained within paragraph 18 below, the Council would not be making a decision on the proposal in terms of Section 11(1) of the said 2010 Act at this time. The Council would therefore not be required to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision in terms of Section 15(2) of the said 2010 Act at this time. It is only when Cabinet review their decision, following any consideration of the Consultation report by Governance and Scrutiny Committee, that the decision in terms of Section 15(2) of the 2010 Act will apply.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The revenue implications of implementing the re-location proposals are cost-neutral.

7. RISK IMPLICATIONS

7.1 If the proposal referred to within paragraph 12 above is subsequently approved by Cabinet, the implementation of the closure proposal and the consequent reduction in the property portfolio reduces risk in terms of infrastructure failure, vandalism and threats to security.

7.2 Should cabinet approve the proposals then every effort would be made to link the Gaelic Language plan with our own management of the implementation of these proposals and to take the opportunity to enhance links with partners such as Bord na Gaidhlig and East Ayrshire Gaelic Forum.

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 It should be noted that Community Planning Partners were also consulted on this proposal and that if subsequently implemented the closure proposal will assist the Council in delivering the promotion of lifelong learning strand of the Community Plan.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Cabinet is asked:

(i) to consider the Consultation Report which was published on 9 May, 2014 and which is appended to this report;

(ii) to agree that:

- Pre School and Primary Gaelic education provision at Onthank Primary School and Early Childhood Centre be discontinued with effect from the end of the 2016/17 academic session in June 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter;

- Secondary Gaelic education provision at Grange Academy be discontinued with effect from the end of the 2016/17 academic session in June 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - the children and young people attending these educational establishments transfer to a new build Gaelic education provision to be sited within the new 3-18 campus on Sutherland Drive, Kilmarnock, with effect from the start of the 2017/18 academic session in August 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (iii) agree that this report and appended Consultation Report be referred to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee for consideration at its meeting on 11 June, 2014 with a recommendation that they report any views/further recommendations back to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 18 June 2014 in order that a final determination on the proposal can be made in terms of Section 11 (1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 at that time; and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

AW
22 May 2014

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. School (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
2. Cabinet Report – 5 February, 2014
3. Consultation Report – Issued 9 May, 2014 (Attached as Appendix 1 of this report)

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services, Tel: 01563 576017 or Alan Ward Acting Head of Service: Schools, Tel: 01563 576090.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: ALAN WARD

CONSULTATION REPORT