

## **Consultation proposal by Stirling Council**

### **Report by Education Scotland, addressing educational aspects of the proposal to relocate Cornton Nursery.**

#### **Context**

This report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act. The purpose of this report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of the council's consultation proposal. Section 2 of this report sets out the views expressed by consultees during the initial consultation process. Section 3 sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal and the views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Stirling Council proposes to relocate Cornton Nursery to premises at Lomond Crescent in order to enhance provision for the nursery. As a result, the current nursery building will create additional space to accommodate the increasing roll in Cornton Primary School. Cornton Nursery is on the same site as Cornton Primary School and the current nursery building would transfer over to the school. This aspect of the proposal is put forward as a medium term solution to addressing the capacity issues at Cornton Primary School.

1.2 The report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act.

1.3 HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspects of the proposal:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 12 November 2013 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of Cornton Primary School, Cornton Nursery School and external visit to the proposed relocation site for the nursery at Lomond Crescent, and discussions with relevant consultees.

#### 1.4 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the nursery and school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area.
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- benefits which the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

## 2. Consultation process

2.1 Stirling Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. The consultation included a public meeting held in November 2013 and invitations to submit written responses or to complete a pro-forma. The consultation period ran from 28 October 2013 to 13 December 2013.

2.2 All responses to the consultation agreed with the proposal. It was felt that this was a viable option to enhance provision for Cornton Nursery, with possible increased capacity, and expand accommodation in Cornton Primary School.

2.3 Parents of children at Cornton Nursery believed the relocation of the nursery would enhance the current provision giving increased floor space, additional accommodation and outdoor space. They await further opportunities to view, and be consulted about, the proposed layout of the new provision and, when appropriate, be aware of the interim arrangements for the extended provision available to children over the summer period when relocation work is being undertaken in both the new and vacated premises. They would like further discussion regarding harmonising the start and finishing times of the nursery and school.

2.4 Parents of children at Cornton Primary School support the proposal and state that this is the best option to relieve accommodation issues at the school and enhance provision for early years classes. They anticipate opportunities to view the proposed layout of the re-configured building and further discussion about harmonising the start and finishing times of the school and nursery. They expressed some apprehension regarding transition arrangements for the induction of the new P1 cohort in August 2014 as in essence children would be using the same learning and teaching space as they currently use.

2.5 Staff at Cornton Nursery welcomed the proposal as a way of enhancing provision for the nursery. This would include a nurture room, toilets adjacent to the playrooms and increased opportunities for outdoor learning. They felt the nursery would be closer to the heart of the community facilitating further involvement with community projects such as 'Stepping Stones' and enhancing the work of the

nursery family worker. They await further opportunities to view, and be consulted, about the layout of the new nursery. They seek further information, when available, about the operational aspects of the move and the interim arrangements for children attending nursery over the summer period. Staff are committed to making the relocation a positive experience and ensure effective transitions for all children.

2.6 Staff in Cornton Primary School agree that this proposal is the most suitable option for the medium term capacity issues at the school. They feel that using the current nursery as additional teaching and learning space will ease the constraints within the building and allow the school to accommodate the increase in classes predicted for August 2014. Staff await further opportunities to view, and be consulted, about the re-configuration of the new teaching space. They are committed to making the transfer of accommodation a smooth process for all children and ensure effective transition arrangements. They are aware that further discussions about the operational aspects of the change, such as movement of children between buildings and the timings of the school day, are necessary.

2.7 Children currently attending Cornton Primary School expressed concern about the limitations of space within the building and agreed with the proposal. Older children were conscious of the implications the increasing roll over recent years has had on the school. Children currently attending Cornton Nursery are being kept informed about the proposal and have already made visits to Lomond Crescent.

### **3. Educational aspects of the proposal**

3.1 The proposal is of clear educational benefit to the children and families of Cornton Nursery. The new Cornton Nursery will provide enhanced facilities for children, staff and the community. This will enrich children's learning experiences and enhance the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. The new nursery will include a nurture room to support the development of social and emotional wellbeing. Toilets will be located directly off the playroom thus promoting uninterrupted teaching and learning. The grounds of the new nursery will be larger and enhance outdoor learning allowing opportunities to develop separate areas for teaching and learning. The new nursery will be larger than the present building and allow future expansion of the service, if required, particularly for provision for children under three years of age. The location of the new nursery will be closer to the centre of the community allowing opportunities for increased community involvement and facilitate the nursery's family worker in her support for various groups.

3.2 The proposal is of clear educational benefit to the children and families of Cornton Primary School. It will increase teaching and learning space for the school. This will enhance provision for early years classes in the school and support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. It will allow the school to increase the number of classes as predicted for August 2014. This will be a medium term solution for capacity issues.

3.3 Children due to attend the school and nursery in two years' time will benefit from the enhanced facilities as outlined.

3.4 Stirling Council intends to minimise any adverse effects by giving consideration to ensuring that the timing of the day of the nursery and the school is harmonised so that there is no negative effect for parents and children. This will require further consultation with all stakeholders. The council is aware that the care and welfare of children and their personal and social development are central to the proposal. As such, staff and children will be provided with information and pictures throughout the refurbishment to ensure children are comfortable with the move to their new building. Staff from Cornton Nursery will liaise with teachers from Cornton Primary School to continue with the successful transition arrangements already established and increase parental involvement during the transition period.

#### **4. Summary**

Stirling Council presents a sound case to relocate Cornton Nursery to new premises in Lomond Crescent and re-configure the current nursery building for use as teaching and learning space to accommodate the increasing roll within Cornton Primary School. There are clear educational benefits within this proposal which will enhance the learning experiences for children who will be attending Cornton Nursery and Cornton Primary School in August 2014 and for those who will be in attendance in two years from the date of this proposal. There will also be clear benefits for the Cornton community. All stakeholders are in favour of the proposal and see this as the best option available at this time. Children who will attend the nursery from August 2014 and in two years' time will benefit from enhanced facilities and learning environment both indoors and outdoors. This will provide enriching opportunities for children to develop and learn. Children who attend Cornton Primary School in August 2014 and in two years' time will have enhanced space allowing staff a greater flexibility in the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence for all children but particularly at the early years. The re-configuration of the current nursery building provides the potential to create a stimulating early years facility for the school. The increased space will benefit the community as a whole in allowing extra capacity to accommodate catchment children into the school. The proposal will also have the potential for increased benefits to the Cornton community with the relocated nursery being closer to the centre of the community. Stakeholders appreciate the consultation process which has taken place to inform this proposal. In taking forward its proposal, Stirling Council needs to continue to work closely with all stakeholders to address the operational concerns which surround the proposal including continued consultation on the proposed refurbishment of both buildings, transition arrangements and regular updates on the progress of refurbishments within stated timescales.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
January 2014**