

## **Consultation proposal by Glasgow City Council**

**Report by Education Scotland, addressing educational aspects of the proposal to relocate Gowanbank Primary School and Howford Primary School and close St Vincent's Language and Communication Resource and Craigbank Nursery School and to build a new campus to include Gowanbank Primary School, Howford Primary School and a new Language and Communication provision as part of Gowanbank Primary School and a new 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. As the council is proposing to close a school, it will need to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining the opportunity for representations to be made to Ministers.

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Glasgow City Council proposes to relocate Gowanbank Primary School and Howford Primary School and close St Vincent's Language and Communication Resource and Craigbank Nursery School and to build a new campus to include Gowanbank Primary School, Howford Primary School and a new Language and Communication provision as part of Gowanbank Primary School and a new nursery.

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 meetings held on 18 March 2014 and 19 March 2014 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 sites of Gowanbank Primary School, Howford Primary School, Craighbank Nursery School and St Vincent's Language and Communication Resource, including discussion with relevant consultees.

#### 1.4 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools, nursery school and language and communication resource; other users of the buildings currently occupied by the schools, nursery school and language and communication resource; 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 Glasgow City Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

2.2 The council carried out extensive stakeholder engagement, including holding focus groups for children, parents and staff in each school. There were many opportunities for stakeholders, including those who live in the community, to express their views. The consultation included an invitation to attend two public meetings held in St Paul's High School and Gowanbank Primary school on 18 and 19 March 2014 respectively. One of the public meetings had no attendees; the other was attended by a small number of adults and children, who were either current or future Gowanbank Primary School pupils and parents or members of the local community.

2.3 The council received 62 written responses from stakeholders. All of these were from children, parents or staff of Howford Primary School. Of the stakeholders interviewed by HM Inspectors, almost all felt that they had been listened to and their views taken into account, including amendments being made to draft plans in response to their suggestions.

2.4 Most parents, staff and children in Howford Primary School were supportive of the proposal. They felt that the council had put forward a clear case with a rationale that they could understand. They believed that the new building would provide a much more attractive learning environment where children would enjoy and benefit

from opportunities for social interaction with a wider group of children. Children were reassured by the fact that they would be able to bring school bikes and go-karts and other familiar objects to the new campus. Parents felt that the transition to the new school would have to be managed carefully in order to avoid children becoming confused. They thought that the bringing together of four groups of children within the new building provided a welcome opportunity for children to work together to deepen their understanding of equality and diversity. Some non-teaching staff were not clear about future contractual arrangements, should the proposal be implemented.

2.5 Almost all parents, staff and children in Gowanbank Primary School were in favour of the proposal. Children were excited about moving to a new school building with modern facilities. They showed a mature understanding of the rationale for the proposal and were ready to embrace the opportunities which the new facilities would offer them, should the proposal be implemented. Children in P6 and P7 expressed some sadness that they would not be able to attend the new campus and that the legacy of their primary education would be linked with the Gowanbank building which they thought may be demolished. A few parents who met with HM Inspectors, raised questions about how the individual needs of children would be met as part of the new campus. Staff in Gowanbank Primary School were convinced that their school's very positive ethos could be further strengthened by the move to a new building and would serve as a positive influence on the new campus community. Staff expressed a view that they would value continued opportunities to discuss and provide their views to the council on the detailed layout, design and resourcing of the new building, should the proposal be approved.

2.6 Parents in Craigbank Nursery School were broadly supportive of the council's proposal. They felt the council had put forward a clear case that they understood. There was recognition that the expansion of early childcare and learning provision accruing from the proposal was a significant improvement in provision for the local communities involved. A few parents would have liked more information on the cost of refurbishing the existing building and on the reasoning behind this choice. A few parents felt disappointed that the considerable efforts and funds directed towards developing the Craigbank site, notably the outdoor environment, would be wasted should the proposed move be approved. A few parents expressed a view that the council should consult widely with all stakeholders on the design and layout of the new Craigbank provision to ensure it was fit for purpose for the children and families concerned. Staff in Craigbank Nursery School welcomed the proposal. They were excited about the potential opportunities afforded by moving into a new fit for purpose building and of their service expanding in range and scope. They expressed a desire to be consulted fully on the design, layout and resourcing of the new provision should the proposal be approved. However, there was a sadness expressed that much effort and funding had been mobilised over the years in making the most of the Craigbank facility and site and this would be lost. A few staff expressed concerns about children's safety, given the volume of traffic on Nitshill Road close to the site of the new campus.

2.7 Children in St Vincent's Language and Communication Resource were happy with the idea of moving to a new building, they felt that they had been extensively consulted about the facilities and that their suggestions had been taken into account.

They were particularly keen to ensure that the new building had a soft play area and that retreat rooms would still be available as they value these very highly in their current building. Staff in St. Vincent's Language and Communication Resource broadly approved the council's proposal. They felt that the council had been responsive to their concerns and had taken time to listen and respond to their views during the consultation period, notably relating to the configuration of rooms in the planned new building which it was proposed they would share. They expressed a view that they would value further opportunities to discuss and provide their views to the council on the detailed layout, design and resourcing of the new unit, should the proposal be approved.

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

3.1 The proposal would have clear educational benefits. Glasgow City Council has given careful consideration to this proposal including the current and predicted demographics of the city and of Greater Pollok. It has taken into account current and future projected school rolls as appropriate.

3.2 The proposal takes good account of the need for the council to provide adequate and efficient education and to secure best value in the delivery of its Education Services. It addresses stakeholders' concerns about the quality and condition of current buildings as well as the council's aspiration to provide high-quality learning and teaching opportunities for all children.

3.3 The new campus has the potential to provide an attractive, accessible and inclusive educational environment, which is linked strongly with the council's vision and values for the future of Glasgow.

3.4 In formulating this proposal, Glasgow City Council has drawn on the experiences of its other schools which have moved into new buildings and whose headteachers have reported positively on the impact on children's motivation and engagement with learning. The council also pays due regard to the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and good practice in relation to community integration and the promotion of individual, family and community health and wellbeing. In taking the proposal forward it will be important for the council to use the expertise within the current staff group to plan and manage high-quality transitions to the new campus and continue to work in partnership with parents to reassure them how the learning needs of children will be met.

3.5 Importantly, the inclusion of a 52 week nursery provision within the proposed campus will have significant benefits in terms of enhanced opportunities for parents and carers to access training and employment.

3.6 The council needs to provide non-teaching staff with more information about any potential implications relating to contractual arrangements, should the proposal be implemented.

## **4. Summary**

4.1 The council makes a strong case for its proposal to relocate Gowanbank Primary School and Howford Primary School and close St Vincent's Language and Communication Resource and Craigbank Nursery School and to build a new campus to include Gowanbank Primary School, Howford Primary School and a new Language and Communication provision as part of Gowanbank Primary School and a new nursery.

4.2 The proposal would have clear educational benefits for current and future children in all four establishments, for parents and carers and for the local community. Benefits include improved equality of opportunity within an inclusive and accessible educational environment and enhanced opportunities for personalisation and choice in learning. The proposed campus would contribute significantly to the further development of existing community strengths and promote opportunities for access to training and employment. In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to continue to involve staff and parents in the design and layout of the new campus.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
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