

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Inverclyde Council to relocate Glenbrae Children's Centre to refurbished premises in Aberfoyle Road, Greenock.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Inverclyde Council's proposal to relocate Glenbrae Children's Centre to refurbished premises. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant 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, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs 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 to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the centre; 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
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- 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;
- consideration of further information on all schools affected; and

- visits to the sites of Glenbrae Children’s Centre and All Saints Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Inverclyde Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

The consultation ran from 23 May 2016 to 23 August 2016. The council held a public meeting on 7 June 2016 at All Saints Primary School. It sought views from a range of stakeholders, including through questionnaires appended to the consultation proposal. Of 31 people who responded through written representations, nearly 70% of respondees agreed with the proposal and around 30% indicated no preference to agree or disagree. All members of the public, parents/carers and trade union representatives who responded agreed with the proposal. Staff who responded either agreed to the proposal or did not have a preference to agreeing or disagreeing. Many respondees commented on the positive benefits which would come with newer facilities, a modern and improved learning environment, and improved facilities for both children and staff including access and parking. The majority of members of staff who responded expressed concerns regarding the out of school care service being moved away from Glenbrae Children’s Centre and located in All Saints Primary School. Several members of staff also commented on the limited outdoor space at the new site.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 Overall, the proposal has many potential educational benefits for current and future learners. The current Glenbrae Children’s Centre is in poor condition and is not providing modern, fit for purpose accommodation for learners, with the council reporting significant issues in terms of building condition and suitability. The proposal will lead to improvements in the quality of learning environments, including for users of the building with mobility issues. Although the current centre offers outdoor areas which includes one large outdoor area, the new accommodation will offer more equitable increased outdoor spaces accessible from each of the playrooms.

3.2 Stakeholders at Glenbrae Children’s Centre and All Saints Primary School who met with HM Inspectors are positive about the proposal to relocate the nursery from the children’s centre to modern accommodation with better learning environments. Glenbrae stakeholders report challenges with the current building. They recognise that the modern refurbished accommodation will benefit nursery children at Glenbrae. Although headteachers of both establishments are very positive about working together, staff from both establishments have concerns regarding the current lack of detail in relation to the out of school care provision being relocated from Glenbrae to All Saints Primary School. Stakeholders are also keen for clarity regarding timescales for the full proposal to take place. In taking forward its proposal, the council will need to work closely with staff, parents and children from Glenbrae Children’s Centre and All Saints Primary School to provide

clarity regarding the out of school care provision and timescales for the full proposal to be implemented.

3.3 Parents at Glenbrae Children's Centre who met with HM Inspectors are anxious about aspects of safe routes to the nursery; in particular some road crossings near the new building. The proposal indicates that the new accommodation will provide improved parking and arrangements for drop off. In taking forward the proposal, the council should work closely with stakeholders regarding safe routes to nursery.

3.4 The council identified one inaccuracy regarding conflicting information in the original proposal document in terms of childcare places available.

4. Summary

The proposal has a number of potential educational benefits for learners, leading to improvements in the quality of learning environments. A modern adapted building will improve the environment for learning and better support the full delivery of Curriculum for Excellence in accommodation which is accessible and inclusive to all learners. It will also support best value for residents across Inverclyde Council. In taking forward its proposal, the council will need to work closely with staff, parents and children from Glenbrae Children's Centre and All Saints Primary School to provide clarity regarding the out of school care provision and safe routes to nursery.

In its final consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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