

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Renfrewshire Council to consult on catchment reviews affecting: Kilbarchan and East Fulton Primary Schools; Kilbarchan and Woodlands Primary Schools; St Margaret's and Our Lady of Peace Primary Schools; and Johnstone and Linwood High Schools.

February 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Renfrewshire Council's proposal to consult on catchment reviews affecting: Kilbarchan and East Fulton Primary Schools; Kilbarchan and Woodlands Primary Schools; St Margaret's and Our Lady of Peace Primary Schools; and Johnstone and Linwood High Schools. 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 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; 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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 26 November 2019 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 Johnstone and Linwood High Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Renfrewshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 18 November 2019 to 21 January 2020. Communication was issued to all statutory stakeholders at the affected schools and in the community informing them of this consultation. Copies of the consultation document were also distributed to local libraries and a copy was placed on the council website. Adverts to notify the public of the consultation meeting were also placed in the local press.

2.3 A public meeting was held on 26 November 2019 in Woodlands Primary School. This was attended by 18 stakeholders. All questions from attendees were responded to by the council.

2.4 During the consultation period there were the following written or online responses to four aspects of the proposal:

Proposal 1: Kilbarchan and East Fulton Primary Schools. One general enquiry was received and 47 responses were received via the on-line survey or questionnaire.

Twenty-two responses (47%) were supportive of the proposal and 25 (53%) responses were against.

Proposal 2: Kilbarchan and Woodlands Primary Schools. There were 34 responses received via the on-line survey or questionnaire. Twenty responses (59%) were supportive of the proposal and 14 (41%) responses were against.

Proposal 3: St Margaret's and Our Lady of Peace Primary Schools. One general enquiry was received and 18 responses were received via the on-line survey or questionnaire. Eight responses (44%) were supportive of the proposal and 10 (56%) responses were against.

Proposal 4: Johnstone and Linwood High Schools. No general enquiries were received and 36 responses were via the on-line survey or questionnaire. Twenty-two responses (61%) were supportive of the proposal and 14 (39%) responses were against.

2.5 Each of the submissions were collated, analysed and responded to by the council and for the purposes of reporting they were grouped by areas of concern. These areas of concern were:

- approach to the consultation;
- building capacity - in relation to Kilbarchan Primary School being seen to be at capacity;
- class sizes;
- community - current and future catchment school area;
- financial - lack of teaching staff; and
- safety and transport - in relation to overflow of parking and traffic congestion.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council has set out a strong case for its proposal to re-zone catchment areas affecting: Kilbarchan and East Fulton Primary Schools; Kilbarchan and Woodlands Primary Schools; St Margaret's and Our Lady of Peace Primary Schools; and Johnstone and Linwood High Schools. In the council's report, Developing the School Estate Management Plan 2020, it was noted that new local housing developments are likely to put pressure on school accommodation in these areas. This could result in pupil numbers increasing at Kilbarchan Primary School, which would be beyond the building's operational capacity. Four individual consultation documents have been created, each of which, outline educational benefits of all affected schools. If approved these catchment alterations would be implemented in August 2021 for school session 2021-2022. HM Inspectors recognise that the proposal will help Renfrewshire Council in continuing to meet its statutory educational responsibilities.

3.2 The council has given due consideration to the potential educational benefits for children and young people affected by the proposal. These are outlined in the consultation documents, which highlight each schools capacity to meet projected increase in roll numbers. This includes consideration of the availability of operational space; both indoors and outdoors, space for teacher directed learning and breakout areas for independent or small group learning. Spaces to support

the wellbeing of all children and young people, including quiet spaces to support emotional wellbeing of those with additional support needs. The proposal highlights potential health and wellbeing benefits for children and young people through increased physical activity and active travel to and from school. Overall, the proposal would enable the council to support all children and young people to achieve well within a school environment that can accommodate projected increases in roll numbers.

3.3 If approved, then all children and young people currently living in affected addresses would be entitled to continue attending the schools they currently attend. In line with the council's transport policy, children and young people currently entitled to free school transport would also continue to receive this support. Siblings of those pupils attending Kilbarchan and St Margaret's Primary Schools and Johnstone High School would also be entitled to attend these schools with their sibling, whilst their sibling is registered in the school when they enrol or transfer. The council would provide transition support to any pupils opting to change school as a result of this proposal.

3.4 Free school transport would only be provided for new P1 children attending Kilbarchan and St Margaret's Primary Schools and new S1 pupils attending Johnstone High School, in instances where pupils enrol in these schools at a time when their siblings still attend the school, and where that sibling is entitled to free school transport.

3.5 Denominational pupils living at addresses within housing developments at Merchiston Hospital and Houston Station are entitled to free school transport if they are currently attending St Margaret's Primary School. If this proposal is approved all pupils living at these addresses would be entitled to free school transport to Our Lady of Peace Primary School. However, if this proposal is approved, all denominational pupils living at addresses within the Johnstone Hospital site would be within one mile's walking distance of Our Lady of Peace Primary School and therefore would not be entitled to free school transport. This is in line with the council's free school transport policy.

3.6 All staff and young people at Johnstone High School who met with HM Inspectors indicated that they like the current size of school, recognising that class sizes allow good relations between staff and young people. They would welcome the likely increased roll numbers resulting from the proposal but are mindful that much larger numbers may add to pressures on social areas within the school.

3.7 Stakeholders from Kilbarchan Primary School recognise that if the council did not act, then the school roll is likely to increase from 80% capacity to well over 100%. They indicated that the proposal will help to reduce the need for another bus or more cars dropping off children, as car parking and congestion was already an issue. It will reduce any further pressure on space within the school.

3.8 All staff and young people at Linwood High School who met with HM Inspectors welcomed an increase in pupil numbers. Young people highlighted that Linwood is closer to the new housing development, and so the new plans made sense as it is easier to walk to school. There would be less need for cars and buses resulting in this being better for the environment. Costs to families for fuel or bus fares may be less too. Road safety may improve such as less crossing of busy roads than there is currently to school. Young people living in the area to be re-zoned, know the Linwood area better. There are opportunities for community links to improve, for example, the memorial garden and Christmas performance for local older adults. Young people thought the size of school allowed more personal and bespoke experiences. Young people are aware that small school size limits course choice and more pupils might help with this.

3.9 The council also received a written submission from the Diocese of Paisley. The Diocese appreciated the challenges facing Renfrewshire Council with regard to its school estate. Having viewed the proposals outlined in the current consultation paper, and in particular the provisions for siblings of children in St Margaret's Primary School to opt to go there if so desired, the Diocese had no objections to the proposals.

4. Summary

The council's proposal provides a strong case to review catchment areas affecting: Kilbarchan and East Fulton Primary Schools; Kilbarchan and Woodlands Primary Schools; St Margaret's and Our Lady of Peace Primary Schools; and Johnstone and Linwood High Schools. The council recognises the potential impact of increasing roll numbers on Kilbarchan Primary School due to housing developments and is taking steps to resolve this through this proposal. The council outlines the associated educational benefits to all affected schools. HM Inspectors endorse this view. All children, young people and school staff who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. In taking this forward, the council should, as part of its plans, consider road safety and safe walking routes to school. The council's proposal, should it proceed, will see improved alignment of localities to school catchment areas. This forward planning will assist the authority in managing the rolls in all affected schools.

HM Inspectors
February 2020