



Glasgow City Council

City Administration Committee

Report by Councillor Cunningham, City Convenor for
Education, Skills and Early Years

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Item 1

10th February 2022

**RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE CREATION OF A NEW PRIMARY
SCHOOL TO BE SITUATED ON THE SOUTH-SIDE
OF THE CITY**

Purpose of Report:

To update the Committee on the responses and next steps for the proposal.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to consider the report, the proposed next steps and seek approval for the proposal not to be taken forward and the steps set out in section 5 to be actioned.

Ward No(s): 4, 6, 8,11, 22

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes ✓ No ☐ consulted: Yes ✓ No ☐

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1. Background

- 1.1 On the 21st October, the City Administration Committee approved a statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to create a new primary school on the south side of the city which would also serve part of the city centre.
- 1.2 The consultation ran from 1st November 2021 to 5th January 2022. There were two public meetings held – one in Blackfriars Primary School on 9th November and one in Bellahouston Academy on 17th November. In addition to these meetings officers held the following further meetings: Meetings with Councillors; Meeting with New Gorbals Housing Association Management Committee; Meeting with the Merchant City Town Council; Meeting with Parent Council and parents of Blackfriars Primary School.

2 Purpose of consultation

- 2.1 The purpose of this consultation was to propose options for a new primary school to be situated on the south side of the city, but which would also serve part of the city centre. As part of this proposal, a new catchment area was defined for the proposed new school and a new catchment area for the proposed associated secondary school. The catchment areas of schools in the locality were also to change as a result of the proposal.
- 2.2 As part of Glasgow's ambitions to regenerate the Gorbals/Tradeston/Laurieston and Govanhill areas of the city, a significant amount of new housing has been constructed in these neighbourhoods. As a result of this, a number of schools have experienced increasing rolls, and steps have had to be taken to ensure that there was sufficient capacity for catchment area children.
- 2.3 In addition to the continued predicted increase in school rolls, the council also has a new City Centre Living Strategy (CCLS) which can be accessed using this link: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=47302> . Given the proximity of this area to the city centre, it is also likely that any success in the CCLS will put additional pressure on the existing local schools.
- 2.4 A 15-year action plan has been produced and is structured around the CCLS's six key objectives. The success of this plan will require collaboration and partnership working with ongoing participation from the council services and stakeholders both public and private across the city centre.
- 2.5 Ensuring that there is sufficiency of capacity, and high-quality educational establishments serving the city centre area will be critical to the success of the CCLS, and this view was reflected in many of the responses received during the research phase of preparing the strategy.

3 Proposal and options

- 3.1 It was proposed to open a new primary school to provide a local school for children living in the south side of the city including Laurieston, Hutchesontown and the city centre. Finding a suitable site for a new establishment, however, was challenging owing to the limited availability of land. Officers from Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability undertook an extensive search of options available. A number were considered but discounted as being unsuitable or unavailable for a range of reasons which were detailed in the consultation paper.
- 3.2 Therefore, two options were proposed as viable for consideration. Option 1 – Repurpose of building at 5 Florence Street and Option 2 – Re-purpose of building at 12 Commercial Road, Adelphi Centre. Officers recommended Option 2 as this provided more opportunity to create a diverse range of teaching and learning spaces fit for a 21st century school more flexibility in the accommodation should more space be required in the future.
- 3.3 It was proposed that the new primary school would be associated with Bellahouston Academy.

4 Responses TO BE FINALISED AFTER 5 JAN

- 4.1 There were 80 responses to the consultation survey. 34 were from parents of primary pupils and 24 were from local residents. Four staff, nine parents and two pupils responded. Seven respondents chose not to identify their status. A response was also received from New Gorbals Housing Association. Of those respondents who had children at school, 23 had a child at St Francis Primary School and 15 had a child at Blackfriars Primary School. 13 respondents had a child at a Glasgow secondary school. 10 of those attended Holyrood Secondary School, two attended Shawlands Academy and one attended St. Mungo's Academy. Of the 78 respondents who expressed a preference, 21 respondents preferred Option 1, a re-purposing of the Florence Street building. 44 respondents preferred Option 2 a re-purposing of the Adelphi Centre building. 13 respondents either did not express a preference or suggested an alternative view.
- 4.2 Of those who expressed a preference for Option 1, the re-purposing of the Florence Street building, most comments considered that the need was for secondary school for the Gorbals and not a primary school. A few respondents did not like the idea of linking the primary with Bellahouston Academy and preferred Shawlands Academy. A few felt this option provided the best outcome in terms of playground space and they were positive about transforming the old Victorian sandstone building. A request for the inclusion of crossing patrol support was also expressed.
- 4.3 Of those who expressed a preference for Option 2, a re-purposing of the Adelphi Centre building, most respondents commented that the need was for secondary school and not a primary establishment. A few considered this a much better option for playground space and liked the opportunity to take

advantage of the close proximity to the sports centre to support physical education provision. There were also positive comments about the attractive riverside location and the potential for enhanced learning experiences including outdoor learning.

4.4 Of the small number of respondents who expressed a preference for an alternative proposal, most comments highlighted a preference for extending both of the existing schools, Blackfriars and St Francis Primary Schools and to relocate the nursery at Blackfriars to create additional space. Again, a small number preferred a secondary school rather than a primary and suggested making use of both buildings to create the same. A few were of the view the consultation period was too short. A few expressed a preference for the old St John's Primary School building. A few respondents suggested that the location of a new primary school should be in Oatlands and not at the riverside. Others expressed some concerns about the safe walking routes to school through, for example Glasgow Green. A small number thought that neither of the proposed locations would be attractive for city centre families. A small number raised some concerns about safeguarding in relation to the intended use of the sports centre for physical education. Others were not in favour of the proposed link to Bellahouston Academy. A further view was expressed that the proposal would divide non-denominational children living in the area.

4.5 Overall, there was not a clear consensus being expressed by respondents.

4.6 The following represents a summary of the main views expressed as part of the consultation survey and the corresponding education services response.

Issue raised

The proposed school is not in Laurieston and this would be a better location.

Response from education

We agree that it would be better if the proposed primary school was in the Laurieston area as this would reduce the walking distance for most families. It would be further for the families in Hutchesontown which is part of the proposed catchment area. When officers from the property team explored options the only available sites were smaller and did not offer the same advantages, such as close access to Gorbals Leisure Centre for enhanced physical education opportunities, or close to Glasgow Green for outdoor learning.

Issue raised

The linked secondary school should not be Bellahouston Academy.

Response from education

We accept that the families who attend Blackfriars Primary School have enjoyed a link with Shawlands Academy over many years. Respondents at meetings told us

about the community's disappointment when a secondary school which used to be in the locality closed more than 20 years ago.

There is only limited space at Shawlands Academy and if it were to be extended then social space and playing field space may have to be reduced. There would be considerable disruption during any building phase which would be detrimental to young people's education. There are, however, a significant number of placing requests accepted every year for entry into S1. Refusing more placing requests would enable more catchment children to attend. A number of placing requests are from families who live in the Bellahouston catchment area but who feel they are closer to Shawlands Academy. If the proposed new primary school was associated with Shawlands Academy then it may be that some of these pupils would not get placing requests, therefore, it would be likely that an extension would still be required at Bellahouston Academy.

Issue raised

The Adelphi Centre should be refurbished to provide a secondary school for the local area.

Response from education

Officers carried out an analysis of what would be required to convert the building into a secondary school. The Adelphi Centre is not big enough to create an S1 to S6 school which would serve the local area. If it is assumed that there would be a maximum of 90 pupils in a year group then a secondary school of S1 to S4 would have a maximum of 360 pupils. This would require 13 general classrooms, 3 IT rooms, 3 science labs, 2 art rooms, 2 hospitality areas, including one cooking class, 2 music rooms, 2 technical area, 1 drama studio and 3 PE areas. This would require 28 classrooms and three areas in Gorbals Sports centre dedicated to the school. The site was also limited in providing area for playing fields and pitches expected of a contemporary secondary school.

This would also mean that young people from the locality would not transition to Shawlands Academy until the end of S4. A smaller school has more limited opportunities for extra-curricular activities and the young people would not have the opportunity to extend their experiences and friendships with young people from different parts of the city.

This would not address the need for more places for primary education in the area. Therefore, either Blackfriars Primary School would require an extension or another location would need to be found for a primary school.

This option would need another statutory consultation and would require considerably more capital funding.

Given the above, there are limited educational benefits to the above proposal.

Issue raised

The council should consider extending St. Francis Primary School.

Response from education

This consultation is only about proposing another non-denominational primary school.

Issue raised

Blackfriars Primary School should be extended and the catchment area extended to include the city centre and the Laurieston area.

Response from education

We recognise that there are positive aspects to this proposal. Blackfriars Primary School is a popular school and a number of families in the Laurieston area would prefer not to use placing requests to access a school which is near to their home. However, the school would need at least six classrooms and one additional general purpose room plus break out areas to enable a range of approaches to learning and teaching as well as additional dining space. This would impact significantly on the amount of play space available to the children. It would also potentially increase the traffic in the surrounding streets.

The Scottish Government makes funding available for new schools, major refurbishments and extensions but only if they meet specific criteria such as highly energy efficient. Any proposal to extend Blackfriars would need to be carefully considered along with colleagues in Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) to ensure compliance with the terms of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) funding that was provisionally secured for the new school, and depending on the approved design solution, may lead to the removal of play space at the site.

The LEIP funding that has already been provisionally secured for the creation of a new school as a result of a major refurbishment would not be automatically available for an extension of Blackfriars. The Council would have to engage with SFT on any new proposal.

5 Summary

5.1 Officers accept that there is insufficient support for the proposal as set out in the consultation document. There is also not a clear consensus from respondents and from the meetings held with stakeholders.

5.2 If the proposal is not taken forward then

- the Scottish Government would be informed and, therefore, the LEIP funding that was secured for a major refurbishment and creation of a new school would no longer be guaranteed to be made available for whatever alternative solution is developed.

- Education Scotland would be informed that there is no requirement for their involvement.
- Officers from the Property team would be tasked with reviewing whether there is potential to build a small school near to Laurieston and the city centre. They would also be tasked with scoping out an extension to Blackfriars Primary School with an assessment on the impact on play space.
- Further engagement would be required to place with the local community.

5.3 Following the above work being done, officers from Education Services will prepare a new statutory consultation.

5.4 Officers will engage with the Scottish Government to explore options for capital funding.

6. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: The consultation has been carried out within existing resources. The refurbishment of the school was to be financed jointly between the Council and the Scottish Government.

Legal: Consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Personnel: N/A

Procurement: N/A

Council Strategic Plan: Excellent and Inclusive Education 35

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. An EQIA was to be undertaken and included had the proposal progressed.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? No impact is anticipated on the protected characteristics.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

N/A

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

Yes

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

The proposal to create a new educational establishment through the repurposing of an existing building accorded with recommendations made in the "Infrastructure Commission for Scotland's Phase 1: Key Findings Report" specifically recommendation 3 "Making the most of existing assets" (points 7, 8 & 9) and recommendation 4 "Heat and Transport" (point 13).

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

The creation of this new establishment was to be part funded from the SG's LEIP (Learning Estate Investment Programme), and as such will require to meet the very high standards of "energy in use" that have been set as a qualifying condition (67 kw/sq/m per annum). This will significantly improve the current "energy in use" performance of the existing building and reduce carbon emissions as part of the local and national response to carbon reduction.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Responders were asked to provide name, age, address and reason(s) for responding. Young people under 16 will have personal details withheld in the response document. Those over 16 would be offered the option of this. The data would only be used/held by Glasgow City Council for the purposes of consultation under the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to consider the report, the proposed next steps and seek approval for the proposal not to be taken forward and the steps set out in section 5 to be actioned.

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