



Burnbrae Primary School
Relocation of
Nursery and Primary 1

Consultation Report

07 August 2017

Consultation Report

Proposal to relocate Nursery and Primary 1 of Burnbrae Primary School to a new school campus on Rosewell Road in Bonnyrigg.

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1. Summary of the proposal

1.1 Proposal

Midlothian Council has consulted on the use of additional non-denominational capacity for Burnbrae Primary School being designated as Burnbrae Early, accommodating all nursery and P1 pupils. This additional capacity will be at a new school campus on the former Hopefield Primary School site on Rosewell Road in Bonnyrigg.

1.2 Background

The Bonnyrigg/Lasswade area has over 7,300 homes that are served by four non-denominational primary schools, Burnbrae, Bonnyrigg, Hawthornden and Lasswade Primary Schools, one denominational school, St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, and one secondary school, Lasswade High School.

| | Total Catchment Properties 2016 | Catchment Primary Pupils 2016 | Projected Catchment Properties | Peak Projected Catchment Rolls (with decine) | School Capacity 2016 |
|--------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Bonnyrigg | 1,463 | 396 | 2,133 | 670 | 459 |
| Burnbrae | 1,586 | 449 | 2,592 | 1,040 | 459 |
| Hawthornden | 2,110 | 422 | 2,152 | 420 | 434 |
| Lasswade | 2,160 | 288 | 2,247 | 420 | 367 |
| St Mary's | | | | | 263 |
| Total | 7,319 | 1,555 | 9,124 | 2,551 | 1,982 |

By 2016 945 houses had been completed on the Hopefield Farm development in the catchment of Burnbrae Primary School with a further 200 houses to be built. The Midlothian Local Development Plan proposes a further allocation of 375 houses in the catchment of Burnbrae Primary School, at housing development site Hs12, with an additional 375 houses expected in the longer term.

The Hopefield Farm development sits across the catchment areas of Burnbrae and Bonnyrigg Primary Schools. By May 2016 1,100 houses had been completed on the development with a further 220 or more houses to be built. The numbers of pupils from these new houses attending a Midlothian school was 50% more than originally predicted and resulted in a surge in the primary intake particularly for Burnbrae Primary School. In August 2016 there were 80 Primary 1 pupils in the Burnbrae catchment, 20 pupils more than the school is designed to accommodate.

Table: Hopefield Farm – Primary Pupil Product based on Pupil Census Data

| | Units | Pupil Product | Pupils |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Original Assumption | 1,100 | 0.308 | 339 |
| Additional units | 200 | 0.308 | 62 |
| | <u>1,300</u> | | <u>401</u> |
| Current pupil product | 1,300 | 0.47 | 611 |

(The pupil product is the average number of children coming forward from each house who attend a Midlothian school. Of these, 7% of the pupils residing in the Burnbrae catchment currently attend a denominational primary school)

The expectation is that the total number of pupils from the Hopefield Farm development will reduce by as much as 50% over time as the development matures and many families continue to live in these houses once their children are beyond school age. It is our prediction this will occur over a twenty-year period following completion of new housing. This will result in the pupil roll of Burnbrae Primary School, excluding the impact of any further housing development, settling back to approximately 400 pupils.

Over the next ten years however, assuming the current proportion of pupils from Burnbrae’s catchment area choosing to attend St Mary’s remains the same, the primary pupil numbers at Burnbrae are projected to rise over 700 pupils.

| 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 386 | 440 | 489 | 533 | 576 | 621 | 659 | 689 | 702 | 710 | 714 |

Meeting the demand for primary school places from these sites will require additional capacity to be provided. The proposed Local Development Plan envisages that this will be provided for this area of Bonnyrigg by way of an additional primary school on housing development site Hs12 combined with a review of school catchment areas. However it will be some years before that school is delivered and the pressure on capacity at Burnbrae Primary School requires a more immediate solution.

On 7th February 2017 Council decided to provide additional capacity for Burnbrae Primary School at the new school campus to be built on the former site of Hopefield Primary School on Rosewell Road and that this site would also provide for the relocation of St Mary’s Roman Catholic Primary School.

In February and March 2017 a number of informal pre-statutory consultation activities were undertaken with parents, staff, elected members and the

community on how the additional capacity at Hopefield campus should be used by Burnbrae Primary School. Different models for the use of the additional capacity were evaluated and three emerged as viable: Early Level, Second Level and nursery to P7. Broadly, the Early Level stage of the Curriculum for Excellence is at nursery and Primary 1, the First Level is at Primary 2 to Primary 4 and the Second Level is at Primary 5 to Primary 7.

The pre-consultation discussed the educational benefits and adverse effects of all three models. During the pre-consultation, surveys of Burnbrae Primary School staff and parents were carried out and in all three the Burnbrae Early model was the preferred option, getting the support of 79% of staff, 82% of parents in a ballot and over half of parents in an online survey. As a consequence of these activities, and the balance of the educational benefits we concluded that the Burnbrae Early model delivers the greatest educational benefit and is the most viable, reasonable and sustainable option available to the Council. It is also the option that has the overall support of staff and parents who took part in the pre-consultation activities. It is for these reasons that the Council is proposing to use the additional capacity for Burnbrae to provide Early Level education for all children at nursery and Primary 1 through Burnbrae Early.

1.3 Educational Benefits of the Proposal

The Council set out the educational benefits of providing Early Level education for children in nursery and Primary 1 at Burnbrae Early on the new Rosewell Road campus in its initial consultation report. These benefits are:

- The new campus will have excellent facilities to meet the needs of the Burnbrae Early model with spacious, purpose-designed early years teaching spaces, breakout areas and attractive outdoor areas. These spaces will all contain modern equipment and technology, designed to support the delivery of high quality teaching and learning of the Early Level of the Curriculum for Excellence. The facilities will vitally allow learning through experimentation and play taking into account the latest research and best practice for the early years of children's lives. Further, the purpose built facility will be designed with the increase to 1,140 hours early learning and childcare by 2020 in mind, reducing disruption to staff and children.
- It presents an opportunity to be creative and innovative in how the children and staff in the nursery and Primary 1 years can work together to share spaces, good practice in teaching and learning and intelligence about learners progress for the benefit of all children.
- As a dedicated early years site for Burnbrae there is an opportunity to develop the family learning approach in place elsewhere in Midlothian specifically for the Bonnyrigg and Lasswade area. The family learning approach will enable the centre to focus on early intervention strategies through an open and welcoming ethos that engages families, putting

support in place for children and their families early in their education, thus reducing any longer term impact and improving longer-term educational outcomes.

- Close working between nursery and Primary 1 will enable excellent transition from nursery to Primary 1 for children, continuing the play based learning environment. Burnbrae Early will also offer focussed and appropriate opportunities to support children with additional support needs in their transition from nursery to Primary 1.
- None of the children who attended Hopefield Primary School and moved to Burnbrae Primary School in 2012 would move back to the Hopefield campus.

In addition to the educational benefits outlined above, there are a number of additional benefits that this proposal will bring. There is significant house building underway in the Bonnyrigg and Lasswade area and this proposal provides additional capacity for children who wish to attend their local school. This will maintain the opportunity for the social groups and friendships which form at the weekends, evenings and holidays that aid social cohesion and learning, positive learning environments and a community ethos.

The new campus is on the former site of Hopefield Primary School on Rosewell Road in Bonnyrigg and is within the Burnbrae Primary School catchment area so no changes to the catchment areas of any of the schools in Bonnyrigg and Lasswade will be required at this time.

The proposal will relieve the pressure on capacity at Burnbrae Primary School and its nursery so that it will be able to provide places for pupils coming forward from the Hopefield Farm housing development.

The Hopefield Farm development includes a network of safe walking and cycling routes which will facilitate those walking from home to both school sites. For the majority of houses in the Burnbrae Primary School catchment area that distance will be less than half a mile and only a very small number will be over a mile from home to the campus site on Rosewell Road.

1.4 Consultation

Midlothian Council has undertaken the consultation on this proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The statutory consultation period ran from 8 May until 20 June 2017. Copies of the proposal document were made available to stakeholders and other interested individuals. One public meeting was held at Burnbrae Primary School on 31 May 2017. Separate consultation meetings with staff and pupils were held on 29 May 2017.

The council consulted formally with the Parent Council, parents, including those of any children expected to attend within two years and pupils and staff from Burnbrae Primary School. The council also consulted the Community Councils of Bonnyrigg and Lasswade, Poltonhall and District and Midlothian Community Planning Partnership.

1.5 Correction to proposal document

At the time of publishing the consultation documents it was planned to complete the new school building during 2018/19 and the published document states 'It is planned to complete the new building during the 2018/19 school session'.

Since then, to allow time for the planning of the new school building to take into account representations made during the consultation, the planned completion date has been put back to Summer 2019. The revised plan is therefore that the proposal should take effect from August 2019.

1.6 Proposal to be recommended to Council

Upon completion of the new school campus building, planned for August 2019, Burnbrae Primary School will operate over two sites, Burnbrae Road and Rosewell Road, under the management of one headteacher. All nursery and primary 1 pupils will attend Burnbrae Early on the Rosewell Road campus and all Primary 2 to Primary 7 pupils will attend the existing school building on Burnbrae Road.

2. Consultation Findings

2.1 Representations made on the proposals during the consultation period

2.1.1 Summary of written representations

Forty-four individual responses to the consultation were received either by email, in writing or through the online questionnaire. Twenty respondents opposed the proposal, eight supported the proposal and the remainder sought clarification on a range of points within the proposal. Consultees raised a number of questions and concerns in their written responses, and at the public meeting. Their main concerns were that the proposal would lead to significant drop off and pick up challenges for families who have children attending both sites; this was cited by the majority of the respondents. A number also had concerns that splitting the school over two sites would be detrimental to the ethos of the school as a single community with staff and pupils not being able to participate in the day to day information sharing that a wider school can offer. Respondents also noted that time would be wasted by travelling between the two sites and that the walking route is currently not safe and in need of upgrading. A number of consultees who agreed with the proposal stated that they saw this as an opportunity for a innovative and bespoke approach to early level for children aged 3 to 5 years. Others believed this was the best option but still had some concerns about the impact on families with children who will be attending both sites.

2.1.2 Summary of oral representations made at the public meeting held on 31st May 2017

In total 22 members of the public attended.

A few attendees expressed concern that the proposed building would now not be open until August 2019, which was not what had been indicated in the consultation document. The delay in building the new campus will create pressure on the current school to accommodate the number of pupils projected to attend over the next two years. One respondent stated this would affect the whole school at present as we would need to composite classes throughout the school and atria spaces would be utilised. A few respondents questioned the decision to split the schools and were not fully clear as to why other options had not been explored or decisions not fully explained on why other alternatives were not suitable.

The issue around families with children attending both sites was also a concern for the majority of the attendees, with some suggesting staggered school starts and finishes, to accommodate the needs of parents with pupils at both campuses.

2.1.3 Summary of oral representations made at the pupil consultation held on 29th May 2017

In total 10 pupils aged P1-P6 attended along with the Principal Teacher.

The pupils were generally positive but articulated some concerns for children that will be affected by this proposal. They thought the new campus was not far away and could be walked, but did discuss how it could be difficult for some families dropping off and picking up children from two different sites. The children expressed concern over the state of the footpath between the current school and the proposed new site, it would require some work to make it a safe and pleasant route. They understood the requirement for more space in the current building. They discussed the transition of the P1 pupils and felt it would be an exciting opportunity for them to move on to the 'big school'.

2.1.4 Summary of oral representations made at the staff consultation held at Burnbrae Primary School on 29th May 2017

In total 17 staff attended.

The majority of the staff are in agreement with the proposal and stressed the importance of being involved in planning the design and layout of the new building. They felt it was an exciting opportunity to custom build Early Years provision. However they did raise a number of issues that would need to be addressed if the proposal goes ahead.

There were some concerns over the size of the current school and the ability to accommodate intake over the next couple of years, it was stated by one member of staff that this would increase pressure on staff and resources. The question was also raised about making the current school fit for a P2 -7 school building.

A few members of staff thought it would be challenging to work across two sites and questioned the practicalities of whole staff meetings, whole school events and assemblies.

The staff also highlighted the issue of drop off and pick up times for families with children across both sites and the state of the paths between the sites for safe walking.

2.2 Education Scotland Report Summary

In their report HM Inspectors stated that the proposal has potential educational benefits for children aged 3-5 years. They felt that a new model of early level education that extends opportunities for experimentation and play from early learning and childcare through to the end of P1 could provide a strong platform for children's further learning and development. They felt that a purpose built facility would enable planning for partnership working, family learning and early

intervention strategies to be embedded from the outset. They believed that children and families could benefit greatly from a strengthened team approach if the educational benefits outlined in the proposal are realised. However, HM Inspectors also felt there was the risk of losing the overall identity of Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School and that, over time, there was potential for the two sites to become two separate educational establishments with increased transition points for many children. To avoid this, HM Inspectors indicated the need for the Council to ensure significant collaboration between all staff and partners and highly-effective leadership of learning at all levels.

HM Inspectors also noted a number of concerns raised by consultees arising from the fact that Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School will operate on two separate sites. They noted that many consultees were concerned about this and the potential significant adverse impact on family arrangements for getting children to and from school, this is particularly problematic for families with children attending both sites. HM Inspectors noted that some parents, staff and children had raised concerns about children moving between the two sites during the school day and the potential for significant loss of learning time. They also noted parents concerns about the state of the main walking route between the sites and the limited access to the new site for those travelling by car or public transport. HM Inspectors acknowledged that the Council had indicated how it might seek to resolve these issues in the consultation proposal paper and at the public meeting. HM Inspectors indicated that the Council needed to address these concerns further in taking forward the proposal. HM Inspectors felt that the Council had given too little consideration to the educational benefits and any issues that might result from a shared campus site with St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School. Finally, HM Inspectors set out the need for the Council to engage further with all stakeholders to address the range of issues raised by consultees during the consultation.

2.3 Midlothian Council's response to representations made during the consultation period and to Education Scotland's report.

Split Campus Working

A common concern amongst all stakeholders was the risk of Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School losing its overall identity and becoming two separate educational establishments.

In order to alleviate these concerns Midlothian Council will ensure there is significant collaboration between all staff and partners. The school will be under the management of one headteacher who will lead and manage the transition of pupils and staff effectively and positively. The headteacher will help maintain a strong platform for children's further learning and development and will seek to develop further partnership working and a strong team approach. There will be a deputy headteacher on each site to assist the headteacher in developing strong links between the early years and primary school.

While the transition from nursery to Primary 1 will be eased, the model will create a transition between Primary 1 to Primary 2. The staff of Burnbrae Primary School will ensure that this transition is carefully and sensitively managed to ensure that children's social and educational needs are met. For example, links with Primary 3 classes learning within the same level along with maintaining the buddy system with P7 pupils would help ease this transition and offer good peer learning opportunities. The excellent transition from nursery to Primary 1 continuing the play based environment allows for a more flexible approach in preparing children for the next level of Curriculum for Excellence in Primary 2. The nurturing and play emphasis for nursery to Primary 1 can be tailored specifically to the needs of Early Level children.

The school will hold regular combined campus events to ensure that children at nursery and Primary 1 are engaged and included in activities of the whole school. All significant school events, such as the sports day and Christmas events will be whole school events with all pupils brought together on one site. Where events such as parents' evenings would be over the two sites for parents with more than one sibling at the school, the school will be flexible to accommodate this in order to maintain parents' involvement in their children's education.

Opportunities for peer learning such as the Primary 7 buddy system and having older role model pupils for the nursery and Primary 1 pupils will be maintained through planning and scheduling by the school as is currently the case. As the sites are not far apart travelling between them would not be an impediment to this, and would link in with encouraging physical activity.

Support staff will have the flexibility to support children across the site at which they are based, i.e. nursery and Primary 1 or Primary 2 to 7, and could move between sites in different years to maintain continuity for children.

Safer Routes to School and Traffic Management

Consultees also highlighted the need for adequate access to the new site for those travelling by car or public transport and for the walking route between the sites to be upgraded. Reinstating a school on the former Hopefield Primary School site will increase pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the surrounding area at drop off and pick up times.

When the Council undertakes detailed planning work for a new school it always considers the access routes using all modes of transport from the housing areas in the catchment. The Policy and Road Safety Team will then create a School Travel Plan with safer routes to school. The Council will work with the police, pupils, parents and the local community to ensure that healthy and safer routes to school are established to encourage walking, cycling, scooting to school and "park and stride" for all those for whom it is an option, to minimise the potential for congestion at drop off and pick up times. Walking routes, cycle paths, roads, bus routes and parking will be revised, where appropriate, with lowered speed limits, additional crossings and improved lighting. The detailed

planning work will also include provision for adequate parking spaces in the school grounds.

Drop off and pick up Times

Many consultees raised the problem of arrangements for getting children to school, particularly for those families with children attending both sites. Siblings who are at different sites would have to travel further to get to school if they accompany their sibling(s) to one site then travel to their own. We are committed to working with parents and carers in exploring potential solutions to this to include walking busses or staggered start and finish times. Final arrangements will be devised and agreed by the school with input from parents as to the most suitable and workable options if the proposal is adopted.

Capacity

Concerns were expressed about the delay in delivering the new school building, with pressure on the existing school's capacity and the ability to accommodate intake for the next couple of years.

The delay in delivering the new school building until August 2019 will allow the detailed design to take into account representations made during the consultation. The Council will invest in bespoke modular units that can be used at Burnbrae Primary to ensure that there is adequate capacity for all pupils until the new school building is ready for occupation.

School Design

Both the pupils and staff of Burnbrae expressed an interest in being involved in the design of the new school building. The pupils understood the requirement for more space in the current building and that the space would need to be adapted to suit the needs of Primary 2 to 7 pupils. Staff highlighted the importance of being involved in the design of both the new and existing buildings. They felt it was an exciting opportunity to custom build Early Years provision.

As part of the detailed planning and design of the Early Years provision on the new school campus, all stakeholders will be consulted on the design and layout of the internal and external spaces. In consultation with both schools, consideration will be given to the spaces required to ensure that the facilities will provide a high quality learning experience for all the pupils on the campus and those who will attend in future years.

Pupils and staff will also be consulted on the design and layout of the existing Burnbrae Primary School to make it fit for Primary 2 to 7 pupils.

Shared Campus

During the consultation a number of concerns were raised on potential issues that may arise from a shared campus site with St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School.

Midlothian Council has experience of managing establishments which are a shared campus site between non denominational and denominational schools. At the heart of this type of shared campus is the fostering of high quality relationships between both schools through strong leadership and good communication. There is good evidence that staff there are working collaboratively to enhance professional learning and practice. Further there have been no major issues around any shared facilities with clear agreement on operational use with any problems being dealt with through negotiation and flexibility. A key part of the joint working is that Parent Councils of both schools are encouraged to work together for the benefit of all children.

We will be working to ensure this situation is duplicated within the new shared campus site on Rosewell Road. The headteachers of both schools will work with their School Group Managers to formalise a clear plan covering; collaborative professional practice, shared events and agreement on the use of shared facilities with a clear aim to be inclusive and maximise the educational benefit for all children on the campus. There will be an opportunity to fully consult on this with stakeholders through their respective Parent Councils and the relevant plan will be fully communicated to all stakeholders by both schools.

2.4 Statement of how Midlothian Council has reviewed the proposals having regard to any relevant representations made during the consultation period and to Education Scotland's report

The proposal to Council on 29th August 2017 will be to implement the following proposals, with effect for primary pupil intake from August 2019:

- operate Burnbrae Primary School over two sites under the management of one headteacher;
- accommodate all nursery and Primary 1 pupils at the new Rosewell Road campus site, and
- accommodate all Primary 2 to Primary 7 pupils on the existing school site on Burnbrae Road.

In consideration of the representations made during the consultation and in Education Scotland's report, the proposals have been reviewed. As a consequence, in implementing the proposal, the Council is committed to:

- ensuring significant collaboration between all stakeholders to ensure that Burnbrae Primary School maintains its identity as one educational establishment under the leadership of one headteacher with the skills and drive to take the school forward across the two sites;
- reviewing School Travel Plans and parking requirements through the Council's Policy and Road Safety Team when planning the new school;
- upgrading walking routes to schools to enable a safe and pleasant journey between the two sites;
- ensuring consultations with parents and carers through the school and the education department are ongoing and that strong communication links are maintained in devising a suitable plan for drop off and pick up arrangements;
- investing in bespoke modular units to ensure that adequate capacity is provided for all pupils on the current site until the new school building is ready for occupation;
- involving and consulting with pupils and staff in the design and layout of internal and external spaces at the new school campus ensuring purpose designed early years' spaces;
- involving pupils and staff in re-designing the existing Burnbrae Primary School to ensure a fit for purpose Primary 2 to 7 learning environment, and;
- ensuring the headteacher and School Group Manager from both schools work together to formalise a clear plan and agreement on shared campus working and the sharing of facilities with a clear aim to be inclusive and maximise the educational benefit for all children on the campus.

If this proposal and the proposal to relocate St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School to a new school campus on Rosewell Road in Bonnyrigg are approved, the council will engage with staff, parents, children and the wider community to

ensure that the benefits of the proposals are maximised and that the shared campus operates to the benefit of all.

2.5 Time for further consideration

There will be a period of 3 weeks from the date of publication of this report for further consideration before the next meeting of Midlothian Council on 29th August 2017, when the Council will make a decision on whether to progress with the proposal, either in whole or in part.

Any further representations in respect of this report should be emailed to joni.connell@midlothian.gov.uk before 28th August 2017 so that the Council can take them into consideration.

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Midlothian Council to provide non-denominational capacity for Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School at a new campus on the site of the former Hopefield Primary School in Bonnyrigg and use this additional capacity to provide early level education for all children at nursery and P1 through a new provision to be known as *Burnbrae Early*.

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 Midlothian Council's proposal to relocate the Early Learning and Childcare and P1 classes at Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School to a new campus on the site of the former Hopefield Primary School. This new provision is referred to as *Burnbrae Early*. 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 Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary 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
- 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; and
- visits to the site of Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School and the site of the proposed new campus, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Following an extensive pre-consultation through which a number of options were explored, Midlothian Council agreed to consult formally on this proposal as the option which found most favour with stakeholders during the pre-consultation. Midlothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 Midlothian Council formally consulted stakeholders between 8 May and 20 June 2017. A public meeting was held at Burnbrae Primary School on 31 May 2017 and was attended by 22 members of the public. Copies of the consultation document were sent to all parents of children attending Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School. Information about the consultation was distributed to other early learning and childcare providers in the surrounding area for distribution to all parents and staff. Separate meetings were held with staff and pupils at Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School. All stakeholders were offered the opportunity to share their views through an online survey.

2.3 Forty-four individual responses to the consultation were received either by email, in writing or through the online questionnaire. Twenty respondents opposed the proposal, eight supported the proposal and the remainder sought clarification on a range of points within the proposal. Consultees raised a number of questions and concerns in their written responses, and at the public meeting. Their main concerns were that:

- the proposal impacts on children who will attend Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School in the future more than on those attending at present and that Midlothian Council had not taken sufficient cognisance of this during the consultation;
- other options had not been sufficiently explored and the reasons for this had not been explained clearly;
- plans for the new school campus have been delayed and this places a significant burden on the current Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School where there is insufficient space for the number of children who attend at present and the number projected to attend over the next two years;

- the proposal would lead to significant drop-off and pick-up challenges for families who would have children attending the proposed *Burnbrae Early* and also children attending Burnbrae Primary School P2-P7;
- splitting the school over two sites some distance apart will be detrimental to the ethos, life and work of the school as single community; and
- time for learning will be lost as a result of the time required for children to travel from one site to another for joint learning experiences.

A few consultees who noted agreement with the proposal stated that they saw this as an opportunity for an innovative and bespoke approach to early level learning for children aged 3 to 5 years. Others expressed that, whilst they believed this to be the best option from the three recently explored, they still had concerns about the impact on families with children who would be attending the two different sites.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The proposal to relocate the Early Learning and Childcare and P1 classes at Burnbrae Primary School to a new campus on the site of the former Hopefield Primary School creating a new provision called *Burnbrae Early*, includes potential educational benefits. There is potential for children who attend *Burnbrae Early* to benefit from an innovative approach which delivers learning across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence from nursery to the end of P1. A new, purpose-designed building could impact positively on children's learning through, for example, improved access to outdoor play, increased use of digital technology and well-planned classroom spaces designed to meet the needs of all children. In particular, the increased space is necessary to accommodate the increasing number of children being enrolled at Burnbrae Primary School and Nursery. The council has not yet developed plans of what the new building might look like so it is difficult for consultees to envisage the extent of this potential benefit. However, this provides an opportunity for stakeholders to be involved at an early stage of the design process. The council has stated that it would like to develop further staff's approaches to planning learning through experimentation and play and increase collaboration between practitioners working across the early level. Whilst a new building is not essential to this, it is clear that the design and space of the current Burnbrae Primary School and Nursery makes it difficult to plan joint learning experiences for nursery and P1.

3.2 For children attending Burnbrae Primary School Nursery, the proposal should provide a seamless transition from nursery to primary education. However, children who enter P1 at Burnbrae Primary School from other early learning and childcare centres will still require support in their transition from nursery to P1. All children will then require support to make the transition from P1 to P2 at the P2 to P7 site. A few consultees have raised this as a concern which the council has not yet responded to sufficiently well. The council has stated that there is an opportunity to further develop family learning and partnership approaches to supporting children and families within the new purpose-built facility. This has the potential to improve early intervention strategies and impact positively on outcomes for children and families in the Bonnyrigg area.

3.3 Co-locating the new early level provision on a joint campus with a new St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School has potential for significant partnership working between the two staff teams which could impact positively on the quality of education all children on the campus receive. However, this aspect of the proposal has not yet been fully explored by staff, parents and children at Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School. Any plans for shared facilities will need to be agreed with all stakeholders.

3.4 Children currently attending Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School will not be affected by this proposal. However, during the consultation and when HM Inspectors visited, children from P1 to P6 were able to articulate some positive aspects of the proposal and some concerns that they had for children who might be affected by this in the future. They understood the need to create more space for their growing school population. Children expressed concern over the poor state of the footpath between the current site and the proposed additional site for their school. It would require some work to make it a safe and pleasant walking route. Children talked at length about the difficulties some families would have dropping-off and picking up children from two different sites. The council will require to engage further with children and families to address these concerns should the proposal be carried forward.

3.5 Parents of children currently attending Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School expressed that their children would not be significantly affected by the proposal. The proposal is of more concern to parents whose children will attend the early learning and childcare and/or primary school in the future. The greatest level of concern is amongst parents who will have children attending both sites. They are concerned about being able to get children to both nursery and school on time and within a reasonable travelling time. The council has stated that it will look to address their concerns through further engagement with parents to ensure appropriate timings for the nursery/school day at each site to allow for drop-off and pick-up. There is a need for the council to work with parents to explore more fully the travel issues which they have raised and find mutually agreeable solutions. If these matters are not sufficiently well addressed, there is potential for increased lateness and therefore lost learning time for children. A significant number of those who rejected the proposal have raised concerns about splitting the school over two sites which are less than one kilometre walking distance apart. The council has stated that regular, combined activities will ensure that all children maintain a sense of belonging to the school community. Moving forward, parents, staff and children will require to be involved in further dialogue about how this will be achieved. The council will need to ensure that time spent moving children between the two sites does not become a regular reduction in time for meaningful learning. The council states that this walk sits well with the desire to encourage physical activity. Whilst such a walk may be part of the school's wider promotion of health and wellbeing, it should not be considered a substitute for high-quality physical education.

3.6 Almost all staff at Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School are in agreement with the proposal. They value the opportunity to be involved in planning the design of the new provision. They see increased opportunities for early intervention and family learning through the bespoke facilities which the council

states it aims to create. They also spoke of opportunities to enhance the early level curriculum through partnerships with local businesses and amenities that are closer to the proposed new site than to the current school building. They are very concerned about the proposed timeline for making this happen and would like further clarification on this. Parents also indicated that this was a concern. In the meantime, there is a need to find appropriate solutions to accommodate the increasing number of children who will enter the Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School classes from August 2017. In particular, the current early learning and childcare space is insufficient for the projected roll for session 2017-18.

3.7 During the consultation period, a few consultees identified a perceived contradiction in the proposal. The proposal consultation document suggests the new building might be open during session 2018-19. However, the note of the public consultation meeting indicates that Midlothian Council expressed that this is unlikely. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to investigate this contradiction. In its final consultation report, the council will need to provide clarity on the timeline.

4. Summary

4.1 For children aged 3-5 years, there are some potential educational benefits to this proposal. A new model of early level which extends opportunities for experimentation and play from early learning and childcare through to the end of P1 could provide a strong platform for children's further learning and development. A purpose built facility will enable planning for partnership working, family learning and early intervention strategies to be embedded from the outset. Children and families could benefit greatly from a strengthened team approach if the educational benefits outlined by Midlothian Council were to be realised. Almost all stakeholders agree that this is the case. However, there is also the risk of losing the overall identity of Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School and that, over time, the two sites become two separate educational establishments with increased transition points for many children. To avoid this, Midlothian Council will need to ensure significant collaboration between all staff and partners and highly-effective leadership of learning at all levels.

4.2 If the proposal is taken forward, Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare and Primary School would operate on two separate sites. Many consultees raised concerns about this aspect of the proposal, which they feel will impact significantly on family arrangements for getting children to and from school. This is particularly problematic for families with children attending both sites. Some parents, staff and children also raised concerns about children moving between the two sites during the school day and the potential for significant loss of learning time. They also raised the poor state of the main walking route between the sites and limited access to the new site for those travelling by car or public transport. In the consultation proposal paper and at the public meeting, the council indicated how it might seek to resolve these issues but some consultees still have concerns that need to be addressed. Very little consideration has yet been given to the educational benefits and any issues that might result from a shared campus site with St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School. In taking its proposal forward, the council should engage

further with all stakeholders to seek appropriate resolution on the range of issues which consultees have raised.

HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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