

Summary of Report to Midlothian Council on 8 May 2018 which was heard in private

New Primary Schools in Dalkeith and Easthouses

1 Purpose of Report

On 15 December 2015, the Catchment Review Programme report was approved by Council. This report first flagged the emerging need for school capacity in Mayfield and Dalkeith. The report approved detailed feasibility studies looking at a range of options available to the Council to provide primary school capacity in Mayfield and Dalkeith.

On 26 September 2017, Council acknowledged the essential requirement and benefits of preparing a long term strategy for the learning estate in Midlothian and agreed the short term strategy through to 2023 which were outlined in the 17 actions set out in section 2.4 of that report. Two of these actions linked to Dalkeith and Easthouses were:

- To identify a site for a new two stream primary school in Dalkeith with the capacity to extend to a three stream, part developer contribution funded, required for August 2019.
- Build a new two stream primary school in Easthouses to be located on the old Newbattle High School site, part developer contribution funded, required for August 2019.

Reports on new primary schools in Dalkeith and Easthouses were considered at the Council Meeting of 27 March 2018 where Council decided to continue consideration of both reports to a future meeting. A number of questions were raised which has led to officers revisiting the proposals and in particular reviewing the potential for various sites to provide the additional primary school capacity required across the Dalkeith and Mayfield areas.

The purpose of this report is to present an alternative solution to providing the additional primary school capacity required in the Dalkeith and Mayfield areas and requests governance from Council to progress with the development of one new primary school to be located on land adjacent to Easthouses and Woodburn.

2 Background

On 27 March 2018 the Council considered reports on new primary schools in Dalkeith and Easthouses. The reports recommended the construction of two new two stream primary schools, both with 80 pre-school places and an enhanced nurture provision. The Dalkeith school was to be built on the former Dalkeith High School site and additionally include a complex needs provision, the Easthouses school was to be built on the former Newbattle High School site. Both schools' sites and designs were to be capable of extension to three streams. Council decided to continue consideration of the report to a future meeting to allow officers time to investigate a number of questions and possible alternatives.

3 Alternative Proposal

A report was presented to Council on 8 May 2018 which proposed an alternative plan for schools in the Dalkeith and Easthouses area. The new proposal would see:

3.1 A new three stream primary school on a site on the perimeter of Easthouses which would draw from both the existing Lawfield and Woodburn primary schools to form its catchment area. This new school would have 120 pre-school places, a complex needs provision and a large enhanced nurture provision to serve both the Dalkeith and Newbattle clusters. It may be possible to deliver the new school by August 2021.

3.2 Expand King's Park Primary School to bring it up to three stream and build a new Early Years provision with 120 places, in addition to the existing 60 places. It should be possible to deliver this expansion by August 2020.

3.3 Add space for one classroom and ancillary space to Woodburn Primary School for August 2019. In 2016 the community room at Woodburn Primary School was converted to provide space for the Woodburn Family Learning Centre and one of the school's classrooms was designated for community use.

3.4 Increase classrooms and ancillary space to both Lawfield and Mayfield Primary Schools and build an additional 40 Early Learning spaces at either Lawfield Primary School or Mayfield Nursery School. Some feasibility work has already been undertaken on the extension to Lawfield and it may be possible to deliver it by August 2019.

3.5 The longer term plan is to explore the possibility of replacing Mayfield Primary School Campus with a new school building within Mayfield. This could support and stimulate the rehabilitation of the Mayfield town centre and would address the suitability issues of the current campus buildings. The Council would need to secure funding through Scotland's Schools for the future programme to support replacement and consideration will be given as to whether this project could be included in the bid to Scottish Government for the next round of funding for school buildings.

4. Assessment

The previous proposal for two new primary schools were each to provide 80 additional Early Years places by August 2020, which is a key component in the Early Years Expansion Strategy that has been submitted to Scottish Government. A move away from and/or a delay in delivering 160 additional Early Years places requires an alternative to be found to meet Midlothian's 1,140 hours Early Years commitments by 2020. This can be mitigated by providing additional Early Years places at King's Park Primary School and 40 places at Lawfield Primary or Mayfield Nursery School. The existing 60 nursery places at King's Park Primary School may in future become surplus to requirements and could be demolished. The provision of the alternative proposals for one new school along with the expansion of a number of the other schools as detailed in section 3 should provide a more sustainable solution in terms of pupil rolls. It is anticipated that it should also be less costly both in capital and revenue terms, although the cost of land acquisition for the school site could potentially offset this somewhat.

The proposed new primary school would draw its catchment pupils predominantly from the Woodburn area and we propose therefore that it would be associated with Dalkeith High School. Dalkeith High School currently has three associated primary schools: Danderhall, Kings Park and Woodburn. The addition of the new primary school would increase this to four associated primary schools until we open the high school in Shawfair, when Danderhall Primary School will become part of that learning community.

It is challenging to create catchment areas with a spread of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones for schools serving Woodburn and Easthouses. The SIMD profile of the new primary school, based on the analysis of the current pupil population, would be an average SIMD of 4, and the impact on Lawfield Primary School is to reduce its SIMD profile from an average of 3 to 2.5.

The provision of one large enhanced nurture provision to meet the social, emotional, behavioural and mental health needs of pupils from both the Dalkeith and Newbattle clusters would require in-depth planning of operation.

5 Consultation

The catchment area for the new primary school would be established from the areas in closest proximity to the school site. This would be done by rezoning areas currently in the catchments of King's Park, Lawfield and Woodburn Primary Schools so as to distribute the pupils, including the additional pupils projected to arise from new housing, between the five non-denominational schools in line with their capacities.

Statutory consultation would be undertaken in the autumn term of 2019/20 on the creation of the catchment area for the new school so that it would be in place prior to commencement of pupil enrolment for August 2021.

6 Resource

The capital cost of building one three stream primary school and extensions to King's Park, Woodburn, Lawfield and Mayfield Primary Schools is anticipated to be less than the cost of building two new primary schools and an extension to King's Park Primary School, which should compensate for the site acquisition costs.

The alternative proposals set out in section 3 require further work including the preparation of a detailed client brief and accommodation schedules in order to establish a capital budget for each project together with the revenue implications for future years. If the recommendations set out in this report are approved officers will progress the work necessary to arrive at the capital budget and S75 funding contributions for inclusion in the General Services Capital Plan.

7 Recommendations

Council agreed to:

1. Dispense with the reports entitled New Dalkeith Primary School and New Easthouses Primary School.
2. Instruct the Director, Resources to enter into negotiations to acquire the area of land required for the new 3 stream primary school referred to in 3.1 above and bring a further report back to Council for governance to purchase.
3. Approve the proposal to construct a three stream primary school on this area of land as detailed in Alternative Proposal 3.1.
4. Approve the proposed expansion of King's Park, Woodburn, Lawfield and Mayfield Primary Schools and Mayfield Nursery School as detailed in Alternative Proposal 3.2 to 3.4.
5. Instruct the Director, Education, Communities and Economy and Director, Resources to prepare and cost a detailed client brief and accommodation schedule for the proposals to enable a budget provision to be included in the General Services Capital Plan for the capital expenditure and associated S75 developer contributions.
6. Instruct the Director; Education, Communities and Economy to commence a statutory consultation programme as outlined in section 5.

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Background Papers:

Learning Estate Strategy 2017-2047, Midlothian Council 26 September 2017

New Dalkeith Primary School, Report to Council, 27 March 2018

New Easthouses Primary School, Report to Council, 27 March 2018