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EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES

EDUCATION SERVICE

STATUTORY CONSULTATION REPORT

**REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED
CLOSURE OF HADDINGTON INFANT SCHOOL AND KING'S MEADOW PRIMARY
SCHOOL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ITS
ASSOCIATED CATCHMENT AREA FOR HADDINGTON**

March 2018

This Consultation Report has been issued by East Lothian Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

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EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES

EDUCATION

This report has been prepared following consultation on the following proposal:

- Proposed Closure of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and the establishment of a new primary school and its associated catchment area for Haddington

This proposal **directly affected** the following schools:

- Haddington Infant School
- King's Meadow Primary School

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period
- b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting held on 7th February 2018
- c) Oral representations made to it at the public drop-in session
- d) Oral representations made to it at the pupil voice sessions
- e) Education Scotland's report on the proposal

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is a Consultation Report prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the above proposal.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written responses;
- Provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meeting held on 7th February 2018;
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any alleged omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Consultation Proposal Document and state how the Council acted upon it; and
- State how the Council has complied with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposal.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Education Authorities have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand. In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

2.2 East Lothian Council is committed to raising educational attainment and ensuring that all children and young people have the best opportunities in life. East Lothian's Education Service aims to provide the best education in Scotland through a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. We will all work together to Get it Right for Every Child and to ensure that all children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. To realise our vision we will:

- act with ambition and integrity to open minds to the rights and values of education

- and help everyone to achieve their potential;
 - work together to nurture all our children and young people;
 - demonstrate a community working together to make that difference for every child; and
 - collectively strive for excellence and equity for all.
- 2.3 Our vision and values for education within East Lothian Council align with the Key Priorities in the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education 'Achieving Excellence and Equity' (Scottish Government, January 2016) and 'Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education' (Scottish Government, June 2016):
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
 - Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
 - Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and
 - Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.
- 2.4 The Haddington catchment area is currently served by two separate non-denominational schools: Haddington Infant School (Nursery to Primary 3 stages) and King's Meadow Primary School (Primary 4 to Primary 7 stages) with separate operational and management structures. The Haddington catchment area is one of only two primary catchment areas in East Lothian where P1 to P3 and P4 to P7 pupils from the same catchment are taught in two separate schools requiring an additional stage transition between P3 and P4. Across Scotland there were only three mainstream local authority Infant Schools registered as open as at September 2016 of which two were in East Lothian.
- 2.5 One of the key outcomes identified for the Education Service in session 2017/18 to 2019/20, as set out in the East Lothian Education Service Local Improvement Plan 2017-18, is consistency in our approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones. This consistency is vital for learner progression, effective transition and raising attainment for all.
- 2.6 The need for seamless and high quality transition is recognised internationally, nationally and locally and is central to continuity of education and progression through the curriculum. Consistency in our approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones is vital for learner progression, effective transition and raising attainment for all. Pupil wellbeing is further supported where approaches are consistent through one school. There is better continuity for pupils in terms of familiarity and confidence and there are increased opportunities for pupils to develop and sustain relationships with their peers and with school staff.

- 2.7 Evidence following the Education Service Reviews of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School in 2016 highlighted that they needed to develop stronger and more effective links to improve curriculum transition. The additional stage transition between these two schools presents many challenges, the most significant being how to ensure meaningful progression and continuity of learning from Primary 3 to Primary 4. This is a crucial stage for pupils as they progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels with the expectation that most achieve First level by the end of Primary 4. Although both schools have worked to develop consistent approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, there are still opportunities to improve this further.
- 2.8 East Lothian Council's Education Service considers establishing one new primary school covering nursery through to P7 under a single management structure through this proposal will provide the opportunity to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum and enhance transition and continuity in learning across the stages in the Haddington catchment area from Early Level through to Second Level.
- 2.9 The educational benefits that will arise from this proposal for children affected or likely to be affected were outlined in the Consultation Proposal Document. It is believed that this proposal is the most reasonable, viable and appropriate course of action open to it in providing primary education and early learning & childcare provision within the context of these schools. The reasons for coming to this view and consulting on the proposal were set out in the Consultation Proposal Document.
- 2.10 The Council must consult on certain changes in arrangements for educating children in its area before it can commit to delivering them. This includes when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools, including nursery schools, such as closure, relocation or change of catchment area. This proposal required a formal consultation to be carried out in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This report documents the formal consultation undertaken on this proposal between 8th January 2018 and 26th February 2018.
- 2.11 The proposed closure of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and the establishment of a new primary school and its associated catchment area for Haddington will **directly affect** the following schools and was considered in this Proposal Document:
- Haddington Infant School
 - King's Meadow Primary School
- 2.12 The following schools are **indirectly affected** by the proposal:
- Knox Academy

- St Mary's RC Primary School
- Yester Primary School

3. CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The main considerations relating to the closure of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and the establishment of a new primary school and its associated catchment area for Haddington are fully explained in the Consultation Proposal Document. The main points are highlighted below:

- The requirements of the National Improvement Framework and the new duties proposed within Education Governance: Next Steps.
- The duties placed on local authorities in relation to the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area.
- The duties placed on local authorities to secure best value in the delivery of services.

4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

4.1 The Council has met the minimum requirements set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 with regards to ensuring the views of all members of the community were listened to and their views are included in this report. The Council believes that this report accurately reflects the views of the community, which have been gathered through a range of engagement events and response mechanisms. It is for members of East Lothian Council to decide to adopt the proposal, withdraw it or seek to consult on another proposal.

4.2 Notification of the consultation was given to all statutory consultees prior to the commencement of the consultation.

4.3 The Consultation Proposal Document was published on East Lothian Council's website and paper copies distributed on 8th January 2018 to:

- Haddington Infant School
- King's Meadow Primary School
- St Mary's Primary School
- Yester Primary School
- Compass School Nursery
- Pear Tree Nursery
- Pumpkin Patch Haddington
- St Mary's Playgroup
- Tots and Teens at Knox Academy
- Bridge Centre

- John Gray Centre
 - John Muir House, Haddington.
- 4.4 The consultation period commenced at 12.00am on **Monday 8th January 2018** and lasted until 12.00am on **Monday 26th February 2018**, being a period of eight weeks, which also included the statutory minimum 30 school days.
- 4.5 The proposal on which consultation took place was to:
- Close Haddington Infant School and King’s Meadow Primary School and establish a new primary school and its associated catchment area for Haddington.
- 4.6 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 4.7 An information leaflet setting out details about the proposal and consultation meetings was issued to the consultees listed in the Consultation Proposal Document. Advice on where the complete Consultation Proposal Document could be obtained was included and was published on East Lothian Council’s Consultation Hub:
<http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/education/haddington-consultation>
- 4.8 If requested, copies of the proposal would have been made available in alternative formats or translated for readers whose first language is not English.
- 4.9 A “Frequently Asked Questions” document was also prepared which was available at the same location on East Lothian Council’s Consultation Hub:
<http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/education/haddington-consultation>
- 4.10 An advertisement was placed in the local newspaper on **11th January 2018** and **8th February 2018**. A pre-announcement was also made on the Council’s website and social media posts on the **20th December 2018**. In addition, there were announcements related to the consultation process on East Lothian Council’s website, linked via a Facebook page and Twitter feeds.
- 4.11 An information meeting was held at Haddington Infant School on 30th October 2017 with members of the Haddington Infant School and King’s Meadow Primary School learning communities prior to the commencement of the consultation period to clarify the consultation process.
- 4.12 The public meeting was held at **Knox Academy** on **Wednesday 7th February 2018** at **7.00pm**.
- 4.13 In addition to specific meetings with statutory consultees, drop-in sessions were held in respect of the proposal at the venues below, at which any members of the public and staff were welcome to attend:

Venue	Date	Time
Haddington Infant School	25 th January 2018	12:00pm – 5:00pm
King's Meadow Primary School	29 th January 2018	12:00pm – 5:00pm

4.14 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following persons, including those indirectly affected, were consulted:

- The Parent Councils of Haddington Infant and King's Meadow Primary Schools
- The parents/carers of children at Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School
- The parents/carers of any children expected to attend Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper
- The children at Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School
- The staff at Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School
- The trade union representatives of the above staff
- Haddington & Lammermuir Area Partnership
- Haddington and District Community Council

4.15 The following schools are **directly affected** by the proposal:

- Haddington Infant School
- King's Meadow Primary School

4.16 Representations were sought from statutory consultees and the wider public in the following ways:

- An online questionnaire on East Lothian Council's Consultation Hub. The questionnaire asked specific questions and enabled general comments and views to be entered. The Consultation Hub stored all relevant consultation documentation for public viewing;
- Widely distributed paper copies of the same questionnaire, at Council buildings around the Haddington area. Sealed boxes were also located at Haddington Infant School, King's Meadow Primary School and John Gray Centre for their return;
- Paper and digital flyers, in addition to the press adverts and Council web and social media announcements linked to the Consultation Hub. These flyers also detailed a specific Education Consultations email inbox, to which any queries could be submitted during the consultation period;
- Flyer distribution to pupils at Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School as well as all local authority managed nursery classes and partner providers within the Haddington cluster area. The Head Teacher of King's Meadow Primary

School who is also currently the interim Head Teacher of Haddington Infant School used established methods of communication to engage/remind parents about the consultation and the Education Scotland independent evaluation visit.

- In addition to the public meeting and public drop-in sessions, staff at both the affected schools were also invited to attend a planned staff voice session held at Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School to discuss the proposal. Additional informal meetings to discuss any queries or concerns they may have on the proposal were held with staff in both schools based around their availability and at their discretion. Information on the 'Protocol for School Merger' was shared with staff at these meetings and a copy of the protocol was provided to the Head Teacher to share with staff on request. Further additional opportunities to engage with HR staff regarding the protocol were also offered to staff at their discretion;
- A representative group of pupils from both Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School attended separate workshops where they were able to express their views on the proposal;
- Meetings were held with Haddington Infant School Parent Council and King's Meadow Primary School Parent Council.

4.17 This Consultation Report is the Council's response to the points raised during the consultation period on the Consultation Proposal Document.

4.18 This Consultation Report will be published for a period of three weeks before a final decision is taken by East Lothian Council on 24th April 2018.

5. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

5.1 As part of the consultation process, the Council sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders. The Council provided stakeholders with a short online or paper questionnaire and also made good arrangements for receiving additional written responses. The Council received 147 responses to its questionnaire, 146 of these questionnaire responses were received during the consultation period. The Council received one questionnaire submission to its consultation by email the day after the consultation period had ended. This response was submitted to Education Scotland with all representations that had been made during the consultation period and any issues or concerns raised are also subject to the Council's response in this Consultation Report.

5.2 The comments made as part of the questionnaire submissions are included in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish East Lothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the

collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 8 of this report.

5.3 The questionnaire responses are summarised by category in the following tables:

Table 1 – Number of respondents by type of respondent

Type of Respondent	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Groups	2	1%
Individuals	145	99%
Total Responses	147	100%

Table 2 – Number of individual respondents by category

Individual Respondents	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Parents	129	89%
Pupils	3	2%
Staff	13	9%
Total Responses	145	100%

Table 3 – Number of group respondents by category

Group Respondents	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Parent Councils	2	100%

Response Analysis from Individuals

5.4 The number of responses to the consultation in support or not in support of each question by category of respondent are shown in Tables 4 and 5 below:

Q1 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School?

Table 4 – Number of respondents by category

Individual Respondents	Agree/ Strongly Agree		No Opinion		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parents	46	36%	14	11%	69	53%	129	100%
Pupils	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3	100%
Staff	4	31%	0	0%	9	69%	13	100%
Total Responses	50	34%	14	10%	81	56%	145	100%

Q2 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to establish a new primary school covering Nursery to Primary 7 and its associated catchment area for Haddington?

Table 5 – Number of respondents by category

Individual Respondents	Agree/ Strongly Agree		No Opinion		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parents	58	45%	12	9%	59	46%	129	100%
Pupils	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3	100%
Staff	4	31%	0	0%	9	69%	13	100%
Total Responses	62	43%	12	8%	71	49%	145	100%

Response Analysis from Groups

5.5 There were 2 responses from groups, both of whom took a neutral position. One group did not wish their response to be shared publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder’s views and informed the Education Authority’s response as detailed in Section 8. The full response from the group who wished to share this publicly can be read in Appendix 1 and is summarised below:

- King’s Meadow Parent Council – following a number of discussions with parents where views were expressed both in favour of and against the proposal, the Parent Council set out the positives highlighted for both the proposal and for retaining the “status quo” (see Appendix 1).

Public Meeting

5.6 A public meeting was held in Knox Academy on Wednesday 7th February 2018 which was attended by 29 members of the community. A full note of the meeting is attached at Appendix 2 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting. The points raised are addressed within the responses to Frequently Asked Questions or within this report.

5.7 Additionally, drop-in sessions were arranged at both schools during the consultation period, enabling any member of the public and staff to ask questions and discuss the proposal, the consultation process and how they could make representations.

Pupil & Staff Voice Sessions

5.8 During the consultation period, Council officers visited Haddington Infant School and King’s Meadow Primary School providing good opportunities for pupils and staff to discuss their views. A note of the planned staff and pupil voice sessions are included as

Appendices 3 and 4. Additional informal meetings were held with staff in both schools at their discretion. As these were informal, no formal record was taken at these additional sessions. Pupils from Haddington Infant School were in support of the proposal, while the majority of pupils from King's Meadow Primary School were unsure.

6. SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL

6.1 43% of all individual questionnaire respondents (62 responses) to the consultation were in favour of establishing a new primary school covering Nursery to P7 for the Haddington area. The full text of all responses received can be read in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish East Lothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 8 of this report.

6.2 A number of common points and questions emerged from the responses as follows:

- Proposal offers more continuity and consistency for the children and parents in terms of learning and teaching, policies etc
- Shared understanding and vision from Nursery through to P7
- Having one school will offer a smoother transition for all children through the primary years
- Opportunities for greater buddying system for pupils
- Concerns that the proposal will not go ahead and that there will continue to be inconsistencies between the two schools in terms of teaching and policies
- School Budget and size of Senior Management Team
- Appointment of Head Teacher and difficulty in recruitment
- Management of one larger school across two campuses
- Transition to the new single school structure and minimising disruption

7. OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSAL

7.1 49% of all individual questionnaire respondents (71 responses) to the consultation were not in favour of establishing a new primary school covering Nursery to P7 for the Haddington area. The full text of all responses received can be read in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish East Lothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 8 of this report.

7.2 The main issues raised in these responses were as follows:

- Concerns that the consultation outcome is already decided and it is just a cost saving exercise

- Concerns that the proposal document is focused on the benefits of the proposal and no information provided on the benefits of the 'status quo'
- Concerns over loss of specialism in stages, for example in Early Years
- Concerns over loss of additional "stage" transition as a positive experience
- School Budget and size of Senior Management Team
- Appointment of Head Teacher and difficulty in recruitment
- Management of one larger school across two campuses
- Protocol for creating a composite class at P3/4
- Additional cost of purchasing a new uniform
- School Capacity & Building Condition
- Catchment area for the new school structure

8. EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO THE MAIN ISSUES RAISED

8.1 Concerns that the consultation outcome is already decided and it is just a cost saving exercise

8.1.1 As stated earlier in Section 2 of this report, The *Education (Scotland) Act 1980* places a legislative duty on the Council to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education across its area and must consult on certain changes in such arrangements before it can commit to delivering them. The *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* sets out the statutory consultation that must be undertaken when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools. The principle of the Act is "... to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools." The statutory consultation process is predicated on consulting on a proposal that is viable and deliverable and represents the very best educational outcomes for its young people. The 2010 Act requires Education Authorities to produce a comprehensive Education Benefits statement that clearly sets out the benefits for children and young people affected by the proposal and that the closure of a school is proposed for positive educational reasons. The 2010 Act also requires HM Inspectors to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal having regard, in particular, to the Educational Benefits statement.

8.1.2 While it is East Lothian Council's Education Service that has undertaken the consultation and put forward the proposal, it is for the elected members of East Lothian Council to decide at its meeting on 24th April 2018 to adopt the proposal, withdraw it or seek to consult on another proposal.

8.1.3 The statutory consultation activities undertaken with regard to this proposal fully met the legislative requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, and were designed to encourage maximum participation. The Council ensured that all statutory

consultees were contacted and made aware of the consultation. In addition, the Council actively engaged with all stakeholders, including staff, parents, pupils and the Parent Councils at a range of informal and formal meetings both prior to and during the statutory consultation period. These meetings were widely advertised through letter drops, social media, local press and school communications etc.

8.1.4 The Council has gone beyond the minimum requirements set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to consult with all members of the community affected by the proposal. This has ensured that the views of all members of the community have been listened to and are included in this report so that the elected members can make an informed decision. The Council believes that this report accurately reflects the views of the community.

8.1.5 As mentioned previously, the statutory consultation process is predicated on consulting on a proposal that is viable and deliverable and represents the very best educational outcomes for its young people.

8.1.6 This proposal has been put forward by the Education Service to address the additional transition challenges present at the two affected schools for children, staff and parents with regard to the additional stage transition between Primary 3 and Primary 4. The Educational Benefits for this proposal were clearly set out in paragraphs 47(A) to 47(L) on pages 18 to 20 of the Consultation Proposal Document.

8.1.7 Education authorities also have additional statutory duties that are relevant to the proposal including the [Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, Part 1, Section 1](#) which requires authorities to secure best value by continuous improvement in performance of the authority's functions, maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost. [Explanatory notes](#) provided for Section 1 of the Act states that:

"9. Section 1 places all Scottish local authorities (as defined by section 61) under a duty to secure Best Value and describes Best Value in terms of the continuous improvement of performance of functions. This statutory definition builds on the working definitions used by local authorities, the Accounts Commission and HM Inspectorates since 1997 on the basis of advice provided by the Best Value Task Force.... 10. Subsection (3) provides that in securing continuous improvement in a particular service local authorities will be expected to maintain a balance between the quality of the outcome of the service delivered and the cost of that service. Subsection (4) provides that in maintaining this balance between quality and cost local authorities will be expected to consider the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of their actions and how well those actions comply with the requirements of equal opportunities legislation."

8.1.8 This proposal represents best value in terms of the continuous improvement of primary education and early learning & childcare provision within the Haddington area and

providing equity across all schools in the Haddington cluster in terms of the continuity and progression in learning for primary aged pupils from Nursery through to P7. This proposal will also ensure equity across all schools in the Haddington cluster in terms of Leadership and Management arrangements.

8.1.9 [Section 3 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000](#), requires authorities to "endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them; and they shall exercise their functions in relation to such provision with a view to raising standards of education". Section 3D of the 2000 Act (as inserted by section 2 of the 2016 Act) introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework. Section 3 of the 2016 Act further introduces sections 3F and 3H of the 2000 Act which place duties on education authorities to prepare annual plans and reports describing planned and past activity to i) reduce inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, and ii) achieve the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework.

8.1.10 These and other duties within the Act are underpinned by section 2(1) of the 2000 Act which states that:

"Where school education is provided to a child or young person by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority it shall be the duty of the authority to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential."

8.1.11 The new duties imposed on education authorities by the 2000 Act as amended by the 2016 Act took effect from August 2017. On 21 November 2017, East Lothian Council's Education Committee approved the [East Lothian Education Service Local Improvement Plan 2017-18](#), the education authority's annual statement of improvement objectives. One of the key outcomes identified for the Education Service in session 2017/18 to 2019/20, as set out in the plan, is consistency in our approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones. This consistency is vital for learner progression, effective transition and raising attainment for all.

"The need for seamless and high quality transition is recognised internationally, nationally and locally and is central to continuity of education and progression through the curriculum. Research suggests that relationships and communication are key to effective transition. 'Practitioners should have an excellent understanding of the experiences the child has had in the past, and will have in the future, and should work towards clear aims and roles during the transitions process.' (Professor Aline-Wendy

Dunlop from the Department of Childhood and Primary Studies at the University of Strathclyde) Consistency in our approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones is vital for learner progression, effective transition and raising attainment for all” (see paragraph 47(C), page 19 of the Education Benefits section of the Consultation Proposal document).

8.1.12 While there will be a small reduction in cost with the reduction of one Head Teacher post, the proposal is predicated on addressing the additional challenges for children, staff and parents that currently exist with the additional stage transition between P3 and P4 and the educational benefits that this proposal will bring for all children Nursery to P7.

8.2 Concerns that the proposal document is focused on the benefits of the proposal and no information is provided on the benefits of the ‘status quo’

8.2.1 As stated in paragraph 8.1.1 above, the statutory consultation process is predicated on consulting on a proposal that is viable and deliverable and represents the very best educational outcomes for its young people. The 2010 Act requires Education Authorities to produce a comprehensive Education Benefits statement that clearly sets out the benefits for children and young people affected by the proposal and that the closure of a school is proposed for positive educational reasons. The 2010 Act also requires HM Inspectors to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal having regard, in particular, to the Educational Benefits statement. The proposal has been put forward by the Education Service to address the additional transition challenges present at the two affected schools for children, staff and parents with regard to the additional stage transition between Primary 3 and Primary 4 and continuity and progression for all Nursery to P7. The Educational Benefits for this proposal were clearly set out in paragraphs 47(A) to 47(L) on pages 18 to 20 of the Consultation Proposal Document. With regard to the educational benefits set out in the Consultation Proposal Document, the Council believes it has complied with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Therefore, given these requirements, the proposal has to focus on the benefits rather than the status quo.

8.2.2 The Education Service and schools work together to share effective practice and ensure our children’s transitions are well-planned. However, the additional transition between Haddington Infant School and King’s Meadow Primary School presents additional challenges for children at a key point of learning within CfE First Level. This also presents a more challenging transition stage for staff which is not experienced by staff in almost every other school across East Lothian and indeed more widely across Scotland.

8.2.3 The Education Service is committed to the presumption of mainstream and the inclusion, engagement and involvement of all children. Support for Learning and Support Staff play a critical role in supporting children who require additional support

for learning. Children requiring support benefit from working with those who know their pastoral and learning needs well. Often, staff move from stage to stage with the children they support. Currently, the existing school structure does not enable Support Staff to transition with children receiving additional support from Haddington Infant School to King's Meadow Primary School.

8.2.4 Evidence following the Education Service School Reviews of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School in 2016 highlighted that they needed to develop stronger and more effective links to improve continuity and progression from Nursery to P7 and to improve curriculum transition. The reviews also highlighted that as a learning community both schools have their own very distinct vision, values and aims as well as learning and teaching approaches. The additional stage transition between P3 and P4 presents many challenges, the most significant being how to ensure meaningful progression and continuity of learning and children's wellbeing from P3 to P4. The challenges of the additional stage transition across two separate establishments have been present for a number of years and although both schools have worked to develop more consistent approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, it has not been possible to fully address this through the "status quo" given that these are two separate schools and further improvement is required.

8.2.5 The Scottish Government published 'Empowering Schools: A Consultation on the Provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill' within which it sets out the intention to enable Head Teachers to determine the curriculum and staffing within their school. If this provision within the proposed Education Bill is enacted there would be no requirement for the Head Teachers of each school to collaborate on learning, teaching and assessment or the curriculum.

8.2.6 Taking all of this into account, the Education Service believes this proposal is the only viable and deliverable option to address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents. The proposed closures and establishment of a new primary school will create a positive environment for more effective learning and teaching that is better matched to the needs of the children across all stages. It will provide the opportunity to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum from Nursery to P7. It will also provide the opportunity to improve the consistency of learning and teaching approaches to better meet the needs of all pupils. This will support much smoother and improved pastoral and curricular transitions across the stages. In addition, this will also enable staff to work with children across the school which will provide enhanced support for their learning.

8.3 **Concerns over loss of "specialism" in stages**

8.3.1 The move to a single school structure covering Nursery to Primary 7 does not remove the need to ensure high quality learning experiences for all children. A single school

structure will still require a curriculum that is designed and delivered to support positive outcomes for all learners across all curriculum areas at all stages of learning. A single school structure will still require highly skilled staff who know their children well as learners and who can ensure learning and teaching of the highest quality for all children.

8.3.2 The new single school structure will not necessarily mean that teachers currently working across the P1 to P3 stages would be expected to teach across the P4 to P7 stages and vice versa. The single structure however will create future opportunities for staff to work across stages to further ensure a shared understanding of each child as a learner and expectations and progression from Nursery to P7 and to support professional learning. This approach is well established across other schools in East Lothian and across Scotland. A new management team across a single school structure would be looking at shared high quality pedagogy from Nursery to P7 that build on best practice.

8.3.3 The new Head Teacher would be working with all the staff in the school to discuss their aspirations and what they want to develop in terms of their skillset to inform the stages that they work within, as is the current practice in all of our single school structures. The [General Teaching Council for Scotland \(GTCS\) standards](#) sets out the requirements for student and registered teachers. Section 2.3.1 of the standard for full registration requires registered teachers to:

- *“have secure knowledge and detailed understanding of the stages of learners’ cognitive, social and emotional development which they are able to use to take an holistic account of all learners’ needs;*
- *have secure knowledge and detailed understanding of learning theories and draw on these systematically in planning, teaching and learning;*
- *have knowledge and understanding of the ways in which natural, social, cultural, political and economic systems function and of how they are interconnected to professional practice”*

8.3.4 The Education Service and HM Inspectors are very clear that teachers need to understand the curriculum in terms of the expectations on children both before and after the stage they are teaching. It is absolutely critical that staff have a full understanding of the breadth and depth of learning and expectations of learners across each of the Curriculum for Excellence levels. Staff also need to have a very strong understanding of child development across the stages and most often that comes from experience of working with children across different stages. This is not possible under the current separate school arrangement.

8.3.5 In addition the Section 2.3.2 of the GTCS standards sets out the expectations for all teaching staff in relation to the importance of research and engagement in professional enquiry. As part of this registered teachers are expected to:

- *“know how to access and apply relevant findings from educational research;*
- *Know how to engage critically in enquiry, research and evaluation individually or collaboratively, and apply this in order to improve teaching and learning”*

8.3.6 Furthermore, the GTCS standards for Leadership and Management enable leadership of learning at all levels. Through Collegiate Activity Time (CAT) and other structured Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) sessions, teachers are encouraged to critically engage with educational policy and research in order to inform practice. Reflection upon CLPL is recorded within each teacher’s ‘My GTCS’ account and feeds into their professional review and development meetings.

8.4 Concerns over loss of additional stage transition as a positive experience

8.4.1 The Education Service acknowledges that for some children the additional stage transition may be a positive experience, however, this is not the experience of all pupils transitioning from P3 to P4 between the current two schools. For example, under the current two-school structure, children in Primary 3 with additional support needs who have built up relationships with pupil support assistants have to start again and build up relationships with new staff when they move into P4. Children’s relationships with staff and teachers are crucial to their support network. A single school structure would enable staff to build relationships from Nursery and sustain those relationships through to P7, especially for those pupils who require enhanced support, and help improve children’s social, emotional and mental well-being. Familiar environments are also important and while the proposed new school would be operating over two campuses, there would be more opportunities within the curriculum under a single school structure to work on common projects, for example, across different stages and the two campuses.

8.4.2 The single school structure split campus arrangement will also continue to provide opportunities for P3 children to act as role models within their campus, while also offering more opportunities for buddying and peer learning between the two campuses.

8.5 Concerns that the proposal will not go ahead and that there will continue to be inconsistencies between the two schools in terms of teaching and policies

8.5.1 If the proposal is not approved, the Education Service will continue to work with both schools to focus on improvement in the consistency of learning & teaching and continuity and progression through School Improvement Planning, Local Education Authority (LEA) Quality Assurance processes and Service Reviews. The Education Bill 2018, however, will determine the extent to which the local authority will be able to influence such improvements.

8.6 School Budget and size of Senior Management Team of Proposed New School

- 8.6.1 As mentioned in the Consultation Proposal Document paragraphs 64 and 65 on page 22, the Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme delivers an entitlement to financial resources based on a criteria. School revenue budgets, including nursery, and the staffing entitlement for schools and nursery classes within East Lothian Council are set in line with the primary and nursery pupil roll and calculated in accordance with the approved Scheme of Delegation for Schools and the Council's DSM policies. The school revenue budget and the staffing entitlement for the proposed new school would also be set in line with the primary and nursery roll of the new school structure and calculated in accordance with the approved Scheme of Delegation for Schools and the Council's DSM policies.
- 8.6.2 As per current protocol, the Head of Education (or nominee, i.e. the new Head Teacher), in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions, and in accordance with the DSM staffing allocation, and job sizing/evaluation processes, will determine the structure for the new school. The staffing entitlement for the proposed new primary school and its nursery class, which includes administrative and support staff, will be set at the time of its establishment in line with the primary and nursery roll of the school. However, it should be noted that the Head Teacher of the new school can determine the management structure for the school using the allocated funding for the staffing structure.
- 8.6.3 The following illustrates a potential staffing entitlement for the proposed new primary school and its nursery class. If the combined rolls of the two affected schools remained the same as the 2017/18 pupil rolls next session, a single school structure with a P1-P7 roll of 659 with a nursery class capacity of 40 places, would be entitled to funding for 3 full-time equivalent Depute Head Teachers.
- 8.6.4 As mentioned in the Consultation Proposal Document paragraph 65 on page 22, Head Teachers are empowered through the scheme to have flexibility to determine whether they will staff the school according to the entitlement or to vary this according to local circumstances and needs. This flexibility is common practice within our schools across East Lothian. For example, the school roll may deliver an entitlement and funding for three Depute Head Teachers, but the Head Teacher may decide to have two Depute Head Teacher posts in place and have additional management posts such as a Principal Teacher instead. This can similarly be the case with other posts in the school.
- 8.6.5 The staffing entitlement for each school is reviewed annually to take account of changes in the pupil roll and revised staffing arrangements are managed in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures. Due to recent and planned house build in the Haddington area the primary-aged population in Haddington is projected to increase steadily over the next 6 years. Any increases in the pupil rolls due to an increase in

nursery and primary aged children arising from changing demographics and committed and planned housing in the area will be reflected in the staffing entitlement and revenue budget for the new school during the budget and staffing allocation processes.

- 8.6.6 Support for Learning staffing requirements for each school, which are met through Predictable Needs funding are determined by the Head Teacher under the DSM scheme to ensure the needs of all pupils are met (see paragraph 65, page 22 of the Consultation Proposal Document). Predictable Needs funding is allocated to each primary and secondary school each year in line with the school roll and free school meal entitlement rate, based on a three-year rolling average. The school roll is calculated at school level and is based on the pupil roll for each school as at the annual Pupil Census in September. Free meal entitlement is also calculated at school level and is based on the proportion of pupils within the school entitled to claim free school meals, whether they have been registered with the authority for free school meals or not, as at the annual Healthy Living Survey date.
- 8.6.7 As is the case with all schools, the predictable needs funding for the proposed new primary school is dependent on the latest school roll and free meal entitlement information, feeding into the predictable needs funding formula at the time the funding is allocated. If the school roll and free meal entitlement figures feeding into the formula remains the same from one year to the next, then the predictable needs funding will remain the same. If the school roll and/or free meal entitlement figures feeding into the formula changes from one year to the next, then the predictable needs funding will change accordingly.
- 8.6.8 Furthermore, budget allocations for Exceptional Need are made based upon the number of hours/full time equivalent (FTE) staff for specific children agreed by the Moderation Panel. These allocations are reviewed annually and are only be available while the child attends school. If the child moves school then these allocations will move with them.
- 8.6.9 Staff Development budgets are devolved to schools on the basis of a basic allocation for each academic year plus an amount per full-time equivalent member of staff (teaching and non-teaching). The allocation for Educational & Other supplies is also devolved each year on the basis of a basic allocation (dependant on the size of the school) plus an amount per full-time registered pupil.
- 8.6.10 If the proposal is approved, Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School would continue to function as two separate schools with separate budgets and staffing structures until the Head Teacher is in post. The predictable needs funding for the two schools would remain as set for that academic session under the responsibility of the appointed Head Teacher until the establishment of the new school. As is the

situation with the other primary school in East Lothian which operates across a split site the school budget and staffing entitlement is adjusted to reflect this.

8.7 Appointment of Head Teacher and difficulty in recruitment

8.7.1 The post of Head Teacher within the new school is deemed to be a "new" job against which Head Teacher(s) of the closed schools are not eligible to claim a match. As stated in the Consultation Proposal Document, high on the list of priorities for the Education Authority will be establishing the staffing arrangements for the new school structure and the recruitment of the Head Teacher.

8.7.2 The recruitment of the new Head Teacher will be carried out in line with current East Lothian recruitment procedures, appointing the best candidate for the vacancy. Recruitment will be open to all appropriately qualified staff from East Lothian and beyond.

8.7.3 If the Education Authority was unable to recruit a new Head Teacher, current arrangements are to work in partnership with the Chair of the Parent Council to discuss re-advertisement and interim arrangements such as Acting Head Teacher.

8.7.4 The Education Authority will work closely with both school communities to promote the post, including the creation of a video. The Council's communication team will be involved fully in the promotion of this exciting opportunity.

8.7.5 The Council has an obligation to redeploy any displaced Head Teacher to an appropriate vacancy within the Council. Successful redeployment would depend on a number of factors, as set out in the relevant procedures for the appointment of teaching staff, and would be subject to consultation with the relevant Parent Council.

8.8 Management of one larger school across two campuses

8.8.1 The projected peak roll for the proposed new primary school is in keeping with the projected rolls for other primary schools elsewhere within East Lothian. The composition of the senior leadership and management team will reflect the size of the school roll ensuring collaborative leadership at all levels. The leadership team will foster collaborative leadership to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of Haddington and its growing community. As mentioned earlier in Section 8.6, school revenue budgets and staffing complements are set in line with the pupil roll and calculated in accordance with the approved Scheme of Delegation for School and the Council's devolved school management policies. Any increases in pupil rolls due to an increase in children arising from committed and planned housing in the area will be reflected within the school revenue budget and staffing complement.

- 8.8.2 The Council is proposing a headship across two campuses for the new single school structure. The Head Teacher of the new school will determine how the management team will be organised in discussion with staff in the school in order to meet the needs of learners across the two campuses. East Lothian Council's Education Service has experience of operating a large primary school across two campuses. The Head Teacher of Dunbar Primary School attended a joint meeting with Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School Parent Councils to share her experiences as Head Teacher of a large primary school across two campuses and responded to the questions posed by parents.
- 8.8.3 Within East Lothian, Dunbar Primary School has a school roll of 1,275 pupils over two campuses, John Muir and Lochend, which are situated approximately 10 minutes apart. Each campus has two Depute Head Teachers with an additional Depute with responsibility for the Cove communication provision. There are three Principal Teachers. Two of the Principal Teachers have inclusion remits; one is based in John Muir Campus and one is based in Lochend campus. The third Principal Teacher is a classroom based practitioner. Both campuses have their own administration offices although administrative functions can be shared across the whole school. The Head Teacher has an office in each campus and spends time in both campuses as required each week.
- 8.8.4 The Scottish Government within the ['Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland'](#) set out its intention to develop new Executive Consultant Head and Cluster Leader roles in the medium to longer term to strengthen school leadership. East Lothian Council is not intending to establish Executive Head or Cluster Leader roles at this point in time. However, officers have explored the various structures in operation in other Education Authorities, including the Executive Head Teacher of two large primary schools to gain an understanding of the management structures and day-to-day management of the schools.
- 8.8.5 The establishment of a single school structure with a larger combined pupil roll does not mean that there will be less individualised support for pupils. The individual needs of learners are still taken into account by class teachers and support for learning staff. Entitlement to teacher numbers is linked to the number of planned classes for the academic session. Maximum class size legislation and the physical limitations of teaching spaces are a key factor in determining the number of classes that are required to accommodate the number of pupils on the school roll. Each primary class would still require the equivalent of one-full time class teacher to teach that class. The appropriate statutory maximum class size – P1 maximum of 25, P2 and P3 maximum of 30, P4 to P7 maximum of 33, and composite maximum of 25 - will still apply to the class organisation for the new proposed school in line with current legislation and policy. The entitlement for promoted teacher posts, support for learning and other support staff would still be

set in accordance with the DSM scheme in line with the nursery and primary roll, as set out in Section 8.6 above.

8.8.6 As stated in earlier in paragraphs 8.6.6 to 8.6.8 Support for Learning staffing requirements for each school, which are met through Predictable Needs funding, are determined by the Head Teacher under the DSM scheme to ensure the needs of all pupils are met. As is the case with all schools, the predictable needs funding for the proposed new primary school is dependent on the latest school roll and free meal entitlement information feeding into the predictable needs funding formula at the time the funding is allocated. If the school roll and free meal entitlement figures feeding into the formula remains the same from one year to the next, then the predictable needs funding will remain the same. If the school roll and/or free meal entitlement figures feeding into the formula change from one year to the next, then the predictable needs funding will change accordingly. Budget allocations for Exceptional Need are made based upon the number of hours/full time equivalent (FTE) staff for specific children agreed by the Moderation Panel. These allocations are reviewed annually and are only be available while the child attends school. If the child moves school then these allocations will move with them.

8.9 Class structure for the 2 campuses and protocol for creating a composite class at P3/4

8.9.1 The class structure of each school is agreed each year in discussion with the Head Teachers before the end of the academic session for the following year. Class structures are determined by the total expected school roll and how that can be organised in line with maximum class size legislation and the planning capacity available at that time.

8.9.2 If the proposal is approved, the roll of the new single school structure will comprise pupils from both Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School. Therefore, the number of classes and class structure agreed for both the affected schools for August 2018 will comprise the class structure for the new school on its establishment for the remainder of that academic session.

8.9.3 Thereafter the class structure would be reviewed annually, as per current protocol, to take account of changes in the pupil roll in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

8.9.4 Composite classes exist where there are insufficient pupils at a stage to form a complete single stage class. A composite class would be formed taking into consideration the following criteria: age, severe/complex needs and the physical size of classroom and would be located based on the availability of capacity and room size.

8.9.5 East Lothian Council's [Composite Class Guidelines](#) set out the protocol for the composition of composite classes at any stage. This protocol would apply to the

proposed new school as with all current primary schools across East Lothian. All classes whether composite or not, contain pupils of different abilities and levels of development. Teachers are expert in how to structure learning for pupils of differing abilities and composite classes do not pose any greater challenge than single-year classes. We know that friendship groups are important and schools work with pupils to ensure where there are composite classes that there are still opportunities for year groups to work together and to retain a year group identity. Schools encourage children to mix with their friends at break and through whole-school or stage events. Parents should also create opportunities to maintain friendships and encourage new ones.

8.9.6 While the pupil roll projections indicate that the projected peak P1-P3 and P4-P7 roll of each school can be accommodated within each school's planning capacity, due to the nature of how pupil projections are calculated it is not possible to accurately predict the exact numbers at each stage over a long timeframe (*see Projected Population Methodology section, pages 16-17 of the Consultation Proposal Document*). Therefore, while not currently anticipated, it is not possible to explicitly confirm if it would be necessary to create a composite class at P3/4 in the future or not.

8.10 Timescales for the establishment of the new school

8.10.1 The establishment of the new school is based on the approval of the proposal by elected members and the conclusion of the full statutory consultation process, the timeline of which is set out in Appendix 1, page 26 of the Consultation Proposal Document.

8.10.2 It is not possible to provide an exact date at this stage of the proposal for the establishment of the new school as this would pre-empt the outcome of the consultation. This is why the proposal refers to the establishment of the new school "with effect from August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter".

8.10.3 The first step in establishing a new school is the recruitment of the Head Teacher. Once a Head Teacher is appointed and in post, a Transition Action Group would be set up comprising the new Head Teacher, staff and parent representatives from both schools as well as council officers and trade union representatives. The remit of the Transition Action Group would be to create a Transition Action Plan and the new school would be established as part of the Transition Action Plan. School staff will involve children, as appropriate, in the development and delivery of the Transition Action Plan.

8.10.4 If the proposal is approved and Scottish Ministers decide not to call-in the proposal, the Council would be able to commence the recruitment process for the new Head Teacher post prior to the end of the Summer Term 2018.

8.10.5 If the proposal is approved and the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal to refer to the School Closure Review Panel, the recruitment process could only commence if the Panel consents to the proposal. The maximum timescale allowed for this could mean that implementation of the proposal would not commence until after 9th October 2018.

8.11 Transition to the new single school structure and minimising disruption

8.11.1 The Council is fully committed to working with staff, children and parents during the transition period to establish the new school. The Education Service will put in place interim arrangements to ensure the allocation of resources to address the transition to a new single school structure and will keep the situation under review as the school grows.

8.11.2 As mentioned in paragraph 8.10.3 above, the first step in establishing a new school is the recruitment of the Head Teacher. The two affected schools would continue to function as two separate schools with separate budgets and staffing structures until the Head Teacher is in post. Once in post, the Head Teacher will assume responsibility for the leadership and management of both schools during the transition period to the new single school structure. The Head Teacher will work closely with staff in both schools to discuss their aspirations and establish an appropriate staffing structure to meet the needs of learners across the two campuses. The Head Teacher will work closely with existing senior and middle managers in both schools to determine roles and remits in line with the needs of learners and context of the new school. During the transition period, the new Head Teacher will support collaboration between the Support for Learning team across both schools. Support for Learning staff would liaise with each other to ensure that the learning, pastoral and social needs of children are met fully.

8.11.3 The budgets for the affected schools would remain as set for the next academic session under the responsibility of the appointed Head Teacher until the establishment of the new school. Any additional resources required to assist the Head Teacher during the transition period will be provided.

8.11.4 A Transition Action Group will also be set up following the Head Teacher appointment. This group will comprise the new Head Teacher, staff and parent representatives from both schools as well as council officers and trade union representatives. The new Head Teacher will lead the Transition Action Group. The remit of the Transition Action Group will be to create a Transition Action Plan with a phased approach specifying clear targets and agreed timescales over an appropriate timeframe to ensure community involvement in the process. The Education Authority will take forward the establishment of the new school in partnership with the Transition Action Group.

8.11.5 The Transition Action Plan will include but is not restricted to:

- the name of the new school and nursery class
- the uniform
- school logo and website
- the formation of the new Parent Council
- consideration of a common school day (start/finish/lunch etc.)
- curriculum rationale and delivery, i.e. approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment
- stage to stage transition policy

8.11.6 The Council will work closely with the children, parents and staff to establish a new sense of school community, ethos and identity. The Transition Action Plan could include a range of activities such as joint learning themes, excursions, social and sporting events. These could take place during the transition period with the aim of creating and developing a positive school ethos.

8.11.7 A high level of engagement activities with parents, staff and children will also be planned from the earliest stages to enhance stakeholder engagement in the establishment of the values of the new school.

8.12 Cost of purchasing a new uniform

8.12.1 This would be one of the considerations for the Transition Action Group. For example, the Transition Action Group, through consultation with parents and children, may decide that the best way to manage this is to allow pupils to use their existing uniforms until they have outgrown them and/or they need replaced as a result of “wear and tear”.

8.12.2 The Education Service would wish to avoid incurring additional financial costs for parents as a result of this proposal. It is important that the Transition Action Group takes account of the recommendations set out in the [East Lothian Poverty Commission Report](#) and [East Lothian Poverty Action Plan 2017-19](#) when making any decisions about the school uniform.

8.13 School Capacity & Building Condition

8.13.1 If approved the new single school structure would operate on a split campus arrangement from within the existing buildings and facilities of Haddington Infant School and King’s Meadow Primary School. The primary-aged population in the Haddington catchment area is projected to increase steadily over the next 6 years as a result of population demographics and new housing developments. Haddington Infant School is due to be extended to accommodate the projected P1-P3 pupils arising from new houses in the catchment area. The new extension will be contained within the buildings of the school in an existing “void” on the first floor. The fit out will provide 2

new classrooms, a breakout space and cloaks. The intention is to have the contract on site by the summer holidays and work completed by the end of 2018. The planning capacity of the building will be increased from 330 to 390 as a result of this work.

8.13.2 The planning capacity for King's Meadow Primary School is 504. There are no plans to extend King's Meadow Primary School. The projected P4-P7 pupil rolls for King's Meadow Primary School to 2031, taking into account new pupils from current planned and committed new housing developments in the Haddington catchment area can be accommodated within the existing planning capacity of the buildings.

8.13.3 The combined planning capacity of the buildings and facilities of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School, with the planned extension at Haddington Infant School, will be 894. The combined planning capacity of 894 can accommodate the projected peak P1-P7 pupil roll of 815 pupils in 2025 for the proposed new single school structure. Further expansion of the buildings and facilities are not required as a result of this proposal. The proposed new school's capacity will be continually assessed (as is the case with all schools), in comparison to roll projections from the catchment area it provides for, and all new house building (of 5 units or more) which occurs within the catchment area.

8.13.4 Letham Mains has its own separate primary school catchment area as defined by the site boundaries of the committed and planned Letham Mains housing allocations. A new primary school is to be built within the Letham Mains development to provide permanent early learning & childcare and primary school capacity to accommodate the projected pupil population living within these new developments. This proposal does not affect the current agreed catchment area for Letham Mains or the need for the new primary school for the Letham Mains catchment area. The new primary school at Letham Mains is projected to be completed in 2020.

8.13.5 The Council has considered the temporary "hosting" arrangements for new pupils moving into the new houses at Letham Mains during the initial house build years while the new primary school facilities at Letham Mains are being built. This will allow a viable pupil roll to develop while the new permanent school facility is being built. The temporary "hosting" arrangement at King's Meadow Primary School is predicated on the school's capacity to accommodate the projected pupil numbers arising from the committed Letham Mains housing development during construction period of the new school. Due to legislation, the "hosting" period can only last up to a maximum of 36 months. The housing development phasing is such that the school would be ready for the children over that period of time. The school's capacity will be continually assessed (as is the case with all schools), in comparison to roll projections from the catchment area it provides for, and all new house building (of 5 units or more) which occurs within this area.

8.13.6 As stated in paragraph 31, page 15 of the Consultation Proposal Document, the current overall condition of Haddington Infant School as reported to the Scottish Government in April 2017 is rated as 'B - Satisfactory' and King's Meadow Primary School is rated as 'C - Poor'. The current suitability rating as at April 2017 of Haddington Infant School is 'A – Good' and King's Meadow Primary School is rated as 'B – Satisfactory'. Planned internal works at King's Meadow Primary School including new sliding screens to the dining hall, kitchen upgrade of internal wall linings, acoustic upgrades to classrooms, external window replacements and upgrade to fire doors during 2017/18 are now complete pending snagging. Following completion of these works, the condition and suitability rating of the school will be reviewed and it is anticipated that the revised Condition rating for King's Meadow Primary School will be set as 'B - Satisfactory'.

8.13.7 It is difficult to provide an accurate timescale for the life expectancy of a building as there are many factors to take into consideration (e.g. construction type, materials used, current/future planned and reactive maintenance, cyclical replacement of building elements including M&E Services etc.).

8.13.8 A rolling programme of Condition Surveys are carried out every 3-5 years (together with other periodic assessments including Suitability Assessments, Fire Risk Assessments, Summary Accessibility Audits etc.). Any building elements which require work to be carried out are highlighted in these Reports as they are assessed in terms of their condition, priority level etc. This data is used to allow the Council to programme future refurbishment/replacement to our Public Building Assets, subject to budgetary constraints.

8.13.9 In addition, statutory compliance maintenance and planned maintenance are carried out on Public Buildings which includes legionella monitoring and remedial works, asbestos assessments/works, mechanical and electrical planned maintenance (such as lifts and electrical testing etc.).

8.14 Shared Assemblies

8.14.1 The maximum capacity for the Gym Hall at the Haddington Joint Campus is 514 and the maximum capacity at King's Meadow Primary School is 634. While the capacity of each hall will present opportunities for shared assemblies across different stages, it would not be possible to have a whole school shared assembly in either of these halls if the total roll exceeds the maximum capacity of either of these two halls.

8.14.2 An alternative solution would be to have a whole school shared assembly in a community facility nearby that would have the capacity to accommodate all the staff and pupils, for example the Haddington Corn Exchange.

8.14.3 This would not be a unique situation for the proposed new school as there are other schools in East Lothian where the capacity of the school hall is not large enough to accommodate the whole school all at once. In such instances, staff embrace the opportunity to hold cross-stage assemblies to share learning, support inter-disciplinary learning experiences and develop further a sense of belonging to one community.

8.15 Catchment area for the new school

8.15.1 There are no plans to change the school catchment area for Haddington. The associated catchment area for the proposed new primary school would be established in name at the same time as the new school. The new associated catchment area will follow the existing boundary of the Haddington primary catchment area which currently serves both Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School.

9. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

9.1 In accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal. The Education Scotland report can be read in full at Appendix 5.

9.2 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 representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal; and
- visits to the sites of Haddington Infant School, St Mary's RC Primary School and King's Meadow Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

9.3 Section 4 of the Education Scotland report summarises their findings and conclusions as follows:

"4.1 Overall, there are clear educational benefits to the proposal. Closing Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and establishing a new primary school with an associated catchment area for Haddington provides an opportunity to improve learning and teaching and further raise attainment for all children in the catchment area. The establishment of a single staff team working together to ensure continuity and progression from P1 to P7 should bring greater curricular coherence, improved consistency of expectations and increased moderation of standards. Children will benefit from improved progression planning to better meet their needs. Removing the need for an additional transition to a different school at the end of P3 is likely to reduce any possible risk of a slowing down of progress as children

progress through the first level of Curriculum for Excellence. The proposal is in line with the aims and aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence.”

East Lothian Council’s Response to Education Scotland’s Report

- 9.4 East Lothian Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts its findings. The points raised by Education Scotland within the Education Scotland Report were also key themes identified through the consultation process and are addressed in Section 8 of this consultation report. The main points identified in the Education Scotland report for further consideration and clarification are as follows:

“4.2 Parents and staff across the two schools hold significantly different views about the educational benefits of the proposal. In taking the proposal forward, the council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and to address their concerns. The council now needs to work with its stakeholders to agree an appropriate timescale for implementing its proposal. In taking its proposal forward, an effective communication strategy and an action plan based on the needs of both schools will be essential for the council to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged. The council should include details of these in its final report.”

- 9.5 The Education Authority has set out its commitment to ongoing engagement with all stakeholders and the process for taking the proposal forward within Section 8.11 and Section 10 of this consultation report. Details on the process for transitioning to the new school structure were also made publicly available during the consultation period through the Frequently Asked Questions document on the Consultation hub and shared at the Public meeting.

10. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

- 10.1 Subject to the conclusion of the Scottish Ministers eight-week call-in period or the notification of the outcome of a call-in, as appropriate, if approved, the closure of Haddington Infant School and King’s Meadow Primary School and the establishment of the new primary school and its associated catchment area will take effect from August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- 10.2 As stated earlier in Sections 8.10 and 8.11, the first step in establishing a new school is the recruitment of the Head Teacher. The two affected schools would continue to function as two separate schools with separate budgets and staffing structures until the Head Teacher is in post.
- 10.3 Once in post, the Head Teacher will assume responsibility for the leadership and management of both schools during the transition period to the new single school structure. The Head Teacher will work closely with staff in both schools to discuss their aspirations and establish an appropriate staffing structure to meet the needs of learners

across the two campuses. The Head Teacher will work closely with existing senior and middle managers in both schools to determine roles and remits in line with the needs of learners and context of the new school.

10.4 The budgets for the affected schools would remain as set for the next academic session under the responsibility of the appointed Head Teacher until the establishment of the new school. Any additional resources required to assist the Head Teacher during the transition period will be provided.

10.5 Once a Head Teacher is appointed and in post, a Transition Action Group would be set up comprising the new Head Teacher, staff and parent representatives from both schools as well as council officers and trade union representatives. The new Head Teacher will lead the Transition Action Group. The remit of the Transition Action Group would be to create a Transition Action Plan with a phased approach specifying clear targets and agreed timescales over an appropriate timeframe to ensure community involvement in the process. School staff will involve children, as appropriate, in the development and delivery of the Transition Action Plan. The Education Authority will take forward the establishment of the new school in partnership with the Transition Action Group.

10.6 The Transaction Action Plan will include but is not restricted to:

- the name of the new school and nursery class
- the uniform
- school logo and website
- the formation of the new Parent Council
- consideration of a common school day (start/finish/lunch etc.)
- curriculum rationale and delivery, i.e. approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment
- stage to stage transition policy

10.7 The Council is fully committed to ensuring continuity of provision for children who will be affected by the proposal. Children currently attending Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School will not be significantly affected by the closure of the two schools as the new school structure would operate within the existing buildings and facilities of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School. For those children with Additional Support Needs there are well established procedures to identify particular learning needs and provide the required support measures during transition. Such work involves close liaison with parents and carers and, where relevant, Community Planning Partners. During the transition period, the new Head Teacher will support collaboration between the Support for Learning team across both schools. Support for Learning staff would liaise with each other to ensure that the learning,

pastoral and social needs of children are met fully.

- 10.8 The current policies on School Admission and Placing Requests would continue to apply to the new school. There is no change to the physical catchment boundary for Haddington as a result of this proposal.
- 10.9 Parents of eligible pre-school children would continue to apply for early learning and childcare provision at the new primary school nursery class through the Council's existing Nursery Admissions processes.
- 10.10 Denominational primary aged children from the associated catchment area of the new primary school would have the option to attend St Mary's RC Primary School if they wish to do so as per current arrangements.
- 10.11 Secondary aged children from the associated catchment area of the new primary school would attend Knox Academy as per the current catchment arrangements.

11. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES

- 11.1 Section (10) (3) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Consultation Proposal Document which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.
- 11.2 In one of the questionnaire responses submitted during the consultation period, the respondent alleged that the lack of research or information in the Consultation Proposal Document on the positives for retaining the status quo and retaining two separate schools was an omission.
- 11.3 As stated earlier in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of this report, the statutory consultation process is predicated on consulting on a proposal that is viable and deliverable and represents the very best educational outcomes for its young people. The 2010 Act requires Education Authorities to produce a comprehensive Education Benefits statement that clearly sets out the benefits for children and young people affected by the proposal and that the closure of a school is proposed for positive educational reasons. The 2010 Act also requires HM Inspectors to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal having regard, in particular, to the Educational Benefits statement. The proposal has been put forward by the Education Service to address the additional challenges present at the two affected schools for children, staff and parents with regard to the additional stage transition between Primary 3 and Primary 4 and continuity and progression for all Nursery to P7.

11.4 The challenges of the additional stage transition across two separate establishments have been present for a number of years and although both schools have worked to develop more consistent approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, it has not been possible to fully address this through the “status quo”. Prior to undertaking the statutory consultation, East Lothian Council contacted professors in order to determine whether to take forward the proposal or not. This research informed the proposal and the Educational Benefits statement. The Educational Benefits for this proposal were clearly set out in paragraphs 47(A) to 47(L) on pages 18 to 20 of the Consultation Proposal Document. The Council believes it has complied with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and that the lack of research or information on the positives for retaining the status quo within the Consultation Proposal Document does not constitute an omission. Any specific questions regarding the research undertaken that was received during the consultation period have been responded to in Section 8 of this consultation report.

11.5 There were no other areas identified by the Council or respondents as being inaccurate or omitted from the Consultation Proposal Document during the consultation period.

12. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

12.1 Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that:

After the Education Authority has received Education Scotland’s report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

(i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,

(ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,

(iii) Education Scotland’s report.

12.2 Following receipt of 146 questionnaire responses during the consultation period, one questionnaire submission received after the consultation period had ended, and consideration of oral representations made at a public meeting held during the consultation period, officers reviewed the proposal.

12.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by relevant officers within the Council’s Education, Finance, Human Resources and Property Services. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of sections 9(1), 12 and 13(3) (b) of the 2010 Act.

13. LEGAL ISSUES

13.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 throughout this statutory consultation.

13.2 The Council is mindful of its duties in respect of equality and the Equality Impact Assessment did not identify that any parent, child or young person would be treated less favourably as a result of this proposal.

13.3 Under the terms of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without having reviewed the relevant proposal having regard, in particular, to:

- a) relevant written representations received from any person during the consultation period;
- b) oral representation made to it by any person at the public meeting held on 7th February 2018;
- c) the Education Scotland report;
- d) preparing a Consultation Report; and
- e) waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.

13.4 As it is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in written form, if required, on 29th March 2018, this meets the statutory requirement to publish this report more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by East Lothian Council.

14. SCOTTISH MINISTERS CALL-IN CLOSURE PROCEDURE

14.1 At the end of the consultation process, Section 15 of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* enables Scottish Ministers to call-in a decision to implement the proposed closure of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and establishment of a new primary school and its associated catchment area for Haddington.

14.2 Beginning on the day that a final decision has been taken, the Council must notify Scottish Ministers of this decision within a period of six working days. Scottish Ministers then have a period of eight weeks from and including the date of decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. The Council must publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified and that representations can be made to the Scottish Ministers within the first three weeks of the eight-week period. The Scottish Ministers will take into account any relevant representations that were made to them by any person within the first three weeks. The Council may not proceed with the implementation of the proposal until this eight-week period has passed.

14.3 If the Scottish Ministers decide to call in a closure proposal, it is then referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels who has a period of seven days after a call in notice is issued to constitute a School Closure Review Panel. The Panel may decide

to refuse consent to the proposal, refuse consent and remit it to the education authority for a fresh decision or grant consent to the proposal, either subject to conditions, or unconditionally. The Panel must notify the education authority of its decision within eight weeks from when the Panel was constituted or within 16 weeks if the Panel has issued a notice to the education authority that a decision has been delayed. The Council may not proceed with the implementation of the proposal until the outcome of the call-in has been notified to the Council.

15. PERSONNEL ISSUES

15.1 The staffing entitlement for the new school will be set in line with the primary and nursery pupil roll of the school and calculated in accordance with the approved Scheme of Delegation for Schools and the Council's DSM policies. Revised staffing arrangements for the new school will be managed in line with the Council's 'Protocol for School Merger'.

15.2 The post of Head Teacher within the new school is deemed to be a "new" job against which Head Teacher(s) of the closed schools are not eligible to claim a match. The recruitment of the new Head Teacher will be carried out in line with current East Lothian recruitment procedures, appointing the best candidate for the vacancy. Recruitment will be open to all appropriately qualified staff from East Lothian and beyond. The Council has an obligation to redeploy any displaced Head Teacher to an appropriate vacancy within the Council. Successful redeployment would depend on a number of factors, as set out in the relevant procedure for the appointment of teaching staff, and would be subject to consultation with the relevant Parent Council. All staff, other than the Head Teacher(s), from the closed schools will be eligible to be matched to jobs in the structure of the new school.

16. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

16.1 No environmental issues have been identified with regard to this proposal.

17. CONCLUSION

17.1 Officers of the Education Authority have considered carefully the written representations, including the Education Scotland report. Having reviewed the feedback from consultees, officers conclude that the basis of the original proposal remained the best solution to address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents at these schools.

17.2 The proposed closures and establishment of a new primary school will create a positive environment for more effective learning and teaching that is better matched to the needs of the children across the stages. It will provide the opportunity to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum from Nursery to P7. It will also provide the

opportunity to improve the consistency of learning and teaching approaches to better meet the needs of all pupils. This will support much smoother and improved pastoral and curricular transitions across the stages. In addition, this will also enable staff to work with children across the school which will provide enhanced support for their learning.

17.3 The key messages deriving from the consultation period are as follows:

- 43% of all individual questionnaire respondents (62 responses) to the consultation were in favour of establishing a new primary school covering Nursery to P7 for the Haddington area, 49% (71 responses) were not in favour and 8% (12 responses) had no opinion;
- There were responses from 2 groups during the consultation period. Both of these were from the Parent Councils of the two directly affected schools who took a neutral position;
- During the consultation period, Council officers visited Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School providing good opportunities for pupils and staff to discuss their views. Pupils from Haddington Infant School were in support of the proposal, while the majority of pupils from King's Meadow Primary School were unsure.

17.4 Education Scotland has identified that the proposal would lead to clear educational benefits for children. This includes *“the opportunity for seamless progression in learning for all children from nursery to P7, in line with the aims and aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence”*. The proposal provides scope to *“improve learning and teaching and further raise attainment for all children in the catchment area... bring greater curricular coherence... improved consistency of expectations and increased moderation of standards... and reduce any possible risk of a slowing down of progress as children progress through the first level of Curriculum for Excellence”*.

17.5 The Council now has 3 options to consider, namely:

- a) adopt the proposal;
- b) withdraw the proposal;
- c) undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal.

17.6 If the Council adopts the proposal, it would be on the basis that the educational benefits set out in the Consultation Proposal Document would materialise.

17.7 In withdrawing the proposal, the two schools would remain as separate establishments with separate staffing structures, management teams and identities. While the Education Service would continue to work with both schools to focus on the

improvement in the consistency of learning & teaching and continuity and progression the Council may not be able to fully address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents to better meet the needs of all pupils. The Education Bill 2018 will also determine the extent to which the local authority will be able to influence such improvements.

18. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

18.1 On the basis of the feedback received and taking account of all of the educational and social benefits of the proposal, it is concluded that the following proposal is the only viable and deliverable option to address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents at Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School.

18.2 Following the conclusion of the Scottish Ministers eight-week call-in period or the notification of the outcome of a call-in, as appropriate, it is recommended that the Council approves the following:

- Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School will be closed and a new primary school covering Nursery to P7 and its associated catchment area will be established for Haddington.

Fiona Robertson
Head of Education
March 2018

APPENDIX 1: COMMENTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Of the 147 questionnaire responses, 98 contained comments of whom 33 declined permission to make their comments publicly available. However, their representations have been taken account of and responded to in Section 8 of this Consultation Report. The summary of comments below, were made from the remaining 65 responses who gave permission to share their comments publicly.

Responses from Groups

King's Meadow Parent Council

Comments
<p>We have had a number of discussions where parents have expressed views both in favour of and against the merger. We spent time gathering parents views regarding the positives of both 2 separate schools and a new combined school so wanted to include these:</p> <p>POSITIVES FOR MERGER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is currently a different approach to teaching in each school and this leads to wasted time when children go to Kings Meadow. Examples are: cursive handwriting, a different approach to teaching maths and lack of consistency from p3 and p4 e.g. in expectations of learning times tables.• There will be educational and financial benefits and as the children would remain in the current buildings, it wouldn't seem too much of a change to the children.• Fewer transitions (there is loads of research about how transition is detrimental to education and this is multiplied for children with additional or special needs).• Less time spent in P3 on end of school/transition activities so more time on curriculum.• Offers more flexibility around staffing.• Will make more shared space available to P4-7 cohort.• Consistency of approach in both teaching and other policies (although some of this can be done through more cooperative working between 2 schools).• Senior team will know all children so not having to 'get to know them' when they move to P4.• Will only have to prepare one improvement plan, one set of policies, one inspection etc so saving staff time on doing this twice.• Only 1 parent council / 1 PTA – easier for parents with children in both schools.• Easier, more productive relationships with HT and senior staff – it's hard to forge relationships with 2 separate schools.• Children with ASN could maintain continuity with having 1 Learning Support teacher.

- Maintain the positives of 2 stages and gain benefits of joining as well.

POSITIVES FOR 2 SEPARATE SCHOOLS

- Targeted leadership staffing for each phase (although a depute for each phase would address this).
- Individual ethos for each phase (although the split campus and the idea of a Depute each for nursery-P3 and 4-7 would allow this to be maintained).
- Senior staffing is key – if by the merger we end up with one head and 2 deputies, effectively losing half a head (for each school) then that would be difficult to manage, but if it was 1 head and 3 deputies then this would be less an area of concern.
- Both schools are already large and a primary school of around 700 (upwards) pupils would be huge – how likely is a head teacher to really know (eg by name) all pupils of such a large school.
- How easy would it be to manage a school of this size? – there is currently a problem recruiting headteachers due to the difficulty / impossibility of the job and not many people wanting to do it – isn't it going to make the job even harder (eg twice the number of pupils and parents to build relationships with)?
- It will never really feel like one school due to it being on two sites – there isn't even a hall big enough for all the children to meet up for a school assembly.
- Concerns about HT workload.

Responses from Individuals

Responses from those in support of the proposal to establish a new primary school covering Nursery to Primary 7 and its associated catchment area for Haddington

The comments included with those responses received that were in favour of the proposal are shown below, comments are redacted to avoid the identification of individuals:

Comments
Makes sense to have one school catering from Nursery to P7. The school working as one throughout primary years. No transition issues. Common expectations throughout the primary years. Shared understanding and vision from Nursery through to P7.
As a bonus probably cost savings as well which can be allocated to other areas within the school.
I agree with having one primary school on one campus but not one primary school on two campuses. Nothing will really change apart from the fact there will only be one head Teacher. It smacks of cost saving.... if both schools could be housed in the same

Comments

building with the same facilities etc then it could work but not the way the current proposal is set out.

I think it makes sense to have one School offering education from nursery to P7; it allows for more continuity and consistency for the children and ensures that they are not facing three different transitions within their education journey which can cause anxiety and upset in some children. It makes more sense to have 'joined up' working with staff throughout the Nursery and Primary stage, as it is in most primary schools. It ensures that policies are consistent, acknowledged and adhered to due to them not changing within different settings. One thing that does concern me however is the management structure that is in place at the moment. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I feel merging the 2 would offer more continuity And consistency for the children. I do however worry about what will happen with the senior management team and in particular the ht post. I would hope that parent opinion will be considered and listened to, and in particular when recruitment of a new ht takes place.

More money can then get spent on lowering class sizes and resources available to teachers

In theory I agree with the two schools becoming one. There are key issues, like inconsistent reading/writing/marking/ numeracy schemes that are different in the two schools and this can be a problem or challenge for children moving up from HIS to King's Meadow. There are things like Playground buddies that don't currently happen at HIS, that would have helped my P1 child settle in the playground better. So if there was a consistent and whole school approach to all subject areas/behaviour/ethos etc then I think it would be a positive thing. I do however have a few reservations/questions about this new school.....

1) How will the new school ethos/rules/subject schemes etc be decided upon. Is it a case of a take over of one school that has to change everything they do or will there be a joined up thinking and all the good points from both used? If that is the case what funding and provisions have been put aside to allow staff to deal with this transition?

2) How much extra funding and time will be given to staff to deal with the change so that the kids are not being taught by exasperated teachers who are not only doing a busy job, but having extra work put on them to deal with changes?

Comments

3) How will the management team structure and individuals be decided upon? [REDACTED]

As long as budgets are protected and the management transition is disruptive to the current pupils, I see little disbenefit from this proposal.

As a teacher myself I firmly believe it is in the best interests to have a joint school, albeit on a split campus. (This has been proven to be a great success at the same idea of joint school yet split campus at Dunbar Primary: and they have a 10min walk in between, not a 10 second walk!). It enables more fluid flow of learning between the school, the staff are able to move between a wider range of year stages and the children see it as a more connected approach to their learning. There can be a greater buddying system in place, the P7s are able to mentor the P1s for example. You can do paired reading or maths activities with your buddy class. The children can see it as less of HI and KM and more of a continuing of a journey through the same school. With the prospect also of another new school being built in Haddington at Letham Mains, I see it as a great opportunity to create a through school from P1-7 rather than continuing with the disjointed system as it currently is. The sense of responsibility and ownership it brings to the pupils is also much greater. I see this as a fantastic opportunity to bring about these changes which can only be for the better. The positives far out way the negatives, which, in my opinion, are negligible. Fingers crossed this finally happens!

I agree with many of the educational reasons for having a single school particularly transition and pastoral care. However, I don't think it automatically follows that closing and joining the 2 schools will deliver these aims. Most other schools that benefit from having nursery to primary 7 together also benefit from being in one building.

Additionally, they do not have the challenges associated with integrating two existing schools. One exception to this is Dunbar, which ONLY had to adjust to 2 campuses they did not also have to integrate 2 schools with existing and separate identities.

The argument that it would be a more equitable situation for the other primary schools in the cluster is frankly absurd, St Mary's and Yester being both single campuses and roughly a quarter of the size that the joined school would be.

If the proposal was to open a single school with a management budget reflective of the enormous challenge of integrating two existing schools (i.e. that the salary of the now defunct second headteacher roll was made available to employ additional deputies and principal teachers or even to make time available to staff for working on integration) it would greatly bolster the arguments made for the educational benefit.

Lastly the sweeping statement that school staffs ability to move between early and second level would constitute professional development is naive and thin. The converse of this argument is that staff have specialised in stages and developed expertise that could likely be wasted moving them around as a point of principal.

Comments

In summary, while I think that the benefits of a single school are obvious, I think the proposal document side steps the issue that this is not the simple creation of a new school and fails to address legitimate concerns. It is rushed, poorly conceived and leaves me with the impression that my child's experience of early primary will be far from coherent.

This seems a very sensible move and will make a positive difference to our daughter's education.

I believe that, in principle, the proposal does have the potential to benefit my children, both of whom attend Haddington Infant school currently; one child in P2 and one in the nursery.

However, whether the proposal works, will be entirely dependent on East Lothian Council recruiting a suitably excellent new head teacher for the new (combined) Haddington Primary School, as well as the council, as employer, maintaining teaching and support staff numbers at or above the combined current levels, for both existing schools, and reinvesting any savings made, from the staffing reduction (of one head teacher post) in maintaining and developing the staff overall.

Given the difficulty that the council seems to have had attracting new and replacement teaching staff, in recent years, it will remain to be seen, as to whether the council can manage this.

The consolidation of the schools into one will of course mean an expanded school role, and staff count, etc.

In principle, the consequently increased head teacher and deputy head salaries, along with the more diverse professional challenges, implied by a larger school, could have the effect of making the new school more attractive, as a place to work, for prospective new head teacher and general teaching staff.

However, there is the danger that the larger set up will attract candidates who favour fast track career progression over the experience of daily interaction with pupils, parents and other staff. The council must make every effort to address this risk, during the ongoing recruitment process, should the proposal go ahead.

If the council gets the recruitment process wrong, there will be an escalating detriment to educational provision, as an unsuitable head teacher being appointed will be liable to drive away the existing, highly talented and visionary staff, that the existing Haddington

Comments

primary schools already have, as well as failing to create a good team of management and educational staff, within the new school, going forward.

If the council is putting all of its eggs, in the one basket, an excellent professional grade of management team, with a highly nurturing attitude, will be a critical requirement.

It is very unusual to have a separate infant and upper primary.

There is a huge disadvantage for staff working in the school as they cannot easily move between stages (P1-7) and do not see the full picture or have experience of teaching all levels of the curriculum.

The upper primary school must report on children achieving first level which is taught over three years but in KM over one year.

The parents do not like the transition at P4 into a new school. You have spent 3-5 years building up a relationship with staff at the infants school and its hard to start again especially with so many parents working more as the children get older.

Children with additional support needs need to build up a whole network of relationships and trust which can be difficult.

The children's standards are lower when transferring to high school as the additional transition and change of teaching methodologies does not make for a smooth transition.

Lack of older children nurturing and supporting the younger children

Difficult for parents to build a new set of relationships

different aims / values for children to connect with

it makes sense to have one school for p1 to p7. i think it would be a good idea to keep the p1 to 3 in same location as p7 children are alot bigger than p1s

Are the council looking at examples good mergers in east Lothain. Has this worked in the past when head teachers have covered 2 schools in different buildings.

I agree this is a better choice for our children, offering more continuity and consistency of teaching. I do not agree with the current management structure and believe the new primary school needs a more inclusive style of management for the good of pupils and parents alike.

I agree with the proposal in principle, however I would be concerned if any of the current benefits associated with Haddington Infants School (e.g. specialism in early years etc) is lost. Basically, I'd like to assume that the quality of education and care currently in place at HIS (which I feel is high/very good) will continue regardless of the changes. If so, then the merger of the schools could be a very positive move, as it could

Comments

provide a consistent and strong culture/environment throughout the entire primary school years.

I would like to make a few observations following last night's meeting.

Transition: It is crucial that children transfer from class to class with security until a state of maturity has been reached. I would rather it was one school with the same rules / ethos etc. The parents that raised that transition is not a problem were articulate and probably provide a very secure life for their child and so they can cope better with the P 3-4 transition. Not every child is so lucky.

It is much harder for the staff of an upper school to engage with parents. The parents have spent up to 5 years with an infant staff and may not want to start again with new teachers and so don't mention background information that is essential for the teachers to plan effectively or deal with the child in an emotional crises.

Support staff are unable to travel the journey with children and so vulnerable children / parents have to start again with new staff. Yet research has proven that trust is a huge indicator of educational success. Having a transition of school from P3-4 will destroy trust for many children as they are not know by staff in their new school and the parents can't reassure them as they don't know the staff either and the staff don't know their history.

King's Meadow have failed to appoint class teachers this year. This may be due to there being a concern from teachers that they can only ever teach P4 up. Teachers need to be able to teach all ages to see where the curriculum applies to each and every level. Teachers from Haddington Infants and King's Meadow rarely leave for promotion as they can only show limited experience across the stages within their school and not the full range of teaching experience.

Children receive Music and PE etc as part of the reduction in class contact time form different staff in the infant and upper school. There is no continuity from P3 to P4 as there would be in other schools.

The 2 school's curriculums don't match. The school may well be working together but a new Head Teacher will have autonomy to develop and create their own curriculum. IF [REDACTED] is right about the empowering schools then the curriculum in each school may become more diverse and work that is already completed in the Infants repeated in the Primary school.

Comments

Limited HT candidates will apply for an infant school only . HTs want to develop the whole curriculum and may not want to work in such close partnership with another head.

The joint roles may trigger additional management time when put together. It may mean that if schools remained separate they would lose a manager. Only one argument was discussed around this. It wasn't balanced.

If only 20 people turned out last night to discuss the merger is everyone else relatively happy? When the majority of the parents did not want the joined at the last consultation they came out in force. The [REDACTED] clearly don't want this merger but how representative is this?

In the consultation document it talks about best value. Why should children in Haddington be treated differently from every other child in East Lothian and Scotland. I want an all through school like everywhere else!

I overheard a parent saying to a council rep as I was leaving that they were in agreement about the school's joining. Like me they did not talk at the meeting as we thought we would be lone voices.

Parent Council members could be far more effective with one parent council that was for all children and developed the curriculum. and school. Parents either choose which council to sit on, few do both. The PTA have to fund raise for both schools. Parents have to put their hands in their pockets twice as often.

I couldn't even get my 2 children's photos taken together when they were at different schools!

I am in favour due to the consistency this will bring for pupils and parents.

I am a little concerned around a) staffing arrangements - we loose £85k by moving from one set up to the other. Is this just a head teacher salary or are we loosing more than that? A bigger school should, I believe, have more senior staff to assist the head?
b) timeliness of changes. Keen to see a decision made quickly to enable practical progress forward for kids and parents.

If the reason for the merger is due to cost then that's fine so long as the children benefit from the cost savings.

Effectively there is no change. All this is is a cost cutting exercise. One head mistress as opposed to two.

I think it would be best to build one primary school for p1 to p7

Comments

I feel it will make transition from p3 to P4 a lot easier. As many children in P3 get very anxious about having to start a whole new system.

As a parent who has children in P1 and P5 it will be really nice for them to share the same school.

I think it will save a lot of repetition on paperwork as I get a lot of the same letters, emails and text messages from Haddington infants and kings meadow.

I also think the teachers will get to understand a whole family better if they become familiar with children's brothers and sisters of different ages not just the ones in their school.

I believe the current school set up of two schools creates inconsistency in education provision as children move from p3 to p4. It is a big move for young children to undertake and unnecessary.

I believe having the age range of p1-p7 in one school in which they come together can be a benefit for all. The older children supporting the little ones and being encouraged to be good role models. I would hope more could be done with p6/7s supporting new p1s as they move into primary school.

Also the current inconsistencies in the teaching of numeracy and reading and writing is a big concern for me as one of my children is set to move to p4 in August. Knowing how they've been taught in HIS will be completely different in KM seems ludicrous and I would hope that with one school the teaching would be consistent from p1-p7.

From a practical point I would like to know as soon as possible about school uniforms as I'm holding off replacing new ones for my children in anticipation of a colour change.

Also I have 3 children between the two schools and will never get a sibling school photo under the current set up. A school photographer who works across both schools is a small thing but would be wonderful.

Due to the challenges ahead if the schools were closed / new one opened - I feel strongly that the head teacher should be NEW to the schools and have strong and dynamic leadership skills, to help parents and teachers have confidence in a new school identity.

Continuity of education is so important and at the moment this is not always possible with two schools and two Senior Leadership Teams.

It is also a much better use of taxpayers money to have one Head Teacher establishing one set of common values and a clear identity for all the young people in the schools.

Comments

One Primary School for everyone also offers better opportunities for the older pupils to support the younger ones as putting together a programme of mentoring would be easier under 'one roof'.

In terms of leadership, if you close the schools and open a new one I firmly believe that the Head Teacher must be new to the schools and bring an inclusive and dynamic style to the role in order that parents, pupils, teachers and the local community buy in fully to the identity and values of the newly formed school as this gives the best chance of a quality education and the best start in life for a large number of Haddinton's young people.

Sometimes the little things make a big difference and from my point of view having one uniform would be much easier and also the opportunity to have our three children in one school photo would be great too.

The reasons why I think it is extremely important to merge the schools is:

To improve quality of learning for the children as there are, currently differing standards in quality and standards reports for the 2 schools and hopefully one management team deciding on curriculum on one merged schools can improve this.

Better knowledge of whole primary curriculum by moving teachers throughout the stages from P1 to P7 which hopefully give them a better understanding of the requirements at each year group and improve learning for the children.

2 differing management team affects the children i.e. way in which both school agree on dividing children into classes is different in both schools

There is some joint working i.e. over a behaviour policy so surely having only one school deciding on this with one management team (and one Parent Council) is far more effective.

I have serious concerns that if we remain as 2 stills then the Education Bill could further result in the schools being operated even more differently

Whilst there is a massive amount of discussion re transitions I think for the majority of pupils this isn't concerns however if we are about getting in right for every child then those children with learning needs or not as confident are adversely affected by the transition and require more management time to ensure it works ok, and also for those supported by a special needs auxiliary they then loose this support as the move between 2 different schools, whilst in one school the support employee could move with the child and continue to support them.

I don't think there is any advantage in being 2 smaller schools for teachers, pupils or parents and am not aware of any evidence that suggests that pupils in smaller schools have a higher level of achievement.

I see advantages for pupils and teachers following the proposed merger.

For pupils they could experience a smoother transition through primary school under a unified management team.

Comments

Teachers potentially will have more opportunities to transfer between years and influence both ends of the primary.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The behaviour policy seemed more punitive at King's Meadow and counterproductive. We felt the open layout and size of the school also didn't help children with attention difficulties. We would hope that this merger and improvements to infrastructure allows the management team to focus on nurturing all children throughout primary to become confident individuals.

One primary school from nursery to P7 should have been established when the new HI campus was originally opened. The parents who objected to having one school identity (at that time), in many cases have since transferred their children to Yester Primary or St Mary's! It makes sense to have a streamlined, consistent staff team and management structure, culture etc and therefore consistency for the pupils.

I would like to state that I agree in principal IF there is enough additional support from an increase in senior management team to support one head and IF assurance was given that this would be in addition to current staffing and not within existing staffing levels.

I think it makes good sense to combine the two schools - it seems a shame that this option was not pursued when the new infant school was built. I think creating an integrated school when pupils are in two different building is going to present significant challenges and am disappointed that no detail of how full integration will be achieved is included in the consultation. A strong NEW management team, ideally with members who have some experience of organisational change will be vital if this exercise is to be more than simply cutting senior staff to save a bit of money - which is how it appears at present.

I agree that the schools need to merge but it has to be done correctly and in a timely manner - not half way through a school year. There has to be a strong, enthusiastic head teacher to take charge of the merge and bring it forward to unite the two schools. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Problems with behaviour and discipline in King's Meadow is outrageous and needs to be sorted before they bring down another schools name. I worry this has not been thought through fully and will just be put together in a panicked rush just to save money for the year ahead!

Responses from those who are not in favour of the proposal to establish a new primary school covering Nursery to Primary 7 and its associated catchment area for Haddington

The comments made in the responses that were not in favour of the proposal are shown below, comments are redacted to avoid the identification of individuals:

Comments
<p>I would question the reasons why other than obvious cost? Both school have the numbers of a single primary school? How do expect a singkehead to maintain quality with double the work load? Why do you need to change the catchment? Will the proposals for the new ' lethamnsind primary ' go ahead or are you just going to expand the catchment for the existing and further dilute the quality ??</p>
<p>This issue was consulted on and an outcome agreed 5 years ago. I agreed with the decision made then. I don't see the reason to revisit it, other than for cost saving measures.</p> <p>This issue was not mentioned or discussed during the 3 or 4 months after the previous Head Teacher at Haddington Infants had given notice of her intention to retire. However a decision was made after she retired to run both schools under one Head Teacher during the "consultation period".</p> <p>I don't believe that the proposal is in the best interests of the children or parents. I see it only as a cost saving measure. However, due to the the way it is being handled, it seems the outcome is a foregone conclusion, which begs the question as to why you are consulting if you have already decided.</p> <p>I would have far more respect for this process if it were honest and said that major cost savings were required and the decision had been made.</p>
<p>Very unsure of what the proposal is and need to read further info on it stems to be closing both schools and reopening with a different name?</p>
<p>Sounds like job cutting, money saving scheme with no thought on pupils education or teachers welfare. If teachers oppose this move then they are 100 percent correct. If they however are for it then they are the best placed people to know the best for children and my views would change.</p>
<p>I feel it would be to much for children with additional needs to cope with, especially changing the name of the school, I am a parent of a child with autism.</p>
<p>- I am concerned that this proposal will adversely affect the children and parents and staff involved in the merger for the following reasons: -Creating a larger school means that pupils may no longer get the same individualised care that they have been doing up to this point. The smaller schools each have their own</p>

Comments

ethos and community surrounding them and pupils benefit from being well known by members of staff due to continuity within that setting and the fact that logistically a smaller number of pupils means stronger relationships. I feel this is very important as pastoral care of the pupils should be a priority as well as education in the more typical sense. If Head teacher and management team are spread more thinly over two campuses and there is more movement of staff between the two I don't see how this high level of care can continue.

- At present staff can be more 'specialised' and focus on the areas of learning most pressing in the early years in the infants and then in the upper Primary. I feel pupils benefit from this expertise greatly and the ethos of both schools reflects the differences between the stages.

- Historically the move up to Kings Meadow has not been identified as a source of concern and has not reportedly had a negative effect on pupils. In fact the pupils feel a pride in being at the top of the infant school and are given more responsibility than they would in a P1-7 setting and then enjoy the next step to Kings Meadow as a rite of passage. These pupils will inevitably have to transition to high school at the end of P7 and the fact that they have already taken this step once and succeeded can be a real confidence boost for them.

- Discipline matters often occur suddenly and without warning and teachers and pupils can require support from management. What happens when that management is in a different building? (perhaps dealing with another incident) - It seems foolhardy to remove this layer of support which is often required, especially for pupils who have specific challenges.

- The proposed re-branding and change of uniform is identified in the proposal as a way to save money for parents, but I would argue that the converse is true. While pupils moving from p.3 -4 will inevitably grow and therefore need new uniform anyway, uniform saved from siblings already attending the school intended to be passed down will no longer be able to be used. This could have a significant impact on parents finances as well as being extremely wasteful and un-environmentally friendly. I understand that grants would be available for those who are currently eligible for PEF but there are many families who are not covered by this who will not have budgetted for buying new uniforms perhaps for several children who would otherwise have worn hand-me downs.

In short, I do not see any measurable educational value to be gained by this proposal. If the current situation was flawed it would be understandable that change was necessary. This is not the case. Any issues arising from transition could surely be eradicated by more liaison and clearer forward planning. The only ones pushing for this are East Lothian Council; not the teachers, pupils or parents. In fact when the previous 'informal' consultation was held, the result was against this very proposal. It seems ridiculous to be

Comments

suggesting the same thing only a few years later. It looks very much like a cost-cutting measure dressed up to look like a positive step when in fact the pupils will certainly be negatively affected by having fewer members of staff to look after them.

I think we have been very lucky to have a situation where children can be educated and grow in confidence at their own pace alongside peers of a similar age. It would be wrong to mix nursery and primary 1-7 in the same school. There is a lot of responsibility on head teachers to ensure safety of pupils whilst in their care. My concern is that Kings Meadow struggle to do that just now, how will they cope having to take on the responsibility of nursery and primary 1-3's as well??

My main concern, for the proposed closure of Haddington Infant School and Kings Meadow Primary School to establish a new school covering nursery to P7, is about a possible composite class the primaries 3 and 4. Which site would this class be situated? Both pose potential difficulties for the pupils. Keeping back primary 4s at the Haddington Infant School or moving the primary 3s up to Kings Meadow Primary School. At a recent parent council meeting I was assured that this would never happen because they would never have a p3/4 composite class but how would that be accommodated in what will be in the near future a potentially overcrowded school while hosting the future Letham Mains School pupils.

Also the history of the unique Haddington education system will be lost.

Haddington infant school is great as it is. Kings Meadow is a dreadful open plan design. I can imagine p1s running round in circles all round the school. The infant school is nurturing for young children unlike Kings Meadow. The transition from one school to the other at P4 gives Children a positive sense of "growing up" and taking more responsibility.

I feel that it's disingenuous of the Council to continually stress the alleged benefits of a merger in reducing transitions for the pupils. Unless the buildings change, young children will continue to feel they are moving to a new school at P4. I'd prefer more honesty from ELC regarding the cost savings in reducing the senior staffing.

[REDACTED]

It sends out a message to parents that a decision has already been made and reaffirms the views among many that this consultation is merely a tick box exercise to satisfy the legislative requirements.

Haddington Infant School is an excellent school with wonderful staff and excellent Learning and Teaching. My first concern is that in the merger, that excellence will be lost. My second concern is that in East Lothian's struggle to appoint Headteachers, [REDACTED]

Comments

[REDACTED]

Both my daughters attended Haddington Infant School and had a very positive experience there. It is a wonderful school with a great ethos and I wouldn't like to see that disappear. If the schools are merged into one large school then I believe we will lose the experience my family had at the Early Years stage.

In terms of management of a very large school I feel one Head Teacher is not enough to manage such a large volume of children. I appreciate there will be Deputy Heads, of how many I am not aware, currently there is one for each school but with the extra demands on the Head Teacher I would hope there would be at least another Deputy Head and an extra Principal Teacher. Even with this level of management I feel it is a workload for the Head Teacher that is unmanageable even for the most competent out there.

I can see there are advantages eg. learning support, perhaps a child having the same teacher throughout the different stages, the upheaval of children going to a "different school" though obviously they will still have to move buildings. Educationally I can't see any real benefit and I'm afraid all I can see is that East Lothian Council save a salary of a Head Teacher.

I am concerned about the size of the new school. I like the fact that Haddington has one main school which the majority of children go to - it helps to keep the community well linked - the only way to have this with also not having a massive primary school is to keep infants and juniors separate. I can't see how a headteacher can really know all the children in such a big school. I think it is hard to recruit really good headteachers for all HT jobs (largely because I think that job is extremely challenging) - I think the type of person needed to make a success of a really big school would be even harder to find.

I also think all the change will have a negative impact on staff and pupils for a number of years and I don't think the councils arguments in favour of a merger are strong enough to warrant this. The 2 schools could remain separate and work much more closely together - which is something they are both embarking upon already. And I personally think the benefits of undergoing another transition (P3/4) balance the supposed concerns of this.

The current provision for education at Kings meadow does not meet the standard of that produced at Haddington Infant School. I currently believe that Kings Meadow needs to improve on its teaching and learning, building a closer relationship with its parent council and showing a united front as a staff, this is currently lacking. In short don't damage the strength of the infant school through the merging with Kings Meadow. OR if it is done change the current management structure.

Comments

I worry that Haddington Infant will deteriorate. It's currently an excellent school with a far more nurturing ethos than Kings Meadow. [REDACTED]

This is a cost cutting exercise. Haddington Infant is not a 'satisfactory' school needing to be fixed, it's an excellent school needing to be left as it is.

Nothing wrong with the way it is just now.

I want my child to go to the infant school with their caring ethos and wonderful early years specialist teachers.

This move is being forced through by the Education director under the banner of transition.

I feel that the proposal to close the schools, while well put forward in its support of the idea, has not demonstrated sufficient critical consideration to justify supporting the change.

The proposal looks only to the strengths of merging the schools, namely the reduction of transitions, without looking to the strengths of the status quo or any potential weaknesses of the proposal. No critical rationale of the options has been put forward, leaving omissions not least in the benefits of early years specialisms - as strongly supported by pro-kindergarten stage group UpStart, which ranks among its supporters Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People Bruce Adamson. Upstart states that:

"International evidence shows that children under the age of seven benefit from an educational approach that supports their all-round physical, emotional, social and cognitive development, rather than pushing them towards early academic achievement.

"In the long run a kindergarten stage enhances academic results. In the most recent OECD international review, the three most successful western nations were Finland, Estonia and Switzerland. All have a play-based kindergarten stage for three- to seven-year-old children."

By keeping our early years schools, East Lothian has the opportunity to lead Scotland (indeed the UK) in this respect.

In terms of Developing the Young Workforce, there is an argument in favour of transitions. Fewer and fewer people leave education to join the job they will retire from, or will even have a 'job' in our conventional sense, with many more likely to work on a project/consultant basis. How well our children can adapt to changes will see how they can succeed in these types of environments. In Darwinian terms, it is the most adaptable who succeed, not those who never face changes (transitions).

Comments

To that end, it also feels that the case for the merger in reducing transitions has also not been well made. The school/s will remain with an early years and senior campus, and while there is a strong case to be made for support officers to be enabled to follow families with whom they share rapport, it is not clear why these posts cannot be supported by East Lothian Council rather than individual schools. This model could also benefit families looking to retain support officers if moving house/school within the council area, or moving to high school.

East Lothian Council's Education Dept has advocated the benefits of creating a new school from Nursery through to P7 throughout the Consultation process to date.

Q1. Why has the Education Team consistently refused to acknowledge any benefits to maintaining the status quo of two separate schools, to the detriment of their credibility?

Q2. How can the Consultation be deemed fair and individuals/groups affected make an informed choice when only one side of the argument has been presented?

East Lothian's Council's Education Dept has largely based its argument for a new, single School on the premise that it will remove an additional transition stage. However whilst the transition is no doubt difficult for some, there are also King's Meadow pupils who have spoken of the advantages of the P3 transition from Haddington Infant School to P4 at King's Meadow. Such advantages include getting the experience of a transition under their belt, making the future transition to Knox Academy less daunting; the opportunity to get to know more people in their year group due to class restructuring; and their sense of pride and feeling more grown-up by graduating to the more senior King's Meadow with its change of uniform.

Q3. Will the Education Dept and Council accept that there are advantages to the current transition process between the Schools, as well as the disadvantages that they have widely documented?

The new Head Teacher of a combined Nursery-P7 Primary School would be responsible for over 800 pupils and have a very demanding remit. This new leader would be absolutely critical to the success of a new, single School.

Q4. How realistic is it within a School of over 800 pupils that pupils would be known by the Head Teacher on an individual basis?

Q5. How confident is the Council that this challenging post will be filled within the right timeframe and by the right candidate, given, for example, that it took several months for the Head Teacher post at King's Meadow to be filled last time it was advertised?

Q6. Will the Council confirm that the new School Management Team will not only have to deal with establishing a new School over two campuses, but will also have to deal with the temporary accommodation of children for the yet-to-be-built Letham Mains Primary

Comments

School? If this is the case, would it not be far less disruptive to the children's education to at least waited until this this temporary arrangement had passed?

Q7. Will the Council admit that the new School will deliver cost-savings in terms of management costs?

Haddington Infant School has built up a solid, early years education specialism with a very experienced education team. King's Meadow also for the middle/senior Primary School years.

Q8. What exact safeguards will be put in place to ensure that these specialisms are not diluted within a significantly larger, merged School?

Q9. If the Schools merge, can the Council guarantee that there will not be a situation where a P3/P4 composite class is created meaning that some children will be situated on a different campus from the rest of their year group? Could this be considered an advantage of the existing set-up?

The Consultation paper states that shared assemblies would be a benefit of new, single School. Yet current staff from both Schools have admitted that neither existing School possesses the capacity to make such an assembly possible.

Q10. Given that neither School has the space to host a 'shared assembly', is this a concept that is only a benefit in theory rather than in practise?

Although I understand the reasons listed in the consultation paper, I also feel that there are other issues that are not addressed.

The term "best value" is mentioned several times. In my personal view, one of the key factors in how a school can provide best value for my children, is the ratio between Head Teacher and pupil numbers. At a time where there are increasing pressures on Head Teachers, I do not understand why we would insist on asking Heads to be in charge of twice the number of children.

Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School have created fantastic, nurturing atmospheres, run by close-net teams of specialist teachers. This has largely been achieved because they are not a super-sized Primary School.

Both schools are working hard to improve the transition from P3 to P4 and are increasing the number of shared policies, such as the new behaviour policy. Why can we not continue to build on this rather than go through the upheaval for all involved of creating a new school? This will have an immediate detrimental effect for pupils and staff for the next few years.

As I work in the education sector myself I can see both the benefits and drawbacks to proposed merger. However, I personally think that creating one large primary will not do much to raise attainment. This will only be achieved with strong leadership. What is required is two great heads in charge of two separate schools that have enthusiastic and motivated staff that collaborate on matters that effect things like pupils transitioning

Comments
from P3 to P4. Head Teachers and classroom teachers are already under a lot of pressure. An increase of school size will not help.
Infants is a wonderful nurturing environment and I have no reassurance that this would not be lost if the schools become one.
Waste of hard work that both schools have put in to create their school communities etc. Why go through all of this when continuity can occur across the two schools if both HT's worked together. This is unfortunately being proposed to save money and not with the children's best interests.
It seems like a whole cost cutting exercise. 1 head teacher cannot be in 2 schools at the same time. Different buildings need different authorities for there to be any structure! Policies need to be in place to cover bullying in both areas.
This proposal already seems to be agreed upon - views really have no real worth as councillors still make ultimate decision. How is this fair? A lot of work, policy practice and documents which schools have worked hard on may be scrapped and redone. This could hinder what is working well currently. If it is not a new head teacher that overtakes then it, in respect, seems HIS will become and add on to KM. The School (HIS) means a lot to the community shutting may hinder memories and jobs. If there are surplus staff, are they redeployed. If so, how is this decision made. As one of the newest staff members I feel VERY anxious that I will be told to leave without my wishes. Our jobs having chose to work here may be in jeopardy.
It is unnecessary and will cost money and possibly jobs.
Bloody ridiculous idea. First the council gets rid of lollypop ((people) (crossing guards)) then they shut 2 perfectly good schools to "save costs". I chose this school for my child for the personal and "smaller school" atmosphere, only to find 4 months later they are moving it again! To make room for the new developments and the kids therein. For god's sake just leave it as is, stop messing everything up to save yourselves money!!

Responses from those who had no opinion or did not answer

The comments made in the responses that held no opinion or did not answer are shown below, comments are redacted to avoid the identification of individuals:

Comments
As a member of staff in a school my concern would be for staff and pupils at these schools having to cope with one management team. In my experience a head teacher or other senior member of management needs to be available within the building at any given

Comments

time. A school operating over two sites albeit not far would cause disruption to the day to day management and running of classes and staff needs.

I agree it is of benefit to the children's education to reduce the number of transition periods, however if the school is to have such a large pupil role and be split across 2 sites a large amount of this benefit disappears. It is mentioned in the proposal that in order to aid with this there will be measures such as combined assemblies, however that is a very large number to children for an assembly and nowhere large enough to hold it. The benefits of knowing the teachers are largely negated by a split campus, there will be no shared play space which again further negates this. Pupils will still be unfamiliar with the building and it will still feel like a separate school to them. Haddington infants was on a split campus and there was great delight that the school would no longer be in this situation and yet it seems the plan is to return to that. I believe the benefit will largely be financial with little impact on the children's education and the possibility of a negative impact due to the size of the school.

As an aside, the comments regarding uniform are laughable. They will make little difference to parental costs in the long term but will add to the expense for parents at the point of merger. Maybe a new uniform should be provided to all children as a way to ensure this does not happen.

If it improves or maintains the quality of the current schools (and I don't see why it would be detrimental) I don't have an issue with this proposal.

There has not been enough information provided to parents about what the new school, and management team, are proposing to do to create a whole school environment. How are the two campuses going to be utilised so that there is not a divide like there is currently. Is the headteacher position going to be advertised publicly, or has that decision already been made. There has been no information provided detailing what the pros of this move are. How are parents meant to make an informed opinion, and answer any questions in a questionnaire, without this information.

Very little information has been provided on what this actually means for the schools. On face value it appears to be a cost saving exercise that there only needs to be a single head teacher overseeing both schools.

If this is the case it would be far more transparent to simply explain that to parents rather than dressing it up as something else.

The Council has to my knowledge set out only the rationale for pursuing the merger, not mentioning any factors which might be relevant to keeping things as they are. This greatly undermines the credibility of the proposals, in particular the contention that it is not a cost saving exercise.

Comments

Effective, responsive leadership will be absolutely key to making the merger a success, establishing and maintaining a real SM Team which communicates excellently and whose actions fully complement each other.

With the proposals for HTs to have ever more responsibilities, including many on the managerial/ financial/ non teaching side, I truly struggle to see how the council can recruit high calibre people able and willing to undertake such a role. It is becoming a totally unreasonable "ask".

APPENDIX 2: NOTE OF PUBLIC MEETING

STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

PROPOSAL - PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HADDINGTON INFANT SCHOOL AND KING'S MEADOW PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ITS ASSOCIATED CATCHMENT AREA FOR HADDINGTON

WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2018

KNOX ACADEMY, HADDINGTON

PRESENT:-

Chris Webb, Independent Adviser, Chair of Meeting
Fiona Robertson, Head of Education
Lesley Brown, Quality Improvement Manager
Zoe McFadzean, HR Business Partner
Pauline Smith, Principal Officer (Information & Research)
Fiona Brown, Principal Officer
Val McIntyre, Principal Officer
Karen Haspolat, Quality Improvement Officer
Rob Lewis, Senior Information Officer
Katy Johnstone, Graduate Intern
David Gilmour, Web Officer
Councillor Shamin Akhtar
Councillor John McMillan
29 members of the public

Chris Webb (CW) introduced the panel and talked through the agenda for the evening. CW outlined that the panel and additional Officers of the Council were present to answer any questions attendees may have. He stated that any questions that could not be specifically answered at the meeting would be recorded and answered for the person at a later date, within the period of the Consultation Process.

CW identified that a Google link had been set up through which anonymous questions could be asked via attendees phones.

CW then gave an overview of the Consultation process as outlined in the Schools Consultation Act (2010). Further explanation was provided by CW on the potential impact on the timescales if Scottish Ministers decided to call in the proposal. The proposal could potentially be called in due to the nature of both Haddington Infant and Kings Meadow Primary being closed as establishments. The Consultation and any potential call-in process, as related to the Schools Consultation Act (2010) is detailed in the Proposal Document.

Fiona Robertson (FR) then presented the proposal, as outlined in the Proposal Document.

Proposal

- If approved, Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School will be closed with effect from August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter;

- Even if the Council makes the decision to close the two schools and the Scottish government doesn't call it in, there would need to be a transition period whilst that is moved forward, it's not a decision that will be taken without further consideration of the need to involve stakeholders in the transition.
- A new primary school and its associated catchment area will be established for Haddington with effect from August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The new primary school will operate on a split site within the existing buildings and facilities for Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School;
- Members of the parent council asked if we could have representation from other schools in the authority where perhaps the Head Teacher operates across two schools or across two buildings, unfortunately due to other commitments they were unable to come tonight but they are going to the joint Parent Council meeting that's being held on 21st February.
- Children attending Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School will transfer to the new primary school with effect from August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Background

- The Haddington catchment area is currently served by two separate non-denominational schools: Haddington Infant School (Nursery to P3) and King's Meadow Primary School (P4 to P7) with separate operational and management structures.
- One of only two primary catchment areas in East Lothian where P1 to P3 and P4 to P7 pupils from the same catchment are taught in two separate schools requiring an additional stage transition between P3 and P4. Across Scotland there were only three mainstream local authority Infant Schools registered as open as at September 2016.
- One of the key outcomes identified for sessions 2017/18 to 2019/20, as set out in the East Lothian Education Service Local Improvement Plan 2017-18, is consistency in our approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones. This consistency is vital for learner progression, effective transition and raising attainment for all.
- Evidence following the Education Service Reviews of the Haddington Infant School & King's Meadow Primary School in 2016, which are part of the duty of the authority in terms of Quality Assuring the education provision within our schools, highlighted that they needed to develop stronger and more effective links to improve curriculum transition.
- The need for improved transition is recognised internationally, nationally and locally and is central to continuity of education and progression through the curriculum.
- The additional transition between P3 and P4 presents many challenges, the most significant being how to ensure meaningful progression and continuity of learning from P3 to P4.
- This proposal has been put forward by the Education Service to address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents. Providing more equitable education provision across the School Estate where almost all schools operate as Nursery to Primary 7 settings.

Education Benefits

This proposal will provide the opportunity:

- to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum from Early Level through to Second Level;
- to develop consistent learning and teaching experiences for pupils across both existing schools;
- for staff to build relationships with families from Nursery and sustain those relationships through to P7, especially for those pupils who require enhanced support;
- for staff working across stages to further ensure a shared understanding of each child as a learner and expectations and progression from Nursery to P7;
- at this point in time children in Primary 3 with additional support needs and who have built up relationships with pupil support assistants for example, have to start again when they move in to P4 and build up relationships with new staff.
- for teachers to work across all stages of the school which would support professional learning;
- this does not mean that if you are currently a P1 teacher in Haddington Infant School you will be asked to be a P6 teacher, the new Head Teacher would be working with all the staff in the school to discuss their aspirations and what they want to develop skills wise. That is the current practice in all of our schools. The Head Teacher works closely with staff over the skillset they want to develop, in terms of making those decisions around the stages that they work within. We are very clear in Education, and HMI are very clear, that teachers need to understand the curriculum in terms of what comes before and what comes after the stage they are working in. It's absolutely critical that our staff are able to communicate in terms of the breadth of learning, the depth of learning across each of the Curriculum for Excellence levels, and its deemed effective practice in relation to our staff having an understanding of the building blocks along the way. Often that comes from moving from stage to stage to get that understanding.
- to develop a new vision, values and aims which are shared and understood across the whole school learning community from Nursery to P7; It was identified in the reviews that as a learning community they have very distinct vision values and aims and yet they are part of the same learning community.
- to establish one Parent Council with equitable membership across all stages of the school. This would enable parents to build and develop consistent relationships and to influence and support developments across the whole learning community.
- All this will support much smoother and improved pastoral and curricular transitions across the stages from Nursery through to P7.

National context and research evidence

- How Good Is Our School? (4th Edition) is the self-evaluation tool by which our schools evaluate the provision within the school: the provision of education, the curriculum, learning, teaching assessment, pastoral, partnerships – including partnerships with parents.

There is a new quality indicator as part of this new edition of HGIOS and because, nationally, transitions are seen as absolutely critical in ensuring continuity and progression in children's learning and attainment. This quality indicator – 2.6 – is devoted to transitions. It has various themes to do with the aspect of learning and teaching transition but there are also sections around the pastoral care transitions which have been taken account of, in relation to looking at moving the schools to one new primary school and having a seamless progression from Nursery through to P7.

- We contacted professors who are renowned internationally for their work on transitions and looked at some of the research. It's not just curriculum transitions that are important, it's also the social and emotional impact of transitions and we've taken that on board in terms of making the changes. Looking at the impact on P3/4s and looking at educational research in relation to social transitions, relationships, developmental, interactions that our children have with our staff, these elements have been taken on board in terms of taking this proposal forward.
- One of these professors will be attending a future Head Teacher conference to speak with head teachers in relation to the importance of transitions, because as nationally, that is a key area that has an impact on children's learning and progression.
- Supporting Positive Transitions
- Familiar environment is a critical factor, contact with the same people, particularly for ASN and vulnerable children. There are children within the stages at Haddington Infant that receive support from support assistants and other staff and have that transition period when they're moving into P4 and they have to start building further relationships. That is one of the aspects that the educational researcher highlighted that we should be looking to seek improvement, in relation to the children's social, emotional and mental wellbeing.
- Children's relationships with staff and teachers are crucial to their support network.
- Continuity of Curriculum for Excellence: At this point in time we have two very distinct schools and the reviews highlighted the different approaches. The pedagogical approaches within the culture and ethos would be more in sync in one school and there is a need to take on board the Empowering Schools Consultation. East Lothian Council's Education Committee approved East Lothian Council's response to that consultation and we will hear the outcome in summer. There is proposed legislation that would mean that if these schools stayed as two distinct schools, the Head Teachers are able to deliver the curriculum they see fit at each of their schools. In Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School that would impact on transitions, if there was a variability in pedagogy and the approaches to learning and teaching within the schools.
- Leadership and Management, a new management team would be looking at shared pedagogical approaches Nursery to P7 and building on early years practice
- Improved communication – academic, pastoral and emotional.
- Shared understanding of transition – not just the transfer of information about their learning but much more about the impact of transition.
- There would be a sense of belonging in a school that's Nursery to P7 – familiar staff, one uniform, one school website

Transition for All – Next Steps

This is transition for all, this is not just transition for children. This is transition for parents, staff, children and the community. The Council makes the decision on the outcome of the consultation, not the Education Service. However, what has been set out is some of the next steps in relation to if the Council did approve the proposal:

- Appointment of new head teacher as per protocol – there is a local authority protocol in relation to the appointment of the new head teacher for the new school, which would be the first step.
- With the new Head Teacher in post there would be a move to forming a Transition Action Group. That group would take a phased approach to move towards aspects such as the school and nursery name. That Transition Action group would have parental membership, staff membership, trade union membership and it would be a group coming together to make that transition to a new school.
- School and nursery name – the Transition Action Group would be working with the community to determine the school and the nursery name moving forward. That would not be a decision taken by the Education Service.
- Staffing – In relation to staffing, as is the current practice, primary schools funding is determined by the school roll and according to that school roll there is an allocation relating to the senior management team structure. Head Teachers do not have to put that structure in place, for example, in any school generally, if the budget allowed for two Deputy Head Teachers as part of the senior management but the Head Teacher felt they wanted one Deputy Head Teacher and principal teachers, then that is entirely up to them. They determine the structure they would like within the school. In terms of the Empowering Schools Consultation, Head Teachers said that East Lothian Council already allows them to determine their staffing structure and that's not in place in some other authorities. If the combined school is allocated a Head Teacher and 3 Deputies, that is the sort of management structure that could be in place and would be determined by the Head Teacher. This is why the new Head Teacher is critical moving forward.
- Parental involvement – parents would be involved in terms of moving towards one Parent Council, but the Transition Action group would be consulting on the school name, on the school uniform etc. Parents would be fully involved in that timeframe moving forward into one school. There will be an appropriate timeframe to ensure the community is involved in the process.
- Moving to a potential Common school day, timetable – looking at start/finish times, looking at lunch times, looking at it in terms of how the curriculum is delivered across the school, looking at the opportunities for different stages to come together for interdisciplinary learning, for example. This would be something the Head Teacher and staff would work on and the common school day would not change without consultation.
- Curriculum rationale and delivery - the staff would be taking forward the agreement on a learning teaching assessment policy in line with East Lothian's Policy.

- Transition policy (stage to stage): Currently in both schools there are transition arrangements for transferring information on children, as they move from stage to stage. A new transition policy for the one school would be developed.
- All of that will take time and it's important to know that it will not happen overnight. For example if parents feel that the best way to change to a new uniform, that has been decided by the community, is that they only change at the point at which they outgrow the uniform they are in, that's absolutely appropriate. These are the discussions that parents would be involved in and if there is parental agreement that's how you would move forward with that new uniform. Children would be involved in that decision, and from meetings so far, they like purple. Hopefully that gives you an idea of the steps that would be taken and that it would be over time. You need time to make sure that everyone has had an opportunity to be involved in the process. When talking about staffing, this refers to all staffing; teachers, support staff, facilities management in the school, all will be part of the discussions moving forward. In terms of staffing, both schools are due to grow, and we will be increasing the staff in the school as we move forward.

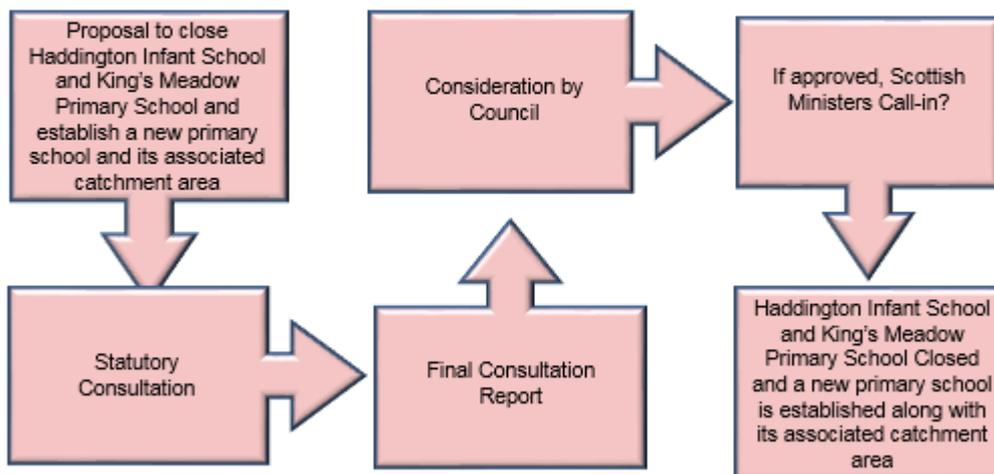
School Capacity

- The primary-aged population in Haddington is projected to increase steadily over the next 6 years.
- The combined P1 to P7 roll of the two affected schools as at September 2017 pupil census is 659.
- By 2020, the P1 to P7 roll of the proposed new primary school is projected to be 787, increasing to 814 by 2023.
- The average size of non-denominational primary schools across the six main towns in East Lothian in 2017 is 430. The average size is projected to increase to 536 by 2020 and 590 by 2023, ranging from a P1-P7 roll of 192 to 1,241. We've got quite a wide range across the school rolls across the school estate.
- Haddington Infant School is due to be extended to accommodate the projected P1-P3 pupils arising from new houses in the catchment area.
- The combined planning capacity of the buildings and facilities of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School, with the planned extension at Haddington Infant School, will be 894.
- The combined planning capacity of 894 can accommodate the projected P1-P7 pupil roll for the proposed new single school structure.
- Further expansion of the buildings and facilities are not required as a result of this proposal.

Map of Locations



Project Timeline



Questions were invited from attendees:

Question (Parent of pupil in King's Meadow):

You said at the start that the budgets are based on the roll. If that's the case, you would expect that added together, the roll would be the same therefore the budget would be the same. However, the

total budget in the document is £87,000 less than the two combined budgets and I wondering why that's the case?

Fiona Brown (FB): It has to do with Devolved School Management (DSM) formula and the number of management roles that the school would get the budget for. You would really need someone from finance to explain the numbers in depth, but some of it will involve the upper structure of the school. Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School could be entitled to two Depute Head Teachers each, under the DSM formula at this point in time, but under the DSM formula a single school of 500-800 could be entitled to 3 Depute Head Teachers.

The parent asked a further question:

So it's not just based on roll, it is based on roll and other factors?

FB: It's based on roll and additional factors. The formula is quite complicated and it is based on a three year average, not just the school roll for that year. They look at the average school roll, the structure and the DSM formula.

FR: Would you like more information on the DSM formula?

The parent made a statement: No

Question (Parent of pupil at Haddington Infant):

This is a follow up question to what we've just heard. At the moment we've got two schools, two senior management teams - and because I work in a school - I have every confidence that both these management teams are very busy. It sounds like we're going to have less people in those management roles, managing the same estate in terms of the buildings and potentially an increasing roll in pupils. It's hard to see how that is an advantage to the young people in those settings?

FR: At this point in time there are very few of our schools that do not have one management team that goes from Nursery to P7. That is how almost all of our schools operate across the county, and that provides efficient education for children in our schools.

The parent asked a further question:

Could it then be argued the children in the schools we've talked about are at an advantage over the other schools that you've mentioned, because they've actually got more support in that management tier?

FR: Not if you're looking at curriculum transitions and pastoral transitions. Remember, we look at this from the perspective of the children as well as the staff. In terms of the children, we're looking at having continuity and progression in our learning from Nursery right through to P7. In terms of staffing we're looking at opportunities to move from stage to stage, building on their skills in relation to undertaking progression right the way through Curriculum for Excellence levels, so it's not just looking at the senior management team. That senior management team structure system operates perfectly well across all our other primary schools in East Lothian, including schools that actually have a split campus at the moment or even schools that are under a shared headship.

Question (Parent of pupil in Haddington Infant):

You've based a lot of your arguments on the educational benefits. In the consultation document there's a whole list of them and you say you've done a huge amount of research on finding this information. I'm curious to find out in this extensive research, did you find no other counter argument that says specialising, particularly in the infant side of things, is better? You found nothing

whatsoever, no contrary person, because I find this slightly difficult to believe. We can always find things to support our existing views.

FR: I think the difficulty that we have is that there are very few infant schools across Scotland. In terms of the evidence base from either the inspectorate or the researchers working within education at this point in time, in Scotland, you'll really be struggling to find schools in any other Local Authority that are Nursery to P3 or infant schools. Unless you change the whole education system, and I'm talking about looking at the system in Finland, for example – and that would be something different to what we have here in Scotland.

The parent asked a further question:

The fact that there isn't any evidence doesn't necessarily mean that it's not there, that there isn't a benefit.

FR: But the rationale for that change has been from the educational benefits that we've got in the proposal, that's why many of the authorities have removed infant schools, because they've moved towards having an early years to P7 primary school.

The parent made a statement:

That's not really answering my question. Just because it's all based on Scotland where there isn't a body of evidence of infant schools, that doesn't mean to say that there is no educational benefits in having them separated. I think that's the concerning thing here, particularly in transition which is one specific piece – there is a bigger picture as well.

FR: It is an important piece, and again, in terms of research you could trawl a lot of the research to find varying views. We looked for experts in terms of not just in Scotland, but that are renowned for their work internationally – before considering that research.

The parent asked a further question:

And you found nothing?

FR: We asked them about the impact of the transition we were looking at in terms of P3/4 and that was the feedback we got.

The parent asked a further question:

No, not just transitions - you've had no one saying "there are some pros to it"?

FR: Not in terms of the infant and the primary. What we had was that even within a Nursery to P7, you may not get positive transitions because there is no clear transition policy. What we had as a counter argument, if you were talking about what they came back to us on, was that because you have one school, this does not necessarily mean to say you have effective transitions. There are multiple transitions around when children move from stage to stage, and if the school does not have an effective process in place, then being in one school will not make any difference. One of the points they made was that you have to ensure that there is a clear transition policy. That was a counter to that, even at early learning and childcare right the way to P7, if the school doesn't have an effective transition programme it can fail.

Question (Parent of pupil at Kings Meadow Primary):

About educational research, what were your findings about the educational research regarding a very large, what I would consider quite a large primary school, of 600 pupils? I know in East Lothian

there are plenty of examples, across Scotland the average is around 400. What was the information that you found on the best size for a primary school?

FR: There is no best size of a primary school and there are positives around transitions. They are fundamentally based on the strength of the leadership in the school, in ensuring that the effective policies and practice are in place and so size doesn't impact. If you've got the right ethos, the right culture in the school and everyone is signed up to that ethos and culture and it's an inclusive learning community. Size does not matter in relation to the impact on the transitions.

The parent asked a further question:

I wasn't asking about transition process, I was asking about the impact on the children and their learning, and how they feel about school – that sort of more general question.

FR: There is no ideal size of a school, it is down to how you develop learning culture within the school. How you ensure a positive learning environment, how you ensure the children have that sense of belonging to whatever community they are part of – and again that's involving the parental community in terms of how they support the school. So you have real strengths, whether it's a small school or whether it's a large school, because it's very much about the ethos and culture of the school.

Question (Member of the public):

You must have done a cost/benefit analysis in appraising this decision and all we've had so far are really benefits, so could you give us some costs. I'm talking about qualitative rather than quantitative costings, some of the negatives you may have found in your research?

FR: In terms of the costs and the educational benefits, this is not a cost saving exercise.

The member of public asked a further question:

I'm talking about softer things, qualitative stuff, so there must have been downsides?

Another member of public asked a question:

Will class sizes get bigger?

FR: The class sizes are determined by the school roll and again we have in place policies for the size our classes can be. We discussed this at Haddington Infant School last week, so again we have set class sizes in terms of P1-P2, and P3 to P7. Whenever we're looking at the makeup of the classes, the Head Teacher will look at the school roll, will determine the classes and meet with the Education service. We work in partnership with the Head Teacher to look at the way that the classes are organised. Class organisation is not something that is just organised by the centre, we look at the number of pupils, where they would fit in terms of class sizes. For example if there was a P3/4 composite in a school across the authority and there are 3 P3s we would be working with the Head Teacher and saying is that the best way to organise those classes. At this point in time, for example, we've got 12 schools across the county where, in liaison with the Head Teacher, we have felt that the formula for working out the classes would not be in the best interests of the children and we've put an additional teacher in as well as an additional class. So that cost benefit analysis of some of those areas like class sizes etc, at the moment, if it moved to one school the organisation of classes or any of those aspects would be in discussion with the senior management in the school.

The member of public asked a further question:

So I guess what I was trying to get out of you, are there no negatives at all to this proposal because we're only seeing positives?

FR: The Education Service would not be making the proposal if it didn't feel that it was going to be a positive aspect for the children, for the staff and for the community.

The member of public asked a further question:

I get that but there may be something, some negatives and positives, could you maybe tell us what they are?

FR: I think there will be challenges moving from two schools to one. They are schools that have existed for a number of years so – from an educational aspect - people are obviously emotionally affected by that change. I think moving to the one school there will be an aspect of moving from two communities into one. I do take on board that that would be a challenge but I don't see any negative aspects in terms of our focus on providing education that's to the benefit of the children in the community.

Question (Parent, Haddington Infant and King's Meadow):

I think we can all agree we're very lucky to have the school structure that we have in Haddington and many of us actually chose to come here, to raise our families here, because of the school size. There's a lot of jargon in this document and there's lots of really good positive educational points. However, as we've been hearing tonight there's nobody who has clearly said that this is a counter argument. We can understand what Scottish Education Policy is, this is a good clear document, however there are lots of things I feel are definitely worth fighting for in Haddington and the status quo has worked for many years. I also think that there are great positives in having transitions, it'd be interesting to hear from Knox Academy on how pupils deal with coming to high school who have already done a transition. Do they transition there better, as opposed to other pupils who come from smaller schools who haven't had that transition. Life is about transition, our children are never going to walk into a job and think "I've done this job, I'm just going to sit at my desk". We have to deal with the challenges and to put the child through two transitions as opposed to one transition, I don't see that as a problem. The specific question I want to ask, there are lots of quotes about the vision, values and aims. These are already being addressed recently, by all schools in the cluster and I attended a meeting where the cluster group were actually talking about having an umbrella vision values and aims. There's great communication between the two schools on many areas. What I wanted to ask specifically, one phrase that keeps on coming up in the document, I'll give you a quote: "establishing a new primary school covering Nursery through to P7 under a single management structure will secure Best Value". I really want to know what that Best Value is because as a parent I think best value is the ratio between head and pupils and at the moment we've got a great ratio. So, please explain what best value is within a new ratio?

FR: Best Value in terms of the Council is ensuring best use of public funding because we are publicly funded. Best Value also means in relation to the provision of Education, so we do feel that a Nursery to P7 provides Best Value in terms of the education that the children will receive and having that continuity and progression in learning.

Question (Member of the public):

I think that this is a really interesting document, I really understand the arguments for it. As interested parent's we're aware of things like early years learning and how important early years are. You've said that you've approached this expert, who has transition experience, both nationally and internationally, and I was wondering what other experts you had approached in other fields across the education spectrum?

FR: We contacted a number of the universities to seek out the experts first, so some of them actually gave us the names of others to communicate with.

The member of public asked a further question:

You asked them for experts on what?

FR: On schooling in terms of the nature of the variety schools, the impact on children in the different schools and also on transitions.

The member of public asked a further question:

But not any other views on transitions?

FR: No, it was in terms of their knowledge of infant schools, junior schools, evidence of attainment within those settings. Those were the sort of areas that we were interested in.

The member of public asked a further question:

But not a focus on early years or where there's different campuses that focus on different parts of the curriculum? As you've said there are very few infant schools to make that comparison nationally.

FR: It was based on what research is there in terms of models elsewhere, on why have we moved to a system where we have Nursery to P7, why is that the reason that we've moved away from having infant and junior schools. Some authorities had an infant school and then a junior school which went to S2 and they've moved away from that. So it was getting information as to why it has moved to that, what would be their evidence based around that, going back to the fact you've got one learning community, one learning environment. We've moved to Curriculum for Excellence that goes from Early Level right the way through. For example, where authorities had junior schools up to S2, which was halfway through a Third Level, they have moved to a Nursery to P7 structure where the average pupil is expected to achieve Second Level by P7. So again partially driven by the curriculum and to enable staff to work together on that progression through Curriculum for Excellence Levels.

Question (Parent, Haddington Infant):

Just looking at the school roll and the fact that the capacity is going to go up, if the Head Teacher is determining how many are in each class what happens about P3/4? Say there's 100 P4's and P3's and the capacity is 30, what happens to the other 10? Do the P4's stay in the Infant School where they're in with P1-3s and their peers are in King's Meadow, or are the P3's brought across to King's Meadow where they would be ahead of their peers? I'm just thinking you're talking a lot about transition but how would that affect the children? Some children might feel left behind, others that they're moving too quickly.

FR: We don't know if composite classes will occur within the new primary school establishment because you can't predict at what age primary children will be coming into the area with all the new build. What we would do is apply the composite class policy. The classes would be constructed using that policy and that's the policy that all of our Head Teachers use. It's only where there are issues over numbers, for example, that it doesn't make a good composite that we would actually look at additional classes. In terms of the building, those are the decisions the Head Teacher would make.

The member of public made a statement:

I'm talking about how you would accommodate that if you didn't have enough classrooms.

FR: We have enough classrooms.

The member of public asked a further question:

If there was going to be a situation where children were in P3/4, there's been a lot of talk about transitions and how that can make children feel, but also if you had to create another classroom is there the capacity within the buildings to do that?

FR: There is capacity within the building for all projected school rolls bearing in mind the schools will be extended anyway. They need to be expanded in terms of Haddington Infant, because of the increasing roll. There is not an issue over capacity. There is a total school roll, whether they come in at P1, P3 or P7, we can't guarantee the numbers. We don't know what the numbers will be. What you do is you work with the Head Teacher in relation to what is currently there, any new families moving into the area and the adjustments that are made, and then the decision would be taken by the Head Teacher and staff in terms of where those classes would be.

The member of public asked a further question:

So there would never be that situation between these two schools?

FR: There could be.

The member of public made a statement:

That's my point, there's a lot of talk about transitions at the moment, it's an actual transition where they are all together, P1-3's and P4-7's but you could have P3's in with P4-7's.

FR: I can't answer that question because it's dependant on the ages of the children and that's no different to any other school across the authority.

The member of public made a further statement:

It is different because if they're in one building, it's not a problem, whereas across two campuses it can make a difference to a child's learning and how they interact with other children.

FB: I'm involved in working with the Head Teachers looking at class organisation and we have quite a number of our primary schools where we have what you'd think of as an infant side and an upper side. So you have your P1-3 at one side of the building and your P4-7 on the other side. When we are looking at it as a whole school, when we know the number of children that are expected in, we look at the legislation. We can't exceed 25 in P1, 30 in P2-3 and 33 in P4-7. On top of that we look at the size of the classrooms as well. In a number of our older schools the classrooms are too small and we can't actually go up to the 33. We do have situations in some of our primaries where you may have a composite P2/3 so some of the P2's who perhaps would have been altogether in one part of the school, some of the P2's are somewhere else in a different play area, a different setting.

Another member of public made a further statement:

It's fair enough to say we don't know if it will happen, but that would have been the situation that my son would have been in if that had happened. If we'd had the single school he would have been potentially in a composite between the two buildings and as a parent of a child in P4, I would not want my child to be in here when all his friends are there, they're having lunch over there, but equally as a parent of a child in P3 you wouldn't want your child to be separated from their friends. I think there has to be some kind of acknowledgement that that could happen, and some sort of policy put in place so that if that does happen, this is what the situation will be because I don't think we can say it won't ever happen.

FR: I don't know if it will happen or not in terms of the school numbers and certainly in terms of each of the stages. The capacity is sufficient enough as it stands but I can't stand here and say it'll never

happen because you've seen all the housing developments in the area, families move in. I think in the past few weeks we've had a number of new children moving in and we can't predict their stages.

CW: I think the point, if I understand it, is if you've got a youngster in P3 and the composite would shift the balance of P3s so that 10 of the P3s were in a different building to the rest of the P3s, or if it shifted the other way so that a few of the P4's had to be in the building with the P3's, that's the specific area. The purpose of this Act is for those sorts of questions to be brought up for clarification and the point is that officers can give you answers tonight, but the point is you've asked a specific question and the purpose of the consultation report is to provide that clarification.

The member of public made a statement:

Yes, and it's just there's been a lot of emphasis on transitions, I can't see that being a positive.

CW: That's the specific bit you're asking about and that's the bit that would require clarification.

Another member of public made a further statement (Parent, King's Meadow and Local Authority Head Teacher):

On that P3/4 composite, it would be interesting to know what Dunbar does because they are not just across a pathway as we're talking about. Also, I'm a Head Teacher for the authority and I benefitted from one of the extra classes this year because of a tricky situation I was facing with composites. In negotiation with the authority I was able to say this is going to cause me difficulty, and in the bigger picture, then I was given an extra class. There were 12 extra classes created this year across the authority to address particular issues and that would be where I would reassure parents that that would be discussed at a support meeting.

CW: If the council's happy with that sort of clarification that might be the sort of clarification that might be in the final consultation report. This is not the final consultation report and this is not commitment from officers as to what is going to be in the final consultation report but you've raised that as an issue and there has been some explanation.

Question (Parent, King's Meadow):

My question is about the building and the planned expansion. We're fairly new to Haddington, just 5 years, so I saw the new Haddington Infant building completed and then my son started attending. Was this expansion a plan from then, that there would be necessary planned expansion or is this a new thing, because it seems to me that it's kind of obvious?

FR: No, it's part of the council's duties in terms of developing a Local Development Plan. Every five years they have to submit a Local Development Plan and East Lothian Council went for what we call a compact growth plan, more towards the Musselburgh area. You may have noticed that there tends to be more housing development in that area but there are also other committed and planned housing developments across the whole of the county. This expansion has been in the Local Development plan and that's why we have been undertaking school consultations in this area because some of the new housing development is going to result in a new primary school – Letham Mains Primary School which will be Nursery to P7 and that will be a new school within the Haddington Cluster. The LDP will have a certain impact on school expansion as well as housing developments that already have planning permission and we call these established planned developments. Areas that have already been given planning permission are taken account of in the school roll projections as well as the impact of planned development in relation to the Local Development Plan, which has been approved by the Council, and again that's quite significant because that goes right across the county, so it is planned development.

The member of the public asked a further question:

Is there an indication as to how long that's going to take, the expansion of Haddington Infant School?

Pauline Smith (PS): There is a 'void' in Haddington Infant School which can be fitted out to create two additional classrooms. The projected completion for the work is the end of 2018 and they're looking to have the contractors on site by the summer holidays.

A Local Councillor made a statement (John McMillan):

Any of you who were involved in the Local Development Plan know that it went through a massive consultation process called the Main Issues Report. The LDP has been drafted, the LDP has gone to what's called the Scottish Government Reporters. All of the work on school rolls, on infrastructure, on schools requirements, has been poured over by our planners, by all members of the Council. Officials have done a great deal of work that will be coming back, we believe, from the Scottish reporter this week. It will go to Council so that planning, and it's considerable planning, down to a level of forecasting school rolls, is also subject to really stringent and rigorous robust review. The first summary of that will come out to Council on the 27th February. It will be further sifted, we will accept it and then it goes back, so actually a similar process but in much greater level of granularity and detail. The questions you're asking about forecasting and accommodation for schools have been addressed elsewhere for the whole of the county. I think its work pointing out a level of work has been done, not specifics about P3/4 and composite classes, but there is a huge amount of work that has gone into that Local Development Plan.

Question (Parent, King's Meadow):

You do have other schools in the county that have the infants and the junior school, are you looking to do the same thing with them?

FR: Yes.

Statement (Parent, King's Meadow):

One of my boys has additional support needs. My main concern would be, I understand the budget gets cut every year, and my main concern would be that it would be stretched even more, and we'd have more problems with him getting extra support.

FR: School budgets are not getting cut every year, school budgets always go up and down depending on the school roll and the formula in terms of what we call predictable needs and exceptional needs. Predictable needs is built in to the funding for the school and that covers a certain range of additional support needs. Exceptional needs is more complex and that's where the schools apply for additional funding from the authority. It's a group of staff, senior managers from the authority, from schools, who sit on that panel to determine that exceptional needs funding. I have to say that we at the centre have absorbed most of the savings that have been made in Education without hitting our schools with those efficiency savings, so we have reduced the staffing at the centre in order that the impact has not been felt at school level.

Question (Member of the Public):

Would there be the opportunity then for children with additional support needs who were at the infant school, when the schools merge together, if they were with a specific support person would that support person then go with them from P1-7, which to me would be a huge benefit to children?

FR: Yes, they would be able to and we know that that would be a change for some of the existing staff in the school, but in terms of some of the positives for children that's where it's working well.

This is particularly in terms of more vulnerable children who may have attachment issues, children that are often looked after and accommodated, we would see that as a positive in terms of a familiar face with those children, supporting and understanding their needs as they progress through the school.

Question (Parent, King's Meadow):

In the document it references shared spaces and assembly space, the idea of having a school assembly together. I'm concerned that there isn't a space between the two schools that would have space to play that important role in the school feeling like one place. This is going to be more difficult with the two campuses, not impossible, but more difficult than a school that doesn't have that issue. Do you have any solutions to that?

FR: There are many ways of schools coming together and it's not always about all of the school being there at the same time. You can have stage assemblies, you can have children working together in interdisciplinary learning, so it's about looking at the opportunities that the two schools have in terms of why they want to come together, what's the purpose of them coming together and it may well be that you change that approach. Working with parents, we've spoken before about whether assemblies have to be on Fridays or should there be opportunities for parents to come at other times. If we have different stage assemblies, we can have different stages in the school coming together and that's currently what happens across our school estate at this point in time. Some schools don't have a hall at all and they are one school. They have to find opportunities to come together, for example in a community hall if they want the whole school as one community. We do have accommodation nearby if that was the case, so it's about thinking through the purpose and rationale for coming together to look at different opportunities for that to take place. If there are big events it's no different, for example, in some of our secondary schools they make use of a community facility for events at particular times of the year, for example, celebrations of attainment achievement award evenings. So schools currently are very flexible in how they use, not just the school estate, but also the community provision as well.

Question (Member of the public):

We've talked a lot about how the two buildings are separate, but they are actually quite close physically. You've got the two playgrounds and the gates are locked so that children can't get out into the public. Is there any possibility, if this was to actually happen, to join the two schools with a covered walkway or bridge, so that staff can actually move easily and children could move easily and safely between the two buildings?

FR: To be honest, the children want a tunnel or a bridge and at this point in time we've actually gone back to planning and asked what the possibilities are. We're aware of school estate in another area across Scotland that actually has a bridge that connects the buildings so it's something we can explore because it's certainly something that's come back from the pupils. We're also looking at the change about the gates, where the access is and what we can do in terms of that access. So we are looking at the possibilities on the back of conversations with pupils.

Question (Member of the public):

To what extent do you envisage children moving between the two sites? You've mentioned that staff would move and the benefits of having familiar faces but also in your slide of what makes a good transition the top point was their environment. So if the children are essentially educated P1-3 on one side and P4-7 on a different side, then they still, although it might be one school on paper, have that experience again of having to learn a new building in P4. This would ameliorate any advantage in terms of transition, unless they are regularly moving between the two sites.

FR: Again, that's one of the areas we would be looking at with the school if it is established as one in terms of what the opportunities are within the curriculum. So, for example, would you have P3/4's working on a common project and could they move either way at different points of the week. As you say, it's separated by a pathway, and it's not impossible for them to be doing that. Then they would be familiar with the different environments that they're working within in terms of buildings. As one community you would be looking for those opportunities as to how you plan learning and assessment and how you plan delivery of the curriculum.

The member of the public asked a further question:

So the idea is there would be a significant amount of movement?

FR: We have to get that in balance, whatever the delivery of the curriculum, there has to be a clear rationale, so why is it they're collaborating and what are the benefits in terms of peer learning. I'm not looking for constant traffic all the time, but what we are saying is that there are opportunities for that to take place. It doesn't mean necessarily that if you're Haddington Infants you are in that building all of the time. We'll explore the opportunities, for example for P7s, as they do in other schools, undertaking reading buddies and there are leadership opportunities. So there are those aspects to be explored as one school and it will be really helpful for the Parent Council, when Helen Gillanders comes to the meeting on the 21st February, where she can share the ideas around that. Even some of our shared headships, we've got new Head Teacher's in post in both the communities that have shared headships and where they've looked at the opportunities that even although they're a few miles away, how they can get children together and how they're working together and sometimes it's not physically moving its using technology. We have, as an authority, been looking at new approaches to technology. We've looked at a new approach to linking classrooms and in some cases we've been using robots. We have new robots now where one class is able to speak to another. Children are able to speak to each other from class to class so there are a variety of ways in which we can be meeting and moving into different buildings, but they don't always necessarily have to do that. It's certainly not going to take away learning time, we want to make best use of that learning time.

Question (Member of the public):

Going back to the point about advantages and you use lots of examples of how you do it in other schools, other schools in East Lothian that are big. You've got other schools that have big school roll. You've got other schools where it's made to work but that doesn't necessarily mean it is better. I don't quite understand why bringing the two schools together would be better than what we have at the moment. Okay they are running separately, I know you focused on the transitions and other people have put it more eloquently than I have about whether or not that's actually as important as you make out. I still at times struggle to see the advantage. All we're seeing is "we do it elsewhere, we make it work" but we don't need to do that here because the status quo works quite well, so demonstrate to us why it's better.

FR: I'll take you back to the school reviews that were undertaken so we currently understand in terms of the areas for improvement that were identified in Haddington Infant and also King's Meadow. As part of these reviews, and at this point in time, those areas for improvement are impacting on children's progress and attainment. When you are saying to me I'm using examples from other schools across the authority, I know that at this point in time looking at some of that provision, the outcomes are better than we are currently seeing here. That might be hard for you to hear at this point in time and I know that has been difficult to hear for staff. The Head Teacher could share with you the Quality Indicator evaluations for the schools now at this moment. The QIs for Haddington Infants are, that have been submitted to the Scottish Government, are satisfactory and for King's Meadow are good. Now at this point in time I'm sure that you would hope that we are

working towards provision that's at least good or better moving forward. Looking at it from a picture of the national standard and expectations at this point in time, Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow would benefit from having Nursery to P7 to improve that whole situation and provision of education of children.

A member of the public made a statement (Parent, Haddington Infant):

I'm possibly the only person in the room who got a bit upset when you said what the pupils want for the common uniform, the colour they want is purple. I find that upsetting. By all means involve the children in decisions like that and get their views once this consultation process has been completed, once we know this is going ahead. You think this might be a good turnout, this is not a good turnout. I wonder perhaps whether pupils are going home saying "we chatted about the new colour of the uniform, it's going to be purple, we decided we want a tunnel". Lots of parents might take some of these comments and think "it's going to happen, they're already asking kids what they want".

CW: The Act says that in taking forward a proposal, because it's about children, the children have to be included. So all the Council is doing is consulting with the children and I guess I can answer for what the Law says. The Law says that Council's must consult with children about proposals and impacts that affect them.

Karen Haspolat (KH): I was the one that spoke to the children in both schools and there was no leading questions at all. Nobody asked them "if there was a new uniform what would you like". Those were the kind of answers they gave and those were the kind of questions they were asking: "would there be a new uniform?". We replied that if the proposal's agreed then that would be something that would be considered and that they would be involved in that. They gave that answer, they were the ones who said they were thinking about purple. It happened in both schools but none of the questions were leading questions.

The member of public made a further statement:

Thank you for your answer. I just think we all need to be a bit mindful of how this topic is generally talked about. Haddington is a small community, it will obviously be bigger, we've talked about that tonight, but I just think that we've got a great document here with lots of great arguments but let's not assume that the outcome is set. I think the language needs to be carefully worded at all public meetings, in all letters, in all communications at all times.

FR: Can I emphasise that I absolutely agree with you about the fact that no decisions have been made. I made it very clear that the two schools are operating as two distinct schools at this point in time in the information going out to parents. We do have an acting Head Teacher arrangement at this point in time. Senior managers met with officers at the centre to determine the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team in both schools, where parents should go if they've got questions and we're making it very clear that these are two distinct schools. It is not for the Education Service to make that decision, it is for the Council to make that decision, however it is for the Education Service to put forward a proposal and if we didn't have a clear educational benefit then we would not meet the duty of the Act.

Question (Member of the public):

Talking about the current attainment levels and impact with transition, in my mind there must be a whole number of variables that impact attainment levels for children in schools. If transition is such a big negative, then surely these two schools would have trailed the others around the county over the many years the schools have existed in this format. You're saying attainment levels in the schools at the moment are bad.

FR: I didn't say it was attainment, what I'm saying is in terms of the Quality Indicators within the National Improvement Framework in which the schools evaluate themselves and are submitted to Scottish Government. Attainment is part of that, yes.

The member of the public made a statement:

If transition is such a negative impact on attainment levels for children, then these two schools should have lagged their peers in attainment over the many years they have been structured like this.

FR: There is capacity for the children to be attaining more.

The member of the public made a further statement:

But there can be any number of factors that can improve that, not just converging them to be suited to one, the Government Education Policy could be impacting on attainment.

FR: There are many factors that affect attainment and I do accept that, staffing for example, but there are other aspects we have been looking at in terms of quality indicators against that national standard. We do know that in terms of the areas that we looked at within the review, there are areas for improvement and they are in terms of the progress of children. There is capacity for the children to be attaining at a higher level. I have been here a year and a half and I can only speak from that perspective. In that time we've undertaken a number of reviews, as we should, as is our duty as a Local Authority. As much as these are challenging messages, the reviews, the quality indicators, the Standard and Quality report, should always be shared with the parental community so there is an understanding of where the school is in terms of its strengths, and there are a significant number of strengths, but also areas of improvement.

The member of the public made a statement:

It's a very basic question. Apart from the transition, which I think we've talked about quite a lot, there doesn't seem to be any evidence that merging the schools will necessarily solve the other problems that may or may not exist. I think the general worry, certainly my worry, is that making a school of 400 to 800 with a smaller senior management team managing that, is actually going to create even more problems.

Statement (Member of the public):

My concern is the cause and correlation, the situation as it is currently and the solution. Is there significant research that supports that that will effect it in a positive way, or could it throw up many more issues that would be more concerning and 10 years down the line we could be saying we should have just kept it the way it was.

Question (Member of the public):

Around transition, you refer to many academic experts, have you actually asked the experts in the room, the parents, what they think the transition process is, positives and negatives. Certainly I've got children in all three schools in Haddington, I've been through the transition stages myself many years ago, and I don't think it's that bad.

FR: Yes, your child may have a positive experience. In the evidence we looked at, there is an assumption that because a child transitions in, we've dealt with all the social and emotional sides of that transition. These are challenging for our children and the researcher is saying that this isn't always as evident. We are adding in an additional transition stage. I accept as someone said earlier that it's appropriate for our children to be challenged, but we are adding in that additional challenge at a very early stage and part way through a Curriculum for Excellence Level.

The member of the public asked a further question:

Are you actually going to engage with the parents? Ultimately we're the sponsors of the school, we're the people who provide children for the school. The teachers do a great job but have you actually engaged our opinion of how that transition process actually works, without just referring to the academic research which isn't necessarily balanced. We are actually the people who are experiencing it on a day to day basis.

FR: And again you have the opportunity to feed that back into this proposal.

CW: From an independent perspective across virtually every school in Scotland, every education authority, every report I can ever remember being written from an HMI perspective, it was certainly arguing that one of the biggest challenges in Scottish Education is transition issues. Largely that was always about primary to secondary and one of the bigger problems was where the secondary schools always believed in a fresh start. Transitions is quite legitimately – not talking about the specific of this particular case – transitions between stages of education is always a challenge and getting it right is a big issue for schools. I'm not talking about specifically this proposal but from experience of many reports that have been written about Scottish Education, certainly in the last 15-20 years I can recall transition was always raised. It was always largely between primary and secondary, and subsidiary to that was stage to stage within schools. Of course what we've got here is an example of an atypical one. It's not common that this transition occurs at a stage of primary school because it's normally happening within a school rather than across schools at primary stage.

A member of the public made a statement:

If transition is a challenge that detrimentally affects education, in this example Haddington Infant School which has come out as satisfactory and King's Meadow Primary School which is good, that's actually bucking the trend because you would expect it to be good to satisfactory. So in Haddington Infants case to King's Meadow, transition is actually benefitting the children. That's just another way of looking at it.

Question (Member of the public):

I've been told that the staff are not to speak to parents about their personal views on the consultation, is that correct, is that the Act?

FR: The staff are employees of the Council, this is a proposal that the Council has put forward. Staff can put in their submission to the Council.

The member of the public asked a further question:

Are they allowed to tell us their personal opinions conversationally?

FR: No, they are officers of the Council.

The member of the public asked a further question:

Is that part of the Act or is that something from the Council?

CW: All teachers are employees of the Council, no matter which Council you're in across Scotland.

The member of the public asked a further question:

And does the Act say that the teachers can't give their personal opinions?

CW: The Act says that teachers should submit their views to the Council.

The member of the public asked a further question:

Can we get the Quality Inspector reports?

FR: Do you mean the school reviews?

The member of the public made a statement:

Yes.

FR: They were done in 2016 and were shared with the Parent Council at that point in time in terms of high level data from the findings. The Quality Indicators for each school should be reported within your 2016 Standard and Quality Report.

The member of the public made a further statement:

I thought it was more recent than that.

FR: Each of those Quality Indicator's has been submitted to the Scottish Government. Staff are working incredibly hard in both schools, but in terms of the areas for improvement that have been identified, as an authority and a with duty to improve education, the Scottish Government are now looking for the actions we are taking in relation to schools that are not good or better.

Chris Webb thanked those in attendance, thanked officers for their time and brought the meeting to a close.

APPENDIX 3: NOTE OF STAFF VOICE SESSIONS

Haddington Infant School Staff Voice Session 25/01/2018

Karen Haspolat (KH) and Katy Johnstone met with a group of staff. Karen Haspolat described the proposal and then there was a group discussion around the following questions and comments:

Q. Could the proposal affect staffing numbers? If two class were joining in a composite there would be a spare member of staff, what would happen to them?

A. KH explained that the schools would be staffed using the associated formula but that as this is based on School rolls there may not be any significant change.

Discussion - Staff were anxious about their job security if the school merges.

Discussion - Staff were worried about children being split across schools e.g. if there was a composite of P3/4 there could be some P3s in the P4-7 campus or some P4s in the P1-3 campus.

Q. How would it be decided on who would be redeployed if there were surplus staff?

A. KH explained that the standard East Lothian Council policies and procedures would apply.

Staff Comment - Frightening for staff the thought of having to move rather than choosing to move (up the school).

Q. Would this mean that we would have to change policies etc and start from scratch in the new school?

A. KH stated that the schools would work together to create a shared vision values and aims.

Discussion - Frustrating that the vision values and aims have just been redone and there was a lot of work put into them and staff feel they have done a really good job and they might be thrown away.

Staff Comment - Hope that the closing of Haddington Infants is done in a sensitive manner, taking into account the history and nostalgia surrounding the school.

Staff Comment - Worries over the cost of uniform for some parents.

Q. Are there any significant monetary savings from the proposal?

A. **Table 8 – 2017/18 Revenue Budget for Haddington Infant School, King’s Meadow Primary School and Proposed New Primary School**

Budget Heading	Haddington IS Budget 2017/18 (£)	King’s Meadow PS Budget 2017/18 (£)	Proposed New Primary School (£)
Core Staff – Primary	718,006	862,714	1,495,720
Core Staff - Nursery	162,450	0	162,450

Budget Heading	Haddington IS Budget 2017/18 (£)	King's Meadow PS Budget 2017/18 (£)	Proposed New Primary School (£)
Other Employee costs (inc Support for Learning staff & absence cover)	135,763	154,258	290,021
Staff Development	1,779	1,639	2,918
Energy Costs	34,268	32,207	66,475
Educational Supplies – core & nursery	19,799	21,464	40,708
Sub Total	1,072,065	1,072,282	2,058,292
Efficiency savings & ICT charges	-28,127	-45,080	-73,207
Pupil Equity Fund	43,200	28,800	72,000
Total Budget	1,087,138	1,056,002	2,057,085

Staff Comment - Overall feeling of anxiety because of the uncertainty

Staff Comment - Worried about being transferred to other years. – HT would decide

Staff Comment - Nice to have the option to teach children through their schooling – in both early years and later

Discussion – Staff Change is scary, change is good, but scary.

Staff Comment - Might not be as scary once the school ethos is established.

Staff Comment - Staff feel the timing of this consultation is not ideal.

Staff Comment - End of the day it's all about what is best for the children.

Staff Comment - Only post that is under any uncertainty is the head teachers.

Q. Impact of new Devolved School Management on current promoted posts in the schools?

A. KH said she could not answer this question at that time but that it would be taken back and responded to in final the consultation report.

Q. What would the process be if we can't find a suitable applicant for the role?

A. KH stated that the normal policy and procedure would apply but that she would hope that this role would be a desirable one for future applicants.

Haddington Consultation - Staff Voice - King's Meadow 29.01.18

Karen Haspolat (KH) and Sharon Fitzpatrick met with a group of staff. Karen Haspolat described the proposal and then there was a group discussion around the following questions and comments:

Q. This is a massive undertaking – what is motivation?

A. It has been initiated by Education Service to ensure consistency through the whole school e.g. better transition, same policies, same approaches, working with the same families etc.

Q. Will the same process be carried out at Prestonpans Infant and Primary Schools?

A. Nothing has been decided about those schools.

Q. Concerns about the time involved, logistics, change of uniform, the time/resource required – Where is this going to come from?

A. We can only plan so far until statutory process is completed and a decision made. If there is a 'yes' decision, then there will be a period of transition. It would need to be a significant priority on the school improvement plan to support the work needing to be done and this would need to be reflected in the working time agreement. There would need to be ongoing consultation- there would need to be a period of community building with staff teams, pupils and parents.

Q. Will this happen by August 2018?

A. It is unlikely to be delivered by August 2018 – the decision with regard to the proposal may be made by then.

Q. The imbalance of management support up to October 2018 feels unmanageable and needs to be fixed now. How will the headteacher and depute headteachers be supported until the new management structure in place? We currently don't have the same coverage re sickness/supply and managing change process.

A. There is a capacity issue across schools in East Lothian as well as nationally. It is difficult to backfill posts. We will continue to work with SMT and support as best we can.

Q. Will there be a temporary headteacher secondment to cover Haddington Infant until new SMT in place?

A. No, the current arrangements will continue.

Q. What timescale after February deadline?

A.

	Date Beginning	Date Ending	Maximum Duration (in weeks)
Statutory Consultation Period	08/01/2018	26/02/2018	7 weeks
Education Scotland Engagement Period	05/03/2018	25/03/2018	3 weeks
Publication of Consultation Report	02/04/2018	22/04/2018	3 weeks
Consideration of Consultation Report by East Lothian Council	24/04/2018	24/04/2018	N/A

Notification of Council Decision to Scottish Ministers	24/04/2018	24/04/2018	N/A
If proposal approved – Scottish Ministers Consideration of Council Decision	24/04/2018	19/06/2018	8 weeks
If proposal not called in by Scottish Ministers – Council Implementation of Proposal	From August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter		
If proposal called in – Scottish Ministers refer to School Closure Review Panel for review	24/04/2018	09/10/2018	24 weeks

Q. Education Scotland – what do they do?

A. Education Scotland will conduct a similar process to this consultation, looking at the educational benefits.

Q. Issue of one school with two campuses

A. If the consultation proposal were approved, the development of the school across two campuses would likely be an evolving process. Dunbar PS, currently over two campuses, has a very fluid approach with movement of staff across two campuses. It would be a similar situation for new school in Haddington.

Q. What would the staff structure look like?

A. It is difficult to say with certainty. There is a formula through devolved school management but the headteacher can make decisions about for example, how many depute headteachers or principal teachers to have. Local needs would need to be taken into account to ensure capacity across both campuses.

Suggestion from Staff:

Communication – there has not been a separate communication for staff about the proposals. It would be nice to know what is happening and to have time to read and digest information before handing out to pupils. Communications to teachers and parents regarding the current shared head teacher post in January was not consistent and could have been handled better.

What ifs:

It is difficult to know what to ask until decision made but then lots of logistical questions will be raised.

APPENDIX 4: NOTE OF PUPIL VOICE SESSIONS

The Pupil Voice sessions were structured workshops with a representative group of pupils from each school. The following are summaries of the discussions and questions/answers.

Haddington Consultation – Haddington Infant School - Pupil Voice – 25.01.18

Karen Haspolat (KH) and Katy Johnstone met with a group of pupils. Karen Haspolat described the proposal and then there was a group discussion around the following questions and comments:

KH - What do you think of this idea?

Pupil Comment - If there is a new uniform I think it should be purple because blue and red make purple.

Pupil Comment - That's weird not having the one school in the one building.

Pupil Comment - You would get to see and say hi to your friends at King's Meadow because you are together.

Pupil Comment - Going to each other's schools would be fun.

Pupil Comment – It would be good to go between the school buildings.

Pupil Comment - They should make a tunnel between the schools.

Pupil Comment - Would be really nice to have a bridge.

Pupil Comment - Seeing new friends would be a good thing, could also make new friends.

Pupil Comment - You would be able to see your brothers and sisters.

Pupil Comment - Would like it to happen sooner.

KH - Is there anything that worries you about this idea?

Q. What if people from King's Meadow see you and recognise you and are mean to you?

A. KH responded that you should do what you would do just now when somebody is mean to you, you should tell an adult.

Pupil Comment - A new uniform might be more expensive for people.

KH - Do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea?

All thought it was a good idea.

Haddington Consultation – King’s Meadow PS - Pupil Voice – 29.01.18

Karen Haspolat (KH) and Sharon Fitzpatrick met with a group of pupils. Karen Haspolat described the proposal and then there was a group discussion around the following questions and comments:

All representatives are formerly Haddington Infant School Pupils

There is a suggestion from one pupil for the name of the new school – “Haddington Primary School”

Questions from Pupils and answered by Karen Haspolat, QIO:

Q. Some pupils have not had much or any information about the proposal and don’t know much about it.

A. Can ask Teachers to provide information about the Consultation

Q. Will both campuses share the same playground?

A. Still separate buildings with separate playground but there could be opportunities to visit other playgrounds e.g. playground buddies etc. There would have to be the same rules in the playgrounds.

Q. What will the new school be called?

A. This has not been decided yet, it depends on the outcome of the Consultation. If the school name was to change, pupils and parents would be involved in the decision about this.

Q. Will school uniform change?

A. This would need to be decided with the pupils, the parents and the staff. One suggestion of colour for new uniform was purple – red and blue mixed from current schools.

Q. How long will it take to happen if it is decided to go ahead?

A. We don’t have any firm timescales but it could take up to 1 year following the decision for the changes to take place. The Pupil Council would be involved in the changes and reviewing current school policies.

Q. Will it happen before P7 pupils move into Knox next session?

A. It will probably take longer than the time left for the current P7s attending King’s Meadow

Q. Where will school dinners be?

A. In each separate building as it is at the moment.

Q. What will happen with the indoor/outdoor shoe policy as this is different in each school?

A. The policy would have to be decided but it would be the same policy for the whole school.

Q. What about school assemblies?

A. These could be held in both campuses and there could be a mix of stages of pupils, i.e. P3 and P4 assembly and P7 attending younger pupil assemblies

Suggestion from pupil: This is a good idea for both schools as it will make Haddington Infant pupils more confident during transition to P4. It will also be easier if there is only one Head Teacher.

Questions from KH and answered by pupils:

Q. What worries pupils about this possibility?

A. Positive Referral Policy – it is important to have same rules and policies to stop confusion. Think it is a good idea – there will be more confidence for P3 to P4 transition. Older pupils can support P1 – P3 pupils more.

Suggestion from pupil: Parents can save money by only buying one colour of uniform

Q. Do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea?

A. Yes – 3

No – 1

Don't know - 6

APPENDIX 5: EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Lothian Council to close Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and establish a new primary school with an associated catchment area for Haddington.

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* 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 East Lothian Council's proposal to close Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and establish a new primary school with an associated catchment area for Haddington. 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 of Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow 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;

- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal; and
- visits to the sites of Haddington Infant School, St Mary's RC Primary School and King's Meadow Primary School including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 East Lothian 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 East Lothian Council formally consulted stakeholders between 8 January and 26 February 2018. A public meeting was held at Knox Academy on 7 February 2018 and was attended by 29 members of the public. The consultation was advertised in the local newspaper and copies of the consultation document were made available at Haddington Cluster Primary Schools and a wide range of other locations. Public drop-in sessions were held at both schools and meetings were held with staff and pupils at Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School. Additional informal meetings to discuss any queries or concerns they may have on the proposal were held with staff in both schools. Information on the 'Protocol for School Merger' was shared with staff at these meetings and a copy of the protocol was made available to staff via the headteacher of King's Meadow Primary School and interim headteacher of Haddington Infant School. Further additional opportunities to engage with HR staff regarding the protocol were also offered to staff at their discretion. A letter informing parents of the consultation was also issued to children attending these schools. All stakeholders were offered the opportunity to share their views through an online survey.

2.3 The majority of parents associated with Haddington Infant School who completed the council's online survey oppose the proposal. Parents of children attending King's Meadow Primary School expressed mixed views on the proposal in the survey. Most agreed with the educational benefits set out in the proposal document but had some concerns about the possible impact of the proposal on staffing, leadership and resources in the new school. The majority of staff at Haddington Infant School who responded to the survey indicated opposition to the proposal. Staff at King's Meadow Primary School are, overall, in favour of the proposal.

2.4 Staff at both schools have some concerns about the council's approaches to communicating with them about the proposal. They feel that they should have been provided directly with more written information about the proposal. They do not feel that the council is listening sufficiently to their concerns about the potential impact on staffing, resources and leadership capacity which may result from the proposal.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The proposal has clear educational benefits, including the opportunity for seamless progression in learning for all children from nursery to P7, in line with the aims and aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence. The creation of a single staff team operating provides scope for a strengthened focus on the development of a coherent curriculum framework. This should support further improvements in planning for

continuity from early level through to second level. In addition, removing the need for children to transition to a different school at the end of P3 reduces the risk of progress being slowed as children settle into new routines and ways of learning. A consistent approach to learning, teaching, assessment and tracking children's progress can be more easily planned and implemented. There is also potential to increase the benefits of the range of achievement opportunities available through widening access to all children in P1 to P7.

3.2 Parents of children associated with Haddington Infant School and staff who met with HM Inspectors expressed significant disagreement with the proposal. Parents and staff feel that the school currently provides very well for children at P1-P3. They believe that the school has a strong positive ethos and sense of community. They do not believe that children are disadvantaged by the transition at P4 to King's Meadow Primary School and that the transition may, in fact, help children to develop resilience. Some parents feel strongly that the council has failed to consider other viable alternatives, such as, maintaining both schools as they are currently but with strengthened partnership working to improve curriculum coherence and progression in learning. Staff also expressed concerns that senior leadership capacity could be compromised by the appointment of a single headteacher for a large school operating on two sites.

3.3 Parents of children attending King's Meadow Primary School have mixed views on the proposal. Parents of children with additional support needs are supportive of the proposal and believe that it should lead to greater continuity in the support provided for their children. Staff at King's Meadow Primary School are, overall, in favour of the proposal, believing that it offers the potential for improved consistency in learning, teaching and assessment.

3.4 The pupil council at Haddington Infant School is well informed about the council's proposal. They report that pupils at the school have mixed views about the proposal. Some children thought it would be good to attend the same school as their older siblings and to have wider opportunities for making friends. Other children have concerns over safety in moving between the two sites and the time this might take. In taking the proposal forward, the council needs to ensure that all children are supported effectively in helping them to understand how the proposed new school can operate safely and efficiently over two sites.

3.5 The pupil council at King's Meadow Primary School also demonstrated a good awareness of the proposal. They outlined several benefits which would arise from the proposal. They liked the idea of having more teachers who could work with them in different ways and thought their teachers would know them better by the time they reached P4. A few children indicated that they thought the proposed new school would be designed to accommodate all pupils in the same building. Children will need continued support to understand more fully the proposal and what it would mean for them.

3.6 During the consultation period, a few of those who attended the public meeting expressed the view that the research which East Lothian Council had used to support its proposal was not broad enough. They would have liked the council to include research specifically about the impact of infant schooling. The council has indicated that any

questions regarding the research undertaken that were received during the consultation period will be responded to in the final consultation report.

3.7 HM Inspectors sampled the views of other stakeholders who are included in the proposal document as being indirectly affected by it. Overall, we found no significant disagreement with the proposal. A few ancillary staff indicated that they would like more clarity about how their roles would be affected if the council takes forward this proposal.

4. Summary

4.1 Overall, there are clear educational benefits to the proposal. Closing Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and establishing a new primary school with an associated catchment area for Haddington provides an opportunity to improve learning and teaching and further raise attainment for all children in the catchment area. The establishment of a single staff team working together to ensure continuity and progression from P1 to P7 should bring greater curricular coherence, improved consistency of expectations and increased moderation of standards. Children will benefit from improved progression planning to better meet their needs. Removing the need for an additional transition to a different school at the end of P3 is likely to reduce any possible risk of a slowing down of progress as children progress through the first level of Curriculum for Excellence. The proposal is in line with the aims and aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence.

4.2 Parents and staff across the two schools hold significantly different views about the educational benefits of the proposal. In taking the proposal forward, the council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and to address their concerns. The council now needs to work with its stakeholders to agree an appropriate timescale for implementing its proposal. In taking its proposal forward, an effective communication strategy and an action plan based on the needs of both schools will be essential for the council to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged. The council should include details of these in its final report.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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