

Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	5 November 2019
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/81/19/RB
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Subject:	Report on intake for St Columba's High School for academic year 2020/21		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Education and Communities Committee to accept up to 140 pupils into St Columba's High School for the academic year 2020/21 and to undertake a pre-consultation exercise to ascertain the future requirements for Catholic Education for village schools particularly in the West of Inverclyde.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In August 2019, Inverclyde Council's decision to refuse placing requests to St Columba's High School was appealed at the Sheriff Court. The Council's decision was upheld by the Court because the school was full and could not accept placing requests for those pupils who did not live in the catchment area.
- 2.2 To date, St Columba's High School has been able to accept all of the pupils who wish to attend the school from its catchment area and it is only placing requests which have been refused. The current maximum yearly intake is 120 pupils giving 6 practical classes. As part of advanced planning arrangements it has been known that in academic year 2020/21 the school will be under pressure from pupils living within the catchment area. This paper recommends that a 7th practical set should be created giving a maximum intake of 140 for academic year 2020/21.
- 2.3 The current pressure on St Columba's High School is compounded by the right given to those attending Wemyss Bay and Inverkip Primary schools to choose a denominational school at the point of transfer to secondary school. This paper provides an outline for a consultation process (including a pre-consultation and, if necessary, a statutory consultation) to seek out views on amendments to the admissions and placing request policy for schools and in particular to review the automatic right for pupils attending village primary schools (Inverkip, Wemyss Bay and Kilmacolm) to choose a Roman Catholic Education at the point of transfer to secondary school.
- 2.4 It is proposed that as part of the consultation process, a wider review of the requirement for Catholic Education in the West of Inverclyde is undertaken. This is because, whilst the population of Inverclyde is decreasing, the population appears to be moving towards the West. This consultation work will feed into the revised learning estate strategy.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Education and Communities Committee agrees that the maximum intake for St Columba's High School should be 140 for academic year 2020/21.
- 3.2 That the Education and Communities Committee agrees that a pre-consultation process takes place to:
 - explore whether there is a need to change the admission policy which allows pupils from the village primary schools of Wemyss Bay, Inverkip and Kilmacolm to choose denomination at the point of transfer to secondary school
 - ascertain the possible future demand for Roman Catholic education in the West of Inverclyde.
- 3.3 That the Education and Communities Committee agrees to a further report being brought back to the Committee in January 2020 outlining the outcome of the pre-consultation process and making recommendations for any statutory consultation if it is required.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In January 2017, after statutory consultation the Education and Communities Committee agreed the policy on Admissions and Placing Requests for Inverclyde Council. In November 2016, the Committee also agreed the maximum yearly intake for secondary schools to give a consistent method of identifying the maximum yearly intake for secondary schools in Inverclyde.
- 4.2 In August 2019, Inverclyde Council's decision to refuse placing requests to St Columba's High School was appealed at the Sheriff Court. The Council's decision was upheld by the Court because the school was full and could not accept placing requests for those pupils who did not live in the catchment area.
- 4.3 To date, St Columba's High School has been able to accept all of the pupils who wish to attend from the catchment area. As part of advanced planning arrangements it has been known that in academic year 2020/21 the school will be under pressure from pupils living within the catchment area. (see Appendix 1). It is difficult to predict the exact numbers who are expected to attend St Columba's High School because the village schools of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay can choose schools which are either denominational or non-denominational in the catchment area.
- 4.4 Any changes to the Admissions and Placing Requests policy can only be made after statutory consultation.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 This report proposes two specific courses of action in respect of the yearly intake to St Columba's High School.
- 5.2 The first proposal for this report is that for academic year 2020/21, St Columba's accepts all pupils who require a place, who live within the catchment area, have a sibling at the school and have a certificate of baptism into the Roman Catholic faith.
- 5.3 Schools can cope with an intake that is greater than the maximum yearly intake from time to time if this is to accommodate the needs of those within the catchment area, however it should be noted that this is more difficult to sustain in the longer term. The cumulative effect of going above the maximum yearly intake has to be taken into consideration. Therefore, it is proposed that further work is undertaken on the admissions policy for village schools and in particular for the West of Inverclyde.
- 5.4 Whilst the overall population of Inverclyde is decreasing, there seems to be an inward migration of people already living in Inverclyde towards the West. There will be inevitably be some impact of new housing on schools, but if families are simply moving within Inverclyde then it may or may not have a significant impact on the school estate. What is known from the current local plan is that if the planned houses are built then this may bring some pressure on the number of pupils attending St Columba's High School. This pressure is compounded by the right given to those attending Wemyss Bay and Inverkip Primary schools to choose a denominational or non-denominational school at the point of transfer to secondary school. It is proposed to review the choice for pupils attending village schools to choose either denominational or non-denominational education at the point of transfer to secondary school.
- 5.5 Any change to admissions or catchment areas needs to undergo statutory consultation. Prior to undertaking statutory consultation it is advisable, if possible, to undertake a pre-consultation to establish the views of the school community as to what proposals should be taken forward to statutory consultation. There are several options that can be considered for the pre-consultation phase and these are outlined below.

Option 1 :- Only pupils with a certificate of Baptism into the Catholic faith will automatically transfer from village schools to Roman Catholic Secondary Schools	This would affect pupils who attend Inverkip, Wemyss Bay and Kilmacolm Primary schools. Careful consideration would need to be given to a transition phase – taking into account those with siblings already at the school.
Option 2:- Remove village schools as feeder schools for denominational secondary schools.	This could increase transport costs for the Council (but buses are already provided). Young pupils would have to make longer journeys (although some pupils are doing this already because parents want a Roman Catholic primary school). This could put a pressure on St Ninian's Primary School depending on the numbers. This could also have an impact on the number of pupils attending Kilmacolm Primary School
Ascertain the demand for a Catholic Primary School in the West of Inverclyde in addition to St Ninian's Primary School	There are two proposals that could be taken forward. The first would be to consider a joint primary campus at Wemyss Bay. This would be a separate Catholic School with its own identity. The school would serve the needs of those requiring a Catholic education who live in Wemyss Bay and Inverkip. The difficulty in taking this forward would be if the building work in the local development plan goes ahead and increases the non-denominational roll for Wemyss Bay. Another possibility, if there is a significant pressure for Catholic education in the West of Inverclyde would be to create Wemyss Bay or Inverkip Primary as the Roman Catholic school for the West. This would mean that one school remains as the non-denominational school for the catchment area and the other would be the denominational school.

The draft timeline for the pre-consultation and statutory consultation would be as follows:

5 November 2019	Decision of November Committee
18 November – 05 December	Pre-consultation phase
10 January 2020	Feedback from pre-consultation phase and paper to Education and Communities Committee as to outcome of pre-consultation and proposals for statutory consultation.
If statutory consultation goes ahead then the most likely timeline would be:	
20 – 31 January – Prepare Consultation paperwork	
13 February 2020	Start of statutory consultation
20 March 2020	End of statutory Consultation period
25 March 2020	Paper work sent to Education Scotland (3 week consultation period for Education Scotland – this overlaps the Easter holidays so may require longer)
22 April 2020	Feedback from Education Scotland considered in final submission.
12 May 2020	Education and Communities Committee decision

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial considerations for this paper.
Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

Legal

- 6.2 Any proposed changes would have to take into account the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act (2010).

Human Resources

- 6.3 N/A

Equalities

- 6.4 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

Yes See attached appendix

No This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Repopulation

- 6.5 This report aims to ensure that an adequate and efficient education is provided to all pupils in Inverclyde and to cope with changing demographics and population.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 Full consultation on any proposal will be undertaken.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 January 2017 Committee paper on admissions to schools and placing requests.
November 2016 Committee paper on establishing the capacities of secondary schools in Inverclyde.

Appendix 1

Roll information for feeder primary schools into St. Columba's High School

The following should be noted:

- This is a roll analysis of the feeder primary schools and does not include those who live in the catchment area but have put in placing requests for other schools.
- This includes any pupils who are placing requests.

ROLL INFORMATION FROM SEEMIS ROLL ANALYSIS 03.09.19								
SCHOOL	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	TOTAL
St Andrew's PS	35	30	23	33	33	37	44	235
St Joseph's PS	24	24	31	15	27	15	15	151
St Ninian's PS	35	34	43	49	42	50	44	297
Inverkip PS	31	34	35	48	41	36	37	262
Wemyss Bay PS	8	14	25	24	23	20	21	135
	133	136	157	169	166	158	161	