
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	30 August 2022
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/40/22/MR
Contact Officer:	Michael Roach	Contact No:	01475 712850
Subject:	Pre-Consultation Process – Future Model for Blairmore Nursery School		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to ask members of the Education and Communities Committee to agree the pre consultation process regarding the operating model of Blairmore Nursery School.
- 1.3 Across Inverclyde there are differing models of early years establishments, the majority of which are either standalone family centres or nursery classes as part of primary schools. There are two standalone nursery schools in Inverclyde, and because of increased provision through 1140 hours this is becoming a less common model.
- 1.4 The retirement of the current head teacher of Blairmore Nursery School gives an opportunity for the service to consult with the service users to identify the best operating model moving forward. Issues around leadership progression and efficiency of service will also be taken into account as any proposals are considered and progressed.
- 1.5 A pre consultation process would allow the service to engage with the key stakeholders linked to the school to hear about their thoughts for how the leadership of the school and the school's status might best progress and identify a single preferred option to take forward into a formal statutory consultation if required. The planned pre-consultation timeline would begin in early September, concluding early on November with a report on its outcome being brought back to committee in January 2023.
- 1.6 There are three key options that the service has identified going forward and these would form the basis of the proposed pre consultation process i.e. the school remains a school in its own right led by a Head teacher, the provision becomes a nursery class and is amalgamated as part of All Saints Primary School or the school remains as an establishment in its own right but becomes an early learning centre.
- 1.7 Depending on the outcome of the pre-consultation process a further report will be submitted to the January Education and Communities Committee outlining any proposal that would be taken forward for formal statutory consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Education and Communities Committee are asked to:

- (i) Approve the commencement of a pre consultation process about the future operating model of Blairmore Nursery School.
- (ii) Note that a further report will be brought back to the January Education and Communities Committee outlining next steps.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director,
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Blairmore Nursery School is located in the East End of Greenock. It shares a campus with All Saints Primary School.
- 3.2 The School provides Early Learning and Childcare for 72 children aged 3 -5 years and 15 children aged 2 – 3 years. Family support services are provided within the school and the community.
- 3.3 The service provides high quality care and learning. This is evidenced by internal self-evaluation processes, Authority quality assurance processes and external evaluations.
- 3.4 The current Head teacher retired in August 2022. A temporary head teacher is in place for session 2022 23 allowing the service to consider, with the community, the best way forward for the leadership of the school.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Across Inverclyde there are differing models of early years establishments the majority of which are either standalone family centres or nursery classes as part of primary schools. There are also two remaining standalone nursery schools in Inverclyde (Blairmore and Newark). The provision of early years through a standalone nursery school has become less common as early years childcare and education has progressed through 1140 hours.
- 4.2 Family centres tend to offer more flexibility for age ranges and can operate increased flexible hours. The Head of a family centre is trained specifically in early years and experience has shown us that the leadership progression route through this type of service is very popular and produces strong management teams.
- 4.3 Nurseries attached to schools are a model that provides efficiencies of scale, especially in the ability to link into the leadership and management and resources of the school. This gives an advantage over standalone nursery schools and is a more efficient model cost wise for an education service to run. Whilst some primary teachers choose to specialise in early years provision, this has become less popular over the years with many teachers who seek promotion opting to transfer to primary schools because of the increased opportunities through the management structure. Recruitment to leadership posts in education establishments continues to be a challenge nationally and in particularly for Head teacher posts of Nursery Schools.
- 4.4 The recent retirement of the head teacher allows the opportunity for the service to review the provision at Blairmore and to work with the community to decide the best model going forward. Whilst statutory consultation would need to take place for any change, the proposal is to carry out a pre-statutory consultation to speak to the community and stakeholders about the type of provision they would like to see.
- 4.5 For any change of status of an education establishment a formal consultation process must take place under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This would include a clear proposal document with consultation events taking place as well as a route for feedback on the consultation to be taken both in person and in written form via the council website.
- 4.6 In order to develop a clear proposal it would be helpful to the service to carry out some informal consultation with key stakeholders to hear their views and determine if there was broad and initial support for changes to the leadership and status of the school, thus meaning that a formal consultation could be undertaken if required.
- 4.7 The Education Service considers that there are 3 options that could be considered during the pre-consultation process:

- The nursery school remains as a standalone nursery school and a replacement Headteacher is recruited.
- The nursery school is incorporated into All Saints Primary School as a nursery class under the leadership of the Headteacher of All Saints Primary School.
- The nursery school becomes a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.

The pre-consultation process may also offer other options that the service has not considered that could be taken forwards.

4.8 Proposed length of Pre-Consultation Period

An advertisement will be placed in the local newspaper on 05.09.22. The consultation process will end on 14.10.22. This is a consultation period in excess of six weeks and including thirty school days.

Date	Action
05.09.22	Start of Public Consultation period (Advert). Publication of proposal paper
20.09.22	Public Meeting at 1.30pm and again at 7pm in All Saints Primary School
14.10.22	End of Public Consultation period
18.11.22	Summary of pre consultation report completed
January 2023	Report to Committee with recommendations
January 2023	Move to formal consultation if required

Depending on the outcome of the pre-consultation process a further report will be submitted to the January Education and Communities Committee outlining any proposal that would be taken forward for formal statutory consultation.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources			X
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)			X
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty		X	
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

5.2 Finance

There are no direct financial costs associated with the pre consultation process i.e. there would be no costs to running such a process at this stage. Depending on the option eventually taken forward then there could be a saving linked to this proposal.

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications.

5.4 Human Resources

N/A.

5.5 Strategic

N/A.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

An EQIA may be needed depending on the outcome of the consultation.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report seeks permission to begin pre formal consultation process as above.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.