
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	5 November 2024
Report By:	Ruth Binks Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/45/24/RB
Contact Officer:	Ruth Binks	Contact No:	01475 712748
Subject:	A Review of Provision of Early Years in Newark 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 to a consultation processes in relation to Newark Nursery School.
- 1.3 Across Inverclyde there are differing models of early years establishments the majority of which are either standalone early learning centres or nursery classes as part of primary schools. Newark Nursery School is the only remaining standalone nursery school and this paper requests permission to undertake a pre-consultation process to change the model. This pre-consultation process would inform any subsequent statutory consultation process.
- 1.4 This paper requests that officers undertake consultation during November with the Newark community in order to inform potential next steps for statutory consultation which will be reported to the next meeting of the Education and Communities Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked to:
- Approve a pre-consultation exercise in relation to Newark Nursery School in order to inform a potential statutory consultation early 2025.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Across Inverclyde there are differing models of early years establishments the majority of which are either standalone early learning centres or nursery classes as part of primary schools. Until August 2023 there were two remaining standalone nursery schools in Inverclyde (Blairmore and Newark). Consultation was undertaken to turn Blairmore into an Early Learning Centre and this left Newark Nursery School as the remaining standalone nursery school.

4.0 PROPOSAL NEWARK NURSERY SCHOOL

4.1 The announcement of the retirement of the Head Teacher of Newark Nursery School at Easter 2025 allows the opportunity for the service to review the provision at Newark 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

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 Newark Primary School as a nursery class under the leadership of the Headteacher of Newark 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 forward.

4.4 If agreed the proposed pre-consultation would take place during November and December.

Depending on the outcome of the pre-consultation process a further report will be submitted to the next meeting of the 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
Financial	X	
Legal/Risk	X	
Human Resources	X	
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

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.					

This report has no specific saving attached and is simply asking for permission to undertake consultation, however if the proposals go ahead there will be a saving which will help to mitigate the pressure on the early years budget.

5.3 Legal/Risk

Statutory consultation must be undertaken for the closure of a nursery school or the permanent cessation of a nursery class in a school.

5.4 Human Resources

There will be no staffing losses as a result of this paper. If the proposals go ahead the retirement of the head teacher at Newark Nursery School allows for a different management model.

5.5 Strategic

The provision of early years and childcare giving young people the best start in life is one of the strategic priorities of the council.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(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. An EqIA will be needed depending on the proposal taken forward.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty. This will be considered when a decision is taken.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights. A CRWIA will be undertaken if a proposal is taken forward.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This paper proposes undertaking a preliminary consultation before any recommendations are taken forward.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.