

**Assessment Response to a Parental Request
for Gaelic Medium Education (GMPE)**

in

East Renfrewshire Council

16 February 2022



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SECTION 1

Background

1. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) and establishes a process by which parents can request Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) from their education authority.
2. Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) takes the form of immersion, i.e. children experience all their learning in the early years of primary school (Pr. 1 - 3) through the Gaelic language. Thereafter, immersion continues but in Pr. 4 – 7 English is introduced, while Gaelic remains the predominant language of the classroom.
3. At present East Renfrewshire Council does not make such a provision but supports families who wish such an experience for their children, and are successful in being granted a placing request to schools in neighbouring local authorities, through provision of transport.
4. [Statutory guidance¹](#), issued by the Bòrd na Gàidhlig came into force on 1 February 2017, Part 1 of which sets out the steps education authorities must take to assess demand on receipt of a request for GME.
5. Under the legislation and statutory guidance parents of children under school age, and who have not yet started to attend a primary school, have the right to request an assessment of the need for GMPE from the education authority in which the family resides. Any request must also set out or be accompanied by evidence of demand for GMPE from parents of other children resident in the same education authority area and who will commence primary school in the same year group as the specified child. An initial assessment should be completed within a 6 week window; a full assessment allows 10 weeks for the local authority to undertake and report on the exercise.
6. When an education authority receives a parental request made under the 2016 Act, it must designate the geographical area in relation to which it will undertake its assessment of the need for GMPE referred to as a 'GMPE assessment area'.
7. The threshold for an obligatory full assessment under the 2016 Act is that an education authority is satisfied that there is demand in the GMPE assessment area from the parents of at least five children who are resident in the GMPE assessment area and who are all in the same pre-school year group; the specified child should be counted in this total.

SECTION 2

Initial Assessment

8. On 27 October 2021 the department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE in East Renfrewshire for her child, known as the 'lead child', who is due to start primary school in August 2023.

¹ <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Statutory-Guidance-for-Gaelic-Education.pdf>

9. Where any education authority determines that there is a potential need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area, it has two possible options, it can:
- carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area; or
 - without carrying out a full assessment, exercise its discretion to take such steps as are necessary to secure the provision of such GMPE as it considers appropriate in the GMPE assessment area.
10. Following initial assessment of demand (as detailed in paragraphs 18 to 24), the department decided to carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE. The statutory guidance requires that *'when carrying out a full assessment an education authority must have regard to a list of mandatory matters, and must decide to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so'*.
11. The department has written to all parents whose names were provided as part of the initial request to indicate that we are carrying out a full assessment. We have also posted the outcome of the initial assessment on the Council's website as per the statutory guidance.

SECTION 3

Full assessment - consideration of Mandatory Factors

12. When carrying out a full assessment, an education authority must have regard to a list of mandatory matters, and must decide to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so.
13. The mandatory factors considered included:
- Views provided by statutory consultees
 - Initial assessment information in relation to demand
 - Existing GMPE provision in adjacent authorities and the availability of access
 - Access to GMPE in East Renfrewshire from children in other Local Authorities
 - Accommodation
 - Costs
 - Teachers – including potential availability within East Renfrewshire and the potential to recruit
 - The East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan.

Views provided by statutory consultees

14. It is required that when undertaking a full assessment the views of statutory consultees be sought and their response taken in to account. The department requested the views of Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant and The National Parent Forum of Scotland on Thursday 16th December 2021.
15. As per the full assessment protocol Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant all responded within four weeks of notification. It is not a statutory duty placed upon The National Parent Forum of Scotland or Comann nam Pàrant to respond. All responses received from the statutory consultees were in favour of establishing GMPE in East Renfrewshire Council.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED: MAIN POINTS

16. The following is a summary of the main points arising from the written responses submitted by the statutory respondents.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

- that there is a need for GMPE within East Renfrewshire from the commencement of Session 2023-24;
- that a Local Authority with a single GMPE service should deliver the service for all residents of the Local Authority;
- the Local Authority reviews provision of GMPE in the context of ultimately providing a 3-18 Gaelic Medium Education (GME) service for residents of East Renfrewshire; and,
- indicated that they would provide professional advice and support regarding possible staffing structures and recruitment processes.

Comann nam Pàrant

- the initial assessment has clearly identified the need for GMPE in East Renfrewshire;
- agree with the decision to designate the whole authority area as the GMPE assessment area;
- when deciding on location of provision the residency of families who have requested GMPE must be taken into consideration; and,
- once provision is established that demand will increase for Gaelic medium education in East Renfrewshire.

Education Scotland

- agree that there is sufficient demand for establishing Gaelic Medium Primary Education from 2023;
- parents should be consulted on the best available location of the proposed Gaelic Medium Education service;
- indicated that the education authority should strategically plan towards a 3-18 continuum of learning that overtakes all the statutory requirements of Gaelic Medium Education; and,
- the education authority should be clear, in consulting with parents, of their preferred future delivery model of high-quality immersion in East Renfrewshire Council.

17. A copy of all responses can be found as part of the appendix of this document.

Initial assessment information in relation to demand

18. As detailed in paragraph 8, the department received a request on 27 October from a parent resident seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE. Included in the request were the names of a further 13 children across a range of year groups, whose parents had expressed an interest in GMPE for their children.

19. The department wrote to each parent included in the request for assessment, inviting them to complete a proforma confirming their wish for GMPE for their child. Given the Council's small geographical area, the designated GMPE assessment area was defined as the whole of the geographical area of East Renfrewshire.

20. The department received 11 positive responses, including that of the lead child, by the deadline of 8 December 2021. The breakdown of numbers for each year group is detailed in table 1 below.

Table 1

Year Group P1 Starting	Number of Positive Responses
2023 - 24	5
2024 - 25	2
2025 - 26	3
2026 - 27	1

21. As such the threshold of five children in any one year group is met.
22. At the time of assessment there was no request for provision prior to August 2023.
23. In April 2017, the Education Department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE in East Renfrewshire for her child. After carrying out the initial assessment, the department concluded that there was not the potential need for GMPE as the threshold for a full assessment had not been met. As a result no further action was taken.
24. The demand for 2023-24 is higher than the previous request in 2017 and above the current existing demand i.e. around 2 per stage.

Existing GMPE provision in adjacent authorities and the availability of access

25. As detailed in paragraph 3, presently East Renfrewshire Council does not make GMPE provision available within the local authority area, however the Council supports families who wish such an experience for their children, and are successful in being granted a placing request to schools in neighbouring local authorities, through provision of transport.
26. The department is not aware of any placing requests being refused in recent years, however our statutory consultees (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant and Education Scotland) as part of this process highlighted the limited capacity of a neighbouring authority and the likelihood of future placing requests being refused.
27. The number of children accessing GMPE in neighbouring local authorities has remained consistent over the past few years with 1 or 2 parents per year making successful placing requests to either Glasgow City Council or South Lanarkshire Council.
28. At the present time 8 children are accessing GMPE in the aforementioned neighbouring local authorities. Five children in Glasgow City Council and 3 children in South Lanarkshire Council.
29. In addition, 7 children access secondary Gaelic Education at Glasgow Gaelic Secondary School. With 2 pupils in S1, 4 pupils in S2, 5 pupils in S3 and 1 pupil in S6.

Access to GMPE in East Renfrewshire from children in other Local Authorities

30. As noted in paragraph 3 this is not currently available. The Education Department would require to update the current admission arrangements to take full account of any new provision.

Accommodation

31. The Education Department must consider and identify an appropriate location for the delivery of GMPE.
32. Given that the catchment area for GMPE has been identified as the Council's boundary, this means that any current establishment identified as being most appropriate for the delivery of GMPE will be required to accommodate pupils from across the Council area, in accordance with relevant legislation.
33. Application for a place in a Gaelic service will be managed via the Council's placing request process.
34. In order to ensure an appropriate learning environment, and to ensure immersive Gaelic education across the P1-P3 stages, amendments will be required to an identified school facility. This will in effect create a separate provision within the school, having a separate entrance and signage, but with shared access to communal areas such as dining and physical education facilities.
35. On the basis of the number of families who have indicated a desire for their child(ren) to be educated in a GMPE facility, initially the provision for GMPE will require a small number of learning spaces. Consequently it is very likely that the class composition for GMPE will be structured on the basis of multi-stage composite classes; this is where children from across several stages are educated by the same teacher and a support assistant within a single learning space.
36. It has been suggested by the statutory consultee Comann nam Pàrant that once established, demand will continue or increase in future years for Gaelic Medium Education in East Renfrewshire, therefore any potential provision for GMPE, must give consideration to the ability to increase the number of learning and teaching spaces, as required.
37. Across the current school estate there is only a small number of current facilities which have the capacity to support the introduction of Gaelic provision.

Costs

38. There will be capital costs associated with amendments to a current school building as well as additional physical resources such as tables and chairs and IT equipment. From early discussions with the Gaelic and Scots Team of the Learning Directorate at The Scottish Government, it is likely that a significant capital funding contribution from the Scottish Government will be available to the Council to develop the Gaelic school in these matters.

39. Initially, it is anticipated that the school will require the recruitment and employment of an additional fluent Gaelic speaking teacher and a Gaelic speaking pupil support assistant (PSA). There may be further job sizing considerations required given the expectation of additional management duties for the Head Teacher. These additional roles will result in additional revenue pressure for the Council however some of this may be offset by a Scottish Government Specific Grant for Gaelic education. As the demand for GMPE grows the costs per capita may reduce to be in line with the cost of current primary provision as the number of children attending the provision increases.
40. In order to prepare the school for the introduction of GMPE, staffing resource will be required to support the development of the Gaelic curriculum, learning teaching and assessment materials. This role will further support other actions such as: looking outwards to identify and learn from existing good GMPE practice elsewhere; communicate effectively with parents, families and other stakeholders as the provision is developed; and support newly appointed teaching and PSA staff with pedagogy and curriculum development. It is possible that the majority of the revenue costs associated with this post will be met by Scottish Government funding.
41. Currently most of the revenue costs of transporting children each day to and from Gaelic provision in other local authorities (Glasgow and South Lanarkshire) are funded by Scottish Government, with the Council meeting the remainder of the costs.
42. There is potential, if Gaelic provision was established in East Renfrewshire, that some of the children who may attend and who live within a 2 mile radius of the provision, would not require to be transported to and from school each day. Furthermore, for children who reside out with the 2 miles radius but who are East Renfrewshire residents, there could possibly be greater degree of flexibility in providing transport, as well as the distance required to travel. Consequently it is likely that transport costs which the Council currently meets will reduce over time and the experience for children will be improved; the Council will continue to seek funding for transportation costs for East Renfrewshire children to be transported to and from the facility.

Teachers

43. At present no information exists relating to the number of East Renfrewshire Council employees who can speak, read, write or understand Gaelic. An action within our Gaelic Language Plan 2017 – 2022 is to audit and monitor this. A new HR and Payroll system was planned to help with this action, unfortunately there have been a number of delays in the implementation of this new system, therefore the data on the number of employees who are Gaelic speakers is not available at this time however this action will be overtaken in the lifetime of the Gaelic Language Plan.
44. East Renfrewshire contacted the General Teaching Council Scotland to request information on the number of existing East Renfrewshire teaching staff who are registered as Gaelic Teachers. This information is not yet available to the Education Department.
45. It is an assumption at this stage that at a minimum, a suitably qualified Gaelic speaking teacher would be required to establish GMPE provision from August 2023.
46. Any recruitment would be through the Council's existing recruitment process, with support sought from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to guarantee a successful outcome.

The East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan.

47. All public authorities in Scotland are required to have a Gaelic Language Plan under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. East Renfrewshire's current plan was approved in 2018 and is due to be renewed by 2023.
48. The Gaelic Language Plan sets out the Council's commitment to promote the Gaelic language in line with the National Gaelic Language Plan. The National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 sets out three priorities:
- Increasing the use of Gaelic
 - Increasing the learning of Gaelic
 - Promoting a positive image of Gaelic.
49. In terms of the learning of Gaelic in East Renfrewshire education establishments, the Council has committed within its Gaelic Language Plan to:
- assess any requests for GME and determine the need for appropriate provision in line with the statutory guidance
 - actively seek and promote opportunities for children and young people from 3-18 to learn Gaelic in our schools and centres.

SECTION 5

Conclusion

50. Having carried out an initial and full assessment, the Education Department is clear that there is demand, as defined by the statutory guidance, for GMPE within East Renfrewshire Council from school session 2023 / 2024.
51. It is agreed by the statutory respondents that the whole of East Renfrewshire Council should be identified as the geographical assessment area.
52. There is a need to establish admission arrangements for any new provision within East Renfrewshire Council.
53. There is limited capacity for East Renfrewshire residents to access GMPE in neighbouring local authorities.
54. Recruitment of suitably qualified staff to any future GMPE provision is paramount to successful introduction.
55. There should be consideration to the continuum of learning for children by planning towards 3 – 18 provision.

SECTION 6

Education Department Recommendation

56. To take forward a learning provision for Gaelic Medium Primary Education for the beginning of school session 2023 / 2024.

SECTION 7: Next Steps

57. The Education Department will:

- Identify available locations for GMPE and carry out a consultation with key stakeholders.
- Develop a model of delivery for GMPE which is attractive, promotes the benefits of bilingualism and encourages children and families to attend.
- Consult on admission arrangements for the new provision.
- Continue to promote and share the successes of Gaelic Medium Education within Scottish education.
- Work in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to recruit required staff.

APPENDICES

**Comann Nam Pàrant Response to Full Assessment
Education (Scotland) Act 2016
Requested by East Renfrewshire Council**

The information provided by the local authority relating to the request

Statutory Guidance is that, at the stage of full assessment, statutory consultees should be given details of the request. The information we received on the request had no detail other than that the request was for Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) from August 2023.

The Initial Assessment

Statutory Guidance is that statutory consultees should be given details of “any information which the education authority was required to take into account during the initial assessment about the demand for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area.”

The information on the initial assessment given to consultees was as follows, “In response to this request, an initial assessment was undertaken in November with the Education Department contacting the parent who made the request and those families who supported the request to determine demand and identify the child’s school year group.”

We have not been given any information on other factors listed in Statutory Guidance (1.28 and 1.29) to which an education authority must consider as part of the initial assessment so are unable to comment on these factors.

The Potential need for GMPE in East Renfrewshire

It is the opinion of Comann nam Pàrant that the initial assessment has clearly identified the need for GMPE in East Renfrewshire.

Location of provision

We agree with the decision to designate the whole authority area as the GMPE assessment area. However, when deciding on location of provision the residency of families who have requested GMPE must be taken into consideration. A local authority has an obligation to promote and support GME and provision which is accessible and attractive to families will make it easier for the authority to fulfil this obligation and achieve growth in GME. Given the large area and poor road infrastructure in more rural parts of East Renfrewshire, provision should be centrally located. Gaelic medium education is based on a 3-18 curriculum, and we recommend that the local authority consult with parents to establish a cohesive 3-18 structure for GME.

Information relating to the demand for GMPE in the area of the authority from parents of children who are under school age and have not commenced attendance at a primary school

Since the request was submitted Comann nam Pàrant have identified a further 5 children whose parents are interested in GMPE. This response from families is the result of minimal promotion via our social media and it is likely that if the local authority were to undertake a more robust assessment of demand that more families would be identified.

The extent to which children resident in the area of an education authority adjacent to the area of the education authority in question could access GMPE in the GMPE assessment area

Families from East Renfrewshire have been able for many years to access Gaelic medium education by submitting a placing request to Glasgow City Council. Due to oversubscription within Glasgow, this is no longer an option but if provision is established, to help meet the continuing high demand in Glasgow, it would be reasonable if families from Glasgow could access provision in East Renfrewshire if places were available.

The extent to which children resident in the GMPE assessment area could access GMPE in the area of an adjacent education authority

The two adjacent authorities to East Renfrewshire with GME provision are Glasgow and South Lanarkshire. Due to oversubscription for GME within Glasgow this is longer an option for families from East Renfrewshire. South Lanarkshire is the only other option, and this will be discounted by most parents for the following reasons:

- Distance and travel time – one parent with a child currently attending provision in South Lanarkshire has said her daughter’s travel time can be over 1.5 hours per day. Many parents would not regard this length of travel time as acceptable.
- Geography –working parents most probably travel to work in the opposite direction from South Lanarkshire, meaning that in an emergency they would be even further away from their child.
- Transport is not provided for after-school activities, so opportunities are limited for pupils to engage in these extra-curricular activities.

Conclusion

East Renfrewshire’s current Gaelic Language Plan includes a commitment to “actively seek and promote opportunities for children and young people from 3-18 to learn Gaelic in our schools and centres.” This parental request for GMPE, and subsequent finding on initial assessment that there is potential demand for GMPE in the local authority area, provides an opportunity for the council to fulfil this commitment in their Gaelic plan by making provision for Gaelic medium education within the authority.

We have no doubt that once provision is established that demand will increase for Gaelic medium education in East Renfrewshire. We would be happy to work with East Renfrewshire Council in further promotion of provision to families.

We look forward to seeing provision established in 2023, or in 2022 if the council finds that there is demand for the start of the next school year.

M Wentworth
Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta)
13.01.2022

Education (Scotland) Act 2016

Report by HM Inspectors of Schools to give an independent view of the determination for East Renfrewshire Council to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education from August 2023, unless it would be unreasonable to do so. East Renfrewshire Council has designated the assessment area for which, it will assess the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education, as the whole of the council.

January 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) (the 2016 Act). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial view of the determination to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education in East Renfrewshire Council from August 2023. This is based on a request received by the education authority from parents of children under section 7 of the 2016 Act. The request is, as required, from parents of children under school age, whose children have not yet started to attend a primary school. The education authority has designated the whole council as the assessment area for which it will assess the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education.

1.2 Section 2 of this report sets out brief details of the assessment process and HM inspectors' views on the determination for the education authority to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This is in accordance with Section 12 and 13 of the 2016 Act. This section sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of:

- the details received from the council on the parental request;
- other information received from the education authority that they, as required, took into account during the initial assessment about the demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education;
- HM Inspectors of Education's national expertise to comment on the potential need for and possibility of securing Gaelic Medium Primary Education in the designated assessment area. This national expertise draws on the wider parental, Gaelic and educational context in Scotland; and
- mandatory factors that must be considered by the education authority in its determination of the potential need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This is in accordance with section 1.52 of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education 2017.

1.3 Section 3 of this report summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the need to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education. Upon receipt of this report, the 2016 Act requires the education authority to have regard to it in preparing their report on the determination to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education. The education authority's report must include an explanation of how it has complied with its duty to secure the provision of Gaelic Medium Primary Education, unless it would be unreasonable to do so.

1.4 The education authority must publish its final report no later than ten weeks after deciding to carry out a full assessment. HM Inspectors will publish our report on our website at the same time as the education authority is publishing their final report.

1.5 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- synthesis of all relevant documentation provided by the education authority in relation to the proposal;
- discussion with the local authority and relevant consultees; and
- review of the council's Gaelic Language Plan and other planning processes.

2. Assessment process and HM Inspectors' determination on establishing Gaelic Medium Primary Education

2.1 East Renfrewshire Council sent notification to HM Inspectors on 16 December 2021 that they had received a parental request for an assessment of the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This request is for Gaelic Medium Primary Education to be established within the education authority from August 2023. The education authority advised HM Inspectors that they

had undertaken an initial assessment of this request in November 2021. This evidenced that there is a demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. HM Inspectors agree that there is sufficient demand for establishing Gaelic Medium Primary Education from 2023. We therefore strongly recommend that the education authority proceed with establishing Gaelic Medium Primary Education in 2023. In our discussions with the education authority, they shared with us some of their initial positive planning towards a full assessment. We agreed with the education authority that their future approach is taken forward in strong collaboration with parents as part of a planned, strategic approach to developing progressive Gaelic Medium Education.

2.2 The information provided by the education authority shows parental interest in enrolling their children in Gaelic Medium Primary Education from 2023 and up to 2026. The education authority should continue to take forward its statutory duty to promote Gaelic Medium Education with the wider parental body as required by the 2016 Act. The availability of Gaelic Medium Education within the local authority would reduce the existing need for children to travel to a neighbouring authority for this option in Scottish education. This would make Gaelic Medium Education more attractive and could increase further the demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. The education authority should continue to promote and share the successes of Gaelic Medium Education within Scottish education. This promotion should include the resultant benefits of bilingualism and how being a speaker of Gaelic is part of Scotland's identity, culture and heritage.

2.3 The education authority has a statutory Gaelic Language Plan, 2017-22. This has a supportive statement about making available Gaelic Medium and Learner Education to pupils within the education authority. The Gaelic Language Plan gives a commitment to “actively seek and promote opportunities for children and young people from 3-18 to learn Gaelic in our schools and centres. We will ensure access to information about East Renfrewshire Council's Gaelic educational provision is available to parents and the public. We will give consideration to the inclusion of Gaelic within our 1+2 Languages strategy as part of our ongoing monitoring and evaluation of this strategy.” The education authority's initial assessment of parental demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education identifies sufficient demand to now set up local provision. This also offers the education authority an opportunity to show further impact towards achieving statutory national targets for Gaelic. Additionally, it improves all young people's access to local-based Gaelic Medium Education in pursuit of excellence, equity and equality in Scottish education.

2.4 The education authority has designated the whole of the council for the assessment area, for which it will assess the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. HM Inspectors are of the view that parents should be consulted on the best available location of the proposed Gaelic Medium Education service. This should make Gaelic Medium Education an attractive option that attracts year-on-year growth in enrolments. In 2017, Bòrd na Gàidhlig published Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education asking that catchment areas, placing guidelines, and guidelines on enrolment and admissions be established for Gaelic Medium Education. The education authority should take forward these duties to enable equal and equitable access to Gaelic Medium Education. They should have a clear policy on how they will support equity through the provision of free transport to their Gaelic Medium Education provision. This is particularly pertinent should there only be one Gaelic Medium provision within the education authority. It would be important for the education authority to complete Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments.

2.5 The education authority is aware of the high-quality and distinctive approaches to Gaelic Medium Education detailed in the [Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017](#), and best practice identified through inspections. The education authority should strategically plan towards a 3-18 continuum of learning that overtakes all the statutory requirements of Gaelic Medium Education. It would be well-judged to plan also for three to five early learning and childcare to

reduce any potential equity gap, raise attainment and enable children to access the curriculum from aged three. In taking this forward, the education authority may benefit from receipt of dedicated funding from Scottish Government. They may also benefit from Bòrd na Gàidhlig's support in setting up a provision, which includes appropriate staffing. It is recognised that the children who would enrol in Gaelic Medium Primary Education in 2023 will not necessarily benefit from early learning and childcare through total immersion.

2.6 The education authority's Gaelic Language Plan, 2017-2022 states that East Renfrewshire Council uses the Gaelic Medium Education services of two neighbouring education authorities to satisfy parental demand. These education authorities use two different delivery models for Gaelic Medium Education. One model delivers through total immersion in all Gaelic schools. The other model delivers through total immersion in dual medium schools, with learning through Gaelic and English occurring in the same school under the leadership of the one headteacher. The education authority should be clear, in consulting with parents, of their preferred future delivery model of high-quality immersion in East Renfrewshire Council.

2.7 One of the mandatory factors to be considered in full assessments is existing Gaelic Medium Primary Education provision. HM Inspectors, in taking forward duties for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, have reported on the growing demand for Gaelic Medium Education in Glasgow City Council. This has led to Glasgow City Council advising that they no longer can provide Gaelic Medium Education services to those out with their own authority. This is a further consideration for the education authority in meeting their statutory duty to provide Gaelic Medium Education.

3. Summary

3.1 HM Inspectors have assessed and commented on East Renfrewshire Council's determination of the potential need for securing Gaelic Medium Primary Education within the education authority from August 2023. We have drawn on our national expertise to comment on the potential need and possibility of securing Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This has taken account of the wider parental, Gaelic and educational context in Scotland. HM Inspectors are of the view that Gaelic Medium Primary Education needs to be set up in East Renfrewshire Council from August 2023. This will support the education authority's ambition to advance excellence and equity for all learners. We have summarised our views on a number of mandatory factors for the education authority to consider for successful implementation of Gaelic Medium Education.

**HM Inspectors
January 2022**

Bòrd na Gàidhlig Response to Full Assessment on the Provision of Gaelic Medium Primary Education

Local Authority: East Renfrewshire

Date: 13th January 2022

Introduction.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes the following:

1. East Renfrewshire Council received a request from parents within the Local Authority seeking Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) commencing in the Session 2023-24 and that the threshold of 5 children had been reached for this request.
2. Following an initial assessment, the Local Authority proceeded to a Full Assessment (Sections 12 and 13 of the Education Act 2016). The Full Assessment has been initiated because the Local Authority has determined there is a potential need for GMPE following the initial assessment.
3. The views of Bòrd na Gàidhlig were sought by the Local Authority in a letter dated 16th December 2021 and a meeting between the Director of Education and other senior education officials in East Renfrewshire and the Director of Gaelic Education and the Education Manager at Bòrd na Gàidhlig took place on the 12th of January 2022.

Response from Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education Sections 1.49 and 1.50 the Bòrd is of the view that there is a need for GMPE within East Renfrewshire from the commencement of Session 2023-24.

The principal reason for this is that the 5-child threshold has been met and that there is evidence of parents from East Renfrewshire seeking GMPE in previous sessions through placing requests to GMPE services in adjacent Local Authorities and that there is furthermore evidence of additional demand in sessions after 2023-24.

We also note the current oversubscription to GMPE services in Glasgow and the likelihood that placing requests from out with Glasgow will not be successful.

In our discussions on the 12th of January 2022 with the Director of Education and Education Senior Management Team members in East Renfrewshire, we note the following in the context of Section 1.52 of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education:

- a) As part of the current review, the Local Authority is proposing that any resultant GMPE area is determined as being the whole of the Local Authority. Bòrd na Gàidhlig firmly supports this view. It is the view of Bòrd na Gàidhlig that a Local Authority with a single GMPE service should deliver the service for all residents of the Local Authority.



- b) The Local Authority are currently reviewing potential sites for a GMPE service and would propose that, should GMPE provision be agreed, a public consultation will take place on the GMPE catchment.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig agrees with this course of action. The Bòrd recommends that the Local Authority reviews provision of GMPE in the context of ultimately providing a 3-18 Gaelic Medium Education (GME) service for residents of East Renfrewshire. This would entail therefore reflection on providing GME Early Years and Secondary provision at a future point. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is happy to provide professional advice and support for future strategic planning concerning a GME 3-18 service within East Renfrewshire.

- c) The Bòrd commends the Local Authority for its initial review of the potential for accessing funding support from the Specific Grant Scheme and Gaelic Education Capital Fund operated by the Scottish Government.
- d) In the meeting between East Renfrewshire Education officials and the Education Team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig on the 12th of January 2022 discussion to place regarding staffing. Despite the challenges in recruiting GMPE staffing due to the rising demand for these services across Scotland, the Bòrd is of the view that assigning and/or recruiting staff should be possible. The Bòrd Education team will be happy to provide professional advice and support regarding possible staffing structures and recruitment processes.
- e) The Bòrd notes that the Local Authority has a Gaelic Language Plan in place with the current edition detailing a set of actions for the period 2017-2022.

It is the view of Bòrd na Gàidhlig that delivery of GMPE will build on actions already undertaken within the current edition of the Gaelic Language Plan.

The Planning Team and Education Team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to provide additional professional advice and support on the next edition of the Gaelic Language Plan for East Renfrewshire. The provision of GMPE within the Local Authority provides a focus for reflection on current progress and a vision for future development.

Additional Comments:

Following our discussions on the 12th of January 2022 with the Director of Education and Education Senior Management Team members in East Renfrewshire we note the following additional information:

- 1) In the context of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education Bòrd na Gàidhlig has been working with several Local Authorities on promoting existing or potential GMPE service in the session 2021-22. In this regard local advertising of the benefits of GME has been commissioned by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and online Public Meetings hosted by the Bòrd and Local Authority Education staff have taken place. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to work with East Renfrewshire Council to provide similar support.
- 2) When other Local Authorities have set up GMPE services, the Education Team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig have provided tailored support for the Local Authority, GMPE staff, collocated English Medium staffing, parents and the local community. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to develop a tailored support program for the delivery of GMPE services in East Renfrewshire.
- 3) Should the Local Authority seek additional information or support regarding any aspect of the provision of GMPE within East Renfrewshire, Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to arrange to meet to ascertain whether additional support could be provided.



In the first instance please contact the Director of Gaelic Education whose details are noted below.

We look forward to working with East Renfrewshire Council in developing a new GMPE Service for residents of the Local Authority which will enrich and augment the Educational Provision already being delivered by the Authority.

Deagh dhùrachdan,

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