

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**THIS IS A FORMAL CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GAELIC MEDIUM PRIMARY EDUCATION  
AT THORNLIBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL  
FROM AUGUST 2023 AND BEYOND**

**JUNE 2022**

This document has been issued by the Education Committee of East Renfrewshire Council for consultation in terms of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

## EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GAELIC MEDIUM PRIMARY EDUCATION AT THORNLIBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM AUGUST 2023 AND BEYOND

1. The education estate across East Renfrewshire Council comprises of 23 early learning and childcare establishments and nursery classes. The Council has 24 primary and 7 secondary co-educational schools, of which 7 primary and 2 secondary schools are denominational Roman Catholic schools, with the Council having the only Jewish Faith based primary school in Scotland, Calderwood Lodge. Additionally the Council has a specialist school, Isobel Mair School, for supporting children and young people with additional support needs. The remainder of primary and secondary schools are non-denominational.
2. Currently East Renfrewshire Council does not make any provision for the delivery of Gaelic medium education across the Broad General Education, but does support families who wish such an experience for their children through the provision of transport, to Gaelic provision in other local authorities.
3. Whilst the Council supports families who attend Gaelic provision by means of transport, East Renfrewshire's families can only access Gaelic medium education if they are successful in being granted a placing request to schools in neighbouring local authorities. Given the ever increasing demands for Gaelic medium education in these authorities, it is now becoming more likely that applications from East Renfrewshire residents for such places in other local authorities will be refused.
4. 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.

#### PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

5. The purpose of this consultation is:
  - (a) to consult on the proposal to establish a GMPE facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.

#### INTRODUCTION

##### *Background*

6. East Renfrewshire Education Department is committed to *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*, and has a well-earned reputation for providing an excellent education for children. This is borne out in the reports received on our schools following inspection by Education Scotland.

##### *GMPE Legislation*

7. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a legislative duty on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE). The act also establishes a process by which parents can request GMPE from their education authority and that when a threshold of demand is evidenced there is, as described in [Statutory Guidance](#)<sup>1</sup>, ‘an effective entitlement to GMPE’, and that local authorities will ‘secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so’. Furthermore the guidance is clear that an education authority cannot take or justify a decision not to provide GMPE on the basis of a single factor, for example, accommodation.

8. 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’.

9. The legislation and statutory guidance directs that 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 are in the same primary school commencement year group as the specified child. A parental request may also contain evidence that there is demand for GMPE from parents of other children under school age who will commence primary education in a different year.

10. The threshold for an obligatory full assessment under the 2016 Act is that an education authority is satisfied that there is demand in the assessment area from the parents of at least five children who are resident in the GMPE Assessment Area and that all are in the same pre-school year group.

11. 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.

12. A full assessment requires local authorities to seek the views of [Education Scotland](#)<sup>2</sup>, [Bòrd na Gàidhlig](#)<sup>3</sup>, [Comann nam Pàrant](#)<sup>4</sup> and the [National Parent Forum of Scotland](#)<sup>5</sup>.

13. Additionally in accordance with the statutory guidance local authorities must consider the following factors when undertaking a full assessment:

- Views provided by statutory consultees;
- Initial assessment information in relation to demand;
- Existing GMPE provision in adjacent authorities and the availability of access;

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig:

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

<sup>2</sup> Education Scotland: <https://education.gov.scot/>

<sup>3</sup> Bòrd na Gàidhlig is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development, including providing advice to Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues: <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/>

<sup>4</sup> A network of around 30 local groups, representing the interests of parents whose children are educated through the medium of Gaelic at the various levels, from pre-school to secondary level. <https://www.parant.org.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFs): <https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

- 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; and,
- The East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan.

14. Where an education authority decides to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE Assessment Area, it must take the necessary steps to secure the provision as it considers appropriate and within reasonable timescales.

*Requests for GMPE delivery within East Renfrewshire*

15. 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.

16. In June 2019 Education Committee remitted the East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan 2017-2022 to Cabinet for approval. This plan includes a commitment to assess requests for GMPE and determine the need for appropriate provision in line with the statutory guidance.

17. On 27 October 2021 the department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE within the council, with the objective of GMPE provision being available for their child for P1 commencing in August 2023. Included in the request were the names of a further 13 children across a range of year groups not yet of primary school age, whose parents expressed an interest in GMPE for their children.

18. The department wrote to each parent included in the request, inviting them to return confirmation of their wish for GMPE for their child. Given the Council's small geographical area, the designated GMPE Assessment Area (defined catchment area) was defined as the entirety of the area of East Renfrewshire Council.

19. In response, the department received 11 confirmations, including that of the lead child, by the deadline of 8 December 2021. The breakdown of positive responses and the year in which the children are likely to commence primary education is detailed as follows:

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

**Table 1**

20. As such the required threshold for an obligatory full assessment of the desire for GMPE of five children in any one year group was met by those families of children who will commence primary education in 2023-24. Consequently, the department decided to undertake a full assessment (appendix C) of the need for GMPE with respect to this application.

21. Comann nam Pàrant recorded in its response to the full assessment that it was aware of an additional 5 children whose parents are interested in accessing GMPE. It is unclear from the response as to where these families are located, the primary school commencement year and confirmation status of desire for GMPE is not yet verified.

22. The department wrote to all parents who intimated a desire for GMPE to inform them that the department intended to carry out a full assessment.

23. Given the legislative timeframe for the completion of the full assessment of 10 weeks, the full assessment required to be completed by 16 February 2022, with a decision made to proceed or otherwise on the introduction of GMPE within East Renfrewshire and to consult accordingly. As a consequence of the full assessment completion deadline occurring before the next council Education Committee meeting, the committee approved the delegation of the decision to establish GMPE to the Director of Education, following consideration of the outcome of the full assessment, at Education Committee on 3 February 2022.

24. On 16 February 2022, the Education Department published the [Assessment Response to a Parental Request for Gaelic Medium Education \(GMPE\) in East Renfrewshire Council](#)<sup>6</sup> (full assessment) which confirmed the Education Department's decision to take forward a learning provision for Gaelic Medium Primary Education for the beginning of school session 2023 / 2024.

25. Given the decision to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE Assessment Area the Education Department is required to take the necessary steps to secure the provision as it considers appropriate and within reasonable timescales and to undertake a statutory consultation.

26. Responses to the GMPE full assessment by Comann nam Pàrant, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Education Scotland suggest that the local authority should consult on the location of the proposed GMPE site and that the local authority should consider other factors such as central location and the ability for the service to be extended at a later date should GMPE increase in popularity in the council area.

27. Furthermore, whilst this proposal focuses on the introduction of GME for the primary sector, responses by Education Scotland, Comann nam Pàrant and The Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommended wider consideration at this time of future provision of immersive Gaelic Medium Education across the entire Broad General Education from 3-18. Therefore, whilst out with the scope of this proposal, the position of 3-18 resources has also been taken into consideration, in the event that any wider future provision is considered.

28. The focus of this consultation is only on GMPE and any future extension of Gaelic medium provision will be undertaken in accordance with legislation and appropriate consultation.

#### *GMPE for East Renfrewshire Residents: Current Position*

29. As detailed in paragraph 2, 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.

30. 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) highlighted in their responses to the full assessment, that it is their understanding there is limited capacity within Glasgow City Council (which previously has accepted applications from East Renfrewshire residents) and that the authority has indicated it will no longer be able to provide places to non-Glasgow residents as a consequence of oversubscription from its residents.

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<sup>6</sup> Full Assessment Report: [https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/7380/GMPE-full-assessment-response/pdf/GMPE\\_full\\_assessment\\_response.pdf?m=637806074901130000](https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/7380/GMPE-full-assessment-response/pdf/GMPE_full_assessment_response.pdf?m=637806074901130000)

31. Comann nam Pàrant further commented in response that it believes any location identified for the delivery of GMPE must also consider the ability to increase the number of learning and teaching spaces available, as it suggests demand will grow in future.

32. At the present time 9 children are accessing GMPE in the aforementioned neighbouring local authorities with 6 children attending an establishment in Glasgow City Council and 3 children attending an establishment in South Lanarkshire Council (East Kilbride).

33. In addition, 8 children access secondary Gaelic Education at Glasgow Gaelic Secondary School.

#### *East Renfrewshire School Estate: Identification of Proposed Establishment for Possible GMPE Provision*

34. Across East Renfrewshire, schools operate as a cluster of schools with early learning and childcare establishments, primary and secondary schools being associated as a family of establishments. This approach allows clusters to work effectively at points of transition with children to ensure seamless progression from one sector to another and allows associated establishments to collaborate in common endeavours to create and continuously develop a 3-18 experience for all learners which is bespoke to the needs of their community.

35. East Renfrewshire's schools and early learning and childcare establishments are exceptionally popular, with many families becoming resident within the Council area in order to allow their children to access the high quality learning experiences, achievements and outcomes which our establishments are known for. This has been further heightened by significant residential property developments within the council area as a consequence of the Council's strategic residential property development plan, Local Development Plan 1 and subsequent [Local Development Plan 2](#)<sup>7</sup>.

36. These factors have resulted in almost all East Renfrewshire primary schools having high occupancy rates which results in little scope for the introduction of GMPE provision even on a small scale. Furthermore, the same constraint can be applied to many early learning and childcare, and almost all secondary establishments.

37. The consideration of an appropriate location for GMPE must also be cognisant of not only an establishment's current school roll, but also its projected school roll as a consequence of planned local residential developments. East Renfrewshire like all councils, must ensure effective management of its school places as it has a statutory duty to provide adequate and efficient provision of school education for its area.

38. In identifying an appropriate location for GMPE the Education Department has taken into consideration a variety of factors including:

- (a) sufficiency of school places for initial GMPE on the basis of current identified demand;
- (b) the availability of space to increase provision at a later date should it be required;
- (c) the opportunity to extend Gaelic provision at a later date to 3-18;
- (d) the location of the establishment with regards to ease of access;
- (e) the ability for the GMPE school to have its own unique identity whilst integrating with the non-GMPE school;
- (f) the Council's duty to *'secure continuous improvement in performance (while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost); and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency,*

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<sup>7</sup> East Renfrewshire Council's Local Development Plan: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ldp>

*effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirement and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.*<sup>8</sup>

39. Thornliebank Primary School campus is located on Thornliebank Drive, to the north-west of the Council's area, and at the heart of the Thornliebank community within a residential area with good transport links.

40. The school is currently operating as a 1 stream school (1 class at each stage) with a school roll recorded in the annual school pupil census in September 2021 of 188. The school's current planning capacity on the basis of being 1 stream is 210, however the school has the ability to increase its planning capacity to 420 (2 stream school) given the number of learning and teaching bases available within the school. On the basis of a planning capacity for the school of 420, the school's roll over each of the last 5 years is detailed in table 2:

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Roll	169	176	186	192	188
Planning Capacity	40%	42%	44%	46%	45%

**Table 2**

41. There is a very small number of pupils projected to take up residence within the school's catchment area in the next 10 years or so from new residential developments.

42. Since August 2020, East Renfrewshire Council has offered families with children aged 3 and 4 years old access to 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare. The maximum capacity at Thornliebank Nursery Class is 40 children present at any one time. Since the introduction of 1140 hours the number of children recorded as attending the nursery class at the end of the academic year is 34 in years 2020-21 and 2021-22. This means that on average over the last two years there have been 6 places available within the nursery class.

43. Woodfarm High School, the associated secondary school of Thornliebank Primary School, has a school roll of 715 as recorded in the annual school pupil census of 2021 or 72% of the school's planning capacity; the lowest value recorded across all of East Renfrewshire's secondary schools. The school's catchment area has a very small number of planned residential property developments in the area and consequently current projections indicate a very small number of potential additional children requiring a place at the school in the next 10 years.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Roll	878	843	807	765	715
Planning Capacity	88%	84%	81%	77%	72%

**Table 3**

44. The proposed model for delivery of GMPE at Thornliebank campus is English & Gaelic being delivered in the same school under the leadership of one Head Teacher. For pupils attending Thornliebank Primary School, pupils will be taught entirely in English as is currently the case. For those in attendance at GMPE school, pupils will be taught entirely in Gaelic across P1 to P3, with English being introduced to pupils from P4 onwards, but with Gaelic still the predominate language in the classroom.

45. It is important that both schools have their own unique identity. The layout of the Thornliebank Primary School campus is conducive to the creation of a unique school for Gaelic medium whilst simultaneously facilitating the integration of the GMPE provision to whole school activities and accessing shared resources. This will ensure equal status of Gaelic, will

<sup>8</sup> Local Government in Scotland Act 2003: Best Value: Revised Statutory Guidance: 2020 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-value-revised-statutory-guidance-2020/>

encourage a positive and inclusive attitude environment in the school and will contribute to the fluency and confidence of young people learning through the medium of Gaelic.

### *Transport*

46. East Renfrewshire Council and all other local authorities in Scotland are duty bound to comply with the statutory requirement to provide home to school transport arrangements that are considered necessary when:

- (a) children are aged less than 8 years old and live more than two miles from their designated school; and
- (b) children aged 8 and over who live more than three miles from their designated school.

47. East Renfrewshire's [School Transport Policy](#)<sup>9</sup> complies with the statutory requirement and has additional conditions which may be met to allow children to access free transport to and from school each day. Specifically in relation to primary school education, an East Renfrewshire resident child is entitled to free transport when the child's catchment school is more than 2 miles from the family home, using the safest shortest walking route.

48. As East Renfrewshire Council does not provide GMPE locally at this time, those children who are successful in applying for a place in other local authority's GMPE provision are provided with free school transport. Free school transport for children attending GMPE takes the form of a taxi.

49. Any East Renfrewshire child who attends the proposed GMPE school and who resides more than 2 miles from the school would be provided with free transport, as the catchment area of the provision is the Council's boundary.

50. There are currently 9 children of primary school age attending GMPE provision in other local authorities either at Mount Cameron Primary School East Kilbride, the Glasgow Gaelic School (Govan) or The Glasgow Gaelic School (Berkley Street). Details of the schools currently being attended and the shortest, longest and average distance to each of those establishments by children is provided in table 4. Additionally distances which would be travelled had children been attending GMPE at Thornliebank Primary School, are also provided.

School Attending	Shortest round trip	Longest round trip	Average Round Trip	Shortest Round Trip to TPS <sup>10</sup>	Longest Round Trip to TPS <sup>10</sup>	Average Round Trip to TPS
Mount Cameron PS	14	19	16	7	8	8
Glasgow Gaelic School Govan	16	19	17	5	10	8
Glasgow Gaelic School Berkley Street	19	21	20	6	10	8

**Table 4**

<sup>9</sup> East Renfrewshire Free School Transport Policy: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/free-school-transport>

<sup>10</sup> TPS: Thornliebank Primary School



51. As per Table 1, families of 5 children have recorded that they wish to access GMPE provision delivered by East Renfrewshire Council from August 2023 and beyond. Whilst it is not clear as to which GMPE provision outside East Renfrewshire each family would apply for a place at if provision is not provided within the Council, table 5 provides details of the average, shortest and longest distance for each establishment from the group of 5 children.

	Shortest Round Trip	Longest Round Trip	Average Round Trip
Mount Cameron PS	12	25	19
Glasgow Gaelic School (Govan)	10	26	18
Glasgow Gaelic School (Berkley Street)	14	21	17
Thornliebank PS	<1	10	6

**Table 5**

52. The allocation of school transport for any East Renfrewshire child who is allocated a place at the proposed GMPE school will be in accordance with the Council's school transport policy. Of the 5 children for which families have requested GMPE place from August 2023, two reside within 2 miles of the Thornliebank Primary School, and so it is likely would make their own way to school each day without the need for transport.

53. Where an East Renfrewshire resident is successful in a placing request to GMPE provision in another local authority, but did not apply for GMPE in East Renfrewshire, then the Council will not make arrangements for transporting that child to the GMPE provision in another local authority. Where a child's application for GMPE provision in East Renfrewshire cannot be accommodated due to oversubscription, and the child is successful in a placing request to another local authority, then the Education Department will provide transport in such cases.

54. Of the remaining 6 children who have requested GMPE for future years, 2 reside within 2 miles of the school.

55. Table 5 highlights the significant reduction in the distance which would require to be travelled by children each day should GMPE provision be made available at Thornliebank Primary School. Further benefits of this reduction in travel is provided in the education benefits statement section.

### *Staffing and Admission Arrangements*

56. All councils must ensure effective management of their school places and have a statutory duty to provide adequate and efficient provision of school education for their area.

57. Local authorities also have a "... duty to secure best value by continuous improvement in performance of the authority's functions, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities and the achievement of sustainable development."

58. In primary schools, the planning capacity is used to determine the number of pupils that the Education Department can plan to take at each stage in a school and informs the number of required teachers. The planning capacity is used to help monitor provision and demand and to support planning to provide an appropriate number of school places for children who reside within a school's catchment area.

59. The pupil teacher ratio as defined by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) defines the permissible number of pupils to a single General Teaching

Council for Scotland (GTCS) registered teacher. The pupil teacher ratios within the primary sector are defined by SNCT as follows:

P1:	25 pupils for every class teacher;
P2-P3:	30 pupils for every class teacher;
P4-P7:	33 pupils for every class teacher.

60. Composite classes allow children from different year stages to be educated together in the same class, by the same teacher. The SNCT agreement defines a teacher pupil ratio maximum of 1:25 (1 teacher to 25 pupils) for composite classes. Composite classes can assist the Education Department to effectively and efficiently manage the school estate and are common place in Scottish schools.

61. It is important that the Education Department plans accordingly to provide the maximum number of places within the GMPE school for those East Renfrewshire residents who request a place, whilst ensuring the Council meets its statutory duty of granting placing requests to those who stay in other local authorities, when it considers places are available.

62. The Education Department must also consider its ability to recruit fluent GTCS registered Gaelic speaking primary teacher(s) when determining the number of maximum pupils which can be accommodated. Bòrd na Gàidhlig recognises the challenge of recruiting appropriately qualified staff given the rising demand for GMPE but is of the view that recruiting staff should be possible. The challenges of recruiting suitably qualified staff and professional development of them, is also a matter raised by Ken Muir in his recent report<sup>11</sup> on education reform in Scotland. The Bòrd has offered to assist the department in the recruitment process.

63. The confirmed demand for a place at the proposed GMPE school records a requirement at this time of 11 places, with 5 places required for commencement in August 2023. However, Comann nam Pàrant indicated in its response to the full assessment that following 'minimal promotion' it was made aware of families of another 5 children who are interested in accessing GMPE and that it believes demand for GMPE will increase in the Council if a school is established.

64. Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) takes the form of immersion, i.e. children experience all their learning in the early years of primary school (P1 - P3) through the Gaelic language. Thereafter, immersion continues but in P4–P7 English is introduced, while Gaelic remains the predominant language of the classroom.

65. Given the number of children the Council is aware of who would request GMPE provision, the department proposes to initially plan for the employment of one GMPE teacher. This will allow a multi-stage composite class across the P1-P3 year stages, aligning with the Early and First Level of the Broad General Education and the approach to delivery of education in immersive Gaelic at P1-P3 and English being introduced from P4 onwards, albeit with Gaelic the predominate language of the classroom.

66. Currently 1 child in the P1 year stage is attending GMPE provision in another local authority. At the commencement of the proposed GMPE provision in August 2023, this child will be commencing the P3 year stage and may request to transfer to the proposed GMPE school in East Renfrewshire.

67. The data gathered thus far indicates that 17 places may be required at the school within the first 5 years of opening. It is also likely that demand will increase once the provision is in place.

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<sup>11</sup> Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/putting-learners-centre-towards-future-vision-scottish-education/documents/>

68. The current [school admissions and placing request policies](#)<sup>12</sup> came into effect on 1 January 2017 following a full public consultation.

69. The school admissions policy is clear in that when a catchment child applies for a place in a catchment school, if there are places available, a place will be allocated.

70. In keeping with legislation, families can apply for their child to attend a school which is not the catchment school allocated to their location of residence or for a school place in another local authority. Where places are available after all catchment children are accommodated (and in excess of reserved places), these should be allocated to placing request applicants accordingly. If the number of placing request applications received is greater than the number of places available, places are allocated in accordance with the placing request priorities.

71. In the case of oversubscription by catchment, places are also allocated to catchment children in accordance with the placing request priorities.

72. Whilst the proposed location of GMPE provision within East Renfrewshire is Thornliebank Primary School, the defined catchment area for accessing the GMPE provision for East Renfrewshire residents is the Council's boundary.

73. In order to access a GMPE place, it is proposed that all East Renfrewshire residents will apply for a place as a catchment applicant to the GMPE school in accordance with the current school admissions and placing request policies.

74. Applicants will also indicate the preferred English medium catchment school (denominational / non-denominational) in the case that the child's GMPE application cannot be accommodated due to oversubscription.

75. At the time of school catchment application processing at the end of March, GMPE applications will be processed by the department first, identifying those who can or cannot be accommodated. In the case of oversubscription by catchment applicants the available places will be allocated in accordance with the placing request priorities as is the case for any catchment school across the Council.

76. All GMPE applicants will be included in the catchment processing of the English medium school recorded regardless of whether or not they have been allocated a place at the GMPE provision, along with all other non-GMPE applicants for that school.

77. Where a child has been granted a place in GMPE, the purpose of inclusion in the processing of applications for the recorded English medium catchment school is only to identify which English medium catchment school the child would have been allocated if a GMPE application had not been successful. The English medium primary school which would have been allocated will then identify the associated secondary school for the child for purpose of P7-S1 transfer applications. Any child allocated GMPE will of course not be allocated a place at the English medium school.

78. Any applicant who cannot be accommodated in GMPE due to oversubscription will have their English medium catchment school application processed alongside all other applicants for that school. At this time, the GMPE applicant will be treated like all other applicants for the English medium school and will be processed in accordance with the school admissions and placing request policies, with an appropriate non GMPE primary place allocated.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/4436/School-Admissions>

79. At the point of transition to secondary school, any child who attends the proposed GMPE school will be assumed to transfer to the secondary school associated with the English medium catchment primary school as described in paragraphs 76 to 78. This is assuming catchment status is unchanged. However, in accordance with the school admissions and placing request policies, parents/carers of children attending the proposed GMPE school will have the option of applying for a place in either of the catchment secondary schools associated with the child's location of residence.

80. At the time of P7-S1 transition, should parents/carers of children attending GMPE wish to submit a placing request for a non-catchment secondary school, for the purposes of placing request applications, the associated secondary school of the GMPE school will be regarded as Woodfarm High School, as is the case with Thornliebank Primary School.

81. The Council's current school admissions and placing request arrangements for catchment East Renfrewshire Council families, and those from other local authorities, will be applicable for those who wish to apply for a place at the Gaelic Medium primary school and there will be no impact on families applying for school places in other schools under the Council's control.

### PROPOSAL

*To introduce Gaelic Medium Primary Education to East Renfrewshire Council to meet the demands for such provision from residents as confirmed by the full assessment of demand for GMPE, and to ensure the Council meets its statutory duty by doing so. It is proposed that GMPE will be provided at Thornliebank Primary School campus from August 2023 and beyond.*

82. The proposal is:

- (a) to consult on the proposal to establish a GMPE facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.

### EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

83. The vision of the Education Department of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*, is at the heart of the work that the department and school staff undertake as they seek to provide the highest quality education and services to develop the whole individual.

84. The aim of *Curriculum for Excellence* is to enable all children and young people to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. The Department's vision and values embody these aims, which are furthered by *Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child*.

85. The Education Department and schools work tirelessly to provide an educational experience which is wide and varied and is designed appropriately to the needs of all learners and our communities.

86. In the Council's Gaelic Language Plan there is a clear statement to the Council's commitment to the use and promotion of Gaelic language in recognition of its status as one of Scotland's national languages and to the encouragement of learning and using the Gaelic language. The plan reaffirms the Council's commitment to contribute towards developing and

sustaining the language in general and for its residents in particular, and the benefits that GMPE will bring.

87. Furthermore the Council's Gaelic Language Plan describes the Council's intention to consider the inclusion of Gaelic language within our 1+2 Languages strategy as an alternative language for learners.

88. Thornliebank Primary School English medium provision would be well placed to access the expertise of specialist Gaelic primary school practitioner(s) should GMPE be provided on the school's campus and could be considered as a language for inclusion in the school's 1+2 approaches.

89. For children who access English medium education at Thornliebank Primary School there will be opportunities to integrate and learn and play with children who would attend the GMPE provision at whole school activities, in the playground, lunch hall and during extra-curricular activities. The school communal areas, Gaelic teaching spaces and some areas of playground would have Gaelic language signage also. This will provide children of English medium the opportunity to develop language skills, knowledge and comprehension in a naturally occurring way and may heighten their interest in the language. The Gaelic and English medium provisions will be able to share in a collective vision, values and aims for the integrated school, creating a fully inclusive and equitable learning environment, which focuses on individual learners and their specific needs; a key feature of the future of education as described by Ken Muir in his recent report<sup>13</sup> on [education reform in Scotland](#).

90. The introduction of GMPE provision within the council will promote and highlight opportunities of Gaelic Medium Education within Scottish education and resultant benefits of bilingualism and will make learners more aware of how being a speaker of Gaelic is part of Scotland's identity, culture and heritage. Additionally, it improves all young people's access to local-based Gaelic Medium Education in pursuit of excellence, equity and equality in Scottish education. The recognition and celebration of Scotland's diversity and parity of esteem for Gaelic communities is another principle recognised by Ken Muir<sup>13</sup> as key in meeting the needs of current and future learners from the community.

91. East Renfrewshire has a similar proportion of Gaelic speaking residents to the national average and so it is of educational benefit for these families to be able to access GMPE within their own council area given the additional logistics families face when children have to travel to other local authorities.

92. Whilst at this time focus is on the introduction of GME within the primary sector, the creation of such a school is considered to be the first step towards the Council overtaking its commitment to actively seek and promote opportunities for children and young people from 3-18 to learn Gaelic in our schools and centres as defined within the Council's Gaelic Language Plan. This would benefit children's education as they would be able to access GME across the years 3-18, allowing children to develop their Gaelic acquisition at entry to early years education and to continue their learning journey in Gaelic medium in secondary school, providing a truly 3-18 progressive experience.

93. Should GMPE provision be provided within Thornliebank Primary School campus, the travelling time for young learners will reduce significantly from the current travelling times required to access other provision in Glasgow City Council and South Lanarkshire. In response to the full assessment consultation, Comann Nam Pàrant made reference to one parent who advised that their child spends around 1.5 hours per day travelling to and from school, which has an impact on children's time pre and post school. Furthermore, children's

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<sup>13</sup> Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/putting-learners-centre-towards-future-vision-scottish-education/documents/>

ability to access extra-curricular activities at the school given the requirement for them to be transported large distances, are limited. Consequently it would be beneficial to children's education to be educated within the local authority.

94. Having GMPE provision within East Renfrewshire Council is likely to facilitate better parental engagement and involvement with school life given the reduced travelling distance to school; there are clear educational benefits to parents/carers having strong involvement and engagement with their child's school.

95. Encouraging active travel for children walking to school each day improves physical and mental wellbeing, reduces car usage within the vicinity of schools reducing pollution in the air and supports the Council's efforts towards being Carbon Neutral by 2040. Active travel will be possible for those who live within 2 miles of the proposed GMPE school.

96. The Education Department considers that the proposals would not have an adverse impact on any child or staff member in terms of age, gender, religion, race, and disability.

97. A Children's Rights, Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the consultation exercise. In carrying out this assessment the department will take account of (or address) any rights, fairness or equality issues raised as part of the consultation process. The Children's Rights, Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment will be included in the consultation report on the results.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

98. At present funding is not yet available for modifications to the identified preferred location for the establishment of a GMPE school or for additional physical resources such as tables and chairs and IT equipment. However from early discussions with the Gaelic and Scots Team of the Learning Directorate at The Scottish Government, it is likely that the majority of capital funding required will be provided to the Council.

99. Initially, it is anticipated that the school will require the recruitment and employment of an additional fluent Gaelic speaking Principal Teacher and a Gaelic speaking pupil support assistant (PSA). This approach will support the objective of providing a totally immersive Gaelic language experience. There may be further job sizing considerations required given the expectation of additional management duties for the Head Teacher.

100. In order to support the Council to meet the additional revenue costs as a consequence of the introduction of GMPE, funding is available to all Scottish Local Authorities for up to 75% of the cost towards delivery of Gaelic education, via the Gaelic Specific Grant. Given that the grant can only meet up to 75% of all costs associated with the cost of GMPE, any costs in excess of the grant would be raised as a spending pressure from financial year 2022-23 and beyond.

101. 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 from the Gaelic Specific Grant, with the Council meeting the remainder of the costs.

102. 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 would continue to seek funding for transportation costs for East Renfrewshire children to be transported to and from the facility from the Gaelic Specific Grant.

## CONSULTATION

103. The Council is required to formally consult on the arrangements for the establishment of a new school or a new stage of education in a school and the associated catchment area of a school. How this is carried out and who must be consulted is clearly set out in the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

104. This paper is issued as a formal consultative document and will be made available to all interested parties. A copy of the paper is available for inspection at the settings and schools and at the Council's Head Office, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock, East Renfrewshire, G46 6UG; and at the Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, G78 1SY. An electronic version can be accessed at the East Renfrewshire Council website (<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/GMPE>).

### *Settings affected*

105. Thornliebank Primary School and the early learning and childcare establishments of the Woodfarm Community area, namely Braidbar Primary School Nursery Class, Giffnock Primary School Nursery Class, Glenwood Family Centre and Thornliebank and Primary School Nursery Class.

### *Period of Consultation*

106. The consultation period will last from Wednesday 17 August 2022 to midnight on Friday 30 September 2022.

### *Relevant Consultees*

107. We will consult with the following:

- Parents/ carers of all children/ young people in the affected settings;
- Parent Councils of the affected settings;
- Parents/ carers of any child(ren)/ young person (people) expected to attend an affected setting within the next 2 school years;
- Parents/ carers of any child(ren)/ young person (people) where parent/carers requested GMPE provision within the initial request and subsequent full assessment of the demand for GMPE;
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- Pupils of each affected school (in so far as the education authority considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity);
- Staff (teaching and otherwise) of each affected setting;
- Trade unions representing staff employed in the affected settings; and

- Any other education authority that the education authority considers relevant.

108. During the consultation period a public meeting will be held in St Cadoc's Primary School at 7:00 pm on 15 September 2022. Elected members and senior officers of East Renfrewshire Council will be present to discuss the proposal and there will be an opportunity to ask questions at the meeting.

109. Note on Corrections: If any possible inaccuracy or omission in the Consultative Document is discovered by the Education Department or is suggested by any other person, the department will determine if relevant information has been omitted or if there has been an inaccuracy. The Education Department will then take appropriate action that may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the proposal paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period as appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised.

### *Responding to the Consultation*

110. East Renfrewshire Council invites all interested parties to make written representation on the consultative proposal. Interested parties are encouraged to provide feedback on East Renfrewshire Council's website <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/GMPE> or alternatively consultees can complete and return the consultation response proforma included as appendix D.

111. Written responses regarding the proposal will also be accepted by post. Such responses should be clear about who you are, where you live, why you are interested including your relationship with the affected settings (e.g. parent/ carer of pupil in an affected setting, member of staff at an affected setting, relative of a pupil at an affected setting etc.) and whether or not you agree with the proposal, or have any alternative solutions or comments. Petitions will be treated as a single response.

112. Education Scotland is entitled to copies of all responses received. We would therefore advise that your personal information will be supplied to Education Scotland if they request it. Separately, other interested parties may also seek sight of the responses received and accordingly you should advise if you wish your personal details withheld in respect of these requests.

113. Please send all written representation on the proposal to East Renfrewshire Council no later than midnight on Friday 30 September 2022 via the Council's consultation website, or postal address for hard copies to East Renfrewshire Council, Education Department, Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, G78 1SY.

114. Education Scotland will be sent details of the consultation responses including issues raised at the public meeting and other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare and submit a report to the Director of Education within three weeks. In preparing their report Education Scotland may visit the affected schools.

115. The Director of Education will report the results of this consultation exercise including the report submitted by Education Scotland to the Education Committee on 8 December 2022. The consultation report on the results will be available for public inspection at least 3 weeks before that date. The report will be available at all reasonable times at Council Offices at Eastwood Park, and Barrhead Main Street, in the affected school, local library and published on the Council's website.

116. Reasonable requests for alternative forms of consultation papers or response documents will be accommodated wherever possible e.g. audio support or language



translations. For this support please contact Aileen Vance via email [Aileen.Vance@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:Aileen.Vance@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk) or write to the address in paragraph 113 above.

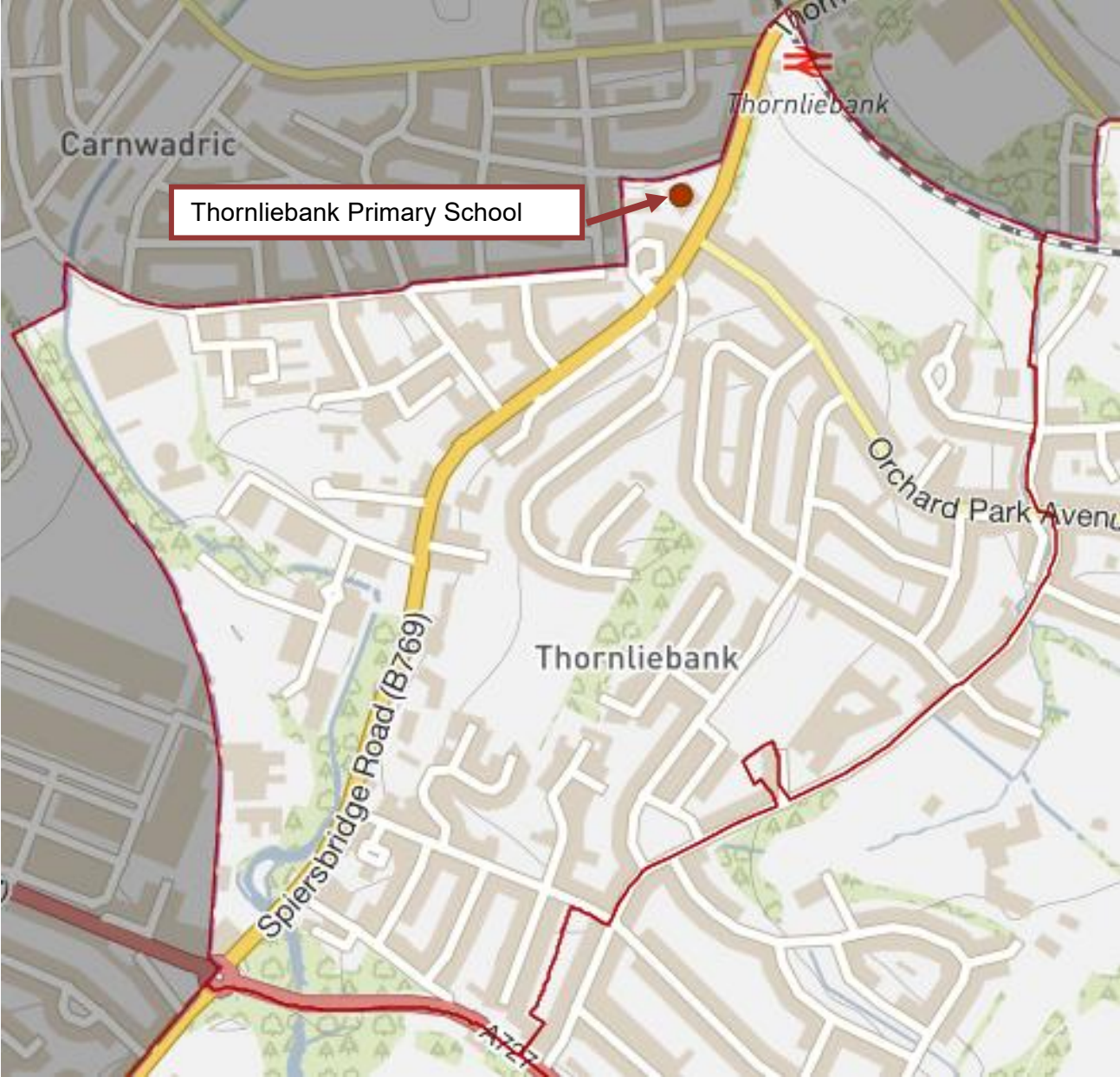
117. The final report and the decision taken by the Education Committee will be made available on the Council's website. Printed copies of the report will be made available on request to anyone who has responded to the consultative document.

Mark Ratter  
Director of Education  
June 2022

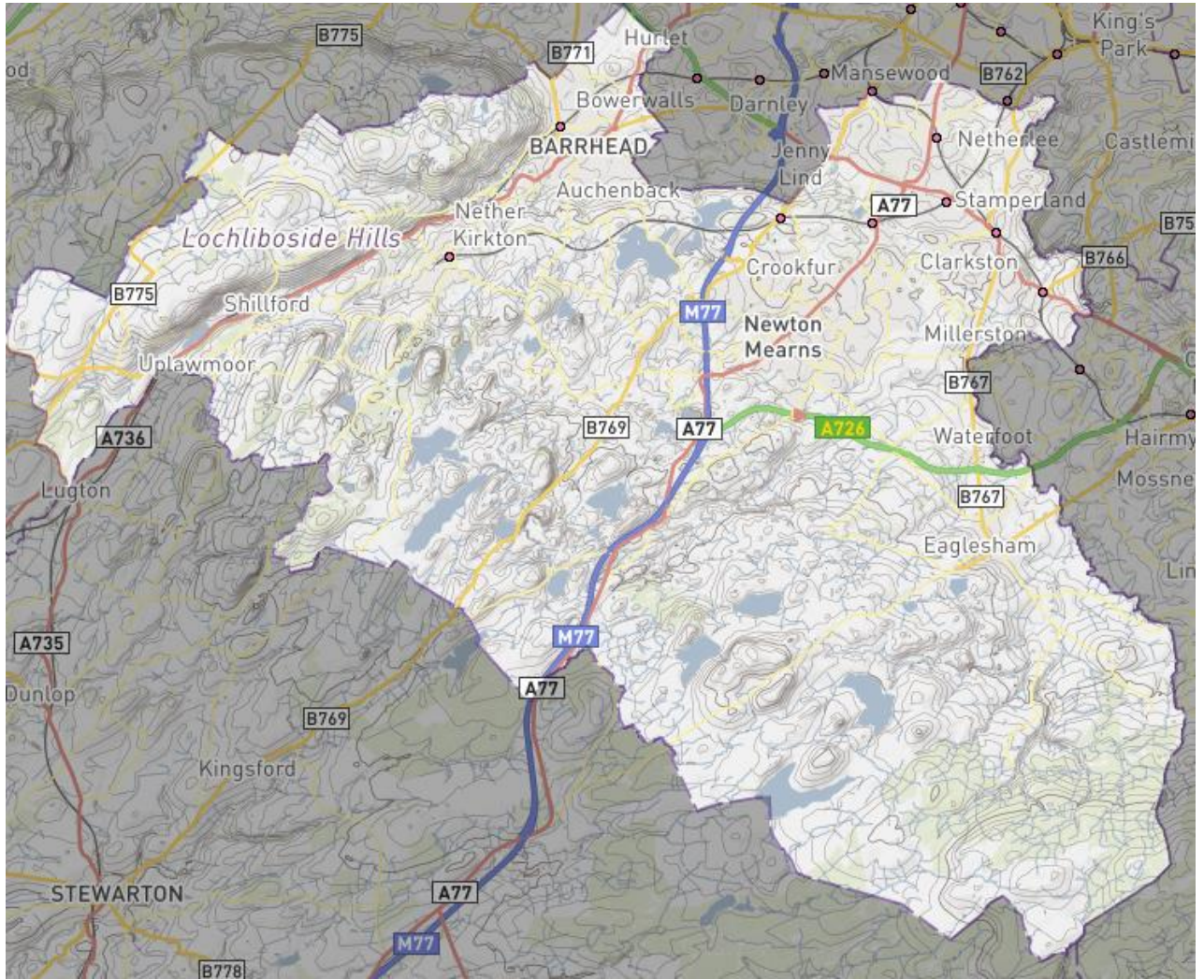
## **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Thornliebank Primary School Location**
- Appendix B – GMPE Assessment Area (Catchment Area)**
- Appendix C – GMPE Full Assessment by East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department**
- Appendix D – Consultation response proforma**

**Appendix A: Thornliebank Primary School Location and Catchment Area**



**Appendix B: Defined GMPE Assessment Area (Catchment Area): Council Boundary**



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

**in**

**East Renfrewshire Council**

**16 February 2022**

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**SECTION 2:** Request for GMPE and consultation process (Initial assessment)

**SECTION 3:** Full assessment - consideration of Mandatory Factors

**SECTION 5:** Conclusion

**SECTION 6:** Education Department Recommendation

**SECTION 7:** Next Steps

## **APPENDICES**

- 1. Statutory Response - Bòrd na Gàidhlig,**
- 2. Statutory Response - Comann nam Pàrant**
- 3. Statutory Response - Education Scotland**

## 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 guidance<sup>14</sup>](#), 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.

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<sup>14</sup> <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 16<sup>th</sup> 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*

<b>Year Group P1 Starting</b>	<b>Number of Positive Responses</b>
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: 13<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.



Bòrd na Gàidhlig,  
Taigh a' Ghlinne Mhòir, Rathad na Leacainn,  
Inbhir Nis, IV3 8NW

Bòrd na Gàidhlig,  
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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,

*Shona MacLennan*

Shona MacLennan  
Ceannard, Bòrd na Gàidhlig.  
E: [shona@gaidhlig.scot](mailto:shona@gaidhlig.scot)

Jim Whannel  
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## EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL : EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GAELIC MEDIUM PRIMARY EDUCATION  
AT THORNLIBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL  
FROM AUGUST 2023 AND BEYOND**

**FORM FOR YOUR RESPONSE**

*Please provide information to all sections. Should you not wish to specify some of the details in the ABOUT YOU section, we will still take your response into account.*

**ABOUT YOU**Name: Address: Post Code 

- Tick the box if we should keep your name and address confidential

***Please select all that apply and complete as appropriate:***

- I am a Parent/Carer of a child/ children attending an *affected school(s)* as noted below.  
***(Carer means the responsible adult with whom the young person lives)***

Thornliebank PS

Thornliebank PS Nursery Class

Braidbar PS Nursery Class

Giffnock PS Nursery Class

Glenwood Family Centre

- My child/ children reside(s) in the delineated catchment area of the school or early learning and childcare community of the establishments above

Name(s) of my child(ren): 

- I am a pupil at

- I am a member of staff at

- I am responding on behalf of a group or organisation.

Name of group/organisation 

- I am related to a young person attending any of the *affected establishments*

- I provide care to a young person attending any of the *affected establishments*

- I reside within East Renfrewshire

- Other (*please specify*)



**WHAT YOU THINK** (*tick only one box*)

- I agree with the proposal.
- I do not agree with the proposal.

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR REASON(S)/ COMMENTS BELOW**

The reason(s) I have for reaching my decision is/are:

Any other additional comment:

Signed

Send your reply to East Renfrewshire Council, via the online consultation website or post to Education Department, Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, G78 1SY, no later than midnight **Tuesday 30 September 2022.**

# **Pupil Consultation on the Proposal**

***To establish a Gaelic Medium Primary Education facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.***

## **Report to the Director of Education**

**Prepared by:  
Karen Shepherd  
External Consultant  
October 2022**

## **1. Process for Consultation with Pupils**

East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) Education Department undertook a consultation exercise on the proposal to establish a Gaelic Medium Primary Education facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.

- 1.1** The consultation was initially planned to be conducted over the period between 17 August, 2022 and 30 September, 2022. However, as a consequence of the death of the Queen and subsequent period of mourning and public holiday, the consultation period was extended until 3 October, 2022.
- 1.2** As part of this process, ERC Education Department decided to consult with, and seek the views of pupils in the school that would be affected by the proposal. Consequently, Primary One to Primary Seven pupils in Thornliebank Primary School were consulted.
- 1.3** An independent Education Consultant was tasked by the Education Department of the Council to carry out the consultation with the stages identified above 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.
- 1.4** ERC Education Department e-mailed the Acting Head Teacher to advise them of the appointment of the independent Consultant and the process for consultation with pupils.
- 1.5** The Acting Head Teacher informed their parent forum that P1 to P7 pupils would be consulted on the proposal and that pupil participation would be voluntary. The Acting Head Teacher informed their parent forums that House Captains and Vice Captains would manage the consultation exercise with pupils, supported by school staff and the independent Consultant.
- 1.6** In structuring the consultation process with primary pupils, the Consultant agreed with the Education Department that engagement of all Primary One to Primary Seven pupils would be best achieved through the involvement of Pupil Representatives/House Captains in the affected school to conduct the consultation exercise.
- 1.7** The following principles were applied in developing the primary consultation process:
  - The Pupil Representatives/House Captains, supported by the Consultant, should be given and take responsibility for managing the consultation exercise with pupils as best suited the structure for pupil voice within the school.
  - The timeframe should be sufficient to allow meaningful engagement with Pupil Representatives/House Captains in order to involve and prepare them in planning and carrying out the consultation exercise. The Consultant would provide background information about the proposal, advice and support for the Pupil Representatives/House Captains including a PowerPoint with notes.
  - The Pupil Representatives/House Captains would put in place easily understood procedures to provide an opportunity for all affected pupils to become informed with an opportunity to share their views.
  - There would be an appropriate timeframe to ensure that all pupils would have a reasonable and objective opportunity to participate in the consultation.
  - Participation by pupils in the consultation exercise would be voluntary and not mandatory.
  - Pupils would also be advised that alternatively they could respond using the ERC on-line consultation process or complete a hard paper copy of the response form and send it by post to the Education Department to arrive by 30<sup>th</sup> September (close of consultation period).
  - Pupil Representatives/House Captains should be supported by an identified member of staff to make the necessary arrangements within the school for the consultation exercise. The staff would support pupils objectively.

- It was emphasised that school staff should not influence the views of Pupil Representatives/House Captains or pupils within the school.
- In addition, the Consultant would meet the Pupil Representatives/House Captains to allow them to give verbal feedback on the consultation process and listen to and record the oral views of any other pupils who wished to make their views known.
- As part of the reporting process, the Pupil Representatives/House Captains would receive feedback on the findings of the pupils of the school with a school report provided by the Consultant.
- The Pupil Representatives/House Captains would have responsibility to share the school report with all pupils within the school.

**1.8** In line with the four capacities that underpin *Curriculum for Excellence*, it was envisaged that Pupil Representatives/House Captains would have a central role in the process and that they would ensure that pupils would perceive the consultation to be fair and without a pre-determined conclusion.

**1.9** In order to support the primary Pupil Representatives/House Captains to deliver consistent and accurate information, the Consultant prepared a standard PowerPoint presentation to inform the Pupil Representatives/House Captains about the key aspects of the proposal and to support them to deliver the key information to their peers (Appendix 1). The presentation also included advice for the Pupil Representatives/House Captains about how to carry out the consultation with their peers. Information was also provided on how the pupils' responses would be reported.

The House Captains were provided with a copy of the presentation, which they adapted with support from school staff to use at a whole school assembly and then during House Meetings. The House Captains were then well prepared to take on responsibility to deliver this PowerPoint presentation to all pupils within their school, explaining the proposal and how pupils could respond to the consultation if they so wished (Appendix 2).

**1.10** The Consultant devised two example pupil response forms for pupils in the school. The House Captains decided to use Pupil Response Form A with pupils in Primary 1 to 3 and Pupil Response Form B for pupils in Primary 4 to 7. (Appendix 3).

**1.11** The Consultant visited Thornliebank Primary to:

- meet with the Head Teacher to explain the process and make dates for further visits in relation to the pupil consultation;
- meet with the House Captains and Vice Captains the member of staff with responsibility for the House Captains, to deliver a presentation and explain the tasks and activities they were being asked to undertake;
- provide the House Captains and Vice Captains with a PowerPoint presentation;
- provide example response forms and discuss other options for gathering pupils' responses
- answer any questions that the House Captains/Vice Captains might have.

**1.12** The Consultant returned to Thornliebank Primary School to meet with the House Captains and Vice Captains to receive feedback on the consultation process and to hear oral views of any other pupils who wished to express them.

**1.13** The Consultant collected the completed response forms from the primary school.

**1.14** Following the conclusion of the consultation, the pupils' responses to the consultation were collated and analysed by the Consultant and a written report prepared for the Director of Education.

An individual report was prepared for the school to report the findings of the pupils. The House Captains would have responsibility for sharing the report with all pupils within the school to provide feedback on the views expressed.

The report included information on:

- the follow-up visit to the school by the Consultant including the consultation methodology, questions made to the House Captains/Vice Captains during the presentations and the questions expressed by pupils to the Consultant;
- the results of the ballot by stage;
- the overall results; and
- the written responses on the ballot forms by stage.

## **2. Outcome of the School's Consultation Exercise**

### *Briefing and Follow-up Meetings with House Captains/Vice Captains*

- 2.1** The briefing presentation to the primary House Captains/Vice Captains was successful. Pupils were enthusiastic and looked forward to the prospect of their leadership of the consultation exercise. Both pupils and staff were aware of the need for meaningful engagement with pupils in this consultation exercise.

The follow-up visit to the primary school provided the House Captains/Vice Captains with a very good opportunity to inform the Consultant in detail about their consultation process and also to share questions posed to them by pupils during their presentations.

### *Consultation Methodology*

- 2.2** Primary House Captains and Vice Captains carried out the consultation exercise by using appropriate organisational structures within their schools.

The House Captains and Vice Captains in Thornliebank Primary shared the delivery of a PowerPoint presentation to all pupils at the whole school assembly.

In preparation for delivery, the House Captains and Vice Captains used the notes pages in the PowerPoint presentation provided by the external Consultant to simplify some of the slides and the language that they used in their oral delivery.

The House Captains and Vice Captains responded well to questions during the presentation. The questions asked by pupils were:

- Do we have to learn Gaelic?
- When will it start?
- How do you say [something] in Gaelic?

The House Captains and Vice Captains explained how the response form could be completed on a voluntary basis.

Response forms were completed back in class - when pupils had time to think about their response - and placed in a ballot box. Vocabulary that pupils found difficult to understand was explained by the class teacher.

The House Captains and Vice Captains reported that they were well supported and were confident in their delivery. They had also enjoyed the opportunity to lead the process in their school.

The school made very good use of the materials prepared by the Consultant.

The approaches used by the school were robust in obtaining pupils' views.

## *Pupil Responses*

### *Pupils' Written Views*

- 2.3** The written responses of pupils to the Consultation Exercise are collated in Appendix 4. This appendix details the reasons / comments provided by the pupils on the ballot forms.

### *Pupils' Verbal Views*

- 2.4** Appendix 5 details verbal views expressed by five primary pupils to the Consultant on their return to the school.

### *Overall Conclusions*

- 2.5** Appendix 6 provides a detailed stage by stage breakdown of pupil responses – agree, disagree and no response.

The 'no response' figure consists of the number of pupils who chose not to express a view on the proposal and the number of pupils who were absent. There were 31 pupils who chose not to express a view on the proposal and a further 12 pupils who were absent which represented in total 22% of all the pupils consulted.

A summary table of pupil responses is provided below.

<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Total Agree</b>	<b>% Agree</b>	<b>Total Disagree</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>	<b>Total No Responses</b>	<b>% No Responses</b>
P1 to P7	95	51%	50	27%	43	22%

**The percentage of Thornliebank Primary pupils in Primary 1 to Primary 7 who responded to the consultation and who were in favour of the proposal was 66%. The majority of Thornliebank Primary pupils agreed with the proposal.**

# Appendix 1 – PowerPoint Presentation for Primary Representatives



## Pupil Consultation Exercise

Primary Pupil Meetings  
September 2022




### What is this exercise about?

- It is a consultation exercise to find out the views of pupils about East Renfrewshire Council's proposal.

*To establish a GMPE facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.*




### What is Gaelic Medium Education?

- GME means that **only Gaelic is spoken** in Primary 1-3
- Children experience all of their learning through the Gaelic language
- In P4 – P7 Gaelic continues to be the main language spoken in the classroom, but some English is introduced





### Why are the Council proposing the change?

- All councils in Scotland have a duty to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE)
- Parents of children who have not yet started Primary 1 can request an assessment of the need for GME from their local education authority. A request has been received.
- Currently there is no GME facility in East Renfrewshire
- Transport is provided by East Renfrewshire Council for pupils who have been granted placing requests to attend GME facilities in nearby councils



### Which settings are affected?

- Thornliebank Primary School
- Thornliebank PS Nursery Class
- Braidbar PS Nursery Class
- Giffnock PS Nursery Class
- Glenwood Family Centre




### Why has our school been proposed?


- East Renfrewshire Council considered all of its schools as a possible location. Thornliebank was proposed because:
  - there is enough space to introduce GME from August 2023
  - there is space to grow if more people want GME later on
  - there is space in the nursery and Woodfarm High School, so an opportunity exists to extend Gaelic provision at a later date to 3-18
  - the school is easy to access from all parts of the Council
  - the ability for the Gaelic Medium school to have its own identity whilst integrating with the non-GMPE school




### Why do we need to know what pupils think?

*Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously*

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12  
(respect for the views of the child)



### Proposal for Consultation

- To establish a Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) facility at Thornliebank Primary School
  - with the same Head Teacher
  - Pupils attending Thornliebank Primary would continue to be taught entirely in English
  - Pupils attending the new GMPE school would be taught entirely in Gaelic in P1-3, with English introduced from P4 but Gaelic still being the main language in the classroom
  - Gaelic and English would have equal status

## Proposal for Consultation

[The GMPE facility within East Renfrewshire] will have the Council's boundary as the GMPE school's defined delineated catchment area

- The Council would provide a free taxi for any East Renfrewshire pupil who lives more than 2 miles from the GMPE school
- Placing requests would be considered from families who live in other local authorities
- Current information indicates 17 places may be required in the first 5 years, starting with 5 children due to start P1 in August 2023
- Initially there would be 1 Principal Teacher, teaching P1-3 and 1 Pupil Support Assistant. Both would be fluent Gaelic speakers.

## Proposal for Consultation

- If the proposal was accepted for establishing the Gaelic Medium Primary Education facility at Thornliebank PS:
  - Gaelic and English would have equal status within the shared campus
  - Children in Thornliebank Primary School English medium provision could have the opportunity to learn Gaelic as one of the 2 additional languages taught in the school
  - Signs in Gaelic throughout the shared areas could help children in both schools to learn the language in a natural way
  - Learners would become more aware of how speaking Gaelic is part of Scotland's identity, culture and heritage

## Proposal for Consultation

If the proposal was accepted for establishing the Gaelic Medium Primary Education facility:

- There would be opportunities for children from both schools to learn and play together and to take part in whole school activities
- Children whose families wished them to have GME would have less distance to travel and more time at home to enjoy hobbies or after school activities
- Parents could be more involved in their child's school due to it being closer to home
- Gaelic Medium Education could be extended from 3-18 years.



## Proposal for Consultation

Under the proposal:

- The Council's school admissions and placing request arrangements would not change
- Thornliebank Primary would still serve the same community
- Woodfarm HS would still be the associated high school for Thornliebank Primary
- Parents across East Renfrewshire could apply for a place for their child at the Gaelic Medium school. They would also apply for their chosen English Medium school in case there were not enough places in the Gaelic school.
- P7 children moving from the Gaelic School would register with the high school associated with the English Medium primary on their application, or their parents could register them with either of the 2 high schools in their local area.

## Why am I here today?

East Renfrewshire Council has issued a Consultation Document with the proposal outlined in this presentation.



This consultation exercise is about letting pupils:

- know about the proposal
- think about the proposal
- have a say as to whether they agree or do not agree with the proposal

## Does everyone need to be involved?

Participation is voluntary – no one has to take part if they do not want to.



## How are we going to do the pupil consultation?

- The Pupil Council or House Captains will work with me to seek the views of P1 to P7 pupils across the school.
- Following on from today's meeting I would like Pupil Council representatives or House Captains to take the main points of this consultation to pupils and give them an opportunity to discuss them.



## What methods will you use for pupils to respond?



## How could pupils share their views?

- Once pupils have had time to think about their response, if they wish they could:
  - make their views known to the Pupil Council or
  - complete a pupil response form and post it in a locked ballot box or
  - go on-line and complete an electronic response form or
  - post the response form to the Education Department (teachers will help with this)



## Response Form A

- There could be a simplified response form for some pupils.
- Completion of the response form would be voluntary.



## Response Form B

- Let's look at a possible response form for P4 - P7 pupils.
- Completion of the response form is voluntary.

19

## How else could children share their views?



- Place a glass bead or marble in either a Yes or No jar, to show whether they agree with the proposal or not

20

## What will the consultant do?

The consultant will return to the school to:

- meet with the Pupil Council/House Captains to receive views about the consultation process
- meet with, listen to and record the views of any other pupils who wish to express them
- collect the responses so they can analyse the contents



*Tell us what you think...*

21

## How are you going to do the pupil consultation?

When you speak to the pupils you will need to communicate:

- what the consultation is about
- make clear that a response is voluntary and anyone can choose not to participate or opt out at any point
- give the main points surrounding the proposal (the presentation today)



22

## How are you going to do the pupil consultation?

- When you speak to the pupils you will need to communicate that the views expressed will:
  - be treated as anonymous;
  - nobody will know the names of anyone who has responded
- Spoken views will be noted and reported back to the consultants by the Pupil Council or House Captains.



23

## How are you going to do the pupil consultation?

When you speak to the pupils you will need to:

- give out pupil response forms to anyone who wants one
- let the pupils know that they complete their response form and place it in the locked ballot box or
- go on-line and complete an electronic response form or
- post the response form to the Education Department (teachers will help with this)



24

## How are you going to do the pupil consultation?

- When you speak to the pupils you will also need to let them know the date and time when the consultant will return to the school to:
  - meet with the Pupil Council/House Captains
  - meet with, listen to and record the views of any pupils who wish to express them
  - collect the ballot box or other evidence



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## How will pupils' views be used?

- Pupils' responses to the consultation will be gathered and analysed (looked at in detail and interpreted) by the consultant
- A report on the responses will be written by the consultant and passed to East Renfrewshire Council
- The Director of Education will publish a report on the results of the consultation and will report to the Education Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> December
- A report on the responses will be written by the consultant for each school



26



27

*Thank You For Listening*



28


# Appendix 2 – Primary House Captains' PowerPoint Presentations to Assembly



## Gaelic Language Classes at Thornliebank




Andrew



### What is the Gaelic language?

Gaelic is an ancient language which used to be widely spoken in the Western Islands of Scotland, and up North.



Lots of families in Scotland still speak Gaelic, and they are looking for an opportunity learn in Gaelic at school.

Sam



### How to speak Gaelic

How to say

Good morning - Madainn Mhath  
Pronounced - Matin va

Good afternoon - Feasgar Math  
Pronounced - Fesker ma

Emma

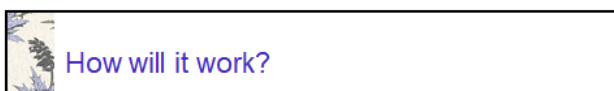


### The council have a question to ask you...

- We want to find out the views of pupils about East Renfrewshire Council's proposal:

*To establish a GMPE facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.*

Haha



### How will it work?


There will only be one or two classes to start with who speak Gaelic.

They will have the same Headteacher as the English speaking classes.

The rest of the school will still speak English as usual.

The Gaelic classes will have their own classrooms (if it is in Thornliebank, they will use some of the rooms we have in the main building), but we share some areas in the school, like the playground and the lunch hall.

Ayaan



### What will happen in the Gaelic classes?

- GME means that only Gaelic is spoken in Primary 1-3
- Children experience all of their learning through the Gaelic language, including their science, RME etc.
- In P4 – P7 Gaelic continues to be the main language spoken in the classroom, but some English is introduced


Andrew




### Why is the council doing this?

- It is important to celebrate this ancient Scottish language.
- Some families have asked for their children be taught Gaelic.
- Legally they are entitled to it if enough families ask for it.

Sam




### Why Thornliebank?



- East Renfrewshire Council considered all of its schools as a possible location. Thornliebank was proposed because:
  - there is enough space
  - there is space in the nursery and Woodfarn High School, so they can expand
  - the school is easy to access from all parts of the Council

Emma

### Why might this be a good idea?



- Thornliebank will have something special that no other school in East Renfrewshire has.
- The children will get to learn about other cultures and make the school more diverse.
- Having the Gaelic Medium classes at Thornliebank might bring more money into the school overall
- For the children who learn Gaelic, they will have less distance to travel to get to school. At the moment, they need to travel to a different local authority.

Hafsa

### Why do we need to know what pupils think?

*Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously*

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Ayizan

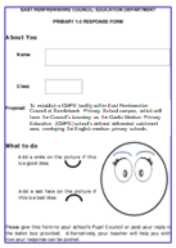
### What happens now?

- We are going to ask if you would like to vote. You don't have to, but the council think it is important to hear from as many people as possible.




Andrew

### P1- P3 Response Form



Sam

### P4 - P7 Response Form



Emma



Hafsa

Ayizan

### Thank You For Listening



### See you soon

## Appendix 3 – Pupil Response Forms

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

PUPIL RESPONSE FORM Primary 1 to Primary 3

### About You

Name:

Class:

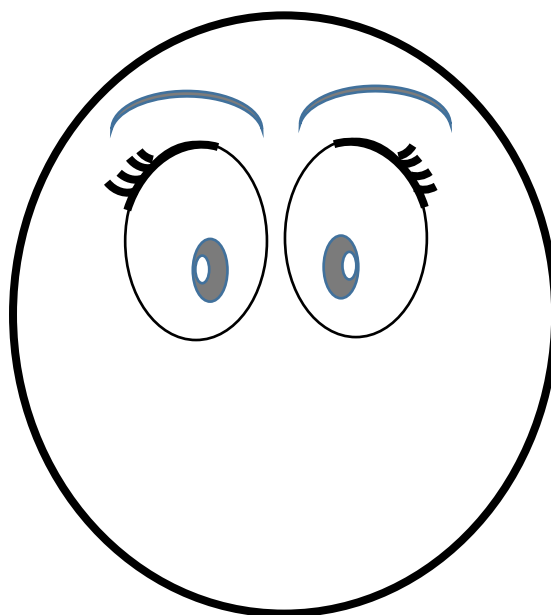
**Proposal:** *To establish a Gaelic Medium Primary Education facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.*

### What to do

Add a smile on the picture if this is a good idea.



Add a sad face on the picture if this is a bad idea.



Please give this form to your House Captain/Vice Captain or post your reply in the ballot box provided. Your teacher will help you if you prefer to post your reply to the Council.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

PUPIL RESPONSE FORM Primary 4 to Primary 7

**About you**

Name:

Class:

**Proposal: To establish a Gaelic Medium Primary Education facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.**

**What do you think?** (*Tick only one box*)

I agree with the proposal.

I do not agree with the proposal.

**Write your reason(s) / comments below.**

**Tell us why.** If you need more space, you can write more on the back of this sheet or use more paper.

**Signed:**

Please give this form to your House Captain/Vice Captain or post your reply in the ballot box provided. Alternatively you can post this to East Renfrewshire Council, Education Department, Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, G78 1SY, to arrive no later than **Friday 30 September, 2022.**



Class	Agree	No. of Times	Disagree	No. of Times
P.6 Cont.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't want changes to happen to our school and I like it the way it is.</li> <li>• I do not agree with this because other people in the school.</li> <li>• Because I don't want another school.</li> <li>• I think that we shouldn't because I think our school will struggle to afford it and our school is too small for more people.</li> <li>• The playground is too small; not enough resources; not enough space inside the classes. Just my personal opinion.</li> <li>• I don't think there is enough space in the school.</li> <li>• School is too small and our playground is also very small.</li> <li>• They might not understand us and we do not have a lot of space in our school!</li> <li>• I do not agree to this proposal because our playground is already quite full and there would be more people.</li> </ul>	2
P.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think this would be a good idea because people will have something to do after school and it's cool to know.</li> <li>• I think that it is a great idea because we need to keep Gaelic alive.</li> <li>• I think yes because this would be a cool addition for our school.</li> <li>• It is good to include everyone.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't think we need it.</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 5 – Pupils’ Verbal Views

Five pupils visited the Consultant during the follow-up visit to the school. The pupils posed three questions which the Consultant responded to. Four of the pupils expressed the following verbal views:

• I would like to find out more about Gaelic.
• I’d like to learn Gaelic.
• It’s important to learn to speak other languages. It can help your brain.
• I don’t want to learn Gaelic because I can already speak some Spanish when I go on holiday and that’s enough.



## Appendix 6 – Results of Pupils’ Views by Stage

		P1			P2			P3			P4			P5			P6			P7			Overall		
School	Roll	A	DA	NR	A	DA	NR	A	DA	NR	A	DA	NR	A	DA	NR	A	DA	NR	A	DA	NR	A	DA	NR
Thornliebank Primary	188	17	0	6	15	5	4	16	4	8	16	8	7	11	14	4	9	13	2	11	6	12	95	50	43

Key: A = Agree

DA = Disagree

NR = Pupils who chose not to express a view on the proposal and absentees

**East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department****Meeting with Parent Council Members of Thornliebank Primary School  
Wednesday 7 September 2022 at 7pm: Online Teams Meeting****Consultation on the Establishment of  
Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE)  
At Thornliebank Primary School From August 2023 and Beyond**

Andrea Shaarani, Chair of Thornliebank Primary School, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services, Provision and Performance, and invited him to present to the group the details of the consultation proposal.

Mr McCaig started by thanking the group for the opportunity to address them regarding the statutory consultation. He indicated that he would give a short presentation and then invite questions and comments. He explained that the consultation is a formal process and as such Mary Hart from the Education Department would take a formal minute of the meeting which would be shared with Education Scotland. Mr McCaig advised that the consultation proposal is regarding the location of GMPE provision and that the decision to introduce GMPE within East Renfrewshire had already been made. Mr McCaig continued, Thornliebank Primary School is the proposed location of the Gaelic Medium Primary Education in East Renfrewshire and that the consultation commenced on 17 August 2022 and will close at midnight on 30 September 2022. Mr McCaig advised that currently there is no Gaelic medium provision available within East Renfrewshire Council and that parents and carers who wish for their children to be educated in the Gaelic medium are required to submit a placing request to other local authorities where provision is available. Mr McCaig advised that whilst East Renfrewshire parents have been successful in placing requests in the past, more recently it is reported that other local authorities have indicated they will no longer be able to provide places to non-residents as a consequence of oversubscription from their own residents. Mr McCaig advised that those granted places are required to travel significant distances. It was noted that currently nine primary pupils and eight secondary pupils resident in East Renfrewshire Council attend Gaelic medium provision in other authorities.

Mr McCaig advised that the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a legislative duty on education authorities to promote Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) and the Council is required to produce a Gaelic Language Plan that requires to be updated every four years. It was noted that the Act also sets out the process whereby parents can request an assessment of the demand for GMPE in a local authority area; Mr McCaig advised that such a request was not progressed in 2017 as the threshold of demand criteria was not met. The threshold of interest for an obligatory assessment is at least five children in the same pre-school year group, who have not yet commenced their primary education and who are resident in the council area. Mr McCaig advised that the Education Department had received a request for a full assessment of interest in GMPE in October 2021 and that following initial investigations, it was clear that the threshold of demand was met. This led to the department undertaking a full assessments with the boundary of East Renfrewshire defined as the assessment area or the proposed catchment area for any potential GMPE provision. The full assessment was carried out from December 2021 until February 2022, including consultation with statutory consultees, which resulted in the decision to establish a GMPE facility in East Renfrewshire.

Mr McCaig advised that in identifying an appropriate location for a facility in East Renfrewshire, consideration was given to sufficiency of school places, the opportunity to increase provision at a later date if required, the location of the facility and the ability of the GMPE school to have its own identity while still integrating with the non GMPE school; this was on the advice of statutory

consultees in response to the full assessment. Account was also taken of the Council's duty to secure continuous improvement. Mr McCaig was heard in explanation of the capacity and current rolls at Thornliebank Primary School and Nursery Class and Woodfarm High School. Mr McCaig noted that statutory consultees also advised it good practice to consider the future expansion of GMPE across early years and secondary education when considering an appropriate location, given this is the natural progression for GMPE, in order to provide a full 3-18 experience in the medium. It was noted that Thornliebank Primary School is currently operating as a one stream school but has capacity to be a two stream school. The layout of the school would provide opportunities for the Gaelic facility to have its own discrete identity but also to integrate with the English medium school. The Chair of the Parent Council asked where the data came from as the school would not want to lose for example the ICT suite, she would like a guarantee that the school would not lose out on the spaces they currently enjoy. Mr McCaig responded that this is calculated on the basis of the number of learning and teaching areas available at the school with a class defined under SNCT agreement that stipulates that P1 has a maximum of class of 25 pupils, P2 & P3, 30 pupils and P4 to P7 have a maximum of 33 pupils per class. Mr McCaig also advised that for composite classes, consisting of children across many year stages, the maximum teacher pupil ratio is 1teacher to 25 pupils.

Mr McCaig confirmed that the proposal is to have two teaching and learning for GMPE. In accordance with statutory guidance It is planned that GMPE in East Renfrewshire would be delivered by full immersion in Gaelic across P1 to P3 year stages and in P4 to P7 English language is introduced but with Gaelic the dominant language, Therefore the plan is for two teaching spaces to be utilised, with one class for P1 to P3 and the other for the upper primary stages. Initially it is planned to employ one Gaelic speaking Principal Teacher and one Gaelic speaking Pupil Support Assistant, with one teaching and learning space being required from August 2023 for the P1 to P3 year stages. Mr McCaig advised that the Education Department would continue to monitor demand for GMPE and would plan the number of required places accordingly in order maintain to provide places for East Renfrewshire residents wherever possible. Mr McCaig did advised that the facility would be open to placing requests for GMPE from residents from other authorities and that where these are available in excess of places required for local residents, these would be granted. Mr McCaig reiterated that the maximum class size for P1 is 25 pupils and that is the same maxima for composite classes.

The current School Admissions and Placing Request policies will apply to applications for Thornliebank Primary School and to the Gaelic school; there is no requirement for these to be altered and there is no impact on any other school applicant as a consequence of the introduction of GMPE at Thornliebank Primary School. Mr McCaig advised that for the purpose of transitions to secondary school, the secondary school associated with the child's location of residence and the English medium catchment school the child would have attended, will be assumed.

Mr McCaig detailed the educational benefits of GMPE at Thornliebank Primary School allowing both sets of pupils to integrate, learn and play with each other. It would also make learners more aware that Gaelic is part of Scotland's identity, culture and heritage. It was further noted that establishing the GMPE facility at Thornliebank Primary School would reduce significantly travelling time for young learners, create better parental engagement and involvement with school life.

Mr McCaig advised that the consultation is open until 30 September 2022 and there will be opportunities for the learners to be consulted through the Pupil Council or House Captains. It was noted that the public meeting will be held on Thursday 15 September 2022 in St Cadoc's Primary School and that as part of their statutory role, a representative from Education Scotland may attend as an observer and hear the views shared at the meeting. At the end of the consultation period all documentation will be sent to Education Scotland who will prepare their report which will be included in the Director's report to Education Committee. At a meeting of the Education

Committee on 8 December 2022, elected members will consider the report of the consultation and approve or reject the proposal.

Mr McCaig concluded his presentation and reminded the group that they are invited to have their say and submit written representation or to complete the online survey.

Mr McCaig then invited questions from the group.

A question was asked about the teaching and staffing element of the GMPE provision indicated by Mr McCaig, specifically what would happen in times of sick absences? Mr McCaig responded that schools are allocated additionally to cover short term absences. If staff leave, while endeavouring to secure another teacher, there are short term solutions which will assist such as Esgoil, the online Gaelic school and having a Gaelic speaking PSA would help in this regard. Mr McCaig also commented that the West Partnership of schools have GMPE provision and that it may be possible to work in co-operation with other LAs; there may be opportunities to support each other in such instances. Mr McCaig advised that the Review of Scottish Education highlighted the need to encourage Gaelic speakers to come into the profession.

A member of the Parent Council highlighted that Thornliebank Primary School is not a central location and is on the boundary of Glasgow City Council. She indicated that it is unlikely that all the pupils will live locally which in turn will lead to increased drop offs. She highlighted that there is already an ongoing issue of congestion on Bangorshall Street and how would the Council deal with this. Mr McCaig responded that this is a challenge faced by the Council at a number of schools but he highlighted that the proposed numbers are small and two of the prospective pupils live within two miles of the school. It was noted that some actions as part of a test of change, had led to the closure of the road at certain times at Giffnock Primary School and this was enforced by Police Scotland. He indicated that we do have an agenda to reduce carbon omissions and he will raise this with colleagues in Roads department and indicated that staggered start and finish times for GMPE facility might alleviate traffic issues.

A question was asked about the use of St Cadoc's Primary School to host the public meeting and Mr McCaig responded that the school was identified as a suitable location given its central location within East Renfrewshire Council and given that the defined area for GMPE is the council's boundary. It was hoped this would encourage people to attend. Mr McCaig commented that similarly there is another consultation underway that directly affects schools in Barrhead and Clarkston and that a public meeting will be held in Eastwood High School, which is central to the Council.

A member of the group indicated that the school would want to protect the identity of Thornliebank Primary School and how would this work. Mr McCaig indicated that the department would strive to protect and promote the identities of both the mainstream school and the GMPE facility and promote the same values and ethos and encourage integration as appropriate. Members of staff have looked at facilities in another authority. Mrs McDonald indicated that she had visited the facility at Meadowburn Primary School in Bishopbriggs which operates a model similar to the proposal for Thornliebank. She was able to see it in practice. The head teacher commented that assemblies were delivered in English with an element of Gaelic, they have a shared playground and lunch hall and PE opportunities are timetabled. She indicated that the pupils greeted one another in Gaelic and this added another dimension to the school. The pupils all wear Meadowburn Primary polo tops and the GMPE pupils wear the same ones using the Gaelic translation. It was noted that Ruth Adams, Education Provision Manager, and Marilyn Brennan, Quality Improvement Officer, had also visited, Ruth from a building and estates perspective and Marilyn looking at learning and teaching.

The chair of the Parent Council asked about additional funding and if any would be available to the school. Mr McCaig responded that the Scottish Government has a Gaelic capital fund which

local authorities can access in order to prepare for GMPE provision and that it is the Council's intention to apply for appropriate funding. The Scottish Government also has a Gaelic revenue fund which supports school transport and can be requested of to support the cost of staffing etc.; it is anticipated that the Council will submit a bid to this fund to support the cost of a teacher and PSA. Mr McCaig indicated that the department is keen to make improvements to the school.

Mr McCaig was asked if the Parent Council would be consulted about the way forward and he confirmed that there would be conversation with the Parent Council and service users.

A PC member asked about the likelihood of GMPE provision extending to include a class at every stage and indicated that she would not wish to see Thornliebank Primary School diminish because of the potential expansion of the GMPE facility. Mr McCaig reassured the group that the department's initial intention is for a facility to provide two composite classes for P1 to P3 and P4 to P7 in two classes. Mr McCaig did comment that he would expect interest to grow once it is known that the service is available in the area, however any expansion would need to be considered along with other issues such as availability of resources including space and teachers.

The Parent Council chair thanked Mr McCaig for his presentation

## **East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department**

### **Public Meeting as part of the Formal Consultation regarding the establishment of a Gaelic Medium Primary Education facility at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and Beyond**

**St Cadoc's Primary School  
Thursday 15 September 2022**

Present: Councillor Andrew Anderson, Convenor for Education and Equalities  
Mark Ratter, Director of Education  
Janice Collins, Head of Education Services  
Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services  
Mary Hart, Project Officer (Minute taker)

Councillor Anderson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced himself and asked that the panel introduce themselves. He advised that the purpose of this public meeting is to consult on the proposal to locate a GMPE facility within East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools. He explained the format for the meeting would be a presentation from Mr McCaig, Head of Education Services, (Provision), followed by an opportunity for the audience to ask questions or comment on the proposal. However, in view of the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II he indicated that there would be a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

Councillor Anderson invited Mr McCaig to deliver his presentation.

Mr McCaig thanked the group for the opportunity to address them regarding the statutory consultation. He explained that the consultation is a formal process and as such Mary Hart from the Education Department would take a formal minute of the meeting which would be shared with Education Scotland. Thornliebank Primary School is the proposed location of the Gaelic Medium Primary Education in East Renfrewshire and the consultation commenced on 17 August 2022 and was initially due to end on 30 September; Mr McCaig advised that the consultation will now close at midnight on Monday 3 October 2022 due to the additional public holiday arising from the death of the Queen. Mr McCaig advised that currently there is no GMPE provision available within East Renfrewshire Council and that parents and carers who wish GMPE for their children are required to submit a placing request to other local authorities where there is provision. Mr McCaig indicated that Glasgow City Council and South Lanarkshire Council are the currently the other local authorities that East Renfrewshire residents attend. Mr McCaig recorded that whilst places have been allocated to East Renfrewshire residents previously, it is reported by statutory consultees that these local authorities have indicated it will be difficult to accept placing requests from other local authorities as a consequence of oversubscription from its residents. Mr McCaig advised that those currently attending GMPE are required to travel some distances and that currently nine primary pupils and eight secondary pupils resident in East Renfrewshire attend Gaelic medium provision in other authorities.

Mr McCaig advised that the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a legislative duty on education authorities to promote Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) and the Council is required to produce a Gaelic Language Plan that requires to be updated every four years. It was noted that the Act also sets out the process whereby parents can request that an assessment of the need for GMPE in an authority be undertaken and that such a request was not progressed in 2017, as the threshold criteria of interested parents/children was not met. There is a threshold for an obligatory assessment of at least five children in the same pre-school year group and who are resident in the council area. Mr McCaig indicated that a request for a full

assessment of demand was received by the Education Department in October 2021 and that following an initial investigation the threshold of demand was met; the Education Department defined the assessment area as the entirety of the Council boundary. A full assessment of demand was carried out from December 2021 to February 2022 which resulted in the decision to introduce GMPE provision within East Renfrewshire.

Mr McCaig advised that in identifying an appropriate location for a facility in East Renfrewshire consideration was given to sufficiency of school places, the opportunity to increase provision at a later date if required, the location of the facility and the ability of the GMPE School to have its own identity while still integrating with the non GMPE school; these areas of focus were derived from feedback from statutory consultees. Account was also taken of the Council's duty to secure continuous improvement. Mr McCaig was heard in explanation of the capacity and current rolls at Thornliebank Primary School as well as the associated Nursery Class and high school, Woodfarm High School, given consideration of future opportunity to expand to a 3-18 provision. It was noted that Thornliebank Primary School is currently operating as a one stream school but has capacity to be a two stream school. The layout of the school would provide opportunities for the Gaelic facility to have its discrete identity whilst also integrating with the English medium school. The Chair of the Parent Council asked where the data came from as the school would not want to lose for example the ICT suite, she would like a guarantee that the school would not lose out on the spaces they currently enjoy. Mr McCaig responded that this is calculated on the basis of the number of learning and teaching areas available at the school with a class defined under SNCT agreement that stipulates that P1 has a maximum of class of 25 pupils, P2 & P3, 30 pupils and P4 to P7 have a maximum of 33 pupils per class. Mr McCaig also further advised that in the case of composite classes, the maximum pupil teacher ratio is 1 to 25 pupils.

Mr McCaig confirmed that the proposal is to have two discrete learning and teaching spaces for GMPE composite classes. It is planned that GMPE in East Renfrewshire, in accordance with statutory guidance, would be full immersion in Gaelic medium across P1 to P3 stages and across P4 to P7 year stages English language is introduced with Gaelic remaining the dominant language. Therefore the two teaching spaces would be for one class for P1 to P3 and the other for the upper primary stages. Initially it is planned to employ one Gaelic teacher (Principal Teacher) and one Gaelic PSA and to initially use one teaching space from August 2023. Mr McCaig was questioned as to the likelihood of increased interest in GMPE and in particular placing requests from children in other authorities. Mr McCaig advised that in accordance with local policy and national legislation the Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of school places for local residents and that placing requests from residents in other local authorities would only be granted when ERC residents are satisfied and places remain. Mr McCaig reiterated that the maximum class size for P1 is 25 pupils and that is the same maxima for composite classes.

The current School Admissions and Placing Request policies will apply to applications for Thornliebank Primary School and to applications for the Gaelic medium school; Mr McCaig advised there would be no impact on the current policy or applicants as a consequence of the introduction of GMPE. It was noted that where there are places available for East Renfrewshire residents these would be allocated to applicants and then would look to grant places to any placing request applicants, should places in excess of those planned for ERC residents still be available. Mr McCaig reminded that the consultation is on the location of GMPE only and not for secondary or early years provisions at this time. For the purpose of transferring to secondary school, the secondary associated with the child's location of residence and the English medium catchment school they would have attended, will be assumed.

Mr McCaig detailed the educational benefits of GMPE at Thornliebank Primary School allowing both sets of pupils to integrate, learn and play with each other. It would also make learners more aware that Gaelic is part of Scotland's identity, culture and heritage. It was further noted that establishing the GMPE facility at Thornliebank Primary School would reduce significantly

travelling time for young learners, create better parental engagement and involvement with school life.

Mr McCaig advised that there will be opportunities for learners at the school to be consulted through the Pupil Council or House Captains. At the end of the consultation period all documentation will be sent to Education Scotland who will prepare their evaluation report. At the meeting of the Education Committee on 8 December 2022 elected members will consider the report on the outcome of the consultation.

Mr McCaig concluded his presentation and reminded the group that they are invited to have their say and submit written representation or to complete the online survey.

Councillor Anderson thanked Mr McCaig for his presentation and opened up the floor to comments and questions.

A member of the audience expressed concern at the proposed staffing of one teacher and one PSA for GMPE, as to what would happen in times of sick absences and non-class contact time. It was noted that the department would provide management time and non-contact time through additional Gaelic speaking teachers and were in the process of identifying any current staff who were qualified to do so. It also was noted that the Department has been in touch with the General Teaching Council for Scotland as well as Bòrd na Gàidhlig to advise of the potential vacancy and will work with these organisations to secure a member of staff who is a fluent Gaelic speaker, and provide opportunities for training. If staff leave, while endeavouring to secure another teacher, Esgoil, the online Gaelic school may be able to support in the short term and having a Gaelic speaking PSA would help this. Mr McCaig also commented that the West Partnership of schools have GMPE provision and the in co-operation with other LAs, there may be opportunities to support each other in such instances. Mr McCaig advised that the Review of Scottish Education highlighted the need to encourage Gaelic speakers to come into the profession.

A member of the audience advised that she knew of former East Renfrewshire residents who had moved to Glasgow to ensure access to Gaelic Medium Education for their children and she felt that if provision was established, they would wish to return to live in East Renfrewshire and asked if the Department would be prepared for a larger number of applicants than had been reported as part of the earlier assessment exercise. It was advised that in the first instance the department will only be making provision for children across the P1-P3 year stages. Mr McCaig advised that the department was only aware of one current resident attending GMPE in another local authority who would be within that groups at the time of the provision opening. It was confirmed that where there is demand the department would seek to meet demand whenever possible.

In response to a question from the audience, Mrs Collins confirmed that the Gaelic School would be led by a Principal Teacher under the overall management of the Head Teacher of Thornliebank Primary School. It was noted that there would be a public advert for the teaching post and that as a member of the school's management team the post would be attractive. It was shared that visits had been to other authorities to look at Gaelic Medium schools and units to see the models used and learn from their best practice had been undertaken.

Concern was expressed that the resources of Thornliebank Primary School would suffer as a result of the proposal as there is the potential for GMPE to grow very fast. It was acknowledge that interest in GMPE provision is likely to grow once the school is established, however this will not be at the detriment of and Thornliebank Primary School. Whilst it was acknowledged that should further space be required at the school in medium to long term, then areas would be repurposed to ensure continuation of current provision at the school. The ICT room was given as an example where fixed desktop devices could be replaced with mobile devices.



A member of the audience advised that her child attends Isobel Mair School and that whilst recognised that this is a fantastic opportunity to introduce Gaelic Medium Primary Education in East Renfrewshire, the parents and pupils at Isobel Mair have been impacted by cuts to the extended school term provision and a significant increase in the cost of after school care. She advised that this was her only opportunity to be heard and questioned why such provision was proposed for such a small number of pupils, whilst at the same time, reducing provision for pupils with additional support needs. She advised that in her opinion the Council was contravening the Disability and Equality Acts. Councillor Anderson acknowledged and noted the comments made.

In response to a question regarding transport to other Gaelic medium schools it was confirmed that East Renfrewshire Council would continue to honour the transport arrangements for pupils currently attending Gaelic Medium provision in other local authorities. It was also noted that the Council would not meet the transport costs of children commencing GMPE provision in other local authorities, where provision is available locally, from August 2023.

A question was asked regarding demand for P4 places from August 2023. Mr McCaig confirmed that GMPE from August 2023 will focus on P1 to P3 year stages only. Should the child currently attending GMPE provision wish to access P3 provision within East Renfrewshire from August 2023, then this would afford the Council a year to plan for the introduction of later stage provision.

A member of the audience asked about future early years' provision and a member of the panel responded that the department's focus is on GMPE only at this time, and the department's intention to ensure an excellent experience in the primary setting first and foremost. However it was acknowledged by department representatives that expansion of GMPE to early years and secondary education was the natural progression and that the consultation addresses this.

A member of the audience asked if there is a guarantee to continue English provision at Thornliebank Primary School and it was noted that there is no intention to close Thornliebank Primary School and that any such proposal would require a full public consultation. It was highlighted that there is still a demand from the Thornliebank community for school places and that the English medium school is also part of the wider provision across the area.

A member of the audience asked what would happen if the proposal for Thornliebank Primary School is rejected and if there is an alternative. The department representatives responded that there are very few schools in East Renfrewshire which have available capacity to host GMPE and whilst there are a small number of alternatives, they are less attractive than Thornliebank Primary School with regards to the areas of consideration.

It was highlighted by a member of the audience that the proposal, if approved, would have the potential to exacerbate the current traffic issues at the school. Bangorshill Street is managed by Glasgow City Council and it has been difficult to secure support to manage the traffic resulting in a couple of near misses where pupils could have been injured. Mr McCaig advised that risk assessments would be carried out and the department would raise this with colleagues in Environment Department and ask them to engage with Glasgow City Council Roads Department.

A question was asked if East Renfrewshire Council has an agreement with Glasgow City Council to accept placing requests from their residents. Mr McCaig indicated that there is no agreement in place and that the granting of placing requests is set out within local policy and national legislation frameworks.

A member of the audience asked about the capacity in the nursery class and Mrs Collins advised that capacity in early years' establishments is determined by Care Inspectorate regulations, with the staffing ratio for children aged 3 to 5 being one adult to eight children. Whilst there were 34 children in the nursery only 12 joined P1 from the nursery. This is a consequence of the way in which early learning and childcare establishments across East Renfrewshire are grouped in one

of four communities and so not all children who attended the nursery class will be living within the catchment area of the school or they may transfer to a different primary school by means of a placing request.

Councillor Anderson drew the meeting to a close, he thanked everyone for their attendance and urged the audience to submit their views or comments formally either online or in writing.

## **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by HM Inspectors addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Renfrewshire Council to establish Gaelic Medium Education at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023. This will have the council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying that of the English medium primary schools. The proposal also sets admission arrangements.**

October 2022

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East Renfrewshire Council's proposal to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023. This will have the council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Education school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the catchment areas for English medium primary schools. The proposal also sets admission arrangements. Section two of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section three of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section four summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the 2010 Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the 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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 15 September 2022 in connection with the council's proposals;
- 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; and
- discussions with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

2.1 East Renfrewshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 17 August 2022 until midnight on 3 October 2022. The proposal paper was available for inspection online, and as a hard copy at the school, schools impacted and at multiple council's Head Office. The council's social media platforms were used to advertise the consultation and raise awareness. A public meeting was held in St Cadoc's Primary School. Elected members and council senior officers were present to discuss the proposal to 15 people who were in attendance. Attendees raised a number of questions at the public meeting. These included how places in Gaelic Medium Education would be allocated, and how resources,

such as staffing, would be allocated. Representatives from the local authority also held a meeting with Thornliebank Primary School's Parent Council to discuss the proposal. East Renfrewshire Council's website had a dedicated area, with information, the proposal paper and an opportunity to respond to the statutory consultation.

2.3 The council's Education Department undertook a consultation exercise with all pupils at Thornliebank Primary School. Children were invited to give their views on establishing Gaelic Medium Education at the school. House and vice captains managed the consultation exercise, supported by school staff and an independent consultant from the local authority education department. A summary report was prepared of pupils' views. The majority of pupils at Thornliebank Primary School agreed with the proposal.

2.4 The council received 80 online responses to the consultation. The council's staff views were sought. The majority of the respondents (61%), including Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant, support the proposal. These Gaelic organisations were supportive of the proposal as they believe it will provide children with the benefits of Gaelic in education, bilingualism and encourage cultural diversity. All respondents to the consultation agreed with the proposed catchment area to encompass the full geographical area of East Renfrewshire Council. Respondees agreed that access to Gaelic Medium Education would be in accordance with the council's school admissions and placing request policies.

2.5 A minority (39%) did not agree with the proposal. A number of these respondents misunderstood the purpose of the consultation and gave their views on Gaelic Medium Education. The statutory consultation was about the location of a new provision for Gaelic. The education authority is taking forward a duty to promote and support Gaelic Education. They should continue to work on promoting an understanding of Gaelic Medium Education.

2.6 A substantial number of consultees' concerns centred on issues in implementing Gaelic Medium Education. A few felt the proposal may exacerbate current traffic arrangements at the school. The council should produce a risk assessment of the potential impact of their proposal on traffic management and safety, particularly as enrolments increase. A number of respondents expressed a view to HM Inspectors that any changes to the school's accommodation and resources should benefit children in both English Medium and Gaelic Medium classes.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council has produced a clear educational statement on the resulting benefits from their proposal. The council does not currently provide Gaelic Medium Education. At present, families who wish Gaelic Medium Education access this in neighbouring local authorities. The council's full assessment of the demand for Gaelic Medium Education demonstrated sufficient interest to establish this type of education. The proposal, if agreed, will provide access to Gaelic Medium Education at the primary stages at Thornliebank Primary School, East Renfrewshire. This supports Gaelic language, equity, equality and inclusion outcomes at the primary stages through the medium of Gaelic.

3.2 In setting up of the provision for Gaelic Medium Education through total immersion, the council will contribute towards developing and sustaining the Gaelic language for its residents. The council plan to consider Gaelic language within their 1+2 Languages strategy. This would increase further and deepen the educational benefits from this proposal, as well as assist the council in meeting national outcomes for Gaelic Education and the objectives of their local authority Gaelic Language Plan.

3.3 The majority of children who expressed their views through the school survey, or spoke directly to HM Inspectors, agree with the proposal. They believe that children at Thornliebank

Primary School will benefit from learners in Gaelic Medium Education attending their school. Most parents requesting Gaelic Medium Education, or as future users, welcome the proposal. In finalising the proposal, and in preparing and publishing its final consultation report, the council should continue to communicate with staff and parents at Thornliebank Primary School. This should aim to develop a more consistent, shared understanding of Gaelic Medium Education, the implications for all of this new option and to support transition arrangements into the school.

3.4 HM Inspectors welcome that the council are, in the future, planning Gaelic Medium Education as a progressive 3 to 18 experience. At this juncture, their plans meet the legislative duty to establish Gaelic Medium Education at P1. It is important that the intended outcomes of the free early learning and childcare are available to users of Gaelic Medium Education. A few respondees have referenced challenges in recruiting and retaining staff. This is also detailed in the council's proposal paper. A few respondees have raised a question on how total immersion will be delivered, while ensuring teachers' non-contact time and the resultant impact on educational benefits.

3.5 HM Inspectors agree with the council's plan to undertake a children's rights, fairness and equality impact assessment on the proposal. This information would be referenced when making a final decision. The council, staff and pupils have made a positive start to discussing the implications of having the authority's first provision for Gaelic Medium Education. They should continue, as planned, to reflect this in their school's vision, values, aims and rationale for the curriculum to increase even further the high-quality benefits and outcomes of their proposal. This should include having well-informed attitudes that demonstrate equity, equality and inclusion for all learners.

## 4. Summary

HM Inspectors evaluated East Renfrewshire Council's proposal to establish Gaelic Medium Education at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and beyond; set up a delineated catchment area for GMPE; and set admission arrangements. HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has potential to result in educational benefits. In taking forward the proposal, the council should continue to involve stakeholders in their plans for the provision. In its final report, the council should, as planned, complete a risk assessment for road safety and consider carefully plans for traffic management. They should also consider the few points raised by stakeholders, as detailed in section three, to ensure the best possible equity and equality outcomes for learners.

**HM Inspectors  
October 2022**

## Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to consider how your policy could impact on the needs of those protected by the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Fairer Scotland Duty and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

- [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
- [Fairer Scotland Duty](#)
- [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#)

In making the assessment you must consider relevant evidence, including evidence received from equality groups. Having considered all of these elements, you must take account of the results of such assessments. This requires you to consider taking action to address any issues identified, such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and exploiting any potential for positive impact. If any adverse impact amounts to unlawful discrimination, the policy must be amended to avert this.

<b>Name of policy*:</b>	Establish Gaelic Medium Education Provision
<b>Completion date:</b>	29/9/22
<b>Completed by:</b>	Marilyn Brennan
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Joe McCaig
<b>Department:</b>	Education

*\*The term 'policy' should be understood as activity of East Renfrewshire Council i.e. all policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities including the delivery of services; essentially everything we do.*

**You should complete the Screening Section (1) to establish if a full assessment is required.**

## 1. Screening

<b>1.1 What is the nature of this policy?</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy or Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Programme or Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service or Function <input type="checkbox"/> Budget proposal <input type="checkbox"/> Another decision. Please state: <a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Review or change to existing <input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please state: <a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>
<b>1.2 What would happen as a result of this policy? Select all that apply</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Change to charging arrangements (including introduction, removal, increase or decrease) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change to how a service is delivered (including addition, change or removal of practice/procedures/processes) <input type="checkbox"/> Change to options or entitlements <input type="checkbox"/> Change to priorities or criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please detail: <a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>
<b>1.3 How relevant is this policy to impact assessment?</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The policy would have consequences for people (positive/neutral/negative) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The policy has potential to advance equality for people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The policy will affect children and young people up to the age of 18 <input type="checkbox"/> The policy has no impact on people
<b>1.4 What people would be affected?</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> East Renfrewshire Council employees <input type="checkbox"/> Organisations or individuals carrying out a service on behalf of the Council



- Voluntary sector groups/organisations
- People living in a specific area of East Renfrewshire. Please detail: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- x Everyone living in East Renfrewshire
- People working, studying or volunteering in East Renfrewshire
- Visitors to East Renfrewshire
- A group of people with a shared interest:
  - Experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage (this includes low/no wealth, low income, area deprivation or material deprivation)
  - Being in a particular age category
  - Being from a black or minority ethnic group e.g. Gypsy/Travellers
  - x Speaking a language other than English
  - Women/girls
  - Identifying as Lesbian, Gay Bisexual or Transgender
  - Belonging to a particular religion or belief
  - Pregnant women or those on maternity/paternity leave
  - Having a long term limiting health condition or disability
  - Providing unpaid care for others
  - Another group e.g. those experiencing homelessness, offenders/ex-offenders. Please detail: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- x Children and young people living in East Renfrewshire
- x Children and young people using East Renfrewshire Council services
- Children and young people visiting East Renfrewshire
- None of the above

Review your answers above.

- If the policy has no impact on people, an impact assessment is not required. **GO TO SECTION 9**
- If the policy will have an impact on people, you should complete the full assessment. **GO TO SECTION 2**

## 2. The Assessment: Your scoping

<b>2.1 How long will this policy be in place and when is it scheduled for review?</b>
Permanently/ongoing review within existing Education Department self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures.
<b>2.2 Are there known inequalities within the subject matter(s) of the policy?</b> For example: access to transport; organisational pay and composition; or bullying in schools.
Equal access to Gaelic Medium Education for speakers of Gaelic
<b>2.3 Are there known impacts on children and young people within the subject matter of the policy?</b> For example, changes to education services, employment support for parents, playparks.
Yes
<b>2.4 How have people who might be affected been consulted and involved in the development of the policy ?</b> Please provide dates and information
Public consultation 17 Aug – 3 Oct 2022
<b>2.5 Where children and young people will be affected, how have they been consulted and involved in the development of the policy?</b> Please provide dates and information
To be undertaken following public consultation

## 3. Impact on Equalities

In order to impact assess any new or existing policy it's important to consider the evidence about how it may affect people. Log information about the experiences and needs of people on the basis of different characteristics/circumstances, and whether the proposed policy could have a positive or adverse impact on that.

You may wish to refer to the following sources:

- Input from local Councillors
- Findings from engagement or involvement activities
- Information or feedback from groups of people, such as equality interest organisations and groups who speak on behalf of others
- National, regional or local statistics
- Analysis of enquiries or complaints from customers
- Recommendations from inspections or audits
- National or regional research to identify similar issues
- Comparisons with similar policies in other departments or authorities to identify similar issues

**Is it possible to collect new evidence that you don't have but think will be relevant?** For example: speaking to colleagues; adapting engagement approaches; setting up meetings or focus groups; and consulting interest organisations.

Characteristics/circumstances	Experience and needs (include sources)	Impact category (positive/neutral/negative) and assessment of impact
Socioeconomic disadvantage		-
Age	Children wishing to access GMPE currently must travel outwith ERC.	Positive impact
Disability or long term health condition		
Ethnicity	Speakers of non-indigenous languages may also require support to enjoy their right to use and learn home languages.	Neutral The needs of different ethnic communities are addressed by existing policies on parental engagement, learning, teaching and assessment, and supporting bilingual learners. The ability of the school to meet the needs of other groups of children is unlikely to be negatively impacted by the establishment of GMPS.
Gender (including gender reassignment)		
Marriage/Civil Partnership (only applicable to Council employment policy)		

Pregnancy / Maternity		
Religion / Belief		
Sexual orientation		
Providing unpaid care		
Any other relevant groups e.g. unemployed people, people experiencing homelessness, care leavers, people involved in the criminal justice system, people with literacy/numeracy barriers, people living in rural communities.	Speakers of Gaelic who wish for their children to access GMPE must currently apply for provision outwith ERC. This creates an additional barrier to accessing GMPE which may intersect with digital inequality, literacy inequality and employment inequality.	Positive

#### 4. Impact on socio-economic disadvantage

Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Scotland, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services. Socio-economic disadvantage can be experienced in both places and communities of interest. East Renfrewshire communities where people are at greater risk of experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage and where resources must be targeted to meet needs are the localities of:

- Barrhead – Dunterlie, East Arthurlie and Dovecothall (ADD2)
- Auchenback
- Neilston
- Thornliebank

Consider the policy itself and the way it will be implemented. How may this result in different experiences for people in East Renfrewshire.

##### **4.1 In what way would the policy alleviate or entrench inequalities from socioeconomic disadvantage?**

*Guidance note*

*Consider common inequalities such as poorer skills and attainment; lower paid and less secure work; greater chance of being a victim of crime; less*

<i>chance of being treated with dignity and respect; lower healthy life expectancy; lower feeling of control over decisions that affect you.</i>
The establishment of GMPE within a more deprived area creates the opportunity for children in this area to access GMPE more easily.
<b>4.2 What opportunities are there within this policy and the way it will be implemented to promote inclusion, participation, dignity and empowerment of people experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage?</b>
-
<b>4.3 What will be done differently to focus on addressing the multiple inequalities experienced by some people in Auchenback, Barrhead, Neilston and Thornliebank?</b>
The location of the provision in Thornliebank will enhance its accessibility for people experiencing multiple inequalities in Thornliebank, Barrhead and Auchenback. Transport will be provided for pupils wishing to access the provision from further afield.

## 5. Impact on Children's Rights

This section must be completed if any potential impact on children and young people up to the age of 18 has been identified in sections 1-3.

If there are no impacts on children and young people GO TO SECTION 6

Which General Principles of UNCRC are relevant to this policy/measure? Tick all that apply.		Which additional articles are relevant to this policy/measure? List all that apply	Which particular groups of children and young people are affected by this policy/measure? (e.g. young children, disabled children, children living in poverty, children in care, young people who offend).
<b>Article 2 Non-discrimination</b> Children should not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of their rights. No child should be discriminated against because of the situation or status of their parent/carer(s).	x	Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)	Children who are Gaelic speakers
<b>Article 3 Best interests of the child</b> Every decision and action taken relating to a child must be in their best interests. Governments	x		All children accessing GMPS in East Renfrewshire

must take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure that children have the protection and care necessary for their wellbeing - and that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for their care and protection conform with established standards.			
<b>Article 6</b> <b>Life, survival and development</b> Every child has a right to life and to develop to their full potential.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Article 12</b> <b>Respect for the views of the child</b> Every child has a right to express their views and have them given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Children should be provided with the opportunity to be heard, either directly or through a representative or appropriate body.	<input type="checkbox"/>		

In relation to the articles identified above, please explain how the impact will be positive, negative or neutral.

Relevant identified Article of UNCRC	Impact category (Positive/Negative/Neutral)	Assessment of impact (including consideration of whether the policy/measure might impact differently on different groups of children and young people affected).
Article 2	Positive	Children who are Gaelic speakers will be able to access education through the medium of their home language. Parents who are Gaelic speakers will be able to participate equally in the life and work of the school.
Article 3	Positive	The establishment of a dedicated GME provision with appropriate facilities within East Renfrewshire will protect the best interests of children accessing GME. Transport outwith the authority area will no longer be necessary.

Article 30 (children from minority groups)	Positive	Children from Gaelic-speaking families will be able to learn and use the Gaelic language and participate in the culture of their community within school.
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## 6. Your results

Considering the evidence logged above, complete the following questions where possible.

<b>6.1 In what ways, if any, would this policy help to eliminate discrimination or undermine it?</b> Consider any potential adverse impact identified above.
The policy will help to eliminate discrimination by promoting understanding of Gaelic language and culture.
<b>6.2 In what ways, if any, would this policy advance or undermine equality of opportunity?</b>
-
<b>6.3 In what ways, if any, would this policy foster or undermine good relations between groups of people?</b> Consider aspects that may tackle prejudice or promote understanding between different groups.
The policy has the potential to foster good relations between groups of people. It will be important that in the implementation of the policy, the wider school community is involved and well supported, and that the equal value and importance of all community languages is emphasised.
<b>6.4 In what ways, if any, will this policy advance or undermine the rights of children and young people?</b>
The policy advances children's right to speak the language of their family.
<b>6.5 In what ways, if any, will this policy protect and promote the wellbeing of children and young people?</b>
The policy promotes the wellbeing of children by creating stronger links between home and school via language and culture.
<b>6.6 How will you communicate information about this policy to people who have: hearing and/or sight loss; English as a second language; are digitally excluded; have literacy/numeracy barriers?</b>
Translations are available on request. Recruitment will identify Gaelic language school staff who will liaise with the Gaelic-speaking community in Gaelic.
<b>6.7 Is this policy to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?</b> If yes, how will you incorporate equality expectations into the contract?

## 7. Your Outcome

### 7.1 Select the most appropriate

- No major change
- Adjust the policy
- Continue the policy
- Stop the policy

### 7.2 Are there any significant and relevant information gaps that have not been filled during the development of this policy?

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended requires that the pupil voice is heard on this matter in so far as the authority considers them to be of suitable age and maturity. The Education Department followed the guidance for local authorities on pupil consultations provided by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, with the assistance of Children in Scotland, and engaged an independent educational consultant to conduct the consultation exercise with children and young people in the affected primary school. The consultant independently managed the pupil consultation exercise and produced a report of all the results of the pupil consultations which is included in the full public consultation report as Appendix B.

### 7.3 What, in brief, does the evidence base underpinning the policy say about its potential impacts on inequalities of outcome?

The policy has the potential to advance equality and foster good relations. It will be important that engagement with the wider community is thorough and sensitively managed.

### 7.4 What, in brief, does the evidence base underpinning the policy say about its potential impacts on the rights of children and young people?

The policy has the potential to advance children's rights.

### 7.5 Consider all evidence and findings of your assessment and complete this short action plan for addressing any potential adverse impact on people, including children and young people, in the policy itself, and in the way it is communicated/ implemented.



Identified adverse impact	Mitigating circumstances	Mitigating actions	Timeline	Responsible person
No adverse impacts identified				

## 8. Approval

<b>Name of policy/proposal:</b>	Establish Gaelic Medium Education
<b>Approval date:</b>	10/11/2022
<b>Approved by:</b>	Joe McCaig
<b>Department:</b>	Education

## 9. No assessment required

Policy/Decision Title	
Department/ Service	
Responsible officer for taking decision	

Rationale for decision	Please record why an assessment is not required and what your justification is for making that decision. This must include confirmation that the policy/programme concerned does not constitute a strategic decision and/or has no relevance re protected characteristics, human rights or socio-economic inequalities
<p><b>Declaration:</b> I confirm that the decision <u>not</u> to carry out an Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment has been authorised by:</p> <p><b>Name and Job Title:</b></p> <p><b>Date Authorisation given:</b></p>	