



EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES

EDUCATION SERVICE

STATUTORY CONSULTATION REPORT

**REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED
CLOSURE OF PRESTONPANS INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL AND PRESTONPANS
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW NON-
DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND ITS ASSOCIATED
CATCHMENT AREA FOR PRESTONPANS**

November 2018

This Consultation Report has been issued by East Lothian Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

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EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES

EDUCATION

This report has been prepared following consultation on the following proposal:

- Proposed Closure of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and the establishment of a new non-denominational primary school structure and its associated catchment area for Prestonpans

This proposal **directly affected** the following schools:

- Prestonpans Infant School
- Prestonpans Primary School
- Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period
- b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting held on 26th September 2018
- c) Oral representations made to it at the public drop-in session
- d) Oral representations made to it at the pupil voice sessions
- e) Education Scotland's report on the proposal

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is a Consultation Report prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the above proposal.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written responses;
- Provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meeting held on 26th September 2018;
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any alleged omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Consultation Proposal Document and state how the Council acted upon it; and
- State how the Council has complied with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposal.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Education Authorities have a number of statutory duties in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their area, including the provision of education for eligible pre-school children and includes any school or Early Learning & Childcare centre, which are run by the Education Authority. These duties apply in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand and include but are not limited to:

- Section 1** of the **Education (Scotland) Act 1980** requires authorities to secure for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/44/contents>
- Section 17** of the **Education (Scotland) Act 1980** requires authorities to provide sufficient accommodation in schools and other educational establishments under their management: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/44/section/17>

iii. **Part 1, Section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003**
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/1/part/1> requires authorities to secure best value by continuous improvement in performance of the authority's functions, maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost.

iv. **Section 3 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000**,
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/section/3> requires authorities to "endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them; and they shall exercise their functions in relation to such provision with a view to raising standards of education". Section 3D of the 2000 Act (as inserted by section 2 of the 2016 Act) introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework. These and other duties within the Act are underpinned by section 2(1) of the 2000 Act which states that:

"Where school education is provided to a child or young person by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority it shall be the duty of the authority to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential."

2.2 The **East Lothian Council Plan 2017-2022** outlines the strategy the Council will follow and details the objectives and strategic goals it has set itself over the next five years to strive to meet its vision. The Council Plan sets out the following themes and objectives for the next five years:

- Growing our Economy
- Growing our People
- Growing our Communities
- Growing our Capacity

2.3 The overarching objective of 'reducing inequalities within and across our communities' that was adopted when the 2012-2017 Council Plan was reviewed in 2014 remains the overarching objective of the new Council Plan. Within this context, the provision of high-quality education and early learning & childcare has an important role in contributing to both the themes and objectives in the Council Plan

2.4 East Lothian Council is committed to raising educational attainment and ensuring that all children and young people have the best opportunities in life. East Lothian's Education Service aims to provide the best education in Scotland through a relentless

focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. We will all work together to Get it Right for Every Child and to ensure that all children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. To realise our vision, we will:

- Act with ambition and integrity to open minds to the rights and values of education and help everyone to achieve their potential.
- Work together to nurture all our children and young people.
- Demonstrate a community working together to make that difference for every child.
- Collectively strive for excellence and equity for all.

2.5 Our vision and values for education within East Lothian Council align with the Key Priorities in the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education 'Achieving Excellence and Equity' (*Scottish Government, January 2016*) and 'Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education' (*Scottish Government, June 2016*):

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

2.6 Furthermore, East Lothian Council has set out its vision for early learning and childcare in the 'Early Learning and Childcare Strategy 2016-2021', making a clear commitment to working with children, families and partners in the community to ensure that children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. The Strategy outlines three guiding principles as follows:

- Deliver on the Scottish Government's commitment to increase the number of funded early learning & childcare hours for all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds from 600 to 1140 per year by 2020. Targeting support towards the parents, children and communities most in need.
- To close the attainment gap through early intervention and reduce the impact of disadvantage by providing targeted support to families facing additional pressures.
- To ensure an informed, well-qualified, skilled and motivated workforce to enable delivery of high quality early learning and childcare services capable of meeting future demand and challenges, as we move towards 1140 hours.

2.7 The new duties imposed on education authorities by the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000* as amended by the 2016 Act took effect from August 2017. On 21 November 2017, East Lothian Council's Education Committee approved the [East Lothian](#)

[Education Service Local Improvement Plan 2017-18](#), the education authority's annual statement of improvement objectives. One of the key outcomes identified for the Education Service in session 2017/18 to 2019/20, as set out in the plan, is consistency in our approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones, and continues to be a focus of the draft Education Service Local Improvement Plan for 2018-19.

- 2.8 The need for seamless and high quality transition is recognised internationally, nationally and locally and is central to continuity of education and progression through the curriculum. Consistency in our approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones is vital for learner progression, effective transition and raising attainment for all. Pupil wellbeing is further supported where approaches are consistent through one school. There is better continuity for pupils in terms of familiarity and confidence and there are increased opportunities for pupils to develop and sustain relationships with their peers and with school staff.
- 2.9 The Prestonpans catchment area is currently served by two separate non-denominational schools: Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School (nursery to Primary 3 stages) and Prestonpans Primary School (Primary 4 to Primary 7 stages) with separate operational and management structures. Until recently, the Prestonpans catchment area was one of only two primary catchment areas in East Lothian where P1 to P3 and P4 to P7 pupils from the same catchment are taught in two separate schools requiring an additional stage transition between P3 and P4. The other primary catchment area in East Lothian was Haddington. Across Scotland there were only three mainstream local authority Infant Schools registered as open as at September 2017. These three schools included Haddington Infant School and Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School.
- 2.10 Between 8th January and 26th February 2018, the Council undertook a statutory consultation on a proposal to close Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and establish a new single non-denominational primary school for Haddington. The proposal was put forward to address the additional transition challenges present at the two schools for children, staff and parents with regard to the additional stage transition between Primary 3 and Primary 4. In line with the *Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010*, Education Scotland considered the education aspects of the proposal and reported there were clear educational benefits. The proposal was approved by Elected Members on 24th April 2018 and is now being implemented following the decision by Scottish Ministers not to call-in the proposal.
- 2.11 The Education Service and schools work together to share effective practice and ensure our children's transitions are well-planned. However, the additional stage transition between P3 and P4 presents additional challenges for children at a key point of learning within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) First Level. This also presents a more challenging

transition stage for staff which is not experienced by staff in almost every other school across East Lothian and indeed more widely across Scotland.

- 2.12 The challenges of the additional stage transition across two separate establishments have been present for a number of years and are also present at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School. Evidence following the Education Service School Reviews of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School in 2016 highlighted that while pastoral transitions were strong between the two schools, they needed to develop stronger and more effective links to improve continuity and progression in children's learning from Nursery to P7 and to improve curriculum transition. While both schools have worked well together to develop more consistent approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, it has not been possible to fully address this given that these are schools under two distinct leadership and management arrangements.
- 2.13 East Lothian Council's Education Service considers establishing one new primary school covering nursery through to P7 under a single management structure through this proposal will provide the opportunity to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum and enhance transition and continuity in learning across the stages in the Prestonpans catchment area from Early Level through to Second Level.
- 2.14 East Lothian Council considers establishing one new primary school covering nursery through to P7 under a single management structure through this proposal will enhance transition and continuity in learning across the stages in the Prestonpans catchment area from Early Level through to Second Level. This proposal represents best value in terms of the continuous improvement of early learning & childcare provision and primary education within the Prestonpans area, providing equity across all schools in the Prestonpans cluster in terms of the continuity and progression in learning for primary aged pupils from Nursery through to P7. This proposal will also ensure equity across all schools in the Prestonpans cluster in terms of Leadership and Management arrangements and bring the Leadership and Management model of the two affected schools in line with all the other schools within the cluster and across East Lothian.
- 2.15 East Lothian Council also considers establishing one new primary school through this proposal to be the preferable option in providing the Head Teacher with the ability to carry out effectively such duties associated with both recent and planned changes within education. While Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre is a separate establishment with a separate budget and will continue to function as a separate establishment if the proposal is implemented, it does come under the management and leadership of the Head Teacher of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School.
- 2.16 The educational benefits that will arise from this proposal for children affected or likely to be affected were outlined in the Consultation Proposal Document. It is believed that

this proposal is the most reasonable, viable and appropriate course of action open to it in providing primary education and early learning & childcare provision within the context of these schools. The reasons for coming to this view and consulting on the proposal were set out in the Consultation Proposal Document.

2.17 The Council must consult on certain changes in arrangements for educating children in its area before it can commit to delivering them. This includes when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools, including nursery schools, such as closure, relocation or change of catchment area. This proposal required a formal consultation to be carried out in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This report documents the formal consultation undertaken on this proposal between 20th August 2018 and 2nd October 2018.

2.18 The proposed closure of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and establishment of a new single primary school structure with nursery class in Prestonpans will **directly affect** the following schools and was considered in this Proposal Document:

- Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School
- Prestonpans Primary School
- Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre

2.19 The following schools are **indirectly affected** by the proposal:

- Preston Lodge High School
- Cockenzie Primary School
- Longniddry Primary School
- St Gabriel's RC Primary School

3. CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The main considerations relating to the closure of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and the establishment of a new single primary school structure with nursery class in Prestonpans are fully explained in the Consultation Proposal Document. The main points are highlighted below:

- The responsibilities associated with the National Improvement Framework and the new duties imposed on education authorities by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 as amended by the 2016 Act.
- The agreed principles underpinning the development of an empowered school led system set out in the 'Education Bill Policy Ambition – Joint Agreement', June 2018 <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/8745/downloads>.

- The duties placed on local authorities in relation to the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area.
- The duties placed on local authorities to secure best value in the delivery of services.

4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

4.1 The Council has met the minimum requirements set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 with regards to ensuring the views of all members of the community were listened to and their views are included in this report. The Council believes that this report accurately reflects the views of the community, which have been gathered through a range of engagement events and response mechanisms. It is for members of East Lothian Council to decide to adopt the proposal, withdraw it or seek to consult on another proposal.

4.2 Notification of the consultation was given to all statutory consultees prior to the commencement of the consultation.

4.3 The Consultation Proposal Document was published on East Lothian Council's website and paper copies distributed on 20th August 2018 to:

- Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School
- Prestonpans Primary School
- Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre
- Cockenzie Primary School
- St Gabriel's RC Primary School
- Longniddry Primary School
- Camperdown Nursery
- Seahorse Nursery
- Longniddry Playgroup
- Puffin Playgroup
- Sandcastle Playgroup
- Tots and Teens at Preston Lodge High School
- Prestonpans Group Practice
- The Harbours Medical Practice
- Forthview Road Surgery
- Prestonpans Community Centre
- Prestonpans Library
- John Muir House, Haddington.

- 4.4 The consultation period commenced at 12.00am on **Monday 20th August 2018** and lasted until 12.00am on **Tuesday 2nd October 2018**, being a period of six weeks, which also included the statutory minimum 30 school days.
- 4.5 The proposal on which consultation took place was to:
- Close Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and establish a new single primary school structure with nursery class and its associated catchment area for Prestonpans.
- 4.6 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 4.7 An information leaflet setting out details about the proposal and consultation meetings was issued to the consultees listed in the Consultation Proposal Document. Advice on where the complete Consultation Proposal Document could be obtained was included and was published on East Lothian Council's Consultation Hub:
<http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/education/prestonpans-consultation>
- 4.8 If requested, copies of the proposal would have been made available in alternative formats or translated for readers whose first language is not English.
- 4.9 A "Frequently Asked Questions" document was also prepared which was available at the same location on East Lothian Council's Consultation Hub:
<http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/education/prestonpans-consultation>
- 4.10 An advertisement was placed in the local newspaper on **23rd August 2018** and **13th September 2018**. A pre-announcement was also made on the Council's website and social media posts on the **16th August 2018**. In addition, there were announcements related to the consultation process on East Lothian Council's website, linked via a Facebook page and Twitter feeds.
- 4.11 The public meeting was held at **Preston Lodge High School** on **Wednesday 26th September 2018** at **7.00pm**.
- 4.12 In addition to specific meetings with statutory consultees, drop-in sessions were held in respect of the proposal at the venues below, at which any members of the public and staff were welcome to attend:

Venue	Date	Time
Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School	4 th September 2018	12:00pm – 5:00pm
Prestonpans Primary School	6 th September 2018	3.30pm - 7.30pm
Prestonpans Primary School	11 th September 2018	12:00pm – 5:00pm

4.13 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following persons, including those indirectly affected, were consulted:

- The Parent Councils of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School
- The parents/carers of children at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, Prestonpans Primary School and Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre
- The parents/carers of any children expected to attend Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, Prestonpans Primary School and Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper
- The children at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, Prestonpans Primary School and Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre
- The staff at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, Prestonpans Primary School and Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre
- The trade union representatives of the above staff
- Preston, Seton & Gosford Area Partnership
- Prestonpans Community Council

4.14 The following schools are **directly affected** by the proposal:

- Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School
- Prestonpans Primary School
- Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre

4.15 Representations were sought from statutory consultees and the wider public in the following ways:

- An online questionnaire on East Lothian Council's Consultation Hub. The questionnaire asked specific questions and enabled general comments and views to be entered. The Consultation Hub stored all relevant consultation documentation for public viewing;
- Widely distributed paper copies of the same questionnaire, at Council buildings around the Prestonpans area. Sealed boxes were also located at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, Prestonpans Primary School, Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre and Prestonpans Community Centre for their return;
- Paper and digital flyers, in addition to the press adverts and Council web and social media announcements linked to the Consultation Hub. These flyers also detailed a specific Education Consultations email inbox, to which any queries could be submitted during the consultation period;
- Flyer distribution to pupils at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, Prestonpans Primary School and Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre as well as all local

authority managed nursery classes and partner providers within the Prestonpans cluster area. The Head Teachers of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School used established methods of communication to engage/remind parents about the consultation and the Education Scotland independent evaluation visit.

- In addition to the public meeting and public drop-in sessions, informal meetings were held with staff at the directly affected schools to discuss any queries or concerns they may have on the proposal based around their availability and at their discretion. Information on the 'Protocol for School Merger' was shared with staff at these meetings and a copy of the protocol was provided to the Head Teacher to share with staff on request. Further additional opportunities to engage with HR staff regarding the protocol were also offered to staff at their discretion;
- A representative group of pupils from both Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School attended separate workshops where they were able to express their views on the proposal;
- Meetings were held with Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School Parent Council and Prestonpans Primary School Parent Council.

4.16 This Consultation Report is the Council's response to the points raised during the consultation period on the Consultation Proposal Document.

4.17 This Consultation Report will be published for a period of three weeks before a final decision is taken by East Lothian Council on 11th December 2018.

5. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

5.1 As part of the consultation process, the Council sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders. The Council provided stakeholders with a short online or paper questionnaire and also made good arrangements for receiving additional written responses. The Council received 135 responses to its questionnaire during the consultation period. All representations that had been made during the consultation period were submitted to Education Scotland and any issues or concerns raised are also subject to the Council's response in this Consultation Report.

5.2 The comments made as part of the questionnaire submissions are included in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish East Lothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 8 of this report.

5.3 The questionnaire responses are summarised by category in the following tables:

Table 1 – Number of respondents by type of respondent

Type of Respondent	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Groups	2	1%
Individuals	133	99%
Total Responses	135	100%

Table 2 – Number of individual respondents by category

Individual Respondents	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Parents	107	80%
Staff	23	17%
Other/Unknown	3	3%
Total Responses	133	100%

Table 3 – Number of group respondents by category

Group Respondents	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Parent Councils	2	100%

Response Analysis from Individuals

5.4 The number of responses to the consultation in support or not in support of each question by category of respondent are shown in Tables 4 and 5 below:

Q1 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and establish a new non-denominational single primary school structure covering Nursery to Primary 7 for the Prestonpans catchment area?

Table 4 – Number of respondents by category

Individual Respondents	Agree/ Strongly Agree		No Opinion/ Not Answered		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parents	40	37%	8	7%	59	55%	107	100%
Staff	2	9%	1	4%	20	87%	23	100%
Other/Unknown	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%	3	100%
Total Responses	44	33%	9	7%	80	60%	133	100%

Response Analysis from Groups

5.5 There were 2 responses from groups. Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School Parent Council responded that they strongly agreed with the proposal while Prestonpans Primary School Parent Council based on feedback from the wider Parent Forum

responded they did not agree with the proposal. The full responses from the groups can be read in Appendix 1 and are summarised below:

- Prestonpans Infant & Nursery Parent Council – the Parent Council set out the positives for the proposal in relation to the implementation of a single leadership team while also setting out their concerns in relation to the budget, staffing levels and points for consideration going forward (*see Appendix 1 – Responses from Groups*).
- Prestonpans Primary Parent Council – following a Facebook poll where 65% of parents responded were against the proposal and 35% were in support, the Parent Council responded to that they disagreed with the proposal. The Parent Council then set out the various questions and queries that were raised at their Parent Council Consultation meetings (*see Appendix 1 – Responses from Groups*).

Public Meeting

5.6 A public meeting was held in Preston Lodge High School on Wednesday 26th September 2018 which was attended by 35 members of the community. A full note of the meeting is attached at Appendix 2 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting. The points raised are addressed within the responses to Frequently Asked Questions or within this report.

5.7 Additionally, drop-in sessions were arranged at both schools during the consultation period, enabling any member of the public and staff to ask questions and discuss the proposal, the consultation process and how they could make representations.

Pupil & Staff Voice Sessions

5.8 During the consultation period, Council officers visited Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School providing good opportunities for pupils and staff to discuss their views. The Head of Education and a representative from Human Resources attended informal meetings with staff in both schools, held at the staff's discretion. As these were informal, no formal record was taken at these staff sessions. A note of the planned pupil voice sessions are included as Appendix 3. Pupils from Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School were curious about the proposal and had prepared a balanced set of questions in advance. Pupils from Prestonpans Primary School expressed mixed views.

6. SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL

6.1 33% of all individual questionnaire respondents (44 responses) to the consultation were in favour of establishing a new single primary school structure covering Nursery to P7 for the Prestonpans catchment area. The full text of all responses received can be read

in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish East Lothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 8 of this report.

6.2 A number of common points and questions emerged from the responses as follows:

- Proposal offers more continuity and consistency for the children and parents in terms of learning and teaching, policies, strategies etc
- Having one school and management team will offer a smoother transition for all children through the primary years
- Better communication and shared understanding of each child's needs across the two sites
- Proposal will help to raise attainment
- One school uniform and opportunity to review start and finish times of both sites
- School Budget and size of Senior Management Team
- Management of one larger school across two campuses
- Concern regarding the timing of implementation of proposal
- Concern it is a cost-saving exercise

7. OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSAL

7.1 60% of all individual questionnaire respondents (80 responses) to the consultation were not in favour of establishing a new single primary school structure covering Nursery to P7 for the Prestonpans catchment area. The full text of all responses received can be read in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish East Lothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 8 of this report.

7.2 The main questions and issues raised in these responses were as follows:

- What is the main purpose of the proposal and is it just a cost-cutting exercise?
- Who will make the final decision about the proposal and why is there only one option?
- Why is the proposal happening now?
- What are the cost savings of this proposal?
- Will this proposal affect the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocations?
- What evidence is there that this proposal will raise attainment?
- What will the management structure of the new school be and will parents have a say in this?
- Management of one larger school across two campuses and access to the Head Teacher

- What impact will the proposal have on the teaching structure and will the current class structure remain the same within the 2 campuses?
- How will children get the right support they need in a larger single school?
- A split campus will still require a physical transition between P3 and P4
- How will the proposal affect support & admin staff?
- Why does the proposal say February 2019 and when exactly will the new school be established?
- What will happen with the school uniform and will we have to buy another new one?
- If the proposal is approved, will the school start and end times change?
- Where is the Prestonpans Infant School extension going and when will it be extended?
- Are there any plans to build any more new primary schools in the Prestonpans catchment area for all the new housing?
- Are there any plans to change the catchment area for Prestonpans and will the pupils from Blindwells be going to Prestonpans Infant School and Prestonpans Primary School?
- Why are the projected numbers for the nursery class and Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre not included in the proposal document?
- Why is the local authority not proposing two separate Nursery to P7 schools for the Prestonpans catchment area?
- What research was used to inform the proposal for consultation?

8. EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO THE MAIN QUESTIONS/ISSUES RAISED

8.1 What is the main purpose of the proposal and is it just a cost-cutting exercise?

8.1.1. The statutory school consultation process is predicated on consulting on a proposal that is viable and deliverable and represents the very best educational outcomes for its young people. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires Education Authorities to produce a comprehensive Education Benefits statement that clearly sets out the benefits for children and young people affected by the proposal and that the closure of a school is proposed for positive educational reasons.

8.1.2 Whilst the financial information in the proposal document reflects a decrease in the revenue budget due to changes in the senior leadership/management team, the main purpose of the proposal is to address the additional challenges for children, staff and parents that currently exist with the additional stage transition between P3 and P4 and raise attainment for all.

8.1.3 The Educational Benefits that will arise from this proposal for all children Nursery to P7 affected or likely to be affected are clearly set out in paragraphs 61 and 62(A) to 62(M) on pages 23 to 26 in Section B of the Prestonpans Consultation Proposal Document, some of which are highlighted below:

'H. The additional stage transition presents many challenges, the most significant being how to ensure meaningful progression and continuity of learning from Primary 3 to Primary 4. This is a crucial stage for pupils as they progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels with the expectation that most achieve First level by the end of Primary 4. Although both schools have worked well together to develop consistent approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, there are still opportunities to improve this further. For example, pupils can experience one approach to writing in Primary 3 and then another approach as they move into Primary 4 which can make it more challenging to build on prior learning or experiences. Therefore, removing the need for an additional stage transition to a different school at the end of P3 is likely to reduce any possible risk of slowing down of progress as children progress through the First Level of Curriculum for Excellence.

I. Currently staff work in separate schools and therefore work across either Nursery to Primary 3 or Primary 4 to Primary 7. Although the schools moderate learning, teaching and assessment across the cluster, teachers have not taught across both schools or participated in further moderation activity across both schools. The Education Service and HM Inspectors are very clear that teachers need to understand the curriculum in terms of the expectations on children both before and after the stage they are teaching. It is absolutely critical that staff have a full understanding of the breadth and depth of learning and expectations of learners across each of the Curriculum for Excellence levels. Staff also need to have a very strong understanding of child development across the stages and most often that comes from experience of working with children across different stages. This is not possible under the current separate school arrangement. The establishment of a single staff team would enable teachers to work across all stages of the school which would support professional learning and would further ensure a shared understanding of each child as a learner and expectations and progression from Nursery to Primary 7. This should bring greater curricular coherence, improved consistency of expectations and increased moderation of standards.'

8.1.4 As set out in paragraphs 18 to 20, pages 14 to 16, of the Consultation Proposal Document:

'Ensuring children transitioning into, through and beyond school is regarded as one of the potential barriers to children's wellbeing, continuity and progress in learning and achievement. Consistency in our approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones is vital for learner progression, effective transition and raising attainment for all. Pupil wellbeing is further supported where approaches are consistent through one school. There is better continuity for pupils in terms of familiarity and confidence and there are increased opportunities for pupils to develop and sustain relationships with their peers and with school staff. The need for seamless and high quality transition is recognised internationally, nationally and

locally and is central to continuity of education and progression through the curriculum. East Lothian Council contacted professors in order to inform the rationale for change, this proposal and the Educational Benefits statement. Research tells us that there is not a shared understanding of transition across cluster schools. This makes it difficult to plan and prepare transition. Within a single school structure there would be a shared understanding of transition. Research suggests that relationships and communication are key to effective transition:

“Practitioners should have an excellent understanding of the experiences the child has had in the past, and will have in the future, and should work towards clear aims and roles during the transitions process.”

“It is important to work with parents together to co-construct the transition, to know more about the social capital of the child and to understand what they are bringing with them to school.”

(Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop from the Department of Childhood and Primary Studies at the University of Strathclyde)’

8.2 Who will make the final decision about the proposal and why is there only one option?

8.2.1 While it is East Lothian Council’s Education Service that conducted the proposal, it is for the elected members of East Lothian Council to decide following the conclusion of the statutory consultation period at its meeting on 11th December 2018 to adopt the proposal, withdraw it or seek to consult on another proposal.

8.2.2 The statutory consultation activities that were undertaken with regard to this proposal were designed to encourage maximum participation. This enabled the views of all members of the community to be included in the Consultation Report for elected members to make an informed decision.

8.2.3 As stated in the Consultation Proposal Document, *The Education (Scotland) Act 1980* places a legislative duty on the Council to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education across its area and must consult on certain changes in such arrangements before it can commit to delivering them. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out the statutory consultation that must be undertaken when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools. The principle of the Act is *“... to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools.”*

8.2.4 The statutory consultation process is predicated on consulting on a proposal that is viable and deliverable and represents the very best educational outcomes for its young people. The 2010 Act requires Education Authorities to produce a comprehensive Education Benefits statement that clearly sets out the benefits for children and young

people affected by the proposal and that the closure of a school is proposed for positive educational reasons. The Educational Benefits that will arise from this proposal for children affected or likely to be affected are clearly set out in paragraphs 61 and 62(A) to 62(M) on pages 23 to 26 in Section B of the Consultation Proposal Document. The Education Service believes this proposal is the only viable and deliverable option to address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents at these two schools and to raise attainment and achievement for all.

8.3 Why is the proposal happening now?

8.3.1 The Prestonpans catchment area is now the only primary catchment area in East Lothian where Nursery to P3 and P4 to P7 pupils from the same catchment are taught in two separate schools with separate operational and management structures requiring these pupils to have an additional stage transition between P3 and P4.

8.3.2 As set out in paragraphs 16 to 17, page 13 of the Consultation Proposal Document: ‘The Education Service and schools work together to share effective practice and ensure our children’s transitions are well-planned. However, the additional stage transition between P3 and P4 presents additional challenges for children at a key point of learning within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) First Level. This also presents a more challenging transition stage for staff which is not experienced by staff in almost every other school across East Lothian and indeed more widely across Scotland.

8.3.3 The challenges of the additional stage transition across two separate establishments have been present for a number of years at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School. Evidence following the Education Service School Reviews of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School in 2016 highlighted that while pastoral transitions were strong between the two schools, they needed to develop stronger and more effective links to improve continuity and progression in children’s learning from Nursery to P7 and to improve curriculum transition.’ While both schools have worked well together to develop more consistent approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment, it has not been possible to fully address this given that these are schools under two distinct leadership and management arrangements.

8.3.4 Both Prestonpans Infant and Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School have worked closely together over the past 18 months. There have been joint management meetings, at least twice a term, to develop consistent approaches to the delivery of education. For example both schools last session engaged in 5 in-service sessions to review and develop the Local authority Curriculum Frameworks. In addition, both schools have worked collegiately with the Local Authority Attainment Advisor and have developed a common vision underpinned by common values and aims as well as developing more consistent approaches to planning teaching, learning and assessment.

Although this work has been very valuable in developing a closer working relationship across both schools, moving forward in terms of raising attainment achievement and improving pedagogy will be very challenging due to a number of factors related to the context of the two schools. Both schools have to negotiate two separate Working Time Agreements with their teaching staff. These have the potential to be very different and this will impact on any development work across both schools. Both schools have separate Pupil Equity Funds and have to consult with different stakeholders regarding how these funds are spent. Our schools are empowered to develop a curriculum that supports the needs of their communities. This work across both schools is predicated on both Head Teachers having the same views regarding the development of the Broad General Education and the consequent programmes and courses operating in both schools. The delivery of the curriculum is still different across both schools, and this remains a significant factor impacting on the education and attainment of children transitioning from P3 to P4. The levels of attainment of children moving up to P4 from P3 was a contributing factor to the evaluation of weak for raising attainment within the recent inspection of Prestonpans Primary school.

- 8.3.5 Below is an extract from the Education Scotland inspection report of Prestonpans Primary School, which highlights the need for staff teams to work more collaboratively with the Infant school to develop a shared understanding of standards, expectations and levels of attainment and achievement. It also highlights that a significant number of children on entry to P4 have not achieved appropriate levels of attainment and the impact this has on the pace of children's progress through the school:

'Across the school, a majority of children, without barriers to learning, are making appropriate progress in reading and listening and talking. Around half of the children are making appropriate progress in writing and numeracy and mathematics. Significant numbers of children entering Prestonpans at P4 have not achieved appropriate levels. This has an impact on the pace of children's progress as they move through the school. The headteacher has recognised the need to ensure more effective partnership working with the local infant school, to ensure shared standards and expectations for all. Children who require additional support with their learning are making appropriate progress, but would benefit from earlier support and intervention at early level. The attainment data shared with the inspection team is based on teachers' judgement together with benchmarking and a range of other internal assessments. Teachers should continue to develop a systematic moderation process especially at the P4 and P7 stages to support confident professional judgements. Staff should also ensure that children have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate and apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts.'
(Prestonpans Primary School, 30 October 2018)

- 8.3.6 Below is an extract from a recent Education Scotland inspection report from a Primary 1 to Primary 7 school out with East Lothian, which highlights the advantages of a P1 to

P7 school where staff at all stages work together to ensure continuity and progression in their learning and achievements:

'The school has developed clear progression pathways that support staff to plan and deliver high quality experiences and outcomes building on their prior learning. The local authority has supported schools through producing pathways in literacy and English language and numeracy and mathematics. These are based on the experiences and outcomes for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and, in conjunction with the national benchmarks, are helping teachers to develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations. These also support both coherence and progression. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the progress of all children as they move through the school. Most children make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment.' (Gourock Primary School, 18 September 2018)

8.3.7 [Section 3 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000](#), requires authorities to *"endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them; and they shall exercise their functions in relation to such provision with a view to raising standards of education"*

8.3.8 Section 3D of the 2000 Act (as inserted by section 2 of the 2016 Act) introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework (NIF). Section 3 of the 2016 Act further introduces sections 3F and 3H of the 2000 Act which place duties on education authorities to prepare annual plans and reports describing planned and past activity to i) reduce inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, and ii) achieve the strategic priorities of the NIF.

8.3.9 These and other duties within the Act are underpinned by section 2(1) of the 2000 Act which states that: *"Where school education is provided to a child or young person by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority it shall be the duty of the authority to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential."* The new duties imposed on education authorities by the 2000 Act as amended by the 2016 Act took effect from August 2017.

8.3.10 Furthermore, as set out in the 'Education Reform – Joint Agreement, June 2018', the Education Bill will aim to establish a Head Teachers' charter requiring local authorities to empower Head Teachers to be responsible for deciding how best to design their local curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence. While Head Teachers would be required to work collaboratively with other schools as well as the local authority on curriculum design and improving learning and teaching, the continuity of curriculum for

excellence across different schools is challenging and having one single school structure would support this continuity. Pedagogical approaches within the culture and ethos of one school would also be more in sync than within two separate establishments. Since the publication of the Proposal Document, the Deputy First Minister has not pursued the Head Teacher Charter through legislation but the [Programme for Government](#) sets out the intentions regarding school empowerment including Head Teacher's autonomy over curriculum design.

8.3.11 East Lothian Council considers establishing one new primary school covering nursery through to P7 under a single management structure through this proposal will enhance transition and continuity in learning across the stages in the Prestonpans catchment area from Early Level through to Second Level. This proposal represents best value in terms of the continuous improvement of primary education and early learning & childcare provision within the Prestonpans area, providing equity across all schools in the Prestonpans cluster in terms of the continuity and progression in learning for primary aged pupils from Nursery through to P7. This proposal will also ensure equity across all schools in the Prestonpans cluster in terms of Leadership and Management arrangements and bring the Leadership and Management model of the two affected schools in line with all the other schools within the cluster and across East Lothian.

8.3.12 East Lothian Council also considers establishing one new primary school through this proposal to be the preferable option in providing the Head Teacher with the ability to carry out effectively such duties associated with both recent and planned changes within education. Taking all of this into account, the Council undertook the statutory consultation exercise on the proposal to close Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and establish a new non-denominational single primary school structure with nursery class for Prestonpans.

8.4 What are the cost savings of this proposal?

8.4.1 The main decrease in the revenue budget provided as part of the indicative budget for a single school structure as at 2018/19 is in relation to the senior leadership/management team. Under the scheme of Devolved School Management the entitlement for the new school would be one Head Teacher and three Depute Head Teachers. The current management arrangements across the two schools is an entitlement to two Head Teachers and four Depute Head Teachers. The overall savings would be circa £130k. Other staffing entitlements based on the DSM scheme would remain the same. The current DSM scheme, however, does not take account of the proposed split campus arrangement and as such the funding model would be adapted to reflect the context of the school.

8.5 Will this proposal affect the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocations?

8.5.1 If the proposal is not approved, this will not directly affect the PEF allocations. Primary School PEF allocations are based on the estimated number of pupils from P1 to P7 who are eligible and registered for free school meals under national eligibility criteria, using the latest available data. For example, the 2018-19 funding allocation was calculated using the most recently available Healthy Living Survey and Pupil Census data and is based on:

- The estimated number of P1-P3 pupils who would be registered for free school meals using the national eligibility criteria. This will be done by taking the proportion of pupils registered for free school meals in primary schools in 2014 and then applying those to the 2017 school rolls for P1 to P3. *Note: the 2014 free school meal registration data is used as that was the last national data collection on P1-P3 pupils registered for free school meals before the national entitlement for free school meals to all P1-P3 pupils was introduced.*
- The estimated number of P4-P7 who are registered for free school meals.

8.5.2 The Scottish Government will keep this approach to estimating free school meal registrations under review as it seeks to improve the quality of data for identifying children living in households affected by poverty.

8.6 What evidence is there that this proposal will raise attainment?

8.6.1 Below are extracts from two Education Scotland inspection reports from schools that do not have an additional stage transition at Primary 3/Primary 4:

'The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work: Strong leadership of the headteacher in the development of a highly inclusive and nurturing ethos in keeping with the school's values. Effective teamwork across staff at the primary stage and their involvement in the process of change. This is helping improve a range of outcomes for children....Learning pathways for literacy and numeracy have been successfully developed in recent years to ensure coverage of experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence and to enable children to build well on prior learning. There are progressive learning programmes in place for almost all areas of health and wellbeing, including the use of some whole school programmes such as God's Loving Plan and Ice Pack..... Staff have worked collegiately on interdisciplinary learning across the school. Staff understand that through this approach, children should be able to better link their learning.' (St Mary's RC Primary School Inspection, 21 September 2017)

'Most children are making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy throughout their time in Inzievar Primary School. Senior leaders and teachers together track children's progress in literacy and numeracy very effectively and regularly, using a wide range of data. This ensures that children have maximum

opportunities to improve their attainment as they move through the stages. There is a clear focus across the school on raising attainment by closing the equity gap.’ (Inzievar Primary School Inspection Report, 28 August 2018)

8.6.2 A recent inspection at Prestonpans Primary School highlighted that a significant contributory factor which impacted on children was the attainment of pupils entering Prestonpans Primary School at P4 and the subsequent effect on attainment and achievement as they moved on through the school. The extracts above from St Mary’s RC Primary School and Inzievar Primary School reports exemplifies the advantages of school leaders and staff across one school working together to ensure that they have a positive impact on attainment.

8.7 What will the management structure of the new school be and will parents have a say in this?

8.7.1 As per current protocols, the Head of Education (or nominee, i.e. the new Head Teacher), in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions, and in accordance with the Devolved School Management (DSM) staffing allocation, and job sizing/evaluation processes, will determine the staffing structure for the new school. While parents have a say regarding the appointment of a new Head Teacher through the Parent Council, they do not have a say in determining school staffing structures.

8.7.2 The staffing entitlement for the proposed new primary school and its nursery class, which includes administrative and support staff, will be set at the time of its establishment in line with the primary and nursery roll of the school. Head Teachers are empowered through the scheme to have flexibility to determine whether they will staff the school according to the entitlement or to vary this according to local circumstances and needs. This flexibility is common practice within our schools across East Lothian and in line with the Scottish Government’s Empowering Schools policy.

8.7.3 The Council is proposing a headship across two campuses for the new single school structure. The Head Teacher of the new school will determine how the management team will be organised in discussion with staff in the school in order to meet the needs of learners across the two campuses.

8.7.4 The current DSM scheme sets out the criteria for entitlement to management and other staff posts. Any change to the current in-place management post structure that arises out of the establishment of a single school structure will be considered in light of local circumstances and the need to ensure no detrimental impact at a time of transition to a new single school structure. The Education Service will put in place interim arrangements to ensure the allocation of resources to address this requirement and will keep the situation under review as the school grows.

8.8 Management of one larger school across two campuses and access to the Head Teacher

8.8.1 The projected peak roll for the proposed new single primary school structure is in keeping with the projected rolls for other primary schools elsewhere within East Lothian. The composition of the senior leadership and management team will reflect the size of the school roll ensuring collaborative leadership at all levels. The leadership team will foster collaborative leadership to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of Prestonpans and its community. Any increases in pupil rolls due to an increase in children arising from committed housing in the area will be reflected within the school revenue budget and staffing complement in accordance with the approved Scheme of Delegation for School and the Council's devolved school management policies.

8.8.2 As mentioned previously, the Head Teacher of the new school will determine how the management team will be organised in discussion with staff in the school in order to meet the needs of learners across the two campuses. As set out in paragraph 92, page 31, of the Consultation Proposal Document: 'The Council is proposing a headship across two campuses for the new single school structure. As the two campuses are not co-located, the Head Teacher of the new school will need to determine how the management team will be organised in discussion with staff in the school in order to meet the needs of learners across two campuses. East Lothian Council's Education Service has experience of operating a large primary school across two campuses. Within East Lothian, Dunbar Primary School has a school roll of 1,275 pupils over two campuses, John Muir and Lochend. The two campuses at Dunbar Primary School are almost a mile apart. The management team use school bikes to get between the buildings or walk. As a 'Senior Learning Team' comprising Head Teacher, 5 Depute Head Teachers and 2 Principal Teachers communication is one of the school's big priorities. They use a 'Weekly What's On' sheet to indicate which members of staff are on call at each campus and include the Head Teacher diary dates so they know where they can be contacted.

8.8.3 Each campus has two Depute Head Teachers and a Principal Teacher with an additional Depute with responsibility for the Cove communication provision. Both campuses have their own administration offices although administrative functions can be shared across the whole school. The Head Teacher works across both campuses, with an office in each campus and aims to spend at least two days a week at each campus but realistically can be in both campuses each day depending on the needs of the school. The Head Teacher takes assemblies at both campuses on a rotation with the rest of the Senior Learning Team. The Senior Learning Team including the Head Teacher have a rota for being on the gates at each campus each morning and evening to be available to pupils and parents. The Head Teacher holds regular drop-in sessions at both campuses when

parents can come along to discuss any concerns, usually in the evening between 5pm to 7pm. Each year stage is line managed by one of the Senior Learning Team and this allows one point of contact for parents in the first instance, this helps with office staff directing complaints or concerns. All staff use SEEMIS to record pastoral notes and these can then only be accessed by the Senior Learning Team so they can link any issues with siblings or specific families. At each campus they have a TV monitor in each entrance hall which shows the activities on at both campuses for the week for pupils and parents. A weekly Senior Learning Team meeting is held every Thursday 3.45pm – 5.30pm at which any member of staff can attend. This is a strategic meeting looking at the school's Service Improvement Plan, Pupil concerns, Data, staff issues, etc. that any member of the school community can bring along. It allows them to ensure that all members of the Senior Learning Team are aware of each other's projects, issues and how they can support these across the two campuses. Training and development activities for teachers/support staff are always held at alternate campuses and they mix up the staff each time so they get to know each other. A staff meeting is held on a Friday morning at 8.15am at least once a fortnight to ensure that both campuses are informed of updates, staff absences, upcoming events, etc. at the same time. To ensure they value, encourage and develop the concept of 'one school, two campuses' every class at John Muir is matched to a class at Lochend, including the nursery rooms. At least twice each term they visit each other to work on an aspect of the 'School Improvement Plan' they are taking forward with their class teachers. This allows pupils to get to know each other and feel confident when they move across to Lochend Campus as P4s. Each year the school holds 'Meet the Teacher' evenings within 2 weeks of school starting at both campuses. The Head Teacher outlines the year ahead, reflecting on progress and achievements of the whole school from the previous session and ensuring that the messages about our priorities are linked to both campuses. Staff PRD sessions are carried out by all members of the Senior Learning Team so they get to know them all. The school has a social group made of staff from both campuses; they regularly arrange activities and events that all staff are invited to. Teachers are encouraged to move between classes and they are given opportunities to visit a class at the other campus. The PE and Music specialists both work at each campus; this means that the pupils know them before they move across from John Muir to Lochend. In addition, all teachers at both campuses are encouraged to take on a specific role e.g. Eco co-ordinator, RRS co-ordinator, Numeracy champion, etc. they then link with their opposite number at the other campus to ensure consistency for the school.

- 8.8.4 Officers of the Council have also explored the various structures in operation in other Education Authorities, including the Executive Head Teacher of two large primary schools to gain an understanding of the management structures and day-to-day management of the schools. The Education Authority contacted the Scottish

Government to establish the exact number of split campus schools across Scotland but the Scottish Government does not collect and hold that information.

8.9 What impact will the proposal have on the teaching structure and will the current class structure remain the same within the 2 campuses?

8.9.1 As set out in paragraphs 54 to 57, page 22, of the Consultation Proposal Document: 'Maximum class size legislation and the physical limitations of teaching spaces are a key factor in determining the number of classes that are required to accommodate the number of pupils on the school roll. The appropriate statutory maximum class size – P1 maximum of 25, P2 and P3 maximum of 30, P4 to P7 maximum of 33, and composite maximum of 25 - will still apply to the class organisation for the new proposed school in line with current legislation and policy. The class structure is agreed each year in discussion with the Head Teachers before the end of the academic session for the following year. Class structures are determined by the total expected school roll and how that can be organised in line with maximum class size legislation and the planning capacity available at that time. If the proposal is approved, the roll of the new single primary school structure will comprise pupils from both Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School. Therefore, the number of classes and class structure agreed for both the affected schools for 2018/19 will comprise the class structure for the new single school structure on its establishment for the remainder of that academic session. Thereafter, the class structure would be reviewed annually, as per current protocol, to take account of changes in the pupil roll in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.'

8.9.2 Due to recent and planned house build in the Prestonpans area the primary-aged population in Prestonpans is projected to increase over the next 6 years. Any increases in the pupil rolls due to an increase in nursery and primary aged children arising from changing demographics and committed and planned housing in the area will be reflected in the staffing entitlement and revenue budget for the new school during the annual budget and staffing allocation processes.

8.10 How will children get the right support they need in a larger single school?

8.10.1 The values and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and the national approach of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) outlined in national legislation requires Education Authorities to consider a wide range of issues facing children and young people and put in place processes and supports to:

- identify and provide support to allow children and young people to overcome any barriers to learning and reach their full potential
- prevent discrimination of pupils with disabilities and protected characteristics and provide reasonable adjustments to ensure equality of opportunity in learning

- plan for accessibility of the curriculum, school information and physical access
- consider the wellbeing of children and young people

8.10.2 The establishment of a single school structure with a larger combined pupil roll does not mean that there will be less individualised support for pupils. The individual needs of learners are still taken into account by class teachers and support for learning staff. Entitlement to teacher numbers is linked to the number of planned classes for the academic session.

8.10.3 Maximum class size legislation and the physical limitations of teaching spaces are a key factor in determining the number of classes that are required to accommodate the number of pupils on the school roll. Each primary class would still require the equivalent of one-full time class teacher to teach that class. The appropriate statutory maximum class size – P1 maximum of 25, P2 and P3 maximum of 30, P4 to P7 maximum of 33, and composite maximum of 25 - will still apply to the class organisation for the new proposed school in line with current legislation and policy.

8.10.4 The entitlement for promoted teacher posts, support for learning and other support staff would still be set in accordance with the DSM scheme in line with the nursery and primary roll.

8.10.5 As set out in paragraphs 89 to 90, pages 30 to 31, of the Consultation Proposal Document, Support for Learning staffing requirements for each school, which are met through Predictable Needs funding, are determined by the Head Teacher under the DSM scheme to ensure the needs of all pupils are met. As is the case with all schools, the predictable needs funding for the proposed new primary school is dependent on the latest school roll and free meal entitlement information feeding into the predictable needs funding formula at the time the funding is allocated. If the school roll and free meal entitlement figures feeding into the formula remains the same from one year to the next, then the predictable needs funding will remain the same. If the school roll and/or free meal entitlement figures feeding into the formula change from one year to the next, then the predictable needs funding will change accordingly.

8.10.6 Budget allocations for Exceptional Need are made based upon the number of hours/full time equivalent (FTE) staff for specific children agreed by the Moderation Panel. These allocations are reviewed annually and are only available while the child attends school. If the child moves school then these allocations will move with them.

8.11 A split campus will still require a physical transition between P3 and P4

8.11.1 Feedback from consultees through the consultation period on the physical transition between two campuses remaining has been both positive and negative. As set out in paragraphs 67 to 68 of the Consultation Proposal Document, the Education Service

acknowledges that for some children the additional stage transition may be a positive experience, however, this is not the experience of all pupils transitioning from P3 to P4 between the two schools. For example, under the current two-school structure, children in Primary 3 with additional support needs who have built up relationships with pupil support assistants have to start again and build up relationships with new staff when they move into P4. Children's relationships with staff and teachers are crucial to their support network.

8.11.2 A single school structure would enable staff to build relationships from Nursery and sustain those relationships through to P7, especially for those pupils who require enhanced support, and help improve children's social, emotional and mental well-being. Familiar environments are also important and while the proposed new school would be operating over two campuses, there would be more opportunities within the curriculum under a single school structure to work on common projects, for example, across different stages and the two campuses.

8.11.3 The single school structure split campus arrangement will also continue to provide opportunities for P3 children to act as role models within their campus, while also offering more opportunities for buddying and peer learning between the two campuses.

8.11.4 The moving of the two schools in Haddington to one cohesive education provision has already started with a focus on curriculum areas for development. They have looked at writing and numeracy from early level to second level. This involves all staff coming together for training, teachers working in small groups from different age groups across the school and moderation exercises. It has been very beneficial to work with children's work from early to second level, something they were not able to do when working separately in two schools. Children have come together for a whole school joint assembly, attended assemblies in both campuses to share news and children in P5 have worked with their reading buddies in P3. The new Head Teacher, Mr French, starts his leadership of the joint Haddington campus on Monday 26th November 2018.

8.11.5 As mentioned earlier in section 8.8.2, East Lothian Council's Education Service has experience of operating a large primary school across two campuses. Within East Lothian, Dunbar Primary School has a school roll of 1,275 pupils over two campuses, John Muir and Lochend, which are situated almost a mile apart. The transition programmes at Dunbar Primary School from Nursery to P1, P3 to P4 and P7 transition to Dunbar Grammar School have been recognised as good practice and are very well received by both pupils and parents. They have a range of activities to ensure the pupils feel prepared, confident and enthusiastic about moving on. To ensure that the school values, encourages and develops the concept of 'one school, two campuses' every class at John Muir is matched to a class at Lochend, including the nursery rooms. At least

twice each term they visit each other to work on an aspect of the 'School Improvement Plan' they are taking forward with their class teachers. This allows pupils to get to know each other and feel confident when they move across to Lochend Campus as P4s. The school holds three whole school assemblies every year when all the pupils from P1-P7 get together at John Mur Campus for a Christmas, Easter and End of Year celebration. These are incredibly popular and really help them to retain that one school ethos. Each year the school holds 'Meet the Teacher' evenings within 2 weeks of school starting at both campuses. The Head Teacher outlines the year ahead, reflecting on progress and achievements of the whole school from the previous session and ensuring that the messages about our priorities are linked to both campuses. The Head Teacher takes assemblies at both campuses on a rotation with the rest of the Senior Learning Team. The Senior Learning Team including the Head Teacher have a rota for being on the gates at each campus each morning and evening to be available to pupils and parents. The Head Teacher also holds 'Star of the Week' and 'Hot Chocolate Friday's' to meet pupils and talk to them about their efforts, find out about concerns and ensure visibility to them. The PE and Music specialists both work at each campus; this means that the pupils know them before they move across from John Muir to Lochend. All teachers at both campuses are encouraged to take on a specific role e.g. Eco co-ordinator, RRS co-ordinator, Numeracy champion, etc. they then link with their opposite number at the other campus to ensure consistency for the school.

8.12 How will the proposal affect support & admin staff?

8.12.1 As set out in paragraphs 82 to 93 of the Consultation Proposal Document, reconfiguration of existing core staffing arrangements will be required as a result of this proposal. The staffing entitlement for the new single primary school structure and its nursery class will be set in line with the primary and nursery roll of the school, calculated in accordance with the approved Scheme of Delegation for Schools and the Council's DSM policies.

8.12.2 All staff, other than the Head Teacher(s), from the closed schools will be eligible to be matched to jobs in the structure of the new school. Most teaching and ancillary staff will transfer to the new school in proportion to the school roll and the Council has specific procedures in place that will be followed. Revised staffing arrangements for the new school structure will be managed in line with the Council's 'Protocol for School Merger' for both teaching and support staff.

8.12.3 As stated earlier in sections 8.10.4 and 8.10.5, the entitlement for support for learning and other support staff would still be set in accordance with the DSM scheme in line with the nursery and primary roll. Support for Learning staffing requirements for each school, which are met through Predictable Needs funding, are determined by the Head Teacher under the DSM scheme to ensure the needs of all pupils are met. As is the case

with all schools, the predictable needs funding for the proposed new primary school is dependent on the latest school roll and free meal entitlement information feeding into the predictable needs funding formula at the time the funding is allocated. If the school roll and free meal entitlement figures feeding into the formula remains the same from one year to the next, then the predictable needs funding will remain the same. If the school roll and/or free meal entitlement figures feeding into the formula change from one year to the next, then the predictable needs funding will change accordingly.

8.12.4 As the Council is proposing a headship across two campuses for the new single school structure and the two campuses are not co-located, both campuses will still require their own administration offices although administrative functions can be shared across the whole school.

8.12.5 As is the case in all schools, the staffing entitlement and revenue budget for each school will be reviewed annually to take account of changes in the primary and nursery roll and nursery capacity. Any increases in the rolls due to an increase in nursery and primary aged children arising from changing demographics and planned housing in the area will be reflected in the staffing entitlement and revenue budget for the new school and its nursery class during the annual budget and staffing allocation processes.

8.13 Why does the proposal say February 2019 and when exactly will the new school be established?

8.13.1 As set out in paragraphs 105 to 112, pages 33 to 34 of the Consultation Proposal Document: 'The establishment of the new single school structure is based on the approval of the proposal by elected members and the conclusion of the full statutory consultation process, the timeline of which is set out in *Appendix 1, [page 38 of the] Consultation Proposal Document*.

Subject to the conclusion of the Scottish Ministers eight-week call-in period or the notification of the outcome of a call-in, as appropriate, if approved, the closure of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and the establishment of the new single primary school structure will take effect from February 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.

It is not possible to provide an exact date at this stage of the proposal for the establishment of the new school structure as this would pre-empt the outcome of the consultation. This is why the proposal refers to the establishment of the new school "*with effect from February 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter*".

8.13.2 The first step in establishing a new school structure is the recruitment of the Head Teacher. If the proposal is approved and Scottish Ministers decide not to call-in the proposal, the Council would be able to commence the recruitment process for the new Head Teacher post in February 2019. If the proposal is approved and the Scottish

Ministers call-in the proposal to refer to the School Closure Review Panel, the recruitment process could only commence if the Panel consents to the proposal. The maximum timescale allowed for this could mean that implementation of the proposal would not commence until after 28th May 2019.

8.13.3 The two affected schools would continue to function as two separate schools with separate budgets and staffing structures until the Head Teacher is in post. Once in post, the Head Teacher will assume responsibility for the leadership and management of both schools during the transition period to the new single school structure.'

8.13.4 The Education Authority would take forward the consultation on the name of the new school with pupils, staff and parents whilst undertaking the recruitment for the new Head Teacher. Once in post, a Transition Action Group would be set up comprising the new Head Teacher, staff and parent representatives from both schools as well as council officers and trade union representatives. The new Head Teacher would lead the Transition Action Group. The Education Authority would take forward the establishment of the new school in partnership with the Transition Action Group.

8.14 **What will happen with the school uniform and will we have to buy another new one?**

8.14.1 As set out in paragraphs 117 to 122, pages 35 to 36 of the Consultation Proposal Document, if the proposal is approved, the uniform of the new school would be decided as part of the actions taken forward by the Transition Action Group and in consultation with parents, staff and children as part of the creation of the Transition Action Plan:

'121. Currently the school uniform identity for Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School operates with different logos and colours. Closing both schools and opening one new school will enable the school uniform identity to have the same logo and colour throughout P1 to P7. This will remove the financial burden on parents/carers having to purchase additional uniforms during the additional stage transition from P3 to P4. The cost of purchasing a new uniform for the new school would be one of the considerations for the Transition Action Group. For example, the Transition Action Group, through consultation with parents and children, may decide that the best way to manage this is to allow pupils to use their existing uniforms until they have outgrown them and/or they need replaced as a result of "wear and tear".

122. The Education Service would wish to avoid incurring additional financial costs for parents as a result of this proposal. It is important that the Transition Action Group takes account of the recommendations set out in the [East Lothian Poverty Commission Report](#) and [East Lothian Poverty Action Plan 2017-19](#) when making any decisions about the school uniform. The authority will review clothing grant payments

to parents/carers where any change to school uniform is due to the direct impact of the new school.'

8.15 If the proposal is approved, will the school start and end times change?

8.15.1 Not necessarily. As set out in paragraph 117 in Section B of the Consultation Proposal Document, this would be a consideration for the Transition Action Group in consultation with parents, staff and children as part of the creation of the Transition Action Plan.

8.16 Where is the Prestonpans Infant School extension going and when will it be extended?

8.16.1 The new planned extension to Prestonpans Infant School will be located either side of the games hall providing increased capacity for primary aged children. As set out in paragraph 50, page 21 of the Consultation Proposal Document, this extension comprises 'a two floor extension to form two additional classrooms, a General Purpose (GP) space and two tutorial/multi-purpose meeting rooms. An extension to the nursery class will also provide 60m² clear play space to provide additional eligible pre-school places. The extensions are expected to be completed in August 2019'.

8.16.2 The music room is temporarily being used as a classroom during the current academic session (2018/19) until the extension is complete and will revert to being used as a GP space.

8.17 Are there any plans to build any more new primary schools in the Prestonpans catchment area for all the new housing?

8.17.1 Prestonpans Infant and Prestonpans Primary schools have been extended to accommodate the pupils arising from new houses built in the Prestonpans catchment area. As stated in the paragraph 40 of the Consultation Proposal Document, the East Lothian Council Housing Land Audit (HLA) 2017 sets out the remaining sites allocated to be built in the Prestonpans catchment area. There are three sites: Edinburgh Rd (14 units), Rope Walk (6 units) and Edinburgh Rd/Dolphingstone (160 units). The main site at Edinburgh Rd/Dolphingstone is currently under construction and is projected to be built out over a 4 year period. The impact of these three sites on the pupil roll projections in the Prestonpans catchment area has been assessed and, as stated section 8.16, a further expansion of Prestonpans Infant School is being provided in August 2019 to accommodate the pupils projected to arise from the new houses.

8.17.2 As stated in paragraph 52, age 22 of the Consultation Proposal Document, the combined planning capacity of the buildings and facilities of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School, with the planned extension at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, will be 1,004. The combined planning capacity of 1,004 can accommodate the projected peak P1-P7 pupil roll of 882 pupils in 2024 for the proposed new single school structure. Further expansion of the buildings and

facilities are not required as a result of this proposal. The proposed new school's capacity will be continually assessed (as is the case with all schools), in comparison to roll projections from the catchment area it provides for, and all new house building (of 5 units or more) which occurs within the catchment area.

8.17.3 St Gabriel's RC Primary School requires to be extended to accommodate the denominational pupils projected to arise from new housing development at Blindwells. Developer contributions of c. 125K has been committed for this purpose. St Gabriel's also requires to be expanded to provide capacity for 1140 hours early learning and childcare. The approach to providing the additional capacity is to expand the nursery into an adjacent classroom with a simple classroom extension incorporating the displace classroom in addition to that required for Blindwells.

8.18 Are there any plans to change the catchment area for Prestonpans and will the pupils from Blindwells be going to Prestonpans Infant School and Prestonpans Primary School?

8.18.1 There are no plans to change the primary school catchment area for Prestonpans. The associated catchment area for the proposed new primary school structure would be established in name at the same time as the new school. The new associated catchment area will follow the existing boundary of the Prestonpans primary catchment area as detailed on **Map 2** in the Consultation Proposal Document which currently serves both Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School (*see paragraph 53, page 22 of the Consultation Proposal Document*).

8.18.2 The planned new Blindwells settlement has an established primary catchment area of its own, approved by East Lothian Council on 22nd June 2010. The current allocation of circa 1,600 houses is of sufficient size to require a new permanent non-denominational primary school with early learning and childcare provision to accommodate the projected eligible pre-school and primary-aged pupils arising from these 1,600 houses. The new school facility provided at Blindwells will have sufficient capacity for the pupils expected to arise from the planned housing developments

8.18.3 The Council has considered the temporary "hosting" arrangements for new pupils moving into the new houses at Blindwells during the initial house build years while the new primary school facilities at Blindwells are being built. Cockenzie Primary School has been identified as the best location for the temporary "hosting" arrangement for Blindwells primary school based on its relative proximity to the proposed Blindwells site and its available capacity based on projected school rolls.

8.19 Why are the projected numbers for the nursery class and Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre not included in the proposal document?

8.19.1 In 2016, the Scottish Government announced its intention to increase the early learning & childcare (ELCC) entitlement available to all 3 and 4 year olds, and eligible 2 year olds, from 600 hours to 1,140 hours per pupil per calendar year by August 2020. As part of its 1140 expansion plan, the Council is considering different models of provision that could be offered. It is not possible to provide a definitive pre-school pupil projection for either the Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School nursery class or the Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre at this point in time as that will be dependent on the outcome of future consultations with parents in terms of the preferred model of 1140 hours they wish to be offered at both settings.

8.19.2 As set out in paragraphs 82 to 100 of the Consultation Proposal Document, the staffing entitlement and revenue budget for the new single primary school structure and its nursery class will be set in line with the primary and nursery roll of the school, calculated in accordance with the approved Scheme of Delegation for Schools and the Council's DSM policies. This includes an allocation for Management and non-teaching staff for the nursery class based on the nursery capacity. The staffing entitlement and revenue budget for each school is reviewed annually to take account of changes in the primary and nursery roll and nursery capacity. Any increases in the rolls due to an increase in nursery and primary aged children arising from changing demographics and planned housing in the area will be reflected in the staffing entitlement and revenue budget for the new school and its nursery class during the annual budget and staffing allocation processes. As stated earlier in section 8.16.1 the nursery class will be extended in August 2019 to provide additional pre-school places increasing the nursery capacity from 60 to 80 children at any one time. This increased nursery capacity will be reflected in the budget and staffing allocation processes for 2019-2020.

8.19.3 As stated in the Consultation Proposal Document, Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre is a separate early learning & childcare establishment with a separate roll and capacity. Although it is under the leadership and management of the Head Teacher of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, it has its own separate budget and staffing entitlement, which is not affected by the implementation of this proposal. The revenue budget and staffing entitlement, including management time, for Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre will continue to be set separately based on the roll and capacity of the centre. As stated in paragraph 33 of the Consultation Proposal Document Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre is one of the first trials set up in East Lothian offering a 38 week 1,140 hours based model with the capacity to accommodate 44 two to five year olds, with a maximum of 20 funded 2 year old places at any one time. The future capacity of Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre will be based on the model of 1140 hours that is adopted going forward from August

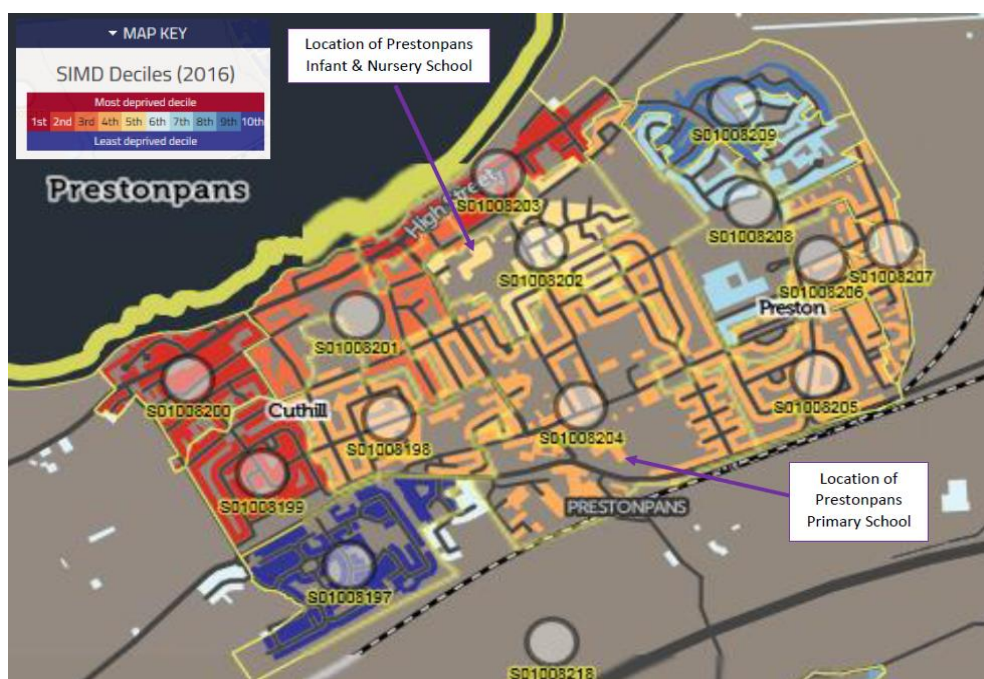
2020. There are plans to trial a 50 week 1,140 hours based model in Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre from August 2019 thereby offering more flexibility and capacity. However, there are no plans to physically extend the facilities at Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre.

8.20 Why is the local authority not proposing two separate Nursery to P7 schools for the Prestonpans catchment area?

8.20.1 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the proposal must set out the educational benefits for all children. The establishment of two separate schools was discounted on the basis of having a detrimental and negative impact on the Prestonpans community.

8.20.2 Figure 1 below shows the current Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) profile of Prestonpans based on [SIMD 2016](#) update. The SIMD is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland.

Figure 1 – Map of Prestonpans SIMD 2016 Deciles and location of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School sites



8.20.3 The socio-economic profile of the primary-aged population living within the Prestonpans catchment area is set out in Table 5 below and shows the spread of pupils across SIMD 2016 deciles. Nursery pupils are excluded from this analysis as early learning & childcare provision is offered in a different way to primary education and is not catchment based.

Table 5 - % of Prestonpans catchment primary-aged population within each SIMD 2016 decile

SIMD 2016 Decile									
D1 – Most deprived 10% areas	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10 – Least deprived 10% areas
0%	18%	6%	28%	4%	0%	11%	0%	7%	26%

8.20.4 To divide the current Prestonpans catchment area equitably into two separate catchment areas with similar pupil numbers would require a boundary to be created that runs either North to South or East to West through Prestonpans. Due to the location of the two existing sites, while both options would create a relatively equitable split in terms of the total P1 to P7 pupil numbers in two separate Nursery to P7 schools, it is not possible to create a practical boundary that would provide an equitable split in terms of the socio-economic profile of two separate schools (see tables 6 and 7 below).

Table 6 - % of primary-aged population within each SIMD 2016 decile attending 2 separate non-denominational Nursery to P7 schools based on a North to South split

North-South Split	SIMD 2016 deciles									
	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10
School 1	0%	33%	11%	19%	9%	0%	17%	0%	12%	0%
School 2	0%	0%	0%	40%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	58%

Table 7 - % of primary-aged population within each SIMD 2016 decile attending 2 separate non-denominational Nursery to P7 schools based on an East to West split

East-West Split	SIMD 2016 deciles									
	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10
School 1	0%	5%	1%	48%	9%	0%	23%	0%	14%	0%
School 2	0%	27%	10%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%

8.20.5 The latest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on [‘Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility’](#) examines how equity in education has evolved over several cycles of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and identifies the policies and practices that can help disadvantaged students succeed academically and feel more engaged at school. The OECD report provides a definition for ‘Equity in Education’ as meaning *‘that schools and education systems provide equal learning opportunities to all students. As a result, students of different socio-economic status, gender or immigrant and family background achieve similar levels of academic performance in key cognitive domains, such as reading, mathematics and science, and similar levels of social and emotional well-being in areas such as life satisfaction, self-confidence and social integration,*

during their education. Equity does not mean that all students obtain equal education outcomes, but rather that differences in students' outcomes are unrelated to their background or to economic and social circumstances over which the students have no control.' OECD (2018), "Executive Summary", in Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility, OECD Publishing, Paris.

8.20.6 The OECD report states there is no country in the world that can claim to have entirely eliminated socio-economic inequalities in education as yet and every country can do more to improve equity in education given the right education policies and practices. PISA consistently finds a strong and positive link between a school's socio-economic profile and student performance:

'There is a strong link between schools' socio-economic profile and students' performance: students who attend more socio-economically advantaged schools perform better in PISA. Hence, disadvantaged students attending disadvantaged schools are, a priori, doubly disadvantaged as they strive for academic achievement.' OECD (2018), "Overview And Policy Implications", in *Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility*, OECD Publishing, Paris

The report sets out the implications for policy and references policies and practices for countries to use in their own specific contexts aimed at providing more equal education opportunities for all children. Included in these, is the policy to reduce the concentration of disadvantaged students in particular schools as a way to address double disadvantage and reduce the number of students suffering from this by reducing the concentration of disadvantaged students in particular schools. Dividing the current Prestonpans catchment area into two separate catchment areas would create two separate schools with an inequitable distribution and concentration of disadvantaged students which goes against this policy.

8.20.7 The East Lothian Council Plan 2017-2022 clearly sets out the Council's continuing commitment to 'reducing inequalities within and across our communities. As stated earlier in paragraph 8.3.6, *section 3D of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 (as inserted by section 2 of the 2016 Act)* introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework (NIF). A key aim of the NIF is to reduce inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. Dividing the current Prestonpans Catchment area into two separate catchment areas would artificially create an inequitable split in the community which is in direct contradiction to our statutory duty and national and local priorities to reduce inequalities. Education Scotland, as independent evaluators of any proposal, would consider the establishment of two

schools in the same community with an inequitable socio-economic profile as not being of sound educational benefit to those affected.

8.21 What research was used to inform the proposal for consultation?

8.21.1 The Education Authority contacted the Education Department at Edinburgh University to ask for recommended experts in the field of transitions. The following research was used to inform the rationale for change:

- The Education Authority communicated with Professor Divya Jindal-Snape, Associate Dean (Research) at the University of Dundee and Director for Transformative Change: Educational and Life Transitions (TCELT) Research Centre who is an expert on transitions. Her research includes 'School belonging and successful transition practice' in K-A Allen & C Boyle (eds), *Pathways to School Belonging: Contemporary Research in School Belonging*. Brill Academic Publishers, pp. 167-187 and 'Keynote: Multiple and Multi-dimensional Educational and Life Transitions of Young People' National Youth Justice Conference 2018, 20/06/18 - 21/07/18.
- 'Understanding School Transition: What happens to children and how to help them' May 2015, Jennifer Symonds
- 'Starting Strong V: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education' 21 Jun 2017, OECD https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/starting-strong-v_9789264276253-en

9. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

9.1 In accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal. The Education Scotland report can be read in full at Appendix 4.

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

- attendance at the public meeting held on 26th September 2018 at Preston Lodge High School 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
- visits to the site of Prestonpans Infant and Nursery School, Prestonpans Early Learning and Childcare Centre and Prestonpans Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

- 9.3 Section 4 of the Education Scotland report summarises their findings and conclusions as follows:

“ Overall, there are potential educational benefits to the proposal, despite the practical complexities outlined in this report. Closing Prestonpans Infant School and Prestonpans Primary School and establishing a new primary school provides an opportunity to improve learning and teaching and to further raise attainment for all children in the catchment area. The establishment of a single staff team working together to ensure continuity and progression from P1 to P7 should bring greater curricular coherence, improved consistency of expectations and increased moderation of standards. Children should benefit from improved progression planning to better meet their needs. Removing the need for an additional transition to a different school at the end of P3 is likely to reduce any possible risk of a slowing down of progress as children progress through the first level of Curriculum for Excellence. The proposal is in line with the aims and aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence.”

East Lothian Council’s Response to Education Scotland’s Report

- 9.4 East Lothian Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts its findings. The points raised by Education Scotland within the Education Scotland Report were also key themes identified through the consultation process and are addressed in Section 8 of this consultation report. The main points identified in the Education Scotland report for further consideration and clarification are as follows:

“Parents and staff across the two schools and the Early Learning and Childcare Centre hold significantly different views about the educational benefits of the proposal. In taking the proposal forward, the council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and to address their concerns. In taking its proposal forward, an effective communication strategy and an action plan based on the needs of the establishments affected will be essential for the council to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged. The council should include details of these in its final report.”

- 9.5 The Education Authority has set out its commitment to ongoing engagement with all stakeholders and the process for taking the proposal forward within Sections 8 and 10 of this consultation report. Details on the process for transitioning to the new school structure were also made publicly available during the consultation period through the Consultation Proposal Document, the Frequently Asked Questions document on the Consultation hub and shared at the Public meeting.

10. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

- 10.1 Subject to the conclusion of the Scottish Ministers eight-week call-in period or the notification of the outcome of a call-in, as appropriate, if approved, the closure of

Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and the establishment of a new single primary school structure will take effect from February 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.

- 10.2 It is not possible to provide an exact date at this stage of the proposal for the establishment of the new school structure as this would pre-empt the outcome of the consultation. This is why the proposal refers to the establishment of the new school “with effect from February 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter”.
- 10.3 As stated earlier in section 8.11 and in the Consultation Proposal Document, the first step in establishing a new school structure is the recruitment of the Head Teacher. The two schools would continue to function as two separate schools with separate budgets and staffing structures until the Head Teacher is in post. If the proposal is approved and Scottish Ministers decide not to call-in the proposal, the Council would be able to commence the recruitment process for the new Head Teacher post in February 2019. If the proposal is approved and the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal to refer to the School Closure Review Panel, the recruitment process could only commence if the Panel consents to the proposal. The maximum timescale allowed for this could mean that implementation of the proposal would not commence until after 28th May 2019.
- 10.4 Once in post, the Head Teacher will assume responsibility for the leadership and management of both schools during the transition period to the new single school structure. The Head Teacher will work closely with staff in both schools to discuss their aspirations and establish an appropriate staffing structure to meet the needs of learners across the two campuses. The Head Teacher will work closely with existing senior and middle managers in both schools to determine roles and remits in line with the needs of learners and context of the new school. The Council is proposing a headship across two campuses for the new single school structure. As the two campuses are not co-located, the Head Teacher of the new school will need to determine how the management team will be organised in discussion with staff in the school in order to meet the needs of learners across two campuses.
- 10.5 The Head Teacher will also assume responsibility for the leadership and management of Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre. The budgets for Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School would remain as set for the academic session under the responsibility of the appointed Head Teacher until the establishment of the new single school structure. Any additional resources required to assist the Head Teacher during the transition period will be provided. Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre is a separate early learning & childcare establishment. Although it is under the leadership and management of the Head Teacher of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, it has its own separate budget and staffing entitlement, which is not affected by the implementation of this proposal.

10.6 The Council is fully committed to working with staff, children and parents during the transition period to establish the new school. The Education Service will put in place interim arrangements to ensure the allocation of resources to address the transition to a new single school structure and will keep the situation under review as the school grows.

10.7 As stated earlier in section 8.13.4, The Education Authority would take forward the consultation on the name of the new school with pupils, staff and parents whilst undertaking the recruitment for the new Head Teacher.

10.8 Once a Head Teacher is appointed and in post, a Transition Action Group would be set up comprising the new Head Teacher, staff and parent representatives from both schools as well as council officers and trade union representatives. The new Head Teacher will lead the Transition Action Group. The remit of the Transition Action Group will be to create a Transition Action Plan with a phased approach specifying clear targets and agreed timescales over an appropriate timeframe to ensure community involvement in the process. The Education Authority will take forward the establishment of the new school in partnership with the Transition Action Group.

10.9 The Transition Action Plan will include but is not restricted to

- the uniform
- school logo and website
- the formation of the new Parent Council
- consideration of a common school day (start/finish/lunch etc)
- curriculum rationale and delivery, i.e. approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment
- stage to stage transition policy

10.10 The Council will work closely with the children, parents and staff to establish a new sense of school community, ethos and identity. The Transition Action Plan could include a range of activities such as joint learning themes, excursions, social and sporting events. These could take place during the transition period with the aim of creating and developing a positive school ethos.

10.11 A high level of engagement activities with parents, staff and children will also be planned from the earliest stages to enhance stakeholder engagement in the establishment of the values of the new school.

10.12 The Council is fully committed to ensuring continuity of provision for children who will be affected by the proposal. Children currently attending Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School will not be significantly affected by the closure of the two schools as the new single primary school structure and its nursery class would

operate within the existing buildings and facilities of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School.

- 10.13 For those children with Additional Support Needs there are well established procedures to identify particular learning needs and provide the required support measures during transition. Such work involves close liaison with parents and carers and, where relevant, Community Planning Partners. During the transition period, the new Head Teacher will support collaboration between the Support for Learning team across both schools. Support for Learning staff would liaise with each other to ensure that the learning, pastoral and social needs of children are met fully.
- 10.14 There is no change to the primary catchment boundary for the Prestonpans catchment area as a result of this proposal. The current policies on School Admission and Placing Requests would continue to apply to the new single primary school structure.
- 10.15 Parents of eligible pre-school children would continue to apply for early learning and childcare provision at the new primary school nursery class through the Council's existing Nursery Admissions processes.
- 10.16 Denominational primary aged children from the associated catchment area of the new single primary school structure would have the option to attend St Gabriel's RC Primary School if they wish to do so as per current arrangements.
- 10.17 Secondary aged children from the associated catchment area of the new single primary school structure would attend Preston Lodge High School as per the current catchment arrangements.
- 10.18 The existing Parent Councils at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School will require to disband in line with the Parental Involvement legislation, S8 [16] "*A Parent Council ceases to exist when the school for which it is established is discontinued or amalgamated with another school,*" and the local authority will provide support to establish a new Parent Council for the new school in accordance with S5 [3] "*the local authority will promote the establishment of a Parent Council for any school*".

11. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES

- 11.1 Section (10) (3) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Consultation Proposal Document which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.

11.2 There were no inaccuracies or omissions within the Consultation Proposal Document either identified by the Council or raised by consultees during the consultation period.

12. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

12.1 Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that:

After the Education Authority has received Education Scotland's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

(i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,

(ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,

(iii) Education Scotland's report.

12.2 Following receipt of 135 questionnaire responses during the consultation period and consideration of oral representations made at a public meeting held during the consultation period, officers reviewed the proposal.

12.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by relevant officers within the Council's Education, Finance, Human Resources and Property Services. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of sections 9(1), 12 and 13(3) (b) of the 2010 Act.

13. LEGAL ISSUES

13.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 throughout this statutory consultation.

13.2 The Council is mindful of its duties in respect of equality and the Equality Impact Assessment did not identify that any parent, child or young person would be treated less favourably as a result of this proposal.

13.3 Under the terms of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without having reviewed the relevant proposal having regard, in particular, to:

a) relevant written representations received from any person during the consultation period;

b) oral representation made to it by any person at the public meeting held on 26th September 2018;

c) the Education Scotland report;

d) preparing a Consultation Report; and

- e) waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.

13.4 As it is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in written form, if required, on 20th November 2018, this meets the statutory requirement to publish this report more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by East Lothian Council.

14. SCOTTISH MINISTERS CALL-IN CLOSURE PROCEDURE

14.1 At the end of the consultation process, Section 15 of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* enables Scottish Ministers to call-in a decision to implement the proposed closure of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and the establishment of a new single primary school structure with nursery class and its associated catchment area for Prestonpans.

14.2 Beginning on the day that a final decision has been taken, the Council must notify Scottish Ministers of this decision within a period of six working days. Scottish Ministers then have a period of eight weeks from and including the date of decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. The Council must publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified and that representations can be made to the Scottish Ministers within the first three weeks of the eight-week period. The Scottish Ministers will take into account any relevant representations that were made to them by any person within the first three weeks. The Council may not proceed with the implementation of the proposal until this eight-week period has passed.

14.3 If the Scottish Ministers decide to call in a closure proposal, it is then referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels who has a period of seven days after a call in notice is issued to constitute a School Closure Review Panel. The Panel may decide to refuse consent to the proposal, refuse consent and remit it to the education authority for a fresh decision or grant consent to the proposal, either subject to conditions, or unconditionally. The Panel must notify the education authority of its decision within eight weeks from when the Panel was constituted or within 16 weeks if the Panel has issued a notice to the education authority that a decision has been delayed. The Council may not proceed with the implementation of the proposal until the outcome of the call-in has been notified to the Council.

15. PERSONNEL ISSUES

15.1 The staffing entitlement for proposed new single primary school structure and its nursery class will be set in line with the primary and nursery pupil roll of the school and calculated in accordance with the approved Scheme of Delegation for Schools and the Council's devolved school management (DSM) policies.

- 15.2 Reconfiguration of existing core staffing arrangements will be required as a result of this proposal. Revised staffing arrangements are managed in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures. Since the roll of the new school structure would comprise pupils from the two closed schools there are specific arrangements for issues such as recruitment to promoted posts in the new school. Most teaching and ancillary staff will however transfer to the new school in proportion to the school roll and the Council has specific procedures in place that will be followed. Revised staffing arrangements for the new school structure will be managed in line with the Council's 'Protocol for School Merger' for both teaching and support staff.
- 15.3 The post of Head Teacher within the new school is deemed to be a "new" job against which Head Teacher(s) of the closed schools are not eligible to claim a match. The recruitment of the new Head Teacher will be carried out in line with current East Lothian recruitment procedures, appointing the best candidate for the vacancy. Recruitment will be open to all appropriately qualified staff from East Lothian and beyond. However, the Council also has an obligation to redeploy any displaced Head Teacher to an appropriate vacancy within the Council. When a post-holder is declared surplus, it is for the local authority to identify what current positions are available and that are a 'best fit' taking into account the knowledge and experience of the individual. Consultation should be undertaken with the Parent Council of the receiving school when redeployment to Head Teacher posts are being considered. Detailed duties under the Parental Involvement in Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher Appointments (Scotland) Regulations 2007, Regulation 5(1) and (2) shall not apply where the education authority decides, following consultation in terms of regulation 4, that the post of Head Teacher be filled by redeploying to that post an existing Head Teacher currently employed elsewhere.
- 15.4 All staff, other than the Head Teacher(s), from the closed schools will be eligible to be matched to jobs in the structure of the new school. Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre is a separate early learning & childcare establishment. While the leadership and management of the Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre will be affected by implementation of this proposal, it has its own separate budget and staffing entitlement and will continue to operate as a separate establishment under the leadership and management of the Head Teacher of the new school. Therefore, reconfiguration of existing core staffing arrangements at Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre is not required as a result of this proposal.

16. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- 16.1 No environmental issues have been identified with regard to this proposal.

17. CONCLUSION

17.1 Officers of the Education Authority have considered carefully the written representations, including the Education Scotland report. Having reviewed the feedback from consultees, officers conclude that the basis of the original proposal remained the best solution to address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents at these schools.

17.2 The proposed closures and establishment of a new single primary school structure provides an opportunity to improve learning and teaching and further raise attainment for all children in the Prestonpans catchment area. The establishment of a single school will create a positive environment for more effective learning and teaching that is better matched to the needs of the children across all stages. It will provide the opportunity to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum from Nursery to P7. It will also provide the opportunity to improve the consistency of learning and teaching approaches to better meet the needs of all pupils. This will support much smoother and improved pastoral and curricular transitions across the stages. In addition, this will also enable staff to work with children across the school which will provide enhanced support for their learning.

17.3 The proposed closures and establishment of a new single primary school structure will have a positive impact on the children in both schools by further developing and enhancing a shared ethos, vision, values and aims from the nursery class through to Primary 7. The establishment of a new primary school under a single operational and management structure will secure best value, providing more equitable education provision across the School Estate where almost all schools operate as Nursery to Primary 7 settings. This proposal will also ensure equity across all schools in the Prestonpans cluster in terms of Leadership and Management arrangements.

17.4 The key messages deriving from the consultation period are as follows:

- 33% of all individual questionnaire respondents (44 responses) to the consultation were in favour of the proposal, 60% (80 responses) were not in favour and 7% (9 responses) had no opinion or did not indicate;
- There were responses from 2 groups during the consultation period. Both of these were from the Parent Councils of the two directly affected schools. The Parent Council of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School responded that they strongly agreed with the proposal while the Parent Council of Prestonpans Primary School based on feedback from the wider Parent Forum responded that they disagreed with the proposal;

- During the consultation period, Council officers visited Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School providing good opportunities for pupils and staff to discuss their views. Pupils from Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School were curious about the proposal and had prepared a balanced set of questions in advance. Pupils from Prestonpans Primary School expressed mixed views.

17.5 Education Scotland has identified that the proposal would lead to clear educational benefits for children. This includes *“the opportunity to improve learning and teaching and to further raise attainment for all children in the catchment area. The establishment of a single staff team working together to ensure continuity and progression from P1 to P7 should bring greater curricular coherence, improved consistency of expectations and increased moderation of standards. Children should benefit from improved progression planning to better meet their needs. Removing the need for an additional transition to a different school at the end of P3 is likely to reduce any possible risk of a slowing down of progress as children progress through the first level of Curriculum for Excellence”*.

17.6 The Council now has 3 options to consider, namely:

- a) adopt the proposal;
- b) withdraw the proposal;
- c) undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal.

17.7 If the Council adopts the proposal, it would be on the basis that the educational benefits set out in the Consultation Proposal Document would materialise.

17.8 In withdrawing the proposal, the two schools would remain as separate establishments with separate staffing structures, management teams and identities. While the Education Service would continue to work with both schools to focus on the improvement in the consistency of learning & teaching and continuity and progression the Council may not be able to fully address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents to better meet the needs of all pupils.

18. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

18.1 On the basis of the feedback received and taking account of all of the educational and social benefits of the proposal, it is concluded that the following proposal is the only viable and deliverable option to address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School.

18.2 Following the conclusion of the Scottish Ministers eight-week call-in period or the notification of the outcome of a call-in, as appropriate, it is recommended that the Council approves the following:

- Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School will be closed and a new single primary school structure covering Nursery to P7 and its associated catchment area will be established for Prestonpans.

Fiona Robertson
Head of Education
November 2018

APPENDIX 1: COMMENTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Of the 135 questionnaire responses, 97 contained comments of whom 32 declined permission to make their comments publicly available. However, their representations have been taken account of and responded to in Section 8 of this Consultation Report. The summary of comments below, were made from the remaining 65 responses who gave permission to share their comments publicly.

Responses from Groups

Prestonpans Infant & Nursery Parent Council

Comments
<p>Leadership Team</p> <p>We agree that many of the issues highlighted within the consultation are a direct result of collaboration (or lack of) between the two sites. We also agree that the most efficient way to address this going forward is the implementation of a single leadership team across the three sites. Having a strong and experienced leadership team, we believe, is vital to this process and the future transition and implementation of this change. We have been assured that this will not be a 'knee-jerk' reaction however, changes will be made and ensuring we have the right head teacher and associated staff in place is key.</p>
<p>Logistics, Budget and Numbers</p> <p>There has been continual reference to two sites, but there are in fact three. Prestonpans Infant School (with the nursery attached), Prestonpans Primary School and the ELCC. The ELCC may be within the grounds of Prestonpans Infant School but it is still a separate building and therefore needs to be considered in both the staffing levels and budget.</p> <p>Fiona referred to the budget adjustment that is made to reflect the fact there are dual sites – can we please ensure that we reflect the fact there are three sites. It's crucial to have the right team in place and therefore a requirement for an additional depute (for example) may be a factor.</p> <p>The numbers quoted did not include the numbers for both the ELCC and nursery. We acknowledge that the school extensions will cope with the expected increase in population however the numbers quoted throughout the consultation referred to primary school age children only. There is an additional 200 (approx..) children to be accounted for when considering the associated nursery and ELCC intake. We've highlighted this because, in total, it takes the number of children to over 1000 and this is set to grow. This ties back to the point that we need to have an experienced leadership team in place however we also need to ensure they have the resources to put experienced staff in place across the various age groups and sites.</p> <p>We've raised this specifically in relation to the FAQ on Citizen Space. We were told that within the proposed budget there is allowance for one Headteacher and 2 Deputes at each campus, although this would be at the Headteacher's discretion. The FAQ however states that we currently have two Headteachers and 4 Deputes, this will change to one</p>

Headteacher and three Deputies. This is lower than we expected – and again takes account of two rather than three sites.

School ethos

This is very important to parents in the community. Yes, we want our children's learning to be at the top level and meet national attainment levels, however, ensuring the community remains involved and a positive ethos is carried through from infant to primary school is of equal importance.

There is a sense of community at the infant school. The school operates an open-door policy and welcomes parents into the grounds. There is a concern that this is not the case once children transition to the primary school and again, we'd like to ensure that this is considered in the recruitment of the Headteacher and the transition plans going forward.

There is a view that once in the playground, the background of children and families does not matter – all are included and treated equally. There is also keen awareness of costs associated with events, for example, and we'd like to ensure that this is addressed and continued across all three sites.

Fiona has stated that having one team in place working to the same education strategy, with the same planning objectives will lead to a smoother transition in relation to the education and raised attainment levels of our children. An equal emphasis should be placed on the approach to community and parental involvement in the ongoing development, nurturing and overall ethos of our children.

Our last point is in relation to the proposed development work of the building at Prestonpans Infant School. The proposal states this will be raised from a category B to C – can we please see more information and a timeline in relation to these works.

Prestonpans Primary Parent Council

Comments

As this is a response from members of our Parent Forum, there are varied views. We ran a poll on our Facebook page where 65% of our parents who responded were against the proposal and 35% for the proposal therefore we have put disagree as our statement above.

Questions and queries raised at our Parent Council Consultation meetings:

- ~ What are the benefits of the merger, what evidence do you have to back this up?
- ~ Why did the local authority not wait until the merger in Haddington was finished to ensure that any problems that arose from the merger could be ironed out before doing it again in EL. The Haddington merger is the first of its kind in East Lothian, therefore there is no guarantee/evidence that there will be educational benefits.
- ~ What are the potential immediate and long term risks of the merger?
- ~ Throughout the consultation document, it talks about removing the transition issues and ensuring familiarity for the pupils - there is still a physical transition. How will this barrier be reduced?

~ Why is this the only proposal available to parents? Why have the authority not shared their gathered evidence and professional reports to show why 2 Nursery-P7 schools on the current sites would not be best for the community?

~ 2 smaller Nursery- P7 schools on the current sites would allow for seamless transition from year group to year group. It would allow families to be together in one school building, there would be no drop off and pick up issues over two sites. More transparency about why this has not been proposed is required.

~ What is the long term Education Estates strategy [REDACTED] said that PINS can't have anymore extensions after the current planned ones are complete. As the community grows, how can we ensure that the accommodation at PINS is at it's best for our children? Currently it is graded poor in condition. Is there a longer term plan for one through school on one site for the Prestonpans catchment?

~ Will there be any job losses?

~ You talk about consulting professors who are experts in relation to transition - what were there responses as these are not included in the consultation document.

~ The school roll including nursery and ELCC is going to be around 1100 pupils. Lots talked about it being up to the HT to decide what management structure should be but that takes time for them to establish their thoughts on what management should look like. What supports are going to be in place to ensure that there is an adequate management structure in place from day 1 if this proposal goes ahead? There needs to be NO impact on our children's learning and experiences in school with change in management structure.

~Parents struggle with not knowing what management structure will look like - why can't authority outline what it should look like in at least the first year after merger?

~ Will there be job cuts in Support for Learning, classroom assistants, ASN staff?

~ What evidence do ELC have that 1 structure over 2 sites will provide 'high quality education' over what already exists or having to separate N-P7 schools on the current sites?

~ Will our PEF, Educational Psychology allocation, predictable needs funding be reduced if we become one school?

~ P12 point 9 of consultation document

'opportunities for pupils to develop and sustain relationships with their peers' – this will remain no different to what it is now, they will still only develop relationships with the peers in their campus. There is already a buddy system in place for P3s with P6s for the transition. What is greatly missing in the fact that it is not a through school on one site is the lack of opportunities for role modelling to take place both within the playground and classrooms for your nursery, p1, p2 pupils from P6/7 pupils. 1 school over 2 sites will not improve/enhance this opportunity. P3s role modelling P1 and 2 pupils is a huge ask for 6 and 7 year olds and can increase anxiety for young pupils.

~ How many split campus sites are there in Scotland? Dunbar is an example of one that works, however it was never 2 schools that merged in to one. Therefore did not have the issues of changing policies, bringing two staff teams together, working on a shared vision, values and aims etc This all takes time and will need to come out of Working Time Agreement time. How will this have immediate benefit to our children, as this all takes TIME?

~P13/14

Point 18 – We cannot ignore that physical transition is a major issue for some children and families wellbeing irrespective of having 1 HT. Removing physical transition will be even more vital for learner progression and raising attainment for all.

~P15

Point 23 – the proposal represents best value – what do you mean by best value? Cost cutting? The schools across the cluster are not just PINS and PPS so how are they all working together to ensure equity and how will making it 1 school change the way the cluster currently works?

~ Point 25 – the additional transition is still in place. The change in location, physical structure of the schools cannot be ignored as this impacts children, their families and their wellbeing. A huge issue for many families currently is that they may have children in both campuses. This causes issue for drop off and pick up, sometimes their children will never have the experience of being in the same campus. This has been an issue for many children, where they haven't been able to have school photos together or even watch each other in class/year group assemblies. This will not change if it is 1 school over 2 campuses, however if it was a N-P7 school on each site more family together opportunities would be more easily organised.

~Point 60 – whole school assemblies – it is utterly ridiculous to suggest that the coming together of the joint school community should be in another location because neither campus can accommodate them. What about wasted learning time walking to another school, how could Nursery and ELCC be included in these? Ratios have to be thought about. A school should be able to come together as one, if it was 2 N-P7 schools with rolls of around 500 pupils this would be more realistic. We should be enhancing the school community feel by making these changes, however this proposal still keeps the campuses very separate.

~P25 point I – staff movement – Movement of staff across levels will be at HT discretion. So it is not a definite as suggested. Point 21 on p14 states it is the HT responsibility to design their school – how can ELC ensure staff movement is put in place?

~ Point J – sustain and build relationships – how can these relationships be truly built in such a large school? No way SMT can know all the families as they should/could in a smaller setting. SMT in larger schools tend to have a level remit, eg Early, First and Second. Therefore the relationships parents make will move across each of the SMT depending on where the child is in school.

~ P26 point K – SfL staff play a critical role – will the current support/predictable needs budgets remain to allow this critical role to continue?

~ P27 point 66 – This proposal will also ensure equity across all schools in the Prestonpans Cluster in terms of leadership and management arrangements – what does this mean?

~ Point 68 – Doesn't allow for older pupils to buddy at a younger stage. Sometimes when a P6/7 pupils is working at early/first level it is a great opportunity for them to buddy a P1/2 pupil. It means they are not always being socially or academically challenged as they might be by buddying a p5/6 pupil. Having the split campus will not enhance the opportunities for buddying.

~P29 point 82 – will merging the schools reduce the collective DSM?

~ Point 126 – secure best value – this statement comes across a number of times throughout this proposal and suggests this is about money saving not improving the educational opportunities for children and our community.

~ During the meetings it was our understanding that the only change would be HT and the current status of 2 Deputes across each campus would remain - although this would be at HT discretion. Fiona Robertson said at the open meeting that the 130k saving was only from 1 HT salary and 1 finance officer.

However in FAQ there is the following which seems to contradict what has been said and that DSM for a joint school would allow for 3 DHTs:

What are the cost savings of this proposal?

Answer:

The main decrease in the revenue budget provided as part of the indicative budget for a single school structure as at 2018/19 is in relation to the senior leadership/management team. Under the scheme of Devolved School Management the entitlement for the new school would be one Head Teacher and three Depute Head Teachers. The current management arrangements across the two schools is an entitlement to two Head Teachers and four Depute Head Teachers. The overall savings would be circa £130k. Other staffing entitlements based on the DSM scheme would remain the same. The current DSM scheme, however, does not take account of the proposed split campus arrangement and as such the funding model would be adapted to reflect the context of the school.

It was discussed in the open meeting that the way the budgets are created are as if the school is on one site so they have to adjust it to reflect it's on two but we are concerned that a school with the potential of around 1200 pupils (inc nursery as this is to increase in size and elcc which they failed to include in numbers last night) would only have a management structure of 1 HT and 3 deputes as it isn't written anywhere that it should be a minimum of 4 DHTs. With the current shortage of supply teachers, the management team are often called to cover classes when staff are off. A reduced management team over a bigger school role will stretch their ability to make the changes needed effectively - therefor will the merger be as effective as ELC would lead us to believe?

Responses from Individuals

Responses from those in support of the proposal to close Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and establish a new non-denominational single primary school structure covering Nursery to Primary 7 for the Prestonpans catchment area

The comments included with those responses received that were in favour of the proposal are shown below, comments are redacted to avoid the identification of individuals:

Comments
The current level of attainment is a serious issue for the children of Prestonpans and I therefore feel that this proposal is necessary to raise this and meet the educationally needs of our children.

Comments

Had agreed with the proposal last time round and think this will be highly beneficial to all the children with just one management structure in place. Just a shame my child will not benefit from management continuity.

In principle I agree with the proposal of there being one unified Primary and Nursery School in Prestonpans, however I also firmly believe that serious consideration should be given to the thought of building a purpose built new Primary school within Prestonpans to cater for the future children who will receive their education in this catchment area.

Currently both the Infant and Primary Schools are at capacity with more extension required in the future. If proposals for merger of the two schools are at discussion stage then future growth and how that is resolved should be at the top of the agenda.

I also think that the timing of the merger of the two schools will be to the detriment of the children who are currently in P7. Given the transitioning the P7 pupils have to undertake for moving to the High School which usually starts around February, surely any changes should be made at the start of a school year not right in the middle of one. Children have a hard time coping with all the changes in preparation for High School as it is and this just makes it more difficult.

Finally if this is just a cost saving exercise at management level to save on staffing (which I do believe it is - given that physical structures are to remain) then shame on the Council. There needs to be more explanation on the benefits to the pupils of having a single management structure across the two campuses than has been outlined already.

My [REDACTED] recently transitioned to the primary school. I felt this wasn't handled as well as it could have been. If the schools sat under one management team there would hopefully be a better understanding of each child's needs and better handling of the transition without disturbing the child's learning journey.

Most towns have a school run under one management team. It's apparent that both the infant and primary schools do not provide the consistency of a P1-P7 school.

We have been led to believe by education officials that pupil attainment is poor at both schools, and that it is critically important to raise attainment. We have been told that merging the schools will help improve attainment.

However, as a parent, I am worried that in doing this the schools will lose their caring, nurturing approach, which they are so good at. My children are happy, settled and feel respected at school.

If the schools do merge, it is very important that the new head teacher and staff are committed to the educational, social and emotional needs of the children.

It is one community, one school being led in the same direction. Better for flow

Comments

I agree with the proposal in the hope that both schools follow the same procedures, strategies and that transition will be smoother and more consistent.
At present both schools lead different values and focuses so I would like to see it become one school.

I think it is a good idea to have one head teacher for both schools

I'd like to know the proposed management structure as I do have a concern that the focus for the head teacher, if located at an alternate site, may not be as it was for the last 2 years.

What is the reason for the consultation? Is it for the benefit of educational standards or for cost savings and what impact would that have on staff and the pupils.

How would this be communicated to the children?

Why Feb 2019 surely logic would dictate that this should be done during Easter or summer break?

Will parents have a say in the new management structure?

How long has this been planned for?

What impact does the council foresee in this happening?

With the massive influx of families in the area how will this help?

I still don't fully understand the drive for this change now however having spoke to the committee put together to raise awareness and discuss the proposal I can see why a single management structure would have benefits to the efficient running of the school. I'm still undecided about the whole idea as I can still see many pros and cons

the current transition from infant to primary school is atrocious I'm hoping that with the new structure the children shall be transitioned with familiar faces staff will move between the 2 sites and that may help with the current state of the primary school

I agree with the proposal as it would make life more straight forward as a parent who currently has a child in each school. Both schools are great but they operate very differently, merging them would simplify things. A single school uniform would also be easier. If it was considered as 1 school over 2 campuses it would make the transition from p3 to p4 easier for the kids as it wouldn't be a new school like it is now and they would be more likely to know more of the staff.

After going to the Public meeting at PL I appreciate what the head mistress of Dunbar primary had to say. I do believe that the success of this proposal is dependent upon hiring the right person.

I was disappointed to see that there was no representation from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at the meeting. It gave the impression that they didn't care. [REDACTED]

Comments
██████ is very community driven and has large presence whereas the ██████ doesn't come across as being engaged in the local community at all. I noticed a lot of teachers and staff present ██████.
Better transition from p3 to p4. Better for teachers career progression. Children will settle quicker at the different building if they know the teachers and the same teaching structure is in place.

Responses from those who are not in favour of the proposal to close Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and establish a new non-denominational single primary school structure covering Nursery to Primary 7 for the Prestonpans catchment area

The comments made in the responses that were not in favour of the proposal are shown below, comments are redacted to avoid the identification of individuals:

Comments
This document does not mention if the appointment of a head teacher overseeing both schools and the nursery would be in addition to the current staffing levels. Should the new 'manager' be in addition to the current staff, then that would make sense. Should the new 'manager' replace at least two existing appointments, then that would be unacceptable.
As East Lothian Council insist on decimating every last piece of farming land and any other available space by throwing up houses, the class sizes are increasing, but the funding and staff structure remain static. This has to be detrimental to the education of our young people.
This appears to be a cost cutting exercise with no evidence that attainment will be raised. I fail to see where this proposal benefits the children and future generations of Prestonpans. I have read that ELC are looking for consistency across P1-P7. While I totally understand that this should be the case in education, the reality is that all teachers vary in what they teach, and how they teach. Having a single school management team will not change that. I was raised in Prestonpans and brought my children up here, so they could go to the schools I attended - not just for sentimental reasons but because I genuinely believed there was no better place to be educated. Many of the staff at the time had been in the schools for many years. In my opinion, the staff teams at both schools are very different - the infants nurture the P1-P3 stage, then P4-P7 turns the kids into independent learners ready for high school. My children have used these transitions to "take the next step" - and this has prepared them well for the future. Many High School parent's nights have finished with me being told that Prestonpans Primary School pupils are the most prepared for High School, and the most resilient.

Comments

If this merger goes ahead, I worry that the staff at both schools will be under enormous pressure, without a head teacher in situ to fall back on. This will have a knock-on effect to the moral of staff in both schools. With teacher turnover as high as it is, East Lothian cannot afford to lose the many talented teachers we already have.

Prestonpans is named in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation - surely this means our children deserve even better opportunities to change their lives around.

If this merger is to be considered, in my opinion it should be delayed until there are statistics from the Haddington merger. If Haddington doesn't improve attainment, then there is no reason to suggest Prestonpans will either.

A new school or a decent size extension is needed to the infants in particular rather than reduce the management structure.

Main concern is relating to having one head teacher over the two school buildings. Both buildings house hundreds of pupils and with growing school roles I do not think that one head should have the responsibility to two large sites. A divided job would be incredibly difficult and I fear would lead to a lack of familiarity with the children and day to day running's if each building. Also with the nursery hours set to increase and more children again on site how can this be safely managed if a headteacher was at the primary school site rather than the infant site? Prestonpans schools ethos is very much based on the community and working closely with them. Having one headteacher would spread too thin and that all important connection and relationship would be diluted and I fear, lost. I disagree strongly with the proposal.

I don't disagree with the idea, but I strongly disagree with the timing. I feel the merger should wait to learn from mistakes made with Haddington, as this is the closest situation to Prestonpans. However, with Haddington, one Head Teacher had been running both schools for a time so the situation is still different. Do not be arrogant enough to tell us mistakes haven't been made. [REDACTED]

I also find the reasons given [REDACTED] for the merger at the infant school meeting abhorrent. Citing results from a review that are two years old, results that have improved, by the way, saying the school was failing our children. The solution, [REDACTED] is to remove a staff member and force the staff of two schools to spend valuable time restructuring rather than focussing on the children who need the extra help. And to take £130k of funding badly needed to help our children to "redeploy the two head teachers", sorry but I don't feel this money should go towards funding staff in other schools. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Use their own budgets for that. Let's call this what it is. It's a money saving exercise. Telling parents it's anything else is an insult. [REDACTED] managed to pull the wool over a few eyes by distracting parents with low results. But we have been given ZERO proof that this proposal will raise any learning statistics. How can removing resources actually do that??? All questions to this effect were deflected. By all means, restructure but keep the saved money for our schools! We need more classroom assistance, the more deprived children need more time and resources. There's only so much a school can do when a child's home life isn't supportive. Ms Robertson took great pains to tell us that this is part of the reason for the low ratings. If that's the case, give the schools help, don't cut funding!!!!

Comments

If the system isn't broken, don't brake it. I feel it's disadvantage to the community of prestonpans and also most importantly the children that attend both schools.

Why change something that works and how can you split one head teacher at two different sites.

There is really no change to the schools however having one head will cause more stress for the person in charge, the fact that there will have to be more deputy heads will cost more than what is currently in place. The money should be put into extending the schools.

It also does not change the fact that both schools are now too small for the amount of children coming into them and with all the building that has happened in the last number of years the council should have had all this in place when all the new builds were originally given planning permission as at that point it was blatantly obvious [REDACTED] that both schools did not meet future requirements in relation to staffing and space.

I feel that this will simply result in a very stressed and distant from both schools HT and that the day to day running of the schools will effectively be led by the DHT's. I feel a far more efficient and workable move would be to change both schools to Nursery - P7 schools with their own HT and staff teams.

I am surprised by the views and arguments offered for the proposal. There has been no evidence backing benefits of the proposal other than the mentioning of some "researchers" at University. There have been no clear numbers given (two different ranges of figures) when asked why there could not rather be 2 schools of P1-7 in Prestonpans. That would not mean that an extension would be needed but that children would be spread differently across the two schools, which seems to make sense taking into consideration the new building developments in Prestonpans and the newly built catchment areas that will come with it.

Staff at Prestonpans Primary are working very well together and are lead by very capable, caring and effective management staff. Such a big change of staffing and throwing together two very different school staff communities will be no doubt a massive disruption for future pupils in the next couple of years. Benefits of this have yet to be backed up by concrete evidence.

Transitions can be beneficial for children when done right. Education Scotland itself claims "Transitions and changes are part of everyone's life. The vast majority of children and young people look forward to moving on. However transitions can be challenging and support from parents and staff can help transitions go more smoothly." So if transition is the main concern for this proposal to be pushed forward, I would argue there are more effective ways of supporting staff from both schools in working together on the transition rather than throw all year groups in a state of chaos and get rid of the transition stage. Children in Prestonpans Primary have an advantage of having experienced school transition at such a young age. Talking to Primary 7 pupils I am amazed about how relaxed and confident the pupils are about going to Secondary school next year. To my surprise, the majority came back with the answer that they have already changed school before and they know they can do it. It's taken the pressure, anxiety and unknown away from the children.

Comments
<p>Overall, I genuinely feel that the need to save money through eradicating a management position would be prioritised over the view of staff and parents. The people who are at the scene are surely the best people to make such a significant decision about their own and the children's future. Handing the decision to someone who experiences this all on paper is a recipe for disaster. Hoping that this is not a mere paper exercise for parents, staff and children to tick a box I trust that views will be published, listened to and heavily considered.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The schools work very well independently with a fantastic transition between the 2 - The schools are only going to get larger as p/pans gets larger > meaning more pressure for the management team. - The management teams for both schools are already under pressure + increasing their remit whilst reducing size will make this worse + they will have to cover 2 sites - This is cost cutting rather than a benefit to the schools + community
<p>Prestonpans Infant School is very good for [REDACTED] has just started in August this year and she really enjoys it. It has really brought her learning skills on. The staff are very good & supportive it would be a big loss & shame for youngsters.</p>
<p>The 2 schools work perfectly well separate. Infants do well for learning with play. The primary push on Education. [REDACTED]</p>
<p>Do not merge the schools this will impact as it needs 2 different Headteachers.</p>
<p>I see no benefit to the learners, staff or community for this proposed change.</p>
<p>[REDACTED] myself and my husband are dreading our daughter going there and I believe each school should have its own head teacher I'm sure the council could find other ways of saving money ie councillors taken a pay cut</p>
<p>[REDACTED] personally think that each school should have its own head teacher and if this is a way of saving money the council needs to think again</p>
<p>There has been no suggestion of what benefits this will provide the community or more importantly, the children at Prestonpans Infant School and Primary. Nothing has been included in the proposal and the only assumption I can make is that this is purely a cost cutting exercise to the detriment of the pupils with a single head teacher having to try to spread their time across 2 sites at once. A head should be visible, approachable and on call should there be an incident at the school. This is clearly not possible i they are not on site. [REDACTED] looking to make a quick buck by trimming any cost they can.</p>
<p>I don't see why this change is required. I went to same nursery and both schools. Has worked for all these years.</p>
<p>If it's not broke don't fix</p>
<p>The schools operate well seperately there is no need to change this. The teaching standards once the kids move up is incredible. P1 to p3 is all about the play which is</p>

Comments

amazing for their ages and I'm so relived now my son can finally spell basic words now he is at the Primary School.

[REDACTED]

This proposal does not appear to take into account the geography of Prestonpans. The schools are at least a ten minute walk apart. For any joint activity (assembly, paired reading, buddying etc.) this means staff have to:

Check PC1s for everyone

First aid kit and other personal medication – inhaler/insulin/Ritalin

Ensure children have been to the toilet

Coats on – if everyone remembered to bring a coat to school!

10 minute walk up or down

Coats off

Assembly/paired reading/buddying etc.

Toilets

Coats back on

10 minute walk in the opposite direction

Coats back off and in to class

This appears to be an awful lot of wasted time that could be used for learning

There is no evidence that this merge will raise attainment.

Children will still transfer into a new building when they go to P4.

Parental engagement lessens as children get older, which means relationships will change-however not always negatively.

'Practitioners should have an excellent understanding of the experiences the child has had in the past, and will have in the future, and should work towards clear aims and roles during the transitions process.'

'It is important to work with parents together to co-construct the transition, to know more about the social capital of the child and to understand what they are bringing with them to school.'

(Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop from the Department of Childhood and Primary Studies at the University of Strathclyde)

This is what transition would look like in an ideal world. However, the views of the person who knows the child best are not always sought. In some instances, due to staff turnover, children can have several teachers within an academic year. Attachment to one member of staff is not always good for the child, or the member of staff.

“Staff also need to have a very strong understanding of child development across the stages and most often that comes from experience of working with children across different stages. This is not possible under the current separate school arrangement.”

Comments

This statement assumes staff have no experience of other stages of development. Most staff have experiences either in past employment or voluntary placements and have a very strong understanding of children's developmental needs.

The expected roll of the new structure is 882 at its highest. I think the best option would be to have a P1-P7 school on each site. The numbers quoted on the proposal for projected rolls show that each school currently has enough capacity for their projected numbers. However 2 x P1-P7 schools in Prestonpans would offer spaces at each stage and would be sizeable schools to manage.

It is a difficult task to merge 2 staff teams.

Prestonpans already has another school, P1-P7, and this has no effect on our local community.

Many "born and bred Panners", myself included, have chosen to stay in Prestonpans because of the split schools.

This appears to be an exercise to save money- it is a shame that this could seriously harm the education of our future generations.

I don't think it possible, for 1 head teacher to give her full attention to both school, I think if you we're to do anything make them both nursery to p7 so they don't need to move again or just leave them as they are as it has work well for years, just seems like another way to save money at the kids expense

I've attended several of the meetings regarding this proposal and I don't think a very good case has been made for it.

The proponents of this proposal have not made clear at all what the attainment concerns are which they claim is driving it. I don't think it's clear at all how attainment would improve with this plan, and it's a huge expectation and pressure for a HT to take on while overseeing the merging of two staff teams with one less deputy, and overseeing two large schools of children. I'm concerned that teaching staff will be less supported by management due to losing a head teacher and deputy (as outlined in the FAQs), and I think management will struggle to be as visible, accessible and responsive as they currently are. I think this is being unnecessarily rushed through, rather than done with care and consideration of how the process has gone in Haddington.

If it goes ahead I'd like to see the new head teacher being given lots of time and space to plan and strategise before the official opening of the new school.

Distance between schools is too great. I would prefer 2 all through schools with sensitively drawn catchments reflecting the growing community.

Shared headteacher potentially unable to fulfill role in both campuses.

Busy roads to cross between schools.

I understand there would be a potential cost saving to merging the schools however feel that as these span 2 different campus', it would be very difficult for one management


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team to adequately dedicated the necessary time to each school. It would also be very hard to maintain an overall view of the goings on at each campus and again dedicate sufficient time to each school, teacher, pupil and support staff.

I think the model works extremely well at present and I would not want to see this change. The schools in PP are only going to grow over the next few years with the influx of new housing therefore I feel it is sensible to maintain the separate approach (with joint working between schools), as the number of classes continue to grow.

I understand there is very different approaches taken at both schools and I think this is a good thing for the children with it being a much softer introduction to the infant school and a more structured perhaps stricter approach in the primary school which is required gearing up for high school.

Therefore considering pupil numbers, geography of campus', parental access to senior management etc. I do not think it would be in anyone's interest to merge the schools.

 I can only imagine this to be alot worse when they have double the amount of children and parents to deal with!.... I feel like more issues will be brushed under the carpet!

I think both schools currently do a great job in looking after our children and have a close working relationship. I don't think putting the running of both schools onto one management team would positively effect either school.

After attending the public meeting the main reasoning for this proposal seems to be to improve attainment across the schools. The P3 to P4 transition and the lack of consistency across the curriculum in the schools was given as the main reasons for the issues identified with attainment. Having a single head teacher to lead both schools seemed to be presented as the solution to solving these attainment issues. However, this seems a rather simplistic point of view. Attainment is the responsibility of all staff across the schools - teachers, principal teachers, senior management and head teacher. If leadership is the key issue does this suggest that the council feel that the current leadership is weak? There is no guarantee that a single head teacher would be able to solve these issues from the top down.

As the school will continue to be spread across the two buildings the transition between P3 and P4 will still largely exist. Movement of staff may help make this easier but for the children it will still be a new building with mostly new staff. I'm not sure an 8 year old would see it as being any different.

I do see benefits for children who have ASNs and for staff retention since they will be able to teach the complete range of P1 to P7 classes. But I would have thought these issues could be solved by arrangements between the two schools to allow staff to move if desired.

Comments

Apart from a single head teacher I struggle to see what would be so different from the current setup. What is stopping both head teachers and senior management teams from collaborating closely? Why can't arrangements be made to enable staff to move between the two schools? The idea that a single head teacher will solve the transition and attainment issues strikes me as wishful thinking.

I do not think that the huge period of change and upheaval will be of any benefit to anyone in our learning community. Both schools work well and while I agree we should work on closer partnership I do not think a merger is what is needed to make this happen. The children, staff and parents benefit from an open and honest relationship with the head teacher which I do not believe will be possible with a school roll of nearly 1000!

Prestonpans Infants is an exceptional school. It is such a happy, busy, thriving place and the head teacher is terrific and such an asset to the school.

I think the proposal to merge the 2 schools is a case of fixing something that isn't broken.

I strongly believe that in the very early school years, the pupils need strong and solid support and guidance, which ultimately works its way down from the headteacher to the staff.

If the head teacher was to be stretched between 2 different campuses they wouldn't be able to commit 100% to these young children. The needs and well being of the children should be paramount, and I think this can only happen with a dedicated head teacher who is based within the physical school building,

I very much hope this proposal, or in reality council cost cutting exercise, is rejected and that both schools can continue to thrive as they are.

To be honest I'm not sure whether I agree or disagree as there are pros and cons to both. On one hand I think it makes sense to have the schools under one management team but feel that this would only work if the both schools merged into one school and all classes from primary 1-7 were under the same roof! (this is not an option, I know, so I'm not sure this will work over split schools)

so how on earth can one headteacher take on another 300plus children and staff? I am sure (forgive me if I'm wrong) that alot of this comes down to budget and saving money and it sadens me as a former pupil of all schools in Prestonpans and now a parent to my child that is in primary 2 and another child who will attend the schools eventually, that this is the predicament that the schools are now in!

I love the infant school and advocate for it and want to support in any way possible but I just can't see how this will work without being too much of a strain on the management team and thus effecting the pupils!

After attending the question time at the infant school on Tuesday evening I have learned that attainment is poor in this area. As a way of improving this, it seems detrimental to reduce the management and support for teachers by removing a head teacher. There

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needs to be more joined up thinking between the two schools and more support for teachers to improve their results. One head teacher cannot split themselves in two across two campuses.

In my opinion, it feels like the closing of two schools to open one mega school is too much like a money-saving exercise. We have been informed the potential new mega school will be run by ONE headteacher and three depute headteachers; that is crazy! The buildings will be across two campuses separated by a 0.5-mile walk/drive, in an emergency that's a long way for a member of SMT to be expected to travel in a speedy fashion.

The Educational department seems to view the other school in Haddington as the jewel in the crown of combining schools, however, there are real differences in this, both schools are next door to each other and a year is not long enough to assess how successful the change has really been.

To better serve the community of Prestonpans and help close the attainment gap in the area, it is imperative to invest in the education of our future generations. This should be done with two through schools (nursery to primary 7). As a teacher who believes in nurturing part of Scotlands future workforce, I heartily believe that two headteachers working well together is far better than expecting one headteacher take on the workload of both. yes it'll be tricky and yes it'll cost more money but surely an investment in the future generations of Prestonpans is worth it?

To what benefit? This may be detrimental. Is it really worth changing a formular that works? Both Schools already have a successful existing communication including the transtion of children moving to P4. Which is regarded by parents & staff as a partnership that works.

Theses are two separate buildings with both having an exceptional high level of pupils in both with this year's P1 numbers being the highest ever. Surely a separate management for each school is a far more manable option. In any other bussiness management it is divided in to the relevant levels & departments rather than looking to manage a whole bussiness. Given they are located in two separate locations. This in my opinion is a unsatisfactory cost cutting option for the Children's interests. I also think with all the intake of forthcoming puplils with more local housing developments. This is a massive undertaking & with this a huge responsibility to prove to provide a more efficient satisfactory improvement to warrant this proposal.

I have been very impressed with The nursery and infant school and the leadership of the school. The school is extremely large but retains a family focussed atmosphere and each child isn't known and treated as an individual. I worry that this would be lost if the schools joined and the head would be unable to maintain this atmosphere as they would be responsible for so many more pupils.

I have not seen any information explaining why this decision might be made and the benefits of it.

I can understand having one head teacher to imply the same points rules values and the running of the schools. The 2 schools do vary slightly. They have been trying to work together more. But with the huge numbers of children attending both schools and with

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them being in separate buildings surely this is a huge amount of work for a one head teacher and to add the EELC and extension to the nursery. It's all about cost cutting im sure and one poor head is going to lose their job. Both schools are run well and the transition for the kids moving has been great as I have had 2 kids that have moved up 1 just in p4 and 1 in p6. With all the new builds and more to come and further extensions to be added this idea seems crazy. It's a new school in one building for a head teacher to be at so this could possibly work and not affect the education of the kids. East Lothian council have allowed all these houses to be built which means more families moving to the area. They must be one of the biggest primary schools in East Lothian? Haddington is going through a similar merger but has there not been talks about a new school being built? Why has St Gabriel 's never been considered extending the numbers, the grounds have space and yes It is a Catholic school but doesn't that belong to East Lothian council and surely in this day and age it's all about education for the children and to be able to accommodate for the area. A percentage of kids from St Gabriel 's do move on to Preston Lodge. Then the next thing school uniforms are they going to change most families have just purchased for the new term starting, another cost if the proposal goes ahead.

I feel that merging the two schools will be detrimental to children's learning due to the size of the current schools. A head teacher will not be able to get to know the pupils and families of what will likely be a nearly 1000 pupil school. What makes the current schools work well is the community links and that families feel they are known by all staff. One head working across two sites will mean an increase in workload, pushing more work on to already huge workloads for other members of senior and middle management. Personally I feel it is an unmanageable task that will be detrimental to my children's education.

The town is ever growing and already the Infant school has lost their music and general purpose rooms to create new classrooms. I feel that a nursery to p7 school is a good option but only if it can be on one site. I truly feel that Prestonpans requires 2 non denominational nursery-p7 schools. At the infant school the children do not get enough access to the gym hall and I personally feel do not get their quality 2 hours of PE, two classes are now sharing the hall, already cramped because about 1/5 of the hall is used as a storage for the after school club. Bringing the schools together as one is not going to change this demand. However, if there were 2 nursery to p7 schools, there would be increased opportunity for the older pupils (who tend to have developed more resilience) to access the outdoors for PE all year round.

If this proposal is truly about improving education in Prestonpans and not about saving money then I think the local authority should be looking at other options rather than merging the schools in to one.

I think that merging the 2 schools under 1 HT will simply save the council money but not in any way resolve any of the issues which are a concern. The 2 schools will I suspect be run effectively by the relevant DHT's and the HT will be very stressed [should you be able to recruit a HT to take not he job int he first place].

I feel that a move to change to 2 through schools i.e. Nursery - P7 would be a far more effective management of the education within the community.

Comments

I'm concerned that there will be one management team split over two sites. I can't see how both schools can be managed properly if they do not have each have a head teacher and deposes as a visible presence. The school roll of each school is also already sizeable and is set to increase and therefore it seems sensible to have two management teams who work closely together rather than just one. I'm also concerned about the infant school nursery inspection report as performance has worsened in recent years and I worry that this downward trend will continue if the workload for the head teacher and management team of one large/combined school is unmanageable.
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I find it difficult to see many potential benefits for both the children and the staff working in each of the schools and feel this is simply a cost cutting exercise by East Lothian council. Potentially, the two schools could benefit from more joined up working but I don't believe that closing the schools and having only one headteacher for what would be a very large school would be of benefit to anyone.

I believe it will not be in the best interest of our children to have a school structure over 2 campuses. The roll each year is getting larger and building a new fit for purpose school would be a much better resolution. All this exercise will achieve is a budget saving

Responses from those who had no opinion or did not answer

The comments made in the responses that held no opinion or did not answer are shown below, comments are redacted to avoid the identification of individuals:

Comments

Although I agree to an extent that this might be a good idea as it will allow for continuity for pupils at all stages, I also think that it might have been an idea to see if this strategy works in Haddington first. I think it's too early to consult when Haddington is in the early stages of the same thing. I also think parents should have a choice of consultation where two through schools could have been suggested. I worry that this idea is being put forward as a cost cutting exercise. How does one head teacher and two deposes effectively look after and support over 750 pupils over two campuses as well as support other members of staff when secondary schools with 1,100 pupils (350 pupils more) and one campus have a head teacher, 4 deposes, numerous faculty heads and 6 guidance teaching pt's not to mention pt's of teaching and learning, pupil support etc etc... it seems detrimental to the pupils in prestonpans that it would be considered to cut support for pupils in this way instead of adding to the management team of both schools. A good thing about this idea is that parents can be involved with the same management team from nursery to p7 but once again I can't help feel that the management team here will be spread far too thin and as part of the consultation I would be expecting to hear that other management roles will become part of this new structure. I also like the idea of one parent council from nursery through to p7 [REDACTED]. I think any nursery/primary school of over 750 pupils is far too big, never mind over two campuses that, lets face it, aren't exactly next door. The needs of

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nursery and p1-3 especially need much more support and need management to know the pupils well (obviously this is important from p4-7 too) and I don't believe this will happen in the way that the consultation is suggesting. I hope this isn't a done deal already because I think there are a lot of problems/issues that need to be addressed and I look forward to attending the public meetings surrounding this issue.

I agree that there needs to be close ties between the two schools to ensure that the children reach their targets - does this mean that the two schools need to merge! I'm not sure why this happening in the middle of an academic year. I am not buying new uniform half way through a school term.

I would have thought the school should just be called Prestonpans Primary School.

Its difficult to agree or disagree with the proposal at this early stahe until further factual information is made available. Such as.....

what impact this will have on current teaching structure, values, ethics, class sizes etc.

What will the immalgamation actually change? What will be different as a result? What are the pros but also what may be the cons? How will this change effect our childrens education?

At this time without key questions being answered I can neither agree or disagree.

What is the main purpose of the proposal?

What will the management structure look like?

What is the cost savings?

What is the costs this change will incur?

Will there be a new build school within the next 3years to deal with the increase in population?

Before I have an opinion I wish to have answers to the following questions:

How many staff will more jobs as a result of the merger? If none, how can you guarantee this will not happen further down the line? (As has happened with a recent merger of another East Lothian school)

What is the main reason for this proposal?

Is it to save money? If so, will the savings go back into the schools facilities?

Will there be any loss of services to parents and pupils as a result of the proposed changes?

I am undecided as I can see benefits on both sides however I wonder if it would be more beneficial to take a longer time and arrange to have 2 schools for P1-7 and use a catchment area to split them? More and more houses are being built in Prestonpans and I can't see how the schools are going to cope going forward with the numbers. Things are already being sacrificed like Christmas shows etc as the schools can't fit the pupils in the halls let alone parents too!!

My child will be moving to P7 next year and I don't want any more disruption as the transition for high school will be difficult enough for them.

I chose « no opinion » because I have for and against views.

For:

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- giving teachers the professional opportunity to teach across p1-7 and widen their experience. As a result, teachers would stay longer as I feel that there has been a big turn over of teachers as we have experienced at PINS.
- better P3 into P4 transition
- better consistency of management if it's just one school, I.e with one head teacher.

Against :

- I am absolutely against the change taking place in February 2019. It should wait till after the Summer holidays. This way, it would give more time to put everything in place. Also I am worried that making this change in February will distract staff from concentrating fully on children's education and needs.
- I am worried about the affect it will have on staff moral. A change in leadership always has an impact of staff in terms of teachers' routine, being across 2 sites...

A worry:

- Will the ASC still be able to use the PINS facilities since it is a agreement with the current head teacher? I would really hope so since it is a vital service for working parents.

Firstly, I feel it is important to note that I am not completely against a merger of Prestonpans Infants School and Prestonpans Primary. I acknowledge that there are benefits to both staff and children to be derived, however, I also feel that it is an incredibly simplistic assumption that creating a through school with a new head teacher will somehow achieve the aims outlined in the proposal. Furthermore, I completely disagree with the approach taken by council leaders during the proposal, which has descended from what felt like an open discussion with a view to creating shared approaches and systems, assuring staff we would be supported through the process at the beginning of the consultation in September to a public shaming of practice, where essentially teaching staff are being accused of incompetence and an inability to support children in progressing their learning to an adequate standard.

It has been made clear through both the public meetings and in written communication with staff that the main priority in relation to the proposal is the raising of attainment, in line with national priorities. In presenting the case for the proposal to merge the two schools, [REDACTED] have referred to the 'experimental' data presented by schools as a key reason for joining, with this apparently demonstrating that our children are failing, achieving less than their peers in neighbouring schools. Despite highlighting this is 'experimental' data [REDACTED] – data which education officials and the government have advised should not be used to draw comparisons between schools – [REDACTED] has interpreted this to suit [REDACTED] own means, by assuming 100% of children should achieve a level by the expected year stage AND by comparing our school with others in the area. 100% attainment is an admirable target, but is aspirational at best and completely at odds with advice parents are given in relation to Curriculum for Excellence which is that all children achieve at their own pace. This data does not demonstrate the actual progress made by a child over time and instead simply produces a snapshot at the end of a level. It is also not demonstrative of the wider achievements of a child and presents a very narrow view of 'attainment' that is not in line with the values of

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our current curriculum. The [REDACTED] fails to recognise that such year stage data also includes children with additional support needs (some of whom do not have access to funded support from the council due to significant cuts/changes to the funding application process) and includes pupils with English as an Additional Language for which there is no support in East Lothian, as this too was pulled due to funding cuts. It is unrealistic to assume that 100% of children will achieve their level by an expected year stage when a child's learning is about so much more than their experience in the classroom.

When considering the validity of the data presented further, I think it is also important to recognise that the publication of said data has only recently begun, partly due to issues many teaching professionals have had in grappling with assessment within Curriculum for Excellence since its creation. Staff continue to develop confidence in engaging with the National Benchmarks (again, a fairly recent development) and in using the Curricular Frameworks produced by the council to support teaching and learning over the course of the last academic year. I am sure if monitored over a longer period we may see this attainment data change and indeed improve as teachers become more confident in committing to the awarding of a level within CfE through continued collegiate work both within schools and across clusters. As the SNSAs are adapted and implemented fully, this too will provide further insight and support in gathering attainment data. It is also important to consider the impact of factors such as staff turnover and wider issues on pupil achievement and assessment of pupil learning and how this may have impacted on the data collected. This is why it is important this 'experimental' data remains just that.

In addition to the data produced through teacher judgement, the council have also drawn on the feedback provided during a recent inspection visit to Prestonpans Primary, advising that inspectors identified gaps in children's learning which, the council suggests, is in part due to the current separate operation of the two schools. This includes a huge focus on the process of transition for children when moving on to Primary 4 and the adverse effect this apparently has on their attainment. However, I would argue that the transition process will be no less difficult under a merger due to the distance and travel between campuses. Children will still require to adapt to a new environment and a large number of new staff (albeit with some familiar faces) and many will still require the extensive process already offered at PINS. The current issues that have been raised around attainment and transition – specifically the 'dip' in attainment in P4 - are not helped by the current need to mix classes as they move on the Primary (often due to composite classes), as this means new teachers are starting with an entirely new class (for all intents and purposes) meaning more time must be spent in building relationships and previous learning and assessment data must be gathered from multiple sources as opposed to just one teacher. It is inevitable that this will mean children will not necessarily pick up their learning from where it is left off in P3, leading to restricted progress.

The proposed merger also raises questions for me around wasted learning time, or 'down time' as [REDACTED] has so put it previously when addressing teachers across

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the authority, where children are travelling to and from the schools frequently under a merged model, leading to a potential 40 minutes of lost learning time per two-way journey. Whilst this is part of our transition process for Primary 3, I would expect we would require further whole school and cross-stage assemblies etc. as outlined in the proposal document, meaning this time would be increased and would affect pupils across all stages, not just at Primary 3 level. How is this conducive to raising attainment?

Unfortunately, I have been left with more questions than answers at the end of this consultation process, perhaps due to the unfortunate choice made by the Head of Education and our QIO to visit teaching staff before the public meetings and a lack of ability to speak up in the public forum as a council employee. I feel disheartened, unsupported and utterly deflated following the manner in which colleagues and I have been presented in the public consultation meetings and question why, if the council's aim is to improve consistency in teaching and learning, more has not been done to support our schools before now? Instead, this process has felt like a means to an end and morale is at an all time low.

Good luck to the poor head teacher who has to pick up the pieces and make this work next year.

APPENDIX 2: NOTE OF PUBLIC MEETING

STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

PROPOSAL – PROPOSED CLOSURE OF PRESTONPANS INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW NON-DENOMINATIONAL SINGLE PRIMARY SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND ITS ASSOCIATED CATCHMENT AREA FOR PRESTONPANS

**WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2018
PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL, PRESTONPANS**

PRESENT:-

Chris Webb, Independent Adviser, Chair of Meeting
Fiona Robertson, Head of Education
Richard Parker, Service Manager – Education (Strategy & Operations)
Pauline Smith, Principal Officer (Information & Research)
Fiona Brown, Principal Officer
David Scott, Quality Improvement Officer
Katy Johnstone, Information Officer
David Gilmour, Web Officer
Helen Gillanders, Head Teacher – Dunbar Primary School
Calum Murray, Business Support Officer
Anna Boni, Education Scotland
Councillor Shamin Akhtar
Carole Glynn, Senior Business Support Assistant
35 members of the public

Chris Webb (CW) introduced the panel and talked through the agenda for the evening. CW outlined that the panel and additional Officers of the Council were present to answer any questions attendees may have. He stated that any questions that could not be specifically answered at the meeting would be recorded and answered for the person at a later date, within the period of the Consultation Process.

CW then gave an overview of the Consultation Process as outlined in the Schools Consultation Act (2010). Further explanation was provided by CW on the potential impact of the timescales if Scottish Ministers decided to call in the proposal. The proposal could potentially be called in due to the nature of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School being closed as establishments. The Consultation and any call-in process, as related to the Schools Consultation Act (2010) is detailed in the Proposal Document.

Fiona Robertson (FR) thanked everyone for attending the meeting and re-iterated that the Officers of the Council were present to answer any questions that attendees may have.

FR then presented the proposal, as outlined in the Proposal Document.

Proposal

- If approved, Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School will be closed (in name only) with effect from February 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- Even if the Council makes the decision to close the two schools and the Scottish Government doesn't call it in, there would need to be a transition period whilst it is moved forward, it's not

a decision that will be taken without further consideration of the need to involve stakeholders in the transition;

- A new non-denominational single primary school structure with a nursery class and its associated catchment area will be established for Prestonpans;
- The new single school structure will operate on a split site within the existing buildings and facilities for Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School;
- Children attending Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School will transition to the new single school structure;
- The leadership and management of Prestonpans Early Learning & Childcare Centre will transfer to the Head Teacher of the new single school structure.

FR advised that Helen Gillanders (HG) was in attendance as HG is the Head Teacher of Dunbar Primary School which has a role of 1297. DPS operates on a split site and HG will respond to any questions regarding how the leadership and management of the school works, working with teachers across the two sites and how often they come together, how often the children come together and the sense of being one community.

FR also re-iterated that the recruitment of the new Head Teacher to the single school will be through an external recruitment campaign.

Background

- The Prestonpans catchment area is currently served by two separate non-denominational schools: Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School (nursery to Primary 3 stages) and Prestonpans Primary School (Primary 4 to Primary 7 stages) with separate operational and management structures.
- Until recently, the Prestonpans catchment area was one of only two primary catchment areas in East Lothian where P1 to P3 and P4 to P7 pupils from the same catchment are taught in two separate schools requiring an additional stage transition between P3 and P4. (The other schools that operated in this way were Haddington Infant School and King's Meadow Primary School and the Council approved the decision to move both of those schools to one new single establishment and the schools are currently working towards forming one single new school and the new Head Teacher commences after the October break).
- Across Scotland there were only three mainstream local authority Infant Schools registered as open as at September 2017. These three schools included Haddington Infant School and Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School.
- One of the key outcomes identified for sessions 2017/18 to 2019/20, as set out in the East Lothian Improvement Plan 2017-18, is consistency in our approaches to planning, learning, teaching and assessment, particularly at key milestones from Nursery into P1 and P7 into S1 and currently we have an additional transition stage which is P3 to P4, and continues to be a focus of the draft Education Service Local Improvement Plan for 2018-19.

(This is a particular focus just now in relation to Scottish Government policy and the formation of Regional Improvement Collaboratives and the Head Teachers Charter which is the empowerment of Head Teachers as the key leaders of learning and teaching within their schools and we have the same focus in East Lothian on improving learning, teaching and assessment).

- Evidence following the Education Service School Reviews of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School in 2016 highlighted that while pastoral transitions were strong between the two schools, they needed to develop stronger and more effective links to improve continuity and progression in children's learning from Nursery to P7 and to improve curriculum transition.
(The Service School Reviews are not just Officers from the Centre – they are undertaken with assisting Head Teachers, or Deputy Head Teachers, from across our schools in East Lothian and also as part of the team we have an Attainment Adviser from Education Scotland who comes in to validate that these reviews are reflecting national standards).
- The need for seamless and high quality transition is recognised internationally, nationally and locally and is central to continuity of education and progression through the curriculum.
- The additional stage transition between P3 and P4 across two separate establishments presents many challenges, the most significant being how to ensure meaningful progression and continuity of learning from P3 to P4.
(We are asking our children to have that additional stage that children across our other schools do not have to experience).
- This proposal has been put forward by the Education Service to address the additional transition challenges for children, staff and parents. East Lothian Council contacted professors in universities involved in international educational research in order to inform the rationale for change, this proposal and the Educational Benefits Statement.
- Programme for Government: We will pick up the pace of reform and are working with local government to agree an approach to empower schools, that will deliver a school and teacher led education system. Rather than wait for legislation we are taking forward work now that, in the year ahead, will make empowerment a reality by:
 - working with partners to deliver a Head Teachers' Charter, supported by new national guidance, to be published by the end of 2018. The Charter and the guidance will put Head Teachers in control of important decisions that are fundamental to running their schools such as curriculum, staffing and budgets.

(By retaining an Infant School and a Primary School, the Head Teachers Charter enables Head Teachers to work two entirely different systems in terms of curriculum, staffing and budgets and our children will transfer from one school to the other perhaps having had a different experience in relation to the curriculum).

Educational Benefits

This proposal will provide the opportunity:

- to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum from Early Level through to Second Level with the staff working right across the CfE levels;
- to develop consistent learning and teaching experiences for pupils across both existing schools;
- for staff to build relationships with families from Nursery and sustain those relationships through to P7, especially for those pupils who require enhanced support – again we are asking our children who may have additional support needs, and our more vulnerable learners, to move into P4 and to start building and making new relationships, particularly with the staff that are going to support them in relation to their additional support needs;
- for teachers to work across all stages of the school which would support professional learning at all levels;
- to develop a new vision, values and aims which are shared and understood across the whole school learning community from Nursery to P7;
- to establish one Parent Council with equitable membership across all stages of the school. This would enable parents to build and develop consistent relationships and to influence and support developments across the whole learning community.

All this will support much smoother and improved pastoral and curricular transitions across the stages from Nursery through to P7.

National context and research evidence

- How Good Is Our School? (4th Edition) is the toolkit for our schools to self-evaluate against National Standards. Quality Indicator 2.6 Transitions includes themes that reflect how well we are looking at the transition in the curriculum and ensuring that there is seamless continuity and progression for children from stage to stage.
- Multiple transitions – we know the impact from the research of multiple transitions in terms of social interactions, social development, relationships that they have, not just with their peers but with staff, how it impacts on their development and also the interactions that they have with the adults that work with them.
- Supporting Positive Transitions.
- Familiar Environment.
- Contact with the same people, particularly for ASN and vulnerable children – Support for Learning staff can go from stage to stage.
- Children’s relationships with staff and teachers crucial to their support network.

- Continuity of Curriculum for Excellence – pedagogical approaches and how we plan our learning and teaching in our schools – it’s understood right from the early level that teachers know what they are building on right the way through from Nursery to P7 and beyond – within the culture and ethos, more in sync in one school.
- Leadership and Management, a new management team would be looking at share pedagogical approaches from Nursery to P7, building on early years practice.
- Improved communication – academic, pastoral and emotional.
- Shared understanding of transition.
- Sense of belonging – familiar staff, one uniform, one school website, one community.

Prestonpans Infant School – School Focus Review

It was highlighted in 2016 within the primary school review and this is what was said in relation to what the school should do as an area of improvement:

“The school should strengthen its place within the 3-18 learning community and seek to work more closely with Prestonpans Primary School. This will support continuity and progression from the early stages through to P7 and beyond. Senior managers recognise the need to plan further opportunities for staff from both schools to work more closely together and to develop a shared understanding in a number of key areas i.e. continuity and progression in learning; assessment evidence underpinning teacher judgement.”

Prestonpans Primary School – School Focus Review

We reviewed both schools very closely together and this is what was said in relation to the focus review:

“The Head Teacher is engaging proactively with the Infant School to improve continuity and progression in learning. He has made a positive start to working with senior managers in the Infant School to progress work related to determining one wider learning community across the two schools. Currently, curriculum transition arrangements do not lead to continuity and progression in learning. Due to accessibility issues, the P3 transition profiles were not used to inform continuity and progression in learning in P4.”

FR reminded everyone that these are public documents which should be on the school websites.

Education Scotland Report

More recently, in May 2018, we had external scrutiny from Education Scotland. We had a team of inspectors visit Prestonpans Primary School – the report is due to be published within the next fortnight. However, the key statements are:

“Overall, there are significant gaps in children’s learning and they lack confidence in applying their learning in unfamiliar real life contexts.”

“To further develop a shared understanding of standards, expectations and levels of attainment and achievement across both schools. There is a need for staff teams to work collaboratively within both schools and with partner schools in the community.”

FR – this is two years on (from the last reviews) so we still have an issue around the continuity and progression from the Infant School to the Primary School and our children deserve better.

I would not be standing here tonight if I did not advocate this proposal in relation to raising the attainment and achievement for your children and the children within this community, because at the moment very clearly we still have the issue around the transition of moving from one school into the other at that particular stage for very young children.

Transition for All – Next Steps

- Appointment of a new Head Teacher as per protocol – the current protocol is that none of the existing Head Teachers are matched in to the post as it is deemed to be a new post. As such, this means that it goes to external recruitment and the Head Teachers may apply for the new post but if they do not wish to apply they will be redeployed to another post with East Lothian Council.
- Transition Action Group – phased approach. In HIS/KMPS situation we said that we would not move forward with the Transition Action Group until the new Head Teacher was in post because he would very quickly want to work with the parents, staff and children to take the school forward to establish the one new school.
- School and nursery name – that is something that can be taken forward quickly. We went out to public consultation for HIS/KMPS and stated that the three top responses would go back to the school community and parents, staff and children have voted on the top three suggestions. The name of the new school has been chosen by the community and exactly the same process would apply within the Prestonpans community.
- Staffing – you will understand that at the moment we are increasing the size of the learning community with a further expansion of the Infant School building and as such we will require all the teachers and non-teaching staff, and more, moving forward. There will be some changes in relation to the administration staff and that would be because e.g. we are moving to one budget so don't need two Finance Officers but there will be redeployment opportunities.
- Parental involvement – working with the Chairs and Parent Councils of both schools to work together to move towards the parental involvement in establishing the new school and a new Parent Council.
- Common school day, timetable – we would look at the school day in terms of what differences in the school day and the timetable for the school day.
- Curriculum rationale and delivery.
- Learning, teaching and assessment- staff will be looking at their approaches to planning, learning, teaching and assessment. Clearly as an authority we have a legislative statutory duty to improve education in the authority and, as such, just because we've got the inspection report doesn't mean that we are waiting on the outcome of this proposal to be working with the school around the outcome of the inspection in May 2018. We cannot, as an authority,

stand back when we know there are issues over the curriculum and issues over learning, teaching and assessment. To really fix the issue that we are facing is around enabling staff who currently sit in two very different schools to actually be working together and to be able to do so; to have Support for Learning teachers who can move right the way through from Nursery through to P7; to have the Additional Support Needs staff who actually work with children to move from P3 to P4 with them so that they have the person that knows them well. We need to look at how the curriculum is being delivered so we don't have the situation where inspectors are stepping in to one of our schools and saying there are gaps in the children's learning in P4. We need to fix this and I recognise that and that is the rationale for this proposal, because we know it's getting in the way.

- Transition policy – stage to stage.

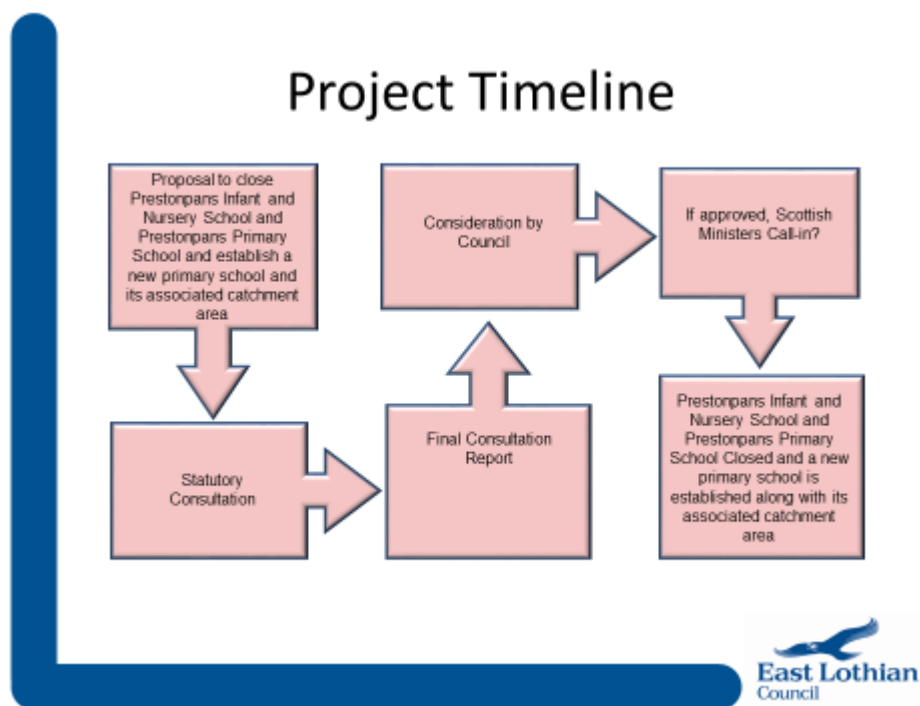
School Capacity & Pupil Rolls

- The primary-aged population in Prestonpans is projected to increase over the next 6 years.
- The combined P1 to P7 roll of the two affected schools as at September 2018 is 769.
- By 2020, the P1 to P7 roll of the proposed new primary school is projected to be 864, increasing to 882 by 2024.
- If the proposal was approved, based on current school roll projections the combined P1-P7 roll would be similar to other primary schools in the main towns of the county, e.g. Law Primary School, Windygoul Primary School and the combined Haddington Infant School/King's Meadow PS P1-P7 roll and also Wallyford Primary School.
- Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School is due to be extended to accommodate the projected eligible pre-school and P1-P3 pupils arising from the new houses in the Prestonpans catchment area.
- The combined planning capacity of the buildings and facilities of Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, with the planned extension at Prestonpans Infant & Nursery School, will be 1004.
- The combined planning capacity of 1004 can accommodate the projected P1-P7 pupil roll of 882 pupils in 2024 for the proposed new single school structure.
- Further expansion of the buildings and facilities are not required as a result of this proposal.

Map of Locations



FR reminded everyone of the locations of the current buildings and re-iterated that HG was here to talk about the movement of staff and pupils and how you get the sense of one community in relation to working across two different buildings.



FR re-iterated the timeline – we are currently in the proposal phase of the Consultation. Once we have finished the Consultation period we will gather in all of the views that have either been sent in electronically or by letter. We will then write a report, however Education Scotland in the meantime will look at all our evidence and how we have carried out the Consultation, they will also look at the educational benefits to see if they are sound and we will then publish the final Consultation Report.

It is for the Council to determine whether to approve the proposal – it is not for the Education Service. The Education Service put the proposal forward based on the educational benefits that we see for your children within this community but then it is the Council that makes the decision. Even if the Council make the decision to “close” (by name) – and remember this is the terminology that is in the Act – if approved the Scottish Ministers may call it in and if they choose not to call it in we will then move forward to establish a new school along with its associated catchment area.

Questions were invited from attendees:

Question (Fiona Dryburgh – parent of children at both schools):

I just want to have the numbers that are projected for the pupil roll – is that including the ELCC and Nursery pupils?

Pauline Smith (PS): That figure is excluding the Nursery pupils as there is a separate capacity for the Nursery pupils and the projected nursery population, and how that would be accommodated, is dealt with through a different arrangement through the 1140 hours.

The parent asked a further question:

Potentially how it sits just now it could be an extra 145 into that roll but the 120 in the Nursery and the number in the ELCC – is that correct?

PS: Yes.

Question (Parent and Chair of Prestonpans Primary School Parent Council):

You talked about the gaps in the children's learning that were identified in 2016 – was that identified before that because you are telling parents that for at least two years you have known there are gaps in children's learning. What's being done about this as it's quite frightening as a parent to know that your child is not where they should be attainment wise?

FR: I fully appreciate that. That was part of the work that was undertaken and David Scott (DS), the Quality Improvement Officer, is here and can talk about working with the Head Teachers in both schools – we asked them to look at re-aligning their CAT time, their working time agreement and to start looking at the way, e.g. that they teach reading or what's their approach to writing and so for the past two years we have been asking the schools to work more closely together but they are still operating as two distinct schools at this time.

In 2016 when the reviews were undertaken that information in terms of the outcome of the reviews was meant to be shared via the Parent Councils, etc so it shouldn't be coming as a surprise to you.

The parent made a statement: It's come as a surprise to me.

FR: I can only say to you that the outcome of the reviews were to be shared through the Parent Councils in relation to the strengths identified within the schools and also the areas for improvement.

The parent asked a further question:

So were these gaps identified before 2016 or is it only when the reviews took place?

FR: I can only speak for the time that I've been here which is since 2016.

The parent asked a further question:

But other Education Officials have been there longer so were the gaps identified previously?

DS: The gaps were identified through the review. When we looked at the work of both schools we certainly identified that it was an area that both schools needed to take forward. I was part of the Prestonpans Infant review and Fiona was part of the Prestonpans Primary review and this was a key area that we saw that pastoral transitions were very good but curricular transitions needed work. As a result of that the Head Teachers, Alison Cameron, who was acting Head Teacher of Prestonpans Infant, and Jonathan Revell, Head Teacher at Prestonpans Primary, started to work together as part of those meetings about moving forward in terms of the commonality of what needed to be done across both schools. As a result of that they had joint management meetings and they identified areas of work which needed to be done in terms of the curriculum, in terms of learning and teaching and other areas to smooth that curricular transition.

What happened then was that there was joint CAT sessions with teachers working together and that work has started but it is a work in progress – it was never going to be achieved over the course of one year that needed to be continued.

The parent made a statement: But that hasn't been reflected in what's been said tonight – at no point has it been said that schools are working together.

FR: I think the key point here is that the pace of improvement is too slow. Your children are in school now – we need to address that continuity and progression and staff being able to, without having to have two management teams come together, agree over their school calendar; without having two school management teams coming together to make decisions over curriculum resources and approaches to learning. One management team ensures that every member of staff is able to move flexibly from stage to stage.

The parent asked a further question:

I understand the proposal but my question is, irrespective of the proposal, what are you doing to help my child now when you are saying that there are possible gaps in her learning? She is in primary 6 so this proposal isn't going to happen by the time she's left the school – or it's not going to be completed – so what are you doing for my child now to identify the gaps?

FR: And that's exactly what I said when I put up that statement from Education Scotland and the inspectors. I said that we can't wait for the outcome of this proposal – as an authority it is our duty to deal with that so as a result of the inspection the school developed an action plan but what I'm saying is that action plan, although it was one school inspected, it reflects on two schools so we now need to work very, very closely with both schools to determine what the gaps are, why the gaps are there and to be really robust in terms of the focus that we have on both schools to close the gap.

The parent made a statement: But you surely must already know what the gaps are because you said there are gaps.

CW: I think we need to be careful here. I certainly understand the points and issues that you are raising there but we need to focus on the subject of the proposal.

The parent made a statement: I understand that that's one of the reasons why they're putting the proposal forward.

CW: I think it will be difficult to answer some of your questions, particularly if you have concerns over your own child's progress, in a public meeting.

Question (Parent of child at Prestonpans Infant School):

Can I just say that I asked these exact same questions when we had discussions before? My concerns are the same – I didn't know about this, I didn't understand or wasn't aware of the fact that you are telling me my child is not having a level of attainment. The other thing that I don't think has been answered yet is what level of attainment do we actually want them to get and how far behind everybody else are we because I can see what the predicted levels were at the Infant School and what they actually achieved and there's a positive difference there and we know that when they go from P3 to P4 there's always a natural dip because it's a change to learning – the information that I have from other people is that that's known nationally that there is a dip from P3 to P4 but if that's not the case that's fine. You need to explain this to us – how far behind are they? All these changes are going on but you're not actually putting into context how big an issue this is and, I say that because we all want the best for our children but, we're in a very different area to Dunbar so I'm interested to hear what you've got to say.

FR: I totally understand what you're saying about Dunbar being different – it may be different in the context of its community – it's not different in terms of how leadership and function within the school in terms of the staffing arrangements and structures.

The parent asked a further question:

Okay, I guess my question is, you've not really answered how it's going to make it – if all of your Head Teachers are part of this strategy that's in place I don't really understand why you're telling me that part of the problem is down to the fact that they've got different curriculums – do we not have the same curriculum across all schools?

FR: It's how you plan learning, teaching and assessment and the resources you use for that and experiences that you give them progressively as they move through the school. And if you're asking

about what level they should attain its Curriculum for Excellence and Primary 3/4, I think you mentioned before why suddenly now do we see it more, we see it more now because it's right in the middle of a level. P3 and P4 is in first level and you're actually putting the transition in between a level. You're asking what the gaps are, obviously in terms of the inspection report, the findings will be out within the next fortnight. In the meantime we've got an action plan in place because we do need to look at the gaps in literacy and we need to look at the gaps in numeracy and they will be there – they are in black in white – in the shared inspection findings from Education Scotland and we need to address this.

CW: (in response to parent trying to ask another question): Could we let Fiona finish and then we can ask one question at a time? I think this is the challenge sometimes and we did say one question and a follow up and you've had two or three really, now you've had a question and you're entitled to a follow up so you're next. You've asked a specific question and Fiona is in the middle of answering it and you're entitled to a follow up if you're not happy with the answer.

The parent made a statement: I don't know if I am completely happy with the answer until we can get more detail on what this actually means.

FR: Do you mean in terms of the gaps?

The parent replied: Yes.

FR: So that's in terms of their ability, in terms of their writing and literacy and their reading and the levels which they're reading at. In terms of numeracy, in relation to their mental agility and aspects of their mathematics. Also in terms of how they present and are able to do the calculations that they're provided with, and that information is there and what they're saying is that the gaps at P4 are coming in below the level expected to build up and catch up and we need to address that. So I know that's very hard for all the parents in here to hear, I fully understand that, but as the Head of Education I either can bring a proposal to you that I think will actually address that challenge, because it's a challenge for our staff in both schools, it's a challenge for our children with additional support needs, it's a challenge for our families who may need support in our community. So I bring that proposal because I see this as a way of actually addressing the issue in the curriculum transition and the gaps. I know that's really hard to hear and what I'm saying to you is I am committing to dealing with it at the moment in time because you're absolutely right, your children should not wait so we need to get into these schools, we need to start that collaboration but we've still got two schools working to two different Head Teachers and we need to tie up and have that coherence from early years right the way through to P7.

Question (Parent of a pupil):

From the first consultation I asked for figures, numbers, etc to compare the differences. I was told that some of the things can be found on the website. I checked last week but the reports are not available for quite a lot of the schools in East Lothian.

FR: Which reports?

The parent replied: The reports, the reviews for example in schools.

FR: Not every school has had a review so you won't find it. We would have to tell you which schools to go and look for them as not every school has had a review.

The parent asked a further question:

I appreciate that but when I think about the schools in East Lothian especially in Prestonpans where they should have two documented and now I can't see them. The thing is we stood and talked and you promised us numbers for the attainment differences between other schools that are comparable, say that have a Primary 1 to Primary 7 building.

And also another thing is that in 2016 there was a review done; you have a duty of care to make sure that something was done in 2016. It's all very well saying that the Head Teachers were told to speak amongst each other – was that all there was or did you actually enforce an action plan to make sure this was taking place? And if that is the case, you must have figures from 2016 to 2018 – has it improved, has it got better or has it got worse? And this is why I'm saying that enough is enough and proper action needs to be taken.

FR: Okay, I think we had three questions in there so I'll start with the first one about the data. You're right, at the parental meeting you asked about data. At the moment the data that we have is Curriculum for Excellence Achievement of a Level data and at the moment the Government considers it be experimental – in other words that means data in development – so that means you should not use it in the sense to make any comparisons because I know that you asked me how St Gabriel's is doing in relation to Prestonpans Primary. What we're looking at, so you could do that, we could put the figures up, but I wouldn't recommend it and neither does Education Scotland. They say you should only be looking at the data, understanding the context of the schools and don't do comparisons. So if you look up against Dunbar or St Gabriel's you're doing that in isolation of other information that you may require. So the data is available on Parentzone, for example, so it's already all there on Parentzone, the Frequently Asked Questions are going up.

PS: Some of them (the questions) are already on the Consultation Hub.

FR: So what we could do is put the link to where the data is - Sheila Laing has done this already and the review report is up as well. So in terms of the data, you can go on and you can compare but I'd prefer you didn't compare because actually the national expectation is to achieve early, first level, second level – early is P1, first level is P4, second level is P7 – that's your expectation and to be confident when we're reporting on that data that the assessment evidence, that's telling you as a parent that your child is achieving at that level, is really strong. So, I don't have an issue over sharing the data, it's already public when it's out in the Parentzone but please remember what it says about it, it's experimental at this point in time. We can put the link on there but ultimately it's about your child in the school at this point in time. How's your child doing? Is your child achieving the best they can and to their potential? And if they're not then we need to be doing something about that and this proposal is based on improving aspects of your child's progression and learning from one school to the other.

So you asked about data and the action plan. You're absolutely right – after the reviews both schools were asked to develop an action plan and to work together on that transition activity and to start the discussions about working time agreement, to start the discussions around resources. What we really need to get in and around is the depth of learning we expect your children to have as they move through the school, because we can all get the same reading scheme but if we're not teaching it in a certain way, the teaching skills as they move through, there's where the gaps come. So Primary 7 teachers working with P1, P2 and P3 can say wait a minute, we need to address this – they're not as strong in this aspect as we want them to be and they can talk to the P2 teachers and say we need to do a wee bit more work on this. So they address the gaps because they can see them and they say wait a minute part of this curriculum isn't working for us. And, you know there are eight curriculum areas to be delivered – how are the two schools delivering those eight curriculum areas? What do

you want your child to know about History by the time they get to P4 and so on? So, action plans, absolutely there were action plans and then there were visits to look at the progress and, as you can see, we've not made the pace of improvement that we would have liked to have seen.

The parent made a statement: Don't get me wrong, this is not a witch hunt, I don't have anything personal against anyone of stature here but I just want the right thing for my child and everyone else's child that's here. You're kind of saying it's experimental and no doubt you are very well educated and qualified but can you prove this is actually going to work because what if it makes it worse.

FR: No, the data is experimental. What happens is that every school has to submit to the authority how many of their pupils have achieved the expected levels in Primary 1, Primary 4 and Primary 7. We gather that in from each of our schools and we have to send that data in to the Scottish Government and because Curriculum for Excellence and Achieving of a Level, because that's you saying that your child has achieved literacy First Level, say in Primary 4, so what happens is that because that's fairly new in terms of teachers having to make that decision what they've said is that from 2015/16 is that we'll give schools the chance to actually look at the way they actually decide on whether your child has achieved a level or not. What we've said is that experimental means, it doesn't mean we're experimenting with your child's education, what it means is that data they're saying are your schools confident about that data yet, are they sure they've got their figures right and until we say, actually we're absolutely confident, it remains with this title experimental.

Action Plan question – Head Teachers need to have that done reasonably quickly after the review and the reason for that is to get that pace of improvement moving but we have to be mindful of working time agreements, and what changes that means for staffing, and we have to work within the aspects of working time agreements to make sure that the staff are aware of why they're being asked to take these improvements forward, but the action plan is turned around quite quickly but the action plan should be developed with staff and should be developed with the Quality Improvement Officer because if it doesn't address some of the key issues that we want to improve then we ask the school to go back and look again.

Question (Andy Castle, parent of a P2 pupil at Prestonpans Infant School):

I can see that the achieving levels that they're getting in the primary school are very good and they improved like they were meant to by the figures printed out but you're saying the achievement level between P3 and P4 weren't good enough to go up higher. By the time it came to the next level in P7 had they caught up again or were they still below? You've only ever talked about P3/P4 level – what happened to the children? Had they finally picked up again or was it just a blip?

FR: This will be the first year that we'll have data that tracks through so this is the first year that, say your children were in Primary 1 and they're now in Primary 4 this is the first time that we'll be able to see whether they've stayed on track or if they've gone off track. My question is it doesn't matter, between P1 and P4 you should be ensuring they're consistently on track, and if they're not we need to have an intervention strategy. So in terms of data over time what you're saying about P4-P7 the data's not been existing long enough to track through to check that if they're at that point in P4 and that point in P7, so at the moment what we're looking at is where they are against that national standard, what percentage are achieving at that national standard? The data hasn't existed long enough to track they were in P1, they achieved early level – did they achieve it in P4, first level? This will be the first year of that happening.

The parent asked a further question:

But you must surely know what the P7s have achieved in the past compared to other schools?

FR: There's only been 3 years of data – that's all we've had is 3 years – and every year you get that data in when you say compare with other years what you've got to do is you could look at it that way, attainment over time year on year, but every year group is made up of different children so what you've really got to look at is how many of them achieved to their highest potential? And how many achieved that level against that national standard. So you have to be very careful about saying well that P7 is higher than that previous P7. I could take a school just now, for example, if it's got one class that's got a significant number of children with additional support needs then if you were comparing the P7 from the previous year where they only had two children with additional support needs, and they weren't achieving the level working within their own learning targets, the next year you have ten in the class then you can't compare. So always interpreting data is understanding what sits behind it. It's a conversation with the school, the teachers to get underneath that data and make a "why are you saying that about that child".

Helen Gillanders (HG): I think that it's really important the idea that you don't compare a cohort with another one because your child is an individual in a class and then that class moves on and we look at that child progressing. We use quadrants and we use that to see who's really achieving where they should be, who's slipping back a bit. I meet my staff three times a year to look at where they are so they can put things in place so that as they move through each year we're tracking their progress and that goes from nursery all the way into Primary 7. It's a really useful piece of information because we only do three tests in Primary 1, Primary 4 and Primary 7 – it's the teachers and what they're doing with accelerated reading, or they might be doing single word spelling tests, or maths things that they're doing and they all form part of the things that they talk to me about your child when I have those meetings three times a year.

Question (Parent of a pupil in Primary 3):

On the same kind of topic, you mentioned that there is a gap between Primary 3 and Primary 4 and you mentioned that there are tests in Primary 1, Primary 4 and Primary 7 – I don't see how Primary 7 would benefit interfering with Primary 1 education, well not education but delivery of the programme and especially because Curriculum for Excellence, the way it is put, by stage and age of a child that certain things have to be achieved in every single year. So how will Primary 7 learn, comparing Primary 7 with Primary 1 or how it will benefit the child?

FR: In terms of the Primary Staff, Curriculum for Excellence first of all you might not always be a Primary 7 teacher so you should have a clear understanding of what comes before and what comes after so that you understand that what you're delivering is laying the strong foundations for what is coming on later on through the learning. It's continuing learning, it's not early – stop, first level – stop, second level. It's continual learning, so the reason P7 and P1 would get together is because they are providing that strong foundation of key learning that needs to be in place to be built on year on year. So they need to be able to be talking to each other and not just P1 to P7, I was just giving that as an example, the staff at all stages are talking to each other so they know that the key aspects of learning, the significant bits are really strong foundations for the children so that they're very strong in their learning as they move through those levels from stage to stage. And it is a known fact that teachers should know the learning and the depth of the learning so it's not just picking up Curriculum for Excellence and looking at experiences and outcomes, it's actually taking those experiences and outcomes and thinking about what is that learning and how am I going to plan for that learning, teaching and assessment and what are the key things that they need to be very strong at because Achievement of a Level is not you have to know everything at a level 100%, you can get qualifications in the senior phase National 5s grade As, Bs and Cs, so you're still a National 5 but there are different gradients of that understanding but we need to have that strong foundation right the way through. And that's the aspect that all our teachers need to have a strong knowledge of to add to the building blocks along the way.

HG: I think one of the things that I really would like to emphasise, because it is very dear to my heart, is the idea that Primary 2 and Primary 3 are currently in one building, that happens in mine as well, and then there's third year where you're taking that first year because it's Primary 2, Primary 3 and Primary 4, create that first level as we call it, you move them from two years of that into a new campus, that's what I do. What I have to ensure is that those children move and they continue learning straightaway. If they are spending time having to get used to a building or having to get used to their teachers or it's a different way of working then I genuinely, genuinely feel that we are not allowing them to make the progress that they should be making – we stop them and what we want to do is from day one my teachers continue teaching because they've worked with the Primary 3s, the Primary 3s have come up and worked with the Primary 4s, they've visited the campus, the curriculum has been planned together for Primary 3 and Primary 4 knowing where they are. When we get to the end of Primary 4 we know those children who are secure but we also know those children who aren't and what we're going to do about it as well. So every single level is important and if you haven't got it right in Primary 1, 2 or 3 you still have those problems emerging and it's maths in particular, and we know because the Infant School work with this, those early stages of mathematical learning, working in your head, you lay those foundations so that by the time they move into Primary 4 you're looking at more algorithms, you're looking at sums, you're looking at abstract maths. If they can't do it in their head that's when they fall down, that's when those little gaps appear but we won't always know if we're not in the same building and we haven't seen it and we don't know what's coming from each teacher along the way and what the tracking of their learning is.

The parent asked a further question:

But the Infant School and Primary School will never be in the same building – its two separate buildings and how will the staff move? You said that it would be beneficial for children because it will be familiar staff; how will the staff move?

HG: My staff move. They are over two campuses but they get a choice as to where they want to go and I make sure a member of staff goes with a whole year group, at least two members of staff stay with the year group and then, because I've got five at every stage, two other people will move to go and get some other experience because that's really important. So somebody who knows the children is moving on with them, you have continuity of the teachers who stay and ensure we know what's happening at that level and then people move because they get that experience and they take the learning that they've had in Primary 3 and they take it into 4, they might go up to Primary 7, they might go from 7 down to 1, because you have to invigorate, you have to rejuvenate what we're learning, it's not staying the same especially if what you're doing isn't working and that's the important thing about teachers, Head Teachers and staff going in and seeing each other teaching and learning from each other and that's being comfortable with each other and having those opportunities to know each other because at least three quarters of my Fridays staff get together to either work together on something or be in each other's classrooms doing things. That's really important in order that you can have that dialogue when there's so many of you at a level.

Question (Parent of a pupil):

Part of my question has been answered but I suppose my main concern is – and I don't have a massive objection to the proposal if it's going to benefit my child – but I suppose what I'm worried about was at the moment it's not working with two separate schools, two separate management structures – that's a decision that's been made years and years ago but our children shouldn't be disadvantaged because it's like that. So why is it not working? I love the school, so I don't know if there's teachers here, but are they not getting the right level of education at schools, because surely if you're following a curriculum you should be getting taught what you should be getting taught. Every child learns differently, I know that, but they shouldn't be failing because of two schools. It's hard to understand.

FR: Basically it's because they are under two different and it's not a reflection on the Head Teachers, it's just that you are the Head Teacher of your school and you work with your staff to deliver the curriculum however you wish it to be delivered within the principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

The parent made a statement: But there should still be a level that they're able to achieve.

FR: Absolutely. Approaches can be different and also in relation to the ability, just exactly what Helen's been talking about, staff being able to communicate with each other to understand the depth of learning required at each stage and because they are in two distinct schools and under different management structures you can't necessarily just say to a P3 teacher you're going into P6 at the other school and do that automatic transfer, you just can't do that. You can ask but what will it lead to in terms of is it going to lead to the improvement that you're looking for? The ability for staff to communicate, even across the two campuses, in the way that Helen described is really, really important to understand the depth of learning that we want delivered through the curriculum.

The parent asked a further question:

But surely there must be a level of P1, P2, P3 that they should be attaining? That shouldn't matter whether they're communicating with a P7 teacher or a P6 teacher – they should be leaving P3 at a certain level.

FR: Yes, I would agree.

The parent asked a further question:

So why are they not?

FR: At this point in time we need to push that.

The parent made a statement: But that needs to be addressed.

FR: I don't disagree with you the fact that we have two schools at the moment in relation to identification that P3/4 transition is getting in the way in terms of an understanding of ensuring there's a depth of learning.

The parent made a statement: I don't think it can all be put down to just the transition.

FR: It's a major factor that's been observed not just by ourselves.

HG: Sometimes it comes down to that magical thing called ethos. In my school if you're in either of my campus I hope you would feel that there's a sense of one school being led by me but my staff and my pupils and the community are heavily involved in it – we're basically singing from the same hymn sheet. With the greatest of respect you sing from two different hymn sheets to a certain degree because you have Sheila in one and Jonathan in another and they have different methods of working, they deal with their staff differently and they will have different working arrangements so one way of doing it is not there and that can impact on the children because my, I don't know how often they get together the Primary 4s with the 1s, 2s and 3s, but mine get together at least once, twice a week depending on activities and they get together for assemblies, they get together to do joint activities, they get together to do buddy group work and it is that coming together and learning from each other and having that ethos, those same values, the same vision of what we're trying to achieve together and it's having that ability to move that bit faster because everybody knows what the message is and they're not having to think.

The parent made a statement: I'm not against it massively because she will take better to knowing various different people within the one school rather than for her going up to a different school but my worry still comes back to why are they achieving?

HG: The only thing I could think of is to draw an analogy – if you worked in two separate offices and if you went to one office and it felt really comfy but you went along to another one and it was different you would still have to try to go across – and what you've got in this situation, you've got two buildings that are trying to work as best as they can but are being stopped because they're not having that great communication or having that ability to learn from each other, or not having that ability to find out what one's doing or what the other one's doing to make it work really well.

FR: Or the ability for staff to teach at a different stage. You've got teachers P1-P3 and they can't currently go and teach in P6, they can't currently go and experience teaching in P4.

The parent made a statement: No, but if they're teaching at P1, P2 and P3 then that's their level of teaching.

FR: But another aspect of that if I just go on to the staffing aspect, if you're in nursery, P1, P2 or P3 then going through a career progression you're not going through a career progression where you're able to talk about having taught in a school that's nursery to P7.

The parent made a statement: My question hasn't been answered.

CW: If you're not happy that your questions hasn't been answered then speak to the officers at the end. The meeting is being recorded and this whole process is to make sure that the questions you raised are answered. That's why this process has to have a final consultation report, that's why the inspectors listen, they'll read all the documentation, they'll read the report regarding the proposal and if there's anything that requires clarification and that's how this process works. If you've not got the answer you want to hear it's not the end of this process. I do think at the same time that what we've got here is a proposal that is about the future and we are happy to address the issues but there are some very different concerns that I believe have been raised this evening about progress in learning, attainment and issues in the two schools which in some ways are independent to the proposal. The proposal is looking at the way of working in the future but you're also expressing concerns about what's currently happening to your children.

The parent made a statement: I'm only expressing concerns about what I've been told at these meetings.

FR: Can I just come in at the point? I think it is important that we share what we know with you. We know that there's an inspection report coming out in a fortnight – if we didn't mention it you would probably ask us why we didn't mention it. I think what we're trying to be is transparent about the fact that we've conducted two primary school reviews in 2016, those should have been shared with parents and they should be up on the website – Sheila's report for Prestonpans Infant is definitely on the website – and shared with parents the action plan to address those. There is an inspection report coming out and we've got to be honest about that because these statements are going to come out and you'd be saying to me why did I not know that at the time of this consultation? Inspections are a proportionate programme, a cyclical programme so basically it varies in the length of time from one inspection to the next one.

The parent made a statement: I think the last one for the Infant School was 2006.

CW: I'm not disputing the legitimacy of the questions but I think also at the same time this is a forum to discuss the proposal and I think that there are several people who want to ask a question.

Question (Parent of a pupil):

My question is more about the management so currently you've got two Head Teachers, so many Deputy Head Teachers – when the schools move together how is that going to work? Will you both have one overall and then several Deputies at the different schools? I just want to know, are you getting rid of staff or are you just going to keep moving them in between so you have the same number and is it just one Head?

FR: Usually what happens is, going back to reflecting where we are at the moment with the other school that's moving to one new establishment, is that the first thing is to appoint a new Head Teacher. Now, the policy in East Lothian is what happens for the size of school the school gets a budget for the size of school and within that it might set out, for example, that you've got a Head Teacher, the size of school you would be entitled to, for example, four Deputies, Principal Teachers – the Head Teacher can choose whether they want to have the four Deputy Head Teachers or if they want to have a different model, for example, two Deputies and two Principal Teachers so they get funding for a management structure and it's up to the Head Teacher. In this situation for the size it's between both of the schools – the Deputies would remain in post but they move buildings, for example, that's a discussion that would be had with them. The Head Teacher would be looking at that funding pot that they have in making decisions and working with the Senior Management Team that exists in relation to how many Deputies, where they would be positioned and whether anyone that's currently a Deputy in the other school might want to move buildings and have some swaps happening – that would happen in discussion with the staff. It might not even happen in the first year because certainly speaking with staff at the other schools that are moving into one there's been some discussion about having some stability at the moment with the new Head Teacher in and over time the senior management time might, for example, be moved across. That's for the Head Teacher to decide and that's actually in line with Scottish Government policy around empowering the Head Teachers to make those decisions. We're actually in line with that policy which is: there's the funding, you create what you think you need for your school. It's not in terms of the staffing here – we're going to need all the staffing that's here – and more over time so there isn't an issue here around the staffing in terms of teaching, dining hall staff. Admin staff, we shall still need two offices open but as I mentioned previously it's mainly over two financial managers – we will only need one so we're talking about redeployment.

The parent asked a further question:

So is this finance based? Are you going to be saving a lot of money by doing this?

FR: No

The parent asked a further question:

I just wanted to know because my son issues and sometimes he has support and I want to know that there's not to going to be problems with the amount of funding – if you are going to save money where the funds would go?

FR: In the actual document it talks about £130k is the difference between the two but the problem is that what that information is reflecting is, for example, there's one Head Teacher's salary plus the administration but that £130k difference is based on the methodology, the way that we calculate the funding for the school but similar to Helen's school it thinks the school is nursery to P7 in one building and what we do, although it's £130k difference, is that what we will do in terms of looking at the school's proposal going forward is the additionality of what the school needs in addition to the normal

mechanisms used to calculate the budget, we then adjust it to reflect the fact it's on two sites. So Helen has some additional staff.

HG: I have some additional classroom assistants and definitely have one more admin, not an admin assistant but a clerical person who provides support comes in. I've got two Deputes and two Deputes – two at each campus.

FR: So the only staffing is really around the financial administration because you will only have one budget to manage full time.

Question (Parent of a P3 pupil at Prestonpans Infant):

I'm not opposed to the proposal but there just seems to be an ideal, in places where I've worked before, they wouldn't have teachers moving from one place to another – you would always have the same teacher teaching the same class throughout. I'm a teacher myself and you would have a teacher that would always teach P3, for example. What surprises me the most is the reasons why you have decided to go with this proposal seems to be the lack of standards because if the only reason, just because we've got two schools, and children going from one school to the next when they arrive to the second they're not up to the level, what happens when they go to middle school or high school? Are we expecting the same thing? Are we going to go from the ideal – let's just have one single education structure from nursery all the way to university. That seems ideal but it seems absurd too. I like the idea of the proposal but I'm just baffled by the lack of standards – a child that goes out of P3 should be up to the level of P3 no matter what school they're coming from. I can understand there are differences in terms of school based on where they are based but we are talking about two schools who are just 100 yards away from each other.

FR: I think that part of your question is, is this just about standards and it's not just about standards. Whilst that's important because we recognise that we are seeing that difference happening that we don't want to see. This is actually as set out, it is about your child being able to be familiar with where they're going and teachers being able to move. I know your question why doesn't a P3 teacher always stay in P3 but this is due to professional development.

The parent made a statement: But this has nothing to do with my child.

FR: I know but a teacher doesn't want to stay in P3 all the time. I mean if teachers have a – it's like having a career progression – if they want to move from being a classroom teacher to being a principal teacher they need to demonstrate a knowledge of working across stages, for example, and the knowledge of teaching within those stages so when I say professional development I'm not talking about attending a meeting and that sort of professional development, I'm talking about the experience of understanding delivering the curriculum through all the stages within the primary sector because teachers come in and it is a profession and there is a career progression pathway – principal teachers, deputy Head Teachers, Head Teachers – and we want to build that capacity. We want to have teachers that have worked at different stages so that they are knowledgeable about the curriculum and can build the future leadership of our schools.

The parent made a further statement: That sounds like a jack of all trades and master of none.

FR: That's a teacher that fully understands curriculum for excellence.

The parent asked a further question:

So what does that do to my daughter? She's in P3, you're going to roll out this proposal that has no effect on her and in the meantime I've got 8 months left of school. I have to do work to make sure

that when she's in P4 she's going to be at the right level to start in a new establishment. So what do I do?

FR: Work with us because there will be an action plan on the back of the inspection and that's why I'm saying to you when you're saying it's about standards that we have to address that situation now for your child in P3 and ensure that we're looking and ensuring that the right standards are in place in terms of the learning and experiences. What happens in the classroom in terms of the learning and teaching needs to be at the right level and needs to have the right level of challenge, needs to be ensuring that you're consolidating the key aspects of learning for your child so they've got that foundation for the next level and we have to work on that. And it doesn't wait on this proposal – this proposal is for the benefits of all staff and for children in relation to we are asking our young children to do a transition that we're not asking our children across any of other schools to do.

The parent made a statement: I appreciate that and I'm all for it.

FR: But you're asking for the here and now.

The parent replied: Yes, I'm talking about right now.

CW: That's what I'm saying – I think there are some questions here that are actually about the schools specifically which is not specifically about the proposal and I think what's emerging from this tonight is there is a need for parallel streams from somewhere with communication with parents about education, progress and standards to address those issues and at the same time we still need to consider this as the proposal which is about working into the future. You're all raising quite different concerns about the here and the now and the future and I know that Fiona will be listening to you, I just know Fiona from the past, and will take those issues seriously because Fiona's always driven by making sure that every youngster in our schools does the best they can and I will give you that reassurance if I could.

Question (Parent of a pupil):

My question is about the senior management as well and I'd really like to hear more about how you as a Head of the two campuses, how you create that ethos and how by putting two schools together you would create that same ethos. How do the deputies work, do they just stay within the same buildings, do they oversee the buildings and you're the bridge?

HG: Yes, definitely I would say you have to be. As Head of the School you drive it so you work with your staff and obviously there'll be an opportunity for the new Head Teacher when this happens, if it happens, to get the staff together and to start to talk about what are we trying to do for the community, how we're going to work hand in hand with our parents, what is our school going to be about and that's really exciting but it's challenging but that's what you will set as your driving goal, your vision and then obviously you have your management team and your staff. Now I have two deputies in one and two deputies in the other and I have a communication unit and I have a deputy there as well, and we get together regularly so we either get together, and my management teams aren't management teams, they're senior learning teams so any member of my teaching staff can come to our meetings because it shouldn't just be about the senior learning teams or the senior management team being involved, it's everybody so we regularly get 10, 15 members of staff coming along to put things forward, to present ideas and we love them being there because what that means is it's not just those people in management thinking "oh I'm sure the teachers will like that" the teachers are there to go "we won't like that" or "we'd like that if you twisted it this way and did something". My staff are visible, I'm visible, you have to be in a big school, you have to be in any school – Sheila will know that and so will Jonathan but we make sure we're out in the playground in

the morning, we're out in the corridors, we run an open door policy where you can come in and you can get us anytime, so you might not be able to get us there and then but if you can't get me you'll get one of my deputies. We always make sure that there's somebody on call, there's somebody else who's about and there will be a deputy who's working in the school so they'll be in the corridors, they'll be in a classroom, they might be taking some children but if I'm at one campus I'll be involved in that as well. And it's about that visibility and it's about the communication – the newsletters, the open the door and say come in and listen to what we're doing in that week, we run bring your adults to school and it's fantastic. We can't do it for the whole school, it's too big, so we have to do a stage at a time so 150 children's parents will come in and they'll spend an hour with us learning what we're doing in maths or finding out how we're running our reading programme plus we'll do things like our drop in sessions for: how do we teach a particular aspect of maths, what's technology looking like now, come along and then we'll find out from the parents what have you got to offer, can you come in and help us so there are lots of things that the Head Teacher who takes over will be able to drive across both campuses and when you know what's going on in both of them it's brilliant because you've got that progress, you can see the progress being made and you can get the children together to support that as well.

The parent asked a further question:

Can I just ask how often you get your whole staff together?

HG: I've got them altogether on Friday so we're doing all kinds of different things and that's the whole staff. This doesn't happen every Friday but most Fridays or either a Monday or a Wednesday because then you can get because then you can get, it means if we have job share teachers they can either come in on a Monday or come in on a Wednesday so those two job share always get to hear what's happening, the other one will report back so it's a Monday, Wednesday and sometimes it's a Friday as well and my staff stay because like the staff at your schools they stay because they want to invest in your children, they love what they're doing. And I will boost us a little bit while I'm here, we won a professional excellence in professional learning which is a teaching award from the GTC and that's for everybody to get within this council as it's about allowing your staff to drive things, to go on courses, to come back with new ideas and to give back to the school, to give back to the children.

Question (Parent who has children in both schools):

In terms of the effect the transition has on attainment what I'm struggling with is that the level of the attainment is the responsibility of all the teachers, of how well at the teachers teach across all the schools from the teachers, the management team and the Head Teacher and to me it seems like the transition is going to be there to an extent, with changing buildings, with changing most staff, there will still be some staff moves, there's still going to be a management team spread across the two buildings who you're suggesting are going to have to collaborate like you're suggesting is part of the action plan of what they should be doing. So it's almost to me like the single Head Teacher is the magic bullet that's going to sort all of these problems and that seems a bit simplistic.

FR: You have to get the right Head Teacher. You've heard about building the ethos within the school. Dunbar Primary has just been awarded by the General Teaching for Scotland for excellence in professional learning because the Head Teacher is the lead learner in that school and they are about behaviours and about modelling that behaviour, it's what drives forward that change that you're looking for across the school. You have to work on building the right ethos and the right culture and you have to share your vision for all the children in your schools and ensure that there's consistent messages that go between the schools so the deputies, everyone's singing from the same hymn sheet, so everyone understands what it is they're trying to achieve. So it's not about a magic bullet, it is that you need to recruit the Head Teacher with the skills who we know is going to be able to take that forward and manage the two schools in the way that Helen has.

The parent asked a further question:

So you're saying that the Head Teacher is key? I could take that as the Head Teachers are failing in the two schools just now. If you could recruit a Head Teacher who, you know, two years down the line we could be having the same discussion because things haven't improved that's what makes it seem simplistic in that it's the people not the structure.

FR: You do need a key person to drive things forward, you're absolutely right about that so you need someone that understands the context and has that vision for how we're going to take both schools forward, so it is a critical appointment and I'm not talking about the current Head Teachers that are in post, I'm talking about what we're looking for our new Head Teacher to do. So it's not saying anything or criticising the two Head Teachers that we have at this point in time, it's saying what we need for the future. What we need for the future if the proposal goes forward is we need a Head Teacher that can come in very quickly and get to grips with the context of the two schools, build the vision and values with the parents, with the staff, with the children to become that one big learning community that starts to work while achieving the aspirations that we want for all the children in this community. So it is a challenge, I don't think it's easy, I would not be putting this proposal forward if I didn't think it would bring about the difference that we are looking for for the children in this community.

Question (Parent who has children at both schools):

I am concerned that if we get a new Head Teacher and staff are moving up and down how is that going to affect the continuity for our children?

FR: We wouldn't do a knee jerk reaction, we've discussed that at King's Meadow and Haddington Infants and both parent councils, I go to along to both parent councils who are meeting as a group at the moment, and also with the current management team in the school. We've made it very clear that there are fears from parents about knee jerks all of a sudden and there's not. That proposal decision was taken in May/June 2018 and we're still in the position where everyone is exactly where they are because what we're waiting on when the new Head Teacher takes up post on October 22nd is that they'll be moving on together from where they are so there will be no knee jerk moving around until a new Head Teacher has conversations with teachers, for example, about their aspirations, about deputies, about in terms of where they see themselves in terms of the journey that they're on and for the children that we're not suddenly going to be going in and changing. If anything we're saying to the P3 teacher "do you want to move into P4 for that continuity" but we're not asking staff to suddenly go in, for example, if they've been for a period of time teaching in P2 we would never expect a Head Teacher to suddenly go in and say you'll be teaching in P6. We need a period of working together, two staff gelling together and getting that vision and ethos right because that's critical first of all and then looking at the staff aspirations and how we build the curriculum and planning of the learning and teaching to make sure that we're not creating any issues for that continuity.

HG: One other thing that's it about, it's about consistency – you talk about continuity and it's about being consistent across my nursery all doing similar things for the children, my P1s all doing similar things and then that feeding through all the way up to primary 7 so that they know what they're expected to do if they're walking along the corridors, they know how to behave outside if they're lining up outside – they all know that's the same thing and it's the same in the classroom, they know the expectation for the work, they know the things that they'll be challenged on, they know what the spelling routines are. All of those things are there and that makes it much easier for children to move their learning forward because they're not having to think about all those other things, it's consistent for them and that's what I really try and get and hopefully that will happen as they're moving through that school – your children will know from one year to the next, what's coming up, what it is and how it works.

The parent asked a further question:

I understand that and at the moment our children know who the Head Teacher and who the deputies are but if we get a new Head Teacher the management structure could all change and for a 5 or 6 year old that could be quite confusing.

FR: That's what you would take into account in terms of the Head Teacher having discussions with staff in relation to the move that said, you might have, I mean these are discussions I don't know the outcome of in relation to what the deposes might want to do so you might have two deposes and two deposes and two decide to swap in the first year of the newly established school you've still got some continuity there as the person that knows the child so these aspects have got to be taken into account but as I said it's not a knee jerk reaction that suddenly your senior management team is all up in the air, you've got your stability with your deposes, for example, your PTs, whoever is still in schools and the new Head Teacher is working with that management team to then say how do work together to get the same messages, the same vision and values that we want across both of our schools and then talk to them about the aspirations of how they may move across two buildings eventually. All that we're doing in terms of the transition action group at King's Meadow and Haddington Infants we said to the parents that we would work with them in terms of any concerns that they may have and that's why I go along and both parent councils know that they've got some questions and can I go along, so none of it is happening without addressing any concerns along the way so something like that where you're saying who might move, who might not move, we listen and the Head Teacher is listening and we've reassured the staff so if staff have said I don't want to be teaching up in P6 then we're not going to do that – what we're doing is pulling staff together with the same vision and values and aims and the same understanding of curriculum, development, planning and learning and so we do take on board the concerns that you've raised.

CW: You said there was going to be a transition group.

FR: The transition group will involve the parents, the parent councils coming together as one and then a sub group will be a transition action group where we're looking at aspects of taking the school forward and that will be put in place on the appointment of a new Head Teacher.

CW: So that will be done with the parents and not to them?

FR: The parents are driving that forward so things, for example, that they're discussing – they will discuss aspects of the school uniform, they will be discussing some of those aspects with the new Head Teacher and obviously then consulting with the parental community and staff community. So it's a mixture of staff and parents and the transition action group. I did ask at the last parent council, I asked what would be some of the things that they would be involved in and taking forward but we have taken forward the school name which is about to be announced and the next thing is that the transition action group will be looking at things, for example, the uniform, a school badge, etc, the vision, values, aims so they're taking some of these aspects forward in partnership with the school, staff, parents, children – they're all part of that transition action group and there's been no knee jerk – both schools are operating as they are until the new Head Teacher is in, the transition action group is in place and we move forward together to address any concerns. And I've also made it clear to both of the chairs of the parent councils that I will be at any meeting to help address any of the concerns and that's basically what I've been doing for Haddington Infants and King's Meadow transition.

Question (Parent of a pupil in P2):

I would just like to highlight my concerns – my daughter is in Primary 2 at the moment and it takes a long time as you're probably aware to build an ethos in a school and to implement a curriculum the way a new Head Teacher might want to do it if it's different to what we're operating at the moment. How is that going to affect the consistency for our children now? It might be good in 4-5 years time

for the children coming up into that but for us just now my daughter is going to be right in the bit from primary 2 to 4 where there's gaps and is this going to make things worse for her than it already is?

FR: I think we've talked already about the fact that we need to address it now, regardless of the proposal we need to talk about it now so we need to start that work on looking at that curriculum and part of the action plan is looking at basically that consistency and approach from nursery through to P7, so for your child in P2 just now we now need to get in and around looking at the curriculum, looking at the depth of learning, looking at the planning for learning, teaching and assessment so what we're bringing together if the proposal goes forward is actually an ethos of the understanding of that curriculum from early learning right the way through.

The parent asked a further question:

I know and I understand that but it's going to be very disruptive having a new Head Teacher who may be somebody different who's got, I didn't realise that Head Teachers had such a reign on how they implement the curriculum or how, I didn't realise it was so much widely or such a different range of how they use that. So you could have somebody completely new and that will be disruptive, it has to be no matter how quickly you try to put things in place it's going to disrupt the children now.

FR: I don't see it as disrupting the children because the children are in the classroom with their teacher but we'll have a new leader of learning coming in to work with the staff.

The parent made a statement: But that has to be disruptive – they know what they know already and having a new teacher who might have a different ethos, might be different from what they're used to so it's going to be disruptive, it has to be.

FR: I'm sorry but I don't agree that it will be disruptive for the children. I think what it will be is an exciting opportunity for the children to be part of a big learning community and to be part of a community that's working as one in terms of the expectations, the standards and the ethos and culture across the whole community so I don't see it as disruptive, I see it as an opportunity for your children, I see it as a real opportunity for your children.

The parent made a further statement: I don't disagree with the proposal but I see it as an opportunity in 5 years time, that's the way I see it just now in that our children are going to be the guinea pigs and our children will have the worst of it.

FR: Your Head Teacher, of whichever school, could decide to go for a new job tomorrow and therefore you will have another Head Teacher in school so that's no different in a sense that we don't know if your Head Teacher just now is thinking or what their aspirations are, they might move on, that happens in education and yes a new Head Teacher will bring in their previous skills and knowledge and experience but ultimately they will develop a culture of learning and the ethos in the environment with you as parents and the staff and the children together. There should not be a disruption.

The parent made a further statement: I just think you can't avoid it.

FR: I know it will be different, yes there will be change but I would put it that it's change for the better and brings more opportunities for your children.

Question (Parent of pupil in P2):

Going back to what is familiar for our children and the thing about the attainment, there's nothing to say that the attainment in primary 3 that there's anything wrong with it, you've said it yourself that you can't prove it. P4 is when you're testing and the transition is when you go up to P4 and the only

figures you've got are from the testing so the infant school attainment could be perfect going by primary 1 and the experimental figures that were published. Sheila the same Head Teacher from the infant school has answered a lot of questions because she's familiar and runs an excellent school.

FR: So if you're saying that the Head Teacher from that school should become the Head Teacher of the new school...

The parent made a statement: I'm saying that she should have a good shout at it.

FR: It's an external recruitment, I can't speak for Sheila who's here this evening and I don't intend to, but I'm not also saying that she's leaving, I should just make that clear but I'm just saying that change can happen. So my quick response to you is it's an external recruitment process, parents from both schools are on the panel, it's not just the service. We have elected members on the panel, we have parent council on the panel so again if Sheila applies she'll be part of that recruitment process.

Question (Parent of a pupil):

I have a question for Helen – how big was Dunbar and how many pupils were there when it went over two sites?

HG: I think there was 800.

The parent asked a further question:

Because we're sitting at, including the nursery which we can't ignore, over 1000 pupils, completely merging two staff teams who are quite evidently working very differently, you had one staff team working in the same way splitting over two schools and they already had the same ethos. Your school gets very excellent results but it's how that can be replicated immediately for Prestonpans and our pupils.

FR: Because we will support you through the process. The education authority will be there to support the staff and that the Head Teacher to move the process forward.

HG: And I'll happily help.

The parent made a statement:

Our school role is 1000 pupils which is slightly bigger than where you are, a slightly different demographic but the advantage you had is you were already one staff team.

HG: And can you imagine my staff team going "you've taken us and you've broken us apart" so that's the opposite situation.

The parent made a further statement: I totally get that but my fear is for when you have two staff teams that are very, very different coming together. My big fear is bringing two very different staff teams together and there's going to be a massive change and what's the impact going to be of that change on our kids?

Question (Parent of a pupil):

Mine ties into both of those questions and I think it's probably a question for you (Helen) and that is what were the biggest challenges, either expected or unexpected because I think it ties in with that it's obviously going to have a ripple effect on the teachers.

HG: Consistency is a really big factor but I worked really hard at it and your new Head Teacher will have to work hard at it and it's probably every Head Teacher in the whole of Scotland faces this problem day in and day out because you are dealing with hundreds and hundreds of children, you're dealing with 20, 30, 40 members of staff and that's what you're trying to deliver. It's not just one person delivering the same curriculum, they're all delivering their interpretation of it and there's nothing wrong with that because what they bring with that is great ideas and great enthusiasm or they bring something else along and so the biggest challenge is getting that consistency and making quite sure that the children are achieving a level, that's the hardest part.

Question (Chair of the After School Club):

I am the Chair of the After School Club which is based in the infant school and we have a roll of numerous children and Sheila has been lovely in letting us "squat" in her dining hall and I'm just concerned that the new head will not appreciate having us in their school because obviously we're there first thing in the morning and until 6 o'clock at night.

FR: I doubt that that will be the case given that the service you provide is making sure that our children are ready for learning and that they've then got that support after school when they need it. I would doubt any head would not be looking for some support.

Chris Webb then reminded those in attendance of what happens next in relation to the consultation.

CW: The two issues coming from an external education perspective is that the issues raised tonight, which are legitimate issues to be shared and discussed, which are less about the proposal and more to do with making sure that all the needs of every youngster in all our schools are met and every youngster is enabled to achieve at their best in the time that they're at the school and I think this is something that I'm confident you will take forward in some way over and above this proposal. The process now is that the proposal consultation period will finish on 2nd October and the Council will have to submit all the evidence it's received to Education Scotland for HM Inspectors to write a report on the proposal. The final consultation report will then be published on 19th November and then it will be three weeks before the Council can make its decision. You still have an opportunity during that process to ask further questions to the Council and to get the responses and anything you submit in terms of writing becomes part of that formal consultation process so hopefully this evening will give you the confidence to understand why this Act was passed – it is giving you this voice and it's making sure the Council doesn't do things to you, it does things with you and consults with you and listens to you and gives you have an opportunity to have your fears and your concerns and to raise your questions.

Chris Webb thanked those in attendance, thanked officers for their time and brought the meeting to a close.

APPENDIX 3: NOTE OF PUPIL VOICE SESSIONS

The Pupil Voice sessions were structured workshops with a representative group of pupils from each school. The following are summaries of the discussions and questions/answers.

Prestonpans Consultation – Prestonpans Infant and Nursery School Pupil Voice – 04.09.18

David Scott (DS) and Katy Johnstone met with a group of pupils. David Scott described the proposal and then there was a group discussion around the following prepared pupil questions and comments:

Q. Will P1-3 still be here and P4-7 at the Primary or will this change?

DS: No this will not change, accommodation here is suited to P1-3s and accommodation is suited to P4-7s at the Primary School.

Q. How will the schools join together when they are so far apart? Will it get joined together by the builders?

DS: The buildings will not join together, there will still be two buildings. It will be one school over two campuses.

Q. Will the name have to change? I like our name.

DS: Names will be suggested by the public and a new name will be chosen, you will be able to suggest names that you like.

Q. It will be hard for the head teacher, how will they look after the schools? How will they know what to do? They will mix up the schools.

DS: Other teachers will help the Head Teacher, there will be Depute Head Teachers in both buildings.

Q. Will some of the playground supervisors and teachers go to work in the primary school?

DS: Teachers who want to teach other ages will get that opportunity. You would put people where you think they will do a good job.

Q. How will we have assemblies? Will we get more gym halls? Rooms? If we are in the Infant School can we use the Primary School playground and gym halls?

DS: Assemblies might be on different days. There will be no more rooms as a result of this consultation. You will have the same playground but now there will be the opportunity to visit the other school much more easily.

Q. Will we get to choose our new Head Teacher?

DS: People will apply for the new role. There will be a recruitment process to find a Head Teacher, part of this process is that pupils from each school will get to interview the new Head Teacher.

Q. If it goes ahead how will you stop children from being worried? They will be worried about their new head teacher, but might not be so worried about moving to the primary school if it's all the same head teacher.

DS: Having one Head Teacher, hopefully that won't happen because you will already know them.

Q. Do we get to make badges to decide our school badge?

DS: That will be part of the Transition Action Group's jobs if the proposal was approved, you would have a say in that.

Q. If our schools join, will we get to decide things about our new school? What things will we get to decide?

DS: We can't say for certain, whoever is the new head teacher would be listening to your views.

Q. Will you come talk to us again?

DS: We won't come back officially, but if you think of something after we leave you can ask your teacher and they can pass it on.

Q. How will the decision be made?

DS: After the end of the consultation, a report will be created which will contain all of the feedback from responses. This report will go to a Council Meeting and Elected Members will decide on whether to approve the proposal or not.

Q. If it goes ahead will some walls get knocked down?

DS: No.

Q. How can the schools not join together?

DS: It would be better to make one school.

Q. Will we get a new gym hall?

DS: No.

Pupil Comment: *Some children are worried about more bullies being at the other school and are worried that they might come down to this school but I don't think that will happen.*

Q. Can the adults say a good thing or a bad thing as well? Can anybody share their opinion?

DS: Everyone is able to share their opinion, there are events that people can come along to and there is an online response form that anyone can fill in.

Prestonpans Consultation – Prestonpans Primary School Pupil Voice – 11.09.18

David Scott (DS) and Katy Johnstone met with a group of pupils. David Scott described the proposal and then there was a group discussion around the following pupil questions and comments:

To make your education better. There is an extra transition in your education that doesn't need to be there. Research also tells us that extra transition is worse for pupils. The teachers can get to know you better if it is one school. If there is a child with additional support needs, the member of staff that has been working with them would be able to go with them from P3 to P4.

Pupil Comment: *That makes sense.*

Pupil Comment: *It's a good idea.*

Pupil Comment: *I think it's good because if the schools merge, it will be better for the little ones, they wouldn't be as scared to move up. They could get to know the teachers more, could come up and visit because it's their school too.*

Pupil Comment: *I think it's not so good because more money would need to be spend on new signs, logo making, extra time spent on name, whole school pantos – not going to be able to do it anymore.*

Q. Who's idea was it to do this and why?

DS: The Head of Education. There is only one other school in Scotland like this and the educational benefits for making the schools one are significant.

Pupil Comment: *Some people will vote for one HT and some for the other and people will not be happy with the school anymore because they don't get their choice.*

DS: It is an open recruitment process, parents and pupils will be involved and we want the best for you. Head Teachers leave and retire all the time so you may not always have the same one for all of the time you are at the school.

Pupil Comment: Good idea because if a child from the Infant School was scared maybe one of the teachers could stay with them for a while.

Pupil Comment: Good idea because younger brothers and sisters can be at the same school, It's easier for drop off and pick up.

Pupil Comment: Uniform – If people didn't know, and didn't have enough money to buy them – wouldn't the children feel different – if families are struggling money wise it is difficult to change it all at the same time.

DS: Instead of putting uniform out quickly, it could be put out in stages. It could also save money in the long term as you would no longer have to change uniform between schools. A Transition Action Group will be set up if the proposal is approved and they would think about all of these issues.

Pupil Comment: We've just paid for new jumpers.

DS: Nothing is going to change quickly.

Pupil Comment: If we do dress down day, to raise money for the school, does that mean the money goes to both or one.

DS: The School will be one but details like that are still to be decided.

Pupil Comment: good side when infant school come up they will know children in the school.

Q. Why don't they just build one big school?

DS: Existing buildings already have capacity for the number of children, there would also be a cost implication.

Q. What would happen if there was a big uproar about it happening?

DS: This consultation is about letting everyone know how people feel.

Q. What will happen to afterschool clubs?

DS: They will operate in the same way.

Q. School dinners – Prestonpans Primary School dinners cost but Infant School dinners are free, what if the new Head Teacher wants to change that?

DS: They can't, Scottish government makes it free for P1-2.

Pupil Comment: You wouldn't pass your name jumper down anyway, so that would be a cost in terms of uniform.

APPENDIX 4: EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Lothian Council to close Prestonpans Infant and Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and establish a new non-denominational primary school structure and its associated catchment area for Prestonpans.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her 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 Lothian Council's proposal to close Prestonpans Infant and Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School and establish a new non-denominational primary school structure and its associated catchment area for Prestonpans. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools and children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper;
- 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 26 September 2018 at Preston Lodge High School 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
- visits to the site of Prestonpans Infant and Nursery School, Prestonpans Early Learning and Childcare Centre and Prestonpans Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

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

2.2 An advertisement was placed in the local newspaper on 23 August 2018 and 13 September 2018. A pre-announcement was also made on the council's website and social media posts on the 16 August 2018. The consultation period ran from 20 August 2018 until 2 October 2018. A public meeting was held at Preston Lodge High School on 26 September 2018 which was attended by 35 members of the public. Responses could be made electronically through the online consultation questionnaire on East Lothian Council's Consultation Hub or in writing, either placed in a consultation box in one of the affected schools or posted to the council headquarters. There were 135 responses to the consultation. Of those who expressed a preference, 45 were in agreement with the proposal and 81 disagreed with the proposal.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The council believes that this proposal will improve the continuity and progression in learning across all curriculum areas and stages of learning from Early Level through to Second Level in the Prestonpans catchment area. The council feels that a new single primary school structure will have a positive impact on the children in both current schools by further developing and enhancing a shared ethos, vision, values and aims from the nursery class through to P7. There is a clear educational benefit from the current schools developing a shared ethos, which will be facilitated by having a single headteacher with responsibility for a single school.

3.2 The council believes that establishing a new non-denominational primary school covering nursery through to P7 under a single management structure will secure best value, providing more equitable education provision across the school estate where almost all schools operate as nursery to P7 settings. Whilst this approach will reflect common practice, it will be more complex to implement a single management structure across a split-site school. The authority, working with the new headteacher, needs to bring its knowledge and experience gained from managing other similar settings to ensure that the progressive achievement of learners is well led. The proposal paper notes that it will be for the new headteacher to determine how the management will be organised in discussion with staff in the school in order to meet the needs of learners across the two campuses. There is potential educational benefit in this arrangement.

3.3 The council believes that a single school structure would enable staff to build relationships from nursery and to sustain those relationships through to P7, especially for those pupils who require enhanced support, and help improve children's social, emotional and mental wellbeing. The council further believes that, while the proposed new school would be operating over two campuses, there would be more opportunities within the curriculum under a single school structure to work on common projects, for example, across different stages and the two campuses at Prestonpans Infant and Nursery School and Prestonpans Primary School. These two campuses are 0.5 miles apart. HM Inspectors walked this route in approximately 10 minutes, but staff report that walking between them with children can take up to 20 minutes. Very careful planning would need to take place to allow children to work collaboratively across these campuses. This is a potential educational benefit, which is dependent upon well-planned learning experiences.

3.4 The council also feels that the single school structure, split campus, arrangement will continue to provide opportunities for P3 children to act as role models within their campus, whilst offering more opportunities for buddying and peer learning between the two campuses. Again, very careful planning would need to take place to allow children to collaboratively work across these campuses. This is also a potential educational benefit, which is dependent upon well-planned learning experiences.

3.5 Children who attend Prestonpans Infant School are generally happy with the proposal and see this as a chance for everyone to feel part of the same school. However, although it is raised in the consultation paper, children still have justifiable concerns that a new school uniform could involve significant extra expense for parents. They are also worried that the new headteacher role, covering three establishments, will be very demanding. Children who attend Prestonpans Primary School are positive about the improvements in transition which the proposal could bring and would welcome greater opportunities to see friends and relatives who are being educated in the other campus. They would like to be more involved in buddying of younger children

3.6 Parents of children who attend Prestonpans Infant School are generally in favour of the proposal, feeling that there are more advantages than disadvantages. They note the difference in ethos between their school and Prestonpans Primary School and see the proposal as a way of addressing this. They have valid concerns about the start and finish times for each part of the school being different to facilitate dropping off and picking up children. Parents of children who attend Prestonpans Primary School feel that other options, such as two separate primary schools or a new school on a single site, would work better than the current proposal. They have understandable concerns that the projected roll figures published in the proposal do not include children who attend the nursery or the Early Learning and Childcare Centre, which would take the overall pupil roll to more than 1,000.

3.7 Staff of Prestonpans Infant School can see a number of advantages to the proposal, but feel that some of the educational benefits could be achieved without changing the management structure across the three establishments. They have justifiable concerns that the answers to many of their practical queries will only be resolved once a new headteacher is appointed, for example, the staffing structure,

the start and finish times associated with the school day, travel between the two establishments and how effective joint working and transition planning will be managed. Staff of Prestonpans Primary School feel that other options, such as two separate primary schools or a new school on a single site, would work better than the current proposal. They agree that a single school should bring more consistency. However, they are concerned at the overall size and complexity of the proposed school and feel that the numbers involved would be overwhelming for the new headteacher. They would appreciate more information about the research findings which are referred to in the proposal document.

4. Summary

Overall, there are potential educational benefits to the proposal, despite the practical complexities outlined in this report. Closing Prestonpans Infant School and Prestonpans Primary School and establishing a new primary school provides an opportunity to improve learning and teaching and to further raise attainment for all children in the catchment area. The establishment of a single staff team working together to ensure continuity and progression from P1 to P7 should bring greater curricular coherence, improved consistency of expectations and increased moderation of standards. Children should benefit from improved progression planning to better meet their needs. Removing the need for an additional transition to a different school at the end of P3 is likely to reduce any possible risk of a slowing down of progress as children progress through the first level of Curriculum for Excellence. The proposal is in line with the aims and aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence.

Parents and staff across the two schools and the Early Learning and Childcare Centre hold significantly different views about the educational benefits of the proposal. In taking the proposal forward, the council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and to address their concerns. In taking its proposal forward, an effective communication strategy and an action plan based on the needs of the establishments affected will be essential for the council to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged. The council should include details of these in its final report.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
November 2018**