

**CEC Engagement Events Re: Informal Consultation on possibility of moving secondary GME to Drummond High School  
Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce**

The following comprises notes taken at two engagement meetings held at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce by the City of Edinburgh Council regarding the informal consultation to move secondary GME to Drummond High School. The first session, on March 5th, was a formal meeting led by councillors and council officials, while the second session, on March 9th, was a more informal event led by council officials. This is reflected in the style of the notes taken at each session.

**First Engagement Meeting  
5<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**Those in attendance from Edinburgh Council were:**

Crawford McGhie (Acting Head of Operational Support);  
Paula McLeay (Strategy and Insight);  
Liz Gray (Quality Improvement Officer);  
Councillor Ian Perry (Convenor, Education, Children and Families Committee);  
Councillor Alison Dickie (Vice Convenor, Education, Children and Families Committee); and  
Norma Martin (Gaelic Development Officer)

Marianne O'Loughlin opened the meeting. Marianne explained that she is the representative from the Parent Council from TnP in relation to this issue.

Ian Perry opened by saying that this meeting was to find out what everyone in the room felt about taking Gaelic Medium Education (GME) forward.

He explained that he was new to the Convenor's role from June 2017. Alison was a brand new Councillor from June 2017.

He indicated that he was aware that proposals had been around in relation to GME with GIG (Gaelic Implementation Group), but that today we were here to discuss the proposal about Drummond High School becoming a Gaelic Medium Education School.

To progress that consultation they had to find out what the parents of TnP want and what the parents of Drummond High School want.

It was clear that Drummond High School community and parents are not happy about the proposal.

Councillor Perry made it clear that Drummond were now aware that it was not the Gaelic community that had asked for Drummond High School to become a GME school, and that that proposal came from the Council.

It was explained very clearly that any re-drawing of the catchments required the consensus of the parents.

He was aware that in relation to this consultation the Gaelic parents felt very let down and he was aware that the feeling was that it had not been handled well by the Council.

He indicated that we need a long term plan for the promotion of GME and Gaelic language as a whole. The view was that this had to be joined up.

He indicated the Council was committed to building on the Gaelic language plan but that we all had to recognise that there were financial constraints.

He wanted to speak to the parents about how to promote Gaelic in Edinburgh and that he would prefer to look forward about how to do this but he understood that the parents would want to talk about had happened in relation to Drummond High.

The intention is to build GME in Edinburgh in a sustainable way, and to support Gaelic in Edinburgh particularly through education would build a strong contribution in relation to that.

Marianne then opened the meeting to questions after introducing new Chairs of the Parent Council Anna Kinsella and Barbie Lyon.

1. Were the Councillors aware of the situation in Glasgow and was there any joined up thinking in relation to that?

Ian Perry answered that there had been discussion in the meeting with GME parents that morning and it was agreed that it was a good idea to identify what was happening in Glasgow. It was clear that they were further forward than Edinburgh and that they had more resources and he had indicated that he and Alison would go and visit Glasgow.

Brian Thunder (CNP) then indicated that he had spoken to Gillian Campbell-Thow who is the Quality Improvement Manager for Education in Glasgow with a remit for Gaelic Education and delivering other languages in Glasgow. She had explained that in Glasgow that there was a member of the Chief Executive's Office who looked after Gaelic and GME; there was Gillian in education; there was another full time member of staff involved in Arts and Gaelic and there was a part time officer who dealt with Gaelic adult learning.

Gillian had given an open invitation to the Councillors in Edinburgh and anyone else who wanted to go through to see how the Council was dealing with the issue and to see the schools in Glasgow.

Brian indicated that in 2006 there had been a school survey in Glasgow trying to identify hidden Gaelic speakers who were not working in GME. It was felt that there was a lack of career opportunity i.e. promotional opportunities within GME and he asked what the Council was doing about that.

Ian Perry indicated that he had asked the Education Department to identify any Gaelic speakers and they were doing that and he expected the results shortly.

It was asked whether the survey was extended to the other Lothian Council Regions. Councillor Perry explained that not at the moment but depending on the outcome other Council areas could be asked the same question.

2. It was asked whether the intention was to go ahead with the consultation about Drummond High School in an adjusted fashion or whether it was completely off the table.

Stated that although the fresh start was welcome the parents had been doing this for years and there was a lot of information already out there and this should be considered.

Councillor Dickie responded and said that she was the convenor of GIG. She said that it was very clear about the frustration felt by the GME parents. They needed to gather the thoughts that were out there and her view was that we needed more joined up thinking.

She felt that the most important thing was to consolidate GME.

Councillor Perry indicated that it was about politicians and that they would be there for 5 years but that they needed to ensure that the information was not lost. He indicated that Alison and he were committed to moving GME forward.

They committed to Drummond High that they would not close it to EME and that there were 500 children there and it was growing and there was still the possibility of a shared campus and that was left open with Drummond.

It was clear that there had to be a long term plan and that the Council had to stop just reacting to situations. I.e. the fact that JGHS is full required steps to be taken. This was not good enough.

He accepted that they knew 10 years ago that JGHS would be full.

There are wider issues across Edinburgh in that the school rolls are rising and that had to be dealt with.

3. The decision to try and use Drummond seemed to be a knee jerk reaction and something needed to be done now because if it is left too late then JGHS will not work for much longer. Councillor Perry agreed that they needed a short term plan but that had to be in the context of a long term solution. He accepted that short term solutions were more expensive than having a long term plan.
4. It was indicated that the feeder primaries from Drummond High School had been given a commitment that they would continue to go to their catchment High School. Could TnP have the same commitment about James Gillespies?

Crawford McGhie answered by saying that if they were to change the catchment for JGHS they would have to have a statutory consultation. He said that every year pressure increased to find a solution for the rising roll at JGHS but that they would require a consultation to change it.

Councillor Perry indicated that if projections were correct, he did not think that GME would be at JGHS in 10 years' time.

It was pointed out that the parents needed some certainty.

Councillor Dickie indicated that the next year was worrying but that an interim solution must come in the context of a long term robust plan for GME. She indicated that she was very aware of the urgency of this situation.

5. A question was asked about public relations and the hostility to Gaelic in the city. This has always been an issue but the Drummond High School issue had made it worse and there were awful headlines following the announcement of the consultation.

The question was whether the Council was thinking about how to handle the public relations strategy.

Councillor Dickie indicated that this had been addressed at the meeting with some GME parents that morning, and that she could see the hostility towards Gaelic in the city. There seemed to be a lack of understanding of the facts, in particular that the Gaelic Language Plan was a statutory requirement for the Council. She thought that clearing up some of the myths was part of the solution.

6. One of the pupils from JGHS GME Unit asked whether the Council had worked with young people and asked for their view. He was aware that three quarters of the GME pupils at JGHS wanted to stay at that school. They did not want their own High School and did not want to go to Drummond High School.

Councillor Dickie indicated that this was the year of young people and she fundamentally agreed that it was important to involve the young people in this consultation.

7. There was a question about the sequencing of activities. It appears that the Gaelic language plan had been parked until the problem of increasing school rolls was sorted and the question was how does this fit into the issue?

Councillor Perry explained that in his view the plan was not joined up. The Gaelic Language Plan existed separately from the need to have an infrastructure in place to deliver that plan. He

felt that the bit that was missing was how the infrastructure was delivered. He did not think that there was clear agreement on the infrastructure required but they were committed to re-connecting the infrastructure and the Gaelic Language Plan.

8. It was indicated that there had been years of thinking behind the Gaelic Language Plan and there was a question about the time line for the commitment in delivering the plan especially in relation to children going to secondary school.

Councillor Perry indicated that in his view there seemed to be two options. One was two primary schools and a standalone GME secondary school or a campus with early learning facilities. He thought we needed to settle on something and then solve the short term problem with a long term plan. He was unclear about how to deliver the plan but needed to have a plan in place in order to find that clarity.

9. It was suggested that there needed to be a greater strategic team in place. Liz Gray indicated that in other areas there were a number of different strategies in relation to education. She gave the example of Learning for Equity and said that there were several strategies being developed along this model and it might be the right time to develop the GME strategy along the lines of this model. This would be working with Senior Management to take the GME strategy forward.

She thought that the points that people had made were well made and that at the moment the strategy was piecemeal and needed to be much more joined up. She was aware that there was pressure on time particularly in relation to the Gaelic Language Plan which had to be in place by the end of May.

She said that there was a model of a short life working group which could be used in relation to GME secondary education.

10. One of the parents indicated that they found it very daunting to hear a discussion about high level strategy planning when their kids were going to high school in two and a half years but there was no real plan about that.

It was disappointing to find out that contrary to expectations there was no real insight into the Drummond High School issue and that actually there was no real plan in relation to GME secondary education, he had no confidence whatsoever in the Council. His initial reaction was that there should have been engagement a lot earlier and it was frustrating to hear that there was a lack of a plan at all.

The question was what point would the Council be able to point to deliverable goals and will it take another year before that is the case.

Councillor Perry agreed with these sentiments and that the politicians had not covered themselves in glory here. He indicated that he was committed to producing a plan with GIG but that there was no timescale for that but it would not be within a year but quicker than that.

Liz Gray indicated that the Gaelic Language Plan had been written by a co-production group along with GIG and some Council officers. It was being pulled together and this involved the GME community.

11. A question was asked about how many teachers were needed in 2023 and how many pupil places were required by 2023. It was suggested that it was quite predictable to identify the numbers of teachers and pupils required in a strategic plan.
12. The question was asked about whether other options were explored prior to Drummond High School.

Crawford indicated that in 2016 there had been a short life working group to try and deal with the capacity problems at JGHS. At that point the options were using the Darroch Unit as an annexe.

There was a list of schools with potential options to provide more GME but one of the key recommendations was to work with the Gaelic Language Plan at that time. It was clear that the aspiration was for a dedicated GME school so that ruled out the Darroch Unit because it could not be a standalone school. Drummond could be but that had to be opened out to consultation.

He indicated that all the other options were there and that they were committed to looking at all of the other options including Drummond and Darroch. There was a question about if Drummond was not feasible were there any other buildings available and Crawford indicated that Drummond had been ruled out as a standalone GME High School.

There was also the option of a joint campus and this could be a dedicated site where a new school was built. Crawford indicated that the Council was prepared to look at all options.

It was re-iterated that the parents needed reassurance soon.

13. Question was asked about the numbers at James Gillespie High School and GME remaining there.

Crawford indicated that they had been looking to get a consultation in place for November 2018 which would change the catchment for August 2019. However this was not going to be possible and so the earliest a consultation could take place and the catchment could change would be August 2020.

14. Question was asked about the bad publicity received in December in relation to the Drummond High School proposal and it appeared that two or three months later Drummond had received a commitment in relation to the feeder primary schools. However it appeared that there was no proposal in relation to GME High School provision for TnP. Councillor Perry stated that he didn't think that they could empty out Drummond High School. He indicated that we needed to look at the two schools co-existing and that that was still an option but the standalone Drummond GME High School was not an option.

One of the parents indicated that he thought that a vote should be taken indicating whether or not there is support for sharing Drummond High School and that a show of hands could be asked for at this stage. Other parents thought this was premature and that there was no information about how a shared resource would look and therefore no votes should be taken.

Councillor Dickie indicated that the Council wanted to look at all the options including Darroch etc.

Brian Thunder on behalf of CNP indicated that the parents had been doing this for a long time and that they were clearly frustrated. They needed to see concrete action and a belief that GME is the best education that we can get for our children – all the parents are committed to this.

However Brian indicated that CNP and the Parent Council needed the parents to keep having faith in them and that we must all work collaboratively with the people from the Council who were here at the meeting. We were committed to a collaborative process and we needed to keep the faith.

15. It was suggested that there was a fair degree of consensus but that the children needed to stay together in JGHS until a solution was found. The Council was asked if there was a commitment to this.

Councillor Perry indicated that there was a commitment and that if they cannot make it happen then he would come back and tell us why.

16. There was something in the Gaelic Language Plan which suggested that a proper unit had to be established in JGHS in order to take forward any standalone secondary GME school.

It was felt that no progress had been made to ensure that there was a body of Gaelic teachers at JGHS to ensure that there was a GME High School to take forward from a stronger unit.

Liz Gray explained that it was not in her remit to deal with recruitment but it was one of the other officers from the Council who dealt with that. One of the officers had specific responsibility for recruitment at primary and recruitment at secondary in relation to GME.

She indicated that Scottish Government had provided funding for two new GME posts:

- A leadership post was funded
- An additional post for a teacher at JGHS was also funded

It was clear that in Glasgow they built up staff over time and before the campus was opened.

Liz Gray also indicated that at the recent GIG meeting it was established that the new social subject teacher had been recruited at JGHS to teach in GME and again this is due to funding from the Scottish Government.

17. A question was asked about whether or not the Council was satisfied with the funding from the Scottish Government and also asked about the problem of teachers being stolen by the different GME regions.

Norma Martin indicated that there was a national shortage and that Edinburgh competes with all the other local authorities who have GME education. Sometimes Edinburgh was successful and sometimes it was not successful and the other local authorities, Glasgow; Western Isles; and Highlands are successful.

Liz Gray indicated that they knew that there was more to do to get GME teachers out.

Brian Thunder indicated that there were 79 children who were coming to TnP next year it appeared. Adverts had already been published by Glasgow Local Authority and Lanarkshire Local Authority, and it wasn't good enough to put adverts in the newspapers but people who could teach in Gaelic were out there but nobody had identified why they were not actually teaching in Gaelic. He queried whether the recruitment person wasn't aware of the particular needs in the GME community.

Liz Gray indicated that all secondary schools were asking the Council to advertise earlier and they were trying to do that. Councillor Dickie indicated that teacher shortages were across the board and that there was an awful lot of negative comments being made about education and working as a teacher and that the country and the UK government and Scottish government as a whole needed to promote education and not simply criticise it.

18. JGHS– it was always known that it would be oversubscribed but is anyone looking at the catchment of the school in general. It appeared that GME kids were being pushed out but were there other ways to keep GME there.

Councillor Perry indicated that they could remove two primary schools from JGHS but there would be a massive outcry just as soon as there was at Drummond High

Crawford indicated that there was a strategic review of all schools and the schools in the city centre were particularly oversubscribed – JGHS and Boroughmuir. The GME school was also over-subscribed.

He indicated that the Council would never be able to deliver a dedicated GME High school within JGHS. Any change to the catchment area would require a statutory consultation.

Drummond High School now has a guarantee and this means that the Council cannot change Drummond. The difference is that there is no problem with capacity at Drummond High School but there is a capacity issue at JGHS. GME wants a dedicated high school – that was what he

understood. Therefore it might be possible to resolve JGHS capacity issue by providing a dedicated GME school.

19. A question was asked about whether or not the Council was consulting experts within relation to minority education. The numbers were very clear and so surely there is a clear idea of the requirements then.

Councillor Perry said that they needed to go to Glasgow and they needed to look at all the information that was available from GIG and if there was anything else that anyone else in the audience wanted to tell them about then they should do that. They wanted to know as much information as possible.

20. The overriding concern is to resolve the GME problem in the long term but we should be aware that the children caught up in the short term plan should not be sacrificed for the longer term goals.
21. A question was asked about the opportunity to use government resources citing the example of TnP where £5 million was received from the government which then created extra capacity for primary school education in Edinburgh. Are the Council working with the government in regard to this?

Councillor Perry indicated that they were. GME had got mixed up with the Council's estate review and it needed to be separate from that. However he did point out that the Council needed 10 new schools at a costs of £198 million.

The point was made that the Council has a separate funding stream.

22. The next question was about accountability and a timeline which the Council could be held to. There were three questions. The first was could the parents have a timeline. The second was whether any mathematical modelling was planned because that would be a good idea and the third was about rewarding GME teachers financially i.e. paying them more because they have another skill set.

Councillor Perry indicated that he had seen lots of numbers but that it was notoriously difficult to predict school roll. However he had asked Crawford to provide him with a timescale in relation to JGHS catchment issues.

Once it was established how long they had in relation to JGHS being over capacity they would work to that deadline which would be in relation to months not years. They know about JGHS; they know about the plan; and they know when to get there and that is the information that should come to the parents. They want to uncouple the GME issue from the school rolls issue.

There was a question of negotiating with Scottish Government. The Council had set aside £25 million for school building but they really did rely on the Scottish Government. Crawford indicated school roll projections are available until 2027 and published on the Council's website. There is no perfect scheme but the information is publically available.

23. It was recognised that the timetable is short and that all the issues were complicated but they need to have a deadline to avoid the decision not being taken because the issues are too complex.

There was a question about who would take ownership of the issue and that GME should not be seen as a problem but as an opportunity. There are critics but research shows there is a high level of support as well.

Ian Perry indicated that there needed to be a further discussion re consensus and once they came up with a plan they would discuss with the parents. The timescale of this depended on the Council and on GIG. Alison Dickie indicated that the estates review was meant to be considered by a committee in May. There was ongoing work with GIG who were asking for timescales in relation to education.

24. Some asked if the Darroch annexe was a possible solution. They had understood that the plan was to use this as a shared resource between JGHS and Boroughmuir. The question was whether this had been taken off the table and it had been discussed as a possible GME school in the long term.

Ian Perry indicated that Darroch could go back on the table. Boroughmuir and JGHS were a different issue and they need to deal with that as well.

He indicated that everything should come back to the table.

25. In relation to the number of pupils there was an urgent need for a second primary school so there could be 120 pupils in each year in 10 years' time.

Crawford McGhie indicated that it was feasible to have a joint campus with facilities on the GME side to cope with those numbers.

26. Would that involve taking away outside space? Crawford indicated no, there would be a need to speak to the site owner about that but there would be feasibility study. Outside space was regulated and set out in legislation.

27. A question was asked about the old Boroughmuir High School and Crawford indicated that a developer had an option on the property and that it would be sold off and the money would go to the Councils capital programme.

28. A question was asked about the short term plans in relation to JGHS. It was explained that two years ago some of the GME cohort had been denied places at JGHS just months before they were due to start high school. Although the decision was quickly reversed, parents need the assurance that the same thing could not happen again and that the catchment would not be reviewed without a plan being in place so the year group could stay together.

The Councillors did not know about the issue two years ago with JGHS and Crawford McGhie indicated that there would be no change in catchment without a consultation.

29. There was a bulge in relation to the current P5. This was concerning because they were going to high school in 2 years. Parents were seeking reassurance that there would not be a change to catchment in relation to JGHS without there being a plan in place. Councillor Perry indicated that as far as he was concerned there would be a plan in place before there was a change in catchment as far as humanly possible.

30. Someone asked about the statement that had been made earlier in relation to there being 6-9 months to work on a strategy to deliver a Gaelic Language Plan and they asked about the timescales. Paula McLeay indicated that in relation to the Gaelic Language Plan the timescales were that the consultation had closed and they were considering the responses but the final plan would be signed off in May. They would be clear after that about implementation timetables and reporting and accountability were built into the plan. This would include parents and an annual review would be published every year to ensure transparency.

Alison Dickie indicated that the timescales were in the Gaelic Language Plan.

31. In relation to JGHS it appeared that GME was seen as an add on problem in relation to the catchment issue that the school already had. There was a request that parity remained in place in relation to that catchment area for GME pupils.

Crawford McGhie indicated that was the case and to change the catchment it would require a statutory consultation.

32. It was important to consult with young people and the speaker indicated that her daughter was in class 5 and had said she wanted to be a teacher. It was essential to look at Glasgow and other Council areas who were successful in relation to GME. But also to consult with children because our GME teachers would come from there.



Ian Perry and Alison Dickie had given a commitment that they would speak to the children.

Councillor Perry closed the meeting by indicating that he was aware that they needed to build up trust and also that GME parents had been there before. He provided a commitment in relation to a time line and indicated that they would bring back something in 6 months' time no matter what level of preparedness that was at.

The vision was to promote Gaelic learning as more than just education but there was a recognition that there was a lot of negativity about this and the whole of Edinburgh should be proud of the Gaelic community. There was a commitment from the Councillors to promote that.

Brian Thunder thanked the parents for all of their input and welcomed the commitment from the Councillors and confirmed that it was important to see them here and to know that they were listening.

He finished by saying that we would all be back here on 5<sup>th</sup> August to hear what the plan was.

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### **Second Engagement Meeting 9th March 2018**

**Those in attendance from Edinburgh Council were:**

Crawford McGhie (Acting Head of Operational Support) CmcG;  
Liz Gray (Quality Improvement Officer) LG;  
Norma Martin (Gaelic Development Officer) NM

Meeting chaired by Marianne O'Loughlin, (MO) Gaelic Implementation Group (GIG) Rep for Taobh na Pàirce (TnP)

Crawford McGhie opened the meeting.

This is an informal consultation that we are doing here and in the South West. The informal consultation came from a strategic review of the school estates across the city.

In the South West, this is in relation to new housing and a clear need for new infrastructure. This consultation is in relation to rising rolls at James Gillespie's High School (JGHS) and Boroughmuir.

There has been a long-standing campaign regarding GME at JGHS and what the sustainable long term solutions for GME might be that could also help us with the issue of rising rolls at JGHS.

In 2017, the Estates team went through a variety of options looking at this issue and one of the ones to emerge was to move GME to Drummond.

The reason for looking at Drummond was that if GME continued to grow, that Drummond had the potential to become a dedicated GME high school.

We said as much as this in December but didn't say much more than this as we wanted to keep the discussion open. It was just an initial proposal with an informal discussion.

Very quickly, the Drummond High School parents and the feeder primary parents came back to say they wouldn't be happy with Drummond closing.

Taking that on board, Ian Perry gave a guarantee to Drummond High School and the feeder primaries that they will have a place for the foreseeable future.

It changes the nature of what we are now looking at.

We have committed to a feasibility study to assess whether Drummond can be expanded to incorporate EME and GME on a joint campus. With a dedicated GME school alongside EME sharing dining and sports facilities but two separate schools with two headteachers.

That's as far as we've got. We have been asked to look at other options: locations for other joint campus; JGHS on site expansion and; use of the Darroch building to expand capacity for JGHS. All these requests for information are coming out of the informal consultation process.

We do have an overriding pressure at JGHS and that pressure is building –and has been a fact for a while.

We are definitely not going to repeat the same catchment situation as happened in 2016\*, but we are having to work out what happens though.

Marianne has been working with the Gaelic Implementation Group (GIG) in relation to this.

Crawford then asked Marianne to give an update.

TnP PC GIG Rep (MO): The discussion of Drummond forms part of a bigger picture with pressures in GME everywhere including sgoil-àraich, primary as well as secondary.

On Monday evening, Ian Perry said the Council will be taking a step back and they will be looking at the whole picture.

There is a discussion about who owns this at Council level and we need to start seeing actions and dates for development.

Alison Dickie is the Vice Convenor of the Education Committee and the Gaelic Champion. She has been in touch since the meeting on Monday evening.

She recognises that we need certainty of pathway for our children (particularly for P6 and P5 families) and she has committed to giving us a written statement confirming this.

We need further support at council level with recruitment across the board. We have asked Glasgow to help give information to help develop Edinburgh Council model a strategy.

We have asked for a survey of existing staff across Edinburgh and the Lothians to see what resources might already exist, and what resources might be fostered going forward.

We need to see a long term plan. Ian Perry has committed to deliver a plan within 6 months.

Parent (MT): A lot of people are looking dubious. We've been having this discussion for many many years.

TnP PC GIG Rep (MO): It is really significant to have Ian Perry and Alison Dickie commit to delivering a better structure and making solid commitments for certainty for families as well as generating strategic plans and for additional staff and support. So, we should look at this positively.

The Council team have worked hard to present something which came to nothing – but there are politicians holding responsibility for this.

We are asking for a commitment that the current situation we have will have to stay as it is until something better is created.

The increasing numbers at Sgoil-àriach is also a very serious problem.

The Councillors have committed to going to Glasgow which is significant as they have been saying it for years.

Liz Gray: We have had a meeting with the Glasgow team though. We have met with people who have been in charge of Gaelic development. So, whilst we haven't visited we are aware of what goes on. Norma has been over to Glasgow twice. However, the commitment to visit from a bigger group is new. But we are in contact, we don't work in a vacuum.

One of the things we learned from Glasgow meeting prior to the opening of their secondary provision was how much staffing increased ahead of the move and we are looking to follow this model in Edinburgh. We have sought additional funding from the Scottish Government Gaelic specific grant for additional costs and an additional full-time GME teacher, and have employed a GME History teacher who will start in June 2018. There are already 2 full time GME teachers at JGHS, one of whose posts is funded from the Gaelic specific grant and the other from the school's devolved budget - recruitment of teaching staff is devolved to the school. This will bring the total to 3.

We have said to the Scottish Government that we would like the 1 x secondary GME probationer who has Edinburgh as their first choice to be allocated to us to start August 2018.

We are recruiting for 1 X promoted post (Curriculum Leader Gaelic Education to include primarily GME but also some limited Gaelic for Learners). This is funded through additional funding from the Scottish Government to the Gaelic specific grant.

Parent (MT): Let's not be too self-congratulatory about it.

LG – Sorry if it is seeming that way, we are trying. One probationary teacher has selected Edinburgh, so we are hopeful they will come to us. We are not pretending it's perfect but we are committed to moving it forward. The strategy group will need to be a major part of their work with an opportunity to look at different models and offers to attract teachers.

Questions were invited from the floor

Parent (RW): I have kids in P4 and P2 - but I have read report from 2008 pre TnP being established. What is the strength of people in the council who know about that report? The decision to open TnP was taken before the JGHS re-furbishment. Why did the Council build a building a a storey and half shorter than the surrounding area?

CmcG: The future of GME was my interview presentation. There were discussions about GME moving to another school when JGHS was refurbished.

One of key things has to be timing, P5s would go to secondary school in 2020. In order to change anything, there would need to be a statutory consultation and so that would be in Nov 2019. By this time next year, we would be in the middle of a detailed consultation about the future of GME.

Parent (RW): Why create a dual system elsewhere when it works well at JGHS?

CmcG: Even if it were to be allowed by planning which is unlikely, It would be very difficult to build additional storeys on to the new JGHS. It would cause too much disruption. What we will look at is if there is a way of any new building on the campus as a way of expanding the school's capacity.

It was always thought that GME would move out and a working group was set up to sort this

out.

The rolls are rising due to people moving back in to the centre of town, less people choosing private education or the Roman Catholic provision. We didn't get the projections completely correct.

Parent (CD): I have a child in S1 and a child in P5, so this is all very relevant to us. Slightly weary around transition to TnP and it's been brilliant and I remember the Tynecastle proposals to halt kids going to JGHS

The council is very reactive to the situation and we continue to have a conversation around school estates rather than the future of GME. We have known since sgoil-àraich through to High school that this situation has been coming, we have seen this and we have been telling you this for ever. It is disappointing that this is still the situation.

The provision at JGHS is too fragile to move it. Moving it risks the future of GME.

A few asks – it would be nice to hear council acknowledge the upset of the handling of this. We shouldn't have to shoulder the amount of work this situation has created not to mention upset to the kids about the uncertainty of what's going to happen to them.

Two, we need some certainty NOW about P5 and P6. They will be starting to think about the transition process now and they need to have certainty of pathway.

Three, the plan to be delivered in the next six months needs to be focused on educational benefit. You need to start talking about proposals in the context of the improvement of the quality of education to what is delivered at JGHS.

LG – We do understand but we do not have answers yet. Not trying to say this is a solution – since Monday I've met with Laura Sweeny, my senior manager and said that we need to improve things and improve our strategies. Actions have been taken. This conversation has taken place and we have stressed that this needs to be taken forward as soon as possible.

We feel really strongly about the commitment from the convenor and vice convenor of education. We understand the framework isn't working and I have put how important this is to senior management. We need someone at a senior level in education to help us with this.

The Gaelic Community will be part of a strategy group and help shape what this looks like.

Parent (CD): There is a huge amount of knowledge in the parent body – please listen and make use of the parent body.

CmcG: You mention about the discussion being driven by estates. But, Liz has answered how they are trying to drive it with what they have and you do have the political will.

Estates have constantly engaged and discussed options with parent representatives and the Drummond proposal was seen as being in discussion with GME but it needed a wider audience.

There has been a lot on estates and not enough on education. But, they have been doing their best. A good thing to come out of this is that the politicians have started listening to what people want – yes at Drummond but also focusing about what is required for GME and a plan is going to develop.

Co-Chair (BL): I would like to pick up on the issue that the JGHS is the only GME option in the City. There are no other GME options for our children. Whilst there are any number of EME schools. Can you give an assurance that primary GME children will continue to go to the City's only GME unit at JGHS?

CmcG: Children will continue to go to JGHS until we undertake a statutory consultation. Earliest this would be in time for the 2020 intake.

Parent (CP): Everyone is worried that the status quo policy will be geographical distance that would disproportionately affect our pupils. Can we say in the event of another lack of capacity crisis GME pupils can go to JGHS?

CmcG: We are in a consultation to improve the situation we have

Parent (CP): The risks of P6 and P5 breaking up are significant. We need a big statement from the Council and from the Gaelic champion. You are saying a lot but not quite enough to give the peace of mind that is required to inform parents.

CmcG: There will have to be some solution to keep the cohort together. We are trying as hard as we can to make that solution the best solution. Report says that solution must be suitable to all pupils affected. We will not split any cohort coming from this school.

NM: In Glasgow, there was only one option for GME in Glasgow and students were refused and parents appealed and won. We have no legal basis to give priority to GME children, but there is a case.

Parent (CP): Better if we can prevent that stress and avoid appeal process.

NM: We will avoid that.

CmcG: We will avoid that at all costs.

It is a rising rolls issue that we will have to deal with in JGHS.

Statutory consultation for primary looks at educational benefit.

Parent (LN): Rising rolls is an issue for the whole of city. And there is a new school being built in Broomhills. Will boundary and provision change for all schools because of new housing developments?

CmcG: There was consultation to create a boundary for the new school. As the city grows there are plans to deliver more primary schools and similar things would happen.

Parent (LN): What about pressure on our primary school. I wondered if there are plans for a Gaelic unit in any of the new schools that are being developed?

CmcG: It has been talked about, no definitive plans. Talked in the office, we could be heading towards it. This would be a statutory consultation for catchment and you would end up in a situation where you would have a split GME catchment. And we need to think about the Lothians too.

Parent (LN): Is that consideration built into planning?

CmcG: We are trying to solve the secondary issue so we have a sustainable pathway for pupils to go right through.

Co-Chair (BL): There is no strategic leader at council level, we are pushing for that.

LG: In terms of the GLP that is held by a team called strategy and insight – there has been a lot of transformational change. So, Councillor Dickie is prioritising this. Once staff are finalised a senior leader will be identified. That is a priority.

Parent: (CP): I hope there is strategic leadership coming soon. The way you answered the previous question about developments of new primaries and potential new GME units not being a priority until the secondary provision is sorted our sounds like what gets us into this

mess in the first place. The primary school issue is racing along and we will reach capacity soon. We need to look at the whole picture.

CmcG: We didn't say that we weren't thinking about it. Estates are thinking about it, but school and lifelong learning need to come out with a strategy first.

Parent (RW): There are 24 parents here, this is time we have put in here. You are funded to be here we are not. We all filled out consultation documents and we don't know who reads them.

LG: The GIG group and the co-production group are reading it and strategy and insight. There is a new version of the Gaelic Language Plan based on this feedback. A draft of the Gaelic Language Plan will go to the Co-production group on Tuesday (13th).

CmcG: Then it goes to committee and then to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Parent (RW): But it will be central to what happens over the next six months.

Co-Chair (BL): There are 22 families that haven't been able to access sgoil-àraich for next session. What is the plan for August?

NM: I am waiting for feedback from a partnership provider.

Co-Chair (BL): Is there no option for Council provision?

NM: We are looking for a private partner to provide provision, rather than council provision as partner provider is a much faster option. If we go down the council route we will have to have qualified staff which we don't have. I am worried about robbing Peter to pay Paul so to speak.

Co-Chair (BL): Will that be in place in August?

NM: We are in discussion, it is up to the provider. They have to meet all the criteria and jump through the hoops with the Care Commission.

Co-Chair (BL): I know the Care Commission need 6 months notice of any changes to provision, so August will be problematic

NM: I need to wait for a response from the provider. We can expedite the situation with the Care Commission. If that is impossible we will go down council provider route.

Parent (CP): Are you doing parallel planning for that?

NM: Early years need to identify capacity then we need to staff it. We would need a full-time teacher – but that can be shared with TnP. But worried about taking staff from TnP to staff it and robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Parent (CD): We have a successful wraparound provider and we are grateful we have the commitment for 2018, but that is in question for 2019 – can we avoid another crisis? As the pressure of numbers grows, the question for Óganán using a classroom comes under question. If we lose that then it is a threat to school. Impact on sgoil-àraich age children is significant. Can we have a commitment as soon as possible for wraparound care?

NM: The pre-school situation is hugely complex. And in terms of a commitment we would say we are looking at the whole situation and we are aware of the problems in the situation. Priority is given to classrooms as we need to provide education.

Parent (KM): Regarding high school, I would like to see the high school provision stay at JGHS and use the Darroch campus. I think that is the solution.

CmcG: For Darroch to be used as a permanent facility needs a lot of work - £7m from the

feasibility study. No science labs. It would take time, but it would provide a solution to capacity issues at JGHS but wouldn't be a long-term solution for GME

Co-Chair (BL): You have to invest somewhere.

Parent (RW): There is a city-wide pressure for secondary – we are trying to voice our need. Short medium and long term. Short term is obvious – where are they going and when, money needs to be spent on some children in Edinburgh and we are expressing our need.

Co-Chair (BL): I know there was a feasibility study that looked at Darroch as a permanent solution, but what about the use of Darroch as an annex for JGHS. When JGHS used Darroch when they were rebuilt the main school did they need to have it refurbished?

CmcG: There is a feasibility study into it. When JGHS used it was only a temporary solution so it didn't need renovating as there was a long term solution being built.

Co-Chair (BL): How long was it used temporarily?

CmcG: Three years

Co-Chair (BL): Three years is temporary?

CmcG: When you know there is an end

Co-Chair (BL): So if we get a plan with a long-term solution it could be used?

CmcG: If you have budget and a plan.

Co-Chair (BL): There was mention for SG funding

CmcG: It is match funding, 50%. We will be asking the government.

Parent (FM): Population is growing in Leith. Council must have a plan for 10/15 years. I don't understand why the council can't just help parents that need the education for their kids coming up for the next 2 or 3 years. In Glasgow, they have had much more support than in Edinburgh.

CmcG: Glasgow is much further down the line in terms of this provision and accommodation. We are trying to develop a sustainable solution, but resources are an issue. Glasgow was already on its path when austerity really kicked in.

NM: Glasgow went to statutory consultation for third school and it was unsuccessful. We want to avoid that as it will set us back. You want the majority of parents to back the choices they are given.

Co-Chair (BL): I would just like to say what a fantastic education GME is and how much my children benefit from it.

TnP PC GIG Rep (MO): brought the meeting to a close.

\*This is a reference to the decision made by the Council in late February 2016 to strictly limit places at JGHS for the August intake that year, and to rescind places from the children who lived furthest from the school. The strict application of the geographic measure disproportionately favoured the geographic EME catchment over the GME children who live all across the city. The resulting effect was that 9 GME children were to be separated from their Gaelic speaking peers and placed at Tynecastle High School, where they would not have received GME. Following the threat of legal action by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the decision was reversed.

