

Comann nam Pàrant Dùn Èideann expansion Project 2019-2024

This document sets out the comments from Taobh na Pàirce Gaelic Medium primary school parents at a meeting on 20th March 2019. It also includes comments submitted by email from those parents unable to attend the meeting in person.

"Do you agree with the project goals of *Comann nam Pàrant Dùn Èideann expansion Project 2019-2024*?"

- Most parents agreed with the goals.
- It was felt that the goals could be more 'active' i.e. "To establish..." rather than "plan to establish..."

Goal: To work for an annual improvement in the quality of GME provision in Edinburgh from 0-18, using as best practice Foghlam Alba document: advice on Gaelic Education

- Unsure about "annual" – would "continued and sustained" be better?
- Also – "development" as well as "improvement" (i.e.: new initiatives/resources, etc.)
- Mirror what the Gaelic Language Plan goals are

Goal: To work towards the establishment of the new accommodation for nursery, primary and secondary GME pupils to ensure that GME remains open to all who wish it for their family.

- Rather than "new accommodation", something like "additional and suitable provision"
- This shouldn't just be limited to "new accommodation" but also to include resources/staffing.
- Relate the second part back to the first part as you can't have one without the other.

"What does a 'successful' Gaelic secondary school look like?"

- Children leave as confident and active adult Gaelic speakers
- Children develop the CfE 4 capacities: confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens, successful learners.
- Breadth and depth of subjects
- Learn lessons from TnP move.
- Many felt that a stand-alone school would be the preferred option to avoid the possibility of a shared campus in which the GME students are 'othered'. Gaelic identity needs equal parity with EME and should not be diluted.
- There needs to be security for students and teachers about the educational pathway.

- It should be positively integrated into Edinburgh as a school not just as a Gaelic school
- Wide educational experience – inclusive of extra curricular activities eg. Drama, media, sport.
- There should be access to good facilities – science, sports etc.
- There should be good access to pastoral care.
- The answer to this needs to align with the Gaelic Language Plan
- Successful might not be 100% taught in Gaelic (Glasgow is 64%) – so realistic aspiration for teaching would be good/useful
- There should be full Gaelic immersion or aspirations of.
- There should be ‘Cool stuff’ (extra-curricular) activities that the kids want to do.
- There should be a dynamic Head Teacher and management.
- A school that staff want to teach at and so will want to stay at the school
- Gaelic Resources for staff and students
- Good GME Learning support for pupils
- There should be access to good professional development for teachers.
- There should be an international outlook – links with other GME schools but also schools of other minority languages within Europe and beyond, e.g. Wales, Brittany, Cape Breton etc
- There should be no barriers to a positive GME environment (link in with equal parity point above).

"What criteria could be used to assess the proposals for the location and design of Edinburgh's Gaelic secondary school that will be put to us by the City of Edinburgh Council over the next year?"

General:

- The school needs to have a distinct Gaelic ethos.
- There should be a full and proper study assessing predictions on future numbers to allow for some expansion so we're not having to do all this again in 10 years. Would a joint campus place a restriction on numbers?
- A stand-alone GME school should be the ultimate aim, though caution was expressed about using joint campus / stand-alone as an exclusion criterion early on – all things should be considered.
- Hard to discuss joint campus in the abstract especially when there is no clear idea or understanding of the extent of the 'joint' element.
- What is the impact on immersion with the joint campus?
- Concern over being a minority group in a joint campus
- Decisions should be made for education reasons as well as practical reasons
- These criteria should meet whatever we have identified in question 2
- There should be a well thought out medium term plan, i.e. from now until the school opening, the transition etc.

Geographical:

- Consideration must be given to transport links and practical travel time (by car or public transport) to school from all part of the city catchment. (There is a maximum time that children can spend travelling to school – so that this criteria needs to be met (case recently in Mull where travel time to Tobermory was too long so school in the south had to remain open)).
- Consider current ‘postcodes’ of pupils v a central location.
- Given the above, it should not be at the extreme edges of the city.
- Nature of GME catchment means the GME children will also be coming into the other pupil’s geographic community – worries about them feeling ‘other’
- Can we build a community where we already are?
- Proximity to existing Primary school so that parents with children in both primary and secondary can drop off/ pick up easily.
- Active travel to school: proximity to cycle / walking network.
- Proximity to green space / space for outdoors activities. Can children walk / cycle to park, sports fields etc.
- Proximity to nearby EME schools and/or Edinburgh College to maintain a Senior Phase Curriculum offer that is broader and both academic and vocational.

Design:

- Adequate Outside space
- Good visibility and Acoustics in all classrooms , meeting halls and gyms (The less the senses are strained, the lower the children’s adrenaline production and thus the better their ability to absorb what is being said or taught to them.)
- Built to best technical standards
- The school should be designed so it could also be a potential Gaelic cultural hub.
- There should be spaces for things like the Mòd and hosting shinty/sports tournaments.
- External environment plays a fairly large part in overall academic achievement.
- That it will a school that a generation of students who are very concerned about climate change can be proud of

Appendix:

This is a link to a similar report from 2015:

<https://cnpduneideannblog.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/october-2015-cnp-secondary-development-paper.pdf>