

Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann & Lodainn)

Submission to Informal Review for GME High School

11 December 2020

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Introduction

Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann & Lodainn) (CNPDE)'s response to City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)'s pre-consultation information on the proposals for future Gaelic secondary provision in Edinburgh, December 2020.

In October 2020, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) published pre-consultation information on the proposals for future Gaelic secondary provision in Edinburgh. In addition to the published information, in November 2020, CEC held two virtual Parent and Carers meetings during which additional detail about the proposals was provided.

CNPDE is a voluntary association, which aims to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in Edinburgh and the Lothians. It is the representative body for parents and carers with children in GME. This report summarises the activities undertaken by CNPDE during this informal consultation and the outcomes of those activities.

This report aims to reflect the collective opinions of the families who engaged with the activities undertaken by CNPDE. CNPDE has also strongly encouraged families to submit their own responses to the proposals by email to CEC, as requested. We look forward to publication of the outcomes report for this informal consultation, which CEC have stated will “reflect the discussions, address all comments and questions received, and conclude which option(s) will be progressed to statutory consultation”.

Engagement Activities

2.1 Awareness-raising about informal consultation

Parents and carers with children at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce (TnP) and James Gillespie's High School (JGHS) were informed about this informal consultation by emails sent from each school. In order to raise the profile of the consultation, it was also advertised through the CNPDE mailing list and social media pages, the TnP ParentMail system, the TnP Parent Council social media pages and the James Gillespie's High School (JGHS) Parent Council, to raise awareness about the consultation among the GME community in Edinburgh during the consultation period.

CNPDE's messaging aimed to encourage the community to engage with and respond to CEC's proposals by submitting their comments and questions to CEC and by attending the virtual public meetings organised by CEC. Typically, CNPDE would also focus on face-to-face activities including distribution of information leaflets to parents and carers at TnP. However, due to restrictions required to curb the spread of COVID-19, these activities were not possible during the informal consultation period.

2.2 CNPDE

CNPDE recognises that, in the main, CEC's proposals for secondary GME are likely to have the greatest impact on families whose children are currently in primary school. It is, therefore, difficult for these families to meaningfully appraise the proposals, prior to having detailed insight into the current GME arrangements at JGHS in terms of Gaelic immersion and subject choices, nor the complexities of secondary school curricula and examination arrangements.

CNPDE also recognise that, on the basis of statements made by CEC at a meeting with the TnP parent body in January 2020, many families had expected the pre-consultation documents to contain a fuller appraisal of the four potential options for GME secondary provision identified by CEC, including two possible sites for a stand-alone GME High School.

Taking these issues into account, CNPDE decided to undertake two activities in order to support and encourage GME families to engage with the proposals. These comprised (i) a survey in order to ascertain to what extent GME families feel that the current proposals align with the [criteria](#) for evaluating any proposal for secondary GME provision that were agreed with the parent body in 2019 following on from meetings and discussion that have taken place since 2015 and (ii) an interactive meeting which would provide an opportunity for discussion of various aspects of the proposals.

2.2.1 Survey

CNPDE created a survey using Survey Monkey and circulated this using the same email and social media channels as detailed in section 2.1. The questions contained in the survey are summarised below:

"CnP have consulted parents and carers of children in GME for many years, particularly throughout 2019 and 2020, on their priorities for secondary education. From these discussions, we agreed on priorities and criteria for provision of secondary GME in Edinburgh.

We would like to understand if these priorities and criteria are still current and relevant to our community. Please indicate below how you agree with them.

- Priority 1: A high-quality education in a well-managed school, with a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular activities offered, along with full support for learning.
Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- Priority 2: An enhanced Gaelic immersion experience as part of the above, with an aim to produce confident and fluent adult Gaelic speakers.
Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- Criteria 1: That any location should support the educational aims of high-quality education within a Gaelic immersion environment, and should provide a permanent home for GME secondary.
Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- Criteria 2: In terms of geography, the specific needs of a city-wide catchment need to

be carefully considered

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

- Criteria 3: Design and environment play a large part in successful education, and this should be fully considered; alongside considerations of impact on wider environment.
Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- Are there any other criteria that are important to you that you would like us to consider? [Free text]
- Did you attend either of the two virtual meetings on the 25th or the 30th November run by the Council to share information on their proposed plan? Yes, No
- Do you feel the Council's preferred location offers the scope to create a school that meets the priorities and criteria outlined above? Yes, No, Not sure. Please tell us why (optional) [Free text]
- From the information you have been given, do you feel that the current plan has the potential to achieve the successful delivery of GME at secondary level? Yes, No, Not sure. Please tell us why (optional) [Free text]
- Is the Council's preferred location suitable for a city-wide catchment area? Yes, No, Not sure. Tell us why (optional) [Free text]
- Finally, tell us what year in school you have children in?"

2.2.2 Virtual Meeting

CNPDE held a virtual meeting for families on Thursday 3 December 2020. The meeting was advertised using the same email and social media channels detailed in Section 2.1 above. A total of 48 families pre-registered and attended the meeting. At the meeting families were given the opportunity, in groups of 6-8 people, to address three questions relating to the proposal under consultation:

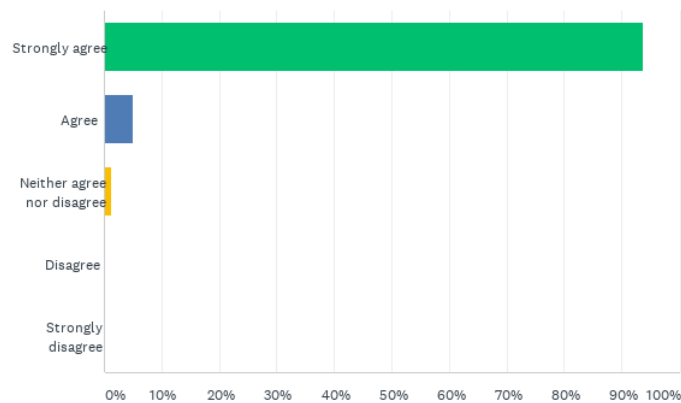
- What do we like about the proposal?
- What concerns do we have about the proposal?
- What measures might allay those concerns?

The outcomes of those small groups were discussed in the main meeting and are summarised below. This report – and, therefore, the summary of the outcomes of the meeting – were circulated to the meeting attendees for comment prior to submission to CEC. As such, CNPDE are confident that those outcomes are an accurate reflection of the opinions expressed by parents and carers who attended the meeting.

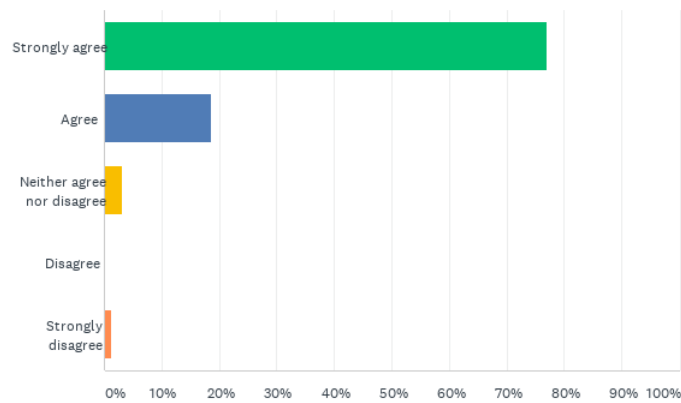
Survey Results

The survey had 157 responses.

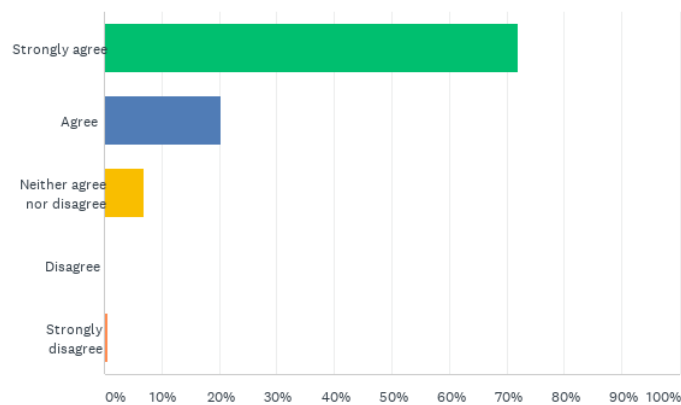
Q1 Tha Comann nam Pàrant Dhùn Èideann is Lodainn na buidheann airson teaghlaichean air feadh Dhùn Èideann agus Lodainn. Comann nam Pàrant Dùn Èideann (CnP) is an organisation that provides a campaigning voice for all families in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in Edinburgh. We represent the views of parents, and are using this survey to inform our response to Edinburgh Council's ("the Council") upcoming consultation on the relocation of secondary GME from James Gillespie's Hlgh School to a new location. Points to note: - This survey will take a few minutes to complete- We will not capture any personal data -To find out more about thebackground to this consultation please see our blog Thank you for taking the time to give us your views. Priorities and CriteriaCnP have consulted parents and carers of children in GME for many years, particularly throughout 2019 and 2020, on their priorities for secondary education. From these discussions, we agreed on priorities and criteria for provision of secondary GME in Edinburgh. A document which outlines this in more detail can be found here: [An overview of GME priorities](#)We would like to understand if these priorities and criteria are still current and relevant to our community. Please indicate below how you agree with them. Priority 1: A high-quality education in a well-managed school, with a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular activities offered, along with full support for learning.



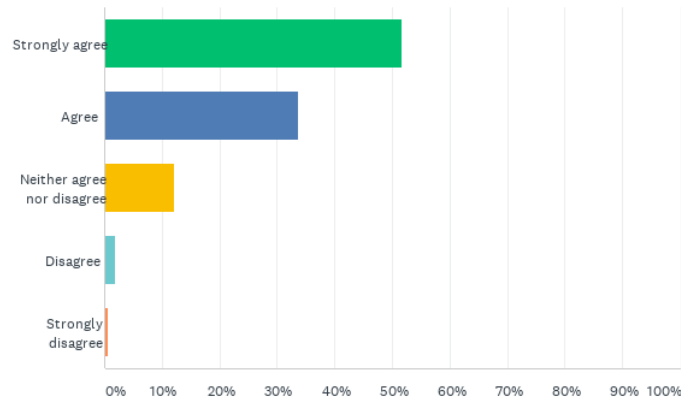
Q2 Priority 2: An enhanced Gaelic immersion experience as part of the above, with an aim to produce confident and fluent adult Gaelic speakers.



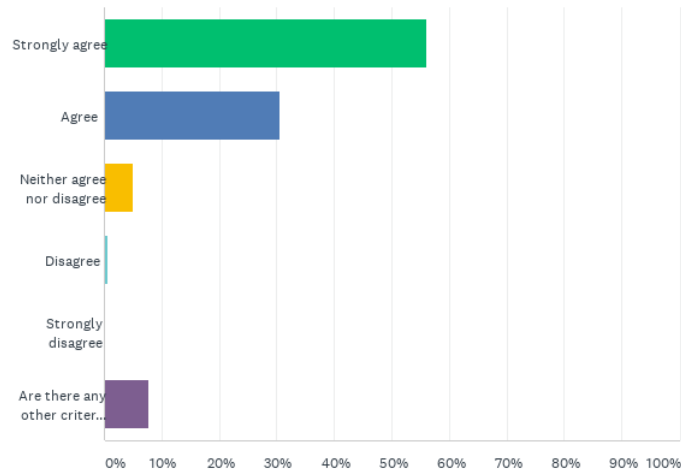
Q3 Criteria 1: That any location should support the educational aims of high quality education within a Gaelic immersion environment, and should provide a permanent home for GME secondary.



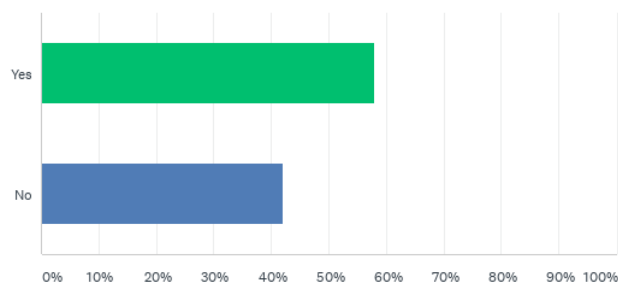
Q4 Criteria 2: In terms of geography, the specific needs of a city-wide catchment need to be carefully considered



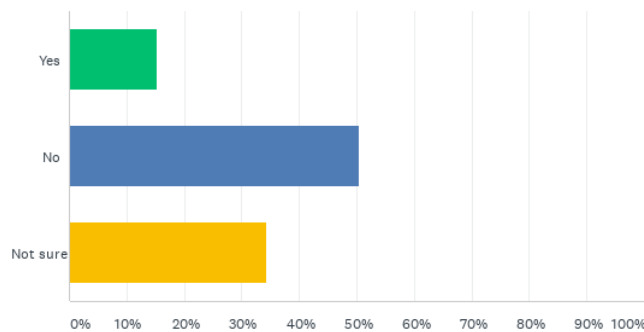
Q5 Criteria 3: Design and environment play a large part in successful education, and this should be fully considered; alongside considerations of impact on wider environment.



Q6 Did you attend either of the two virtual meetings on the 25th or the 30th November run by the Council to share information on their proposed plan?



Q7 Do you feel the Council's preferred location offers the scope to create a school that meets the priorities and criteria outlined above?



51% of the respondents **did not feel** that the Council's preferred location offered the scope to create a school that meets our priorities and criteria. Analysis of the feedback on this point offers the following themes:

- The most common concern was **over a joint campus** in terms of the quality of Gaelic immersion it offers and concerns about how the GME High School would integrate and engage with the EME school.

“Co-located school will not promote Gaelic education, culture and confident identity as much as an own-site campus could. Concern regarding GME pupils receiving a significant proportion of their lessons in the EME neighbouring school.”

- The **location was the next most common area for concern**. These related to Liberton not being considered central, the transport links not being adequate and the distance from the existing primary school.

“Liberton is not central. It's too far from the current GME primary school and therefore the location will be a big deterrent for many families, especially those whose children may not be able to cope with the long travel time (due to ASN). The location does not take into account sustainable transport plans for the city.”

- Other reasons for not feeling that the proposal offered the scope were:
 - Feeling that there was only one option being presented which did not allow for a proper assessment of the options and a feeling that the Council was pressurising GME into its preferred option.
 - Concern over transition plans, particularly in relation to the experience of the S1 and S2 cohort which could end up isolated and having a negative experience on a shared campus.

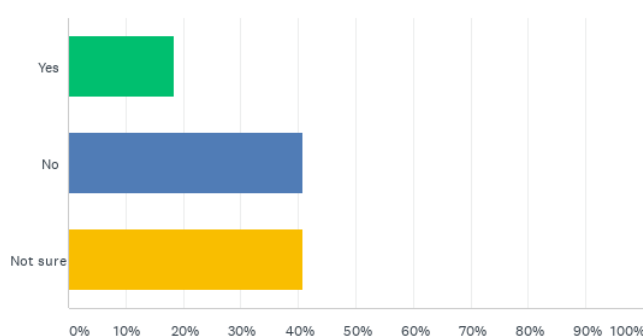
Of the respondents who were **not sure**, their reasons mirrored that of the “no” group. The additional theme in this group was that they did not feel they had enough information in the proposal to properly assess it.

“There has not been enough information to make an informed decision. There are MAJOR concerns and these have not been answered or addressed in the consultation exercise.”

15% of the respondents answered “**yes**” to this question. Reasons given for this were:

- The location was a positive thing and made GME more accessible for those in the Lothians.
- The solution was not perfect, but they were pragmatic about what was possible.
- Co-location with an EME school offered the positive option of a good range of subjects to support the curriculum.

Q8 From the information you have been given, do you feel that the current plan has the potential to achieve the successful delivery of GME at secondary level?



82% of respondents answered “no” or “unsure” to the question “from the information you have been given, do you feel that the current plan as the potential to achieve the successful delivery of GME at secondary level?”.

The reasons given for the answers were consistent across these two groups.

- **Co-location and the impact on language immersion** were the most frequently cited, as seen in the question above.
- **Lack of planning and that this seemed a “rush”** was the next most common comment from respondents. Concerns were around the lack of thoroughness in the planning, lack of data and the feeling that the Council are trying to rush this plan through to solve an estates problem.

“It is clear that the Council are trying to rush through a proposal purely on its financial merits and with the aim of getting us out of JGHS, without consideration of the long-term good of GME in Edinburgh.”

- **Recruitment and retention of teaching staff** was the next most common theme to emerge from these two groups. Concerns were that the location, sharing a campus and being so far from the primary school would not make this an attractive proposal for staff.

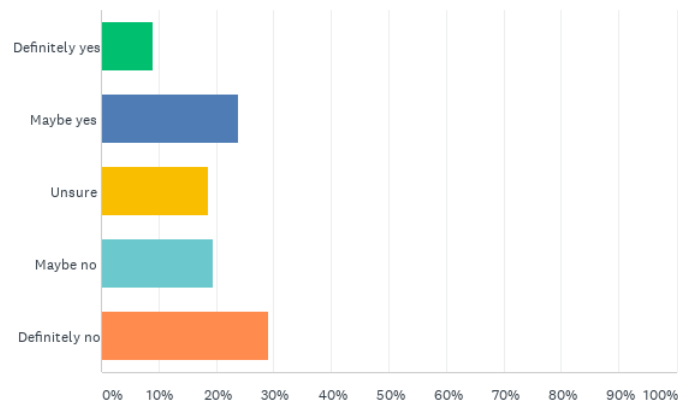
“Gaelic teachers are hard to source yet this proposal will require more teachers for opposite ends of the city instead of allowing for an easily accessible shared (Gaelic speaking) resource.”

- **The impact on the S1 and S2 cohort that first transitioned** was also mentioned. It was felt that the number of these children was not sufficient and that they were at risk of suffering educationally in the move, which might cause families to lose confidence and abandon GME. These comments were accompanied by suggestions that the **planning for a second GME primary school** was further considered by the Council alongside secondary planning.

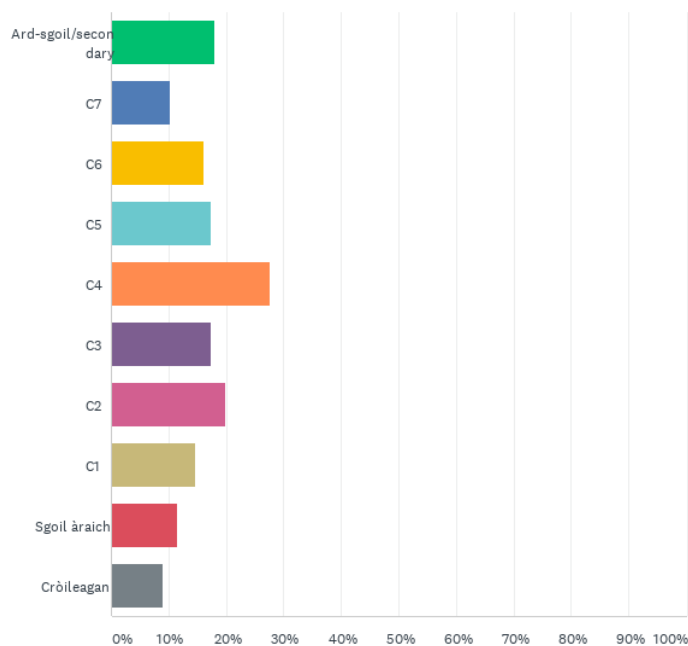
“In the lifetime of the current P3 and P4 students in particular, the information received to date provides little assurance that their (particular) needs have been considered and that the offer is better than what is currently available for GME students, or by moving the children into the standard catchment (English) secondary school.”

The 18% who answered “yes” to this question were optimistic that the planning would happen and the proposal could be made a success. The uncertainty was acknowledged and how that would impact the response. However, this group was also positive about the education opportunities offered by being co-located with an EME school.

Q9 Is the Council's preferred location suitable for a city-wide catchment area?



Q10 Finally, tell us what year in school you have children in



Feedback from CNPDE Parent and Carers meeting

The table below summarises and collates the comments reported by the various groups at the meeting on 3 December 2020.

Participants were split into 6 groups. The numbers in bold after the statement indicate the group or groups which made the relevant comments.

What do we like about the current proposal?
Substance
There is a proposal and it would give Gaelic a permanent, secure home, alleviating some uncertainty. (1, 2, 4, 5, 6)
The site is more central for the Lothians as a whole. It is reasonably accessible by public transport. (2, 3)
It may be the most central location available. If all GME pupils come together as one cohort rather than being in an EME school, they are at least travelling together. (6)
The site is large, allowing expansion and additional Gaelic facilities (including perhaps a primary school) and separation between the EME school and the GME High School. (1, 2, 3)
Minimal shared facilities with the EME school would allow for a Gaelic “language bubble”. (1)
There will be plenty of outdoor space and good sports facilities. (6)
The school would be a new build, avoiding the challenges that come with refurbishing an existing building. (6)
The shared campus which could help with curricular and extra-curricular support for a small cohort and would facilitate proper embedding in the community to form local relationships. (2)
Staff would be in one place and not as scattered as they are now. (2,6)
There is no realistic alternative. (2)
The centre of excellence for languages and Gaelic cultural hub both sound exciting. (4)
A shuttlebus would alleviate some of the concerns about links between TnP (and the community around it) and a GME High School in Liberton. (3,5)
The Council have managed to grow the number of GME teachers in place at James Gillespie’s (JGHS) and they will transfer to the new school. (1)
Process
The Council are committed to making the GME High School happen and to GME. (4,6)

We heard directly from the councillors. **(5)**

The Council have thought about the benefits for Liberton of having GME alongside them. **(4)**

The Council have engaged with the Parent Council CNPDE through the Gaelic Implementation Group, and this is reflected in the consultation report. **(3,4)**

There is an interim plan - Darroch - which shows a bit of thinking of how we get from A to B to C. **(1,4)**

This proposal, although not fully thought through, is more thought through than any previous proposals. **(3,4,5)**

There is recognition that GME is growing and of the need for a second primary. **(5)**

A leadership team is in place and the Gaelic Champion and Quality Improvement Officer have a better understanding of GME. **(5)**

Communication has been better in terms of positivity and commitment to GME. **(6)**

The Council want to consult parents and carers on questions of design. **(6)**

The following section covers the second two questions:

- What are our concerns about the proposal?
- What do we think might allay those concerns?

Relationship between the new GME High School and Liberton	
What are our concerns about the current proposal?	What do we think might allay those concerns?
<p>How would co-location affect immersion? Immersion is difficult to create even in ideal circumstances, but on a shared campus this would be more difficult. It would need to be a substantially different set up to that in JGHS for parents and carers to buy into the move. (1, 2, 3, 4, 6)</p>	<p>Maximising physical separation: it's a big site, do the two schools really need to be right next to each other as in the current designs? (2, 3)</p> <p>A primary school at the same location to boost numbers of Gaelic learners onsite and to encourage community involvement from people in Liberton. (3)</p> <p>The distinct management teams at the two schools need to build an effective relationship. (2)</p> <p>Clarity around the curriculum support expected from other schools. This would be less of a concern if the teachers were coming to the school rather than the pupils moving to other schools. (3,6)</p>
<p>There is a lack of clarity surrounding how co-location will look. What will be shared? Will it be one big 'superschool'? If sharing is done well, it could be positive, but more detail is needed. (1,4,5)</p>	<p>Clarity about the size of the site owned by the Council to show how much opportunity there is for expansion. (1)</p> <p>In order to allay concerns over co-location, more detail around how it will work is needed from the Council. (3,4)</p> <p>More opportunities need to be developed for using Gaelic outside school. (4)</p>
<p>The GME High School, certainly in the early years, would very much be the 'little sibling' to the larger school. How would the Gaelic pupils be supported as the minority? There are concerns about the Gaelic pupils being seen as 'different' because of the language and whether this might make them feel more exposed when the cohort is only 100 or so pupils. Is there an existing Gaelic community of any size in Liberton? (2, 3, 5, 6)</p>	<p>A primary at the same location would boost the numbers of Gaelic learners onsite and encourage community involvement from people in Liberton. (2, 3)</p> <p>The distinct management teams need to build an effective relationship. (2, 3)</p> <p>Gaelic being offered as a modern language for EME students on the site in order to cross-pollinate and register commitment to the shared site. (6)</p>

How will the pupils being separated send a positive message to young people about how to act as a community? (6)	
Some parents are still shaken by their experience with the Council's consultation relating to Drummond which was poorly handled and resulted in negative press coverage and unpleasant social media messages. Parents are concerned that history might repeat itself – how will the Council avoid this situation in the future? How has the council engaged with the Liberton community to date? (1, 5)	Council to deliver some engagement activities between the two communities including visits to Parent Council Meetings (1, 6)
Is there a risk that the GME pupils will be absorbed into Liberton High School if the roll drops? (1)	Clarity about what happens if the GME roll in the High School drops very low and about what would happen were the roll to become unsustainable. (1)
	Are there design elements that represent best practice that could be incorporated into the school? (1)

Relationship between the new GME High School, TnP and any other primary	
What are our concerns about the current proposal?	What do we think might allay those concerns?
There is a dislocation between the current primary school and Liberton. The demographics of TnP have changed (the recent end of day change for C1 and C2 reflects that far fewer of these pupils are taking buses than previously). While the new GME High School will have a city-wide catchment, not enough consideration has gone into location – the distance might put parents and carers of children in TnP off choosing GME for High School. (2, 4) Liberton is not very accessible for those living in the west of Edinburgh. (4)	Give firm assurances and more detail on shuttle buses. (2, 4)
Siblings will be split between Liberton and JGHS. (4)	
Continued support for shuttle buses is open to question in light of council objectives on traffic pollution. (5)	Give firm assurances and more detail on shuttle buses. (5)
What is the clear plan for Darroch? Some indications point to use as a second primary, others that it would be needed for JGHS in the medium term. (5)	Clarity and a detailed plan to be published for delivery of GME to 2035. (5)

Transition planning/curriculum	
What are our concerns about the current proposal?	What do we think might allay those concerns?
Will those currently in C4 be guinea pigs? What will their quality of education be like? (1)	There must be a well thought-out, well-prepared and structured educational plan to ensure that current C4 are not guinea pigs. A much clearer and more developed transition plan is necessary. More GME teachers and a much higher ratio of teachers to pupils is needed. (1)
<p>The school will have a very small cohort in the early stages. (2, 3, 6)</p> <p>It was noted that there would be a lack of support for the S1/S2 cohort when the school opens, and that they would be isolated without older peers. This small, young cohort would also face challenges. (1, 3, 4, 6)</p>	<p>Embed in Darroch first for some years to build up to sustainable numbers. (2)</p> <p>Build a primary school on the Liberton site first, eventually providing us with a 3-18 campus. This would alleviate ongoing pressure on TnP ensuring we build numbers in advance. (2, 3)</p> <p>A coherent and explicit plan is needed to address this issue. (3)</p> <p>It was suggested that a strong connection between the two schools would be necessary. (1, 3, 4)</p>
How do we offer a diverse wide curriculum with small cohort? (1, 2, 6)	<p>Co-operation with EME school onsite (2)</p> <p>Primary opened earlier to help boost numbers. (1, 2, 3)</p> <p>More extensive exploration of how a stable teaching cohort was built up in Glasgow. (3)</p>
The curriculum offer is still vague and parents would like more clarity from the Council on this. . Which model would be used at the new school – 3:3 or 2:2:2? Would e-Sgoil be used, and to what extent? e-Sgoil should not be relied on too heavily. (1, 3, 4, 5, 6)	<p>A clearer plan with more explicit detail about delivery of the curriculum to be circulated ahead of any further consultation. (3,4)</p> <p>Clearer information on the use of e-Sgoil and on any evaluation on the use of e-Sgoil. (1)</p>
Staffing: there is a lack of a staffing plan from the Council. (4,5)	<p>A clear staffing strategy is required from the Council, alongside funding details for this. (1,3,4)</p> <p>More extensive exploration of how a stable teaching cohort was built up in Glasgow. (3)</p>
Lack of clarity around the provision that would be made at Darroch in the interim. (3)	Clarification of how classes at Darroch would work, in particular the extent to which GME pupils would be sent to schools other than the JGHS. (3)

What provision would be made for the GME pupils above S2, who would continue at JGHS, after the GME teachers had moved? (3,5)	A clear plan. (3)
The school roll could be very low to begin with, since there will be no second primary until the secondary school opens. (1)	

Process	
What are our concerns about the current proposal?	What do we think might allay those concerns?
There is a lack of detail in the proposals: many elements are not laid out clearly enough to enable evaluation. (1)	
The proposal lacks ambition or any vision for Gaelic as being at the heart of life in the city. (3)	
There is no evidence of any effort to secure the additional funding which would be necessary for a stand-alone option. (5)	
There is a feeling that the council has not appraised each of the sites properly, especially with regard to their locations. (4, 5, 6)	<p>A better appraisal of all four options (rather than one which is weighted in favour of Liberton), particularly Castlebrae and Granton, which are stand-alone, in developing areas and have (or will have) connections to active travel and public transport networks. (5,6)</p> <p>Acknowledgement that Liberton is not central. (5)</p> <p>A positive case for the merits of the Liberton site that does not depend on budgets or deliverability. (3)</p>
The findings of the report by McLeod, O'Rourke and Simpson have not really been addressed. (6)	
The process appears to be rushed through at a funding low-point? (5)	Is the timeframe realistic for a successful transition? 2 or 3 more years at JGHS to allow the consolidation of the delivery of GME and to allow proper appraisal of all the options. (5,6)
	Clarity about the consequences of the Liberton option being turned down in light of the rising rolls at JGHS. (6)
	Can the Council offer tours of the site so that we have a clearer idea of what is planned and how much space there is? (1)

General accessibility	
What are our concerns about the current proposal?	What do we think might allay those concerns?
The site is not easily accessible by active travel for a large portion of the city. (3)	A more central location. (3)
The site is not well situated for access by either bus or train. (5)	

Conclusion

We welcome the prospect of a new, permanent home for Gaelic at the secondary level and thank the Council Officers and team for all their work on this proposal. After the last CEC engagement event in January 2020, the majority of parents/carers felt that they did not have enough information on which to make a decision based on the information provided for the four options that had been tabled. CNPDE has welcomed the opportunity over the last year to provide the CEC with feedback relating to parents and carers concerns and to request information that the parents/carers have requested to make an informed decision about their children's education. It is in this spirit that we draw our conclusions and recommendations.

Our survey indicates that the key parental priorities that we reported last year have been reaffirmed. There remains, however, substantial doubt amongst a large number of parents and carers about whether this proposal meets these priorities (see the discussion on Question 7 in *Survey Results*).

At this stage, only a minority of parents and carers positively support CEC's preferred option, with a much larger minority against and a significant number remaining unsure about the plan.

In our meeting with parents and carers we discussed what their particular concerns were and what steps, if any, could be taken to address them.

Key issues:

- **Concerns around a shared campus.** This can be separated into two key areas: a) concerns around protecting language immersion, and b) concerns around being a new, smaller school sharing a site with an already established school with a substantially larger cohort (the issue with the size of the cohort is compounded in the early years in particular- see below),
- **Concerns around the timescale and transition.** While there would likely be issues with a transition to any new site, some of these may be exacerbated by this particular proposal. The proposed timescale and transition would produce a very small cohort at first which will, in turn, result in a diminished overall experience for those students (e.g. with regards to staffing and over-reliance on EME and/or e-Sgoil).
- **Concerns around location.** While our survey has reaffirmed the community's position that the school has to be appropriately positioned for pupils across Edinburgh (and the Lothians), the results of the survey indicate that large numbers of parents and carers do not believe that the council's preferred option delivers this.

In response to these issues, a number of potential solutions were discussed (see *Feedback from CNPDE Parent and Carers meeting*) with the main ones listed below. While we cannot say that the adoption of the following points would be sufficient to attract majority support (still less a large

majority or even consensus position), we do think that the following points would need to be incorporated if CEC hopes to appeal to more parents and carers:

1. Early building of a primary school, perhaps as part of 3-18 campus. This would: a) embed GME in the local community in the same way that TnP has done in North Edinburgh, with more local families making use of it; b) quickly increase the numbers of pupils entering the GME Secondary thus addressing some concerns regarding having a small cohort; and c) increase the overall numbers of pupils in GME onsite countering some of the relative size disparity between the GME and EME schools.
2. Further consideration should be given to the layout of the site. While physical barriers would be undesirable, is greater 'breathing space' between the two schools possible than is indicated in the current plans (cf. St Augustine's and Forrester's)?
3. More detail on the facilities, including what exactly is to be shared (e.g. the proposal indicates that sports facilities will be shared but what does that include?).
4. Clarification of curriculum offer at the new Gaelic school in 2025 – and what curriculum support would be offered from Liberton and/or e-Sgoil. What would the proposed curriculum offer be to ensure pupils have the widest choice of options?
5. Assurances over staffing. When Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu was opened the council ensured that it was staffed to a level where it could offer a full curriculum in Gaelic despite its relatively small cohort in the beginning. Parent concerns around over-reliance on the neighbouring EME school or e-Sgoil could be allayed by a similar commitment from Edinburgh Council to staff the school to an appropriate level for a successful transition and not rely on the standard formula used to calculate staffing levels.
6. Assurances over transport from other parts of the city. Positive indications were given at the Edinburgh Council meetings that there could be emission-free shuttle buses to and from other parts of the city to address concerns about the distance and accessibility. A commitment to these and/or other similar measures would be welcome.
7. Extension of the timetable, bedding in at Darroch for a longer period of time which would allow GME teaching capacity to grow and for the establishment of a second primary school which could support numbers in the new secondary to ensure a thriving GME community from the beginning.
8. When Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu was set up, their Gaelic Development Officer (GDO) had a key role which was crucial in securing the confidence of parents and carers in the development of the plans. Similarly, when TnP was set up, the Gaelic Development Officer (who was a long-standing member of the Gaelic community) was there to provide information and support to parents and carers and to act as a conduit for questions and concerns. The ambition of Edinburgh is to deliver a GME High School and a second primary school, building staff numbers and utilising e-Sgoil, alongside developing early years to

deliver 1140 hours per child and running Cròileagan groups across the city. It would be beneficial to have a Project Manager to oversee the successful delivery of this growth strategy, working across CEC, TnP and JGHS as well as liaising with parents to build confidence ahead of the transition. It will also be important in the years ahead to have someone actively promoting GME across the city, to ensure that the number of pupils in GME continues to grow and therefore ensure the viability of the GME High School over time. The appointment of a person to this role ahead of a statutory consultation would be significant.

The growth of GME in Edinburgh has accelerated significantly, especially at secondary level, over the last couple of years. We would like to extend our thanks to the staff teams at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce and James Gillespie's High School, along with Council Officers and Councillors for their support in achieving this.

Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann & Lodainn) will continue to work closely with City of Edinburgh Council during what continues to be an exciting period of growth and expansion for GME in the city. GME parents and carers are committed to taking a collaborative approach towards securing a successful outcome for the education of our children.

Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann & Lodainn) 10 December 2020