



cnpduneideann@gmail.com  
By email

23 December 2021

Iain is Alison còire

**Re: correspondence between the City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government**

We write to you in relation to your letter to Shirley Anne Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, dated 21 December 2021, which was in response to the Scottish Government's letter regarding a site for a new Gaelic Medium Education (GME) secondary school for Edinburgh, dated 14 December 2021, both of which you kindly shared with Comann nam Pàrant (CnP) on 23 December 2021.

The Cabinet Secretary's letter notes that *'it would be premature for the Scottish Government to indicate any financial commitment to one particular option in advance of a [feasibility] study being carried out.'* and *'that significant questions remain both about the cost, viability and availability of the Royal Victoria site in the timescales needed. These are important questions and again the proposal of a feasibility study would provide the necessary clarity on this and other options and would assist with decision making.'*

CnP agrees with the Cabinet Secretary's suggestion and welcomes her support to undertake a feasibility study. CnP sees this as a commitment to take the steps necessary to achieve the successful and strategic development of GME which families seek.

Your response, however, states that *'[the Scottish Government] are not in a position - even in principle - to provide extra funding to build a new Gaelic secondary school.'* and goes on to say that *'consequently, it is not possible to include the Victoria site in our Statutory Consultation. We are therefore left with the two options to put to the Gaelic parents. The co-located option at Liberton and stand-alone option at Craigmillar.'*

CnP disagrees with this interpretation. The Cabinet Secretary has, in fact, stated that without a feasibility study, the Scottish Government is not in a position to comment on financial commitment. She has **not** stated that the Scottish Government would be unable to provide financial support, only that this cannot be confirmed until a feasibility study is carried out first.

CnP also finds the Council's conclusion concerning, in particular the action to discount an option without undertaking the feasibility study as suggested. We remind the Council, once again, that without the detailed, high quality information required, it is impossible for families to engage meaningfully in any consultation.

In our meeting of 14 December 2021, you asserted your belief that discussions with the Scottish Government will be concluded prior to the start of any statutory consultation. As it stands, there is no conclusion, and to proceed to statutory consultation now will be viewed by many as unreasonable. CnP, and the families we represent, expect the Council to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to undertake the level of due diligence required before any consultation begins. Failure to do so will lead families to question whether it is truly educational benefits to our children which are at the heart of any consultation.

Le dùrachdan

Comann nam Pàrant  
(Dùn Èideann is Lodainn)