



cnpduneideann@gmail.com

By email

9 December 2021

Alison is Iain còire

**Re: Education, Children and Families Committee, Tuesday 7 December**

On behalf of GME families across Edinburgh and the Lothians, we write to you to express our disappointment at the decision taken on Tuesday 7 December by the Education, Children and Families Committee to disregard the concerns of GME families, instead voting to accept the Council's report on Gaelic Medium Education Statutory Consultation.

Over the past year, Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann is Lodainn) has repeatedly highlighted the longstanding concerns of GME families regarding the proposals for a new high school. We have undertaken a survey and held meetings for parents, collaborated with families in writing our deputation in May 2021, and communicated with the Council through letters and meetings. Most recently, we submitted a written deputation to the Education, Children and Families Committee meeting held 7 December 2021, outlining again the range of issues which have not been addressed, and highlighting information gaps, a lack of strategic planning and areas which require clarity.

We are greatly concerned by the decision to agree to a proposal which includes starting a statutory consultation process on 31 January 2022. There is insufficient time for the Council to fully establish engagement with parents, or to provide the requisite detailed information for GME families to make an informed decision, or for families themselves to fully consider each option. In addition, of significant concern is the absence of a clear strategic approach to support the growth needed in GME at secondary level and the way in which this aligns with the Scottish Government's national ambition for, and commitment to, Gaelic.

Without such a strategy in place, coupled with robust information, clear communication, substantial engagement, and the time for GME families to fully consider options, there is a very real risk that GME families will not have confidence in the proposal. This, in turn, puts the statutory consultation process in jeopardy. Comann nam Pàrant is fully aware that the

success of a new GME high school relies on the support of the families and community it serves; we strongly encourage the Council to acknowledge this too.

In her letter to the Council dated 26 November 2021, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills stated that further information about CEC's proposals for GME secondary school provision is required in order to determine what support is available from the Scottish Government, in line with the SNP's recent manifesto commitment to GME in Edinburgh. We are sure that you would agree that it would be completely inappropriate for either an informal consultation or a statutory consultation to commence without this avenue being explored as fully as possible.

The ambition for a new GME high school for Edinburgh is hugely significant for the growth of GME, and we recognise the considerable steps taken over the years in working together to achieve this goal. But the Council must ensure that any proposal and outcome is guided by the views of GME families, and that the GME community is fully included at every step of the journey towards a new high school. Comann nam Pàrant is committed to the GME families we represent and we will continue to advocate on their behalf, listen to their concerns and amplify their voices.

Leis gach deagh dhùrachd

Comann nam Pàrant  
(Dùn Èideann is Lodainn)