



Statement regarding the outcome of the Education, Children and Families Committee meeting

Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann is Lodainn) is deeply disappointed by the decision taken today (7 December 2021) 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.

In the report, the Council recommended that a proposed Statutory Consultation Paper be presented for consideration to a special meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee in January 2022.

The Council has asserted that parents have full knowledge of what is being offered in the proposal and that consultation has been ongoing for sufficient time. Comann nam Pàrant cannot agree with either of these statements, and has repeatedly outlined serious concerns over the past year, through letters, reports, meetings and deputations.

The Council has not made it clear what the potential options will be for a new GME high school, or how it aligns with Scottish Government ambitions for Gaelic, nor have they given adequate information on crucial issues such as curriculum, immersion, transition or staffing. All of these are central concerns for GME families who have the right to participate in this process from a fully informed position. They are unable to do so without meaningful communication and engagement from the Council.

The Council has not undertaken this in a substantial enough way during 2021, and we firmly believe that there is insufficient time for the Council to complete the necessary strategic planning, communication and engagement prior to 31 January 2022, the proposed start date of the public consultation period.

Comann nam Pàrant submitted a [written deputation to the Education, Children and Families committee](#) ahead of today's meeting. In our deputation, we asked the committee **not** to agree to the Council's report due to the significant concerns we have with the proposal, including but not limited to:

- Absence of clear educational benefits for the different options
- Lack of a strategic approach to deliver the growth needed in GME at secondary level, guided by an objective to deliver the highest quality of education through Gaelic in the best possible setting

- Failure to fully address the concerns and questions that Comann nam Pàrant raised during the informal consultation period
- Absence of strategic planning for the recruitment and retention of Gaelic speaking teaching staff and for how the Council aims to increase the proportion of curriculum delivered through Gaelic.
- Absence of financial planning for the holistic development of GME from 0-18 years in Edinburgh, and, crucially,
- **Insufficient time for the Council to meaningfully engage with GME families on their proposals, putting the success of any statutory consultation in jeopardy.**

We requested that the Council instead take the time to prepare and present detailed pre-consultation information, to communicate and engage with families in a more comprehensive way, and to fully address the concerns raised by Comann nam Pàrant in the past year. The Council cannot reasonably expect to establish, maintain and develop this engagement with parents on such a significant matter in the short timeframe.

Comann nam Pàrant will continue to advocate for GME families across Edinburgh and the Lothians and we strongly encourage all GME families to share their feedback and concerns: cnpduneideann@gmail.com