

Glencorse Primary School - Consultation

Report by Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships

Report for Decision

1 Recommendations

Council is requested to authorise the Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships to undertake statutory consultation on the proposal to permanently discontinue primary education at Glencorse Primary School and to extend the catchment areas of the neighbouring primary schools to include the Glencorse catchment area.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

This report advises that Glencorse Primary School is no longer viable due to the falling roll and very small numbers of children attending. In light of the majority of parents not being in agreement with the option to mothball the school, this report advises the best course of action is to proceed without delay to statutory consultation on this proposal.

Date: 4 August 2020

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3 Background

The *Education (Scotland) Act 1980* places a legislative duty on the Council to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across its area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand.

Section 3D of the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000* (as inserted by Section 2 of the 2016 Act) introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework. It is, therefore, the duty of the education authority to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children to their fullest potential.

In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* by continuous improvement in performance of the local authority's functions, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities and the achievement of sustainable development.

There are 73 primary-aged children residing in Glencorse Primary School catchment, however there are only 7 pupils currently attending Glencorse within one composite P4-P7 class. This is the third year where families have decided to make a choice other than Glencorse for their children who are starting primary school, as a result, the school has had no Primary 1 intake since 2017. Appendix C

Currently, there are around thirty schools with a school roll of 7 or less across Scotland's 2,010 primary schools, most of these are in very rural locations, including the Scottish islands. Glencorse, situated in the Penicuik settlement, 1.8 miles from Penicuik town centre, with four other primary schools within a 2 mile radius is not a rural school. Children from the Glencorse catchment area who attend other schools in this neighbourhood continue to benefit from education in a locality familiar to them, and still relatively close to home.

In June 2020 we held a virtual parental engagement meeting and subsequently wrote to parents offering them the option to mothball the school from October 2020 or June 2021 to allow time to develop and agree on the optimal solution for primary school provision for the Glencorse catchment and to defer undertaking statutory consultation. The majority of parents were not in agreement.

In these circumstances we consider that the best course of action is to proceed without delay to statutory consultation on the proposal to:

- Permanently discontinue the provision of primary education at Glencorse Primary School with effect from 25 June 2021, and

- Extend the catchment areas of the neighbouring primary schools, namely Bilston, Mauricewood, Roslin and Strathesk, to include the catchment area of Glencorse Primary School.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) sits at the heart of what Midlothian Council is committed to achieving in terms of raising attainment and achievement, and improving educational outcomes for all children. CfE is intended to nurture successful, effective, confident and responsible children, able to learn and utilise learning in a way that helps them reach their full potential and to respond to the increased variety and pace of change in today's and tomorrow's world. Whilst the Education Service recognises the quality of education provision currently offered it considers that the very small number of children attending Glencorse Primary School will benefit more from the wider range and breadth of learning experiences available to them within other learning environments and within a wider peer group at their age and stage. This will also ensure that the children will have parity of access to learning and opportunities offered within our larger establishments with the remaining children being placed at alternative schools of their choice.

Council is requested to authorise the Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships to undertake statutory consultation on the proposals:

- to permanently discontinue the provision of primary education at Glencorse Primary School, and
- to adjust the catchment boundaries of Bilston, Mauricewood, Roslin and Strathesk Primary Schools to incorporate the catchment area of Glencorse Primary School.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

There is no direct impact on resources resulting from the recommendation in this paper. However if the outcome of the consultation leads to the discontinuation of primary education at Glencorse there will be the following impact on resources.

The remaining pupils will be assigned places at their parents' choice of alternative neighbouring school, this can be accommodated without increasing the operating costs of those schools. There will however be a cost for transporting the children affected to and from school, where there is no safe walking route to school and/or the distance from home to school is more than two miles. Based on using a minibus, this cost is estimated at £120 per day or £22,800 for a school year.

Glencorse Primary School's staff will all be offered positions in other schools allowing a saving of the school's employee costs, which totalled £139,977 in 2019/20.

Savings on the school's running costs, which totalled £41,211 in 2019/20, can also be achieved dependant on decisions about the use of the building once primary education has been discontinued.

The school's 2019/20 operating costs are detailed in Appendix D.

4.2 Digital

None

4.3 Risk

This report addresses the risk to affording parity of access to learning experiences for all Midlothian pupils and the risk that the Council does not deliver best value.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

This report does not recommend any change to policy or practice and therefore does not require an Equalities Impact Assessment. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out and published as part of the consultation process.

4.4 Additional Report Implications

None

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – Consultation Timeline

Appendix C – Glencorse Primary School Rolls

Appendix D – Glencorse Primary School Operating Costs

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Not applicable

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- ☐ Holistic Working
- ☐ Hub and Spoke
- ☐ Modern
- ☐ Sustainable
- ☐ Transformational
- ☐ Preventative
- ☐ Asset-based
- ☒ Continuous Improvement
- ☐ One size fits one
- ☐ None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- ☐ One Council Working with you, for you
- ☐ Preventative and Sustainable
- ☒ Efficient and Modern
- ☐ Innovative and Ambitious
- ☐ None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

The implementation of the recommendation of this report will enhance best value in the delivery of Council services.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This report recommends consultation with communities and all stakeholders regarding the provision of primary education at Glencorse Primary School.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The report does not directly impact on Midlothian Council's performance and outcomes

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Not applicable

APPENDIX B – Consultation Timeline

Glencorse Primary School	Minimum Time	From	Target Completion Date
Obtain Council governance to progress to statutory consultation			25-Aug-20
Consultation period	6 weeks	26-Aug-20	9-Oct-20
HMiE issue report	3 weeks	12-Oct-20	2-Nov-20
Publish Consultation Report			6-Nov-20
Further Consideration after publication of report	3 weeks		27-Nov-20
Report outcome to Council			30-Nov-20
Council Meeting & Decision			15-Dec-20
Ministerial Call In	up to 8 weeks		mid Feb 21
School Closure Review Panel	up to 17 weeks		mid June 21
Council Meeting following Review Panel decision			August 2021

Appendix C

Glencorse Primary School Rolls

Glencorse School Roll History								
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2020	--	--	--	1	2	1	3	7
2019	--	--	2	2	3	3	2	12
2018	--	2	2	3	3	2	3	15
2017	2	2	4	3	1	3	2	17
2016	3	5	4	2	6	5	--	25
2015	7	4	4	6	5	--	3	29
2014	5	5	6	6	--	3	2	27
2013	5	7	4	--	1	2	2	21
2012	5	7	4	--	1	2	2	21
2011	4	--	1	5	2	2	3	17
2010	--	--	7	3	2	3	3	18

Summary of Glencorse catchment children schools attended 2019

School	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total	Overall %
Glencorse			2	2	2	2	2	10	13.70%
Mauricewood	5	4	3	9	6	5	4	36	49.32%
Roslin	1	9	2		2	1		15	20.55%
Others (7)	4	2	1		2	2	1	12	16.44%
Total	10	15	8	11	12	10	7	73	100.00%

APPENDIX D**Glencorse Primary School Operating Costs**

Cost Summary	2019/20
Employee Costs	£139,977
Premises Costs	£36,139
Transport Costs	£318
Supplies & Services	£4,505
Third Party Payments	£248
	<u>£181,188</u>

Premises Costs	
Repairs & Maintenance	£19,556
Heat, Light & Water	£10,458
Rates	£4,234
Cleaning equipment	£214
Refuse Disposal	£1,678
	<u>£36,139</u>

2019/20 Pupil Roll	12
Cost per pupil	£15,099