



## **Proposal to Review the Denominational Primary School Estate**

### **Report by Don Ledingham, Director, Education & Children's Services**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- To inform Cabinet of the need to review the denominational primary school estate in Midlothian.
- To obtain approval to proceed.

#### **2. Background**

In addition to one denominational high school, Midlothian is home to seven denominational primary schools located across the county – Sacred Heart PS, Penicuik, St Andrew's PS, Gorebridge, St David's PS, Dalkeith, St Luke's PS, Mayfield, St Margaret's PS, Loanhead, St Mary's PS, Bonnyrigg and St Matthew's PS, Rosewell. The fabric and suitability of the school buildings vary widely with some of the schools housed in quite new buildings and others in very old buildings that suffer from the usual age-related problems. There are also growing challenges with the rolls (number of children enrolled in a school) where some schools have a limited capacity to meet demand for placements while others have such low rolls that several year groups are accommodated in a single class.

Other developments and the opportunities they present mean that it has now become necessary to undertake a proper investigation including consulting with pupils, parents, teaching staff, the wider community and church leaders and representatives.

#### **3. Report implications**

##### **3.1. Resource**

- a) If approved, a programme of consultation and information gathering will commence including discussions with religious representatives and / or church leaders as well as other stakeholders.
- b) The exercise will be resourced from within existing budgets.

##### **3.2. Risk**

- a) Without a proper investigation, assumptions about the school estate might be made that could prove erroneous in the future.
- b) Delaying decisions about locations and other options may prove quite costly to the Council in future years.

- c) In some local authorities, proposals concerning denominational schools have met with strong opposition, however, our intention to consult with all stakeholders including an iterative approach of discussing progress, developments and consultation outcomes should ensure transparency throughout the process.

### **3.3. Policy**

#### **a) Strategy**

The proposal is in accordance with Corporate Objective 1e “to provide suitable infrastructure for the efficient and effective delivery of services to meet the full range of community needs” and with the Divisional Priority “to provide increased access to Education...facilities and resources through the Divisional Estate Asset Management Plan”. It also supports the Priority, “to improve the quality of learning and teaching, leading to raised levels of achievement and attainment”.

#### **b) Consultation**

If approved, full consultation will take place with all stakeholders.

#### **c) Equalities**

This paper does not propose a new policy or changes to existing ones.

#### **d) Sustainability**

There are no sustainability issues relating to this report. However an investigation will review the sustainability of the current strategy.

### **4. Recommendations**

Cabinet is asked to,

- a) Approve the proposal to review the Midlothian denominational primary school estate and report back to full Council with the findings.

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#### **Report Contact:**

**Name:** Ogo Onwuchekwa

**Tel No:** 0131 271 3721

**E mail:** [ogo.onwuchekwa@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ogo.onwuchekwa@midlothian.gov.uk)