

World-Class Secondary School Provision for Penicuik & A701 Corridor**Report by Mary Smith, Director, Education, Communities and Economy****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the feedback received from the pre consultation meetings held in September, further to a report to Council of December 2015 which stated that informal consultation would be undertaken on the options for secondary schools to serve the A701 corridor and Penicuik to include a 'centre for excellence' for Science, and that a report on the way forward would be brought to Council in the course of 2016.
- 1.2 Approval is being sought to provide pupils in the Loanhead settlement with the option of transport to Beeslack Community High School.

2 Background

- 2.1 Many of the settlements served by Beeslack, Lasswade and Penicuik High Schools have been expanding and more house building is scheduled to take place. This means a review of non-denominational secondary school provision in the area is needed to make sure the schools are in the right locations with sufficient capacity to meet the needs of a growing population and to ensure that learning spaces are equipped for the delivery of a world-class 21st Century education.

These high schools serve Bonnyrigg, Penicuik and the A701 corridor, including the settlements of Bilston, Loanhead, Rosewell, Roslin and the surrounding area.

Lasswade High School is a modern, recently built school which opened in 2013. This school is now at capacity and the number of pupils is forecast to increase significantly over the years ahead. Beeslack and Penicuik High Schools are older buildings dating from 1984 and 1937 respectively. Although more recently the number of pupils attending has been falling, the roll projection forecast shows a rise to levels which will exceed their current capacities.

- 2.2 The review of secondary school provision for Penicuik and along the A701 provides an opportunity to consider how to create world-class innovative learning spaces across all the high schools, explore opportunities to build learning partnerships with a wide range of partners creating opportunities, drawing on the very best international research in order to deliver world-class learning facilities and programmes for 21st Century Learners.

These developments provide potential opportunities to work in partnership with organisations at the Bush and Pentland Science Park to create a STEM corridor along the A701 which would be home to a centre of excellence for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

2.3 The current forecast and roll capacity for each of the secondary schools is:

	2016 Pupil Census Students by Stage							Capacity	Occupancy	Roll Forecast 2040
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total			
Beeslack	106	120	107	125	120	77	655	860	76.2%	1,070
Lasswade	300	297	287	256	223	163	1526	1,480	103.1%	2,267
Penicuik	99	117	100	98	85	55	554	945	58.6%	1,073
Total	505	534	494	479	428	295	2,735	3,285	83.4%	4,410

The primary schools associated with these secondary schools are:

Beeslack High School	Lasswade High School	Penicuik High School
Bilston Primary	Bonnyrigg Primary	Cornbank Primary
Glencorse Primary	Burnbrae Primary	Cuiken Primary
Mauricewood Primary	Hawthornden Primary	Strathesk Primary
Roslin Primary	Lasswade Primary	
	Loanhead Primary	
	Paradykes Primary	
	Rosewell Primary	

Although not part of the Penicuik Associated Schools Group (ASG), the majority of pupils attending Sacred Heart Primary School choose to attend a secondary school in Penicuik. In the last two years all 22 P7 pupils have chosen to go to either Penicuik High School or Beeslack Community High School.

2.4 **Lasswade High School** is currently at its capacity of 1,480 pupils and occupies a site which could accommodate up to a maximum of 2,000 pupils. The planned house building in this area will result in an estimated roll of 2,267 by 2040, exceeding the maximum site capacity. As a result the catchment needs to be reduced or additional land acquired to expand the site. The work carried out to date indicates that it would not be feasible to expand the site therefore if the catchment area for Lasswade is not reduced, catchment pupils will have to be refused places.

The Council's policy on allocating places at schools sets out that where catchment pupils are refused, the pupils refused would be those who live furthest away from the school by safe route. The distance by road from Lasswade High School to Paradykes Primary School is approximately half a mile further than the distance to Rosewell Primary School, therefore the restriction on catchment pupils would impact first upon pupils living in Loanhead and then potentially Rosewell.

The current road links between Rosewell and the A701 corridor are not suitable for large volumes of traffic and the option to cycle or walk is not ideal either, so consideration of Rosewell being associated with a secondary school on the A701 corridor is not being taken forward at this point. This may be revisited in the future if transport links improve and the number of pupils attending Lasswade High School is forecast to exceed the capacity of the school site.

- 2.5 **Beeslack Community High School** has a falling roll, but current projections based on new and existing housing indicate that the roll will grow to exceed its current capacity of 860.

The school lies 1 mile from Penicuik High School and is on a site which could accommodate 2,800 pupils. The existing building needs significant refurbishment but the design of the building makes this difficult. Beeslack Community High School receives a number of placing requests from Loanhead Primary School pupils who currently pay for transport to the school as it is not within their catchment.

- 2.6 **Penicuik High School** roll has settled and is also set to grow to exceed its current capacity of 945.

The school lies 1 mile from Beeslack High School and has a maximum site capacity of 1,800 pupils. The original building is a category B listed and needs refurbishment, later additions need replacement. The school site includes the playing fields to the south west of the school, on the other side of Carlops Road.

- 2.7 **The A701 corridor**, in particular the section between Penicuik and the Edinburgh City Bypass, is one of the main communication links through Midlothian and provides good links with the settlements along its length. The settlement of Auchendinny, Bilston, Loanhead and Roslin are set to expand considerably in the future.

This section of the A701 corridor lies in the Midlothian West Ward which includes these settlements as well as the settlement at Rosewell. There is currently no secondary school located within the ward boundary of Midlothian West.

A spirit of community exists already between the school communities in Loanhead, Bilston and Roslin – one example of this is shared after school club arrangements.

A school sited in the A701 corridor would be in a central location to serve both large and small communities in the surrounding area. It would also be in close proximity to the Bush and Pentland Science Park, providing an excellent opportunity to build partnerships with academic and business organisations and enhance senior phase opportunities for pupils by creating a vibrant world-class STEM corridor.

There is significant interest in establishing a new school in this area as a Centre of Excellence for Science and this proposal forms part of the City Deal funding bid under the Skills and Innovation work-stream. There have been positive early discussions with the University of Edinburgh as a potential partner for the proposed Centre of Excellence in Science, which would provide students with access to a world class educational resource.

The identification of a suitable site, however, is a critical component of any funding proposal, which means that it is essential for the Council to identify a site at the earliest possible date. This will allow the Council to develop a funding proposal for a new school on the A701 corridor in anticipation of the Scottish Government releasing funding for school estates.

- 2.8 When feedback was last sought on the right size for a secondary school it was clear that parents in general preferred smaller schools of up to 1,000 pupils, but not so small that there would be limitations on subject choice offered to pupils. When pupils reach senior phase they choose the subjects they want to pursue from options provided to them by the school. As there are a minimum numbers of pupils required for each subject to be viable to run, the smaller the numbers of pupils at the school, the smaller the range of subjects which can be offered.

It is being considered that Midlothian adopts a preferred model of secondary schools with roll between 750 and 1,800 pupils and that a minimum of 600 pupils is necessary to continue to offer a sustainable subject choice for senior phase pupils.

The 2015 School Estate Statistics show that only 2 out of 361 secondary schools have a roll of over 1,800 pupils; St Ninian's In East Renfrewshire with 1,801 pupils and Holyrood in Glasgow City with 2,064 pupils.

3. Informal Consultation

3.1 Options

3.1.1 The options consulted on were:

Option 1 - Status quo:

Extend Lasswade High School, refurbish and extend Beeslack and Penicuik High Schools, make no change to catchment areas associated with each secondary school.

The number of pupils is forecast to exceed the capacity of all three schools by 2027, with Lasswade reaching 2,267 in 2040 compared to current capacity of 1,480.

Option 1	Census 2016	Forecast					Capacity	Max. Site Capacity
		2020	2025	2030	2035	2040		
Lasswade HS	1,526	1,585	1,670	1,975	2,205	2,267	1,480	2,000
Beeslack HS	655	491	513	756	980	1,070	860	2,800
Penicuik HS	554	701	851	989	1,062	1,073	945	1,800

Option 2 - Status quo but move the Loanhead settlement into the catchment for Beeslack High School:

Extend Lasswade High School, refurbish and extend Beeslack and Penicuik High Schools, associate Loanhead & Paradykes Primary Schools with Beeslack.

Reduces the roll forecast at Lasswade High School to 1,809 pupils in 2040.
Beeslack's current location may not be ideal for pupils from the Loanhead area travelling to the school on foot or by bicycle.

Option 2	Census 2016	Forecast					Capacity	Max. Site Capacity
		2020	2025	2030	2035	2040		
Lasswade HS	1,526	1,261	1,315	1,558	1,750	1,809	1,480	2,000
Beeslack HS	655	828	860	1,181	1,440	1,530	860	2,800
Penicuik HS	554	701	851	989	1,062	1,073	945	1,800

Option 3 - Replace Beeslack High School on a new site along the A701 corridor and refurbish and extend Penicuik High School to serve the Penicuik area:

Build a new secondary school on the A701 corridor to serve the Bilston, Glencorse, Loanhead and Roslin areas. Extend Lasswade High School. Refurbish and extend Penicuik High School to serve the Penicuik area including Mauricewood.

This reduces the roll forecast at Lasswade High School to 1,809 pupils in 2040.

For this option to be viable a suitable site on the A701 corridor needs to be secured.

Option 3	Census 2016	Forecast				
		2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Lasswade HS	1,526	1,261	1,315	1,558	1,750	1,809
A701 Corridor HS	655	577	641	910	1,126	1,215
Penicuik HS	554	938	1,078	1,253	1,370	1,387

Option 4 - Combine Beeslack High School and Penicuik High Schools into a new school on the A701 corridor and rezone the Loanhead settlement to the new school:

Build a new secondary school on the A701 Corridor for a combined Beeslack and Penicuik High School, including Loanhead & Paradykes Primary Schools. Extend Lasswade High School.

This reduces the roll forecast at Lasswade High School to 1,809 pupils in 2040.

The combined school of Beeslack and Penicuik including Loanhead would have a roll forecast of 2,601 pupils by 2040.

The new school could be built on the Beeslack site or on a new site to be acquired elsewhere on the A701 Corridor. The Penicuik High School site is too small for a school this size.

There has been previous negative feedback from the public to a proposal to merge Beeslack and Penicuik High Schools, albeit the proposal at that time was to operate the school split across the two school sites.

Option 4	Census 2016	Forecast				
		2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Lasswade HS excluding Loanhead	1,526	1,261	1,315	1,558	1,750	1,809
A701 & Penicuik combined	1,209	1,515	1,719	2,163	2,496	2,601

Option 5 - Combine Beeslack and Penicuik High Schools on A701 Corridor site. Loanhead area remains associated with Lasswade High School:

Build a new secondary school on the A701 Corridor for a combined Beeslack and Penicuik High School. Extend Lasswade High School; Loanhead & Paradykes remain part of Lasswade Associated School Group.

Lasswade High School roll forecast would reach 2,267 pupils by 2040 compared to current capacity of 1,480, which would exceed the maximum site capacity of 2,000 pupils.

A combined Beeslack and Penicuik school would have a roll forecast of 2,143 pupils by 2040.

Option 5	Census 2016	Forecast				
		2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Lasswade HS (no change)	1,526	1,585	1,670	1,975	2,205	2,267
Beeslack & Penicuik combined	1,209	1,192	1,364	1,746	2,042	2,143

3.2 Feedback

- 3.2.1 Two public consultation meetings were held to discuss the rationale and proposals and to give residents an opportunity to come up with further ideas and to express their opinions. Feedback forms were issued to those attending and the information pack and feedback forms were made available through the council's web pages.
- 3.2.2 The meetings were well attended with approximately 70 people attending over the 2 evenings. The meetings raised several issues and concerns from those who attended. Some of the major concerns were around the safe routes to school, particularly in options 2, 3, 4 and 5 and adding pressure to an already busy trunk road, the A701. It was also noted that Loanhead area pupils currently have to pay for transport if they choose to go to Beeslack High School.

People also voiced their concerns about a super school (very large school) being too big with pupils losing their identity. It was also felt that some pupils coming from our smaller primaries already find the transition to secondary school a daunting experience, to make the secondary school even larger could make the transition more challenging.

The point was also raised that although savings could be made through reducing administration and management by building a super school, that pupils in the middle

achieving bracket could be disadvantaged because it was assumed teachers would only know the top and bottom 10% achieving children in the school. Super schools operate across the world in urban areas, however it was noted that Midlothian is not a high density area. There was support for a secondary school remaining in Penicuik.

- 3.2.3 The public meetings also allowed an opportunity for attendees to choose their preferred option. The twenty five responses provided the following results:

Option		Preferred
1.	Status quo: extend all three schools on current sites.	0
2.	Status quo but move Loanhead & Paradykes to Beeslack High School: extend all three schools on current sites.	5
3.	Replace Beeslack High School on a new site on the A701 corridor to serve Bilston, Glencorse, Loanhead and Roslin areas. Extend Lasswade High School. Refurbish and extend Penicuik High School to serve the Penicuik area, including Mauricewood.	18
4.	Build a new secondary school on the A701 corridor for a combined Beeslack and Penicuik High School, including Loanhead and Paradykes Schools. Extend Lasswade High School.	0
5.	Build a new school for a combined Beeslack and Penicuik High School on the A701 corridor. Lasswade High School is extended and Loanhead and Paradykes remain associated with Lasswade High School.	2

- 3.2.4 Fifteen feedback forms were received along with four e-mailed responses. A similar theme to the meetings was evident and the main concerns were safe routes to schools and the loss of a secondary school in Penicuik if a super school option were to be adopted. Comments were also made referring to the school roll at Lasswade exceeding capacity and that options one, two and five would not solve this problem in the long term. It was also felt that a super school would be far too large and impersonal and would remove schools from the communities they serve.

The fifteen completed surveys and e-mail responses provided the following results:

Option		Like	Don't know	Dislike
1.	Status quo: extend all three schools on current sites.	6	1	9
2.	Status quo but move Loanhead & Paradykes to Beeslack High School: extend all three schools on current sites.	5	6	5
3.	Replace Beeslack High School on a new site on the A701 corridor to serve Bilston, Glencorse, Loanhead and Roslin areas. Extend Lasswade High School. Refurbish and extend Penicuik High School to serve the Penicuik area, including Mauricewood.	13	0	4
4.	Build a new secondary school on the A701 Corridor for a combined Beeslack and Penicuik High School, including Loanhead and Paradykes Schools. Extend Lasswade High School.	0	0	15
5.	Build a new school for a combined Beeslack and Penicuik High School on the A701 Corridor. Lasswade High School is extended and Loanhead and Paradykes remain associated with Lasswade High School.	0	0	15

3.3 Ideas put forward from Consultations

3.3.1 The following suggestions were raised through the consultation process:

- Use current Beeslack site for a Penicuik secondary school.
- Build a further secondary school in Bilston to serve Auchendinny, Bilston, Loanhead and Roslin i.e. in addition to Beeslack and Penicuik.
- To include community and/or leisure facilities within a new school.
- To provide an ASN/ASD provision in a refurbished Penicuik High School.
- Create an American style 'middle school' to serve the 10-14 year old age bracket.

These suggestions will be considered as the options for the A701 corridor are progressed.

3.4 Informal Consultation Summary

From the responses received and the feedback provided at the meetings option 3 was significantly more favoured and least disliked. Option 2, which includes moving the Loanhead settlement to Beeslack's catchment area, was second most favoured and least disliked. Options 4 and 5 were significantly more disliked than any of the other options.

There was a strong feeling that Penicuik should retain a secondary school, located within the settlement. Any new build along the A701 would need to have significant consideration given to transport links along the A701. The idea of Centres of Excellence was received very positively and was seen as an exciting opportunity for the children of Midlothian.

4. Items to be Progressed

4.1 Site Options

In order for options 3, 4 and 5 to be viable a suitable site needs to be identified along the A701 to accommodate a school of the size required. We project the site capacity would need to allow for 2,600 pupils.

Discussions have been held with the University of Edinburgh who have indicated a willingness to consider releasing an area of greenfield land within Easter Bush, adjacent to Seafield Moor Road and the Pentland Field Business Park. This would enhance the opportunities to build partnerships with academic and business organisations and allow the development of senior phase opportunities given the close proximity to the University.

Consideration has also been given to a site off the Gowkley Moss Roundabout adjacent to the A701 and Roslin Bing. However concerns have been expressed regarding the loss of agricultural land and coalescence of settlements each side of the A701.

A potential site – *Emily/Ramsay* Bing - to the north of the current Loanhead and St Margaret's Primary School has also been suggested and considered. This is a sloping site of made up contaminated land which, whilst it would be possible to develop would be expensive to remediate and service. In addition the location of the site is difficult to access and could lead to significant congestion within the area.

The site of the current Beeslack High School does have site capacity large enough to accommodate a bigger secondary school, but this would be in the wrong location to serve the Loanhead area.

4.2 Home to School Transport

Lasswade High School's pupil roll is over its stated capacity of 1,480. To alleviate some of this pressure it is proposed to offer parents residing in Loanhead the option of home to school transport to Beeslack. This would remove the barrier of the cost of transport, enhance parental choice and encourage parents to make a placing request for their child/ren to attend Beeslack.

To put this into effect within the timescale of the 2017 pupil placement process, at the start of January a letter would be sent to all parents residing in Loanhead whose child/ren will commence S1 in August 2017. The letter will inform them that the Council will provide transport from Loanhead to Beeslack if they opt to make a placing request to attend Beeslack.

5 Report Implications

5.1 Resource

The provision of transport from Loanhead to Beeslack may result in an additional cost to the Council. Depending on the number and size of busses or bus passes required. This is estimated to be in the region of £15,770 to £26,790 per annum. As pupils being transported to Beeslack would otherwise be transported to Lasswade much of the costs, dependent on efficiencies, would be offset by savings. Should this offer of transport not be made transport may well be required in any case for pupils who cannot be accommodated at Lasswade High School and are then placed at Beeslack.

If the offer of transport is successful it will allow the Council more time before additional capacity is required to be provided at Lasswade.

5.2 Risk

Offering transport to Beeslack for pupils from Loanhead will reduce the risk of having insufficient capacity at Lasswade for catchment pupils and placing requests in to the school.

5.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

This work is a part of the Single Midlothian Plan's key priority of Reducing the Gap in Learning Outcomes.

5.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The provision of high quality secondary schools suitable for the current and future delivery of education, with sustainable school rolls, supports work towards the Single Midlothian Plan's key priority of reducing the gap in learning outcomes and presents every child with the opportunity to attend the school which serves their community. By supporting improvement in pupil attainment and achievement, and hence positive destinations, it also contributes to reducing gaps in economic circumstances and health.

5.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Reducing the gap in learning outcomes is a preventative contribution to work towards reducing gaps in economic circumstances and health.

5.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The pre consultation process has included consultation with parents, staff and community representatives.

5.7 Ensuring Equalities

An EQIA has been carried out on the proposal to provide home to school transport from Loanhead to Beeslack High School.

5.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The proposals take into account the need to deliver fit for purpose, sustainable (for both now and the future) secondary schools through the design and use of appropriate and sustainable facilities and infrastructure.

5.9 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

6 Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- Note the feedback from the informal consultations.
- Approve the provision of free home to school transport for Loanhead area pupils wishing to attend Beeslack High School.
- Note the ongoing discussions with Edinburgh University regarding building partnerships with academic and business organisations and on securing a suitable site for a secondary school in the A701 corridor.
- Note the need for the Council to develop a funding proposal for a new school in the A701 corridor in anticipation of Scottish Government releasing funding for school estates. A potential site in Midlothian West Ward should, therefore, be identified at the earliest possible date.
- Request a further report be submitted to Council in due course for approval of formal consultation on the provision of secondary school education in the A701 corridor.

Date: 29 November 2016

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