



## **Public Meeting Held in St Bridget's Primary Tuesday 5 February 2019 at 6pm**

The Head of Service (Inclusion), Education and Youth Employment, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the other North Ayrshire Council officers present. It was also noted that Education Scotland were in attendance.

A presentation which provided information on the key proposal was delivered.

It was noted that there was an online survey available for the public to complete, paper copies of this were also available at the meeting and could be collected from various other public buildings.

Draft plans for the proposed refurbishment of St Bridget's Early Years' class were displayed on boards for all to view and discuss at the meeting. It was confirmed that these were not final plans and that there would be further consultation on these.

Following the presentation, questions were invited from the audience:-

**Enquiry:** Were all Garnock Valley Early Years Centre staff notified of the consultation process at the beginning?

**Response:** Yes, all staff were informed.

**Enquiry:** Were the staff ok with having the proposal of having 40 children in the same room?

**Response:** The proposal scheme will offer a variety of spaces for children to use, including two playrooms.

**Enquiry:** Where will birth to 2 year-old children go?  
Are there enough spaces for this in Kilbirnie?

**Response:** The Council took the decision last year to remove service provision for 0-2 year old children across all Early Years Centres. Children in this age group currently attending the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre will continue to attend. No further children of this age will be enrolled in any centres across North Ayrshire.

Where there is an identified need, parents will be supported in sourcing day-care providers within the area. Day Carers receive specialist training. This also provides opportunities for Childminders and Day Carers in the Garnock Valley area.

**Enquiry:** An attendee advised they had tried to use the online survey but was unable to complete the process?

**Response:** Another attendee confirmed that they had successfully completed the online process earlier that evening, however it was agreed that this process will be

checked and contact would be made to confirm the survey was operational. Paper copies were provided to all attendees at the meeting.  
*Post-Meeting note: The on-line survey was checked and was found to be operating. The attendee was contacted by phone to advise of this.*

**Enquiry:** A query was raised regarding the safety of children attending Early Years as parents had to access the current entrance via the primary playground. There was also a concern about adults walking through the playground whilst pupils were outside. It was suggested that the nursery entrance be relocated to the rear of the Early Years facility at St Bridget's.

**Response:** There have been visits by architects to look at the site and gauge the scope of works. Children would be dropped off at new entrance, go through cloakrooms and then into playrooms from where there is access to the secured outside play space. The design proposal is still at an early stage and aligns to Scottish Government criteria and best practice, as defined in the **Space To Grow** guidance. As the proposal is at feasibility stage there will be further consultation on the final design. There will be further consultation and we would consider fencing options to delineate areas or other solutions. Early involvement is important to ensure we get value for money and a facility with which everyone is happy. It is critical with any major works not to disturb the service delivery. Our colleagues in Property would develop a programme of works in consultation with the Head Teacher. Suitable arrangements would be made to ensure that children and pupils experience minimal disruption.

**Enquiry:** Can you put an entrance at the back of the school and create a safety gate?

**Response:** We will pick up these suggestions at the design consultation. It's very helpful for you to raise this and it will be looked at. We will also need to consider improved external lighting for outdoor areas, and security.

**Enquiry:** What will be the size of the new playroom and extension?

**Response:** In the proposed scheme there are the following:  
Playroom for 2-3 year olds measuring approximately 52m<sup>2</sup>.  
Playroom for 3-5 year olds measuring approximately 96m<sup>2</sup> - included in this figure is the extension area of approximately 45m<sup>2</sup>.  
There will also be a shared playroom pod, between the two playrooms, with an approximate area of 11m<sup>2</sup>.  
We are following Government guidance on the space allocation per child in an Early Years setting.

**Enquiry:** At present there are separate rooms for wet and dry play. The proposal only has one big room so how will that work?

**Response:** Within the design proposal, there will be a separate playroom for 2-3 year olds and another for 3 – year olds. It is proposed to expand and enhance the current accommodation at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years class, which will offer greater flexibility, including free flow access to improved outdoor areas. It is envisaged that children will have greater choice and ability to access a wider range of learning experiences.

The set-up of the rooms will allow all types of play with lots of resources, furniture and equipment. The new outside canopies will provide the opportunity to do wet play outside, if appropriate.

Currently having two rooms for 3-5 years olds at Garnock Valley Early Years does present challenges for staff.

**Enquiry:** The outside area, that is marsh, could that not be the 2-3 year playroom? As the area is marshy the children will get dirty if this is used as outdoor play space?

**Response:** We would always consider existing space for any design scheme and the initial proposal was seen to be the most cost-effective solution. However further design consultation will take place in due course.

Whilst the area is marshy, it is ok for children to get muddy. Health and safety considerations and risk assessments are undertaken, but we do want to allow and encourage children to explore, discover and experience taking their own risks through outdoor play.

We would work with staff to develop all outdoor areas, to provide flexible and stimulating outdoor learning experiences for children. There are plans for two external canopied play areas.

**Enquiry:** It was stated that other schools with canopies used these to store equipment, could this be an issue?

**Response:** The canopies may be used to store play equipment overnight, however children will use these covered areas during the day to enjoy outdoor learning and play activities.

**Enquiry:** Will the current outdoor hut be retained?

**Response:** Yes it will remain.

**Enquiry:** What will happen to the existing GVEYC building, who would use it?

**Response:** The building would not be retained by Education. The future use of the asset would be considered corporately, which includes representation from Education. All needs and views would be considered before any decision is made.

**Enquiry:** What about children whose parents would not want to send them to a catholic school?

**Response:** Early Years provision is non-denominational. Parents will have the same options and choices for primary and secondary education as they currently do.

The placement for Early Years is determined by parental choice and availability of space within the Early Years settings.

Parents will still have the choice on whether to enrol their child at their catchment denominational or non-denominational school, or making a placing request to another school of their choice.

Other Early Years settings within Kilbirnie include Garnock Community Campus and Moorpark Primary School Early Years.

Current children attending the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre will be going into primary by the time the project is completed.

**Enquiry:** Will staff be communicated with regarding their positions?

**Response:** Yes. This would take place once the final outcome is known, following the statutory public consultation. We will consider the transition for staff, and children, at that point.

**Enquiry:** Why was the meeting at this time?

**Response:** As part of the statutory public consultation process, we must have public meetings which are open for everyone to attend including staff, parents and carers. Therefore public meetings tend to be held in the evenings.

**Enquiry:** What would be the timelines for the building works?

**Response:** A detailed programme of works will be developed in consultation with the Head Teacher and staff to minimise any impact on the operations of the school. Contractors commissioned by the Council are used to working in operational school environments and work with establishments to keep disruption to an absolute minimum.

Depending on how the consultation and plans move forward, construction work may start in December 2019. If that was the case, we would hope to be finished by the beginning of the summer holidays in 2020.

**Enquiry:** What about transport for children from Milton, if you don't put on a bus then people will not come in? There is poor public transport.

**Response:** Where there is an identified vulnerability, and it has been identified that the child requires transport, then this would be provided.

The Head of Service (Inclusion) thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reminded the audience of the importance of completing and submitting the formal response form as part of the consultation process.