

New Gaelic school proposed for Edinburgh

A city-wide consultation is taking place in Edinburgh that will decide whether nursery and primary Gaelic Medium Education(GME) will be established with a dedicated school.

The two options put forward earlier this year were to :-

1) Establish a dedicated primary school with nursery facilities in the former Bonnington Primary School premises in Leith and withdraw the current GME unit at Tollcross Primary School; or

2) Increase the GME capacity of the Tollcross Primary School by extending the building and relocating the nursery to a new, larger facility in the grounds of the existing school where Gaelic is currently taught alongside the English stream.

The report – *Outcomes Arising from Consultation on Proposals for the Future Development of Nursery and Primary Gaelic Medium Education* – recommends the Bonnington option but will be discussed at the next Full Council meeting on 30 June.

The recommendation is based on the following factors:

– the establishment of a dedicated school is in line with the priorities and aspirations of the Scottish Government's National Plan for Gaelic and reaffirms the Council's commitment to the preservation and development of the Gaelic language;

– a dedicated school offers the potential for a fuller Gaelic language immersion experience making fluency and bilingualism more likely educational outcomes;

– the establishment of a dedicated school represents the preference of 94% of the 598 consultation respondents;

– a dedicated school is expected to attract significant levels of Government funding with the Scottish Government having already confirmed that capital funding of £1.4m will be available for a new school at Bonnington.

The recommendation is subject to clarifying the level and sources of capital funding in advance of the Council meeting.

Education Leader, Councillor Marilyne MacLaren, said: “We have listened to all the points raised during the consultation and the recommendation being put before Full Council at the end of the month is for a dedicated Gaelic school.

“It is important however that before any decisions are made that we are clear how much it will cost to do this.

“The costs have already increased due to the condition of the building and we need further discussions with the Scottish Government to establish how these additional costs will be funded.”