

New Gaelic School approved by council

Plans for a new Gaelic school in Leith, Edinburgh, have been given the go-ahead by The City of Edinburgh Council.

The full council met yesterday and approved plans for the former Bonnington Primary School to be turned into Edinburgh's first dedicated Gaelic primary school. At present Gaelic learning has been provided by Tollcross Primary School since 1982. In June 2011, after wide public consultation, the council had noted that the educational arguments for a standalone Gaelic school had been established and agreed to press ahead with this course of action subject to the resolution of issues relating to the finances.

The plans were finally agreed by the council yesterday following The Scottish Government's increased offer of £1.8m capital funding towards the costs of restoring the former primary school, with a further £100,000 of additional annual revenue funding also being provided. This allows the Council to realise further capital funding of £1.275m through prudential borrowing.

The Council will fund the remaining £0.455m of the total £3.53m of capital funding needed for the works at Bonnington and will also fund the additional ongoing revenue costs associated with running the new school.

City Education Leader, Councillor Marilyn MacLaren, said:

"The Council's decision to go ahead with a dedicated primary Gaelic school, has demonstrated our commitment to investing in young people and communities, during this restrictive economic situation. Assuming that consent is granted by the Scottish Government, we will be able to move on with quickly progressing work on site to be ready for the first pupils in

2013.

“We will make the transition to the new Gaelic school as smooth as possible and are we confident that Tollcross Primary will continue to thrive and be a very successful mainstream school within its expanded space once Gaelic pupils have moved.”

The plans to go ahead with the dedicated school will see the withdrawal of the current GME unit at Tollcross Primary School. All pupils will be offered the choice of a place from August 2013 at either the newly established GME primary school or in Tollcross Primary’s English stream.

There will now follow a period of six weeks during which the Scottish Government could issue a call-in notice to the Council regarding its decision based on any representations made to them. A call-in notice would mean that Scottish Ministers may either refuse to consent to the proposal or grant their consent unconditionally or subject to certain conditions.

The new Gaelic school is due to open in August 2013.