

# Petition lodged following council school closure plans

The news 'broke' on Friday afternoon that the council is to review schools in the west and south west of the city, and already a petition to Keep Currie Community High School open has begun.

The review of schools in the west and south west of the city was however discussed in a report to the Education Committee in August 2017, when the council identified a need for a new West Edinburgh High School to accommodate pupils from the new homes planned for the area.

The plans to demolish Currie Community High School were also mentioned in that report, but it was considered to be a long term plan at that stage.

The council had planned to build the new school within the International Business Gateway, but it would appear that this will no longer be possible following guidance from the Scottish Government.

In light of rising rolls, deteriorating buildings and a need for new schools the council has drawn up proposals which affect many of the secondary and some primary schools in the area. You can read more about the details of these proposals [here](#).

There will be two events in January and February at all the affected schools organised in conjunction with parent councils, with a view to passing comments and recommendations back to the Education Committee in March next year.



One of the thoughts is to combine Currie High School and

Wester Hailes Education Centre into one new school called South West High School.

## **PETITION**

The purpose of the announcement was to give plenty of time for discussion and consultation on the proposals. But some parents of Currie High School children who might be affected by the moves have already lodged a public petition to save the school.

A letter to all parents was also sent out by the council :




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The [petition](#) lodged by Nic Reid already has over 2,000 signatures, perhaps indicative of the strength of feeling in the area.

The narrative reads as follows:

*Recently the council have unveiled plans to change catchment areas for both primary and secondary schools and to demolish two secondary schools (Wester Hailes Education Centre and Currie Community High School) and build a new school in their place. Their reasoning is that both schools need refurbishing and that it will be cheaper to build a new school. Whilst it is true that both need repairs that means the council should temporarily cut funding from other aspects of their work not that both schools should be abandoned (and most likely sold to housing developers). Currie is one of the top nationwide schools and there is no way to tell how this change will affect those statistics. If these proposals come to fruition it will completely disturb the local community as many sports clubs and social groups are hosted in the buildings. Not only that but the council would be affecting Woodlands School as it was built so it could share Currie High's resources. Currie is an expanding area and many parents of young children have recently moved into new housing developments. All these children would have to get to their new schools by bus, car or other non eco-friendly methods of transportation unless they were to use a bike on a busy road. At 8:00 – 8:30 on a weekday morning many people are on their way to work meaning children will most likely have to leave earlier than usual in the morning. There are no shops near the proposed sites meaning children who don't like school dinners or packed lunches will go hungry as opposed to the current Currie High which is near Scotmid, Baynes, the local butchers' and the local chip shop amongst others. If the*

*council are intent on building a new school then it should be on the site where the school playing fields currently are. This would mean that the council could save the money and that the majority of pupils going to the new South West High could transition smoothly without much disruption and that Balerno High would no longer need an extension. The council could then build upgraded sporting facilities to replace the current facilities, for example a 4G pitch to replace the cracking, bumpy astro-turf currently in place. Although this would still mean a temporary pause on some sporting clubs I am sure most of them would be able to use the indoor halls.*

Cllr Alison Dickie, Vice Convener, of Education, Children and Families, at the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “The aim of publishing these proposals is to gauge the views of parents and their school communities. It’s so important we hear their voices – especially if they have any alternative proposals we could consider.

“The consultation over the coming months is an integral part of the review process however I must stress these proposals cannot be implemented without a statutory consultation process which would be the next step.

“It’s important to remember that no decisions have been made so I would urge anyone who has views on the plans to feed back their comments so it can help shape any future statutory consultation.”

Wester Hailes Education Centre has a swimming pool which is open to the public as well as pupils, so no doubt there will be resistance to that in due course.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

And a Freedom of Information request has been lodged with The City of Edinburgh Council by Daniela Dinwoodie as follows:

*Dear City of Edinburgh Council,*

*I would like a copy of all costings done in relation to the proposed merger of Currie High with WHEC, so the actual figures for the new build costs at new proposed sites 1&2 but also to include extend and refit build costings for Balerno HS,*

*Also any costings done for a rebuild of Currie HS on existing site*

*and further infrastructure costs for improving the roads to and from, and any extra traffic /transport considerations. For the new proposed site at options 1 and 2.*

*Also proposed repair works cost for existing Currie high school building*

*I would like the full costings taken in relation to this proposal.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Daniela dinwoodie  
Edinburgh*

The council has 20 days to respond to this request.