

# **Further site being considered for Edinburgh's Gaelic High School**

**Edinburgh Council education officers are to look again at the feasibility of two sites in central Edinburgh for a Gaelic high school after internal discussions.**

Council officers will work with partners to reassess the potential of the current Police Scotland headquarters at Fettes and the site of the former Royal Victoria Hospital in Comely Bank as potential and additional options for the home of a new Gaelic Medium Education (GME) secondary school.

The move comes after a meeting between the Minister for Education and Skills, Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, and Education Convener Cllr Ian Perry with Vice-Convener Cllr Alison Dickie in July to discuss the Council's proposals for a dedicated GME high school on a site in Liberton, which the Minister again welcomed as an excellent option.

Councillors have however written to the Minister this week to confirm that the two central sites will be re-assessed given concerns about "centrality" raised by some parents during the development of the Liberton plans.

The letter makes clear that significant Scottish Government financial assistance, in the region of at least £48 million for the build cost alone, as well as further financial support required in either case.

The Council will launch a statutory consultation on plans for dedicated new GME high school later this year.

Cllr Perry said: “We had a very constructive and helpful meeting with the Minister last month and set out again our proposals to further the growth of GME in the Capital. Given the concerns some Gaelic parents raised over ‘centrality’, we are reassessing the feasibility of two possible sites – at Fettes and at Comely Bank. It must be stressed, however, that significant Government support would be required to make these viable options.

“We need to hear directly from The Scottish Government on the options of these two sites as a matter of urgency, we cannot continue to delay the education and future of our young people.”

Our number one priority remains identifying the best and most workable solution for a fully immersive GME high school for the city and our statutory consultation beginning later this year will bring this close to fruition.’

Cllr Dickie said: “We’re fully committed to ensuring GME can grow and thrive in Scotland’s Capital and we have welcomed the Scottish Government’s continued encouragement about our plans for a new and dedicated school at Liberton. It is vital though that we get this absolutely right for children and their families, and for the growth of Gaelic Medium Education in the city. Given then, the growing appetite for a more central location, we have made a decision to pause to re-evaluate previously visited options and their related barriers.

“As well as the substantial financial hurdle involved, we’d need certainty that the land would be available to meet the timescales involved. Most of all though, we need options that deliver the best educational outcomes for our children and young people.”