

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE23 June 2022Report by Director of EducationCONSULTATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GAELIC MEDIUM  
PRIMARY EDUCATION (GMPE) AT THORNLIBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL  
FROM AUGUST 2023 AND BEYOND**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To seek approval to undertake a statutory education consultation on the proposal to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and beyond.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. Education Committee is asked to:
- a. approve that the Director of Education proceeds with a consultation on the proposal to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and beyond; and
  - b. instruct the Director of Education to report on the consultation at a specially convened additional Education Committee on 8 December 2022.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Council is required to consult formally on a proposal to: establish a new school (in this case Gaelic Medium Primary Education); changes to a delineated catchment area; and to the admission arrangements of any school. How this is carried out and who must be consulted is clearly set out in the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 which came into force in April 2010 and amended in 2014.

4. Currently East Renfrewshire Council does not make any provision for the delivery of Gaelic medium education across the Broad General Education but supports families who wish such an experience for their children through the provision of transport to Gaelic provision in other local authorities.

5. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a legislative duty on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE). The act also establishes a process by which parents can request GMPE from their education authority and that when a threshold of demand is evidenced there is, as described in [Statutory Guidance](#)<sup>1</sup>, 'an effective entitlement to GMPE', and that local authorities will 'secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so'.

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig:  
<https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Statutory-Guidance-for-Gaelic-Education.pdf>

6. When an education authority is satisfied that there is demand from the parents of at least five children who are resident in the GMPE Assessment Area and who are in the same primary school commencement year group, the authority can carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE or exercise its discretion and introduce GMPE provision.

7. The Education Department confirmed the number of families and children who indicated their desire for GMPE met the threshold for a full assessment of demand for P1 places commencing August 2023. Subsequently a full assessment was undertaken and a report published in February 2022 which detailed the Education Department's decision to take forward learning provision for GMPE for the beginning of school session 2023 / 2024.

8. Further details on the historical background of GMPE requests within East Renfrewshire, legal requirements and the full assessment process is available in paragraphs 7 to 28 of the consultation document.

## REPORT

9. East Renfrewshire's schools and early learning and childcare establishments are exceptionally popular with families taking up residence to access education services and the department receiving a large number of placing requests each year. With significant residential property developments within the council area, almost all East Renfrewshire primary schools have high occupancy rates resulting in little scope for the introduction of GMPE provision even on a small scale.

10. Furthermore other factors must be considered when identifying an appropriate location for GMPE such as ease of access, centrality and the opportunity for the school to have its own unique identity whilst potentially integrating with an English medium school. Further details of considerations are included in paragraph 38 of the consultation document.

11. Following consideration of multiple factors, it is proposed that future GMPE provision be located at Thornliebank Primary School.

12. Responses to the full assessment by statutory consultees Education Scotland, Comann nam Pàrant and Bòrd na Gàidhlig suggest that not only should a proposed school be identified for GMPE, but that the opportunity to extend provision to early years and the secondary sector at a later date, also be considered. Details of the school's current and projected roll, and the possibility of extending provision to the early years and secondary sectors in future years, are detailed in paragraphs 34 to 45 of the consultation document.

13. Pupils attending Thornliebank Primary School, will be taught entirely in English as is currently the case. Pupils attending GMPE would be taught entirely in Gaelic across P1 to P3, with English being introduced to pupils from P4 onwards, albeit with Gaelic still the predominate language in the classroom.

14. It is proposed that the school will commence with a multi-stage composite class across stages P1 to P3 and that this will extend in future to a second multi-stage composite class at stages P4 to P7. Admissions to the provision will be managed on this basis.

15. Access to the GMPE provision will be in accordance with the current school admissions and placing request policies and there will be no impact on East Renfrewshire families applying for school places in other schools under the Council's control.

16. The proposed defined catchment area for the proposed GMPE provision at Thornliebank Primary School is the Council's boundary area.

17. The educational benefits and implications of the proposal are set out in paragraphs 83 to 97 of the attached consultation document.

18. The operational detail and timescales of the consultation are also set out in the consultative document.

19. The consultation period will last from Wednesday 17 August 2022 until midnight on Friday 30 September 2022.

## **FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS**

20. At present funding is not available for capital investment to the proposed school for the establishment of GMPE and for additional physical resources such as tables and chairs and IT equipment. Early discussions with the Gaelic and Scots Team of the Learning Directorate at The Scottish Government, indicate it is likely that the majority of capital funding required will be provided to the Council via the Gaelic Capital Fund.

21. Initially, it is anticipated that the school will require the recruitment and employment of an additional fluent Gaelic speaking Principal Teacher and a Gaelic speaking pupil support assistant (PSA). Funding is available to all Scottish Local Authorities for up to 75% of the cost towards delivery of Gaelic education, via the Gaelic Specific Grant, and the Council would look to access this.

22. Further information is included in the section on Financial Considerations in paragraphs 98 to 102 in the attached consultative proposal document

## **CONSULTATION**

23. The purpose of this paper is to seek elected member approval to undertake a consultation exercise as is required by the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010.

24. Note on Corrections: If any inaccuracy or omission was discovered in the Proposal Document either by the Education Department, or any person, the department would determine if relevant information has been omitted or, if there had been an inaccuracy. The Education Department would then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the proposal paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period as appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland would be advised.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

25. The legislative timescales required for the various elements of statutory consultation as defined by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, means that it is difficult to align the process of consultation with planned local governance processes and timelines such as Education Committee. As a consequence of the required timescales, the report on the results of the proposal will not be available for consideration by the next Education Committee (17 November 2022), following the end of the Consultation on 30 September 2022. This means that a decision on the proposal and associated findings of the consultation by Education Committee cannot be progressed for some time, and likely no earlier than January 2023.

26. In order to avoid a lengthy delay between the end of the consultation and a decision by Education Committee, it is proposed that an additional special Education Committee be convened as defined in the Recommendations.

27. Further implications of the proposals are set out in the consultative document and await the outcome of the consultation. The Director of Education will report the results of this consultation exercise, including the report submitted by Education Scotland, to the Education Committee on 8 December 2022.

28. If, following the consultation exercise, the decision is made to agree the proposal then from school session 2023 onwards it is proposed to:

- a. establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and beyond; and
- b. define the catchment area of the GMPE school as the Council's boundary and that the associated secondary school of the GMPE provision be Woodfarm High School, for the purpose of placing request applications.

29. This proposal is not subject to ministerial call in.

30. East Renfrewshire Council's legal section has been involved and is aware of the proposal and consequential outcomes for the Council.

## CONCLUSIONS

31. Following confirmation of the demand for GMPE within East Renfrewshire which meets the threshold for the '*effective entitlement to GMPE*', the Education Department is progressing with the introduction of GMPE to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to '*secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so*'.

32. It is proposed that GMPE be delivered at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and beyond.

33. Current legislation requires the Council to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposed changes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

34. Education Committee is asked to:

- a. approve that the Director of Education proceeds with a consultation on a proposal establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and beyond; and
- b. instruct the Director of Education to report on the consultation at a specially convened additional Education Committee on 8 December 2022.

Mark Ratter  
Director of Education  
June 2022

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation Paper: The establishment of Gaelic Medium Primary Education at Thornliebank Primary School from August 2023 and beyond

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**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**THIS IS A FORMAL CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GAELIC MEDIUM PRIMARY EDUCATION  
AT THORNLIBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL  
FROM AUGUST 2023 AND BEYOND**

**JUNE 2022**

This document has been issued by the Education Committee of East Renfrewshire Council for consultation in terms of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GAELIC MEDIUM PRIMARY EDUCATION  
AT THORNLIEBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL  
FROM AUGUST 2023 AND BEYOND

1. The education estate across East Renfrewshire Council comprises of 23 early learning and childcare establishments and nursery classes. The Council has 24 primary and 7 secondary co-educational schools, of which 7 primary and 2 secondary schools are denominational Roman Catholic schools, with the Council having the only Jewish Faith based primary school in Scotland, Calderwood Lodge. Additionally the Council has a specialist school, Isobel Mair School, for supporting children and young people with additional support needs. The remainder of primary and secondary schools are non-denominational.
2. Currently East Renfrewshire Council does not make any provision for the delivery of Gaelic medium education across the Broad General Education, but does support families who wish such an experience for their children through the provision of transport, to Gaelic provision in other local authorities.
3. Whilst the Council supports families who attend Gaelic provision by means of transport, East Renfrewshire's families can only access Gaelic medium education if they are successful in being granted a placing request to schools in neighbouring local authorities. Given the ever increasing demands for Gaelic medium education in these authorities, it is now becoming more likely that applications from East Renfrewshire residents for such places in other local authorities will be refused.
4. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) and establishes a process by which parents can request Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) from their education authority.

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

5. The purpose of this consultation is:
  - (a) to consult on the proposal to establish a GMPE facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.

INTRODUCTION

*Background*

6. East Renfrewshire Education Department is committed to *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*, and has a well-earned reputation for providing an excellent education for children. This is borne out in the reports received on our schools following inspection by Education Scotland.

*GMPE Legislation*

7. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a legislative duty on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE). The act also establishes a process by which parents can request GMPE from their education authority and that when a threshold of demand is evidenced there is, as described in [Statutory Guidance](#)<sup>1</sup>, ‘an effective entitlement to GMPE’, and that local authorities will ‘secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so’. Furthermore the guidance is clear that an education authority cannot take or justify a decision not to provide GMPE on the basis of a single factor, for example, accommodation.

8. When an education authority receives a parental request made under the 2016 Act, it must designate the geographical area in relation to which it will undertake its assessment of the need for GMPE referred to as a ‘GMPE Assessment Area’.

9. The legislation and statutory guidance directs that parents of children under school age and who have not yet started to attend a primary school, have the right to request an assessment of the need for GMPE from the education authority in which the family resides. Any request must also set out or be accompanied by evidence of demand for GMPE from parents of other children resident in the same education authority area and who are in the same primary school commencement year group as the specified child. A parental request may also contain evidence that there is demand for GMPE from parents of other children under school age who will commence primary education in a different year.

10. The threshold for an obligatory full assessment under the 2016 Act is that an education authority is satisfied that there is demand in the assessment area from the parents of at least five children who are resident in the GMPE Assessment Area and that all are in the same pre-school year group.

11. Where any education authority determines that there is a potential need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area, it has two possible options. It can:

- carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area; or
- without carrying out a full assessment, exercise its discretion to take such steps as are necessary to secure the provision of such GMPE as it considers appropriate in the GMPE assessment area.

12. A full assessment requires local authorities to seek the views of [Education Scotland](#)<sup>2</sup>, [Bòrd na Gàidhlig](#)<sup>3</sup>, [Comann nam Pàrant](#)<sup>4</sup> and the [National Parent Forum of Scotland](#)<sup>5</sup>.

13. Additionally in accordance with the statutory guidance local authorities must consider the following factors when undertaking a full assessment:

- Views provided by statutory consultees;
- Initial assessment information in relation to demand;
- Existing GMPE provision in adjacent authorities and the availability of access;

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig:

<https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Statutory-Guidance-for-Gaelic-Education.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Education Scotland: <https://education.gov.scot/>

<sup>3</sup> Bòrd na Gàidhlig is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development, including providing advice to Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues: <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/>

<sup>4</sup> A network of around 30 local groups, representing the interests of parents whose children are educated through the medium of Gaelic at the various levels, from pre-school to secondary level. <https://www.parant.org.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPF): <https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

- Access to GMPE in East Renfrewshire from children in other Local Authorities;
- Accommodation;
- Costs;
- Teachers – including potential availability within East Renfrewshire and the potential to recruit; and,
- The East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan.

14. Where an education authority decides to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE Assessment Area, it must take the necessary steps to secure the provision as it considers appropriate and within reasonable timescales.

#### *Requests for GMPE delivery within East Renfrewshire*

15. In April 2017, the Education Department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE in East Renfrewshire for her child. After carrying out the initial assessment, the department concluded that there was not the potential need for GMPE as the threshold for a full assessment had not been met. As a result no further action was taken.

16. In June 2019 Education Committee remitted the East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan 2017-2022 to Cabinet for approval. This plan includes a commitment to assess requests for GMPE and determine the need for appropriate provision in line with the statutory guidance.

17. On 27 October 2021 the department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE within the council, with the objective of GMPE provision being available for their child for P1 commencing in August 2023. Included in the request were the names of a further 13 children across a range of year groups not yet of primary school age, whose parents expressed an interest in GMPE for their children.

18. The department wrote to each parent included in the request, inviting them to return confirmation of their wish for GMPE for their child. Given the Council's small geographical area, the designated GMPE Assessment Area (defined catchment area) was defined as the entirety of the area of East Renfrewshire Council.

19. In response, the department received 11 confirmations, including that of the lead child, by the deadline of 8 December 2021. The breakdown of positive responses and the year in which the children are likely to commence primary education is detailed as follows:

<b>Year Group P1 Starting</b>	<b>Number of Positive Responses</b>
2023 - 24	5
2024 - 25	2
2025 - 26	3
2026 - 27	1

**Table 1**

20. As such the required threshold for an obligatory full assessment of the desire for GMPE of five children in any one year group was met by those families of children who will commence primary education in 2023-24. Consequently, the department decided to undertake a full assessment (appendix C) of the need for GMPE with respect to this application.

21. Comann nam Pàrant recorded in its response to the full assessment that it was aware of an additional 5 children whose parents are interested in accessing GMPE. It is unclear from the response as to where these families are located, the primary school commencement year and confirmation status of desire for GMPE is not yet verified.

22. The department wrote to all parents who intimated a desire for GMPE to inform them that the department intended to carry out a full assessment.
23. Given the legislative timeframe for the completion of the full assessment of 10 weeks, the full assessment required to be completed by 16 February 2022, with a decision made to proceed or otherwise on the introduction of GMPE within East Renfrewshire and to consult accordingly. As a consequence of the full assessment completion deadline occurring before the next council Education Committee meeting, the committee approved the delegation of the decision to establish GMPE to the Director of Education, following consideration of the outcome of the full assessment, at Education Committee on 3 February 2022.
24. On 16 February 2022, the Education Department published the [Assessment Response to a Parental Request for Gaelic Medium Education \(GMPE\) in East Renfrewshire Council](#)<sup>6</sup> (full assessment) which confirmed the Education Department's decision to take forward a learning provision for Gaelic Medium Primary Education for the beginning of school session 2023 / 2024.
25. Given the decision to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE Assessment Area the Education Department is required to take the necessary steps to secure the provision as it considers appropriate and within reasonable timescales and to undertake a statutory consultation.
26. Responses to the GMPE full assessment by Comann nam Pàrant, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Education Scotland suggest that the local authority should consult on the location of the proposed GMPE site and that the local authority should consider other factors such as central location and the ability for the service to be extended at a later date should GMPE increase in popularity in the council area.
27. Furthermore, whilst this proposal focuses on the introduction of GME for the primary sector, responses by Education Scotland, Comann nam Pàrant and The Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommended wider consideration at this time of future provision of immersive Gaelic Medium Education across the entire Broad General Education from 3-18. Therefore, whilst out with the scope of this proposal, the position of 3-18 resources has also been taken into consideration, in the event that any wider future provision is considered.
28. The focus of this consultation is only on GMPE and any future extension of Gaelic medium provision will be undertaken in accordance with legislation and appropriate consultation.

#### *GMPE for East Renfrewshire Residents: Current Position*

29. As detailed in paragraph 2, presently East Renfrewshire Council does not make GMPE provision available within the local authority area, however the Council supports families who wish such an experience for their children, and are successful in being granted a placing request to schools in neighbouring local authorities, through provision of transport.
30. The department is not aware of any placing requests being refused in recent years, however our statutory consultees (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant and Education Scotland) highlighted in their responses to the full assessment, that it is their understanding there is limited capacity within Glasgow City Council (which previously has accepted applications from East Renfrewshire residents) and that the authority has indicated it will no longer be able to provide places to non-Glasgow residents as a consequence of oversubscription from its residents.

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<sup>6</sup> Full Assessment Report: [https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/7380/GMPE-full-assessment-response/pdf/GMPE\\_full\\_assessment\\_response.pdf?m=637806074901130000](https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/7380/GMPE-full-assessment-response/pdf/GMPE_full_assessment_response.pdf?m=637806074901130000)

31. Comann nam Pàrant further commented in response that it believes any location identified for the delivery of GMPE must also consider the ability to increase the number of learning and teaching spaces available, as it suggests demand will grow in future.

32. At the present time 9 children are accessing GMPE in the aforementioned neighbouring local authorities with 6 children attending an establishment in Glasgow City Council and 3 children attending an establishment in South Lanarkshire Council (East Kilbride).

33. In addition, 8 children access secondary Gaelic Education at Glasgow Gaelic Secondary School.

*East Renfrewshire School Estate: Identification of Proposed Establishment for Possible GMPE Provision*

34. Across East Renfrewshire, schools operate as a cluster of schools with early learning and childcare establishments, primary and secondary schools being associated as a family of establishments. This approach allows clusters to work effectively at points of transition with children to ensure seamless progression from one sector to another and allows associated establishments to collaborate in common endeavours to create and continuously develop a 3-18 experience for all learners which is bespoke to the needs of their community.

35. East Renfrewshire's schools and early learning and childcare establishments are exceptionally popular, with many families becoming resident within the Council area in order to allow their children to access the high quality learning experiences, achievements and outcomes which our establishments are known for. This has been further heightened by significant residential property developments within the council area as a consequence of the Council's strategic residential property development plan, Local Development Plan 1 and subsequent [Local Development Plan 2](#)<sup>7</sup>.

36. These factors have resulted in almost all East Renfrewshire primary schools having high occupancy rates which results in little scope for the introduction of GMPE provision even on a small scale. Furthermore, the same constraint can be applied to many early learning and childcare, and almost all secondary establishments.

37. The consideration of an appropriate location for GMPE must also be cognisant of not only an establishment's current school roll, but also its projected school roll as a consequence of planned local residential developments. East Renfrewshire like all councils, must ensure effective management of its school places as it has a statutory duty to provide adequate and efficient provision of school education for its area.

38. In identifying an appropriate location for GMPE the Education Department has taken into consideration a variety of factors including:

- (a) sufficiency of school places for initial GMPE on the basis of current identified demand;
- (b) the availability of space to increase provision at a later date should it be required;
- (c) the opportunity to extend Gaelic provision at a later date to 3-18;
- (d) the location of the establishment with regards to ease of access;
- (e) the ability for the GMPE school to have its own unique identity whilst integrating with the non-GMPE school;
- (f) the Council's duty to *'secure continuous improvement in performance (while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost); and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency,*

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<sup>7</sup> East Renfrewshire Council's Local Development Plan: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ldp>

*effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirement and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.*<sup>8</sup>

39. Thornliebank Primary School campus is located on Thornliebank Drive, to the north-west of the Council's area, and at the heart of the Thornliebank community within a residential area with good transport links.

40. The school is currently operating as a 1 stream school (1 class at each stage) with a school roll recorded in the annual school pupil census in September 2021 of 188. The school's current planning capacity on the basis of being 1 stream is 210, however the school has the ability to increase its planning capacity to 420 (2 stream school) given the number of learning and teaching bases available within the school. On the basis of a planning capacity for the school of 420, the school's roll over each of the last 5 years is detailed in table 2:

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Roll	169	176	186	192	188
Planning Capacity	40%	42%	44%	46%	45%

**Table 2**

41. There is a very small number of pupils projected to take up residence within the school's catchment area in the next 10 years or so from new residential developments.

42. Since August 2020, East Renfrewshire Council has offered families with children aged 3 and 4 years old access to 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare. The maximum capacity at Thornliebank Nursery Class is 40 children present at any one time. Since the introduction of 1140 hours the number of children recorded as attending the nursery class at the end of the academic year is 34 in years 2020-21 and 2021-22. This means that on average over the last two years there have been 6 places available within the nursery class.

43. Woodfarm High School, the associated secondary school of Thornliebank Primary School, has a school roll of 715 as recorded in the annual school pupil census of 2021 or 72% of the school's planning capacity; the lowest value recorded across all of East Renfrewshire's secondary schools. The school's catchment area has a very small number of planned residential property developments in the area and consequently current projections indicate a very small number of potential additional children requiring a place at the school in the next 10 years.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Roll	878	843	807	765	715
Planning Capacity	88%	84%	81%	77%	72%

**Table 3**

44. The proposed model for delivery of GMPE at Thornliebank campus is English & Gaelic being delivered in the same school under the leadership of one Head Teacher. For pupils attending Thornliebank Primary School, pupils will be taught entirely in English as is currently the case. For those in attendance at GMPE school, pupils will be taught entirely in Gaelic across P1 to P3, with English being introduced to pupils from P4 onwards, but with Gaelic still the predominate language in the classroom.

45. It is important that both schools have their own unique identity. The layout of the Thornliebank Primary School campus is conducive to the creation of a unique school for Gaelic medium whilst simultaneously facilitating the integration of the GMPE provision to whole school activities and accessing shared resources. This will ensure equal status of Gaelic, will

<sup>8</sup> Local Government in Scotland Act 2003: Best Value: Revised Statutory Guidance: 2020 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-value-revised-statutory-guidance-2020/>

encourage a positive and inclusive attitude environment in the school and will contribute to the fluency and confidence of young people learning through the medium of Gaelic.

### Transport

46. East Renfrewshire Council and all other local authorities in Scotland are duty bound to comply with the statutory requirement to provide home to school transport arrangements that are considered necessary when:

- (a) children are aged less than 8 years old and live more than two miles from their designated school; and
- (b) children aged 8 and over who live more than three miles from their designated school.

47. East Renfrewshire's [School Transport Policy](#)<sup>9</sup> complies with the statutory requirement and has additional conditions which may be met to allow children to access free transport to and from school each day. Specifically in relation to primary school education, an East Renfrewshire resident child is entitled to free transport when the child's catchment school is more than 2 miles from the family home, using the safest shortest walking route.

48. As East Renfrewshire Council does not provide GMPE locally at this time, those children who are successful in applying for a place in other local authority's GMPE provision are provided with free school transport. Free school transport for children attending GMPE takes the form of a taxi.

49. Any East Renfrewshire child who attends the proposed GMPE school and who resides more than 2 miles from the school would be provided with free transport, as the catchment area of the provision is the Council's boundary.

50. There are currently 9 children of primary school age attending GMPE provision in other local authorities either at Mount Cameron Primary School East Kilbride, the Glasgow Gaelic School (Govan) or The Glasgow Gaelic School (Berkley Street). Details of the schools currently being attended and the shortest, longest and average distance to each of those establishments by children is provided in table 4. Additionally distances which would be travelled had children been attending GMPE at Thornliebank Primary School, are also provided.

School Attending	Shortest round trip	Longest round trip	Average Round Trip	Shortest Round Trip to TPS <sup>10</sup>	Longest Round Trip to TPS <sup>10</sup>	Average Round Trip to TPS
Mount Cameron PS	14	19	16	7	8	8
Glasgow Gaelic School Govan	16	19	17	5	10	8
Glasgow Gaelic School Berkley Street	19	21	20	6	10	8

**Table 4**

<sup>9</sup> East Renfrewshire Free School Transport Policy: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/free-school-transport>

<sup>10</sup> TPS: Thornliebank Primary School

51. As per Table 1, families of 5 children have recorded that they wish to access GMPE provision delivered by East Renfrewshire Council from August 2023 and beyond. Whilst it is not clear as to which GMPE provision outside East Renfrewshire each family would apply for a place at if provision is not provided within the Council, table 5 provides details of the average, shortest and longest distance for each establishment from the group of 5 children.

	Shortest Round Trip	Longest Round Trip	Average Round Trip
Mount Cameron PS	12	25	19
Glasgow Gaelic School (Govan)	10	26	18
Glasgow Gaelic School (Berkley Street)	14	21	17
Thornliebank PS	<1	10	6

**Table 5**

52. The allocation of school transport for any East Renfrewshire child who is allocated a place at the proposed GMPE school will be in accordance with the Council's school transport policy. Of the 5 children for which families have requested GMPE place from August 2023, two reside within 2 miles of the Thornliebank Primary School, and so it is likely would make their own way to school each day without the need for transport.

53. Where an East Renfrewshire resident is successful in a placing request to GMPE provision in another local authority, but did not apply for GMPE in East Renfrewshire, then the Council will not make arrangements for transporting that child to the GMPE provision in another local authority. Where a child's application for GMPE provision in East Renfrewshire cannot be accommodated due to oversubscription, and the child is successful in a placing request to another local authority, then the Education Department will provide transport in such cases.

54. Of the remaining 6 children who have requested GMPE for future years, 2 reside within 2 miles of the school.

55. Table 5 highlights the significant reduction in the distance which would require to be travelled by children each day should GMPE provision be made available at Thornliebank Primary School. Further benefits of this reduction in travel is provided in the education benefits statement section.

### *Staffing and Admission Arrangements*

56. All councils must ensure effective management of their school places and have a statutory duty to provide adequate and efficient provision of school education for their area.

57. Local authorities also have a "... duty to secure best value by continuous improvement in performance of the authority's functions, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities and the achievement of sustainable development."

58. In primary schools, the planning capacity is used to determine the number of pupils that the Education Department can plan to take at each stage in a school and informs the number of required teachers. The planning capacity is used to help monitor provision and demand and to support planning to provide an appropriate number of school places for children who reside within a school's catchment area.

59. The pupil teacher ratio as defined by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) defines the permissible number of pupils to a single General Teaching



Council for Scotland (GTCS) registered teacher. The pupil teacher ratios within the primary sector are defined by SNCT as follows:

P1:	25 pupils for every class teacher;
P2-P3:	30 pupils for every class teacher;
P4-P7:	33 pupils for every class teacher.

60. Composite classes allow children from different year stages to be educated together in the same class, by the same teacher. The SNCT agreement defines a teacher pupil ratio maximum of 1:25 (1 teacher to 25 pupils) for composite classes. Composite classes can assist the Education Department to effectively and efficiently manage the school estate and are common place in Scottish schools.

61. It is important that the Education Department plans accordingly to provide the maximum number of places within the GMPE school for those East Renfrewshire residents who request a place, whilst ensuring the Council meets its statutory duty of granting placing requests to those who stay in other local authorities, when it considers places are available.

62. The Education Department must also consider its ability to recruit fluent GTCS registered Gaelic speaking primary teacher(s) when determining the number of maximum pupils which can be accommodated. Bòrd na Gàidhlig recognises the challenge of recruiting appropriately qualified staff given the rising demand for GMPE but is of the view that recruiting staff should be possible. The challenges of recruiting suitably qualified staff and professional development of them, is also a matter raised by Ken Muir in his recent report<sup>11</sup> on education reform in Scotland. The Bòrd has offered to assist the department in the recruitment process.

63. The confirmed demand for a place at the proposed GMPE school records a requirement at this time of 11 places, with 5 places required for commencement in August 2023. However, Comann nam Pàrant indicated in its response to the full assessment that following 'minimal promotion' it was made aware of families of another 5 children who are interested in accessing GMPE and that it believes demand for GMPE will increase in the Council if a school is established.

64. Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) takes the form of immersion, i.e. children experience all their learning in the early years of primary school (P1 - P3) through the Gaelic language. Thereafter, immersion continues but in P4–P7 English is introduced, while Gaelic remains the predominant language of the classroom.

65. Given the number of children the Council is aware of who would request GMPE provision, the department proposes to initially plan for the employment of one GMPE teacher. This will allow a multi-stage composite class across the P1-P3 year stages, aligning with the Early and First Level of the Broad General Education and the approach to delivery of education in immersive Gaelic at P1-P3 and English being introduced from P4 onwards, albeit with Gaelic the predominate language of the classroom.

66. Currently 1 child in the P1 year stage is attending GMPE provision in another local authority. At the commencement of the proposed GMPE provision in August 2023, this child will be commencing the P3 year stage and may request to transfer to the proposed GMPE school in East Renfrewshire.

67. The data gathered thus far indicates that 17 places may be required at the school within the first 5 years of opening. It is also likely that demand will increase once the provision is in place.

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<sup>11</sup> Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education:  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/putting-learners-centre-towards-future-vision-scottish-education/documents/>

68. The current [school admissions and placing request policies](#)<sup>12</sup> came into effect on 1 January 2017 following a full public consultation.

69. The school admissions policy is clear in that when a catchment child applies for a place in a catchment school, if there are places available, a place will be allocated.

70. In keeping with legislation, families can apply for their child to attend a school which is not the catchment school allocated to their location of residence or for a school place in another local authority. Where places are available after all catchment children are accommodated (and in excess of reserved places), these should be allocated to placing request applicants accordingly. If the number of placing request applications received is greater than the number of places available, places are allocated in accordance with the placing request priorities.

71. In the case of oversubscription by catchment, places are also allocated to catchment children in accordance with the placing request priorities.

72. Whilst the proposed location of GMPE provision within East Renfrewshire is Thornliebank Primary School, the defined catchment area for accessing the GMPE provision for East Renfrewshire residents is the Council's boundary.

73. In order to access a GMPE place, it is proposed that all East Renfrewshire residents will apply for a place as a catchment applicant to the GMPE school in accordance with the current school admissions and placing request policies.

74. Applicants will also indicate the preferred English medium catchment school (denominational / non-denominational) in the case that the child's GMPE application cannot be accommodated due to oversubscription.

75. At the time of school catchment application processing at the end of March, GMPE applications will be processed by the department first, identifying those who can or cannot be accommodated. In the case of oversubscription by catchment applicants the available places will be allocated in accordance with the placing request priorities as is the case for any catchment school across the Council.

76. All GMPE applicants will be included in the catchment processing of the English medium school recorded regardless of whether or not they have been allocated a place at the GMPE provision, along with all other non-GMPE applicants for that school.

77. Where a child has been granted a place in GMPE, the purpose of inclusion in the processing of applications for the recorded English medium catchment school is only to identify which English medium catchment school the child would have been allocated if a GMPE application had not been successful. The English medium primary school which would have been allocated will then identify the associated secondary school for the child for purpose of P7-S1 transfer applications. Any child allocated GMPE will of course not be allocated a place at the English medium school.

78. Any applicant who cannot be accommodated in GMPE due to oversubscription will have their English medium catchment school application processed alongside all other applicants for that school. At this time, the GMPE applicant will be treated like all other applicants for the English medium school and will be processed in accordance with the school admissions and placing request policies, with an appropriate non GMPE primary place allocated.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/4436/School-Admissions>

79. At the point of transition to secondary school, any child who attends the proposed GMPE school will be assumed to transfer to the secondary school associated with the English medium catchment primary school as described in paragraphs 76 to 78. This is assuming catchment status is unchanged. However, in accordance with the school admissions and placing request policies, parents/carers of children attending the proposed GMPE school will have the option of applying for a place in either of the catchment secondary schools associated with the child's location of residence.

80. At the time of P7-S1 transition, should parents/carers of children attending GMPE wish to submit a placing request for a non-catchment secondary school, for the purposes of placing request applications, the associated secondary school of the GMPE school will be regarded as Woodfarm High School, as is the case with Thornliebank Primary School.

81. The Council's current school admissions and placing request arrangements for catchment East Renfrewshire Council families, and those from other local authorities, will be applicable for those who wish to apply for a place at the Gaelic Medium primary school and there will be no impact on families applying for school places in other schools under the Council's control.

### PROPOSAL

*To introduce Gaelic Medium Primary Education to East Renfrewshire Council to meet the demands for such provision from residents as confirmed by the full assessment of demand for GMPE, and to ensure the Council meets its statutory duty by doing so. It is proposed that GMPE will be provided at Thornliebank Primary School campus from August 2023 and beyond.*

82. The proposal is:

- (a) to consult on the proposal to establish a GMPE facility within East Renfrewshire Council at Thornliebank Primary School campus, which will have the Council's boundary as the Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) school's defined delineated catchment area, overlaying the English medium primary schools.

### EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

83. The vision of the Education Department of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*, is at the heart of the work that the department and school staff undertake as they seek to provide the highest quality education and services to develop the whole individual.

84. The aim of *Curriculum for Excellence* is to enable all children and young people to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. The Department's vision and values embody these aims, which are furthered by *Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child*.

85. The Education Department and schools work tirelessly to provide an educational experience which is wide and varied and is designed appropriately to the needs of all learners and our communities.

86. In the Council's Gaelic Language Plan there is a clear statement to the Council's commitment to the use and promotion of Gaelic language in recognition of its status as one of Scotland's national languages and to the encouragement of learning and using the Gaelic language. The plan reaffirms the Council's commitment to contribute towards developing and

sustaining the language in general and for its residents in particular, and the benefits that GMPE will bring.

87. Furthermore the Council's Gaelic Language Plan describes the Council's intention to consider the inclusion of Gaelic language within our 1+2 Languages strategy as an alternative language for learners.

88. Thornliebank Primary School English medium provision would be well placed to access the expertise of specialist Gaelic primary school practitioner(s) should GMPE be provided on the school's campus and could be considered as a language for inclusion in the school's 1+2 approaches.

89. For children who access English medium education at Thornliebank Primary School there will be opportunities to integrate and learn and play with children who would attend the GMPE provision at whole school activities, in the playground, lunch hall and during extra-curricular activities. The school communal areas, Gaelic teaching spaces and some areas of playground would have Gaelic language signage also. This will provide children of English medium the opportunity to develop language skills, knowledge and comprehension in a naturally occurring way and may heighten their interest in the language. The Gaelic and English medium provisions will be able to share in a collective vision, values and aims for the integrated school, creating a fully inclusive and equitable learning environment, which focuses on individual learners and their specific needs; a key feature of the future of education as described by Ken Muir in his recent report<sup>13</sup> on [education reform in Scotland](#).

90. The introduction of GMPE provision within the council will promote and highlight opportunities of Gaelic Medium Education within Scottish education and resultant benefits of bilingualism and will make learners more aware of how being a speaker of Gaelic is part of Scotland's identity, culture and heritage. Additionally, it improves all young people's access to local-based Gaelic Medium Education in pursuit of excellence, equity and equality in Scottish education. The recognition and celebration of Scotland's diversity and parity of esteem for Gaelic communities is another principle recognised by Ken Muir<sup>13</sup> as key in meeting the needs of current and future learners from the community.

91. East Renfrewshire has a similar proportion of Gaelic speaking residents to the national average and so it is of educational benefit for these families to be able to access GMPE within their own council area given the additional logistics families face when children have to travel to other local authorities.

92. Whilst at this time focus is on the introduction of GME within the primary sector, the creation of such a school is considered to be the first step towards the Council overtaking its commitment to actively seek and promote opportunities for children and young people from 3-18 to learn Gaelic in our schools and centres as defined within the Council's Gaelic Language Plan. This would benefit children's education as they would be able to access GME across the years 3-18, allowing children to develop their Gaelic acquisition at entry to early years education and to continue their learning journey in Gaelic medium in secondary school, providing a truly 3-18 progressive experience.

93. Should GMPE provision be provided within Thornliebank Primary School campus, the travelling time for young learners will reduce significantly from the current travelling times required to access other provision in Glasgow City Council and South Lanarkshire. In response to the full assessment consultation, Comann Nam Pàrant made reference to one parent who advised that their child spends around 1.5 hours per day travelling to and from school, which has an impact on children's time pre and post school. Furthermore, children's

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<sup>13</sup> Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/putting-learners-centre-towards-future-vision-scottish-education/documents/>

ability to access extra-curricular activities at the school given the requirement for them to be transported large distances, are limited. Consequently it would be beneficial to children's education to be educated within the local authority.

94. Having GMPE provision within East Renfrewshire Council is likely to facilitate better parental engagement and involvement with school life given the reduced travelling distance to school; there are clear educational benefits to parents/carers having strong involvement and engagement with their child's school.

95. Encouraging active travel for children walking to school each day improves physical and mental wellbeing, reduces car usage within the vicinity of schools reducing pollution in the air and supports the Council's efforts towards being Carbon Neutral by 2040. Active travel will be possible for those who live within 2 miles of the proposed GMPE school.

96. The Education Department considers that the proposals would not have an adverse impact on any child or staff member in terms of age, gender, religion, race, and disability.

97. A Children's Rights, Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the consultation exercise. In carrying out this assessment the department will take account of (or address) any rights, fairness or equality issues raised as part of the consultation process. The Children's Rights, Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment will be included in the consultation report on the results.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

98. At present funding is not yet available for modifications to the identified preferred location for the establishment of a GMPE school or for additional physical resources such as tables and chairs and IT equipment. However from early discussions with the Gaelic and Scots Team of the Learning Directorate at The Scottish Government, it is likely that the majority of capital funding required will be provided to the Council.

99. Initially, it is anticipated that the school will require the recruitment and employment of an additional fluent Gaelic speaking Principal Teacher and a Gaelic speaking pupil support assistant (PSA). This approach will support the objective of providing a totally immersive Gaelic language experience. There may be further job sizing considerations required given the expectation of additional management duties for the Head Teacher.

100. In order to support the Council to meet the additional revenue costs as a consequence of the introduction of GMPE, funding is available to all Scottish Local Authorities for up to 75% of the cost towards delivery of Gaelic education, via the Gaelic Specific Grant. Given that the grant can only meet up to 75% of all costs associated with the cost of GMPE, any costs in excess of the grant would be raised as a spending pressure from financial year 2022-23 and beyond.

101. Currently most of the revenue costs of transporting children each day to and from Gaelic provision in other local authorities (Glasgow and South Lanarkshire) are funded from the Gaelic Specific Grant, with the Council meeting the remainder of the costs.

102. There is potential, if Gaelic provision was established in East Renfrewshire, that some of the children who may attend and who live within a 2 mile radius of the provision, would not require to be transported to and from school each day. Furthermore, for children who reside

out with the 2 miles radius but who are East Renfrewshire residents, there could possibly be greater degree of flexibility in providing transport, as well as the distance required to travel. Consequently it is likely that transport costs which the Council currently meets will reduce over time and the experience for children will be improved. The Council would continue to seek funding for transportation costs for East Renfrewshire children to be transported to and from the facility from the Gaelic Specific Grant.

## CONSULTATION

103. The Council is required to formally consult on the arrangements for the establishment of a new school or a new stage of education in a school and the associated catchment area of a school. How this is carried out and who must be consulted is clearly set out in the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

104. This paper is issued as a formal consultative document and will be made available to all interested parties. A copy of the paper is available for inspection at the settings and schools and at the Council's Head Office, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock, East Renfrewshire, G46 6UG; and at the Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, G78 1SY. An electronic version can be accessed at the East Renfrewshire Council website (<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/GMPE>).

### *Settings affected*

105. Thornliebank Primary School and the early learning and childcare establishments of the Woodfarm Community area, namely Braidbar Primary School Nursery Class, Giffnock Primary School Nursery Class, Glenwood Family Centre and Thornliebank and Primary School Nursery Class.

### *Period of Consultation*

106. The consultation period will last from Wednesday 17 August 2022 to midnight on Friday 30 September 2022.

### *Relevant Consultees*

107. We will consult with the following:

- Parents/ carers of all children/ young people in the affected settings;
- Parent Councils of the affected settings;
- Parents/ carers of any child(ren)/ young person (people) expected to attend an affected setting within the next 2 school years;
- Parents/ carers of any child(ren)/ young person (people) where parent/carers requested GMPE provision within the initial request and subsequent full assessment of the demand for GMPE;
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig;
- Pupils of each affected school (in so far as the education authority considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity);
- Staff (teaching and otherwise) of each affected setting;
- Trade unions representing staff employed in the affected settings; and

- Any other education authority that the education authority considers relevant.

108. During the consultation period a public meeting will be held in St Cadoc's Primary School at 7:00 pm on 15 September 2022. Elected members and senior officers of East Renfrewshire Council will be present to discuss the proposal and there will be an opportunity to ask questions at the meeting.

109. Note on Corrections: If any possible inaccuracy or omission in the Consultative Document is discovered by the Education Department or is suggested by any other person, the department will determine if relevant information has been omitted or if there has been an inaccuracy. The Education Department will then take appropriate action that may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the proposal paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period as appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised.

### *Responding to the Consultation*

110. East Renfrewshire Council invites all interested parties to make written representation on the consultative proposal. Interested parties are encouraged to provide feedback on East Renfrewshire Council's website <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/GMPE> or alternatively consultees can complete and return the consultation response proforma included as appendix D.

111. Written responses regarding the proposal will also be accepted by post. Such responses should be clear about who you are, where you live, why you are interested including your relationship with the affected settings (e.g. parent/ carer of pupil in an affected setting, member of staff at an affected setting, relative of a pupil at an affected setting etc.) and whether or not you agree with the proposal, or have any alternative solutions or comments. Petitions will be treated as a single response.

112. Education Scotland is entitled to copies of all responses received. We would therefore advise that your personal information will be supplied to Education Scotland if they request it. Separately, other interested parties may also seek sight of the responses received and accordingly you should advise if you wish your personal details withheld in respect of these requests.

113. Please send all written representation on the proposal to East Renfrewshire Council no later than midnight on Friday 30 September 2022 via the Council's consultation website, or postal address for hard copies to East Renfrewshire Council, Education Department, Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, G78 1SY.

114. Education Scotland will be sent details of the consultation responses including issues raised at the public meeting and other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare and submit a report to the Director of Education within three weeks. In preparing their report Education Scotland may visit the affected schools.

115. The Director of Education will report the results of this consultation exercise including the report submitted by Education Scotland to the Education Committee on 8 December 2022. The consultation report on the results will be available for public inspection at least 3 weeks before that date. The report will be available at all reasonable times at Council Offices at Eastwood Park, and Barrhead Main Street, in the affected school, local library and published on the Council's website.

116. Reasonable requests for alternative forms of consultation papers or response documents will be accommodated wherever possible e.g. audio support or language

## 122

translations. For this support please contact Aileen Vance via email [Aileen.Vance@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:Aileen.Vance@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk) or write to the address in paragraph 113 above.

117. The final report and the decision taken by the Education Committee will be made available on the Council's website. Printed copies of the report will be made available on request to anyone who has responded to the consultative document.

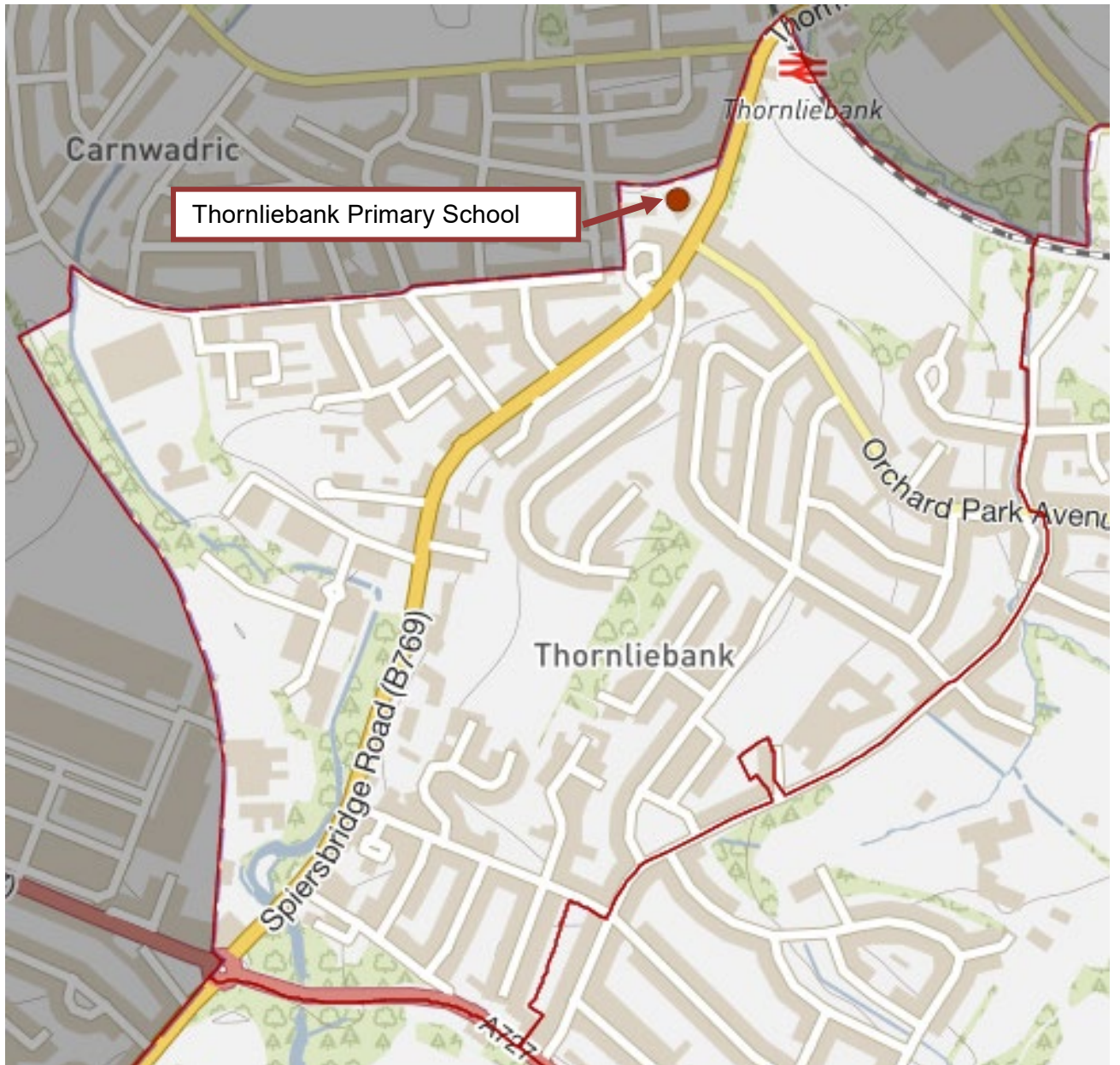
Mark Ratter  
Director of Education  
June 2022



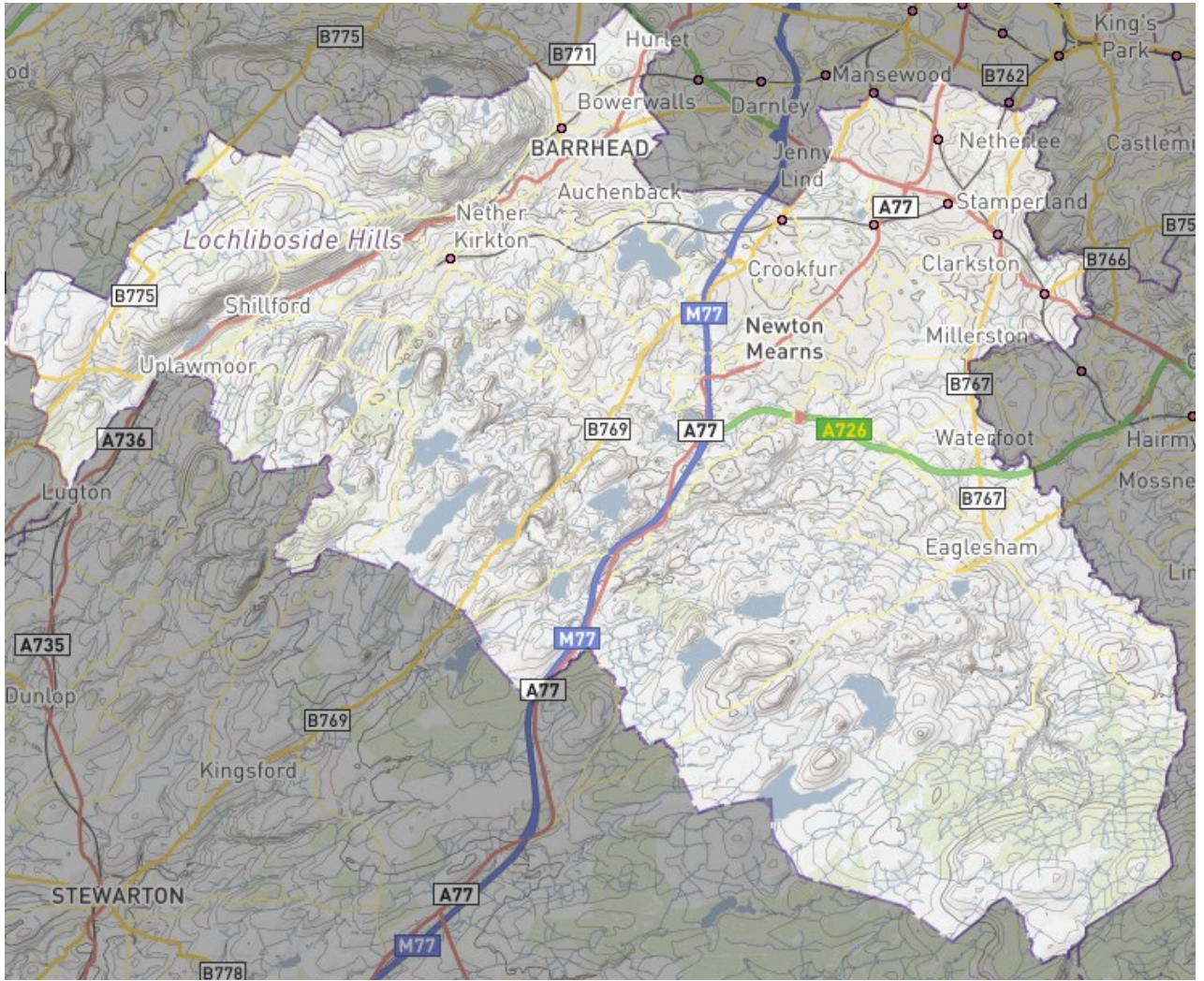
**Appendices**

- Appendix A – Thornliebank Primary School Location**
- Appendix B – GMPE Assessment Area (Catchment Area)**
- Appendix C – GMPE Full Assessment by East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department**
- Appendix D – Consultation response proforma**

**Appendix A: Thornliebank Primary School Location and Catchment Area**



**Appendix B: Defined GMPE Assessment Area (Catchment Area): Council Boundary**



**Assessment Response to a Parental Request for Gaelic  
Medium Education (GMPE)**

**in**

**East Renfrewshire Council**

**16 February 2022**

**Contents**

**SECTION 1:** Background

**SECTION 2:** Request for GMPE and consultation process (Initial assessment)

**SECTION 3:** Full assessment - consideration of Mandatory Factors

**SECTION 5:** Conclusion

**SECTION 6:** Education Department Recommendation

**SECTION 7:** Next Steps

**APPENDICES**

- 1. Statutory Response - Bòrd na Gàidhlig,**
- 2. Statutory Response - Comann nam Pàrant**
- 3. Statutory Response - Education Scotland**

## SECTION 1

### Background

1. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on education authorities to promote and support Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) and establishes a process by which parents can request Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) from their education authority.
2. Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) takes the form of immersion, i.e. children experience all their learning in the early years of primary school (Pr. 1 - 3) through the Gaelic language. Thereafter, immersion continues but in Pr. 4 – 7 English is introduced, while Gaelic remains the predominant language of the classroom.
3. At present East Renfrewshire Council does not make such a provision but supports families who wish such an experience for their children, and are successful in being granted a placing request to schools in neighbouring local authorities, through provision of transport.
4. [Statutory guidance<sup>14</sup>](#), issued by the Bòrd na Gàidhlig came into force on 1 February 2017, Part 1 of which sets out the steps education authorities must take to assess demand on receipt of a request for GME.
5. Under the legislation and statutory guidance parents of children under school age, and who have not yet started to attend a primary school, have the right to request an assessment of the need for GMPE from the education authority in which the family resides. Any request must also set out or be accompanied by evidence of demand for GMPE from parents of other children resident in the same education authority area and who will commence primary school in the same year group as the specified child. An initial assessment should be completed within a 6 week window; a full assessment allows 10 weeks for the local authority to undertake and report on the exercise.
6. When an education authority receives a parental request made under the 2016 Act, it must designate the geographical area in relation to which it will undertake its assessment of the need for GMPE referred to as a 'GMPE assessment area'.
7. The threshold for an obligatory full assessment under the 2016 Act is that an education authority is satisfied that there is demand in the GMPE assessment area from the parents of at least five children who are resident in the GMPE assessment area and who are all in the same pre-school year group; the specified child should be counted in this total.

## SECTION 2

### Initial Assessment

8. On 27 October 2021 the department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE in East Renfrewshire for her child, known as the 'lead child', who is due to start primary school in August 2023.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Statutory-Guidance-for-Gaelic-Education.pdf>

9. Where any education authority determines that there is a potential need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area, it has two possible options, it can:
- carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area; or
  - without carrying out a full assessment, exercise its discretion to take such steps as are necessary to secure the provision of such GMPE as it considers appropriate in the GMPE assessment area.
10. Following initial assessment of demand (as detailed in paragraphs 18 to 24), the department decided to carry out a full assessment of the need for GMPE. The statutory guidance requires that *'when carrying out a full assessment an education authority must have regard to a list of mandatory matters, and must decide to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so'*.
11. The department has written to all parents whose names were provided as part of the initial request to indicate that we are carrying out a full assessment. We have also posted the outcome of the initial assessment on the Council's website as per the statutory guidance.

### SECTION 3

#### **Full assessment - consideration of Mandatory Factors**

12. When carrying out a full assessment, an education authority must have regard to a list of mandatory matters, and must decide to secure the provision of GMPE in the GMPE assessment area unless it would be unreasonable to do so.
13. The mandatory factors considered included:
- Views provided by statutory consultees
  - Initial assessment information in relation to demand
  - Existing GMPE provision in adjacent authorities and the availability of access
  - Access to GMPE in East Renfrewshire from children in other Local Authorities
  - Accommodation
  - Costs
  - Teachers – including potential availability within East Renfrewshire and the potential to recruit
  - The East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan.

#### **Views provided by statutory consultees**

14. It is required that when undertaking a full assessment the views of statutory consultees be sought and their response taken in to account. The department requested the views of Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant and The National Parent Forum of Scotland on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021.
15. As per the full assessment protocol Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant all responded within four weeks of notification. It is not a statutory duty placed

upon The National Parent Forum of Scotland or Comann nam Pàrant to respond. All responses received from the statutory consultees were in favour of establishing GMPE in East Renfrewshire Council.

#### THE VIEWS EXPRESSED: MAIN POINTS

16. The following is a summary of the main points arising from the written responses submitted by the statutory respondents.

##### *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*

- that there is a need for GMPE within East Renfrewshire from the commencement of Session 2023-24;
- that a Local Authority with a single GMPE service should deliver the service for all residents of the Local Authority;
- the Local Authority reviews provision of GMPE in the context of ultimately providing a 3-18 Gaelic Medium Education (GME) service for residents of East Renfrewshire; and,
- indicated that they would provide professional advice and support regarding possible staffing structures and recruitment processes.

##### *Comann nam Pàrant*

- the initial assessment has clearly identified the need for GMPE in East Renfrewshire;
- agree with the decision to designate the whole authority area as the GMPE assessment area;
- when deciding on location of provision the residency of families who have requested GMPE must be taken into consideration; and,
- once provision is established that demand will increase for Gaelic medium education in East Renfrewshire.

##### *Education Scotland*

- agree that there is sufficient demand for establishing Gaelic Medium Primary Education from 2023;
- parents should be consulted on the best available location of the proposed Gaelic Medium Education service;
- indicated that the education authority should strategically plan towards a 3-18 continuum of learning that overtakes all the statutory requirements of Gaelic Medium Education; and,
- the education authority should be clear, in consulting with parents, of their preferred future delivery model of high-quality immersion in East Renfrewshire Council.

17. A copy of all responses can be found as part of the appendix of this document.

#### **Initial assessment information in relation to demand**

18. As detailed in paragraph 8, the department received a request on 27 October from a parent resident seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE. Included in the request were the names of a further 13 children across a range of year groups, whose parents had expressed an interest in GMPE for their children.

19. The department wrote to each parent included in the request for assessment, inviting them to complete a proforma confirming their wish for GMPE for their child. Given the



Council's small geographical area, the designated GMPE assessment area was defined as the whole of the geographical area of East Renfrewshire.

20. The department received 11 positive responses, including that of the lead child, by the deadline of 8 December 2021. The breakdown of numbers for each year group is detailed in table 1 below.

*Table 1*

<b>Year Group P1 Starting</b>	<b>Number of Positive Responses</b>
2023 - 24	5
2024 - 25	2
2025 - 26	3
2026 - 27	1

21. As such the threshold of five children in any one year group is met.
22. At the time of assessment there was no request for provision prior to August 2023.
23. In April 2017, the Education Department received a request from a parent resident in East Renfrewshire seeking an assessment of the demand for GMPE in East Renfrewshire for her child. After carrying out the initial assessment, the department concluded that there was not the potential need for GMPE as the threshold for a full assessment had not been met. As a result no further action was taken.
24. The demand for 2023-24 is higher than the previous request in 2017 and above the current existing demand i.e. around 2 per stage.

#### **Existing GMPE provision in adjacent authorities and the availability of access**

25. As detailed in paragraph 3, presently East Renfrewshire Council does not make GMPE provision available within the local authority area, however the Council supports families who wish such an experience for their children, and are successful in being granted a placing request to schools in neighbouring local authorities, through provision of transport.
26. The department is not aware of any placing requests being refused in recent years, however our statutory consultees (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant and Education Scotland) as part of this process highlighted the limited capacity of a neighbouring authority and the likelihood of future placing requests being refused.
27. The number of children accessing GMPE in neighbouring local authorities has remained consistent over the past few years with 1 or 2 parents per year making successful placing requests to either Glasgow City Council or South Lanarkshire Council.
28. At the present time 8 children are accessing GMPE in the aforementioned neighbouring local authorities. Five children in Glasgow City Council and 3 children in South Lanarkshire Council.
29. In addition, 7 children access secondary Gaelic Education at Glasgow Gaelic Secondary School. With 2 pupils in S1, 4 pupils in S2, 5 pupils in S3 and 1 pupil in S6.

#### **Access to GMPE in East Renfrewshire from children in other Local Authorities**

30. As noted in paragraph 3 this is not currently available. The Education Department would require to update the current admission arrangements to take full account of any new provision.

**Accommodation**

31. The Education Department must consider and identify an appropriate location for the delivery of GMPE.
32. Given that the catchment area for GMPE has been identified as the Council's boundary, this means that any current establishment identified as being most appropriate for the delivery of GMPE will be required to accommodate pupils from across the Council area, in accordance with relevant legislation.
33. Application for a place in a Gaelic service will be managed via the Council's placing request process.
34. In order to ensure an appropriate learning environment, and to ensure immersive Gaelic education across the P1-P3 stages, amendments will be required to an identified school facility. This will in effect create a separate provision within the school, having a separate entrance and signage, but with shared access to communal areas such as dining and physical education facilities.
35. On the basis of the number of families who have indicated a desire for their child(ren) to be educated in a GMPE facility, initially the provision for GMPE will require a small number of learning spaces. Consequently it is very likely that the class composition for GMPE will be structured on the basis of multi-stage composite classes; this is where children from across several stages are educated by the same teacher and a support assistant within a single learning space.
36. It has been suggested by the statutory consultee Comann nam Pàrant that once established, demand will continue or increase in future years for Gaelic Medium Education in East Renfrewshire, therefore any potential provision for GMPE, must give consideration to the ability to increase the number of learning and teaching spaces, as required.
37. Across the current school estate there is only a small number of current facilities which have the capacity to support the introduction of Gaelic provision.

**Costs**

38. There will be capital costs associated with amendments to a current school building as well as additional physical resources such as tables and chairs and IT equipment. From early discussions with the Gaelic and Scots Team of the Learning Directorate at The Scottish Government, it is likely that a significant capital funding contribution from the Scottish Government will be available to the Council to develop the Gaelic school in these matters.
39. Initially, it is anticipated that the school will require the recruitment and employment of an additional fluent Gaelic speaking teacher and a Gaelic speaking pupil support assistant (PSA). There may be further job sizing considerations required given the expectation of additional management duties for the Head Teacher. These additional roles will result in additional revenue pressure for the Council however some of this may be offset by a Scottish Government Specific Grant for Gaelic education. As the demand for GMPE grows the costs per capita may reduce to be in line with the cost of current primary provision as the number of children attending the provision increases.

40. In order to prepare the school for the introduction of GMPE, staffing resource will be required to support the development of the Gaelic curriculum, learning teaching and assessment materials. This role will further support other actions such as: looking outwards to identify and learn from existing good GMPE practice elsewhere; communicate effectively with parents, families and other stakeholders as the provision is developed; and support newly appointed teaching and PSA staff with pedagogy and curriculum development. It is possible that the majority of the revenue costs associated with this post will be met by Scottish Government funding.
41. Currently most of the revenue costs of transporting children each day to and from Gaelic provision in other local authorities (Glasgow and South Lanarkshire) are funded by Scottish Government, with the Council meeting the remainder of the costs.
42. There is potential, if Gaelic provision was established in East Renfrewshire, that some of the children who may attend and who live within a 2 mile radius of the provision, would not require to be transported to and from school each day. Furthermore, for children who reside out with the 2 miles radius but who are East Renfrewshire residents, there could possibly be greater degree of flexibility in providing transport, as well as the distance required to travel. Consequently it is likely that transport costs which the Council currently meets will reduce over time and the experience for children will be improved; the Council will continue to seek funding for transportation costs for East Renfrewshire children to be transported to and from the facility.

### **Teachers**

43. At present no information exists relating to the number of East Renfrewshire Council employees who can speak, read, write or understand Gaelic. An action within our Gaelic Language Plan 2017 – 2022 is to audit and monitor this. A new HR and Payroll system was planned to help with this action, unfortunately there have been a number of delays in the implementation of this new system, therefore the data on the number of employees who are Gaelic speakers is not available at this time however this action will be overtaken in the lifetime of the Gaelic Language Plan.
44. East Renfrewshire contacted the General Teaching Council Scotland to request information on the number of existing East Renfrewshire teaching staff who are registered as Gaelic Teachers. This information is not yet available to the Education Department.
45. It is an assumption at this stage that at a minimum, a suitably qualified Gaelic speaking teacher would be required to establish GMPE provision from August 2023.
46. Any recruitment would be through the Council's existing recruitment process, with support sought from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to guarantee a successful outcome.

### **The East Renfrewshire Gaelic Language Plan.**

47. All public authorities in Scotland are required to have a Gaelic Language Plan under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. East Renfrewshire's current plan was approved in 2018 and is due to be renewed by 2023.
48. The Gaelic Language Plan sets out the Council's commitment to promote the Gaelic language in line with the National Gaelic Language Plan. The National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 sets out three priorities:

- Increasing the use of Gaelic
- Increasing the learning of Gaelic
- Promoting a positive image of Gaelic.

49. In terms of the learning of Gaelic in East Renfrewshire education establishments, the Council has committed within its Gaelic Language Plan to:

- assess any requests for GME and determine the need for appropriate provision in line with the statutory guidance
- actively seek and promote opportunities for children and young people from 3-18 to learn Gaelic in our schools and centres.

## **SECTION 5**

### **Conclusion**

50. Having carried out an initial and full assessment, the Education Department is clear that there is demand, as defined by the statutory guidance, for GMPE within East Renfrewshire Council from school session 2023 / 2024.
51. It is agreed by the statutory respondents that the whole of East Renfrewshire Council should be identified as the geographical assessment area.
52. There is a need to establish admission arrangements for any new provision within East Renfrewshire Council.
53. There is limited capacity for East Renfrewshire residents to access GMPE in neighbouring local authorities.
54. Recruitment of suitably qualified staff to any future GMPE provision is paramount to successful introduction.
55. There should be consideration to the continuum of learning for children by planning towards 3 – 18 provision.

## **SECTION 6**

### **Education Department Recommendation**

56. To take forward a learning provision for Gaelic Medium Primary Education for the beginning of school session 2023 / 2024.

### **SECTION 7: Next Steps**

57. The Education Department will:
- Identify available locations for GMPE and carry out a consultation with key stakeholders.
  - Develop a model of delivery for GMPE which is attractive, promotes the benefits of bilingualism and encourages children and families to attend.
  - Consult on admission arrangements for the new provision.
  - Continue to promote and share the successes of Gaelic Medium Education within Scottish education.
  - Work in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to recruit required staff.

**APPENDICES**

**Comann Nam Pàrant Response to Full Assessment  
 Education (Scotland) Act 2016  
 Requested by East Renfrewshire Council**

**The information provided by the local authority relating to the request**

Statutory Guidance is that, at the stage of full assessment, statutory consultees should be given details of the request. The information we received on the request had no detail other than that the request was for Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) from August 2023.

**The Initial Assessment**

Statutory Guidance is that statutory consultees should be given details of “any information which the education authority was required to take into account during the initial assessment about the demand for GMPE in the GMPE assessment area.”

The information on the initial assessment given to consultees was as follows, “In response to this request, an initial assessment was undertaken in November with the Education Department contacting the parent who made the request and those families who supported the request to determine demand and identify the child’s school year group.”

We have not been given any information on other factors listed in Statutory Guidance (1.28 and 1.29) to which an education authority must consider as part of the initial assessment so are unable to comment on these factors.

**The Potential need for GMPE in East Renfrewshire**

It is the opinion of Comann nam Pàrant that the initial assessment has clearly identified the need for GMPE in East Renfrewshire.

**Location of provision**

We agree with the decision to designate the whole authority area as the GMPE assessment area. However, when deciding on location of provision the residency of families who have requested GMPE must be taken into consideration. A local authority has an obligation to promote and support GME and provision which is accessible and attractive to families will make it easier for the authority to fulfil this obligation and achieve growth in GME. Given the large area and poor road infrastructure in more rural parts of East Renfrewshire, provision should be centrally located. Gaelic medium education is based on a 3-18 curriculum, and we recommend that the local authority consult with parents to establish a cohesive 3-18 structure for GME.

**Information relating to the demand for GMPE in the area of the authority from parents of children who are under school age and have not commenced attendance at a primary school**

Since the request was submitted Comann nam Pàrant have identified a further 5 children whose parents are interested in GMPE. This response from families is the result of minimal promotion via our social media and it is likely that if the local authority were to undertake a more robust assessment of demand that more families would be identified.

**The extent to which children resident in the area of an education authority adjacent to the area of the education authority in question could access GMPE in the GMPE assessment area**

Families from East Renfrewshire have been able for many years to access Gaelic medium education by submitting a placing request to Glasgow City Council. Due to oversubscription within Glasgow, this is no longer an option but if provision is established, to help meet the continuing high demand in Glasgow, it would be reasonable if families from Glasgow could access provision in East Renfrewshire if places were available.



**The extent to which children resident in the GMPE assessment area could access GMPE in the area of an adjacent education authority**

The two adjacent authorities to East Renfrewshire with GME provision are Glasgow and South Lanarkshire. Due to oversubscription for GME within Glasgow this is longer an option for families from East Renfrewshire. South Lanarkshire is the only other option, and this will be discounted by most parents for the following reasons:

- Distance and travel time – one parent with a child currently attending provision in South Lanarkshire has said her daughter’s travel time can be over 1.5 hours per day. Many parents would not regard this length of travel time as acceptable.
- Geography –working parents most probably travel to work in the opposite direction from South Lanarkshire, meaning that in an emergency they would be even further away from their child.
- Transport is not provided for after-school activities, so opportunities are limited for pupils to engage in these extra-curricular activities.

**Conclusion**

East Renfrewshire’s current Gaelic Language Plan includes a commitment to “actively seek and promote opportunities for children and young people from 3-18 to learn Gaelic in our schools and centres.” This parental request for GMPE, and subsequent finding on initial assessment that there is potential demand for GMPE in the local authority area, provides an opportunity for the council to fulfil this commitment in their Gaelic plan by making provision for Gaelic medium education within the authority.

We have no doubt that once provision is established that demand will increase for Gaelic medium education in East Renfrewshire. We would be happy to work with East Renfrewshire Council in further promotion of provision to families.

We look forward to seeing provision established in 2023, or in 2022 if the council finds that there is demand for the start of the next school year.

M Wentworth  
Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta)  
13.01.2022



## Education (Scotland) Act 2016

Report by HM Inspectors of Schools to give an independent view of the determination for East Renfrewshire Council to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education from August 2023, unless it would be unreasonable to do so. East Renfrewshire Council has designated the assessment area for which, it will assess the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education, as the whole of the council.

January 2022



## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) (the 2016 Act). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial view of the determination to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education in East Renfrewshire Council from August 2023. This is based on a request received by the education authority from parents of children under section 7 of the 2016 Act. The request is, as required, from parents of children under school age, whose children have not yet started to attend a primary school. The education authority has designated the whole council as the assessment area for which it will assess the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education.

1.2 Section 2 of this report sets out brief details of the assessment process and HM inspectors' views on the determination for the education authority to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This is in accordance with Section 12 and 13 of the 2016 Act. This section sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of:

- the details received from the council on the parental request;
- other information received from the education authority that they, as required, took into account during the initial assessment about the demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education;
- HM Inspectors of Education's national expertise to comment on the potential need for and possibility of securing Gaelic Medium Primary Education in the designated assessment area. This national expertise draws on the wider parental, Gaelic and educational context in Scotland; and
- mandatory factors that must be considered by the education authority in its determination of the potential need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This is in accordance with section 1.52 of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education 2017.

1.3 Section 3 of this report summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the need to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education. Upon receipt of this report, the 2016 Act requires the education authority to have regard to it in preparing their report on the determination to establish Gaelic Medium Primary Education. The education authority's report must include an explanation of how it has complied with its duty to secure the provision of Gaelic Medium Primary Education, unless it would be unreasonable to do so.

1.4 The education authority must publish its final report no later than ten weeks after deciding to carry out a full assessment. HM Inspectors will publish our report on our website at the same time as the education authority is publishing their final report.

1.5 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- synthesis of all relevant documentation provided by the education authority in relation to the proposal;
- discussion with the local authority and relevant consultees; and
- review of the council's Gaelic Language Plan and other planning processes.

## 2. Assessment process and HM Inspectors' determination on establishing Gaelic Medium Primary Education

2.1 East Renfrewshire Council sent notification to HM Inspectors on 16 December 2021 that they had received a parental request for an assessment of the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This request is for Gaelic Medium Primary Education to be established within the education authority from August 2023. The education authority advised HM Inspectors that they

had undertaken an initial assessment of this request in November 2021. This evidenced that there is a demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. HM Inspectors agree that there is sufficient demand for establishing Gaelic Medium Primary Education from 2023. We therefore strongly recommend that the education authority proceed with establishing Gaelic Medium Primary Education in 2023. In our discussions with the education authority, they shared with us some of their initial positive planning towards a full assessment. We agreed with the education authority that their future approach is taken forward in strong collaboration with parents as part of a planned, strategic approach to developing progressive Gaelic Medium Education.

**2.2** The information provided by the education authority shows parental interest in enrolling their children in Gaelic Medium Primary Education from 2023 and up to 2026. The education authority should continue to take forward its statutory duty to promote Gaelic Medium Education with the wider parental body as required by the 2016 Act. The availability of Gaelic Medium Education within the local authority would reduce the existing need for children to travel to a neighbouring authority for this option in Scottish education. This would make Gaelic Medium Education more attractive and could increase further the demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. The education authority should continue to promote and share the successes of Gaelic Medium Education within Scottish education. This promotion should include the resultant benefits of bilingualism and how being a speaker of Gaelic is part of Scotland's identity, culture and heritage.

**2.3** The education authority has a statutory Gaelic Language Plan, 2017-22. This has a supportive statement about making available Gaelic Medium and Learner Education to pupils within the education authority. The Gaelic Language Plan gives a commitment to "actively seek and promote opportunities for children and young people from 3-18 to learn Gaelic in our schools and centres. We will ensure access to information about East Renfrewshire Council's Gaelic educational provision is available to parents and the public. We will give consideration to the inclusion of Gaelic within our 1+2 Languages strategy as part of our ongoing monitoring and evaluation of this strategy." The education authority's initial assessment of parental demand for Gaelic Medium Primary Education identifies sufficient demand to now set up local provision. This also offers the education authority an opportunity to show further impact towards achieving statutory national targets for Gaelic. Additionally, it improves all young people's access to local-based Gaelic Medium Education in pursuit of excellence, equity and equality in Scottish education.

**2.4** The education authority has designated the whole of the council for the assessment area, for which it will assess the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. HM Inspectors are of the view that parents should be consulted on the best available location of the proposed Gaelic Medium Education service. This should make Gaelic Medium Education an attractive option that attracts year-on-year growth in enrolments. In 2017, Bòrd na Gàidhlig published Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education asking that catchment areas, placing guidelines, and guidelines on enrolment and admissions be established for Gaelic Medium Education. The education authority should take forward these duties to enable equal and equitable access to Gaelic Medium Education. They should have a clear policy on how they will support equity through the provision of free transport to their Gaelic Medium Education provision. This is particularly pertinent should there only be one Gaelic Medium provision within the education authority. It would be important for the education authority to complete Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments.

**2.5** The education authority is aware of the high-quality and distinctive approaches to Gaelic Medium Education detailed in the [Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017](#), and best practice identified through inspections. The education authority should strategically plan towards a 3-18 continuum of learning that overtakes all the statutory requirements of Gaelic Medium Education. It would be well-judged to plan also for three to five early learning and childcare to

reduce any potential equity gap, raise attainment and enable children to access the curriculum from aged three. In taking this forward, the education authority may benefit from receipt of dedicated funding from Scottish Government. They may also benefit from Bòrd na Gàidhlig's support in setting up a provision, which includes appropriate staffing. It is recognised that the children who would enrol in Gaelic Medium Primary Education in 2023 will not necessarily benefit from early learning and childcare through total immersion.

**2.6** The education authority's Gaelic Language Plan, 2017-2022 states that East Renfrewshire Council uses the Gaelic Medium Education services of two neighbouring education authorities to satisfy parental demand. These education authorities use two different delivery models for Gaelic Medium Education. One model delivers through total immersion in all Gaelic schools. The other model delivers through total immersion in dual medium schools, with learning through Gaelic and English occurring in the same school under the leadership of the one headteacher. The education authority should be clear, in consulting with parents, of their preferred future delivery model of high-quality immersion in East Renfrewshire Council.

**2.7** One of the mandatory factors to be considered in full assessments is existing Gaelic Medium Primary Education provision. HM Inspectors, in taking forward duties for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, have reported on the growing demand for Gaelic Medium Education in Glasgow City Council. This has led to Glasgow City Council advising that they no longer can provide Gaelic Medium Education services to those out with their own authority. This is a further consideration for the education authority in meeting their statutory duty to provide Gaelic Medium Education.

### 3. Summary

**3.1** HM Inspectors have assessed and commented on East Renfrewshire Council's determination of the potential need for securing Gaelic Medium Primary Education within the education authority from August 2023. We have drawn on our national expertise to comment on the potential need and possibility of securing Gaelic Medium Primary Education. This has taken account of the wider parental, Gaelic and educational context in Scotland. HM Inspectors are of the view that Gaelic Medium Primary Education needs to be set up in East Renfrewshire Council from August 2023. This will support the education authority's ambition to advance excellence and equity for all learners. We have summarised our views on a number of mandatory factors for the education authority to consider for successful implementation of Gaelic Medium Education.

**HM Inspectors**  
**January 2022**



## Bòrd na Gàidhlig Response to Full Assessment on the Provision of Gaelic Medium Primary Education

Local Authority: East Renfrewshire

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022

### Introduction.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes the following:

1. East Renfrewshire Council received a request from parents within the Local Authority seeking Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) commencing in the Session 2023-24 and that the threshold of 5 children had been reached for this request.
2. Following an initial assessment, the Local Authority proceeded to a Full Assessment (Sections 12 and 13 of the Education Act 2016). The Full Assessment has been initiated because the Local Authority has determined there is a potential need for GMPE following the initial assessment.
3. The views of Bòrd na Gàidhlig were sought by the Local Authority in a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and a meeting between the Director of Education and other senior education officials in East Renfrewshire and the Director of Gaelic Education and the Education Manager at Bòrd na Gàidhlig took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.

### Response from Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education Sections 1.49 and 1.50 the Bòrd is of the view that there is a need for GMPE within East Renfrewshire from the commencement of Session 2023-24.

The principal reason for this is that the 5-child threshold has been met and that there is evidence of parents from East Renfrewshire seeking GMPE in previous sessions through placing requests to GMPE services in adjacent Local Authorities and that there is furthermore evidence of additional demand in sessions after 2023-24.

We also note the current oversubscription to GMPE services in Glasgow and the likelihood that placing requests from out with Glasgow will not be successful.

In our discussions on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2022 with the Director of Education and Education Senior Management Team members in East Renfrewshire, we note the following in the context of Section 1.52 of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education:

- a) As part of the current review, the Local Authority is proposing that any resultant GMPE area is determined as being the whole of the Local Authority. Bòrd na Gàidhlig firmly supports this view. It is the view of Bòrd na Gàidhlig that a Local Authority with a single GMPE service should deliver the service for all residents of the Local Authority.



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- b) The Local Authority are currently reviewing potential sites for a GMPE service and would propose that, should GMPE provision be agreed, a public consultation will take place on the GMPE catchment.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig agrees with this course of action. The Bòrd recommends that the Local Authority reviews provision of GMPE in the context of ultimately providing a 3-18 Gaelic Medium Education (GME) service for residents of East Renfrewshire. This would entail therefore reflection on providing GME Early Years and Secondary provision at a future point. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is happy to provide professional advice and support for future strategic planning concerning a GME 3-18 service within East Renfrewshire.

- c) The Bòrd commends the Local Authority for its initial review of the potential for accessing funding support from the Specific Grant Scheme and Gaelic Education Capital Fund operated by the Scottish Government.
- d) In the meeting between East Renfrewshire Education officials and the Education Team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2022 discussion to place regarding staffing. Despite the challenges in recruiting GMPE staffing due to the rising demand for these services across Scotland, the Bòrd is of the view that assigning and/or recruiting staff should be possible. The Bòrd Education team will be happy to provide professional advice and support regarding possible staffing structures and recruitment processes.
- e) The Bòrd notes that the Local Authority has a Gaelic Language Plan in place with the current edition detailing a set of actions for the period 2017-2022.

It is the view of Bòrd na Gàidhlig that delivery of GMPE will build on actions already undertaken within the current edition of the Gaelic Language Plan.

The Planning Team and Education Team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to provide additional professional advice and support on the next edition of the Gaelic Language Plan for East Renfrewshire. The provision of GMPE within the Local Authority provides a focus for reflection on current progress and a vision for future development.

#### **Additional Comments:**

Following our discussions on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2022 with the Director of Education and Education Senior Management Team members in East Renfrewshire we note the following additional information:

- 1) In the context of the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education Bòrd na Gàidhlig has been working with several Local Authorities on promoting existing or potential GMPE service in the session 2021-22. In this regard local advertising of the benefits of GME has been commissioned by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and online Public Meetings hosted by the Bòrd and Local Authority Education staff have taken place. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to work with East Renfrewshire Council to provide similar support.
- 2) When other Local Authorities have set up GMPE services, the Education Team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig have provided tailored support for the Local Authority, GMPE staff, collocated English Medium staffing, parents and the local community. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to develop a tailored support program for the delivery of GMPE services in East Renfrewshire.
- 3) Should the Local Authority seek additional information or support regarding any aspect of the provision of GMPE within East Renfrewshire, Bòrd na Gàidhlig will be happy to arrange to meet to ascertain whether additional support could be provided.



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In the first instance please contact the Director of Gaelic Education whose details are noted below.

We look forward to working with East Renfrewshire Council in developing a new GMPE Service for residents of the Local Authority which will enrich and augment the Educational Provision already being delivered by the Authority.

Deagh dhùrachdan,

*Shona MacLennan*

Shona MacLennan  
Ceannard, Bòrd na Gàidhlig.  
E: [shona@gaidhlig.scot](mailto:shona@gaidhlig.scot)

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL : EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GAELIC MEDIUM PRIMARY EDUCATION  
AT THORNLIBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL  
FROM AUGUST 2023 AND BEYOND

FORM FOR YOUR RESPONSE

Please provide information to all sections. Should you not wish to specify some of the details in the ABOUT YOU section, we will still take your response into account.

ABOUT YOU

Name:

Address:

Post Code

Tick the box if we should keep your name and address confidential

**Please select all that apply and complete as appropriate:**

- I am a Parent/Carer of a child/ children attending an *affected school(s)* as noted below. **(Carer means the responsible adult with whom the young person lives)**
- Thornliebank PS  Thornliebank PS Nursery Class
- Braidbar PS Nursery Class  Giffnock PS Nursery Class
- Glenwood Family Centre
- My child/ children reside(s) in the delineated catchment area of the school or early learning and childcare community of the establishments above

Name(s) of my child(ren):

- I am a pupil at
- I am a member of staff at
- I am responding on behalf of a group or organisation.  
Name of group/organisation
- I am related to a young person attending any of the *affected establishments*
- I provide care to a young person attending any of the *affected establishments*
- I reside within East Renfrewshire
- Other (please specify)

**WHAT YOU THINK** (*tick only one box*)

- I agree with the proposal.
- I do not agree with the proposal.

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR REASON(S)/ COMMENTS BELOW**

The reason(s) I have for reaching my decision is/are:

Any other additional comment:

Signed

Send your reply to East Renfrewshire Council, via the online consultation website or post to Education Department, Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, G78 1SY, no later than midnight **Tuesday 30 September 2022.**