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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

14 May 2019

### CABINET

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**Title:** Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme

**Purpose:** To inform Cabinet of the outcome of the statutory consultation on the proposal to close Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and relocate provision to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class in Kilbirnie, and to seek approval for the proposal to go ahead.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Approves the proposal to close Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and relocate the provision for 2 – 3 year olds to newly refurbished provision within St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class in August 2020.

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Statutory Public Consultation period for the above proposal ended on 08 March 2019. The report on the outcome of the Statutory Consultation was published on 08 April 2019 and is attached at Appendix 1. The report includes a summary of the report on the educational aspects of the proposal which was provided by Education Scotland on 22 March 2019.
- 1.2 Based on the analysis of the responses received to the statutory consultation and the recommendations of the Education Scotland report, the Outcome Report concludes that the proposal should go ahead. Cabinet is therefore asked to approve the proposal.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 In December 2018, Cabinet approved a paper which proposed the commencement of a Statutory Public Consultation on 23 January 2019 on the proposal to relocate the early learning and childcare (ELC) provision at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre (GVEYC) to a newly re-furbished provision for 2-5 year olds at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class.
- 2.2 The Statutory Public Consultation ran from 23 January 2019 until 08 March 2019. Views were sought from parents, carers and staff from both affected establishments and members of the public who were provided with a choice of methods to respond to the proposal. A public meeting was held on Tuesday 05 February 2019 to share information

about the proposal. This meeting was attended by one member of the public, three members of staff, one local councillor and a representative from Education Scotland. The consultation complied fully with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended).

2.3 Education Scotland provided their consultation report on 22 March 2019 and this formed part of the Council's report on the outcome of the statutory consultation. Their report supports the educational benefits of the proposal, commenting that it also offered "Best Value through making more efficient and effective use of (the Council's) resources". Education Scotland advised the Council to fully involve parents and staff from both establishments in the final design of the new facility.

2.4 The table below provides a breakdown of the responses received to the question posed during the consultation period. Stakeholders were asked the following question:

*Do you agree with the proposals to relocate Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years provision?*

Establishment	Interest	Relocate GVEY Centre to St. Bridget's Primary School Early Years		
		YES	NP*	NO
Garnock Valley Early	Parent/Carer			4
Garnock Valley Early	Staff			2
St. Bridget's Primary	Parent/Carer			
St. Bridget's Primary	Staff	1		1
Both establishments	Parent			1
Establishment Unknown	Parent		1	
Organisation (other)	Stakeholder group		1	
NP* = No Preference		1	2	8
		Total of 11		

2.5 Key themes emerging from the consultation were as follows:

- Staff notification of the consultation.
- Loss of nursery based provision for birth – two year old children.
- Safety of early years' children accessing the early years' entrance via the school playground.
- Sizes of the proposed new playrooms.
- Accommodation for wet and dry play areas.
- Physical state of outdoor play space.
- Use of canopied outdoor areas for storage rather than play.
- Parents not wanting to send their children to an early years' provision located in a denominational school.
- Communication to staff on future roles.
- Timing of public meeting.
- Continued support for parents.

- Loss of dedicated transport.

- 2.6 The Council has addressed all of these points in section 6 of the Outcome Report (see Appendix 1)
- 2.7 The Directorate of Education and Youth Employment published its report on the outcome of the consultation for a 3 week period from 08 April 2019. It was available for viewing on the Council's website and hard copies were made available at St Bridget's Primary School, Garnock Valley Early Years Centre, Kilbirnie Housing Office, Bridgend Community Centre and Kilbirnie Health Centre.
- 2.8 Based on the analysis of the responses received, the nature of the issues they have raised and the Council's response to them, the report concludes that the proposal should go ahead.
- 2.9 If the proposal is approved, the Scottish Ministers must be notified of the decision. Thereafter, Scottish Ministers have an eight week period to consider whether they will issue a notice to the Council to call in the proposal.
- 2.10 In taking the decision on whether to issue a call in notice, the Scottish Ministers are required within the framework of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended), "to take account of any relevant representations made to them (by any person) within the first three weeks of that eight week period".
- 2.11 If no representation is made to Ministers, the Council will be able to implement any decision it has taken to proceed with the recommendations concluded in the Outcome Report.

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended), and as a result of the successful early engagement with stakeholders and the outcome of the Statutory Consultation Process, it is proposed that Cabinet gives its approval to:
  1. Relocate the current ELC provision for two–three year old children at GVEYC to a newly re-furnished provision for two-five year old children at St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class with effect from August 2020.
  2. Discontinue ELC provision at GVEYC from August 2020 and return this facility to the NAC estate portfolio for re designation to an alternative purpose
  3. Notify Scottish Minister of the decision to allow them to consider whether they will issue a notice to the Council to call in the proposal.

#### 4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

<b>Financial:</b>	<p>Scottish Government has confirmed capital funding of £11.4m for the required infrastructure works across the whole early years' estate. The high level costs of the proposed works at St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class is £639,710 and is included within this funding.</p> <p>There will be revenue savings of approximately £200,818.</p>
<b>Human Resources:</b>	<p>A full engagement programme will take place pending the outcome of the Statutory Public Consultation, with the early years' staff at both establishments and Trade Unions, to minimise impact of the changes on staff and to promote the opportunities for the newly expanded workforce as a result of 1140 hours expansion.</p>
<b>Legal:</b>	<p>The consultation has been carried out in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended). If the proposal is approved, the Scottish Ministers must be notified of this decision. Thereafter, Scottish Ministers have an eight week period to consider whether they will issue a notice to the Council to call-in the proposal. In taking the decision whether to issue a call-in notice, the Scottish Ministers are required by the Act "to take account of any relevant representations made to them (by any person) within the first three weeks of that eight week period."</p>
<b>Equality/Socio-economic Duty:</b>	<p>There are no equality issues arising from this report.</p>
<b>Children and Young People:</b>	<p>The colocation of two to three year old children within a whole early years' community will be more inclusive and support improved transitions.</p> <p>Provision of a modern, fit for purpose learning environment will have a positive impact on all children.</p>
<b>Environmental &amp; Sustainability:</b>	<p>There are no environmental or sustainability issues arising directly as a result of this report. However any investment in infrastructure will take account of environmental and sustainability considerations.</p>
<b>Key Priorities:</b>	<p>Draft North Ayrshire Council Plan 2019 - 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority Outcome: North Ayrshire's children and young people have the best start in life: We will expand our early learning and childcare to make sure all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free care each year.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Benefits:</b>	<p>Access to St Bridget's Primary School facilities. This will also be identified through the procurement of works.</p>

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 Consultation and engagement with key groups is a strong focus of the Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme. Stakeholder groups are listed below:

- Parents, carers and families
- Staff
- Trade Unions
- Partner providers and childminders
- Employers
- Ayrshire College
- NACPP
- Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland
- Other NAC Council Directorates

Caroline Amos  
**Head of Service**

For further information please contact **Doreen Walkinshaw, Business Manager**, on **01294 324175**.

## **Background Papers**

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North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

## **CONSULTATION REPORT**

### **PROPOSAL TO CLOSE GARNOCK VALLEY EARLY YEARS CENTRE AND RELOCATE THE PROVISION TO ST BRIDGET'S PRIMARY SCHOOL EARLY YEARS CLASS IN KILBIRNIE**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF SERVICE (INCLUSION),  
EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

This document has been issued by North Ayrshire Council for consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended)

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**North Ayrshire Council  
Education and Youth Employment**

**Consultation report on the proposal to relocate Garnock Valley Early Years Centre  
to St. Bridget's Primary School Early Years Provision in Kilbirnie**

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Note of Public Meeting 5 February 2019  
Report from Education Scotland**

**NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**  
**CONSULTATION REPORT**

**1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION REPORT?**

In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended), North Ayrshire Council is required to:

- set out the total number of written representations made to the Council by any person during the period of the public consultation exercise;
- set out a summary of those written representations;
- set out a summary of the oral representations made to the Council at the public meeting held at:
  - St. Bridget's Primary School on 5 February 2019
- set out a statement of the Council's response to:
  - those written and oral representations; and
  - Education Scotland's report.
- provide a copy of Education Scotland's report;
- set out a statement explaining how the Council reviewed the above proposal having had regard (in particular) to:
  - the relevant written representations received by the Council during the public consultation period;
  - oral representations made to it at the public meetings detailed above; and
  - Education Scotland's report
- provide details of any alleged omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Document and a statement of any action taken;
- outline the procedure for making representations to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15(4) of Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended).

**2. HOW DID WE GET HERE?**

**2.1 Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme**

North Ayrshire Council's Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme Board is responsible for delivering the Scottish Government's new Early Years Strategy to provide 1140 hours per annum of early learning and childcare (ELC) for all three and four year old and eligible two year old children by 2020.



This strategy is designed to reduce health and social inequality in later life and is linked to policies for school age children to close the poverty related attainment gap.

North Ayrshire Council's Directorate of Education and Youth Employment aspires to deliver an education estate that is fit for purpose for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning and teaching, guided by Scottish Government principles of estate management and the Space to Grow Guidance and the Council's own Early Learning and Childcare Standard Design Brief. The key objectives are listed below:-

- the condition of the establishment and its ability to support and enhance the function of early learning and childcare to accommodate the increase in hours;
- more suitable and inclusive establishments which are future proofed for flexibility and adaptability;
- establishments which are greener, more sustainable and environmentally efficient;
- establishments which best serve their communities;
- a well-managed estate which represents and delivers best value;
- establishments which both drive and support effective early learning and childcare; and
- establishments which provide children with relevant indoor and outdoor learning experiences.

In considering capital investment and infrastructure plans, the Scottish Government assumes that effective early years expansion planning will take account of a sequential decision making process as follows:

1. Use what we have – make full use of existing assets;
2. Use what we purchase – enhancing the use of partner provision; and
3. Create what we need – including the use of outdoor nurseries.

A key part of the early learning and childcare expansion programme is to co-locate 2 year old provision with 3 - 5 year old provision wherever possible, to support and facilitate children's transition through early years and into primary school. This proposal enhances the opportunities for improved transitions as children move through their early learning journey, offering clear pathways through early level learning to primary education.

On 19 June 2018, North Ayrshire Council's Cabinet took the decision to cease the provision of early learning and childcare for all children aged birth – two years in North Ayrshire Council's Early Years Centres and direct all referrals to the Council's Day Carer service. This will mean that the number of children in this age group attending Garnock Valley Early Years Centre will gradually reduce until 2020 when there will be no children in this age group at the Centre.

The current facility and infrastructure within the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre has limited flexibility to accommodate the demands of the expansion to 1140 hours.

## 2.2 Early Engagement Process

The Council recognises both the importance of seeking the views of the community and the valuable contribution that this collaborative approach has in establishing a comprehensive proposal. Working together from this early stage builds the foundation for positive working throughout the life of this initiative.

In August 2018, the Directorate of Education and Youth Employment embarked on a series of engagement events with parents, staff and community representatives.

These events presented the proposal to relocate the early learning and childcare provision within Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to St. Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class, and to listen to and consider the views expressed in the development of this proposal.

Whilst this stage of the process is not legally required, the Council wanted to engage with all interested parties at this early formative stage of the process. A working group was established to consider and develop a robust plan to ensure as many views as possible were heard prior to formulating the more detailed proposal.

The first step in this joint approach was to issue an introductory letter to parents and staff in August 2018, providing early information on this proposal. A copy of the pre-consultation stakeholder plan was included with this letter along with an invitation to attend information sessions.

A series of engagement sessions took place with parents, staff, parent council representatives, the local community councils and health visitors. The sessions highlighted the importance of their contribution and explained the significance of their role in encouraging others to participate.

The early engagement process helped to shape the best way forward for this proposal and ensure the needs and desires of the community are met.

### **3. THE PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended), and as a result of early engagement with a wide range of interested parties, at its meeting on 15 January 2019 North Ayrshire Council's Cabinet approved the recommendation to commence a Statutory Public Consultation to discontinue the early learning provision at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre with effect from June 2020. This provision would relocate the provision to a modern and fit for purpose learning environment located at St. Bridget's Primary School.
- 3.2 As part of the early learning and childcare expansion programme, North Ayrshire Council is planning to undertake a £639,000 refurbishment project at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class to enhance the current early years' provision and include facilities for the 2 year old children. This refurbishment will provide suitable ancillary facilities to accommodate the expansion to 1140 hours from August 2020 which is not currently available at the school. This will include dining, nurture and parenting facilities. The outdoor learning area and children's toilets will also be enhanced and improved.

This project has been developed in line with the Scottish Governments Early Years design principles as detailed in the Space to Grow Guidance and the Council's own Early Learning and Childcare Standard Design Brief.

Existing fittings will be stripped out for renewal, existing toilets will be relocated to provide direct access from the playrooms to encourage independence of the children, and a small extension will be created within the facility to create more open and bright playrooms for the 2 year old and the 3 – 5 year old children.

A significant feature and improvement will be the creation of free flow access to the outdoor garden area direct from both playrooms, complete with two canopied areas and improved external lighting. This free flow arrangement will allow the children to lead and develop their own play opportunities outside.

A flexible dining/general purpose space will be developed for all children to have their lunch or light tea. This will also be utilised for general purpose activities and for parents groups. A dedicated parent's room will also be provided within the scope of the proposed plan.

Improvements are being considered for the entrance and cloaks areas and all fixtures and fittings would be renewed to provide a modern, fresh and high quality facility. A quiet room would also be created between the two playrooms. This would be a shared space for each age group which would have the benefit of assisting with transition and participating in shared activities between the two groups of children.

The existing fence line between the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and St Bridget's Primary School Early Years' garden will be moved to allow the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre garden to be retained by the new facility.

- 3.3 The co-location of two to three year old children within a whole early year's community will provide:
- support for high quality transitions for our youngest children;
  - an inclusive nurturing environment;
  - links with other siblings already in the school;
  - consistency of staffing;
  - a familiar setting through all stages of their early learning and primary education;
  - improved outdoor learning opportunities;
  - one point of contact for parents where there is more than one sibling attending early years;
  - inclusion in a larger early years community for parents and
  - access to the whole St Bridget's Primary School community and facilities.

## **4. THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 4.1 A Proposal Document was developed and published on the North Ayrshire Council website at [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk). Copies were made available at those establishments affected by the proposal, Education and Youth Employment HQ, local libraries, local community centres and the health centre. In addition, a summary of the Proposal Document was issued to all interested parties. Both documents are attached to this report - see Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The consultation started on 23 January 2019 and remained open until 12 noon on 8 March 2019, which included a period of 30 school days.
- 4.3 Views on the proposal were encouraged, using the following methods:
- Completing an online response form at [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk);
  - Submitting a paper copy of the response form. These could be obtained from the establishments affected by the proposal or on request by calling 01294 324429;
  - Writing to the Head of Service (Inclusion), Education and Youth Employment, North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE; or
  - E-mailing [educ\\_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educ_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

- 4.4 A formal public meeting was held to share information about the proposal. The details of the meeting were included in both the Proposal and Summary Documents and were also advertised in the local press and the Council website. Both establishments issued reminders to parents of the meeting, which took place on:

Venue	Date	Time
St. Bridget's Primary School	Tuesday 5 February 2019	6.00pm

One member of the public, (a parent), three staff from Garnock Valley Early Years Centre, one local councillor and one Education Scotland Officer attended the meeting. The parent and members of staff asked several questions regarding the proposal, all of which were considered, discussed and responded to at the time. All attendees at the meeting were shown the initial plans for the proposal, and advised that there would be further consultation on these with staff and parents. The notes of the public meeting, which are in question and answer format, can be found in Appendix 2. The timing of the public meeting was to allow staff, parents/carers and members of the public to attend.

- 4.5 At the public meeting an invitation was extended to parents, carers and staff from Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to visit other new or recently refurbished early years' establishments to illustrate the benefits that modern educational facilities can offer.
- 4.6 Copies of the Proposal Document, Summary Proposal Document, public meeting note and all responses to the proposal were submitted to Education Scotland whose report on the proposal can be found at Appendix 3.

## **5. WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE TO THE STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION?**

- 5.1 A total of 131 summary proposal documents and 30 full proposal documents were issued to interested parties at the beginning of the consultation period, including the Parent Council, Education Scotland, Parents and Carers of children attending the establishments affected, Staff, Trade Unions, Community Planning Partners and any other users of the School and Centre. Information on the Consultation was also included on North Ayrshire Council's website.
- 5.2 At the end of the consultation period, a total of 11 formal responses were received, 7 on-line surveys were returned, 1 email response and 3 paper responses were received. All of the responses are available for public reference at Education and Youth Employment, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE.

A press enquiry was received relating to the proposal. The content of the enquiry followed similar themes to those raised at the public meeting and via the submitted responses.

Two enquiries were received from local Councillors; one was received following the Council's Cabinet meeting, which approved the commencement of the Statutory Public Consultation, but prior to the start of the formal Statutory Consultation period. The questions raised were similar in theme to those raised at the public meeting and a response was provided. The second was regarding the time of the public meeting.

- 5.3 The table below provides a breakdown of the responses received to the question posed during the consultation period. One has not been included as the detail was incomplete. A detailed analysis of responses is attached at Appendix 4.

Stakeholders were asked the following question:

Do you agree with the proposals to relocate Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years provision?

Establishment	Interest	Relocate GVEY Centre to St. Bridget's Primary School Early Years		
		YES	NP*	NO
Garnock Valley Early Years	Parent/Carer			4
Garnock Valley Early Years	Staff			2
St. Bridget's Primary	Parent/Carer			
St. Bridget's Primary	Staff	1		1
Both establishments	Parent			1
Establishment Unknown	Parent		1	
Organisation (other)	Stakeholder group		1	
NP* = No Preference		1	2	8
		Total of 11		

5.4 Key themes that emerged throughout the consultation period, both at the public meetings and comments made in the form of responses received, can be summarised as follows:

- Were staff notified of the consultation?
- Loss of nursery based provision for birth – two year old children;
- Safety of early year's children accessing the early years' entrance via the school playground. Could the entrance be relocated?
- Sizes of the proposed new playrooms;
- How could wet and dry play be accommodated within one playroom when there is currently access to two rooms;
- Outdoor play space marshy;
- Use of canopied outdoor areas for storage rather than play;
- Parents may not want to send their children to an early years provision located in a denominational school;
- Communication to staff on future roles;
- Time of public meeting;
- Continued support for parents;
- Loss of dedicated transport.

## 6.0 THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSES TO THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION

6.1 A number of points were raised during the consultation period. The Council's responses are detailed below:

### 6.2 Staff Consultation

A query was raised asking if staff at Garnock Valley Early Centre had been informed of the proposal to relocate the Centre to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class

### **The Council's Response**

The affected members of staff were informed of the proposal in June 2018. Senior Managers met with the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class staff groups.

Early stakeholder engagement meetings were held with both parents and staff to discuss the proposal.

#### **6.3 Loss of Nursery Based Provision for Birth – Two Year Old Children**

There is a concern that the loss of the birth – two year old provision will result in parents not using the Daycarer or Child Minding services.

### **The Council's Response**

The Council took the decision in 2018 to remove service provision for this age group across all Early Years Centres. Where there is an identified need, parents will be supported in sourcing Day-care providers within the area. It was noted that the Daycare Support Service is a specialist team of Childminders who have been trained by the Council to respond to and support children with additional support needs and from vulnerable families. The Daycarers provide early learning and childcare for children who have been referred through the Named Person Service.

#### **6.4 Access to the Early Years Entrance via the School Playground**

There were concerns for the safety of children attending the early year's class at St. Bridget's Primary School as parents had to access the current entrance via the school playground.

### **The Council's Response**

Parents were advised that the design proposal is still at an early stage in the process. The plans shown to the staff and parents were feasibility plans to show what could be achieved. Further consultation sessions will be planned once the outcome of the proposal is known.

These sessions will take account of the thoughts and ideas raised by the parents and staff to develop and shape the final design. The management and operation of the newly expanded provision will be discussed with the Head Teacher and staff.

#### **6.5 Early Years Class Sizes in the Proposed New Design**

At present the 3 – 5 year old children in St. Bridget's Early Years Class can access two playrooms. Parents were concerned that by providing a single playroom for the 3 – 5 year old children they will be limited in the choice of activities offered.

### **The Council's Response**

The proposal to refurbish, remodel and expand the current provision in St Bridget's Early Years Class will provide some of the most vulnerable children with facilities to support their smooth transition through early years. It is proposed to expand and enhance the current accommodation at St Bridget's Early Years Class, which will offer greater flexibility, including free flow access to improved outdoor areas. It is envisaged that children will have greater choice and ability to access a wider range of learning experiences. The set-up of the rooms will allow all types of play with different resources, furniture and equipment.

#### **6.6 Choices for wet and dry play within one playroom**

There are concerns that by having one play room this will limit the type of play that children can take part in and may exclude children and hinder their development. It was felt that children would not be able to access wet and dry play at the same time if there was only one playroom for each age group.

### **The Council's Response**

Staff have the skills and experience to engage with children to manage their individual needs and provide a stimulating learning environment that enhances children's development. The proposed design provides additional areas for the early year's classes to use and includes a Play Room pod/Quiet Room, GP space and Nurture Space. The new outside canopies will allow wet and sand play to move outside, if appropriate.

#### **6.7 External Ground Conditions**

There were concerns that children will get dirty if they play in areas that are muddy and marshy. It was suggested that it would be better to build the proposed extension in this area.

### **The Council's Response**

There will be further design consultation sessions to look at the final design. Whilst the area is marshy, health and safety considerations are taken into account for all activities undertaken. Children are provided with outdoor clothing to allow them to take part in the outdoor learning environment and are encouraged to explore, discover and experience new challenges through outdoor play.

#### **6.8 External Canopied Areas**

It was stated that canopies in other schools are used for storing equipment and not used for the purpose that they were designed and installed.

### **The Council's Response**

The canopied areas can be used to store play equipment such as bikes and trikes overnight in a secured area. Children will be able to use these covered areas throughout the day to enjoy outdoor learning and play activities in any weather. The water bath and sand pit can also be located in this area. These covered spaces will provide greater flexibility for the children to have free flow access to the outdoor space and be provided with shelter from the elements.

#### **6.9 Children Attending an Early Years Class Within a Denominational School**

There was a concern that parents may choose not to send their children to the new early year's facility as it is part of a denominational school.

### **The Council's Response**

There is no catchment for early years provision and it is classed as non-denominational. The placement for early year's children is determined by parental choice and availability of space within the early year's setting. Parents will have the same options and choices for primary and secondary education as they currently do. Parents will still have the choice on whether to enrol their child at their local denominational or non-denominational school or make a placing request to another school of their choice.

#### **6.10 Future Roles of Staff**

Staff enquired as to whether they would have the opportunity to discuss their future roles should the proposal be approved.

### **The Council's Response**

Staff were advised that this would take place once the final outcome of the statutory public consultation was known.

#### **6.11 Timing of the Public Meeting**

A local Councillor enquired why the public meeting was in the evening and not held during the day where it was felt more parents could attend.

##### **The Council's Response**

Officers from Education and Youth Employment undertook an early pre-engagement exercise with stakeholders last year. This included parents and staff at both St Bridget's Primary School and Garnock Valley Early Years Centre. These meetings were held during the day. As part of the statutory public consultation there is a requirement to undertake a public meeting which is open to all interested parties, therefore the preferred time for these meetings is early evening to ensure that working parents and employees can attend.

#### **6.12 Continued Support for Parents**

Concerns were raised regarding the perceived loss of parents' classes and mental health support within the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre.

##### **The Council's Response**

In the current setting, parents groups meet in a small area off the staff room. Support for parents and parenting is extremely important to North Ayrshire Council and therefore support for individual parents and parenting programmes will continue to be provided. In the new plan it is proposed to create a dedicated parents room that will provide the opportunity for parents to access a wider range of support activities.

#### **6.13 Loss of Dedicated Transport**

There was a concern that parents would not bring their children if the dedicated transport arrangement currently available for children attending Garnock Valley Early Years Centre is removed.

##### **The Council's Response**

The dedicated transport arrangement is unique to the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and is not available at any other North Ayrshire early years facility. The service does not continue when the children move from the Centre to another early year's provision at the age of three. Only families, where the nearest early years facility is more than five miles from their home, are entitled to receive transport to their nearest facility.

### **7. EDUCATION SCOTLAND**

- 7.1 Education Scotland has a key role in considering the educational aspects of the proposal. A representative from Education Scotland attended the public meeting and was provided with copies of all correspondence received by the Council during the consultation period.

As well as attending the public meeting their officers subsequently conducted interviews with staff from Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class.

- 7.2 In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended), a report was provided by Education Scotland in relation to the proposal. This report can be found at Appendix 3.

- 7.3 Detailed below is a summary of their report:



North Ayrshire's proposal to relocate Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to a newly refurbished provision at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class has a number of possible educational benefits. The proposal will assist the council to deliver 'Best Value' through making more efficient and effective use of its resources. The removal of transport will save money and ensure equity of provision across the authority. The proposal will enable the council to deliver 1140 hours per annum of early learning and childcare for all eligible children in line with the Scottish Government's Early Years Strategy. Pre-school children from two to five will learn in a modern, well-resourced environment. They will have access to improved dining and social areas and access to wider learning opportunities. Transition into the primary school stage will be improved.

In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to involve fully parents and staff from both establishments in the final design of the refurbished early year's resource. In particular it should address concerns raised in this consultation in terms of the allocation and layout of the space, location of a secure entrance, maintaining support to parents and engaging with staff regarding their employment status.

## **8. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT**

8.1 North Ayrshire Council welcomes the report by Education Scotland which highlights the educational and wider benefits of the proposal. Education Scotland considered the educational aspects of the proposal and their comments are detailed in their report, attached at Appendix 3. The Council has considered these comments, both during and after the public consultation process and can offer the following responses.

8.2 **Education Scotland's Comment:** Parents and staff from Garnock Early Years Centre did not agree that there would be any educational benefits for either parents or children. Concerns were expressed about the perceived loss of the inclusive, supportive environment the children currently experience and a reduction in the level of service.

**The Council's Response** St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class will continue to be led by a dedicated Head Teacher, supported by an Early Years Manager and Senior Early Years Practitioner. The team will lead the development of a range of curricular pathways that will maximise opportunities for attainment and achievement for all children from 2 years old. The modern learning environment will fully support the guidelines contained within Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families, Curriculum for Excellence and Building the Ambition.

This new, fully inclusive environment will provide better outcomes for children at transition points and improve the participation of early learning and childcare in the life of the school and enable enhanced opportunities for cross sectoral work with staff able to move between stages of education, facilitating continuous learning experiences for children as well as improved opportunities for families and staff to work more closely together

8.3 **Education Scotland's Comment:** Parents and staff in Garnock Valley Early Years Centre expressed concerns about a reduction in the much valued support they receive including provision of transport to and from the facility and their access to wider support services.

**The Council's Response:** The dedicated transport arrangement is unique to the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and is not available at any other North Ayrshire early years facility. The service does not continue when the children move from the Centre to another early year's provision at the age of three. Only families where the nearest early years facility is more than five miles from their home are entitled to receive transport to their nearest facility.

The relocation will result in easier integrated working for support services such as educational psychology, learning support and health and social care services. These specialist services will enable improved planning and as a result, will provide better personalised planning for children with additional support needs and improve the transition process for children.

- 8.4 **Education Scotland's Comment:** The staff at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre expressed concerns about the limited level of shared detail, their lack of engagement in the process and the impact on their own employment status.

**The Council's Response:** Senior Managers undertook early stakeholder engagement meetings with staff in June 2018 to discuss the proposal with Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class staff groups. Affected members of staff were informed at this time.

At the Public Meeting, those parents and staff in attendance were advised that the design proposal is still at an early stage in the process. Those shown were feasibility plans to show what could be achieved. Further consultation sessions will be planned once the outcome of the proposal is finalised. These sessions will take account of parent and staff views to develop and shape the final design.

- 8.5 **Education Scotland's Comment:** Staff from St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class expressed a concern on how space will be maximised to accommodate 2 – 3 year olds without detriment to existing 3 – 5 year old, the location of a dedicated entrance and the proposed staffing compliment.

**The Council's Response:** The proposal is to expand and enhance the current accommodation at the St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class. In the proposed scheme there will be playroom for the 2 – 3 year olds and a separate playroom for the 3 – 5 year olds. The available space for each child aligns to the Scottish Government criteria and best practice, as defined in the Space to Grow guidance and the Council's own Standard Design Brief. The feasibility plan shows that a small extension would be created to create more open and bright playrooms.

The staffing compliment will align to the Council's agreed staffing strategy for early year's establishments. For those schools ranked within the Scottish Indicators for Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 and 2 respectively, the staffing ratios for 3 – 5 year old children will be one member of staff per six and one member of staff per three children in the 2 – 3 year old age group.

## 9. NEXT STEPS

### 9.1 Cabinet Decision

North Ayrshire Council Cabinet will make a final decision on the proposal on 14 May 2019.

### 9.2 Scottish Ministers Consideration

If the proposal is agreed, the Scottish Ministers must be notified of this decision. Thereafter, Scottish Ministers have an eight week period to consider whether they will issue a notice to the Council to call-in the proposal. In taking the decision whether to issue a call-in notice, the Scottish Ministers are required by the Act "to take account of any relevant representations made to them (by any person) within the first three weeks of that eight week period."

Anyone wishing to contact the Scottish Ministers during the three week period referred to above should do so by e-mail to:

[schoolclosure@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:schoolclosure@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

or in writing to:

School Infrastructure Unit  
Scottish Government  
Areas 2-A South  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ

### 9.3 Design Consultation

If the proposal is approved, a series of design consultation sessions will take place with parents and staff to shape the design of the new facilities within St. Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class, with a view to being on site by December 2019.

## 10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The response to this consultation is relatively low taking account of the number of potential interested parties who received information on the proposal. Of those who did respond, 8 out of 11 did not agree with the proposal, 1 agreed and 2 expressed no preference.

10.2 Delivering 1140 hours of early learning and childcare at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre would be a challenge. The Centre has limited flexibility of space to enable the creation of lunch provision, quiet room and nurture space, as well as limited free flow access to outdoor spaces.

10.3 The move to a newly refurbished and enhanced provision will enable the co-location of 2 year olds with the 3 - 5 year old provision. This will provide improved transitions for children as they move through their early learning journey, offering clear pathways beyond early level learning into primary education.

North Ayrshire Council has considered each response made to the consultation, taking on board all feedback and comments. The Council are confident that their proposal will provide an innovative, quality, flexible, and affordable facility which makes best use of Council assets. The design and implementation of the proposed learning environment will be progressed in consultation with staff and parents/carers, giving consideration to childrens' learning, childcare, development, wellbeing and social needs and experiences. Furthermore, the Council are confident that the high quality of care, teaching and learning being provided in the current provision will be continued.

10.4 The analysis of the number of responses and the nature of the issues they have raised concludes that the proposal to discontinue the early learning and childcare provision at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre with effect from June 2020, and relocate the provision to a modern and fit for purpose learning environment located in St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class, should go ahead.

This document can also be made available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。  
ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Na życzenie klienta, informacje te mogą być udostępnione w innych językach oraz formatach.

Please apply in writing to North Ayrshire Council, Education and Skills, Cunninghame House,  
Friars Croft, Irvine, KA12 8EE; by telephone on 01294 344429; or by e-mail at  
educ\_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk



**EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

**PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE  
GARNOCK VALLEY EARLY YEARS CENTRE TO ST BRIDGET'S  
PRIMARY SCHOOL EARLY YEARS PROVISION IN KILBIRNIE**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF SERVICE  
(DIRECTORATE of EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT)**

This document has been issued by North Ayrshire Council for consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended)

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**Proposed Relocation of Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to  
St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Provision**

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 North Ayrshire Council's Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme Board is responsible for delivering the Scottish Government's new Early Years Strategy to provide 1140 hours per annum of early learning and childcare (ELC) for all three and four year old and eligible two year old children, by 2020.
- 1.2 To ensure that North Ayrshire early years classes and centres are prepared for this expansion, a full review was undertaken of our early year's estate to identify what level of investment may be required to support the increase in operational hours.
- 1.3 This proposal relates to Garnock Valley Early Years Centre (GVEYC) and St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class, both located in Kilbirnie. GVEYC is a dedicated, standalone building located in the grounds of St Bridget's Primary School which provides ELC for up to 15 two to three year old, and 8 birth to two year old, children per session. St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class provides ELC for up to 40 three to five year old children per session.
- 1.4 The proposal is to relocate GVEYC to newly refurbished provision at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class. Its main aim is to establish a more inclusive ELC service that focuses on secure and seamless transitions for young children and is designed to facilitate delivery of an enhanced service model that reflects, and is responsive to, local needs.
- 1.5 Taking account of the Care Inspectorate publication 'Space to Grow' as a standard, the Directorate of Education and Youth Employment has identified the following key principles to be included, where possible, in the design of all our establishments;
  - Parents meeting and learning spaces;
  - Dining and general purpose spaces;
  - Nurture space;
  - Small break out areas to provide greater flexibility in the delivery of early learning and childcare;
  - Greater flexibility and variety of space and activities for children who could be accommodated within the service from 8am – 6pm; and
  - Provision for children to move freely between the internal learning environment and outdoor learning and social spaces.
- 1.6 In its current location, delivering 1140 hours at GVEYC will be challenging. The Centre has limited flexibility of space to enable the creation of a lunch provision, quiet room or nurture space. Only one of the two playrooms has free flow access to outdoor learning space. The move to a newly refurbished and remodelled provision would provide some of our most vulnerable children with the facilities to support smooth transitions through their early learning journey. St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class and GVEYC are ranked in SIMD deciles1 and 2 respectively, in the Scottish Indicator for Multiple Deprivation.

## 2. Strategic Context

### 2.1 Council Vision

The current North Ayrshire Council Plan sets out our key aims and ambitions over the five year period 2015-2020.

Our mission is 'to improve the lives of North Ayrshire people and develop stronger communities'. We aim to achieve this by being 'a leading organisation defined by excellent and innovative services'.

The Council's priorities to achieve this aim are outlined below:

- Growing our economy, increasing employment and regenerating towns;
- Working together to develop stronger communities;
- Ensuring people have the right skills for learning, life and work; □ Supporting all of our people to stay safe, healthy and active;
- Protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations.

Further information on the Council's priorities can be found on the Council's website at [www.northayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.northayrshire.gov.uk)

### 2.2 Education and Youth Employment Vision

North Ayrshire Council's Directorate of Education and Youth Employment aspires to deliver an education estate that is fit for 21st century learning and teaching, guided by Scottish Government's principles of estate management and the Space to Grow Guidance which include:

- the condition of the establishment and its ability to support and enhance the function of early years to accommodate the increase in hours;
- more suitable and inclusive establishments which are future proofed for flexibility and adaptability;
- establishments which are greener, more sustainable and environmentally efficient;
- establishments which best serve their communities;
- a well-managed estate which represents and delivers best value;
- establishments which both drive and support effective early learning and childcare; and
- establishments which provide children with relevant indoor and outdoor learning experiences

In considering capital investment and infrastructure plans, the Scottish Government assumes that effective early years expansion planning will take account of a sequential decision making process as follows:

1. Use what we have – make full use of existing assets;
2. Use what we purchase – enhancing the use of partner provision; and
3. Create what we need – including the use of outdoor nurseries.



A key part of the early learning and childcare expansion programme is to co-locate 2 year old provision with 3-5 year old provision, wherever possible, to support and facilitate children's transition through early years and into primary school. This proposal enhances the opportunities for improved transitions as children move through their school career, offering clear pathways through early level to primary education.

## 2.3 Asset Management Strategy

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 places a duty on Local Authorities to demonstrate best value in delivering their services and managing any assets they hold.

Typically, individual Councils hold assets worth many millions of pounds and it is in the interest of Councils and their residents that the most effective use of these assets is being made. This is achieved through the delivery of a Property Asset Management Plan (PAMP).

North Ayrshire Council's PAMP clearly outlines the priorities for the physical care and improvement of the Council's property portfolio and is intended to assist the Council in contributing to its key priorities.

The purpose of the PAMP is to support the delivery of our vision for North Ayrshire properties, providing a strategic framework to facilitate fit for purpose properties to ensure our property assets continue to play an active role in the delivery of our services. The PAMP sets out the Council's approach to the management of its property assets by:

- establishing a corporate framework for the management of all our property assets;
- highlighting our corporate outcomes and priorities and how they will be supported through the effective and efficient management of our property assets;
- presenting an overview of the extensive property assets owned by the Council;
- identifying the internal and external influencing factors and challenges affecting property;
- identifying a number of activity themes to improve the performance of property assets management; and
- outlining the investment we will make in our property assets over the next five years.

## 3. Background to Current Proposal

- 3.1 The expansion of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) places from 600 hours per annum to 1140 hours per annum for eligible 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds by 2020, is an integral part of Scottish Government's drive to improve outcomes for all children. It is a flagship Scottish Government policy designed to reduce health and social inequality in later life and is linked to policies for school age children to close the poverty related attainment gap.

North Ayrshire Council's Directorate of Education and Youth Employment has a well-established programme of work to meet this additional requirement for ELC across the authority. The Directorate is committed to ensuring that this opportunity contributes to the fulfilment of its vision of enabling children and young people "to have the best start in life" and for "North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up"

Nationally, the Scottish Government recognises that the expansion in ELC to 1140 hours per year will require transformational change in how ELC is delivered. This will not just reflect the substantial increases in workforce and infrastructure investment, but also new and innovative models of delivery. Local authorities are fully engaged in the planning and delivery of the ELC programme at a national level with Scottish Government.

3.2 North Ayrshire Council's expansion programme prioritises high quality learning experiences for our children, recognising the significant contribution that universally accessible early learning and childcare can make to a child's development and to closing the attainment gap. High quality indoor and outdoor learning environments are a key part of this approach. In addition, as children will be spending more time in an early years setting, there is even more need to ensure the overall environment and facilities are:

- fit for purpose;
- of a high quality to support and inspire the learning experience;
- supporting positive outcomes and creating opportunities for children to have fun, learn and play;
- improving learning outcomes for children;
- positively supporting children to access indoor and outdoor learning opportunities which inspire curiosity, wonder and excitement; and
- welcoming places at the heart of our communities.

3.3 In an early learning and childcare setting, there are several transitions that we expect children to manage: from home to ELC provision; from person to person; from ELC provision to ELC provision; and eventually from ELC provision to primary school. It is essential that all of these transitions are managed sensitively, inclusively and positively. North Ayrshire Council is already focussed on this careful management of transitions and pays particular attention to the needs of eligible two year old children when they make the transition from home to an ELC setting and within the setting from two year old provision to three-five year old provision. Currently GVEYC will be the only establishment in North Ayrshire that provides ELC for two to three year olds exclusively in a standalone centre.

#### 4. Pre-Consultation Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 The Council recognises both the importance of seeking the views of the communities and the valuable contribution that this collaborative approach has in establishing a comprehensive proposal. Working together from this early stage builds the foundation for positive joint working throughout the life of this initiative.

4.2 In August 2018, the Directorate of Education and Youth Employment embarked on a series of engagement events with parents, staff and community representatives. These events aimed to present the proposal to relocate the ELC provision within GVEYC to St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class, and to listen to and consider the views expressed in the development of this proposal.

4.3 A working group was established to consider and develop a robust plan to ensure that as many views as possible were heard prior to formulating the more detailed proposal. This resulted in a pre-consultation stakeholder engagement plan being produced, attached at Appendix 1.

4.4 Whilst this stage in the process is not legally required, the Council wanted to engage with all interested parties at the early, formative stage of the process and hear as many views as possible prior to formulating more detailed proposals.

- 4.5 The first step in this joint approach was to issue an information letter to parents and staff in August 2018, providing early information on the proposal. A copy of the pre-consultation stakeholder plan was included with this letter along with an invitation to attend information sessions.
- 4.6 A series of information and engagement sessions took place, with parents, staff, parent council representatives, the local community council and health visitors. The sessions highlighted the importance of their contribution and explained the significance of their role in encouraging others to participate.
- 4.7 The early engagement process has helped to shape the best way forward for this proposal and ensure that we meet the needs and desires of the community.

## **5. Outcome of Pre-Consultation Stakeholder Engagement**

- 5.1 The key themes emerging from the pre-consultation stakeholder engagement were:

### **Suitability of the proposed new facility at St Bridget's Primary School**

Significant works are planned to improve and expand the learning environment at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class. This includes the provision of a dedicated entrance, creation of nurturing and parenting facilities and an enhanced outdoor learning environment. The programming of these works will ensure minimum disruption to the pupils attending St Bridget's Primary School and Early Years Class.

### **Support for parents**

All the parenting classes and support provided at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre will continue to be delivered at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class. As a result of the planned works, these classes and support will take place in a dedicated parenting space designed with their needs in mind.

### **Loss of nursery based provision for birth – 2 year old children**

The Council has previously taken a decision to direct all referrals for children aged birth to 2 years to its specialist Day Carer service. This is currently being phased in across the Council and will be fully implemented by August 2020.

### **Change of staff working arrangements**

Discussions around staff working arrangements at the new location will take place as part of the transitional planning for the new facility.

### **St Bridget's Primary School denominational provision**

Early learning and childcare provision is non-denominational across the authority.

### **Parking**

Traffic management will be considered as part of the detailed design development process.

## **6. Current Service Provision Information**

- 6.1 GVEYC is located within a dedicated, standalone building in the grounds of St Bridget's Primary School in Kilbirnie, see Appendix 2. It has the capacity to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) provision for 15 two to three year old children and 8 birth to two year old children. (Birth to two year old children are not eligible for funded ELC but are provided with an ELC service because they are vulnerable or are referred through the Named Person Service).
- 6.2 Currently 25 eligible two to three year old children attend GVEYC. This is split with 12 attending the morning session and 13 in the afternoon sessions and 1 child in the birth-2 room.
- 6.3 On 19 June 2018, Cabinet approved a proposal to cease provision of early learning and childcare for all children aged birth – two years in NAC Early Years Centres and direct all referrals to the Council's Day Carer service. This will mean that the number of children aged birth – two years attending GVEYC will gradually reduce until 2020 when there will be no children in this age group attending GVEYC.
- 6.4 The current facility and infrastructure within the GVEYC has limited flexibility to accommodate the demands of the expansion to 1140 hours. This includes the provision of lunch space, nurture space, and a quiet room. In addition there is free flow access to the outdoor space from one of the two playrooms. Some children have to be accompanied to a path that is adjacent to the car park area and escorted around the building to the rear garden and outdoor learning area.
- 6.5 The GVEYC Service is managed by a Head of Centre and Depute Head of Centre.
- 6.6 GVEYC provides a transport service for children who attend the Centre. This is a unique service in North Ayrshire and was developed as a response to the rural nature of the Garnock Valley. However, there is a need to review the continuation of this service as part of this proposal as the same rural and deprivation characteristics that exist in the Garnock valley, also exist in other localities of the authority which do not benefit from a transport service. Children currently attending St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class do not receive this transport provision.
- NAC does not provide transport for any other early years child unless the child has an additional support need, there is a request from the HSCP, or they live more than 5 miles from the nearest early years establishment (Arran only).
- 6.7 St Bridget's Primary School Early Year's Class exists within St Bridget's Primary School in Kilbirnie. It is located less than 50 yards from GVEYC. It has capacity to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare provision for 40 three to five year olds per session. There is currently no two year old provision at St Bridget's. The ELC provision is managed by the Head Teacher of St Bridget's Primary School

## **7. Financial Information**

- 7.1 North Ayrshire Council has secured funding from the Scottish Government to enable the implementation of the increased hours for early learning and childcare.

Feasibility visits were undertaken at each early year's class and centre to determine the scope of capital works that may be required to ensure that our establishments are fit for purpose.

A scoping exercise was completed for the expansion of the early year's provision at St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class to include the two to three year old provision. An initial cost proposal suggests that the project would cost in the region of £639,000.

## 7.2 Revenue Costs

The revenue saving as a result of this proposal will be £200,818. This is made up of:

Staffing costs	£193,696
Operational costs (incl transport)	£7122

Appendix 4 provides a detailed breakdown of recurring costs and savings.

There has been no recurring savings applied in relation to building costs or income. This is because any potential saving would not be directly linked to Education and Youth Employment.

## 8. Proposal

- 8.1 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended), and as a result of early engagement with a wide range of interested parties, North Ayrshire Council, proposes that:

Education provision at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre will be discontinued with effect from June 2020. Children will relocate to a modernised and fit for purpose learning environment located at St Bridget's Primary School.

- 8.2 As part of the ELC expansion programme, North Ayrshire Council is planning to undertake a £639,000 refurbishment project at St Bridget's Primary School to enhance the current early years' provision. This refurbishment will provide suitable ancillary facilities to accommodate the expansion to 1140 hours from August 2020 which is not currently available at the school. This will include dining, nurture and parenting facilities. The outdoor learning area and children's toilets will also be enhanced and improved.

The £639,000 project has been developed in line with the Council's standard brief and 1140 hours key principles. Existing fittings would be stripped out for renewal and existing toilets relocated with direct access from the playroom to encourage independence of the children.

A small extension would be created within the facility for 3-5 year olds, to create a more open and bright playroom. A significant feature and improvement will be the creation of free flow access to the outdoor garden area direct from both playrooms, complete with covered canopy and external lighting. This free flow arrangement will allow the children to lead and develop their own play opportunities. A flexible lunch/GP space would be developed for children to receive meals and this will also be utilised for general purpose activities and for parents groups. A dedicated parents' room will also be provided within the scope of the proposed plan.

Improvements are being considered for the entrance and cloak areas and all fixtures and fittings would be renewed to give a modern, fresh and high quality facility. A quiet room would also be created between the 2 playrooms. This would be a shared space for each age group which would have the benefit of assisting with transition and shared activities between the two groups of children.

Consideration is being given to altering the existing fence line GVEYC and St Bridget's early year's garden to allow the GVEYC garden to be retained by the new facility.

8.3 The co-location of two to three year old children within a whole early year's community will provide:

- support for high quality transitions for our youngest children;
- an inclusive nurturing environment;
- links with other siblings already in the school;
- consistency of staffing;
- a familiar setting through all stages of their early learning and primary education;
- improved outdoor learning opportunities;
- one point of contact for parents where there is more than one sibling attending early years or school provision; and
- inclusion in a larger early year's community for parents.
- access to the whole St Bridget's Primary School community and facilities

## **9. Educational Benefits Statement**

- 9.1 The newly refurbished and remodelled St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class will continue to be led by a dedicated Head Teacher, supported by an Early Years Manager and Senior Early Years Practitioner. The team will lead the development of a range of curricular pathways, that will maximise opportunities for attainment and achievement for all children from 2 years old.
- 9.2 The modern learning environment will fully support the guidelines contained within Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families, Curriculum for Excellence and Building the Ambition.
- 9.3 Dining and social areas will be improved from current arrangements. This, along with the development of external areas to create stimulating and inspiring outdoor learning space, will encourage young children to socialise and improve their health and wellbeing.
- 9.4 The new learning environment will allow for greater movement of children and consequently better learning opportunities across all areas. This should result in a removal of barriers to accessing all curriculum areas as well as wider learning opportunities.
- 9.5 Outdoor learning areas will allow for free flow to all weather participation in activities. These improved outdoor areas will further promote opportunities for outdoor learning to meet the needs as set out by the Scottish Government in 'Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning'.

- 9.6 This model will also support effective transition into the primary school stage and enable staff to share information to ensure progression in children's learning.
- 9.7 Professional collegiate collaboration for staff will be enhanced in this new expanded and refreshed setting, enabling a shared understanding and safeguarding of the range of children's needs, in particular in relation to Getting it Right for Every Child and child protection.
- 9.8 The proposed relocation will result in easier integrated working with support services such as educational psychology, learning support, health and social services. These specialist services will enable improved planning across sectors, and as a result will provide:
- better personalised planning for children with additional support needs; and
  - improved transition processes for children with additional support needs.

**9.9 What will be the impact on children and young people from any affected early years provision?**

Provision of a modern, fit for purpose learning environment will have a positive impact on all children and families attending the enhanced provision.

**9.10 Specific Benefits for the Children and Families**

Easing the transition between early years and primary stages will provide better outcomes for children at transition points. An inclusive environment that improves the participation of ELC in the life of the school, will enable enhanced opportunities for cross sectoral work with staff able to move between stages of education, facilitating continuous learning experiences for children. There will be improved opportunities for families and staff to work more closely together.

**9.11 How will the proposal impact on future children?**

The opportunity to build on the strengths of the St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class and GVEYC will be realised through this proposal. A wider range of staff expertise, interest and skills in one enhanced learning environment will open the way for improved learning experiences for children in the short and long term.

Modern design specifications will be used to reduce revenue costs, for example, through energy efficiency. This will also free resources for the general benefit of children and young people in the Authority area.

**9.12 What is the community impact of the new early year's provision?**

The co-location of the early years and primary education in this local area will enable families to come together to support and develop parenting skills, and help enrich the community.

**9.13 What is the impact on other children in the Council area?**

This proposal will not have any impact on other children in the Council area.

#### **9.14 Are there any other likely effects of the proposal?**

Families with primary or early year's children will have all educational services concentrated in one area, for example easing problems of school transport or family emergencies.

#### **9.15 How does the authority intend to minimise or avoid adverse effects that may arise from the proposal?**

It will be essential to fully support the transition arrangements to the new ELC provision for all children and families involved. Should the proposal go ahead, during the transition phase to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class, a commitment will be undertaken to ensure that the full range of children's needs are addressed and that any disruption to their early learning and childcare is minimised. Care will be taken to ensure that all children, parents and staff are familiar with their new environment.

The two ELC establishments already work closely together and this will be further strengthened by ensuring the improvement planning process leads to a consistent approach to all aspects of ELC. In addition, a number of other measures will be put in place to support the proposal. These include:

- opportunities for children, parents and staff and parents to come together prior to any move;
- joint planning between staff on matters such as curriculum planning; and □ joint and team events;
- familiarisation visits to the new establishment by both parents and children to enable them to experience the new learning environment.

In supporting the move to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class, the Head Teacher and leadership team will be involved in visits to other similar sized establishments with two – five provision, to observe, learn and reflect on best practice.

### **10. The Proposed New Provision**

10.1 The newly extended and refurbished facility would accommodate 40 three to five year olds and 14 two to three year old children.

10.2 It is proposed that the design should accommodate the existing numbers of children that attend early years across the two sites.

The design will signal to all users (children, parents and staff) that learning is a valued activity, and that the learning environment is a priority. It will be inspiring and invite exploration of the use of the environment and space in different and imaginative ways.

10.3 The extended facility would be staffed according to local and national policies and agreements in place at the time, which are designed to ensure that all duties and responsibilities of the early year's provision are carried out.

The staffing levels will principally be determined by the number of children.



Transfer of staff would be managed in accordance with existing agreed Council policies and procedures.

- 10.4 The newly refurbished facility will be appropriately equipped with the facilities and resources to allow for the delivery of the teaching and learning of the early years curriculum.

Stakeholders will have the opportunity to be involved in the design of the new provision. It will be important that all users of the proposed facility have the opportunity to express their views.

- 10.5 A Transport Assessment will require to be undertaken as part of the planning process. Within this assessment predicted traffic flows to, from and around the school are assessed and where necessary mitigation measures are proposed to deal with and identify problems including congestion. Part of the focus will be to encourage walking / cycling and sustainable modes of travel. These will be encouraged as part of the project to reduce the numbers of children being dropped off and picked up by private car.
- 10.6 In line with North Ayrshire Councils policy, transport will only be provided for those early year's children that qualify under additional support need, there is a request from the HSCP, or they live more than 5 miles from the nearest early years establishment. Therefore, the existing transport arrangements will cease from August 2020 when the new facility at St. Bridget's becomes fully operational.
- 10.7 The use of the existing GVEY site, once vacated has still to be determined. It is likely that it would be used either by the Council or a third party for future development, for a purpose that complies with or is capable of complying with the requirements of the Local Development Plan. However consideration will be given to retaining the existing GVEYC garden space.

## **11. Statutory Public Consultation Process**

- 11.1 This document has been issued by North Ayrshire Council for consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended).

### **11.2 What is a Statutory Public Consultation?**

In Scotland, local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of Early Learning and Childcare in their area. If a local authority proposes to change any part of the existing education provision in its area, then it must engage in a formal consultation process under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended). The act aims to ensure that all major changes which affect schools are subject to clear consultation with parents, children, young people and communities.

### **11.3 When does the statutory public consultation start?**

The consultation will start on 23 January 2019 and run until 12 noon on 8 March 2019, which includes a period of 30 school days.

#### 11.4 Who will have access to this proposal document?

This proposal document has been made available to all interested parties, including St Bridget's Parent Council, Education Scotland, Parents and Carers of children attending the establishment affected, Staff, Trade Unions and any other users of the establishments as detailed in the distribution list.

This proposal document is published on the Council website at [www.northayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.northayrshire.gov.uk). Copies are also available at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class and Garnock Valley Early Years Centre, Education and Youth Employment HQ, local library, local community centres and health centres. If requested, copies can be made available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

#### 11.5 What if I notice an error in the document?

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this proposal document, either by the Council or any person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or if there has been an inaccuracy.

The Council may then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction notice, the reissuing of the proposal document or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised.

#### 11.6 How will I get a chance to give my opinion?

You will be able to give your opinion on the proposal by:

- Completing an online response form at [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk);
- Submitting a paper copy of the response form, attached at Appendix 3;
- Writing to the Head of Service (Inclusion), Education and Youth Employment, North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE; or
- Emailing [educ\\_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educ_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

All responses must be submitted by **no later than 12 noon on 8 March 2019**.

#### 11.7 Will there be any information sessions for the public?

A formal public meeting will be held to discuss these proposals and will be advertised in local newspapers. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so.

The meeting will be convened by North Ayrshire Council and will provide an opportunity to hear more about the proposal, ask questions and have your views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.

The public meeting will be held as follows:

Venue	Date	Time
St Bridget's Primary School	Tuesday 5 February 2019	6.00pm

A note will be taken at the meeting of comments, questions and officer responses. The note will be published on the Council website and a copy will be made available on request. The note will also be forwarded to Education Scotland along with all other submissions and comments that are received by the Council during the consultation process.

#### **11.8 Will any other agencies be involved in the process?**

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended) requires that a report on the proposal is prepared by Education Scotland. Education Scotland may attend the public meeting.

Once the statutory public consultation period comes to an end, Education Scotland have three weeks to consider the educational aspects of the proposal and submit a report to the council.

Education Scotland receive copies of relevant papers from the council, including:

- a copy of the proposal paper;
- copies of the written representations or a summary of them (if Education Scotland agree);
- a note of oral representations made at the public meeting;
- any other related documentation.

Education Scotland visit schools as part of their consideration of the proposal and meet with children, staff and parents who may be affected by the proposal.

Upon receipt of the proposal document and other relevant documentation, Education Scotland will consider the educational aspects of the proposal. They will ensure that their report takes account of:

- the educational benefits statement;
- the representations received by the council;
- any further written representations made directly to Education Scotland on any educational aspect of the proposal which is considered relevant.

The consultation report that the Council publish following the statutory public consultation must include the report from Education Scotland in full.

#### **11.9 Will the outcome of the consultation be made public?**

The Head of Service (Education and Youth Employment) will prepare a report on the results of the consultative process. The report will take account of all Education Scotland recommendations. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in local newspapers. It will be available on the Council website and from Council headquarters, affected schools, local libraries, local community centres and health centres.

The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written and oral representations, and the Council's response to recommendations made by Education Scotland.

A copy of the Education Scotland report will be an appendix to the consultation report which will be published and available for further consideration for a period of 3 weeks ahead of presentation to Elected Members at Cabinet.

**11.10 When will the Council make a decision on the outcome of the consultation?**

The consultation report, together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by Cabinet (Education) who will make a decision on the proposal in May 2019.

**11.11 What happens next?**

If the proposal is approved, the Council is required, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland Act) 2010 (as amended), to notify Scottish Ministers within 6 days of making that decision. The Council is also required to place a notice on its website of the decision and of the opportunity to make representations to Scottish Ministers.

Scottish Ministers then have a period of eight weeks following an authority's decision in which to decide to call-in the decision or not. The first three weeks of this period is to allow stakeholders to make representations either against or in support of the decision. Scottish Ministers then have a further five weeks to consider all documents and representations.

Until the Council has been notified of the outcome, the proposal cannot be implemented.

In accordance with legislation, should the proposal not be approved, the Council are restricted in their ability to reconsider it within a 5 year period.

## **DISTRIBUTION**

A copy of this document is available on the North Ayrshire Council website:  
[www.northayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.northayrshire.gov.uk)

A summary of this document will be provided to:

Stakeholders associated with the early years centres/classes affected by the proposal, including:

- Parents/Carers
- Parent Councils
- Head Teachers
- Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff, including facilities management
- Local Elected Members
- Member of Parliament
- Member of Scottish Parliament
- Education Scotland
- Chief Executive
- Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Support)
- Head of Service (Place) x 2
- Executive Director (Economy and Communities)
- Director, Health and Social Care Partnership
- Head of Democratic Services
- Community Planning Partnership Board
- Sub Division Commander, Police Scotland
- Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Chief Executive, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- Principal of Ayrshire College
- Community Councils
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- East Ayrshire Council
- South Ayrshire Council
- Inverclyde Council
- Dumfries and Galloway Council

## **Trade Unions**

- Unison
- EIS, Education Institute of Scotland
- NAS/UWT, National Union of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers
- T&GWU, Transport & General Workers' Union
- GMB
- UNITE
- VOICE

Copies of the Proposal Document will be made available to view at:

- St Bridget Primary School Early Years Class and Garnock Valley Early Years Centre
- Education and Youth Employment, Cunninghame House, Irvine
- Local Public Libraries, Community Centres and Health Centres

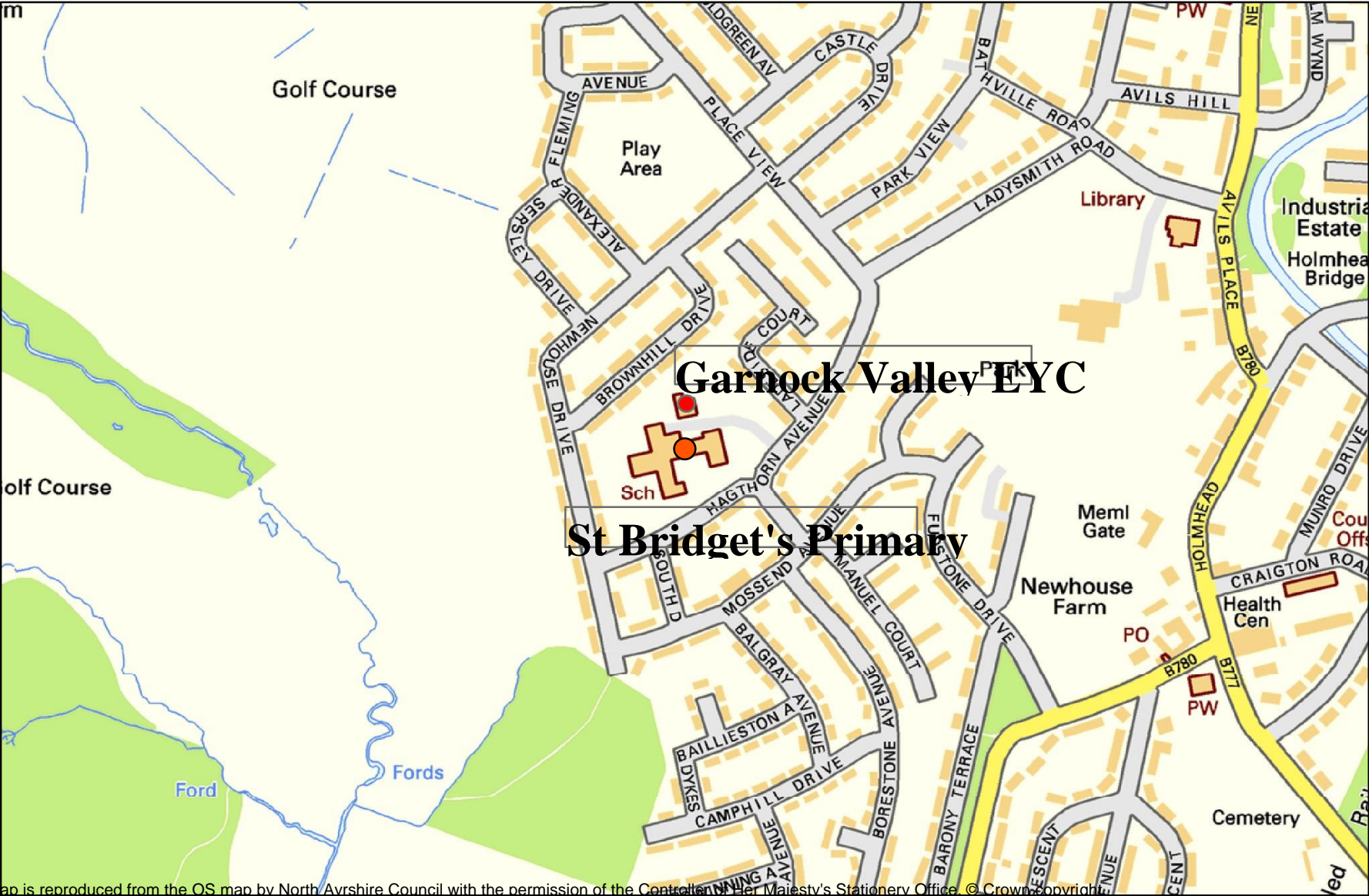
Adverts will be placed in local newspapers.

**Proposed Relocation of Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to  
St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Provision**

**Appendix 1**

<b>Pre-Consultation Stakeholder Engagement Plan</b>	<b>Date Time Venue</b>
GVEY Staff and St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Staff	3 September 2018 4.15pm St Bridget's Primary School
Parent Council	3 September 2018 2.30pm St Bridget's Primary School
Parents	25 September 2018 3.00pm St Bridget's Primary School  1 November 2018 9.15am St Bridget's Primary School
Local Community Council	11 September 2018
Health Visitors	28 November 2018

Proposed Relocation of Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to  
St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Provision



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# Proposed Relocation of Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Provision

## Appendix 3

Education and Youth Employment, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cunninghame House, IRVINE KA12 8EE



### RESPONSE FORM

**PROPOSAL  
CONSULTATION**  
Garnock Valley Early Years Centre

### St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class

For convenience this form can be completed online at: [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

It is proposed to relocate GVEYC to newly refurbished provision at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class. Its main aim is to establish a more inclusive Early Learning and Childcare service that focuses on secure and seamless transitions for young children and is designed to facilitate delivery of an enhanced service model that reflects, and is responsive to, local needs.

North Ayrshire Council, in line with our Data Protection responsibilities will only use the personal data provided for the sole purpose of evaluating your responses. The response submitted by you may form part of the response paper that will be submitted to the Council for consideration in the near future and will therefore be made available for public inspection.

Should you wish any of your personal details (e.g. name, address, phone number, etc.), which you have included in your response, to be included in our published responses it is necessary for us to obtain your consent. Please indicate this by ticking the box below.

Yes I consent ☐

Further details how North Ayrshire manages your data can be found within our privacy Policy at the following website link. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/privacy-policy.aspx> If you require a paper copy please contact Education and Youth Employment on 01294 324429.

### MUST BE COMPLETED FOR A VALID RESPONSE

<b>Name</b> (PRINTED)	<b>Address</b>  <b>Email Address:</b>
--------------------------	---

Please confirm that you have read the full report by ticking this box

Garnock Valley Early Years Centre	Parent/Carer <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Pupil <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Centre	Parent/Carer <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Pupil <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree with the proposal?

Yes ☐

No ☐

No Preference ☐

Please use this space for any additional comments

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# Proposed Relocation of Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Provision

## Appendix 4

### Financial Template

Table 1	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Row 1	Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure			
Row 2	Name of School	Costs for full financial year (2018/2019) (projected annual costs)	Additional financial impact on receiving school (St Bridget's Early Years (10-102021))	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
Row 3	Garnock Valley Early Years (10-102039)			
Row 4	School costs			
Row 5	Employee costs - note 1			
Row 6	teaching staff	-	-	-
Row 7	support staff	332,364.84	138,668.48	193,696.36
Row 8	teaching staff training (CPD etc)			-
Row 9	support staff training			-
Row 10	Supply costs - note 2			-
Row 11	Building costs:			-
Row 12	property insurance	4,950.00	4,950.00	-
Row 13	non domestic rates			-
Row 14	water & sewerage charges			-
Row 15	energy costs			-
Row 16	cleaning (contract or inhouse)			-
Row 17	building repair & maintenance			-
Row 18	grounds maintenance			-
Row 19	facilities management costs - note 6			-
Row 20	revenue costs arising from capital			-
Row 21	other			-
Row 22				
Row 23	School operational costs:			
Row 24	learning materials	2,164.27	1,080.00	1,084.27
Row 25	catering (contract or inhouse)			-
Row 26	SGA costs			-
Row 27	other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	1,996.00		1,996.00
Row 28				
Row 29	Transport costs: note 3			
Row 30	home to school			note 4
Row 31	other pupil transport costs	3,120.00		3,120.00
Row 32	staff travel	922.00		922.00
Row 33	SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL			
Row 34				
Row 35	Income:			
Row 36	Sale of meals			-
Row 37	Lets			-
Row 38	External care provider			-
Row 39	Other			-
Row 40	SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	-	-	-
Row 41				
Row 42	TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	345,517.11	144,698.48	200,818.63
Row 43				
Row 44	UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR			

Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
Capital Life Cycle cost - note 7		
Third party contributions to capital costs		

Table 3	Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal
	property insurance
	non domestic rates
	water & sewerage charges
	energy costs
	cleaning (contract or inhouse)
	security costs
	building repair & maintenance
	grounds maintenance
	facilities management costs
	other
	TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL

Table 4	Non-recurring revenue costs
	TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS
	200,818.63

Table 5	Impact on GAE - note 5
	GAE IMPACT

### Notes

1. The total costs incurred for teaching staff (row 5) and support staff (row 6) are required to be included. Column 2 should include the current costs for a full financial year for the school proposed for closure, and column 3 should include the additional cost to the receiving school as a result of staff transferring.

For teaching staff, this should include regular teachers, itinerant teachers, learning support teaching staff and special education (ASN) staff.

Itinerant teaching staff includes central support services such as English as additional language support, hearing, visually impaired services, educational psychology services.

For support staff, this should include classroom assistants, administration staff and janitorial staff.

For all staff the costs entered should include salary, NI and pension costs.

If the school proposed for closure has less than 3 staff members, then the cumulative staff costs only should be given in row 5 (for both teaching and support staff), so as to avoid possible disclosure of individual salaries.

Training costs should be identified separately in rows 7 and 8.

2. Supply costs to cover teaching and support staff. This may be held in a central budget, be devolved or shared across the budgets.

3. 'Home to school' pupil transport costs should include those school transport costs incurred in accordance with Council policy. 'Other pupil transport costs' will cover costs incurred for the transport of pupils for activities such as swimming etc.

4. Row 30 of column 3 should include the additional transport costs related to the increased home to school transport arrangements that are put in place in accordance with Council policy. This figure is therefore likely to be considerably higher than current costs.

5. This table is to capture the impact on the revenue support grant as a result of changes to GAE. Impact on GAE should consider the issues covered in the GAE section of the guidance document that accompany this template.

6. Facilities management costs will include costs related to caretaking, janitorial and security.

7. The capital costs for the receiving school should be taken across the life cycle of the school in line with the life expectancy of that school. The capital costs for the school proposed for closure should be taken across the same life cycle period. It should be noted that the lifecycle costs in Tables 3 represent 10 year anticipated costs and exclude fees, contingency, prelims and VAT.



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

**STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE  
CURRENT EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROVISION FOR 2-3 YEAR OLD  
CHILDREN AT THE GARNOCK VALLEY EARLY YEARS CENTRE AND RELOCATE TO ST  
BRIDGET'S PRIMARY SCHOOL EARLY YEARS CLASS**

**SUMMARY PROPOSAL DOCUMENT**

**This is a summary document only**

The full Proposal Document can be accessed at [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Copies of the full Proposal Document will also be available at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre, St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class, Kilbirnie Library, Kilbirnie Housing Office, Bridgend Community Centre, local health centre and Education and Youth Employment HQ. If requested, copies will also be made available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English.

**Statutory Public Consultation**

North Ayrshire Council want to consult you about the following proposal in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended). The proposal is to:

- Relocate the current Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision for 2-3 year old children at the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to a newly refurbished provision for 2-5 year old children at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class with effect from August 2020.
- Discontinue the ELC provision at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre from August 2020 and that this facility is declared surplus.

The proposed development would see St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class delivering early learning and childcare for children aged 2-5 years from August 2020. The refurbishment would take account of the Care Inspectorate publication 'Space to Grow' as a standard design brief. The Directorate of Education & Youth Employment has identified the following key principles to be included, where possible, in the design of all our establishments;

- Greater flexibility and variety of space and activities for children who could be accommodated within the service from 8am – 6pm;
- Provision for children to move freely between the internal learning environment and outdoor learning and social spaces;
- Nurture space;
- Small break out areas to provide greater flexibility in the delivery of early learning and childcare;
- Dining and general purpose spaces; and
- Parents meeting and learning spaces;

The newly refurbished and remodelled St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class will continue to be led by the Head Teacher, supported by an Early Years Manager and Senior Early Years Practitioner. The team will lead the development of a range of curricular pathways to maximise opportunities for attainment and achievement for all children from 2 years old.

Easing the move from early years and primary stages will provide better outcomes for children at key transition points. An inclusive environment which can improve the participation of ELC in the life of the school, will enable enhanced opportunities for cross sectoral work. Staff will be able to move between stages of education, facilitating continuous learning experiences for children. There will be improved opportunities for families and staff to work more closely together.

## **Background**

On 15 January 2019, North Ayrshire Council's Cabinet agreed that a proposal, informed by an early engagement process, should be developed to relocate the early learning and childcare provision at Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to a newly refurbished provision for 2-5 year olds at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class.

Pre-consultation engagement was undertaken, which has helped to ensure that this proposal best meets the needs and wishes of the community.

## **Why are the Council proposing this?**

The co-location of 2-3 year old children within a whole early years' community will provide:

- support for high quality transitions for our youngest children;
- an inclusive nurturing environment;
- links with other siblings already in the school;
- consistency of staffing;
- a familiar setting through all stages of their early learning and primary education;
- improved outdoor learning opportunities;
- one point of contact for parents where there is more than one sibling attending early years or school provision;
- inclusion in a larger early years community for parents; and
- access to the entire St Bridget's Primary School community and facilities.

## **Where can I find out more about this proposal?**

Copies of this document are available from Education and Youth Employment, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cunninghame House, Irvine KA12 8EE. The document can also be viewed in Garnock Valley Early Years Centre, St Bridget's Primary Early Years Class, Kilbirnie Library, Kilbirnie Housing Office, Bridgend Community Centre, local health centre and on the North Ayrshire Council website, [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

A public meeting will be held to discuss these proposals:

Venue	Date	Time
St Bridget's Primary School	Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	6:00pm

A note will be taken at the meeting of comments, questions and officer responses. The note will be published on the Council website and a copy will be made available on request. The note will also be forwarded to Education Scotland along with all other submissions and comments that are received by the Council during the consultation process.

### **How do I make sure my views are heard?**

You will be able to share your opinion on the proposal by:

- Completing an online response form at [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk);
- Submitting a paper copy of the response form. These can be obtained from St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class and Garnock Valley Early Years Centre on request or by calling 01294 324614;
- Writing to the Head of Service (Inclusion), North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE; or
- E-mailing [educ\\_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educ_consultation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

All responses must be submitted **no later than 12 noon on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019**.

### **What happens next?**

All the points raised during the consultation will be carefully considered and the Council will then decide if the proposal should go ahead. Education Scotland and the Scottish Government will also consider the proposal.

If the proposal is accepted, ongoing stakeholder engagement will take place to ensure a smooth transition to the new facilities for all children, their families and the community.

**North Ayrshire Council  
Education and Youth Employment  
Proposal To Relocate Garnock Valley Early Years Centre To St  
Bridget's Primary School Early Years Provision In Kilbirnie**



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

**Public Meeting Held in St Bridget's Primary  
Tuesday 5 February 2019 at 6pm**

The Head of Service (Inclusion), Education and Youth Employment, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the other North Ayrshire Council officers present. It was also noted that Education Scotland were in attendance. One member of the public (parent), three staff from Garnock Valley Early Years Centre and one local councillor attended the meeting.

A presentation which provided information on the key proposal was delivered.

It was noted that there was an online survey available for the public to complete, paper copies of this were also available at the meeting and could be collected from various other public buildings.

Draft plans for the proposed refurbishment of St Bridget's Early Years' class were displayed on boards for all to view and discuss at the meeting. It was confirmed that these were not final plans and that there would be further consultation on these.

Following the presentation, questions were invited from the audience:-

**Enquiry:** Were all Garnock Valley Early Years Centre staff notified of the consultation process at the beginning?

**Response:** Yes, all staff were informed.

**Enquiry:** Were the staff ok with having the proposal of having 40 children in the same room?

**Response:** The proposal scheme will offer a variety of spaces for children to use, including two playrooms.

**Enquiry:** Where will birth to 2 year-old children go?  
Are there enough spaces for this in Kilbirnie?

**Response:** The Council took the decision last year to remove service provision for 0-2 year old children across all Early Years Centres. Children in this age group currently attending the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre will continue to attend. No further children of this age will be enrolled in any centres across North Ayrshire.

Where there is an identified need, parents will be supported in sourcing day-care providers within the area. Day Carers receive specialist training. This also provides opportunities for Childminders and Day Carers in the Garnock Valley area.

**Enquiry:** An attendee advised they had tried to use the online survey but was unable to complete the process?

**Response:** Another attendee confirmed that they had successfully completed the online process earlier that evening, however it was agreed that this process will be

checked and contact would be made to confirm the survey was operational. Paper copies were provided to all attendees at the meeting.

*Post-Meeting note: The on-line survey was checked and was found to be operating. The attendee was contacted by phone to advise of this.*

**Enquiry:** A query was raised regarding the safety of children attending Early Years as parents had to access the current entrance via the primary playground. There was also a concern about adults walking through the playground whilst pupils were outside.

It was suggested that the nursery entrance be relocated to the rear of the Early Years facility at St Bridget's.

**Response:** There have been visits by architects to look at the site and gauge the scope of works.

Children would be dropped off at new entrance, go through cloakrooms and then into playrooms from where there is access to the secured outside play space.

The design proposal is still at an early stage and aligns to Scottish Government criteria and best practice, as defined in the **Space To Grow** guidance. As the proposal is at feasibility stage there will be further consultation on the final design.

There will be further consultation and we would consider fencing options to delineate areas or other solutions. Early involvement is important to ensure we get value for money and a facility with which everyone is happy.

It is critical with any major works not to disturb the service delivery. Our colleagues in Property would develop a programme of works in consultation with the Head Teacher. Suitable arrangements would be made to ensure that children and pupils experience minimal disruption.

**Enquiry:** Can you put an entrance at the back of the school and create a safety gate?

**Response:** We will pick up these suggestions at the design consultation. It's very helpful for you to raise this and it will be looked at. We will also need to consider improved external lighting for outdoor areas, and security.

**Enquiry:** What will be the size of the new playroom and extension?

**Response:** In the proposed scheme there are the following:

Playroom for 2-3 year olds measuring approximately 52m<sup>2</sup>.

Playroom for 3-5 year olds measuring approximately 96m<sup>2</sup> - included in this figure is the extension area of approximately 45m<sup>2</sup>.

There will also be a shared playroom pod, between the two playrooms, with an approximate area of 11m<sup>2</sup>.

We are following Government guidance on the space allocation per child in an Early Years setting.

**Enquiry:** At present there are separate rooms for wet and dry play. The proposal only has one big room so how will that work?

**Response:** Within the design proposal, there will be a separate playroom for 2-3 year olds and another for 3 – year olds.

It is proposed to expand and enhance the current accommodation at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years class, which will offer greater flexibility, including free flow access to improved outdoor areas. It is envisaged that children will have greater choice and ability to access a wider range of learning experiences.

The set-up of the rooms will allow all types of play with lots of resources, furniture and equipment. The new outside canopies will provide the opportunity to do wet play outside, if appropriate. Currently having two rooms for 3-5 years olds at Garnock Valley Early Years does present challenges for staff.

**Enquiry:** The outside area, that is marsh, could that not be the 2-3 year playroom? As the area is marshy the children will get dirty if this is used as outdoor play space?

**Response:** We would always consider existing space for any design scheme and the initial proposal was seen to be the most cost-effective solution. However further design consultation will take place in due course.

Whilst the area is marshy, it is ok for children to get muddy. Health and safety considerations and risk assessments are undertaken, but we do want to allow and encourage children to explore, discover and experience taking their own risks through outdoor play.

We would work with staff to develop all outdoor areas, to provide flexible and stimulating outdoor learning experiences for children. There are plans for two external canopied play areas.

**Enquiry:** It was stated that other schools with canopies used these to store equipment, could this be an issue?

**Response:** The canopies may be used to store play equipment overnight, however children will use these covered areas during the day to enjoy outdoor learning and play activities.

**Enquiry:** Will the current outdoor hut be retained?

**Response:** Yes it will remain.

**Enquiry:** What will happen to the existing GVEYC building, who would use it?

**Response:** The building would not be retained by Education. The future use of the asset would be considered corporately, which includes representation from Education. All needs and views would be considered before any decision is made.

**Enquiry:** What about children whose parents would not want to send them to a Catholic school?

**Response:** Early Years provision is non-denominational. Parents will have the same options and choices for primary and secondary education as they currently do.

The placement for Early Years is determined by parental choice and availability of space within the Early Years settings.

Parents will still have the choice on whether to enrol their child at their catchment denominational or non-denominational school, or making a placing request to another school of their choice.

Other Early Years settings within Kilbirnie include Garnock Community Campus and Moorpark Primary School Early Years.

Current children attending the Garnock Valley Early Years Centre will be going into primary by the time the project is completed.

**Enquiry:** Will staff be communicated with regarding their positions?

**Response:** Yes. This would take place once the final outcome is known, following the statutory public consultation. We will consider the transition for staff, and children, at that point.

**Enquiry:** Why was the meeting at this time?

**Response:** As part of the statutory public consultation process, we must have public meetings which are open for everyone to attend including staff, parents and carers. Therefore public meetings tend to be held in the evenings.

**Enquiry:** What would be the timelines for the building works?

**Response:** A detailed programme of works will be developed in consultation with the Head Teacher and staff to minimise any impact on the operations of the school. Contractors commissioned by the Council are used to working in operational school environments and work with establishments to keep disruption to an absolute minimum.

Depending on how the consultation and plans move forward, construction work may start in December 2019. If that was the case, we would hope to be finished by the beginning of the summer holidays in 2020.

**Enquiry:** What about transport for children from Milton, if you don't put on a bus then people will not come in? There is poor public transport.

**Response:** Where there is an identified vulnerability, and it has been identified that the child requires transport, then this would be provided.

The Head of Service (Inclusion) thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reminded the audience of the importance of completing and submitting the formal response form as part of the consultation process.





## **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Ayrshire Council to relocate Garnock Valley Early Years Centre to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years provision in Kilbirnie.**

March 2019

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of North Ayrshire Councils proposal to relocate Garnock Valley Early Years Centre (GVEYC) to St Bridget's Primary School Early Years provision in Kilbirnie. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.
- 1.2 HM Inspectors considered:
- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the settings; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children in the council area;
  - any other likely effects of the proposal;
  - how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
  - the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.
- 1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:
- attendance at the public meeting held on 5 February 2019 in connection with the council's proposals;
  - consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
  - visits to the site of GVEYC and St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Provision in Kilbirnie, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

- 2.1 North Ayrshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.2 The formal consultation ran from 23 January 2019 until 8 March 2019. A public meeting was held on 5 February 2019. One member of the public attended. A number of concerns were expressed. These included: too many children being housed in one

playroom and adults accessing the facility via the infant playground at school break times. The council posted the consultation document on its website. Interested parties were invited to comment. Hard copies were also made available at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class, GVEYC, Education and Youth Employment HQ, the local library, local community centres and health centres. A total of 131 summary proposal documents and 30 full proposal documents were issued to interested parties.

- 2.3 The council received 11 responses in total to the proposal. These included seven online surveys, one email response and three paper responses. Of these, eight were not supportive of the proposal, one was supportive and two did not indicate a preference. The main areas of objection raised were: the location of the extension and entrance, the safety of four to seven year olds should have access to the facility be via the infant playground, the proposed loss of transport for existing GVEYC users and the impact of locating all pre-school children in one room.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

- 3.1 GVEYC is located within a dedicated, stand-alone building in the grounds of St Bridget's Primary School in Kilbirnie. It has the capacity to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) provision for 15 two to three year old children and eight birth to two year old children. Currently 25 eligible two to three year olds attend GVEYC. In June 2018 North Ayrshire Council approved a proposal to cease provision of ELC for all children aged birth to two years in North Ayrshire Council Early Years Centres and direct all referrals to the council's Day Carer Service. This will mean that the number of children attending GVEYC will gradually reduce until 2020 when there will be no children in this age group attending. GVEYC currently provides a transport service for children who attend the centre. This service is unique to GVEYC as North Ayrshire Council does not provide transport for any other early years child unless the child has an additional support need. St Bridget's Primary School Early Year's Class exists within St Bridget's Primary School in Kilbirnie. It is located less than 50 metres from GVEYC. It has the capacity to provide 600 hours of ELC provision for 40 three to five year olds per session. There is currently no two year old provision at St Bridget's. The council is committed to delivering 1140 hours per annum of ELC for all eligible children by 2020 in line with the Scottish Government's Early Years Strategy.
- 3.2 The council has set out a reasonable case in support of its proposal. The council states that there will be a number of educational benefits if the proposal goes ahead. These include pre-school children learning in a modern, well-resourced environment, access to improved dining and social areas, access to wider learning opportunities available including improved outdoor areas and across the school as a whole. Collegiate, collaborative working will be enhanced. Transition into the primary school stage will be improved. More effective staff sharing of information should improve progression in children's learning. The proposal will assist the council to make efficient and effective use of its resources as it will not incur costs for running GVEYC. The removal of transport will save money and ensure equity of provision across the authority. The proposal will enable the council to deliver 1140 hours per annum of ELC for all eligible children by 2020 in line with the Scottish Government's Early Years Strategy.
- 3.3 Parents and staff from GVEYC who met with HM Inspectors did not support the proposal. Parents and staff did not agree that there would be any educational benefits for either parents or children. Concerns were expressed about the perceived loss of the inclusive, supportive environment the children currently experience and a reduction in the level of service. Parents were concerned about a reduction in the much valued support they

receive including provision of transport to and from the facility and their access to wider support services. Staff, including support staff, expressed concerns about the limited level of detail shared, their lack of engagement in the process and the impact on their own employment status.

- 3.4 Staff from St Bridget's Primary School Early Year's Provision who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. They saw a number of benefits. Early Years children would benefit from being part of the whole school community, from the school's wider community links, have access to facilities such as the gym hall and to wider staff expertise including music specialists. Transition to primary would be improved. However, as staff have not seen detailed plans, they were unclear about the detail of how the proposal would progress. A number of concerns were expressed namely: how space will be maximised to accommodate two to three year olds without detriment to existing three to five year olds, the location of the dedicated entrance and the proposed staffing complement. No parents from St Bridget's Primary School met with HM Inspectors.
- 3.5 The representative from the Catholic Church who met with HM Inspectors was supportive of the proposal. She saw the proposal as offering improved continuity for children as they progress from early years education to primary. All children would benefit from the improved resources should the proposal proceed.

#### 4 Summary

North Ayrshire's proposal to relocate GVEYC to newly refurbished provision at St Bridget's Primary School Early Years Class has a number of possible educational benefits. The proposal will assist the council to deliver 'Best Value' through making more efficient and effective use of its resources. The removal of transport will save money and ensure equity of provision across the authority. The proposal will enable the council to deliver 1140 hours per annum of ELC for all eligible children in line with the Scottish Government's Early Years Strategy. Pre-school children from two to five will learn in a modern, well-resourced environment. They will have access to improved dining and social areas, and access to wider learning opportunities. Transition into the primary school stage will be improved. In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to involve fully parents and staff from both establishments in the final design of the refurbished Early Years resource. In particular, it should address the concerns raised in this consultation in terms of the allocation and layout of space, location of a secure entrance, maintaining support to parents and engaging with staff regarding their employment status.

