

## Proposals for the temporary decant of James Gillespie's High School

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This consultation paper sets out the rationale for, and implications arising in respect of, the proposal to relocate part of James Gillespie's High School during the build phase for the new school. The paper also sets out the consultation process and the means and timescales for making representations.

#### Format of Consultation Paper

1.2 The consultation paper is divided into the following sections:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Project Context
- 3 Decant Options
- 4 Educational Benefits Statement
- 5 Financial Considerations
- 6 Public Consultation Process

1.3 Comments on this paper should be submitted at the latest by close of business on **Thursday 1 July 2010** to the either of the addresses set out in Section 6.8 of this paper.

1.4 A public meeting, detailed in Section 6, will be held as follows:

| Venue                         | Date         | Time        |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| James Gillespie's High School | 17 June 2010 | 7 pm – 9 pm |

### 2. Project Context

2.1 In 2006 the Council set out its intention to build five replacement schools in the City, of which James Gillespie's High School was one. The project has subsequently been allocated £20 million in February 2010 in the Council's Capital Investment Programme 2010-14 and has secured part funding from the Scottish Government's Schools Building Programme which is managed by the Scottish Futures Trust.

2.2 The proposal is to replace the school on its existing site. The school is well located within its catchment area and no deliverable alternative sites exist on which to replace the school.

- 2.3 It is estimated that the school would be completed during academic year 2014/2015 (depending on the final option both in terms of decant and the new school design), subject to Scottish Government funding being available for a site start in 2012/13.
- 2.4 The timing of the project will depend on the availability of Scottish Government finance through the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT). The current project programme envisages that an on-site start in academic year 2012/13 could be achieved, however this is dependant on the SFT funding being available during the build period. Guidance on the availability of funding has been sought from the SFT, however this matter remains unclarified at present.
- 2.5 It is anticipated that between a two and three year build period would be required – depending on the agreed decant solution and the design of the school.
- 2.6 In March 2009, the Council approved £1.5 million to progress the James Gillespie's design to Stage D (Planning). The strategic briefing process for the school – the first stage in the scoping for the design - is now nearing completion. Education design briefing sessions have been held with the Management Team, Department Heads and all other staff and these have formed the basis of the Strategic Educational Design Brief. This Brief aims to outline the school objectives for learning, teaching and organisation, and this will be translated into a set of design criteria to underpin the final design solution, ensuring that the school's aspirations for learning and teaching are effectively delivered by the new school. The aspirations for the Curriculum for Excellence have also been considered as part of the process and the strategic brief has been discussed with HMIE.
- 2.7 Before the architects can begin to consider the design of the school, they require to know how much of the site can be cleared for the first phase of the project. This can only be determined once the decant solution has been identified and it is known how much of the site will continue to be required for operational purposes. Accordingly it is important to consult on the decant options now, rather than closer to the time of the construction phase of the project commencing.
- 2.8 The limited size of the school site makes it inevitable that existing buildings will have to be demolished in order to free up space to start construction of the new school. The more space that can be freed up on the site for construction, the better the design opportunities for the new building should be and the shorter the construction period is likely to be.
- 2.9 Given the site limitations it is inevitable that a decant of pupils will be required. Accordingly the Children and Families Department has worked closely with the school management team to evaluate options and identify a proposed solution, as set out in this paper.

### 3. Decant Options

#### *Proposal*

- ***S4-S6 James Gillespie's High School pupils are decanted to Darroch annexe for duration of the project***
- ***S1-S3 pupils will remain on the existing High School site in existing buildings supplemented by temporary accommodation***

#### **Options Explored**

- 3.1 A number of options for decant were considered:
- A full decant off site to the former Tynecastle High School
  - A full off site decant into temporary accommodation
  - A temporary decant village fully on site at James Gillespie's High School
  - A partial decant off site to Darroch with a decant village created on site to provide the balance of accommodation required (the recommended option).

#### **Discounted Options**

##### **Full Decant to Tynecastle High School**

- 3.2 The Council currently has a vacant secondary school building in the Gorgie area having relocated Tynecastle High School into its new building in January 2010. The option of using this building as decant for James Gillespie's was assessed but discounted for the following reasons:
- The old Tynecastle building could not provide the number of class spaces required which would mean additional accommodation would be required – the most feasible of which would be the installation of temporary units on-site, with significant expenditure implications.
  - The building is in poor condition and would require significant expenditure to bring it back into use, with the practical accommodation requiring complete replacement with temporary accommodation.
  - It would introduce up to 1800 children between the two school rolls into a congested area which raised health and safety concerns
  - Both schools believe there would be management issues by having two high schools directly across the road from each other
  - The location would be difficult to reach from the James Gillespie's catchment area.

### **Full Decant to an Alternative Site**

- 3.3 This would require the provision of a complete set of school facilities in temporary accommodation off-site. This option would be extremely expensive with an estimated cost in excess of £5m. It would need a significant land take and sites are extremely limited in the area. Options explored included the Astley Ainslie site however this would require to align with the NHS's own strategy and timescales. Decant to the pitches at Double Hedges Road in Liberton was also considered but exploration with the Planning Division identified significant access issues for the site. The complexities of the limited opportunities for full off site decant, combined with the high cost, have resulted in these options being discounted.

### **Full On-Site Decant**

- 3.4 The possibility of retaining all pupils on site has been discounted as there is insufficient space to install the necessary level of temporary accommodation without significant logistical problems. It would also release a very limited site area for construction, necessitating a series of complex phases to be built around existing users, leading to limited design opportunities, a prolonged timescale and an associated increase in costs.

### **Proposal Detail**

- 3.5 The proposal aims to remove as many pupils as possible from the main school site and release as much space for the construction as possible.

### ***Upper School***

- 3.6 The 500 pupils in the upper school, S4 – S6, would move off the main site entirely into the Darroch building for the duration of the construction project. Darroch is based in Gillespie Street, just off Gilmore Place and is within walking distance of James Gillespie's, just half a mile from the existing High School site. Its location is illustrated in Appendix 1
- 3.7 Darroch would operate as an entirely independent unit, providing the full level of academic accommodation required for this population. It would effectively become an examination centre for part of the year.
- 3.8 The accommodation would be fitted out to ensure the necessary number of general and practical spaces were provided on site. The majority of this accommodation would be provided within the main building, with a further six curriculum spaces provided through temporary unit accommodation on site.
- 3.9 The Darroch building also has two halls which would provide examination accommodation and also some curriculum sports facilities throughout the year. These halls would also be available for extra curricular activities for the entire school and the community learning programme.
- 3.10 It is proposed that the temporary units would be installed in the same locations as previous units that were used for the St Thomas of Aquin's decant in the late 1990s. There are presently temporary dining facilities and additional toilet facilities on-site and these would be supplemented by additional units providing six general teaching spaces.

- 3.11 Further sports facilities would be required to supplement the two halls available on the Darroch site. It is proposed that pupils would be bussed to alternative facilities either within the school estate or managed by Edinburgh Leisure.
- 3.12 The condition of the existing Darroch building would be upgraded to ensure that it provided an appropriate environment for an operational school.

### ***Lower School***

- 3.13 It is proposed to retain the S1-S3 pupils (around 600 pupils) on the existing site. The existing Warrender, Spylaw and Thirlestane buildings would be retained to provide the principal academic accommodation on site. These buildings are all clustered in the southern part of the site, meaning a substantial area could be released for construction in the northern part while creating a completely separate 'village' for the continued operation of the school.
- 3.14 The existing buildings would be able to offer the majority of the academic accommodation required for the lower school. With only half the current school roll remaining here, some of the existing classrooms would be remodelled to provide the practical accommodation that is required to replace classrooms currently located in the Lauder building and Bruntsfield House at the north end of the site.
- 3.15 Temporary accommodation would be installed adjacent to the Warrender building to provide the library, guidance, dining, staff and administration accommodation. This is expected to be provided over two storeys given the space available on site.
- 3.16 A significant part of the current site is covered by the games hall, assembly hall, swimming pool and library. To incorporate these areas within the area available for the first phase of construction would significantly increase the construction site area. It is anticipated that this would bring significant benefits to the project by:
- Reducing disruption to pupils through repeated moves around small phases of building work that would otherwise be necessary;
  - Increasing opportunities for design flexibility for the new school building, particularly in the project's ability to respond to the schools desire to maintain the 'pavilion' feel of the campus;
  - Reducing the potential construction programme by up to one year, and in turn reducing the disruption to all pupils;
  - Reducing the cost of the project through a shorter construction programme.
- 3.17 In order to achieve these significant benefits it would be necessary to make provision for sporting activities off-site. As with the upper school it is proposed that these facilities would be provided in either other secondary schools and/or in Edinburgh Leisure facilities – principally Meggetland, Craggs, Meadowbank and Warrender swimming pool. An appraisal of the availability of facilities would be undertaken closer to the time to determine precisely which facilities would be utilised. It is proposed to retimetable sport into two hour blocks – requiring one visit per week - to minimise the amount of travel time required to access sports each week.
- 3.18 The location of the decant village on the main site is illustrated in Appendix 2.

- 3.19 Facilities on both the main school site and at Darroch will be available to maintain the Adult Learning Programme that takes place at the school.

### **Management Arrangements**

- 3.20 The school management team has been assessing the additional staffing requirements resulting from a split site operation. It is envisaged that the management team would be split so that half would operate from Darroch and half from the main site. At this stage it is envisaged that an acting senior depute head teacher would be required to supplement the management team at Darroch, but this will be further refined once an image of the timetable that would be in place for the split site is created. The timetable development would also identify the principal teacher requirements for the split sites. It is recognised that there will be a need for flexibility with the staffing for the split sites, in relation to both teaching and support staff.

### **Effect on Primary School**

- 3.21 It is possible that the construction site for the high school building will need to incorporate the area occupied by the gym hall and nursery for James Gillespie's Primary School. Should this be required for the high school site, a permanent new nursery building and gym hall would be built as part of the advance works prior to the main high school construction commencing. Consideration will also be given to the play space and site boundaries associated with the primary school if affected by the high school site, to ensure that appropriate provision is made for the primary school. There will be full dialogue with the primary school as the high school design implications emerge.

### **On-Site Construction**

- 3.22 The Council has extensive experience of managing an operational school alongside a construction site and this experience will ensure any disruption to students remaining on site will be minimised. By relocating almost half the roll off-site, it significantly reduces the pressure of maintaining a large school alongside the construction site. By relocating the upper school, it ensures that there will be no disruption during examination times. The proposal offers as large a site as possible to the contractors to assist them with minimising their impact on the operations of the school.
- 3.23 Further detail on the operation of the high school and primary school alongside the construction site will be developed at a later stage in the process through a full Health and Safety Plan. The contractor and design team will work with the schools to identify health and safety procedures; programming and phasing implications.

## Timing

- 3.24 The current project programme would see the decant commencing in January 2013. This programme is subject to securing the necessary levels of Scottish Government funding to allow a construction to commence at this stage. It is anticipated that the decant as proposed would be required for a period of around two years.

## 4. Educational Benefits Statement

- 4.1 There are significant educational benefits to be achieved from the delivery of the project to build a new school. The suitability of the new school design is being considered at length to ensure it provides the spaces needed for learning and teaching styles of the future. The new building will be able to adapt to future requirements providing an enhanced space for learners. It should be an attractive and inspirational place to learn, encouraging students to engage more fully with their place of learning. The condition of the building will also be significantly enhanced, again making the environment more attractive to learners and also ensuring days are not lost as a result of building failures. The decant is a necessary element of being able to deliver the new school.
- 4.2 The split campus model proposed for the decant will mean that the upper school will be largely unaffected, and can operate as a self contained unit. Maintaining the S1-S3 at the current JGHS site will benefit the transition process as the primary pupils will be more comfortable coming to a location that they know and will allow the Curriculum for Excellence curricular map to be implemented as effectively as possible for S1-S3. The Council's experience of managing major construction projects alongside operational schools will ensure that any disadvantages will be minimised. Mitigating measures such as timetabling PE to minimise travel times and increasing PE staffing are also being proposed. It is also proposed that additional management time will be put in place to ensure the continued smooth running of the school on a split site.
- 4.3 The decant also offers the opportunity to start early implementation of the teaching methodologies that will be used and the type of spaces that will be included in the new building.
- 4.4 The Council is confident that it can continue to deliver an appropriate curriculum for all the pupils during the operation of the decant.
- 4.5 The other benefits associated with the proposed decant are seen as being:
- A reduced construction programme;
  - Reduced disruption through shorter construction timescales and through moving almost half the roll off-site;
  - A reduced funding requirement;
  - The minimal distance between the main site and the off-site decant at Darroch.

## 5. Financial Considerations

5.1 It is anticipated that a capital spend of £1.06m is required to upgrade the condition of the Darroch building and carry out some minor adaptations to the buildings which would be retained on the main site. This would form part of the overall project costs.

5.2 It is estimated that the following revenue costs will be incurred for the anticipated two year decant period:

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| • Installation and fit out of temporary units (both sites) | £300,000          |
| • Rental of temporary units                                | £363,000 pa       |
| • Venue hire and transport to PE facilities                | up to £184,000 pa |
| • Additional staffing for split site and PE                | £75,000 pa        |

## 6. Public Consultation Process

6.1 This section expands upon the public consultation process relating to the proposal.

6.2 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out the statutory consultation requirements for the relocation of a school wholly or in part and the statutory consultees include the following:

1. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE);
2. the Parent Council or combined Parent Council of any affected school;
3. the parents of the pupils at the affected school;
4. the parents of any children expected to attend the affected school;
5. the staff at the affected school and trade union representatives; and
6. affected community councils.

6.3 The consultation period for the proposals paper will run for six weeks from 20 May to 1 July 2010 and the paper will be made available electronically and in paper format. A public meeting will be held in respect of the proposals at the venue listed below. Free childcare and/or translation services can be provided at the public meeting if requests for these services are made to (0131) 469 3161 no later than 10 June 2010.

| Venue                         | Date         | Time         |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| James Gillespie's High School | 17 June 2010 | 7.00-9.00 pm |

6.4 At the end of the consultation period, the Council is required to send to HMIE the following:

- a copy of the proposal paper;
- written representations received by the Authority during the consultation period or a summary of representations if agreed by the HMIE;
- a record of the public meeting; and
- any other relevant information.

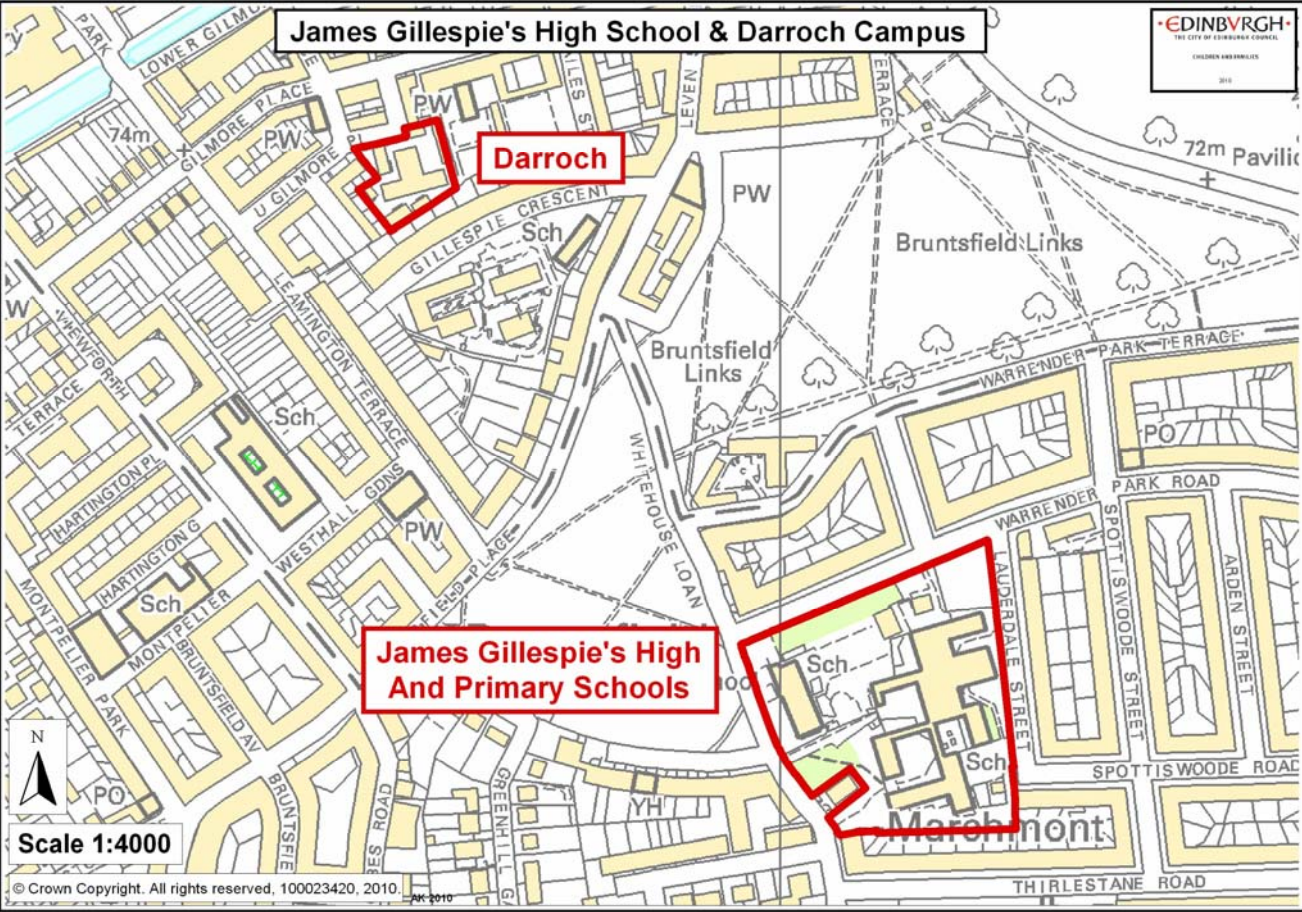
- 6.5 HMIE is required to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the relevant proposal and must submit this report to the Council within three weeks (or longer if agreed). The Council must then take account of the HMIE's report in preparing the final consultation report.
- 6.6 The consultation report will be made publicly available and notification will be given to those individuals or groups that have made representations during the consultation period. The report will include a summary of written representations received during the consultation period and representations made at the public meeting along with the Council response to representations made.
- 6.7 The Council must wait three weeks from date of publication of the consultation report before making a decision on whether to approve the proposals either in whole or in part. It is anticipated that the consultation report will be presented to a meeting of Education, Children and Families Committee on the 9 November 2010 setting out recommendations.
- 6.8 The Council website, **[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cfpropertyreview](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cfpropertyreview)** will contain information on the consultation. During the consultation period, any views on this proposal should be sent in writing to the address given below. Responses can also be made by e-mail to **[newschoolbuildings@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:newschoolbuildings@edinburgh.gov.uk)**. All responses to the consultation paper should be received by Thursday 1 July 2010 and addressed to the Director of Children and Families.

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APPENDIX 1: LOCATION OF JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL AND  
DARROCH SCHOOL

APPENDIX 2: JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL DECANT VILLAGE AND  
POTENTIAL CONSTRUCTION SITE

**APPENDIX 1: LOCATION OF JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL AND DARROCH SCHOOL**



## APPENDIX 2: JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL DECANT VILLAGE AND POTENTIAL CONSTRUCTION SITE

