

Gaelic Medium Education: Outcome of discussions with the Scottish Government and Options for Development

Education, Children and Families Committee

7 September 2010

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to detail the outcome of the City of Edinburgh Council's discussions with the Scottish Government regarding the availability of additional funding to support the anticipated growth in demand for Gaelic Medium Education (GME). This report also explores the cost implications and complexities of potential accommodation options to address existing accommodation issues and the feasibility of how GME provision could be expanded.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee on 15 June 2010 approved the recommendation in the "Options for Development of Gaelic Medium Education" paper that further development of the options presented be undertaken and that funding options be explored with the Scottish Government. Subsequent discussions with the Scottish Government have revealed considerable uncertainty about the level of funding that will be available due to a national spending review that is unlikely to conclude until late in this calendar year. It is within the context of this uncertain funding situation that discussions with Comann nam Pàrant and further investigation of the implications of each option have been considered, resulting in the revised set of options. These are:

For Nursery and Primary provision, either

Option (A) – A dedicated primary school with nursery facilities being established at the old Bonnington Primary School premises, and the withdrawal of the current GME unit at Tollcross Primary School; or

Option (B) – Setting up a second Gaelic Unit at Leith Walk to complement the unit at Tollcross; or

Option (C) – Maximising capacity on the Tollcross Primary School site by extending the building and relocating the nursery to a new facility in the grounds of the existing school;

And for secondary provision

The relocation of the GME unit for future S1 intakes from James Gillespie's High School to Tynecastle High School.

- 2.2 Assuming that Specific Grant funding from the Government is maintained at its current level, delivering this expanded capacity could increase the Council's required net funding contribution from current levels of £441,000 in 2010/11 to nearly £1.1m per annum cby 2014/15 depending on which option is chosen. There would also be capital costs associated with all primary options varying from £600,000 to £1.66m.
- 2.3 Establishing a dedicated school (Option A) would require capital expenditure of around £600,000 for essential building works plus the opportunity cost of losing a capital receipt from a surplus building currently valued at approximately £1m. The Scottish Government's Gaelic Schools Capital fund could provide up to £1.35m of funding in 2010/11 for the capital works required under Options (A), (B) and (C).
- 2.4 The costs associated with expanding GME would increase the total Departmental budget costs. This additional provision would accordingly require to be found from savings elsewhere within the Children and Families Departmental budgets.

3 Main report

Background

- 3.1 An assessment of the anticipated growth of GME was undertaken and the findings reported to the Education, Children and Families Committee meeting on 15 June 2010. The report found that growth at all levels of GME was likely to continue should provision be made for it, finding that GME P1 intakes could be 50 pupils by 2014 with the total number of primary GME pupils projected to reach approximately 300 by 2015. If this projected demand is realised, additional accommodation would be required for the primary sector. In addition, James Gillespie's High School's S1 intake limit would not be sufficient for both catchment and GME pupils in the future.
- 3.2 Should the Council wish to address this level of growth the report of 15 June 2010 set out the following options for the development of nursery, primary and secondary GME:

Either

1. Establish a second GME primary unit at Leith Walk Primary School to complement the primary and nursery unit functions continuing at Tollcross Primary School; *or*

2. Establish a dedicated primary school with nursery facilities at the old Bonnington Primary School premises, and the withdrawal of the current GME unit at Tollcross Primary School.

The report recommended the further development of options for secondary GME provision, including the possible option of using Tynecastle High School.

- 3.3 The report further recommended that the costs associated with both primary options necessitated that the availability of additional funding options be explored with the Scottish Government. This report outlines the findings of those discussions with the Scottish Government and considers the views of parents from Tollcross GME Unit in further developing the two previously reported options.

Financial Context

Current Position

- 3.4 Tollcross Primary School's GME unit currently delivers 7 classes providing places for 158 pupils, plus nursery provision for 30 morning and 30 afternoon places. The cost of this level of provision, including primary and nursery teaching and support staff is approximately £464,000. This and other costs set against the Specific Grant for GME (see section 3.5 below) are:

Nature of expenditure	2010/11
GME Primary Unit costs	£464,000
GME Transport costs for primary sector	£100,000
GME Secondary Unit costs	£78,000
Additional GME Staff#	£67,000
Resources and Training	£22,000
Total	£731,000

Additional GME Staff includes a Gaelic Development Officer, a peripatetic teacher and Playgroup Staff

Specific Grant for GME

- 3.5 The Grants for Gaelic Language Education (Scotland) Regulations (1986) introduced the Scheme of Specific Grants for Gaelic education. Annual funding of the scheme has increased at a national level from £250,000 in 1986 to £5.6 million in 2009/10. The Specific Grant is for the teaching of the Gaelic language through education and, as such, the administrative rules for the grant invite authorities to submit a grant request on an annual basis for projects relating to new and additional educational provision. The Grant provided will not exceed 75% of these costs.
- 3.6 Specific Grant funding for the City of Edinburgh Council from the Scottish Government for the support and development of GME was set at £250,000 for each of three years 2008/9 to 2010/11. A further 'one-off' award of £40,000 for financial year 2010/11 brings the total GME specific grant to £290,000. With

total costs estimated to be £731,000 for academic year 2010/11 the costs covered by the Council come to £441,000 (60% of total cost).

Capital Funding for GME

- 3.7 In 2009 the Scottish Government made available a Gaelic Schools capital fund of £2.15m for 2009/10 and £1.35m for 2010/11 for which bids are invited from local authorities to fund capital projects that directly develop and promote GME. At the time of writing, no applications for the current financial year (2010/11) had been received. This budget could therefore provide a source of funding for the capital expenditure element of any GME development projects considered by the City of Edinburgh Council. Risks associated with this funding route are set out in the financial implications section.

Future Funding

- 3.8 The City of Edinburgh Council officers have met with the Scottish Government to discuss the extent to which both the capital costs and an increase in the revenue costs incurred by the Council through the options for the development of GME identified in the 15 June 2010 committee report could be met by additional funding from the Scottish Government.

Revenue Costs

- 3.9 The results of the UK Government's Spending Review which will set budgets for April 2012 to March 2015 will not be announced until 20 October 2010. The Scottish Government have advised that its own spending review will follow this announcement and is not likely to conclude until late in this calendar year. While in previous years budgets have been fairly constant, the current economic climate means that there is uncertainty about budget allocations for future years. Therefore CEC are unlikely to fully understand the financial implications of funding for GME until around December.
- 3.10 The Scottish Government have advised that, should the available budget for the Specific Grant Scheme remain at its present level, there is a degree of flexibility within which applications for larger grants may be awarded. However, they have indicated that this would be unlikely to approach the additional level that the Council would seek to address the increased revenue costs projected for 2014/15 which would be up to an additional £633,000 per annum under Option (A). It should also be noted that until the results of the spending review are known, a reduction in the level of Specific Grant received is also a possibility and remains a significant risk. As a result of these discussions, it is concluded that the majority of the revenue costs of expanding GME provision will fall to the Council.

Capital Costs

- 3.11 The future of the Gaelic Schools Capital Fund will also be dependent on the results of the Scottish Government's spending review. Therefore, until

December there is likely to be no announcement as to whether this funding will be extended beyond 2010/11. The Scottish Government have advised that if CEC are to take advantage of the £1.35m currently available an application should be made by the end of the calendar year.

Options Development

3.12 The following section outlines the steps that have been taken to further develop the available options for the development of additional places for GME.

3.13 At its meeting of 15 June 2010, the Education, Children and Families committee approved the further development of the options outlined in section 3.4 of this report. In developing the options, the Children and Families department have taken cognisance of correspondence received from parents, and the Gaelic community and have met with representatives of the parent committee of Tollcross GME unit, Comann nam Pàrant. The parent committee strongly favour the dedicated school option and have submitted a document outlining their views on the options presented to Committee on 15 June 2010 which officers subsequently discussed with them at a meeting on 27 July 2010. The full document is available for inspection in the members lounge, however in summary it raises the following issues/concerns:

- Comann nam Pàrant feel that Tollcross GME unit offers an excellent and exceptional educational experience for pupils.
- Comann nam Pàrant feel that a dedicated school:
 - is a proven model for increasing fluency and for normalising the use of Gaelic.
 - would result in better attainment, allow Edinburgh to meet Government targets for GME and would be a show-case for Edinburgh.
 - is a model of GME provision that has been shown to secure rapid growth.
 - represents better value for money than the two unit option as it makes better use of school resources due to high uptake.
- Comann nam Pàrant feel that a two unit option is unworkable because:
 - there is a lack of opportunity for immersion offered by Leith Walk Primary so that educationally it would struggle to emulate the success of the established Tollcross unit.
 - Leith Walk Primary does not have an established, large supportive GME community such as that at Tollcross.
 - the lack of enthusiasm among Gaelic parents and the lack of an established Gaelic community at Leith Walk means that uptake at Leith Walk is likely to be low.

3.14 The outcome of the discussions, consideration of many of the arguments presented in Comann nam Pàrant's paper and the further investigative work conducted since 15 June 2010 has been to consider a further option that would deliver expanded GME accommodation. This responds to the cultural and practical implications for the development of the Gaelic language in Edinburgh

whilst recognising the very difficult financial position in which CEC is operating. It would see the growth of the GME unit in its current location at Tollcross Primary School.

- 3.15 In light of revisions to the options presented in June and the addition of a further option, it is proposed that the Council engage in further discussion with Comann nam Pàrant and other key stakeholders.

Revised Options

OPTION (A): Open a Dedicated GME Primary School

- 3.16 Under this option primary level GME would cease to be offered at Tollcross Primary School. Pupils from the Gaelic Medium unit at Tollcross would be offered a place in a dedicated GME Primary School based in the former Bonnington Primary School premises. Bonnington Primary has been identified as the only central surplus property suitable as a functioning primary school. Other surplus buildings are located on the periphery of the City, and their anticipated capital receipts are required to offset the costs of investment in receiving schools following the recent school closures programme.
- 3.17 The Gaelic Medium unit at Tollcross currently occupies 7 classes and an expected roll of 158 pupils; Bonnington has a capacity of 415 (14 classes). Therefore, with a projected roll of 207 by August 2012 the initial occupancy rate of a dedicated Gaelic Primary school would be approximately 50%. Projections suggest that uptake of GME will rise sharply with the occupancy rate projected to be greater than 85% by 2017. However, should the anticipated growth in numbers not be forthcoming, this dedicated school would be significantly under occupied, which is a major risk associated with a dedicated facility of this size.
- 3.18 The Bonnington accommodation also includes a separate nursery capable of supporting 40 morning and 40 afternoon places with a minor upgrade. If the Gaelic nursery were to move to Bonnington, there would be an opportunity to use the vacant nursery facilities at Tollcross Primary to provide mainstream nursery places to supplement the number of places in the James Gillespie's/Bruntsfield area.
- 3.19 It is estimated that the capital cost of the works required to return the Bonnington Primary School building to a condition suitable for use as a school would be around £600,000 for essential work. However, it should be noted that the school building is currently subject to repeated vandalism attacks, despite security being in place, that is likely to see the further deterioration of the building and, as a consequence, an increase in these estimated costs.
- 3.20 The projected pupil numbers that are the driver behind the need for these options are produced on the basis of known elements – a highly successful and well regarded city centre nursery and primary GME unit linked to an equally well regarded secondary GME unit. How development of any part of this provision, either now or in the future, might affect demand cannot easily be quantified. Therefore, there remains a risk that the projected levels of demand may not arise. In this respect the dedicated school option represents the greatest risk to the Council as once it is established, there is no method of expanding or contracting supply to meet levels of demand.

- 3.21 Equally uncertain is the future of the Specific Grant from the Scottish Government that would be required to support a dedicated school on an annual basis. Discussions with the Scottish Government suggest that, assuming the nationally available fund for Specific Grants remains at its current level following its spending review; it is highly unlikely that City of Edinburgh's allocation would significantly increase to fund the full value of the anticipated revenue costs represented by the options available. To put the level of Specific Grant available into context, at present CEC operates a primary unit (roll 158) and a secondary unit and will receive £250,000 in 2010/11 (excluding a 'one-off' supplement this year of £40,000). Glasgow City Council, who operate two GME nurseries and an all-through dedicated GME school incorporating nursery, primary (with a roll of approximately 300) and secondary education received £510,000 in 2010/11. Even if CEC were to receive Glasgow's level of funding under the dedicated school option, an annually recurring net cost of circa £800,000 would still be incurred by the Council. However, until the results of the Scottish Government's spending review are known, a reduction in the level of Specific Grant received by CEC is also a possibility and remains a significant risk.
- 3.22 Should the Gaelic Medium Unit be relocated to a dedicated facility in the former Bonnington Primary School, the occupancy rate of the remaining English Medium school at Tollcross would be approximately 45%. Catchment populations are rising in this area of the City and it is expected that all the schools in this area, including Tollcross, will be required to cater for their catchment populations. The immediate issue of under occupancy that would result from GME moving to a dedicated facility may be addressed by identifying other users or an expansion of community use.
- 3.23 Under Option (A), a full statutory consultation under the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 would be required. It is recommended that should this option be pursued, it should only be progressed when more accurate information on the availability of the Specific Grant is available, at the end of the calendar year. This would mean a consultation could start no earlier than January 2011. With the new procedures introduced by the Act, a report recommending a final decision would not be possible until mid May 2011 at the earliest. This timescale would be too late to apply for the 2010/11 capital funding from the Scottish Government, and would be contingent upon the assumption that future capital grants would be available.

Option (A): Dedicated School	
Arguments For	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated schools are widely regarded as the most successful educational model for development of minority languages; increasing fluency through greater language immersion; offering greater opportunity for development of the cognitive benefits associated with bilingualism. • A dedicated school is the favoured option of Comann nam Pàrant and the 	

Gaelic community in Edinburgh.

- All GME primary and nursery facilities would be located on one site – no catchment areas would be necessary, allowing siblings to be on one site.
- Projections suggest that the school would be operating at 85% occupancy by 2017.
- It offers the opportunity to provide up to 14 classes for GME.
- It offers the opportunity to identify other users for Tollcross building, expand community provision and/or provide mainstream nursery places to address city centre nursery waiting lists.

Arguments Against

- It isolates GME from 'mainstream' education and the broader spectrum of peer interaction.
- Once set up, the dedicated school offers no flexibility if the projected demand for places fails to materialise. This is a significant risk to this option.
- It means the discontinuation of a successful and highly regarded GME facility at Tollcross Primary school.
- It increases annually recurring revenue costs for Gaelic education to £1.1m by 2014/15 representing an increase in the required annual Council contribution to Gaelic education of £633,000 over current levels (assuming no increase or decrease in the level of Specific Grant received).
- It places an additional burden on the maintenance budget for schools.
- Estimated capital costs may be higher as a result of repeated vandalism of the Bonnington site.
- Uncertainty about the future of Specific Grant funding means that the level of available Government support for Gaelic Education in years to come is unknown. This is a significant risk.
- A bid for capital funding would fall in 2011/12 against a Scottish Government fund which is presently unquantified.
- Due to its location north and east of the city centre a dedicated school in Bonnington represents the highest transport costs.
- The accommodation associated with this option will not be deliverable until 2012/13, necessitating the formation of a temporary eighth class at Tollcross for 2011/12.

OPTION (B): Two Unit Option

- 3.24 This option would see a second GME unit being opened at Leith Walk Primary School. This second unit would be expected to grow in the same way that the Tollcross unit has since 1988, commencing with a single class offering GME at the P1 stage.

- 3.25 This option also requires a permanent accommodation solution for Tollcross, where the space currently occupied by the nursery would be used to address the shortfall in General Purpose space. The existing nursery would be relocated to a new standalone nursery facility in the grounds of the school. This would maintain the number of GME and English Medium classes currently available in Tollcross Primary school. The cost associated with the works required to relocate the nursery to a standalone facility and refurbish the existing nursery is estimated to be £515,000.
- 3.26 It is proposed that the allocation of places at either unit would be based on the introduction of two catchment areas for GME, with Leith Walk serving the eastern half of the City.
- 3.27 GME nursery provision under this option could be provided at both the Tollcross and the Leith Walk sites. The Leith Walk nursery accommodation could initially be provided in the main school building subject to adaptations estimated to be no more than £100,000. When demand for primary GME rises to an operating unit of four classes the nursery could be relocated to the current History of Education accommodation at Leith Walk. This would displace the History of Education to an alternative location and incur refurbishment costs estimated to be £150,000.
- 3.28 It is proposed that up to 40 morning and 40 afternoon places would be provided across the Tollcross and Leith Walk locations, with the level of provision in each location adjusted to reflect GME catchment demand.
- 3.29 It is recognised that a second primary GME unit would require time to emulate the practices possible in Tollcross resulting from its critical mass of population and established reputation for GME. This is an inherent risk to the two unit strategy.
- 3.30 Option B would require statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As with Option (A), given the uncertainty regarding the Specific Grant level, it is recommended that any consultation on this option would be undertaken in 2011.

Option (B): Two Units	
Arguments For	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates opportunities to promote and develop the Gaelic language within a new area of the city and a new community. • Provides opportunities for joint-working and collaboration between Tollcross Primary School and Leith Walk Primary School. 	

- Maintains Gaelic Education at the highly successful Tollcross GME unit.
- Provides a new, modern nursery facility at Tollcross Primary.
- Two units offer greater flexibility in responding to fluctuations in demand.
- Accommodation available at Leith Walk offers flexibility in terms of its configuration.
- It increases the capacity for primary (up to 13 classes in total) and nursery GME across the city.
- It makes efficient use of available spare capacity in the school estate.
- It reduces travelling distances for GME pupils on the east side of the city.
- Leith Walk Primary is fairly centrally located.
- It limits revenue costs by using existing management and staff structures at Leith Walk Primary.

Arguments Against

- At the outset the intake of a single GME P1 intake at Leith Walk would not allow interaction with Gaelic speaking peers.
 - The presence of only one or two Gaelic teachers and a small number of pupils in the first years of a second unit would not offer the educational experience that Tollcross GME currently offers.
 - Immersion in the Gaelic language, which is important in the development of bilingualism, is difficult to achieve in a predominantly English speaking school.
 - In its first years there would be a lack of opportunity for Gaelic staff at Leith Walk to share resources, and contribute to developing GME.
 - Siblings could potentially be split across the two units, particularly in initial years.
 - It increases annually recurring revenue costs for Gaelic education to £872,000 by 2014/15 representing an increase in the required annual Council contribution to Gaelic education of £431,000 over current levels (assuming no increase or decrease in the level of Specific Grant received).
 - Uncertainty about the future of Specific Grant funding means that the level of available Government support for Gaelic Education in years to come is unknown. This is a significant risk.
 - Should GME rise to 6 classes at Leith Walk, along with accommodating a nursery, flexibility to cope with increased demand from the English stream would be removed for the longer term (i.e. 5+ years).
 - Additional capital costs estimated to be £150,000 associated with relocation of History of Education facility and refurbishment of modular unit for nursery use likely to be incurred if/when the GME roll at Leith Walk exceeded 4 classes.
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- The availability of Scottish Government Funding for additional capital costs, such as the refurbishment of the modular unit if/when it is required, is uncertain.
 - The accommodation associated with this option will not be deliverable until 2012/13, necessitating the formation of a temporary eighth class at Tollcross for 2011/12.

- 3.31 This option has emerged as a result of the continuing difficulties of identifying funding for the dedicated school, and the parental desire to see GME provided in a single central location, building upon the strengths of an established Gaelic community. This option proposes that the success and popularity of GME achieved at Tollcross be capitalised on by physically expanding the capacity of the Tollcross Primary School building. Under this option an application would be made to the Scottish Government for an allocation from the Gaelic Schools Capital Fund to fund the expansion of the available class space at Tollcross Primary School through capital works.
- 3.32 There are a number of restrictions that would apply to the development of the Tollcross primary school building. Firstly, the building is listed and the Planning Division are likely to object to any proposed development on the building's main facade on the south side. Secondly, the proximity of the existing buildings to the west and the position of the school itself is such that the Planning Division would be likely to object to a multi-storey development in this area on the grounds that it would restrict natural daylight to the existing buildings and/or to the extension.
- 3.33 Accordingly, the most suitable area for development is considered to be the space on the north side of the school around the lift and main entrance. This is not a large area and an extension would be limited to no more than 4 class spaces, however, it may also offer the opportunity to address existing security issues by creating a new main entrance to the school separate from the one it currently shares with the Community Centre. The estimated cost would be £1m.
- 3.34 In addition to building an extension, the existing nursery would be reprovided in a new standalone facility built in the grounds of Tollcross Primary to the west of the main building, immediately south of the parking area. This would provide an additional 2 class spaces in the main building and, as the new nursery could be built with a 40/40 capacity, would create an additional 20 Gaelic nursery places. The cost of is estimated to be £650,000 for the new nursery plus £15,000 for the refurbishment of the existing nursery space for class use. These costs are based on similar recent projects to provide a standalone nursery at Clermiston.
- 3.35 Tollcross currently accommodates 6 English stream and 7 GME classes plus 1 GP space shared between both streams. An eleven class school should have three general purpose spaces to support its organisation, currently the school only has one space. The issue of sufficient general purpose space would require to be addressed through extending the school. The six additional class spaces provided by building an extension and a new nursery facility would maintain an English stream in 6 classes plus 1 GP space and provide GME with 10 classes and 3 GP spaces.

- 3.36 This level of provision would address the projected GME roll until 2014/15 when projections suggest that an eleventh class would be required for GME. Should this level of demand materialise, a compromise on one GP space would be required to provide the eleventh class. Expansion beyond 2014/15 on the Tollcross site may be achieved by relocation of the community facilities currently accommodated within the Tollcross building. It is estimated that £400,000 would be required to refurbish the Community Centre space for class use. Further capital costs and revenue costs associated with this strategy would be dependent on the alternative accommodation options for the Community Centre available at that time.
- 3.37 The full capital cost of re-providing nursery facilities in a new facility and building a four class extension is estimated to be £1.66m. However, the Scottish Government's Gaelic Schools Capital Fund is only £1.35m for 2010/11. For this reason two separate applications for funding would be required. The first would be made in November 2010 for the maximum £1.35m available. A second application for the remaining £310,000 would be made in April 2011. This would see the completion of the nursery and the refurbishment of the two class spaces by August 2012. Construction of the 4 class extension would be completed by August 2013. It should be noted that this second application is a risk as the availability of the Gaelic Schools Capital Fund is currently uncertain in light of the Scottish Government's spending review which is not due to conclude until November/December 2010.
- 3.38 It is estimated that design, planning and construction of the 4 class extension is likely to take 22-24 months. The organisation of the phasing and site management of construction would be determined in discussions with the appointed contractor and the school.
- 3.39 Option (C) requires no statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

Option (C): Extend Tollcross	
Arguments For	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It builds on the achievements, strengths and high standard of education offered by the GME unit at Tollcross Primary as reported by HMIE on 24 August 2010 in their inspection report. • It provides language immersion within a school that has already established a strong reputation for the delivery of Gaelic. • It builds on established staffing and resourcing structures and arrangements at Tollcross Primary. • It maintains and develops the strong relationships between staff, parents, the community centre and the wider Gaelic and Tollcross communities. • It expands primary and nursery GME capacity in the city. • It provides a new, modern nursery facility at Tollcross Primary. • It potentially addresses security issues at Tollcross by creating a dedicated entrance for the school. • The timelines and processes associated with statutory consultation are not required. • It allows a phased expansion of GME, responding to demand, negating some of the risks associated with realisation of projected growth. 	

Arguments Against

- It reduces the available outside space at Tollcross Primary.
- It initially offers 10 classes for GME which is less than other options. However, should it be required, an eleventh class could be created by compromising on 1 GP space with further expansion up to 14 classes possible by the relocation of the community centre at an estimated additional capital cost of £400,000.
- It requires applications to the Scottish Government for capital funding across two years (2010/11 and 2011/12) without certainty that funding will be available in 2011/12 or that an application for the full £1.35m available in 2010/11 will be successful. This is a significant risk to this option.
- It increases annually recurring revenue costs for Gaelic education to £746,000 by 2014/15 representing an increase in the required annual Council contribution to Gaelic education of £305,000 over current levels (assuming no increase or decrease in the level of Specific Grant received).
- Uncertainty about the future of Specific Grant funding means that the level of available Government support for Gaelic Education in years to come is unknown. This is a significant risk.
- The accommodation associated with this option will not be deliverable until 2012/13, necessitating the formation of a temporary eighth class at Tollcross for 2011/12.

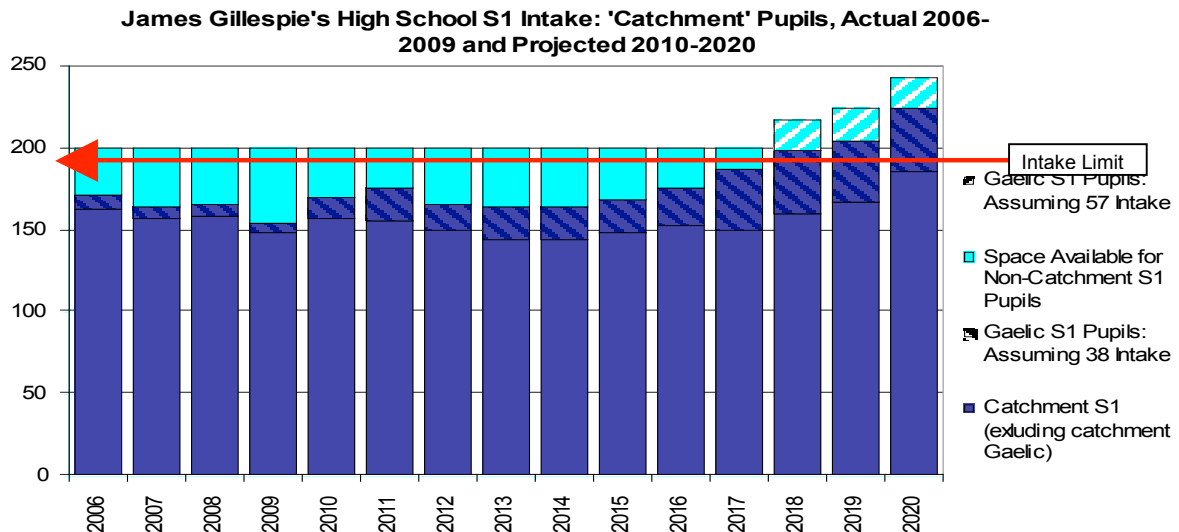
Secondary GME

- 3.40 Currently, pupils attending the GME unit at Tollcross Primary School automatically have the right under Council placement guidelines to attend James Gillespie's High School regardless of their actual secondary school catchment. The historic pattern of continuation from Tollcross Primary's GME unit would suggest that in most cases this right is being exercised and is in line with the City of Edinburgh's Draft Gaelic Language Plan target for a transfer rate to secondary of 95% or more annually.
- 3.41 In 2010/11 there are 45 pupils studying the Gaelic language at James Gillespie's High School with 11 of those pupils in the new S1 intake. If all pupils attending the GME unit at Tollcross Primary School in 2010/11 go on to attend James Gillespie's High school, assuming current S4-S5 and S5-S6 drop off rates, there will be 135 pupils in James Gillespie's from Tollcross Primary's GME unit by 2017/18.
- 3.42 James Gillespie's High School currently has a capacity of 1050 and a roll of 1129 (108% occupancy). There is a proposal to replace the James Gillespie's school building in academic year 2014/15. Partial funding for this new school has been secured through the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT), with the remainder of the funding falling to the Council. The SFT funding is only available on a like for like basis in terms of the size of the roll. To increase the size of the school to accommodate an expansion of Gaelic places would cost the Council in excess of £4m, in addition to the already significant funding contribution the Council is making to this project. This level of additional funding is not deliverable. Accordingly, the new James Gillespie's High School will be built with a capacity of 1150 to support its existing roll.

- 3.43 Potentially, many of the 135 pupils likely to be attending James Gillespie's High school from Tollcross Primary's GME unit by 2017/18. However, in terms of occupancy, pupils originating from Tollcross GME, the majority of whom are non-catchment, would occupy approximately 12% of James Gillespie's available capacity.
- 3.44 Between 2006 and 2009, James Gillespie's High School's overall catchment population numbers have remained reasonably consistent at around 1050 pupils. This consistency in the James Gillespie's catchment population is counter to the overall trend in Edinburgh's secondary age population which continues to fall, and is counter to the GRO's 2006 and 2008 based population projections that predicted a continuing fall in the number of 12-18 year olds in Edinburgh until 2017. From 2017 to 2025 the GRO projects a continuous rise in the number of 12-18 year olds in Edinburgh reflecting the recent trend apparent in rising P1 intakes. The effect of catering for its geographic catchment and rapidly increasing demand from Tollcross Primary's GME unit is likely to have its most significant impact on James Gillespie's High School's S1 Intakes.
- 3.45 If the Education, Children and Families Committee decide to expand GME primary provision, the expectation should be that GME P1 intakes would eventually rise to match the available capacity. This would mean future P1 intakes of around 40 under option (B) – the expansion of Tollcross Primary school – and up to 60 under option (A) – a dedicated school. Accordingly, allowing for the 95% continuation from primary to secondary currently targeted and achieved by the City of Edinburgh's Draft Gaelic Language Plan, the expectation should be that the number of pupils moving from Tollcross GME units P7 class into S1 at James Gillespie's High School would be approximately 38 to 57 pupils depending on the primary option chosen.

Figure 1 (below) projects the total number of James Gillespie's S1 catchment pupils in each S1 intake based on the GRO's 2008-based projections for the number of 12 year olds and the rolling forward of Gaelic Primary numbers with assumed P1 intakes of 38 and 57 from 2011.

Figure 1: James Gillespie's High School S1 Intake – Catchment Pupils



3.46 Figure 1 illustrates that there is presently capacity for Gaelic secondary education at James Gillespies High School. However, it also illustrates that within 10 years, James Gillespie’s will be unable to support an intake from its own catchment area and a regular Gaelic intake. It further illustrates that the greater the expansion at primary level, the more pressing the need to address secondary provision becomes.

3.47 In a scenario where a school is unlikely to be able to support its own catchment population a process of identifying priorities within that population is undertaken. In such a circumstance it is likely that non-catchment pupils from the Gaelic Medium Unit at Tollcross would be the lowest priority due to their distance from the school and would not receive a place. Addressing this situation and allowing Gaelic greater scope for future development would require a relocation of the GME unit out of James Gillespie’s High School into an alternative venue.

3.48 Given that due to funding restrictions James Gillespie’s High School cannot be built for more than 1150 pupils, it is inevitable that rising numbers in the Gaelic primary sector would require the relocation of Gaelic secondary education at a future date.

3.49 An evaluation of the occupancy levels of secondary schools across the city shows that schools with sufficient space to accommodate a specialist stream such as Gaelic are limited in number. It is estimated that to ensure there is sufficient space for any catchment growth and the anticipated growth in GME, around 300 places would require to be available. The majority of the schools with spare capacity are located on the periphery of the City – Castlebrae, Forrester and WHEC – and have been discounted. Broughton High School has spare places, but having recently opened in a new building and offering specialist provision for music, drama and football, it is anticipated that roll will grow naturally at this school. The remaining school is Tynecastle High School.

3.50 Tynecastle High School is centrally located and opened in a new PPP building in January 2010. It currently has a capacity of 900 and a roll of 563. A small

S1 catchment population and a low capture rate mean that accommodating the additional Gaelic intake is possible with further room for expansion if necessary.

- 3.51 Should changes to the secondary sector be effected, pupils in James Gillespie's would continue to receive Gaelic language classes, pupils moving from Tollcross GME unit's P7 into secondary school would be offered places at a new Gaelic unit in Tynecastle High School.
- 3.52 At the appropriate time this option would be subject to the statutory consultation requirements set out under the 2010 Act.

4 Financial Implications

Projected Capital Costs

- 4.1 The table below summarises the estimated capital costs associated with each of the options:

Table 1: Estimated Capital Works Required

	Description of Capital Works Required	Estimated Cost (£'000)
OPTION A – Dedicated School		
Option A – Open a Dedicated GME Primary School	Essential works to restore former Bonnington Primary to condition required for school use.	600
Option A Total Capital Cost		600
OPTION B – Two Units		
Option B – Two Unit Option	Reprovide existing nursery in new standalone facility with up to a 30/30 capacity.	500
	Refurbish existing nursery rooms for class use.	15
	Adapt Leith Walk Primary building to provide up to a 20:20 nursery	100
Option B Total Capital Cost		615
OPTION C – Extend Tollcross		
Option C – Extend Tollcross Primary School	Reprovide existing nursery in new standalone facility with a 40/40 capacity.	650
	Refurbish existing nursery rooms for class use.	15
	Build 4 Class extension to Tollcross Primary.	1,000
Option C Total Capital Cost		1,665

- 4.2 The Scottish Government have advised that no applications have yet been made by any authority for any part of the £1.35m available in the Scottish

Government's 2010/11 Gaelic Schools Capital Fund. However, an application to this fund for the £600,000 required to carry out the essential works necessary to implement Option (A) or the £615,000 required to implement Option (B) would not be recommended until 2011/12, following the conclusion of statutory public consultation on the options. As future years' Gaelic Schools Capital Fund is dependent on the Government spending review, there is a risk funding may not be available.

- 4.3 It should also be noted that an additional capital cost associated with Option (A) – the dedicated school – is the opportunity cost of losing a capital receipt from the sale of the surplus building (the former Bonnington Primary School) currently valued at approximately £1m. A further capital cost is also likely to be incurred under Option (B) – the two units – if, as projections suggest, the new unit grows beyond 4 classes. This additional £150,000 represents the cost of refurbishing the History of Education facility at Leith Walk for relocation of the nursery.
- 4.4 The £1.66m of capital required to deliver Option (C) would require that two separate bids are made, one in the 2010/11 financial year and one in the 2011/12 financial year. A bid for the funding for this option is likely to be viewed favourably as, like options (A) and (B) it offers development of the available capacity for primary GME across the city. An initial bid for the £1.35m would cover the costs of the new nursery and a significant element of the extension. Works would not be complete by the end of the financial year, however it is anticipated that the Council would be able to demonstrate its commitment to the project to avoid clawback of the funding. A bid for the remaining £310,000 would be required in financial year 2011/12 and would be subject to the same risk associated with Options (A) and (B) regarding the availability of the Gaelic Schools Capital Fund in future years.
- 4.5 Should capital funding for the chosen option not be forthcoming, the additional revenue costs of supporting capital borrowing through the prudential scheme are estimated to be as follows:

	1 st Year Payment	Following 20 Years
Option (A)	£17,000	£51,000
Option (B)	£17,000	£51,000
Option (C) ¹	£46,000	£139,828

¹ Assumes that bids in both 2010/11 and 2011/12 are unsuccessful. If an initial bid of £1.35m were to be successful, the cost of capital borrowing for the remaining £310,000 would be £8,611 in the first year and then £26,112 each year for 20 years thereafter.

Projected Revenue Costs

- 4.6 There has some debate about how the cost of Gaelic provision should be quantified, with the Gaelic community looking at how the cost per pupil at Tollcross compares with the City wide average. The Department, however, considers its budget in terms of total number of teachers and total number of establishments. The costs below are based on an increase in the number of teachers being required in the City in order to offer extended primary GME provision. Should a dedicated school be pursued, this will increase the number of primary school establishments in the City from 87 to 88. This will inevitably lead to an increase in total costs for the City. The extent of that increase is set out in the tables below.
- 4.7 Table 2 (below) shows the projected revenue costs for options (A), (B) and (C) from 2012/13 to 2014/15. None of these options are able to deliver additional accommodation for 2011/12 and would rely on an eighth class being formed temporarily at Tollcross, at an anticipated additional revenue cost of £53,000 for staffing.
- 4.8 Table 2 illustrates a rise in primary costs (excluding transport) from the 2010/11 level of £464,000 per annum to a maximum of £957,000 under Option (A). The significant difference in annual revenue costs between Option (A) and Options (B) and (C) is principally due to the requirement under Option (A) for additional non-teaching staff such as a Head Teacher, a Business Manager, admin staff, dining room staff and janitorial staff, and building running costs.

Table 2: Estimated Annual GME Primary Revenue Costs by 2012/13 to 2014/15

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Option (A) – Open a Dedicated GME Primary School			
Projected Total Gaelic Primary Roll	207	236	269
Projected Dedicated School Classes	9	10	11
Estimated Staffing Cost of Dedicated School (£'000)	754	813	875
Estimated Premises Cost of Dedicated School (£'000)	81	81	82
Total Estimated Primary and Nursery GME Cost (£'000)	835	894	957
Estimated 2010/11 Transport Cost (£'000)	100	100	100
Estimated Additional Transport Costs (£'000) ¹	60	80	100
Total Estimated GME Nursery and Primary Revenue Cost (£'000)	995	1074	1157
Total Estimated Additional Revenue Cost over estimated Revenue Cost for 2010/11	431	510	593

Option (B) - Two Unit Option			
Projected Total Gaelic Primary Roll	207	236	269
Projected Total GME Classes	9	10	11
Estimated Tollcross Cost (£'000)	464	464	464
Estimated Leith Walk Cost (£'000)	132	186	291
Estimated Premises Cost (£'000)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Estimated Primary and Nursery GME Cost (£'000)	596	650	755
Estimated 2010/11 Transport Cost (£'000)	100	100	100
Estimated Additional Transport Costs (£'000) ¹	60	80	100
Total Estimated GME Primary Twin Unit Cost (£'000)	756	830	955
Total Estimated Additional Revenue Cost over estimated Revenue Cost for 2010/11	192	266	391
Option (C) - Extend Tollcross Primary School			
Projected Total Gaelic Primary Roll	207	236	269
Projected Total GME Classes	9	10	11 ²
Estimated 2010/11 Tollcross Primary and Nursery Staff Costs (£'000)	464	464	464
Estimated Additional Staff Costs (£'000)	108	136	205
Estimated Premises Cost (£'000)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total GME Provision Cost (£'000)	572	600	669
Estimated 2010/11 Transport Cost (£'000)	100	100	100
Estimated Additional Transport Costs (£'000) ¹	20	40	60
Total Estimated GME Nursery and Primary Revenue Cost (£'000)	692	740	829
Total Estimated Additional Revenue Cost over estimated Revenue Cost for 2010/11	128	176	265

* All Options could not be implemented by 2011/12 requiring investigation of means of temporarily accommodating an eighth class

¹ Estimated based on existing GME pupil locations, estimated number of routes and vehicles required and the average annual cost per route.

² Assumes the use of an existing GP space as an eleventh class.

- 4.9 Bonnington's location to the north and east of the city centre means that there are more pupils over two miles from the school than would be the case at Tollcross which is centrally located. Thus transport costs for the dedicated school are likely to be higher than remaining at Tollcross. The two unit option is expected to increase transport costs by virtue of travelling to two locations. For these differing reasons, options A and B are expected to have similar requirements for the number of vehicles and thus similar transport costs.
- 4.10 Assuming that secondary sector and additional GME staffing costs remain constant; and assuming that the Specific Grant received from the Scottish Government remained £250,000 per annum; the Council's contribution to GME would increase from an estimated £441,000 in 2010/11 up to £1.1m in 2014/15 depending on which option is chosen. The following table indicates the estimated Council annual contribution by 2014/15 if these assumptions are applied to each option:

Table 3: Council Annual Contribution to GME – 2010/11 and Projected 2014/15

Nature of expenditure	2010/11	Option A 2014/15	Option B 2014/15	Option C 2014/15
GME Primary Unit costs	£464,000	£957,000	£755,000	£669,000
GME Transport costs for primary sector	£100,000	£200,000	£200,000	£160,000
GME Secondary Unit costs	£78,000	£78,000	£78,000	£78,000
Additional GME Staff ¹	£67,000	£67,000	£67,000	£67,000
Resources and Training	£22,000	£22,000	£22,000	£22,000
Total	£731,000	£1,324,000	£1,122,000	£996,000
- Specific Grant	- £290,000*	- £250,000	- £250,000	- £250,000
Estimated Council Contribution	£441,000	£1,074,000	£872,000	£746,000
Estimated increase in Council Contribution over 2010/11 levels	n/a	£633,000	£431,000	£305,000

* The Specific Grant of £250,000 has been supplemented with a one-off payment of £40,000 for 2010/11

1 Additional GME Staff includes a Gaelic Development Officer, a peripatetic teacher and Playgroup Staff

2 Assumes capital funding applications to Scottish Government would be successful

- 4.11 It should be noted that the table above assumes the continuation of the Specific Grant set at its current three year level. However, a risk to all options remains the possibility of the Specific Grant being reduced as a result of the Scottish Government's spending review; the results of which are unlikely to be known until November.
- 4.12 The creation of a dedicated school will increase the repairs and maintenance burden on the estate. The figures for Option (A) above include an average annual repairs spend prior to Bonnington Primary School closing, but this is fairly low. The maintenance burden for the building will increase after an initial period of low spend immediately following the upgrade to bring it back into use.

4.13 Revenue funding for the additional costs of provision outlined in Table 3 will have to be met from savings from elsewhere within the Children and Families Department. Assuming no reduction or increase in the Specific Grant and no extra costs for capital funding via prudential, by 2014/15 these additional annual revenue costs are anticipated to be:

Option A: £633,000 per annum

Option B: £431,000 per annum

Option C: £305,000 per annum

4.14 Should capital funding from the Scottish Government not be forthcoming the additional annual revenue costs of supporting capital borrowing through the prudential scheme would increase the 2014/15 figures as follows:

Option A: £684,000 in per annum

Option B: £482,000 per annum

Option C: £445,000 per annum (assumes application for funding in both 2010/11 and 2011/12 rejected) *or* £331,000 per annum (assumes application for £1.35m in 2010/11 successful but funding unavailable in 2011/12)

5 Environmental Impact

5.1 Due to the increased travelling distances for the majority of existing GME pupils under Option (A) and the two locations under Option (B), these options do not comply with the Councils Sustainable Travel Plan which seeks to reduce reliance on motorised forms of transport.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The significant investment made by the Council in developing the Gaelic language is evident in the continuing success and growth of the GME unit at Tollcross Primary School. However the Children and Families Department's commitment to developing the Gaelic language must be considered in the context of the current financial climate. An increasing investment in GME should not only offer the high standard of educational environment that Tollcross's GME unit currently offers, but must also offer value for money for the City of Edinburgh.

6.2 The discussions with the Scottish Government have highlighted that it is highly unlikely that the Council would receive more than a partial additional contribution from the Scottish Government towards the additional revenue costs associated with each option.

6.3 The complexities around each of the options presented in this paper require that further dialogue be undertaken with parents, schools and other stakeholders. Accordingly, it is proposed that a paper be returned to Committee in November following these discussions. The timescales associated with any option mean that any reconfiguration of provision would not be ready until August 2012. The 2010/11 GME P1 intake would consequently have to be capped to around 17 pupils, or temporary options explored to expand provision through the use of part of the community centre. Options for this temporary measure will also be considered further in the report to Committee in November.

6.4 With regard to the secondary sector, a new location for Gaelic provision must be considered if the numbers coming from the rising roll in the primary sector are to be accommodated. It has been established that Tynecastle High School offers the most appropriate opportunity to provide this. It is proposed to conduct statutory consultation on this matter at a later date.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the uncertain financial position that provides the context in which options for the development of Gaelic Medium Education are presented.
- b) Note the expected need to undertake statutory consultation at a later date on the location of secondary school GME provision, the timescales for which will be set out in the report back to Committee in November, and the need to consult on the primary school options as appropriate.
- c) Note the Children and Families Department's intention to return a report to Committee in November following further dialogue with schools, parents and other stakeholders.



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Appendices	None
Contact/Email	lindsay.glasgow@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	3, 4 and 5
Background Papers	Options for Development of Gaelic Medium Education – Education, Children and Families Committee 15 June 2010