School Catchment Area Review

Report by Donald MacKay, Director, Education and Communities

1 Purpose of Report
This report seeks approval from Members to progress to statutory consultation those changes to school catchment areas for which there was general support in the responses to the preliminary consultation and to do further work on the other options which did not find general support.

2 Report Summary
The report to the Seminar of Council on 26 May 2009 set the context for the requirement to revise a number of Midlothian’s school catchments in order to support the implementation of the Local Plans, utilising existing school capacity wherever possible and minimizing the requirement to build additional school capacity.

This was followed by a second seminar on 10 June 2009 at which it was suggested by Members that a preliminary public consultation be undertaken on a range of options on rationalisation of school catchment areas to allow Members to gauge public opinion on what should be included as final options to be put forward for formal community consultation.

The initial consultation was carried out over the period from October to December. Five leaflets were distributed to the communities, one outlining the options for the school catchments in each of the areas of Dalkeith, Newbattle, Lasswade and Penicuik and the fifth outlining the options for the school catchments of the Roman Catholic schools.

The report to the Seminar of Council on 2 March 2010 informed Members of the outcomes of that preliminary community consultation. Members at that seminar requested that we brief Parent Councils and report to the next meeting of Council on the proposals to be progressed to formal consultation. A special meeting of Parents Councils has been arranged for the evening of Monday 22 March 2010.

3 Report Detail

3.1 Dalkeith Area
A large majority of respondents to the preliminary consultation favoured the proposal affecting the catchment areas of King’s Park and Woodburn Primary Schools which is to transfer the St David’s Primary School housing site adjacent to Kippielaw, Waterfall Walk and Bruce Gardens and the area bounded by James Lean Avenue, Woodburn Drive, Spalding Crescent and Woodburn Road from the catchment of King’s Park to that of Woodburn Primary School. This will free up
capacity at King's Park Primary School so that it can accommodate pupils arising from planned new housing and will make use of the additional capacity which has been built at the recently completed replacement Woodburn Primary School.

The proposal to Members is to progress this to statutory consultation.

The option for Dalkeith High School which was preferred by the respondents to the preliminary consultation was to provide a new secondary school for Danderhall and Shawfair, rather than extending Dalkeith High School or transferring Danderhall to the catchment of Lasswade High School.

The proposal to Members is for the officers to do further work on the options for Dalkeith High School, exploring in more detail the implications of the various alternatives.

3.2 Newbattle Area

Opinion was split in the responses from the preliminary consultation on the options outlined for changes to the catchment areas of Newtongrange and Mayfield Primary Schools.

The proposal to Members is for the officers to do further work to obtain a better understanding of the underlying issues, to ascertain definitively the desirability and potential for extending Newtongrange Primary School and to ensure that the views of the existing residents of the areas most affected by the proposals have been taken into account.

A majority of respondents to the preliminary consultation favoured the proposed changes to the catchment areas of Gorebridge and Stobhill Primary Schools which is to extend the catchment boundary of Stobhill to include houses in the area bounded by Burnside Road, Gore Avenue, Hunter Square and Hunterfield Road (the area from which we receive most placing requests for Stobhill Primary School).

The proposal to Members is to progress this to statutory consultation.

Opinion was split in the responses from the preliminary consultation on the option to include the planned Redheugh/Prestonholm community in the catchment of Newbattle High School or that of Lasswade High School.

The proposal to Members is that officers look further into these options in the context of the review of optimum size of secondary school and the size of school currently being planned for the replacement of Lasswade High School.

3.3 Lasswade Area

A majority of respondents to the preliminary consultation favoured the proposed changes to the catchment areas of Bonnyrigg, Hopefield, Hawthornden and Lasswade Primary Schools. These changes will make better use of the existing capacities of the schools in the area so
that the additional school capacity specified in the S.75 agreement for the Hopefield Farm development will be sufficient to accommodate the projected number of pupils.

The proposal to Members is to progress these to statutory consultation.

Opinion was split in the responses from the preliminary consultation on the options outlined for Loanhead and Paradykes Primary Schools.

The proposal to Members is that officers look further at the level of housing development which will come forward and the capacity of the two Loanhead primary schools to accommodate the revised projected number of pupils.

The option for Lasswade High School which was preferred by the respondents to the preliminary consultation was for Loanhead and Paradykes Primary Schools to become feeder primary schools to Beeslack High School. Opinion was split on Lasswade High School becoming the catchment secondary school for pupils from the planned new community at Redheugh/Prestonholm. Respondents from the Lasswade area agreed with respondents from the Dalkeith area that Lasswade High School should not be the catchment school for Danderhall.

The proposal to Members is that officers do further work on the proposals taking account of these responses, the likely effect on Beeslack High School, the review of optimum size of secondary school and the size of school currently being planned for the replacement of Lasswade High School.

3.4 Penicuik Area

A majority of respondents to the preliminary consultation wished to leave the catchment of Glencorse Primary School unchanged. The current number of pupils attending Glencorse is 30, 12 pupils from Glencorse catchment and 18 from other Penicuik schools' catchments, the projection for August 2010 is 24 pupils. There are currently 60 pupils from Glencorse attending Midlothian primary schools, 24 at Mauricewood, 12 at Glencorse, 10 at Cuiken, 8 at Sacred Heart, 4 at Strathesk and 2 at Roslin.

The proposal to Members is that officers do further work to ascertain the likelihood of housing development at Auchendinny in the foreseeable future which would provide a pupil population that would support a primary school for the village and develop proposals for Glencorse catchment in that context.

A majority of respondents were in favour of rezoning the Cuikenburn and Deanburn areas to the catchment of Cuiken Primary School, rezoning the residential area bounded by John Street, Carllops Road and Peebles Road and the rural area to the west of the A701 to Cornbank Primary School, and rezoning the rural area to the east of the A701, including Howgate, to Strathesk Primary School. There was also a majority of respondents against rezoning all the areas south of
Mauricewood Road to the catchment of Cuiken or Cornbank Primary Schools. Opinion was split, with no clear majority on whether to rezone the 400 new units in North West Penicuik to Cuiken or Cornbank Primary Schools.

The proposal to Members is that the officers look further at the possibility of zoning the new housing planned for Penicuik to the catchment of Cornbank Primary School, which has the most available capacity, and the consequent effects on the catchment areas of the other Penicuik primary schools.

A majority of respondents were in favour of nominating Penicuik as the high school for Strathesk Primary School. The option to operate a single high school for Beeslack and Penicuik High Schools on a split site was the most unpopular option with a majority of responses against. Respondents in the Penicuik area were split on the other options given for the two secondary schools.

The proposal to Members is that officers do further work on the proposals taking account of these responses, the effect from rezoning areas of new housing to Cornbank Primary School and the effect if Loanhead and Paradykes become feeder primary schools to Beeslack High School.

3.5 Roman Catholic Schools

The preliminary consultation on Roman Catholic school catchments elicited responses which favoured no changes to the catchment areas of the Roman Catholic primary schools. This would leave the issue of under utilisation of capacity at four of the seven Roman Catholic primary schools unaddressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roman Catholic School</th>
<th>School Capacity</th>
<th>Pupil Census 2008</th>
<th>Pupil Census 2009</th>
<th>Pupil Projection 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Luke’s PS</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret’s</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary’s PS</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Matthew’s</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposal to Members is that officers do further work in the first instance with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church on the possibility of aligning parish boundaries with school catchment areas.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

Whilst there are no resource implications arising directly from this report, the options which have been consulted on have significantly different cost implications for the Council.

The changes to the school catchments which it is proposed to progress to statutory consultation at this stage will all result in better use being made of existing school capacity and minimize the requirement for capital investment in additional school space.
It is proposed to report back to members on the cost implications of the options for the other changes to school catchments, those that require further work, before these are put forward for formal community consultation.

4.2 Risk Implications

If catchment areas are not modified then some schools will require to be extended while there is spare capacity in others. This will have a significant cost implication for the Council and, in secondary schools, may have a detrimental effect on the scope of curriculum that can be offered to pupils. The proposals in this report seek to reduce these risks.

4.3 Policy Implications

Strategy
The proposal in this report supports the Council's Corporate Strategy for the promotion of excellence in our schools and lifelong learning.

Consultation
This report relates to the initial consultation that has been undertaken with the Community. Any changes to individual schools’ catchment areas will be subject to statutory consultation.

Equalities
The continued development of this proposal will include an overview of the equalities implications.

Sustainability
There is no sustainability implication arising directly from this report.

5 Recommendation
Council is requested to agree to:

a) commencing statutory consultation on changes to the catchment areas of the following primary schools: King’s Park Woodburn Gorebridge Stobhill Bonnyrigg Hopefield Hawthornden Lasswade

b) further work being undertaken on the other revisions to primary and secondary school catchments necessary to support the implementation of the Local Plans as outlined in the detail of this report.

10 March 2010

Report Contact: Sandra Banks, Resource Planning Manager, Education & Communities Division
sandra.banks@midlothian.gov.uk Tel No 0131 271 3146