

Notes from school review workshops

Currie Primary School: Workshop held on Wednesday 17 January 2018

The following notes are separated by discussion group and have been categorised by subject discussed. The discussion group notes were taken by different council officers and in some cases by group members. The representations below are as faithful to the original notes as possible. Accordingly, the written approach of the notes taken at each discussion group will vary. None of the notes taken are verbatim. We have not included comments which may identify an individual who is not a Council Officer.

Discussion Group One

Item	Discussion / Comments
Published Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity to provide a community hub / lifelong learning opportunities / new swimming pool.• Most children will use the buses moving westwards, better for congestion• Size of school could be a concern• Loss of high school from Currie will decimate community, can't just have housing in the area.

Summary of Published Proposals:	
Currie Primary School catchment would go to Balerno Community High instead of Currie Community High when South West Edinburgh High opens August 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils that are already in primary school should be guaranteed a place in the secondary school that applies at the time they started primary school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will resolve a lot of people’s concerns about all the proposed options. <p>For example, this would stop pupils already in primary school being split from their friends if they have to go to different secondary schools.</p>
Alternative Proposals	
Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as require.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps community together • Preserves local facilities; • The three high schools could work together more – become centres of excellence e.g. WHEC (technical focus), Balerno Community High School (sport focus) with pupils moving between sites. • Keeping Currie and Nether Currie together in the same secondary catchment is one of the main things that the community wants
Build a new school on the Muir Wood field site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult for WHEC pupils to get to Muir Wood. It is hard enough to get pupils to go to WHEC never mind a school that is much further away. • Loss of greenspace a big concern • Concern about increase in traffic travelling east along Lanark road. • The site is not better than rebuilding on Currie Community High School • An alternative site that is closer to Wester Hailes would be better for new south west school.

<p>Amalgamate Currie and Balerno Community High School in a new building on the existing Currie Community High School site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Big schools – class sizes too big, lesser relationship with pupils, not flexible to accommodate future growth.• Would like evidence about larger schools and why they could be better.• There would not be space for Woodlands School if a super school as built on the site• How will an amalgamation effect the teaching body?• Could sport or other facilities be retained at Balerno to reduce what is required at Currie site?• Traffic concerns from having such a large sprawling catchment area.
---	---

Discussion Group Two

Item	Discussion / Comments
<p>Published Proposals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agreed and acknowledged that the three high schools required to be refurbishment / built. • Recognise that there are good and bad points for both larger schools and smaller schools • All agreed that any changes that take place to catchments areas/new schools want to have sibling guarantee for both primary and secondary schools. • Currie Community High School is successful as it is.
<p>Alternative Proposals</p>	
<p>Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as require.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preferred option. • Geographically they are positioned well within the communities. Keep the three high schools and not reduce to two. • Less educational and travel disruption. • A new Currie Community High School could be built on the land while the existing school is occupied as the site is big enough. Move Balerno Community High School to existing Currie Community High School whilst refurbishing / extending Balerno Community High School. • The group think the community facilities they have are good.

Comments / Suggestions

- WHEC supports its community and can address specific needs very well that would be lost if amalgamated with another school / super school.
- WHEC is under capacity, children speak very highly and they have achieved high attainment levels.
- Recognised that WHEC is a much improved school.
- Keep the children supported and refurbish WHEC.
- Why do people from Wester Hailes choose to go to Currie Community High School?
- Why are the local community not sending their children there?
- The group would like more information on super schools.
- You should not build new schools that will be at capacity from day one!
- Pupils could become “lost” or anonymous within a larger/super school.

Discussion Group Three

Item	Discussion / Comments
<p>Published Proposals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group felt it was positive that they were invited to get involved and thanked us for listening to them. • Some frustration around reasons for proposals – why do we do it? Is it just financial?
<p>Summary of Published Proposals:</p>	
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combining the seventh/eighth best school with one of the worst – why is it the worst? • How do we prevent good results coming down if the schools amalgamate? • New school equals a new start – period of adjustment could have an impact.
<p>Cherry Tree area realigned with Dean Park Primary School and Balerno Community High School from August 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If catchment changes split families then that's unfair. People understandably thinking about impact on family • Cherry Tree area – quality of education won't be impacted as Currie and Balerno Community High schools both perform well, same thing • It's not about cutting catchments by streets, it's about cutting by communities

<p>Currie Primary School catchment would go to Balerno Community High instead of Currie Community High when South West Edinburgh High opens August 2022.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new South West High School – people already choose to send their children to Currie Community High School from Wester Hailes, if we built a new school would people even go? Or would its roll suffer? If you get it wrong then you might end up with an empty school (like WHEC).
<p>North of the Gogar Burn realigned with Ratho Primary School and Balerno Community High School from August 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratho makes sense to move to New West High.
Alternative Proposals	
<p>Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for retaining Currie Community High School (Currie HS) on its current site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community hub ○ Good level of education ○ At the moment, children travel to school against the flow of traffic, they can walk to school and this was a big reason for choosing school – the new options would mean the opposite ○ Bypass is a safety issue – safety is important ○ Like that the high school is in the middle of Currie – it is a community high school. Sense of community is incredibly important.
<p>Build a new school on the Muir Wood field site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's more central but still a new, bigger amalgamated school. • Location takes away issue of the bypass but not questions around the size of the site (is it too small), attainment etc • Catchment changes will stay the same, so same arguments against it apply.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to do something regarding the size of the primary school. • School size – what is the feedback? Are bigger schools bad/better? Super schools? • Muir Wood could potentially make Juniper Green and Currie feel closer. • If Muir Wood was one of the original options it might have relieved panic.
<p>Amalgamate Currie and Balerno Community High schools in a new building on the existing Currie Community High School site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currie site offers more space for development. • Does it make sense to draw everyone up to Balerno? • Are you able to lock Kirknewton into going to Balerno Community High School? West Lothian could change its plans etc and we could then be left with additional costs/capacity if they later decide to change their catchments etc and build new schools. • If you remove schools from Balerno then you're just left with Dean Park. • It was suggested that Juniper Green realigns to WHEC and wveryone else to new school (Currie / Balerno) • If you sold Balerno Community High School, how much would it raise? • If you sold Currie Community High School, how much would it raise? • Balerno Community High School is in better condition but what about pressures on commuting and this other information – could inform the decision. • Doesn't matter where the children are from – ethos, leadership, quality, and culture of the school are so much more important

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise different communities but we need to be careful about how we talk about children living in the different areas, education needs of children will be different • As a parent, your priority is thinking whether your child's education will be ok. Then their community, travel to school etc. • Wester Hailes are also saying proposals would take their community away. • Small roll limits education level and curriculum on offer – an increased roll equals more opportunities. • 15% of Wester Hailes children go to Currie Community High School already – they're therefore part of its success. • Currie and Balerno Community High schools on one site would mean catchment of 1800. If Ratho moves to West High School and Juniper Green aligns to WHEC then that would make roll 1400.
<p>Other Comments / Suggestions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions asked regarding the costs involved when considering options. • It was felt comparative details on refurbishment vs rebuilding were needed to help inform consideration. • Clarity on building conditions, space available for redevelopment etc would also help inform decisions. • What happens to the children during the refurb / rebuild process? • Currie Primary School has a very strong sense of community, we don't want this false divide (splitting catchments). This strong community spirit leads on to the secondary school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Really good transition, allows children to expand social groups / friends

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Importance of activities provided outside of the school environment (swimming etc) means that children will have already attended the High School in some capacity and won't be as scared / nervous when they move to bigger school● The High School is a Community high school. Lots of events are held, so kids from the whole catchment come for activities, meaning they know each other before they start at the school.● Children group together and walk to school. Parents have also attended the school – reason why they came back to the area, for the sense of community.● Parents know each other through evening classes etc too – see each other regularly and interact. If these events end up hosted elsewhere then this will be harder to achieve.● Was suggested that a new school could create a new community hub.● Currie is like a wee village. That's what I want for my child if high school goes then we'll need to look elsewhere.● Balerno is very much a community too.● Older neighbours also have a view – not just about the school but the wider community. Community is static, solid.● Regarding roll size, other schools in the city have larger rolls but we wanted a community high.● Community is created from the kids up.● Could those within WHEC be redistributed to other school's under-capacity and closer to their community?
--	--

Open Discussion

- Risk that building / refurbishing an old building just means adapting if (might prevent creative thinking in design).
- Currie Community High School currently has access issues – bottleneck, problems with right of way etc. Could a new entrance be built or pedestrianize this section (although noted there are three different ways to access)?
- Problems of WHEC being pushed on us.
- Wester Hailes – some people choose to come to Currie Primary School (so travel against the traffic etc for a better school).
- Could there be a joint primary and high school on the Currie Community High School site?
- How are community facilities in Currie and WHEC used at the moment? Where are the facts and figures? Is there enough resource in the new location for demand?
- If building a new school elsewhere, what would be provided on the old Currie Community High School site? How would you provide community facilities?
- So many new houses being built puts pressure on other services.
- Doctors are oversubscribed, facilities would be limited – if you remove the school the facilities on offer wouldn't be there.
- Understanding the infrastructure to support a new school / proposed changes would help thinking.
 - What does it mean for the area?
 - What will it bring to area?
- In 60 years, how will the community have changed?

Woodlands School

- Not even mentioned in the initial letter.
- Purpose built school and important for those with additional needs.
- Catchment is for the whole of Edinburgh.
- There were hopes to share this facility with Currie Community High School - allows children with additional support needs to go to a mainstream school but with extra support closely available.

Discussion Group Four

Item	Discussion / Comments
<p>Published Proposals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will all cause (and is causing) a lot of disruption and will have (and is having) an effect on the children. It will cause anxiety for children. Therefore, the sooner we can implement the better. • This process has the potential to divide communities, e.g. Wester Hailes and Currie through the use of social media. • If more housing is built on the current Currie Community High School land then there will be no facilities or infrastructure for the community left. • People made the decision to live where they live based on current catchment areas. • Do not want to mix the two different communities of Currie and Wester Hailes due to attainment levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do people from Wester Hailes choose to go to Currie Community High School? • Do not want to be a test. Currie Community High School has positive attainment rates, is a high performing school and it would be detrimental to change this. • Buses are already at capacity. • There is currently too much congestion – the proposed council option and option two would add to this. • Less travel / children can walk. There will be more travel if going with the other options. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Majority of children currently walk to school. ○ The other site options are too far too walk.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With proposed catchment changes, part of Currie will also need to travel to Balerno Community High School. This is a longer distance to walk (Uphill on way. Could be around 30 minutes). ● It would introduce risk for local businesses. There will likely be a drop in customers and the community want these businesses to stay as they are, e.g. bakers. ● The relationship with Woodlands School is important: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is good to have Currie Community High School and Woodlands School beside each other. ○ It would be mad to move Woodlands School. ● The sporting facilities are essential for Woodlands School. ●
Alternative Proposals	
Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This was everyone's preferred option at this table, by far. ● It would minimise the risk of staff leaving when compared to the other options and possible drop in morale. ● It would minimise disruption of education when compared to the other options. ● It would minimise any further disruption of travel – roads are bad as they are. ● Happy with the current community facilities. ● Currie Community High School currently has good sized grounds and the current land is a plus point.
Amalgamate Currie and Balerno Community High schools in a new	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The group thought this could be an option but still preferred option one. <p>The positives of this option included:</p>

<p>building on the existing Currie Community High School site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It might not affect the traffic too much as people would be traveling in the opposite direction compared to the proposed council option and option 2. • The school could be rebuilt on the existing Currie Community High School site which would mean less disruption. • There would be the benefit for Woodlands School not moving. We don't want to isolate the children here. Some children have autism. <p>The negatives included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be swapping the problem to Balerno. They might be in opposition to this. <p>Other discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will numbers work? • Community and catchment for this option – there was some debate around this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The majority of the table were ok with including Dean Park, Currie and Nether Currie primary schools only in this catchment area for this proposed option. ○ However, there was one person opposed to the exclusion of Juniper Green. • It would be important to keep the current attainment levels of Currie Community High School if merging with Balerno Community High School.
<p>Build a new school on the Muir Wood field site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group felt this was not a good option for the same reasons as the original council proposal. • Some other reasons for this were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disagree with taking away greenspace ○ Although it is a better site than the proposed council option it is still not the preferred option. However, there was debate over this.

<p>Other comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are good and bad points for both larger schools and smaller schools. • Super School – What do we mean by this? • Should we be investing money into Currie Community High School if it needs to be demolished? • Open to discussion of refurb/rebuild on existing Currie Community High School site. • Attainment levels – keep current attainment levels • To improve social and cultural issues in certain areas, educating adults as well as children is important. This can have a knock-on effect on children in schools. • Greenfield sites should not be built on. <p>Catchments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balerno, Ratho and Currie are all expanding rapidly and therefore all these current schools will be needed and filled in future.
<p>Suggestions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If retaining Currie Community High School on current site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ facilities could be improved even more so. ○ Currie Community High School could be made slightly bigger. ○ Currie Community High School needs repaired but everything else is ok. • If amalgamating Balerno and Currie Community High schools turn Balerno Community High School into a new Deanpark Primary School with improved facilities. • There should be consideration for special needs children to attend a local high school.

Discussion Group Five

Item	Discussion / Comments
<p>Published Proposals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One parent noted that under the published proposals they'd have children at three separate schools, which was undesirable as it would create problems logistically and reduce their opportunity to fully engage with each school if they had to spread their time across three different schools. • If parental engagement is linked to attainment then a sibling guarantee is required to ensure siblings go to the same school so parents can engage with one school, rather than splitting their time over two or more schools.
<p>Summary of Published Proposals:</p>	
<p>Pupils from the Cherry Tree area of Currie Primary School would go to Dean Park Primary and then to Balerno Community High from August 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would need a sibling guarantee. • Should not assume all parents in that area want to go to Dean Park Primary School.
<p>Alternative Proposals</p>	
<p>Build a new school on the Muir Wood field site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location good for Currie Community High School existing catchment area • Could incorporate Dean Park Primary School – linked trips along Lanark Road West

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could incorporate other schools, Clovenstone and Canal View primary schools? • Woodlands School would have to move with Currie Community High School • Site not as good as the existing school site, second best site • The whole group did not support development on the site, some concerned about loss of greenspace, traffic • What happens to existing Currie Community High School site? Would not want more housing developments. • Size of a new school; 1600 too big, how would that be future proofed? 1200 okay.
<p>Other comments</p>	<p>Existing School</p> <p>What works well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top four: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Location ○ Quality ○ Community ○ Local Facilities • Location, walking distance (20-30-minute walk to High School acceptable, need alternative to walking (bus, cycle if longer than 30 minutes) • Supports additional needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports and swimming clubs for children and adults (badminton, football, athletics) • Provides an easy transition from primary school • Supports FABB holiday club • Joint working between Woodlands and Currie schools • Good reputation • Community hub • Wide curricular choice • High degree of parental involvement because the school is in the community <p>What could be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of the changing rooms and pool generally • General investment required in the building: refurbish or rebuild • Could create more / better links with older members of the community • Administrative process to use rooms / facilities for community purposes is burdensome • Use of sports facilities could be more affordable
--	---