

## Notes from school review workshops

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### Juniper Green Primary School: Workshop held on Thursday 25 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
<b>Published Proposals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Although roads and traffic are not ideal at present it will not make them any worse. Traffic is moving against the flow it keeps roads and traffic.</li><li>• Lack of valid data for the context for change.</li><li>• Lack of planning ahead – South Queensferry is too small before it is even built and the problem is now spreading west to find solutions to that issue.</li><li>• The rising rolls data was challenged and the group felt it was inaccurate / challenged the validity of it.</li><li>• Giving a single projection, which is based on Local Development Plan.</li><li>• One group member advised there should be “confidence intervals” around the data and this is missing.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk around other new high schools being at capacity before they are built (Boroughmuir High School) or after opening (James Gillespie's High School).</li> <li>• The group had no confidence in the council's ability to predict figures with any accuracy.</li> <li>• Recognised that the current schools (Currie / Balerno and WHEC) all have strengths and the council should be building on these strengths.</li> <li>• Keen to include Woodlands School in this.</li> </ul>
<b>Summary of Published Proposals:</b>	
<p>Juniper Green along with Nether Currie, Canal View and Clovenstone Primary catchment areas would feed to the new South West Edinburgh School when it opens in August 2022.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that the transition of children has not been considered – it can take 20/30 years to get back to get organisations to settle down after major change.</li> <li>• The council are not getting this right.</li> </ul>
<p>The new South West Edinburgh High would be in Juniper Green's catchment area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was also a desire to keep the catchment area the same.</li> <li>• Discussion about Currie Muir end site. Parents strongly felt it was not appropriate. Road access was not conducive to safer routes to schools.</li> <li>• Longstone site – Crawford McGhie, Acting Head of Operational Services advised no one had commented on this site.</li> </ul>

Alternative Proposals	
<p>Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as require.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group unanimously agreed that they wanted the current Currie Community High School to remain.</li> <li>• They felt that it was not acceptable that this proposal was not included in the paper.</li> <li>• They felt that there had been a huge disruption.</li> <li>• Resource implications for the informal consultation but there was no substance to it.</li> <li>• Group agreed unanimously that their first choice is to rebuild Currie Community High School on its existing site.</li> <li>• This would ensure the continuity of teachers and friendships.</li> <li>• Keep four schools on the same site – extend WHEC - extend college partnerships</li> <li>• Important for communities to keep their own schools.</li> <li>• Needs to be built taking into account future roll projections based on accurate data.</li> <li>• Need to future-proof the school.</li> <li>• Question about when new school could be built on site.</li> <li>• Crawford McGhie advised it takes two and a half to three years to build a school, with two years being actual build time.</li> <li>• Again, all reiterated that rebuilding on site would be quickest and best option.</li> </ul>

Build a new school on the Muir Wood field site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group started by unanimously agreeing to building on Muir Wood site.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Open Discussion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Gardiner added to the discussion by advising of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Marchmont and this has skewed the numbers.</li> <li>• Also mentioned problem of future planning developments and whether planners actually follow through requests.</li> <li>• Crawford McGhie advised that John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills has advised that money for building new schools would be awarded to councils who are making brave decisions in planning new schools.</li> <li>• Recognition that there needs to be a “future proofing” of schools in terms of rising rolls.</li> <li>• Important to have a stability in teaching and learning</li> <li>• Recognised that the current schools (Currie/Balerno and WHEC) all have strengths and the council should be building on these strengths. Keen to include Woodlands School in this.</li> <li>• Council should build on these four schools and the sense of community each has.</li> <li>• Use quality indicators to identify what we know works well.</li> <li>• We should consider building 5 -18 campus.</li> <li>• Pupil equity funding discussed.</li> <li>• Use quality indicators in schools and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of schools.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government recently launched a loneliness and social inclusion document</li> <li>• There are multi-generational needs within the community.</li> <li>• Looking for a centre that will cover from birth to old age, both educationally and as a community hub. Include a bank?</li> <li>• Crawford McGhie advised that Scottish Government will want to see what we propose to enhance current provision.</li> <li>• Add in a community hub on site. Parents in Partnership has put forward proposal to rebuild on site.</li> <li>• Suggestion of a public swimming pool. There are a lot of activities taking place at present. We should take them all forward.</li> <li>• Crawford McGhie - there is no funding programme or criteria announced as yet.</li> </ul> <p><b>Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic.</li> <li>• Need to look at safer routes to schools.</li> <li>• Length of time this process is taking is very unsettling for our children.</li> <li>• Rebuilding on site would help some of these issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>Attainment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong feeling that there is no evidence in closing the attainment gap that merging schools will help this.</li> </ul>
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## Discussion Group Two

Item	Discussion / Comments
<p><b>Published Proposals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A potential for 400 plus additional houses near Balerno was cited as a major future pressure on the school portfolio.</li> <li>• The group accepted that action was needed and understood the demand would soon be an issue.</li> <li>• The group expressed concern at the possibility of removing a vital community hub (Currie Community High School) and felt that the missing facility would create a very damaging gap in the local area.</li> <li>• The south west's elderly population are growing rapidly and the demand for high quality community based assets will continue to increase.</li> <li>• The group did appreciate and understand the council's motivations and rationale but felt there was not a significant enough weight of evidence to justify the disruption the proposed changes would cause to their children and provide surety that future attainment was maintained at the current high levels.</li> <li>• Why does the proposal mean that everyone else has to change as a result of these new housing developments – is this fair?</li> </ul>

Summary of Published Proposals:	
The new South West Edinburgh High School would be in Juniper Green's catchment area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The WHEC was noted and acknowledged as being 'good quality' and had received 'Royal Acclaim'.</li> <li>• It was not understood why around 15% of their catchment area already go to Currie Community High School. Questions were raised around the socio-economic status of these kids/families.</li> <li>• Perhaps some deeper understanding of this would provide further understanding of the choices made.</li> </ul>
Alternative Proposals	
Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group were unanimous in expressing a preference for the Currie Community High School site to be either extended or completely rebuilt.</li> <li>• There is lots of aspirational, supportive work being carried out at Currie Community High School. This needs to be acknowledged and recognised and the group felt it was crucial to continue and maintain these standards.</li> </ul>
Amalgamate Currie and Balerno Community High schools in a new building on the existing Currie Community High School site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The idea of merging with Balerno Community High School appeared to be an option the group were vehemently against.</li> <li>• It was acknowledged that if Ratho feeds into a new school at Ratho Station then this would make Balerno Community High School no longer viable with much fewer pupils feeding in.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Comments/Suggestions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were many discussions about the pressure on rolls going forward but the group remained entirely unconvinced about the proposal on a merger.</li> <li>• When asked ‘what works well?’ the group wanted clarity about what we are comparing against?</li> <li>• Currie Community High is currently regarded as a successful school and is considered a valuable community asset.</li> <li>• Alistair Gaw, Executive Director of Communities and Families emphasised that a new build would be a much-improved asset and may offer opportunities around extending the curriculum - the group did not feel fully convinced around this.</li> </ul> <p><b>Maintaining Excellence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was accepted that attainment does vary across the different schools currently and that school size certainly plays some part in this.</li> <li>• The National Improvement Framework was referenced by many acknowledging this.</li> <li>• There was agreement that leadership of a Head Teacher also plays a significant part in the overall quality of education provision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Transport &amp; Infrastructure Concerns:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were numerous concerns expressed around the need for any change to be supported by a review or at least a rethink of transport provision.</li> <li>• If a new school facility were to be built then there would need to be safe cycling routes set up.</li> <li>• Currently there are no buses going north to south.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Also, how would the elderly or disabled adjust to having to travel further to their hub?</li><li>• What about setting up a partnership arrangement between Balerno and Currie Community High schools and WHEC to look at combining strengths and tackling the main challenges each school faces?</li><li>• Developer involvement – has the council received any offers of interest about the land where Currie Community High School is sited?</li><li>• Could Woodlands School be added to the new build at Currie?</li><li>• Some assumptions have been made which require evidence - such as integration versus partnership.</li><li>• How safe is the land on the proposed new build site?</li><li>• What can be done to strengthen the current sense of instability (and continuity) given that children are already expressing their worries about their future?</li><li>• There needs to be further clarification around the funding considerations. What will the Scottish Government explicitly fund and not fund?</li></ul>
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## Discussion Group Three

Item	Discussion / Comments
<p><b>Published Proposals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are not enough benefits and rational for the other options.</li> <li>• If there is not a high school in Currie, where is the heart of the community? Where is the focal point? Currie does not have a High Street, Currie Community High School is that focal point.</li> <li>• It was questioned what would happen to the Currie Community High School land if it were to move.</li> <li>• The group do not want more housing on this land as this will cause even more problem with traffic, etc.</li> <li>• Currie Community High School is in the top five schools in Edinburgh. Amazing curriculum choices, three sciences, art drama, social sciences, 16 first year subjects.</li> <li>• However, there was discussion that the group would like it to be even higher.</li> <li>• Moving Currie Community High School to another site is moving a certainty to an uncertainty.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of Published Proposals:</b></p>	
<p>Juniper Green along with Nether Currie, Canal View and Clovenstone Primary catchment areas would feed to the new South West Edinburgh School when it opens in August 2022.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juniper Green is very much part of the wider Balerno, Currie and Juniper Green community. Strong sense of community along this corridor. Seen as three villages with very strong historical links.</li> <li>• WHEC and Juniper Green amalgamating dilutes parental engagement.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A member of the group asked the group if there was evidence to support this comment?</li> <li>● Class sizes are not a determining factor.</li> <li>● Juniper Green parents attend family learning sessions in school.</li> <li>● Would need to be convinced that the attainment gap would not change for the existing Currie Community High School pupils.</li> <li>● It will take 10 years before Currie Community High School becomes over capacity by 27 pupils, according to the projections.</li> </ul>
<p>The new South West Edinburgh High would be in Juniper Green's catchment area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If WHEC is removed from Wester Hailes, what is there left for people in West Hailes?</li> <li>● WHEC is the heart of the community.</li> <li>● Joining/merging with a larger school will bring uncertainty and challenges.</li> <li>● It is an important community facility for Wester Hailes community.</li> <li>● Needs are different for WHEC.</li> <li>● A small school would be better to address some of the issues in Wester Hailes.</li> <li>● Rebuild and enlarge, enable children who want to learn/train to go.</li> <li>● What works for people who do not want an academic outcome? This needs to be addressed.</li> <li>● A percentage from WHEC are attending Currie Community High School and others.</li> <li>● Suggestion: Give people from WHEC a dual catchment option.</li> </ul>

Alternative Proposals	
<p>Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferred option.</li> <li>• Pupils travelling to CCHS by foot and bicycle will be safer.</li> <li>• Currie Community High School (CCHS) to remain on its current site, there is enough space. Would like a new building but would be satisfied with a refurbishment but think that extension for all of the schools is necessary.</li> <li>• There is no room to improve the current infrastructure for transport in the area.</li> <li>• The group felt that the other options had fewer pros than the status quo.</li> <li>• If CCHS remained at its current site there would be no additional traffic problems.</li> </ul>
<p>Build a new school on the Muir Wood field site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consensus in the group was that this was not a viable option.</li> <li>• The group thought there are restrictions to build here.</li> <li>• Not enough information provided on catchment areas for this proposal.</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• The group thought this was not an option.</li> <li>• This would cause an increase of traffic in Currie and add to the current traffic problems.</li> <li>• What about Balerno? Let Ratho stay with Balerno Community High School.</li> <li>• The school would be too big.</li> </ul>

**Other comments**

- Woodlands School has strong links with Currie, there is evidence supporting this (fundraising). The group felt that the school link should remain.

## Discussion Group Four

Item	Discussion / Comments
<b>Summary of Published Proposals</b>	
<p>The new South West Edinburgh High would be in Juniper Green's catchment area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was thought that a bigger school wouldn't serve Wester Hailes community well. A small school would be better to address some of the issues in Wester Hailes.</li> <li>• If WHEC is removed from Wester Hailes, what is there left for people in West Hailes?</li> <li>• WHEC was the first community high school.</li> <li>• It is an important community facility for Wester Hailes community.</li> <li>• There are opportunities that could be made for Wester Hailes and WHEC that we're missing.</li> <li>• A new WHEC could encourage children to attend.</li> <li>• WHEC could be a specialist school.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative Proposals</b>	
<p>Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was the preferred option of everyone in the group.</li> <li>• The group would like to keep Currie Community High School (CCHS) on its current site.</li> <li>• They highlighted that this does not necessarily have to be a brand-new building but they would not say no to a new building on the same site.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One group participant had experienced being at CCHS and using temporary buildings while the previous extension work was taking place. She believes that this did not disrupt her education. This could be done again.</li> <li>• A new school wouldn't service both communities as it will be out with one of the communities.</li> <li>• Families would not be able to use the facilities if they are removed from Currie as they would not be able to walk to them.</li> <li>• Traffic – a benefit of keeping CCHS on its current site would mean not causing extra traffic.</li> <li>• The transport infrastructure cannot be improved.</li> <li>• Travel is safer going to CCHS where it currently is. It is against the flow of traffic so it doesn't cause any issues.</li> <li>• There are currently options for walking and cycling safely to CCHS from Juniper Green.</li> <li>• There are not enough benefits and rationale for the other options.</li> <li>• We need existing schools slightly bigger.</li> <li>• There is space to rebuild on the current CCHS site.</li> </ul>
<p>Build a new school on the Muir Wood field site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The general consensus in the group was that this was not a viable option.</li> <li>• The Muir Wood field site could be a better site when compared to the council proposed options based on logistical reasons only, e.g. travel from Blinkbonny is better.</li> <li>• There is uncertainty around catchments.</li> <li>• This land is a natural division between the villages.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions were placed around the numbers suggesting this.</li> <li>• There appear to be current restrictions for building on this land.</li> <li>• It would disadvantage Woodlands School.</li> <li>• This would not be a good site for Wester Hailes pupils. It is passing the problem over to Wester Hailes.</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• Some of the same reasons why they wouldn't want to merge with WHEC.</li> <li>• This would cause an increase of traffic in Currie and add to the current traffic problems.</li> <li>• What about Balerno?</li> <li>• The school would be too big.</li> <li>• It might exclude Juniper Green.</li> <li>• Extra housing will cause problems for capacity. It would be short-sighted and not part of a 30-60 years plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other comments</b></p>	<p><b>Woodlands School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current links with Woodlands School is paramount.</li> <li>• Woodlands School needs to stay where it is.</li> </ul> <p><b>Open Discussion – Published Proposal; Primary School Catchment Changes;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conclusions in the condition report are unclear and the communication on CEC website and slides are misleading. The group would like further clarity on what this means.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would also like more information on the school review in the context of the other schools in Edinburgh.</li> <li>• Where is future new housing going to be?</li> <li>• There is a premium for land and houses in their area.</li> <li>• It was asked if this was mainly about money.</li> <li>• The group wanted an honest conversation.</li> <li>• Is there evidence that results dropped at CCHS due to the extension work?</li> <li>• There was some discussion and debate around the attainment gap.</li> <li>• One person was open to the idea of helping to close the attainment gap and perhaps this could be achieved by mixing pupils from different schools and raising the attainment of lower performing pupils. However, there was argument against this as it could see a slight drop in the higher performing pupils.</li> <li>• It would be good to gather ideas on how to improve the attainment gap by other means.</li> <li>• There are not projected to be massive numbers of additional children for Currie so it is unlikely to cause any capacity issues in the near future.</li> <li>• Public-Private Partnership (PPP) doesn't work.</li> <li>• There were concerns around the lack of consideration being given to impact assessments. There is a need for a disability impact assessment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggestions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CCHS could be refurbished/rebuilt while still under capacity causing less disruption.</li> <li>• If there was the opportunity to rebuild or improve CCHS on its current site, there were ideas of creating an improved community hub which could:</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Combat social isolation for older people – e.g. children teaching older people</li><li>○ Similar to how CCHS works with Woodlands School.</li><li>○ Create an accessible swimming pool for people with physical disabilities.</li><li>○ Create a community library which could be open all the time to the public.</li><li>○ Create a café / pop-up restaurant open to the public.</li><li>○ Create dance studio.</li><li>○ The council could generate money or income using some of these approaches e.g. it could rent out AstroTurf pitches.</li><li>○ It could have Oriam links.</li><li>● The group highlighted that we want to be an inspiring capital and encourage people to live and work in Edinburgh. It's this current community that should be emulated across the city.</li><li>● Refurbish existing schools as part of a 60 year plan to deal with growth.</li></ul>
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## Discussion Group Five

Item	Discussion / Comments
<p><b>Published Proposals</b></p>	<p>The table was universally against the published proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currie Community High School (CHS) is the blueprint for a successful school.</li> <li>• Complaint that the teaching work force were not consulted in the first instance.</li> <li>• Complaint that views were not sought prior to a published proposal being put forward.</li> <li>• Complaint that views were not sought on site options prior to a published proposal being put forward.</li> <li>• Complaint that two months after published proposal with many objections having been sent by Juniper Green that CEC still did not change their ideas.</li> <li>• Group was unhappy with rationale presented as it does not bear up to scrutiny</li> <li>• Group was especially unhappy with CEC’s claim that larger school size is related to higher attainment.</li> <li>• Smaller schools can be better in certain circumstances – OFSTED have an evidence based report.</li> <li>• Further evidence from American studies has been e-mailed to CEC:</li> <li>• There was concern over the quick change in the last two CHS structural reports - how can we be sure there won’t be further escalation?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why pump more millions into maintaining CHS in the future years if we are going to knock it down?</li><li>• CHS is a community asset and thriving school.</li><li>• Concern that the school roll projections are too specific and don't take account of all developments</li><li>• The merger of Curriehill and Riccarton primary schools was a mistake.</li><li>• How are largescale housing developments allowed to proceed without better joined up thinking (e.g. Kirkliston)?</li><li>• The only way of futureproofing is keeping all four schools open (Balerno, CHS, WHEC and Woodlands Schools).</li><li>• All our schools work so why mess them up?</li><li>• The merger of WHEC with CHS would be an issue – they are two quite different schools.</li><li>• Woodlands School might not cope with moving, it is populated with children with fundamental needs.</li><li>• We don't want a bigger school.</li><li>• The group asked that the comments (rejections) fed into the consultation from Juniper Green be analysed and reported.</li><li>• All the primary communities work well together – they should stay together.</li></ul>
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Alternative Proposals	
Retain all schools on their existing sites refurbishing or rebuilding as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status quo of all four schools (Balerno, CHS, WHEC and Woodlands Schools) is preferred with current catchments.</li> <li>• A rebuilt CHS (on the same site) could have improved infrastructure, sports facilities and be brought up to current disability standards.</li> <li>• A larger school would be okay – CHS is expandable.</li> </ul>
Build a new school on the Muir Wood field site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The table was against this option.</li> </ul>
Amalgamate Currie and Balerno Community High schools in a new building on the existing Currie Community High School site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option was not supported.</li> <li>• If there isn't an educational benefit can the council legally close a secondary school?</li> <li>• Is a financial imperative more important than the educational benefit?</li> </ul>
<b>Other comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have CEC ever split a school population and then merged with a different population before?</li> <li>• If we rebuilt or improved WHEC would that bring more pupils back to it?</li> <li>• Would WHEC children be bothered to go to the proposed new high school site options?</li> <li>• Are these proposal options laid out in the same way at other schools in their workshops?</li> </ul>