



**Midlothian Council**  
**Children, Young People and Partnerships Division**  
**People and Partnerships Directorate**

**Statutory Consultation Report**

**Report on the outcome of the consultation on the  
proposed variation to the Admissions Arrangements  
to Primary and Secondary Education.**

**18 August 2025.**

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## **Midlothian Council**

### **Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate**

This report has been prepared following a statutory consultation on the following proposal:

#### **Proposed variation to the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

Subject to the outcome of the consultation:

- The variation to the School Admissions Policy will be implemented from September 2025.

The following schools are directly affected by this proposal:

- All Midlothian schools will be directly affected by the proposal, excluding Saltersgate, which will remain unaffected by the proposed changes to the admissions policy.

The following schools will be indirectly affected by the proposal:

There are no schools indirectly affected by the proposal.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period
- b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the five public meetings which were held on 22 & 24 April and 12, 15 & 22 May 2025.
- c) Any representations made to it by Parent Councils
- d) Oral representations made to it at the virtual public drop-in sessions on 17 & 28 April, 19 & 27 May 2025.
- e) Digital representations made to it by pupils
- f) Education Scotland's report on the proposal

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At a meeting of Midlothian Council on 12 November 2024, approval was granted for officers to undertake a review followed by a statutory consultation to update Midlothian Council's admission policy for all schools (excluding Early Learning and Childcare and Saltersgate) in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and for a report on the outcome of the consultation exercises to be brought back to council for consideration and a decision.
- 1.2 As a local authority, Midlothian Council has a legislative duty to provide suitable educational opportunities for children and young people within its boundaries. Midlothian Council's approach to pupil placement is to ensure a place for every pupil at one of their catchment schools and to review and grant placing requests whenever possible. The impact of parental choice and the demand for places at specific schools

have highlighted the need to review the current School Admission Policy to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

- 1.3 Each home address in Midlothian is assigned a catchment school for both primary and secondary education. The designated catchment schools are determined based on the pupil's home address. While Midlothian Council strives to ensure there are sufficient places for all children within a catchment area to attend their designated school, residing within a catchment area does not guarantee a child a place at that school. Where catchment schools are over-subscribed, Pupil Placement seeks to allocate places at neighbouring schools to ensure every pupil is afforded the opportunity to attend a local school.
- 1.4 All parents and carers have the right to request a place for their child at a school outside their designated catchment area; this is known as a placing request. It is the Council's statutory duty to approve placing requests when there are available places, except in specific circumstances outlined in The Education (Scotland) Act 1980. Midlothian Council's current school admissions policy can be found on: [Pupil registration and placing requests | Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools policy guidelines](#)
- 1.5 Midlothian Council is recognised as Scotland's fastest-growing local authority. This rapid growth has brought significant challenges, particularly for education. This growth has led to heightened pressures on schools which includes applying intake limits at several schools to safeguard places for pupils to be able to attend their catchment school. According to the National Records of Scotland, Midlothian Council has seen the largest increase (15%) in the aged 0-15 population of all local authorities since 2014. The population as a whole has also increased by 1.5% between mid 2023 and mid 2024, which is the second highest rate of increase in Scotland after Glasgow City Council.
- 1.6 The increasing population and housing developments within Midlothian continue to generate growth in pupil numbers. There is a significant risk that the council will not have a place for every pupil at their catchment school and the Council's Learning Estate Strategy considers this from a strategic perspective. In the short term this risk is mitigated by the application of limits on pupil intake, reviews of placing requests, and, in the case of denominational schools, by giving first priority to those who are baptised Roman Catholic.
- 1.7 At the time the proposal document was published the Pupil enrolment for the 2025/26 school session was well underway. 1,326 Midlothian primary pupils and 1,194 Midlothian secondary pupils had registered as of 14 March 2025 for the August 2025 intake. This included 202 who have advised they intend to defer entry to primary school.
- 1.8 In the 2024/25 school session, 264 placing requests were received, including 28 from outside Midlothian, marking a decrease from the previous year's total of 302 requests. The Education Appeal Committee convened in May and June 2025 to consider any appeals received in respect of placing requests which were refused.
- 1.9 This is a Consultation Proposal prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the above proposal

1.10 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written responses;
- Provide a summary of the oral representations made at the five public meetings which were held on 22 & 24 April and 12, 15 & 22 May 2025.
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any alleged omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Consultation Proposal Document and state how the Council acted upon it; and
- State how the Council has complied with Section 12 of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* when reviewing the above proposal.

1.11 The education authority have received a range of views with regard to the Historical Arrangement with East Lothian Council for Loretto RC PS, both for and against. Midlothian Council's education authority has given consideration as to the most appropriate way in which to proceed. As referenced in the body of the report, it is the intention of the education authority to recommend to Midlothian Council that further consideration be given to the arrangements for admission to St David's RC High School of pupils attending Loretto RC Primary School to provide clarity for all parties.

## 2 Background

2.1 *The Education (Scotland) Act 1980* places a legislative duty on the Council to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across its area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand.

2.2 Section 3D of the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (as inserted by Section 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016)* introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework. It is, therefore, the duty of the education authority to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children to their fullest potential.

2.3 In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* by continuous improvement in performance of the local authority's functions, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities and the achievement of sustainable development.

2.4 The Council has a number of statutory duties relating to the provision of education in its area including the statutory consultation that must be undertaken when proposing

a permanent change to any of their schools, including Nursery Schools, such as closure, relocation or change of catchment area. *The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* principal purpose is:

“to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools.”

- 2.5 This Proposal Document has been prepared in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, having regard to the statutory guidance published by the Scottish Government on 14 May 2015 and the complementary guidance published by Education Scotland (revised July 2023), which are available for reference at the following websites:

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act

2010: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/2/contents>

Statutory Guidance (14 May 2015): <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/05/4615>

Education Consultation Guidance for Local Authorities (revised July 2023):

<https://education.gov.scot/media/rh0jzhvo/external-schools-consultation-education-scotland-guide-for-local-authorities-july-2023.pdf>

The following information has also been used to prepare the report:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period
- Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the five public meetings which were held on 22 & 24 April and 12, 15 & 22 May 2025.
- Any representations made to it by Parent Councils
- Oral representations made to it at the virtual public drop-in sessions on 17 & 28 April, 19 & 27 May 2025.
- Digital representations made to it by pupils
- Education Scotland’s report on the proposal

### **Midlothian’s Vision for Education**

- 2.6 The Council is ambitious for the future of Midlothian. By working together as a Community Planning Partnership, individuals and communities will be able to lead healthier, safer, greener and successful lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions
- 2.7 Our outcomes for the next 5 years are:
- Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes
  - No child or household living in poverty
  - Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030

- 2.8 We continue to aspire to deliver a world-class education system through equity and excellence. Our vision is to provide the highest quality inclusive education, learning and employability service for all individuals and families in Midlothian. To realise this vision we will support the priorities set out in the Single Midlothian Plan, Getting it Right for Every Child and will:
- give all our children the best possible start in life, providing an inclusive learning environment that builds resilience;
  - ensure that every young person has the opportunity to be a successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen and an effective contributor who is healthy and happy, especially those who are care experienced;
  - work with our communities to promote high expectations which deliver the best educational outcomes for all learners; and
  - Celebrate diversity, reduce inequalities and remove barriers to learning.
- 2.9 As a local authority, Midlothian Council has a legislative duty in respect of admissions to provide suitable education opportunities for children and young people. Midlothian Council's approach to pupil placement is to provide a place for every pupil at one of their catchment schools and to review/grant placing requests whenever this is possible. Where catchment schools are over-subscribed, Pupil Placement seeks to allocate places at neighbouring schools to ensure every pupil is afforded the opportunity to attend a local school.
- 2.10 A review of the current admissions policy will reflect and incorporate any recent changes to legislation, policies and procedures as well as schools' circumstances. This will ensure that the admissions process continues to be fit for purpose and provides flexibility, remains effective, clear and consistent to meet the enrolment requirements of the children and young people of Midlothian fairly and effectively.
- 2.11 The proposed variation to the School Admission Policy aims to prioritise Midlothian children and young people, living within the designated catchment area of a Midlothian School, ahead of placing requests and exceptional circumstances.
- 2.12 Priority for places in a Midlothian School will be considered and, where possible, granted to those eligible to attend a local school based on their residential address. These places will be granted ahead of placing requests and exceptional circumstances.
- 2.13 For denominational schools, Roman Catholic children and young people within the catchment area will be given priority over non-Roman Catholic children based on their residential address. These places will be granted ahead of placing requests and exceptional circumstances.
- 2.14 In schools where the intake is not oversubscribed, there would be no change to the ability to grant placing requests. Places remaining after all catchment children are enrolled will be available for non-catchment Midlothian children and young people, subject to those reserved for catchment children arriving during an academic session. However, in schools where the intake is oversubscribed, places would continue to be granted in accordance with the agreed capacity. Refused placing requests would be

maintained on a waiting list as additional classes will not be created for non-catchment children.

- 2.15 Children and young people living outside of Midlothian will be required to submit out of catchment placing requests. Midlothian Council will aim to grant these requests if places are available after enrolling all Midlothian children and retaining reserved places within the agreed intake limit. However, additional classes will not be created for non-catchment children and young people.
- 2.16 A historical arrangement between Midlothian Council and East Lothian Council, originating from the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 and the subsequent disaggregation in 1996, has allowed pupils attending Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian to transition to St David's RC High School. This current arrangement applies only to Loretto RC Primary School and to pupils living within a designated catchment area of East Lothian. It does not extend to any other Roman Catholic primary school in East Lothian Council and has remained in place up to the present academic year. However, under the proposed changes to the School Admission Policy, which aims to prioritise Midlothian catchment children, followed by Midlothian resident and then non-Midlothian applicants, pupils from Loretto RC Primary would be classified as out-of-authority placing requests. As a result, parents or carers wishing their child to attend St David's RC High School would be required to submit a formal placing request.
- 2.17 It is the intention of the education authority to recommend to Midlothian Council that further consideration be given to the arrangements for admission to St David's RC High School of pupils attending Loretto RC Primary School to provide clarity for all parties.

### **3 Considerations**

- 3.1 The main considerations relating to the variation of the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education. These are fully explained in the Consultation Proposal Document. The main points are highlighted below:
- The responsibilities associated with the National Improvement Framework and the new duties imposed on Education Authorities by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 as amended by the 2016 Act.
  - The agreed principles underpinning the development of an empowered school led system set out in the 'Education Bill Policy Ambition- Joint Agreement', June 2018 <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/8745/downloads>
  - The duties placed on local authorities in relation to the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area
  - The duties placed on local authorities to secure best value in the delivery of services

### **4 The Consultation Process**

- 4.1 The Council has met the requirements set out in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* with regards to ensuring the views of the community were listened to and their views are included in this report. In order to further ensure compliance with the Act, an independent consultant was engaged to chair all meetings to ensure impartiality.



The Council believes that this report accurately reflects the views of the community, which have been gathered through a range of engagement events and response mechanisms.

It is for members of Midlothian Council to decide to adopt the proposal, adopt the proposal with an amendment, withdraw it or seek to consult on another proposal.

- 4.2 Notification of the consultation was given to all statutory consultees prior to the commencement of the consultation.
- 4.3 The Consultation Proposal Document was published on Midlothian Council's website on 2 April 2025 and paper copies distributed on 2 April 2025 to:
- All Midlothian Schools
  - Danderhall Library & Leisure Centre, 59 Edmonstone Road, Danderhall, EH22 1QL
  - Gorebridge Library, 98 Hunterfield Road, Gorebridge, EH23 4TT
  - Lasswade Library, 19 Eskdale Drive, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LA
  - Loanhead Library, The Loanhead Centre, George Avenue, Loanhead, EH20 9LA
  - Midlothian House, 40 – 46 Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN
  - Newbattle Library, 1 Newbattle Way, Easthouses, Dalkeith, EH22 4SX
  - Newtongrange Library, St Davids, Newtongrange, EH22 4LG
  - Penicuik Library, Carlops Road, Penicuik, EH26 9EP
  - Roslin Library, 9a Main Street, Roslin, EH25 9LD
- 4.4 Copies of an information leaflet on the consultation were emailed to affected consultees (see list below) and schools and others on 31 March 2025.
- 4.5 Affected consultees:
- The children and young people attending Midlothian Schools, excluding Saltersgate.
  - The parents / carers of pupils and children expected to attend a Midlothian School.
  - The staff employed by the Council and based within Midlothian Schools.
  - The Trade Union and Professional Associations Representatives of the above staff.
  - The Archdiocese of St Andrew's and Edinburgh.
  - Community Councils
  - Community Planning Partnership.
- 4.6 In addition, information was shared with the parents/carers, staff and parent council of Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian via the Head of Education at East Lothian Council. Pupils responded to the consultation process via a digital pupil voice survey. East Lothian Council's views were also sought through the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services and Head of Education in their discussion with Education Scotland.
- 4.7 The consultation period commenced on Wednesday 02 April 2025 and lasted until Monday 02 June 2025 being a period of eight weeks, which also included the statutory minimum 30 school days.
- 4.8 The proposal on which the consultation took place was:

- The proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.
- 4.9 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.
- 4.10 An information leaflet setting out details about the proposal and consultation meetings was issued to the consultees listed in the Consultation Proposal Document. Advice on where the complete Consultation Proposal Document could be obtained was included and was published on Midlothian Council's Consultation Hub:
- <https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/admissions-policy-consultation>
- 4.11 If requested, copies of the proposal would have been made available in alternative formats or translated for readers whose first language is not English.
- 4.12 In addition the consultation was publicised and received engagement in the following ways:
- There were 11 Facebook posts: Best performing Facebook post reached 42,445 news feeds and 7,086 people engaged with the post.
  - There were 11 X posts (formerly known as Twitter): Best performing X post achieved 795 impressions with 179 engagements.
  - Midlothian Council website consultation page had 211 views.
  - The consultation was pushed during Council news slots on a local radio station.
- 4.13 A generic email account was set up by the Council to receive representations and enquiries on the proposal.
- 4.14 Five public meetings were held:
- Dalkeith Schools Community Campus on 22 April 2025 at 6:30pm
  - Penicuik High School on 24 April 2025 at 6:30pm
  - Bonnyrigg Primary School on 12 May 2025 at 6:30pm
  - Beeslack Community High School on 15 May 2025 at 6:30pm
  - Easthouses Primary School on 22 May 2025 at 6:30pm
- 4.15 In addition, virtual drop-in sessions via MS Teams were offered on 17 and 28 April 2025 as well as 19 and 27 May 2025, which members of the public and staff were welcome to attend and there were six attendees.
- 4.16 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following persons, including those indirectly affected, were consulted:
- The children and young people attending Midlothian Schools, excluding Saltersgate.
  - The parents / carers of pupils and children expected to attend a Midlothian School.
  - The staff employed by the Council and based within Midlothian Schools.
  - The Trade Union and Professional Associations Representatives of the above staff.
  - Community Councils

- Community Planning Partnership.

4.17 The following schools are directly affected by the proposal:

- All Midlothian schools will be directly affected by the proposal, excluding Saltersgate, which will remain unaffected by the proposed changes to the admissions policy.

4.18 Representations were sought from statutory consultees and the wider public in the following ways:

- An online questionnaire on Midlothian Council's Citizen Space Consultation Page. The questionnaire asked a specific question and enabled general comments and views to be entered.
- Digital leaflets, Council web and social media announcements linked to the Consultation Page. These detailed a specific Education Consultations email inbox, to which any queries could be submitted during the consultation period.
- All Midlothian Council Head Teachers used established methods of communication to engage/remind parents about the consultation.
- The Head Teacher of Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian also communicated with parents and pupils in relation to the consultation.
- The Council consulted with children and young people potentially affected by this proposal through digital Pupil Voice sessions, conducted using Google Forms.

4.19 The Consultation Proposal is the Council's response to the points raised during the consultation period on the Consultation Proposal Document.

4.20 This Consultation Proposal will be published for a period of three weeks before a final decision is taken by Midlothian Council on 09 September 2025.

## **5 Responses to the Consultation Exercise**

5.1 As part of the consultation process, the Council sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders. The Council provided stakeholders with a short online or paper questionnaire and also made arrangements for receiving additional written responses. The Council received 511 responses to its questionnaire during the consultation period. All representations that had been made during the consultation period were submitted to Education Scotland and any issues or concerns raised are also subject to the Council's response in this Consultation Proposal.

The questionnaire responses are summarised by category in the following tables:

**Table 1 – Number of respondents by type of respondent**

Type of Respondent	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Organisations	9	1.8%
Individuals	500	97.8%
Not Answered	2	0.4%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>100</b>

*\*Numbers are shown to the single decimal point and therefore may not add exactly to 100 in this form.*

**Table 2 – Number of respondents by category**

Individual Respondent	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Parents	443	67.6%
Staff	73	11.2%
Member of Local Community	98	14.9%
Other/Unknown	41	6.3%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*The total number of respondents differs from the number of respondents by category because some respondents identified with more than one category.*

- 5.2 For the Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.? The responses were as follows:

**Table 3 – Number of Responses by Opinion**

Response	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	111	21.7%
Agree	87	17.0%
No Opinion	26	5.1%
Disagree	49	9.6%
Strongly Disagree	237	46.4%
Not Answered	1	0.2%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*Numbers are shown to the single decimal point and therefore may not add exactly to 100 in this form.*

**Table 4 - Number of respondents by category**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No opinion/Not answered</b>
Parents	182	235	26
Staff	35	35	3
Member of Local Community	26	70	2
Other/Unknown	9	32	0
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>31</b>

*\*The total number of respondents differs from the number of respondents by category because some respondents identified with more than one category.*

- 5.3 The comments made as part of the questionnaire submissions are included in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish Midlothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the education authority's response as detailed in Section 9 of this report.

#### **Response Analysis from Organisations**

- 5.4 There were 9 responses from organisations, their responses have been included in tables 1 to 10 above. All groups did not wish their response to be shared publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the education authority's response as detailed in Section 9.

#### **Public Meeting**

- 5.5 Five public meetings were held to allow members of the public and staff to view a presentation regarding the proposals and to ask any questions they may have. 66 members of public were in attendance across the five meetings.
- 5.6 Additionally, virtual drop-in sessions were arranged for on 17 and 28 April 2025 as well as 19 and 27 May 2025, enabling any member of the public and staff to ask questions and discuss the proposal, the consultation process and how they could make representations. Six members of the public attended these sessions.

#### **Pupils and Staff**

- 5.7 During the consultation period, Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all

Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points. Loretto RC Primary School in Musselburgh, East Lothian, was also included due to the current historical arrangement in place. The same Pupil Voice questionnaire and presentation were sent via email to the Head of Education at East Lothian and the school's Headteacher.

- 5.8 A copy of the information leaflet and a link to the consultation page was sent to all staff, inviting them to respond to the consultation via the online survey and highlighting the consultation mailbox for any queries.

## **6 Support for the Proposal**

- 6.1 198 of all questionnaire respondents (511 responses) to the consultation were in favour of the proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.

The full text of all responses received can be read in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish Midlothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the education authority's response as detailed in Section 9 of this report.

- 6.2 A number of common points and questions emerged from the responses as follows:
- Catchment Priority
  - Residents of Midlothian accessing Catholic Education
  - Continuity from Primary to Secondary
  - Fairness and Equity
  - Siblings

## **7 Opposition to the Proposal**

- 7.1 268 of all questionnaire respondents (511 responses) to the consultation were not in favour of the proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.

The full text of all responses received can be read in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish Midlothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the education authority's response as detailed in Section 9 of this report.

- 7.2 A number of common points and questions emerged from the responses as follows:
- Concerns About Future Access to Catholic Education
  - Impact on Loretto RC Primary Pupils
  - Catchment and Access Concerns
  - Impact on Longstanding Traditions
  - Sibling Separation and Family Logistics
  - Lack of Alternative Catholic Secondary Options

## **8 No Opinion on the Proposal**

8.1 26 respondents indicated that they had no opinion on the proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.

8.2 A number of common points and questions emerged from the responses as follows:

- Lack of Clarity in the Proposal
- Uncertainty About Catchment Changes
- Desire for Local School Access
- Concerns About Children's Experience (attending with siblings and peers)
- Need for More Information

## **9 Education authority Response to the Main Issues Raised**

The education authority have received a range of views with regard to the Historical Arrangement with East Lothian Council for Loretto RC PS, both for and against. Midlothian Council's education authority has given consideration as to the most appropriate way in which to proceed. As outlined in the body of the report, it is the intention of the education authority to recommend to Midlothian Council that further consideration be given to the arrangements for admission to St David's RC High School of pupils attending Loretto RC Primary School to provide clarity for all parties.

### **9.1 What will happen to those kids currently in P4, 5 and 6 at Danderhall if Dalkeith is full?**

We carefully monitor the number of children enrolled in our schools and that data along with pupil projections are used to predict available capacity in our schools.

Should a school be approaching its capacity we work with Senior Officers and the School Management Team to identify changes in working practise that will free up capacity in the school, such as shared senior phase subject offers.

We also work with our Learning Estate colleagues to identify short-, medium- and long-term building requirements for our schools, this could include increasing the capacity by adding temporary accommodation.

If, after these measures are implemented, the school is still oversubscribed then our current policy states: If a place at a catchment school is not available, parents/carers will be offered a place at the nearest Midlothian secondary school to their home address with places available. They will be given the option to make a placing request to another school, if they so wish. The pupil will be placed on a waiting list for the catchment school in order of priority and, should a place become available, parents/carers will be contacted by Pupil Placement. Where there are more pupils in one category, the priority will be based on distance.

We do not anticipate this part of the policy to change following this consultation.

### **9.2 More clarity needed around how distance from school will be used if schools are over subscribed. What happens if a child is rejected from their catchment school because they do not live close enough?**

If a school is oversubscribed then our current policy states: If a place at a catchment school is not available, parents/carers will be offered a place at the nearest Midlothian secondary school to their home address with places available. They will be given the option to make a placing request to another school, if they so wish. The pupil will be placed on a waiting list for the catchment school in order of priority and, should a place become available, parents/carers will be contacted by Pupil Placement. Where there are more pupils in one category, the priority will be based on distance.

We do not anticipate this part of the policy to change following this consultation.

**9.3 How much money has and is being spent on children from another local authority instead of the funds being spent on our own children's educational needs?**

The 2023/24 Local Government Benchmarking Framework cost per secondary school pupil is £8,750.

Midlothian's Equipped for Learning programme will provide any pupil enrolling in a Midlothian secondary school from out with Midlothian with an individual digital device. The 2025/26 cost per secondary pupil is £370.

The Scottish Government funding per secondary school pupil in financial year 2025/26 is £5,320.

**9.4 Why haven't Midlothian council withdrawn from this unwritten arrangement before now and why are they continuing to provide education for secondary aged pupils from another local authority?**

Midlothian is experiencing rapid population growth, and up until this point, we have been able to accommodate the list of Loretto RC PS P7 pupils provided by East Lothian Council. However, there are Loretto RC PS pupils who are not on the list and who have not been granted places at St David's RCHS. This proposal is due to the education authority seeing the pupil rolls increasing across all of our schools and future proofing the admissions process given ongoing growth in school-age population.

**9.5 Many responses were received, both in support and opposition, regarding the historical arrangement with East Lothian Council and Loretto RC PS.**

Under current arrangements, East Lothian Council each year provide to Midlothian Council a list of pupils who attend Loretto RC Primary School, and who they consider would be entitled, under historic arrangements, to attend St David's RC High School.

Following the consultation process, and taking cognisance of the range of views shared, the education authority will recommend to Midlothian Council that further consideration be given to the arrangements for admission to St David's RC High School of pupils attending Loretto RC Primary School to provide clarity for all parties.

**9.6 How would this proposal affect me? (Sacred Heart RC PS)**

As a parent of a child attending Sacred Heart RC PS, this proposal would not change your catchment status. Sacred Heart RC PS will continue to be within the catchment area for St David's RC High School.



However, subject to the decision to be taken by Midlothian Council at full Council in September, there could be significant implications. Specifically, children living in the west of Midlothian may face challenges securing a place at St David's RC High School if the school reaches capacity, as admissions are based on geographical distance.

**9.7 The proposal states that the number of placing requests has been less than in previous years. It is possible to accommodate this number of placing requests, so, why should this change substantially in the coming years?**

The number of catchment children has increased over the last five years as the population of Midlothian has increased. This means there are less out of catchment places available in our schools. The number of placing requests received each year fluctuates but the number of refused placing requests has increased as school capacity is used by catchment children.

**9.8 Why would you prevent catholic children from attending the only Catholic school in Midlothian and East Lothian?**

The proposed changes to Midlothian's School Admissions Policy are designed to strengthen access for Roman Catholic (RC) children who are resident within Midlothian and its designated catchment areas. It is important to emphasise that St David's RC High School is the only denominational secondary school serving the entire Midlothian area, and the revised policy seeks to ensure that children who are baptised in the RC faith and living in Midlothian are appropriately prioritised for places there. The proposal does not aim to exclude Catholic children, but rather to prioritise places for Midlothian families in the context of increasing demand and limited school capacity.

**9.9 Impact on St David's RC High School, Catholic Primary Access, Provision of RC Schools and Children's Faith Education, and Changes to the Loretto RCPS Arrangement — How Long Would It Be Before Access Is Denied for the Catholic Primaries in Midlothian?**

Midlothian Council is recognised as Scotland's fastest-growing local authority, and rising demand for school places has made it necessary to review the current School Admissions Policy. This includes the longstanding, informal arrangement allowing pupils from Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian to transition to St David's RC High School. East Lothian Council determines eligibility and provides a list of pupils to Midlothian Council. The current arrangement does not apply to any other East Lothian RC primary school.

This proposal is not an attempt to close St David's RC High School. There are no plans to reduce its capacity, change its denominational status, or close the school. Midlothian Council has made significant investments in the denominational school estate and remains committed to the continuation of faith-based education. The proposal aims to secure the future of St David's RC HS as a denominational secondary school serving all of Midlothian.

The Learning Estate Strategy outlines plans to manage capacity across both denominational and non-denominational schools. St David's RC HS will continue to operate independently within the Dalkeith Community Campus, in partnership with Dalkeith High School, to ensure equitable access to a broad senior phase curriculum.

Admissions criteria will prioritise baptised Roman Catholic children from Midlothian, ensuring continued access to faith-based education for local families.

Midlothian Council's commitment to Roman Catholic education is further demonstrated through recent investments, including the refurbishment and extension of Sacred Heart RC Primary School, the replacement of St Mary's RC Primary School, and the ongoing redevelopment of St Luke's RC Primary School, which will include a new nursery stage under the leadership of the Headteacher at St Luke's RC PS.

**9.10 How will our primary children here in Musselburgh be able to continue with their right to continue their Catholic Education being sent to a non Catholic teaching school?**

Following discussions with colleagues at East Lothian Council, they have advised that any questions or concerns relating to internal arrangements within East Lothian should be directed to the following mailbox: [educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk). All enquiries sent to the email address provided will be reviewed and responded to individually by the appropriate team in East Lothian.

East Lothian Council has also confirmed that a formal statement will be issued when the consultation process has concluded in accordance with the outcome determined by Midlothian Council.

**9.11 What affect does this policy have on previous catchment consultation transition arrangements?**

The proposed Admissions Policy does not change any existing catchment consultation transition arrangements. However, it does clarify how transitions should be managed going forward.

**9.12 I kindly request confirmation of the current policy regarding sibling placements in such circumstances and whether an exclusion clause could be implemented for children from the former Glencorse catchment who had siblings enrolled at Roslin prior to the 2024 changes.**

The consultation regarding the changes to the former Glencorse catchment area included transition arrangements for siblings and was approved by Council on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

**9.13 Has there been any discussion with East Lothian Council around sharing capacity and making it convenient for pupils to access nearby high schools, even if they are in a different council area? Could cooperation between neighbouring councils address the capacity pressures in the period until Shawfair campus is available?**

There have been no formal discussions on this matter with East Lothian Council.

**9.14 My question is if there has been any alternative solutions explored by Midlothian Council to address this pressure on school places?**

Midlothian Council continually monitors, reviews and updates its Learning Estate Strategy to ensure that the supply of school places meets local demand across the entire authority. This includes ongoing monitoring of data including school rolls and a

detailed analysis of roll projections, informed by housing land audit data, to provide a clear picture of capacity requirements for each school in its local context.

Midlothian Council is committed to delivering expanded school provision across Midlothian to meet the needs of our rapidly growing communities. This includes recent major projects such as the new Easthouses Primary School, the new Mayfield Community Learning Campus, and the replacement Beeslack High School, alongside other planned improvements across the authority.

Where additional capacity is required, Midlothian Council works with developers to secure contributions towards the funding of new or expanded school places. However, in the current challenging financial climate, it is not always possible to increase school places beyond the requirements identified through these assessments.

**9.15 Has anyone thought about what current students of St David's RC High School think about this?**

In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended), Midlothian Council is required to consult with pupils at any affected school, where they are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity. To meet this obligation, the Council facilitated a series of digital Pupil Voice engagement sessions across all Midlothian schools directly impacted by the proposed changes. A Google Form survey and an accompanying presentation, jointly developed by the Education and Digital Inclusion and Learning Teams, were distributed to schools to support pupil discussions and gather feedback. Several schools, including St David's RC High School, participated and submitted responses. These have been recorded and will form part of the statutory consultation evidence base.

**9.16 We would be grateful for clarification on whether a formal request was made to East Lothian Council for an impact assessment and, if such a request exists, that this correspondence be made publicly available.**

It is our understanding that East Lothian Council will carry out any required impact assessment. The scope and nature of these assessments will depend on the final decision made by Midlothian Council. This approach ensures that any potential implications are appropriately evaluated in accordance with the outcome determined by Midlothian Council.

**9.17 What is the procedure if a school doesn't have space for the children living in the catchment area?**

We carefully monitor the number of children enrolled in our schools and that data along with pupil projections are used to predict available capacity in our schools.

Should a school be approaching its capacity we work with Senior Officers and the School Management Team to identify changes in working practise that will free up capacity in the school, such as shared senior phase subject offers.

We also work with our Learning Estate colleagues to identify short-, medium- and long-term building requirements for our schools, this could include increasing the capacity by adding temporary accommodation.

If, after these measures are implemented, the school is still oversubscribed then our current policy states: If a place at a catchment school is not available, parents/carers will be offered a place at the nearest Midlothian secondary school to their home address with places available. They will be given the option to make a placing request to another school, if they so wish. The pupil will be placed on a waiting list for the catchment school in order of priority and, should a place become available, parents/carers will be contacted by Pupil Placement. Where there are more pupils in one category, the priority will be based on distance.

We do not anticipate this part of the policy to change following this consultation.

**9.18 Midlothian council doesn't not have the legal authority to make this change, only the Secretary of State can i.e. the Education Minister.**

Midlothian Council does have the legal authority to propose and implement changes to its school admissions policy. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a statutory duty on local authorities to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education within their area. This includes managing admissions, catchment areas, and placing requests.

Additionally, the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended, provides the framework for how councils must conduct consultations when proposing significant changes to school arrangements. This includes changes to admissions policies. The Act requires councils to consult with affected stakeholders—including pupils, parents, staff, and Education Scotland—and to publish a consultation report before making a final decision.

While Scottish Ministers have the power to "call in" certain proposals, such as school closures, they do not have exclusive authority over routine policy changes like admissions criteria. In the case of Midlothian, once the statutory consultation process is complete and all representations have been considered, the final decision on whether to implement any changes rests with the elected members of Midlothian Council.

The education authority has legal authority to make changes to its admission policy, subject to compliance with the relevant legislation, for relevant proposals. If the education authority engages in any further consultation, it will, as is current practice, consider and comply with any other required legislation pertinent to the proposal.

**9.19 When I attended the public consultation on the 22nd of May at Easthouses Primary School, I did not obtain the level of clarity to my question as regards 'exceptional circumstances' and what they were - Would asylum seekers be considered to have exceptional circumstances, such that they get priority over British children?**

At the meeting, Council officers clarified that there is no change to the definition of exceptional circumstances under the proposed admissions policy. There is no set definition of exceptional circumstances. Each case is assessed by a panel to determine if a child / young person should be given a high priority to attend a school. Examples of exceptional circumstances include parental bereavement or a child who is care experienced.

Officers further noted that a panel reviews the information submitted and makes a decision based on the evidence provided. While there is no definitive list, it was emphasised that the number of cases qualifying under exceptional circumstances is typically very small in numbers.

An Asylum seeker would not automatically be granted exceptional circumstances, and the panel would consider all factors.

**9.20 The Council has misinterpreted the formality of the existing agreement as regards Catholic pupils of Loretto RC Primary School continuing their education at St David's RC High School.**

The education authority does not accept that it misinterpreted the formality of the existing agreement. However, even if they are incorrect in that position, the formal status of the arrangement (that is whether it was a formal or informal arrangement) did not impact upon the decision to consult upon the proposals to vary that arrangement, nor upon the manner in which the consultation was carried out.

Irrespective of the Education Authority's intention to recommend that further consultation is undertaken with regards to Loretto RC Primary School pupils, the education authority considers that the proposed changes as outlined within the Proposal Paper do not constitute a breach of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, which grants local authorities discretion over placing requests and catchment arrangements, provided that statutory duties are met. The education authority retains the duty to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of education and to prioritise catchment pupils, including those baptised Roman Catholic, in denominational schools. The revised policy continues to uphold this principle within Midlothian.

Regarding the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the education authority has followed the statutory consultation process, including public meetings, stakeholder engagement, and involvement of Education Scotland. The proposal remains subject to review and feedback, and the final decision will consider educational benefits, equality impacts, and all representations received.

**9.21 It has also unfairly prejudiced and singled out a specific group of pupils with a protected characteristic.**

The Education Authority's position is that the proposed changes do not unfairly prejudice any group with a protected characteristic. An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Fairer Scotland Duty. The proposed revised admissions policy continues to support Catholic education within Midlothian and does not remove access to denominational schooling.

While the impact on affected families is acknowledged, the Education Authority's actions appear to be aligned with its statutory duties.

**9.22 Any decision to change the current arrangement is so unreasonable in the context of the 1918 Act and Catholic education in Scotland that no reasonable local authority would consider it;**

The Education (Scotland) Act 1918 brought Catholic schools into the state system and established key protections to preserve their religious character. These include

safeguards around religious instruction, the ethos of the school, and the appointment of teachers. These provisions remain in force today and must be respected in any policy affecting denominational schools.

However, these protections do not prevent a local authority from proposing changes to admissions policies. The education authority has the legal authority to make such proposals under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, which places a duty on councils to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education.

has the legal authority to make such proposals under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, which places a duty on councils to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education.

Any significant change, including to admissions, must follow the statutory process set out in the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010. This process involves public consultation, engagement with stakeholders such as parents, pupils, staff, and Education Scotland, and the publication of a consultation report. Once this process is complete and all views have been considered, the final decision rests with the elected members of Midlothian Council.

**9.23 The proposed actions are not proportionate to the aim the Council seeks to achieve**

The proposed policy changes are intended to future-proof the admissions system, ensuring that Midlothian resident and catchment children retain access to their local schools and that the process remains fair and sustainable. The Council's Learning Estate Strategy and intake management practices are part of a broader effort to plan ahead rather than react to capacity issues once they become critical.

The education authority has made clear that the sole aim is not to respond to current demand, but to ensure that future pressures can be adequately managed. With being recognised as Scotland's fastest-growing local authority, Midlothian is experiencing rapid population growth driven by extensive housebuilding and inward migration. This expansion is already placing strain on school capacity, and the Council anticipates that demand for school places will continue to rise significantly.

While the education authority can appreciate the basis of the concerns raised, it considers that the actions are necessary and proportionate in order to ensure there is a sufficient long-term strategy to manage growth and avoid disruption to families and schools in the years ahead.

**9.24 There exists a binding arrangement in place whereby pupils of Loretto RC Primary School continue their Catholic education at St David's RC High School as if they were residing in the catchment area. Those pupils and their parents are entitled to rely on that arrangement continuing. Even if such proposed change to the order of priority were to be accepted (which it is not) then it should not (i) be changed by the Council unilaterally on what is effectively less than 6 months' notice, and (ii) take place until at least 2033 (to allow the new primary 1 cohort to enter St David's RC High School on the current terms).**

The assertion that there exists a binding arrangement guaranteeing pupils from Loretto RC Primary School automatic progression to St David's RC High School, as if they

were within the catchment area, is not supported by current legislation, formal policy or any documentation/records held by Midlothian or East Lothian Councils.

Following the disaggregation of local authorities under the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994, an arrangement was continued which allowed pupils from Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian to attend St David's RC High School, in Midlothian. However, this arrangement has never been formalised in legislation or reflected in Midlothian Council's admissions policy, and it does not apply to any other Roman Catholic primary school in East Lothian.

We recognise the strength of feeling expressed by families, and we are carefully considering all representations made during the consultation period in determining the most appropriate way in which to proceed.

**9.25 There could be doubts over the provision of school bus service being continued by East Lothian Council if the link between Loretto primary and St David's High School is formally broken.**

Following discussions with colleagues at East Lothian Council, they have advised that any questions or concerns relating to internal arrangements within East Lothian should be directed to the following mailbox: [educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk). All enquiries sent to the email address provided will be reviewed and responded to individually by the appropriate team.

In their response to Education Scotland's consultation, East Lothian Council have confirmed transport will be provided for the coming year. Education Scotland recommended that if this proposal is agreed, it would be important for East Lothian and Midlothian Councils work together to consider any travel implications it could create for young people and their families.

**9.26 If the Council have never had to reject admissions from other council areas then as parents we are unsure as to why this proposal is being suggested.**

With being recognised as Scotland's fastest-growing local authority, Midlothian is experiencing rapid population growth driven by extensive housebuilding and inward migration. This expansion is already placing strain on school capacity, and the Council anticipates that demand for school places will continue to rise significantly.

To date, we have been able to accommodate the list of children provided by East Lothian under the historical Loretto RC Primary School arrangement. However, in line with legislation, we refuse placing requests from other local authorities when we are unable to offer a place. There are children who attend Loretto RCPS who are not on the list provided by East Lothian Council, who submit an out of authority placing request which have not always been granted. For example, for August 2025 entry, over 40% of placing requests from other local authority areas were refused.

**9.27 It is crucial that the Council considers the implications of any changes to the current admissions policy, especially in light of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which emphasizes the importance of community input and the preservation of educational opportunities.**

Midlothian Council must give full and careful consideration to the implications of any proposed changes to its current admissions policy, particularly in light of the statutory obligations set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended) and the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. These legislative frameworks place a clear duty on the Council to ensure that any variation to school admissions is not only educationally sound but also reflects the views and needs of the communities it serves.

The 2010 Act mandates a transparent, accountable, and inclusive consultation process for any significant changes to school arrangements. Midlothian Council has adhered to this by issuing a comprehensive proposal document, engaging stakeholders through public meetings and virtual sessions, and involving Education Scotland in the review of educational impacts. This process ensures that community input is central to decision-making and that the educational benefits of any proposed changes are clearly articulated and evidenced.

The proposed changes aim to prioritise catchment pupils and Midlothian residents, ensuring fairness amid rising demand. While this formalises admissions criteria, it also acknowledges the historical arrangement and considers their impact. An Integrated Impact Assessment, which is also being undertaken, ensures compliance with equality and accessibility standards.

**9.28 Under the Education Scotland Act, what duty of care does the local authority have to educate children who live within the local authority? Does that change if the children are Roman Catholic? What we want to know, is legally, can the local authority give priority to Roman Catholic children who live in another local authority over non Roman Catholic children who attend a RC primary school, who may be Christian?**

Under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, Midlothian Council has a statutory duty to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education for all children residing within its boundaries. This duty applies universally, regardless of a child's religious affiliation or denominational status.

Every residential address in Midlothian is assigned both a denominational and non-denominational catchment school, and parents/carers are informed of their right to make placing requests to alternative schools. While the legal duty remains consistent for all children, the Council's admissions policy for denominational (Roman Catholic) schools introduces prioritisation based on religious affiliation.

The proposed Admissions Policy explicitly affirms that Midlothian-resident children—particularly those residing within the designated catchment area—are to be prioritised ahead of any placing requests from outside the authority. This principle applies equally to both denominational and non-denominational schools. In the case of denominational schools, the policy outlines a clear hierarchy: catchment children who are baptised Roman Catholic are prioritised first, followed by other catchment children. Only once all Midlothian-resident children have been placed are out-of-authority placing requests considered, including those from Roman Catholic children residing in other local authority areas.

Therefore, the Council cannot legally or procedurally prioritise Roman Catholic children from another local authority over non-Roman Catholic children who live in Midlothian



and attend a Roman Catholic primary school—unless the latter are not baptised and the school is oversubscribed.

Should Council approve the continuation of the historical arrangement with regard to Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian, this would not apply to other East Lothian Roman Catholic primary schools. This approach ensures that Midlothian Council fulfils its statutory obligations to its own residents and maintains a fair, transparent, and legally compliant admissions process, reflecting the Council's commitment to equity and consistency in the allocation of school places.

## **10 Education Scotland Report**

10.1 In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Midlothian Council's proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education. The Education Scotland report can be read in full at Appendix 5.

10.2 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the five public meetings held on 22, 24 April 2025 as well as 12, 15 and 22 May 2025. in connection with the council's proposal;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others, and;
- visits to the site of Danderhall Primary School, Paradykes Primary School, St David's Roman Catholic (RC) High School, Sacred Heart Primary School, Hawthornden Primary School, Roslin Primary School, Dalkeith High School, Newtongrange Primary School, St Andrew's RC Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees;
- meeting with representatives of the Catholic Church and officers from East Lothian and Midlothian Councils.

10.3 The Summary section of the Education Scotland report summarises their findings and conclusions as follows:

*HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits in Midlothian Council having an admissions policy that will best manage the change in their school population. Many stakeholders that spoke to HM Inspectors recognise the challenging situation in Midlothian of rising school rolls at many of their schools. This proposal, if agreed, has the potential to change access to preferred Midlothian schools for a few children and young people. Should this proposal be agreed, it will be important for Midlothian Council to work with schools to support cohesive and effective transitions for all children. Stakeholders raised the need for Midlothian Council to enable younger siblings to attend the same school as their siblings. They would like this to be considered further by the council if they decide to change their admissions policy. HM Inspectors recommend the council further explore with stakeholders how to reduce any negative impact of this proposal in regard to siblings.*

*Families who live outwith Midlothian, but whose children and young people attend Midlothian schools, are worried by the proposal. In particular, there is a long history of children who attend Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian being able to transition to St David's RC High School in Midlothian for secondary education. Both the affected families and representatives of the Catholic Church are concerned that this proposal, if agreed, will potentially remove these children's access to faith-based education once they reach the secondary stage of education. If the proposal is agreed, it will be important for the two councils to work together to minimise disruption to these children's learning journeys.*

### **Midlothian Council's Response to Education Scotland's Report**

- 10.4 Midlothian Council welcomes the report by Education Scotland which highlights the benefits of the proposal and the education authority accepts its findings. Officers from the education authority met to consider the content of the report and the action highlighted in the summary.

- 10.5 In response to the findings contained within the Education Scotland report Midlothian has been asked to address the following points:

*Should this proposal be agreed, it will be important for Midlothian Council to work with schools to support cohesive and effective transitions for all children. Stakeholders raised the need for Midlothian Council to enable younger siblings to attend the same school as their siblings.*

- 10.6 If the proposal is approved, Midlothian Council is committed to developing clear and consistent transition guidance that supports families, including those with siblings.

### **11 Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies**

- 11.1 Section (10) (3) of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Consultation Proposal Document which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.

- 11.2 Two corrections within the Consultation Proposal Document were identified by the Council following the consultation period. These can be found in Appendix 4.

- 11.3 The correction in the proposal consultation document page 7, paragraph 21, occurred due to an administrative error and this was the only place this occurred in the documentation. This made no material change to the consultation.

- 11.4 The correction in the Information Leaflet, page 1, occurred due to an administrative error and this was the only place this occurred in the documentation. This made no material change to the consultation.

### **12 Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

- 12.1 Section 9(1) of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* states that:

After the education authority has received Education Scotland's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,
  - (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,
  - (iii) Education Scotland's report.
- 12.2 Following receipt of the Education Scotland report, 511 questionnaire responses received during the consultation period and consideration of oral representations made at a public meeting held during the consultation period, officers reviewed the proposal.
- 12.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by relevant officers within the Council's Children, Young People's and Partnership Directorate. Data and factual information was checked where required and advice and input was sought from other Council Services where needed to consider the issues raised. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of sections 9(1), 12 and 13(3) (b) of the 2010 Act.

### **13 Legal Issues**

- 13.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* throughout this statutory consultation.
- 13.2 The Council is mindful of its duties in respect of equality under the *Equality Act 2010*, the *Public Sector Equality Duty 2011*, and the *Fairer Scotland Duty* (Part one of the Equality Act).
- 13.3 Under the terms of the *Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010*, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without having reviewed the relevant proposal having regard, in particular, to:
- a) relevant written representations received from any person during the consultation period;
  - b) oral representation made to it by any person at the public meetings held on;
  - c) the Education Scotland report;
  - d) preparing a Consultation Proposal; and
  - e) waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.
- 13.4 As it is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in paper form, if required, on 18 August 2025, this meets the statutory requirement to publish this report for more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by Midlothian Council.

### **14 Personnel Implications**

- 14.1 If this proposal is implemented the variation to the School Admission Policy will be implemented from September 2025.
- 14.2. The proposal affirms Midlothian Council's ongoing commitment to prioritising catchment-area children for placements in their local schools. This approach strengthens continuity in educational progression and fosters a sense of community cohesion by enabling children to learn and grow within their local environment.

- 14.3 The implementation of the proposed variation to the School Admission Policy is not expected to result in any changes to staffing structures or personnel arrangements within Midlothian schools. The Council has confirmed that there will be no implications for teaching or support staff in any of the affected schools. This includes both the number of staff employed and the nature of their roles and responsibilities.
- 14.4 The proposal will not impact school management arrangements. Leadership teams and operational structures will remain consistent with current practice, ensuring stability across the school estate. This continuity is particularly important in maintaining the quality of educational provision and supporting staff wellbeing.

## **15 Environmental Issues**

- 15.1 Overall there are no environmental impacts as a result of this proposal.

## **16 Conclusions**

- 16.1 On the basis of the feedback received and taking account of the educational and social benefits of the proposal, it is concluded that:

a) The education authority have received supportive submissions that the proposal provides fairness and clarity for prioritising Midlothian children, future proofing the admissions policy to address ongoing growth and equity for Midlothian taxpayers and residents.

b) The education authority received a range of views with regard to the Historical Arrangement with East Lothian Council for Loretto RCPS, both for and against. Midlothian Council education authority has given consideration as to the most appropriate way in which to proceed. As referenced in the body of the report, it is the intention of the education authority to recommend to Midlothian Council that further consideration be given to the arrangements for admission to St David's RC High School of pupils attending Loretto RC Primary School to provide clarity for all parties.

## Appendix 1 - Comments from Questionnaire Responses

Of the 511 questionnaire responses, 280 contained comments of which 221 declined permission to make their comments publicly available. However, their representations have been taken account of and responded to in Section 9 of the Consultation Proposal. The summary of comments below, were made from the remaining 59 responses who did not choose the option to decline permission to make their comments publicly available.

Comments
<p>This would be unfair to parents who already have a child within a Midlothian Primary School and who wish for their younger child to go there as well.</p> <p>As a teacher at a secondary school within Midlothian, being able to send my child to a school in Midlothian, despite living in Edinburgh, allows me to continue working full time due to the breakfast club and after school club offered at the school. I would hope for my younger son to also be able to attend the same primary school when he turns 5. This proposal would severely limit that opportunity.</p> <p>It would also disadvantage them when it comes to applying to go to the schools catchment high school which would have a negative emotional impact on them.</p>
<p>Seems a reasonable proposal. Main consideration should be that any placing decisions are made in an open and transparent manner.</p>
<p>Subject: Response to Admissions Policy Consultation</p> <p>Dear Midlothian Council,</p> <p>I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the school admissions policy. I fully support the inclusion of sibling priority in the criteria, as it is essential for families. Parents cannot be in two places at once, and ensuring that siblings can attend the same school will make school drop-offs and pick-ups far more manageable.</p> <p>I believe these changes will create a fairer and more practical admissions process for families across Midlothian. Thank you for considering the needs of parents and children in this review.</p>
<p>I disagree with the change to the admissions proposal, especially the termination of the existing arrangement with Loretto RC. This change means that children currently attending Loretto fall down to the bottom of the list with no provisions for Roman Catholic secondary school.</p>
<p>I completely agree with the priority classifications for admissions. My family has to apply for out of catchment and I consider the priority candidates for out of catchment fair. I do think that the catchment areas need to be reconsidered for Penicuik. The town has grown so much in the past few years and the catchment areas no longer logical. Our nearest school is not my child's actual catchment school. We would have to travel a considerable distance to attend that school, either by car or over a number of busy roads. I hope the catchments are reconsidered soon to take these issues into account.</p>
<p>Although I have selected disagree. I do understand and agree no child should face restrictions to an educational environment of their or their parents choosing. It should not come at a cost though of pupils withing the alignment of current catchment areas that these children don't receive a place because children are that are outwith the catchment.</p>

Where focus is on the support needs of those children with ASN again this provision should not come at a cost or effect places of mainstream pupils.
The children of Midlothian should be prioritised based on their most local school.
Unfair proposals which will discriminate children and families who seek a continuation of catholic education and dilute school identities.
<p>I am extremely concerned that this will affect the children in Danderhall year groups that are due to begin S1 at Dalkeith High School in the next few years. Including my child in current P5.</p> <p>The new proposal sets that as these children are the furthest to the boundary of the catchment area that they may not get a space! Where would they go? How would they get there?</p> <p>This is very alarming that children could potentially not be given a space at their catchment Secondary school!</p> <p>It is not the children's fault that Midlothian Council have not built the new Shawfair campus in a timely manner.</p> <p>The current Primary 5 children were the children who had to start Primary 1 during COVID. Please don't let their start to S1 fill them with additional trauma!</p>
I agree that children within a school catchment area should be the first choice for the school
In terms of complex needs and siblings then I agree but there would be no need to consider siblings if catchment meant that was your school...fullstop. working in a school I've seen people use old ID or doctored council tax letters to get into schools and they really live in Edinburgh. The fact that people can "choose" a public school beggars belief and they should go to their local school for many many reasons.
<p>Loretto RC Primary pupils have always had an automatic right to attend St David's High School and when my husband and I made the decision for our two children to attend Loretto RC Primary, our catchment Catholic school, instead of our non-denominational catchment school, we expected them to continue in their Catholic education journey at St David's High School. This is now under threat due to this proposal.</p> <p>This proposal has a significant impact on the admittance of Loretto RC Primary children to St David's High School, a long-standing arrangement which has been in place since council boundary changes in the 1990s.</p> <p>Longer term, if fewer Catholic children attend St David's High school, this could have a significant impact on the Catholic identity and long-term future of St David's High School, and Catholic provision in Scotland in general.</p> <p>Catholic schools assist parents in helping their children grow in knowledge, wisdom and virtue. Denominational education has made positive contribution to Scotland by building upon Christian values, integrity and moral courage. The central Catholic teachings prepare pupils to lead responsible, confident, and moral lives.</p> <p>Loretto RC Primary is a small school, it is oriented at family and community. This change would have a significant impact on all children, their families and the community. This would also mean that children from Loretto that already attend St David's would be separated from the rest of their community.</p>

One of the points the proposal addresses is 'reducing the likelihood of separation from their P7 peer group', but this is exactly what would happen to the children in Loretto. It has been a tradition for Loretto RC children to attend St David's, now there is already uncertainty and division, with P7 children not only this year, but in the future, being separated into 3 schools- St David's, Musselburgh Grammar and Rosehill.

Although 'the Council aims to create a robust policy that benefits every child and young person' (Section D. Point 1), this change would have a huge impact on a small group of children from Loretto, and their families.

Currently, the first priority for admission to denomination schools is given to those who are baptised Roman Catholic. As per this proposal, the priority for admission to St David's High School will now be given to all Midlothian children, whether Catholic or not, before any other children from other councils. Children that attend a Catholic primary school and wish to then attend a Catholic secondary school, will potentially have their placing request rejected due to lack of spaces, as these will be filled with non-Catholic children that perhaps live close to the school.

Scottish Government vows to 'Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)' but refusing children to attend their chosen secondary school will have a significant impact on children's wellbeing, mental health and education, possibly meaning they will not reach their full potential.

I strongly disagree with the proposals to remove Loretto RC Primary School from St. David's RC High School catchment area. Pupils from Loretto RC have been attending St. David's since 1948, including one of my grandparents, parents, myself and now my children. More than 100 children from Loretto RC are currently enrolled at St. David's. The proposals would, in practice, end Catholic secondary education for children from Musselburgh as Loretto RC children would be very unlikely to receive places as "out of catchment" students. The strong, faith-based community links between Musselburgh and Dalkeith would be badly damaged. On a personal level, as a parent with a child currently at St. David's and with a younger sibling at Loretto RC we would be left as a family with children in two different secondary schools. It appears the impact of this on me and other families - there will be many in a similar situation given the large numbers of Musselburgh children at St. David's have not been included in your impact analysis. It would be devastating, time-consuming and expensive for us, and for many others. Plus, we would have one child enrolled in a denominational school and one not.

This is a worry for parents of children who already attend school and whether or not they will then get into the same high school as their peers. Also for younger siblings to get into the same school. My children both attend a catholic school and they are not baptised although I would say I raise my children with the values of a catholic. I worry my 3 children will not be able to attend the same school and that by the time they reach high school they will be made to go to a different one from their peers which I know will have a huge impact on them socially, mentally and likely academically as well. I would personally leave the school system alone in Midlothian as it is working well.

As parent of 2 catholic children I do not like my children separated. My sons is at St Davids School and my daughters at Loretto Primary School. I want them to go there as well with their brother. I want them to have a catholic school with their families and friends.

It is not possible for working parents to drop off at two different locations and have the same opportunities in the workplace. If admissions are not based on catchment and siblings attendance it is a further levy on working parents

This will definitely cause more secularization and Apostasy in Midlothian. This will start a process of turmoil and eventually lack of will for anyone wishing to bring their children up into the Catholic Faith. Learning and education in the Catholic schooling processes is an integral part of teaching the values of the Catholic faith partnered within the educational process. With less choices this will eventually deminishing into the norm.

As a Catholic family, it is of utmost importance to us that our children continue their education in a faithful environment, where they can grow in their faith as well as in their academic pursuits. The long-standing arrangement that allows Our Lady of Loretto students to transition into St David's High School has been vital for maintaining this continuity. Unfortunately, apart from St David's RC High School, there are no other suitable options for our children that align with our values and beliefs.

The potential reduction in the number of Roman Catholic children attending St David's High School could pose a significant threat to its Catholic identity and long-term viability. It is crucial that the Council considers the implications of any changes to the current admissions policy, especially in light of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which emphasizes the importance of community input and the preservation of educational opportunities.

We urge the Council to take into account the voices of families like ours who seek a Catholic education for their children and to ensure that Our Lady of Loretto pupils retain their right to attend St David's High School. Upholding this arrangement is essential for fostering a strong and vibrant Catholic community within the school.

While I understand the reasons behind these proposed changes, I believe they place East Lothian Catholic pupils attending Our Lady of Loretto RC Primary School in a very difficult position. Specifically, these changes would assign the lowest priority to out-of-catchment pupils, which, in the current climate, effectively gives them little to no chance of securing a place at St David's High School.

The importance of continuity in Catholic education cannot be overstated. For families like ours, it is essential that our children can continue their education in an environment that fosters their faith and upholds our values. The historical arrangement between Midlothian Council and Loretto RC Primary School dates back to the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994, which resulted in the disaggregation of schools in 1996. This informal agreement has allowed children from Loretto RC Primary to attend St David's High School, ensuring that they maintain their Catholic education through their formative years.

It is vital that the Council considers the implications of these changes on the community's ability to provide Catholic education in a supportive and cohesive environment. We urge the Council to maintain the historical arrangement that has served our children well and to ensure that all pupils have equitable access to their preferred school, thereby preserving the Catholic identity and values that are so important to our families.

St. David's secondary school is the only Cathotlic school in the area. I also think that Catholic community is wider than council boundaries therefore taking away opportunity from my child to continue her education in Catholic school is extremely worrying.

I am speaking as a pupil of St David's high school. I strongly disagree that this arrangement should be made, as I truly do see Loretto RC students creating a community within school. I have joined St David's quite recently, and used to go to Loretto. The transition was made easier as it was comforting to see former Loretto pupils being successful and truly fitting in within the school. Another strong reason as to why I believe that this idea is not a good one is



that St David's is the only Catholic high school near our area. I really do believe that if students are strongly religious, then they should be able to go to a school with the same standards as them. They should be able to pursue their faith and further understand their religion. Furthermore, Our Lady of Loretto Parish and St David's have had a strong bond for a while now. I have reason to believe that our Parish has recently given funds to the school in confidentiality, and I feel that shows the community's devotion to the school. Loretto and St David's have had a catchment for as long as I remember, and as much as the council would like to deny it, there is much evidence that this was a formally made decision, not an improper one. Please listen to this community, look at our bonds and ties to this school, and let Loretto students continue to pursue their futures within this school.

Kids from Loretto RC are no longer welcome to St Davids school in Dalkeith. These proposition or properly called changes were done without any consultation with the public, Councillors or church authorities. They were done at the last moment giving parents little to no time to react and apply to other schools. All the decisions seem to have been made with malicious intent.

If the council have never had to reject admissions from other council areas then as parents we are unsure as to why this proposal is being suggested.  
It is important to us for our children to receive a catholic education and believe this proposal is being put in place to diminish numbers and eventually combine pupils with Dalkeith High.

Another attempt for the demise of Catholic education in Midlothian. Many non Catholics and those of other faiths including Muslims choose to send their children to Catholic schools for the values and beliefs system taught. It isn't only the Catholic community being targeted here, it's multiple faiths.

This has been an agreement going back many years.  
St davids has always provided a catholic education for both Midlothian and Loretto.

It seems to be that Midlothian council are trying to slowly take away the catholic education offered.

Why would Midlothian council want to take away that catholic education away?

It is imperative that Catholic schools remain open.

As a parent with two children currently at St. David's, I strongly disagree with the proposal to remove catchment status from Loretto RC Primary School, an arrangement that has been in place since 1948.

Our children have greatly benefitted from the link between the two schools, and are thriving in the supportive, faith-based education at St. David's that builds on their primary education at Loretto. It saddens us to think that future children from Loretto RC would not get the same opportunity if these proposals were accepted, and in fact that any prospect of continuing with Catholic education would be effectively ruled out.

At the recent public meeting, we heard from Council officials that not one Midlothian pupil had been refused a place at St. David's because of pressure on numbers and the presence of Loretto children, so I do not understand why this proposal is necessary.

The proposal would also over time have a very negative impact on the academic community at St. David's too. Former Loretto RC children make up more than 100 of the 800 pupils at St.

David's, including the current Head Boy and Head Girl, and many former pupils (now parents and grandparents) continue to support the school, including financially through raising money at events.

This is a terrible idea, and I hope Councillors and officials will think again.

Loretto and St David's have had a long standing affiliation for many years now. My father, who's now 72, attended both schools. My two sisters and I attended both schools. My niece and nephew attended both schools. Both of my own two children currently attend Loretto and our plans were always for them to attend St David's also. Indeed, many children currently attending Loretto, are doing so because we, as their parents, many whom are following generations of tradition, made that choice for them with the existing knowledge that the next step in their religious education would take them onwards to St David's. Lots of families feel strongly that children being raised in the Catholic faith should have access to relevant religious teaching, not only in our local parish, but in school also. Sadly, St David's is the only Catholic school in our local area. The children attending Loretto who wish to continue their religious education beyond P7 should be allowed to do so and their option to do so at St David's should not be taken away from them. I implore those who have any influence on this decision to please reconsider this proposal.

I think it is important to consider to offer the children of Loretto RC access to an education at St David's

It is imperative that we prioritise children and young people within Midlothian. Without moving ahead with this proposal, children within Sacred Heart Primary school, which is geographically furthest from St David's High School, are at a disadvantage should the existing policy continue. Families choose to attend a faith-based schools for a variety of reasons, and not solely based on faith. Families of different or no faiths have shared with me that the community-feel and nurturing ethos of a Catholic school is what has drawn them to Sacred Heart. Children develop strong relationships during their time at primary school and it is imperative that they are given the opportunity to continue to build these relationships as they transition from primary school to high school. With the current policy, children at Sacred Heart are at risk of losing friendships and their sense of security at what can be a very difficult time for them. Increasing this risk will have massive implications on pupil wellbeing, will increase levels of anxiety and could be detrimental to the mental health of our children and young people as well as that of their parents and carers. I predict that this will also significantly impact academic confidence and overall attainment for Midlothian.

The new policy creates very clear and concise boundaries in relation to catchment areas, which I believe is necessary to ensure equity for our children and young people in Midlothian. By giving preference to children from outside Midlothian, as the current policy does, even if these children are Catholic, we are not being equitable to the children and their families who live in Midlothian, who contribute to communities within Midlothian; whose families have chosen to be part of Midlothian and who contribute to public funding within Midlothian. We are undermining the overall principles of fairness and inclusivity: giving higher priority to children from another local authority is inequitable and will disadvantage our local families within Midlothian.

My eldest is at an out of catchment school because I looked into the schools in the area & the school they go to was in my & others opinion the best for them. This needs to be taken into consideration. Why should parents have to settle for a school that may not be the best for their child? I also have 2 younger children who won't be starting school until 2027. I think that siblings should be guaranteed to attend the same school. How are parents meant to drop off

& collect at two different schools? Especially when the children aren't allowed to walk alone until at least P4? I would hope that these things are being taken into consideration.

My comments are in relation to the proposed changes affecting the transition of pupils from Loretto RC Primary School to St David's RC High School.

1. Pupils from Loretto RC Primary School have been transferring to St David's RC High School since St David's was founded in 1948.
2. Loretto RC Primary School was always a Midlothian School until the council boundaries were officially changed in April 1996.
3. It was the only denominational school affected by the changes and East Lothian did not have a Roman Catholic High School.
4. Discussions took place between the two authorities and it was agreed that the pupils from Loretto RC Primary School could continue to transfer to St David's RC High School.
5. The other Roman Catholic primary schools in East Lothian, namely St Mary's, St Gabriel's and St Martin's, have always been East Lothian schools which is why they have always had to make placing requests.
6. Pupils from Loretto RC Primary School have been transferring to St David's RC High School for 77 years.
7. Given the long history between the two schools and the very strong bond between the two communities, I would urge you to reconsider your decision.

We are based in Auchendinny and are part of the closed Glencorse Primary School catchment.

Our daughter started P1 at Roslin Primary School in August 2024. As agreed at closure of Glencorse Primary School, we had the option of choosing Roslin Primary School where she was already well settled in Nursery.

She has a sibling, who was born in November 2023. Per guidelines, he will be starting P1 in August 2028. It is currently not clear to me if her sibling or others in the same/similar situation would be able to enrol at Roslin PS.

Our daughter started at Roslin Primary School before the recent catchment changes. There was also previous agreement at closure of Glencorse Primary School that siblings would be kept together.

It would be of great benefit to our son and family if they could enrol at the same school.

You will be aware that keeping siblings together in school promotes emotional safety at a critical time when going through a lot of development and change, as well as promoting stronger bonds between them.

I hope this is covered by your policy but if not could you please assess and make an allowance in your review.

1. I previously completed a survey on sibling criteria for children from the closed Glencorse Primary School catchment who are currently at Roslin Primary School. I explained that your policy was not clear on whether siblings would be able to attend together. In particular we have a daughter already at Roslin Primary whose sibling (our son) would be starting P1 in 2028. Being able to enrol him at the same school will be crucial for his development, for their sibling bond & for our family as a support unit for both. Can you please review the sibling policy and make some allowances if not already covered?

2. In addition - I would like to extend my views to High School enrolment. It is not clear if our daughter, originally from closed Glencorse PS catchment, currently enrolled at Roslin Primary since August 2024 (before the catchment changes), would be able to progress to Beeslack High school with her peer group from Roslin Primary School.

As highlighted in your report there is immense benefit to children's emotional safety, social interactions and development if they can maintain their peer links when transitioning from Primary School to High School.

I hope this is also covered by your policy but if not could you please assess and make an allowance in your review.

Catholic children have the same right to continue with religious education as children of other faiths and beliefs. Restricting their access to St David's RC High School will be detrimental to the children in my opinion

Although everyone should be given the right to practice and embrace their faith it has no bearing on education and allocations of students

Students should not be given space over others in the catchment area based purely on religion

Religions should be practiced in their own time and not dictate a school's admission policy  
Although Loretto have a historical agreement with St David's this should not determine a pupil's placement especially since the increase in demand due to population growth this would be the same regardless of religion East Lothian students should go to East Lothian schools and vice versa

The children of Loretto have a long term and successful relationship with St David's. Given that many of the current pupils had disruption to their education with lockdown of yet another radical change to their education journey can only be counterproductive.

I strongly agree that Midlothian people  
Should get places ahead of others in schools

after watching the diabolical meeting of councillors yesterday they are more keen to keep houses for the people of Midlothian but who cares who takes the spaces in our schools. How is it fair that people can fill our schools if I want a space and live in the area but someone miles away gets it before me

Councillors seriously need to listen to themselves back and Midlothian is a district on its own for a reason we are not Midlothian merged with others

As a parent with children currently at St. David's RC High School, but formerly at Loretto RC Primary, I strongly disagree with the proposal to amend the St. David catchment area to exclude Musselburgh, Wallyford and Whitecraig from the catchment area, and Loretto RC's status as an associated primary school.

These are not "informal arrangements", as the consultation document disingenuously states. Records from the Lothian Region era through to the present-day East Lothian and Midlothian Councils consistently show Loretto RC Primary as an associated (catchment) primary for St David's RC High School. This is evidenced by historic practice, council policies and references in council documents and school publications. To cite just one recent example, the advertisement for a new St. David's Head Teacher posted by Midlothian Council on the 4th October 2024, states that "... the school serves the educational needs of the Catholic community of Midlothian and East Lothian, corresponding closely to the Deanery of St David's. Associated primaries are; St Mary's, Bonnyrigg; St David's, Dalkeith; St Luke's, Mayfield; St Andrew's, Newtonloan; Sacred Heart, Penicuik; St Matthew's, Rosewell and; Loretto, Musselburgh ..."

The proposals would cause severe detriment to children, parents and carers in Musselburgh,

Wallyford and Whitecraig planning for attendance at St. David's, and cause particular hardship and practical difficulties for families with older children at St. David's and younger children excluded. They would have a very negative impact on the academic community at St. David's in which former Loretto RC children have thrived for nearly 80 years, and damage deep and long-standing community links across the Deanery of St. David's maintained since the Lothian Region was split into four Councils, including East Lothian and Midlothian in 1975.

The proposals would also mean Catholic secondary education provision for children in Musselburgh and the surrounding area would effectively cease. We are fortunate that our children, who attended Loretto RC Primary are already at St. David's and so will not be affected. We are very concerned on behalf of the parents, carers and young people in future years who will not be able to continue their faith-based education if these proposals are put into practice.

My feelings as a parent of a child at Sacred Heart Primary School in Penicuik:

So personally for me, I am very keen for my son to progress to St David's in Dalkeith. It has an excellent reputation and my son's older step-brother moved to St David's and received an excellent school experience and education there.

How would this proposal affect me?

It would probably mean that my son has a slightly better chance of attending St David's if Loretto is de-prioritised. Ethically I am not sure I agree with this because of the longstanding arrangement with Loretto students progressing to St David's and there being no other RC secondary schools in East Lothian or even the Scottish Borders.

However, it may mean that he has a slightly worse chance of attending St David's because the proposal will also prioritise pupils from baptised Catholic backgrounds, which we are not. But ethically I agree with this. We are not a Catholic family, my own spiritual beliefs are closely aligned with the values of Christian and Catholic which is why I would choose my son to attend an RC school, but ethically I personally agree with the parents of Loretto and their concerns that their 30 year arrangement may fall away, leaving them less chance of their children attending an RC school.

The upshot as I see it is that there is a lack of RC secondary schools especially in East Lothian and Scottish Borders where there are none. Given that Edinburgh City is oversubscribed, St David's is their best option. However I understand that Midlothian Council, who are expected to deliver the best for their area and are probably experiencing financial difficulties (as are all councils), have gone through a review process and come up with this proposal. It's a tricky one. In considering this I researched the numbers of RC schools in the Edinburgh and Lothians area and will paste these numbers below for info:

SOURCE: <https://archedinburgh.org/education/#our-schools--find-a-school>

Primary RC schools in Edinburgh (15):

St Joseph's, Carrick Knowe (238)  
St Mary's, City Centre (80)  
St Andrew's, Corstorphine (171)  
St Francis', Craigmillar (291)  
St Catherine's, Gracemount (216)  
St Mary's, Leith (335)  
St John Vianney's, Liberton (270)  
St Peter's, Morningside (1205)  
St Mark's, Oxcgangs (110)  
St David's, Pilton (280)  
St John's, Portobello (360)  
St Ninian's, Restalrig (286)  
St Cuthbert's, Slateford (260)  
St Margaret's, South Queensferry (210)  
Holy Cross, Trinity (580)  
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 4892

State Secondary RC schools in Edinburgh (3):

Holyrood RC High School, Duddingston, Edinburgh (2170)  
St Thomas of Aquins, Old Town, Edinburgh (773)  
St Augustines High School, Broomhouse, Edinburgh (661)  
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 3604

Primary RC schools in Midlothian (6):

St Mary's, Bonnyrigg (142)  
St David's, Dalkeith (201)  
St Andrew's, Gorebridge (153)  
St Luke's, Mayfield (192)  
Sacred Heart, Penicuik (123)  
St Matthew's, Rosewell (50)  
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 861

Secondary RC schools in Midlothian (1):

St David's RC High School, Dalkeith (750)  
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 750

Primary RC schools in East Lothian (4):

St Mary's, Haddington (104)  
Loretto, Musselburgh (164)  
St Gabriel's, Prestonpans (182)  
St Martin's, Tranent (134)  
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 584

Secondary RC schools in East Lothian (0):

TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 0

Primary RC schools in Scottish Borders (3):

St Margaret's, Galashiels (72)

Halyrude, Peebles (86)

St Joseph's, Selkirk (9)

TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 167

Secondary RC schools in Scottish Borders (0):

TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 0

Primary RC schools in West Lothian (16):

St Thomas', Addiewell (427)

St Anthony's, Armadale (195)

St Columba's, Bathgate (110)

St Mary's, Bathgate (381)

Our Lady of Lourdes, Blackburn (143)

St Nicholas, Broxburn (386)

St Paul's, East Calder (128)

St John the Baptist, Fauldhouse (176)

St Joseph's, Linlithgow (152)

Howden St Andrew's, Livingston (346)

St John Ogilvie, Livingston (347)

St Ninian's, Livingston (248)

St Mary's, Polbeth (171)

Our Lady's, Stoneyburn (72)

St Joseph's, Whitburn (232)

Holy Family, Winchburgh (177)

TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 3691

Secondary RC schools in West Lothian (3):

St Kentigern's Academy, Blackburn (1280)

St Margaret's Academy, Livingston (1132)

Sinclair Academy, Winchburgh (179)

TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS: 2591

I would like to at least maintain one tradition of many generations of which I belong to of when I was a child I attended Loretto RC primary school Musselburgh and then later to St David's RC High School ( which back then was situated at Abbey Road,Dalkeith ,later demolished)Let us stand united to keep and protect something I myself am proud to have been a part of and for many more generations to come.

I am writing as a parent of two children at St David's High School. St David's High School is a Roman Catholic school and should prioritise RC pupils from its traditional catchment area which includes Midlothian, Musselburgh, Wallyford and Whitecraig.

The proposed change to the school admissions would break a link with Loretto RC primary school in Musselburgh which has been in place for more than 75 years.

This has the twin negative impact of reducing High School catholic education provision for East Lothian pupils currently at Loretto RC primary (they have no alternative), and for St David's it means a diminution of its catholic identity if Midlothian based non-denominational pupils apply - which would be a reasonable expectation with Dalkeith High School at capacity.

We saw the impact on current p7 Loretto pupils with the removal of transition visits and considerable uncertainty about S1 placings. This negative experience and de-prioritisation of places for Loretto RC pupils from 2026 intake would deter applications. For example:

- If one child is accepted but not a younger child a few years later - this can be really impractical and inconvenient for parents and siblings.
- There could be doubts over the provision of school bus service being continued by East Lothian Council if the link between Loretto primary and St David's High School is formally broken.
- If Loretto p7 pupils either can't attend transition visits because Midlothian Council disallows Loretto transition visits or if pupils can attend transition visits but then don't secure a place in S1. In both situations the child's transition would be disrupted and disadvantaged at the crucial step of moving to high school.

I note a recent quote from Council Leader Councillor Kelly Parry regarding the Shawfair campus: "A single-campus model eliminates traditional transition challenges between primary and secondary school, reducing attainment dips and improving overall pupil progress. Pupils benefit from a familiar environment and a consistent approach to teaching and learning."

The proposal would do the exact opposite for Loretto pupil's wishing to attend St David's High School. There are several significant negative changes for parents and children that will either directly or indirectly impact the provision of RC high school education. It will place a big dilemma on parents that are concerned about the risks and impact involved under the proposed admissions.

My concern here is that this proposed change to admissions is a 'permanent' change - in so much as it can't easily be reversed if new Midlothian High School capacity is added in a few years time, particularly as there is guidance of 900 or 1200 pupil new high school capacity at Shawfair with development expected to start in the coming few years.

There is a very reasonable prospect that the pressure on Midlothian high school capacity can be addressed with upgraded and new schools. The capacity issue should be seen as a temporary pressure as the population grows and the school estate catches up. This is a temporary growing pains issue across Midlothian council area.

The detriment to catholic education provision under this proposal is of a permanent nature and very significant and negative for those directly involved and wishing their children to continue faith based education. Furthermore, placings in St David's High School from Loretto RC primary make up around 2% of the total Midlothian S1 admissions. The 120 or so pupils



from Loretto currently attending St David's high school are just 10% of the intended Shawfair High School maximum capacity. The benefit to Midlothian council by way of relieving pressure on the school estate is marginal at best and the issue should be time limited to when the Shawfair campus opens.

Overall the proposal would have very limited benefit for a short period with a very significant and permanent detriment to catholic education across Midlothian, Musselburgh, Wallyford and Whitecraig, while undermining the St David's high school community and identity.

My question is if there has been any alternative solutions explored by Midlothian Council to address this pressure on school places?

For example, has there been any discussion with East Lothian Council to explore if the councils can agree on making places available at either Musselburgh Grammar or Rosehill High School to pupils living in the north part of the Dalkeith High School catchment which are proximate to these schools and where transport routes exist. This would be under a scenario where Dalkeith High School has insufficient capacity and alternatives elsewhere in Midlothian are deemed less convenient for travel relative to the East Lothian High Schools. A reverse arrangement of sorts to Loretto catchment pupils attending St David's.

Has there been any discussion with East Lothian Council around sharing capacity and making it convenient for pupils to access nearby high schools, even if they are in a different council area? Could cooperation between neighbouring councils address the capacity pressures in the period until Shawfair campus is available?

If East Lothian and Midlothian councils had a joint education team or a more collaborative approach that recognised the valuable contribution of denominational education, I do not expect the proposals to break the link between Loretto and St David's would have happened.

I strongly disagree with the proposal to negate the arrangement whereby pupils of Loretto Primary School are able and have a right to attend St David's Catholic High School, Dalkeith.

I object that Loretto children cannot go forward to St David's School. We are a Catholic family and wish our child to have the continuation of an education and core values that St David's provides. Not just for our child but for all future generations of Loretto. We are being victimised on religious grounds, and this should be discussed at Parliament level.

Generations of my family have attended Loretto RC moving on to ST David's. It's not just a school, it's a way of life! Faith schools are very important in teaching children values and helping them to be open minded to other beliefs. Loretto RC isn't a very large school and to restrict entry to these children would have a very detrimental impact to their learning, confidence and wellbeing given that the alternative to ST David's is not just one school. The class would be split between 3 schools depending on their religion and postcode. Rosehill, Musselburgh and ST David's. My family's faith is catholic going back every generation. I chose to wait and let my son decide when he was old enough to understand about religion, which path he wanted to choose meaning my son would be excluded from ST David's as he is not baptised as yet. The thought is just heartbreaking.

Terrible the way Loretto RC has been treated with the children all worried.

I am writing to seek clarification regarding the recent catchment boundary amendments affecting Roslin Primary School. My family resides in Auchendinny, which was previously part

of the Glencorse Primary School catchment area prior to its closure.

My eldest child is currently enrolled at Roslin Primary School and will be entering Primary 2 in August 2025. At the time of their enrolment, our residence was within the official catchment for Roslin. However, I understand that following the catchment review implemented in 2024, our address is no longer within the Roslin catchment.

I would like to request that consideration be given to families in our situation—specifically, that an exemption be granted to allow siblings of pupils who were already enrolled at Roslin under the previous catchment arrangements to attend the same school. My second child will be due to start Primary 1 in August 2028, and I wish to ensure continuity of schooling for our family.

I kindly request confirmation of the current policy regarding sibling placements in such circumstances and whether an exclusion clause could be implemented for children from the former Glencorse catchment who had siblings enrolled at Roslin prior to the 2024 changes.

The long standing agreement of children from loretto RC continuing education at at David's precedes the counties being redrawn and musselburgh previously being part of Midlothian. Written agreements should have been put in place years ago.  
The new council policy of pushing a local catholic primary feed in school down the list in favour of others is quite frankly not acceptable.

Good Afternoon,

This proposal has caused great distress to the children, parents, carers, teachers, and our community in general. Currently and historically Loretto RC Primary has been a catchment school, with automatic right for pupils to continue in their Catholic education, and we have made great contribution to the school, parent council and community.

To call East Lothian people 'not local', and stressing the need to prioritise local families, this causes enormous divide in the usually very close communities.

Also, the children currently attending Loretto, be it in Primary 1 or Primary 6, have hoped to attend St David's High School, just like their siblings, friends, parents, did in the past. Loretto RC Primary School is a small school, and there is an amazing feeling of a family school, where all pupils know each other, and so do their families. To take away this right for the pupils to attend with their friends and siblings is unfair.

Has anyone thought about what current students of St David's High School think about this? Essentially, they won't have all their friends and siblings coming to study there in future years. There will be a great divide where these students will be looked at differently, as it was suggested in proposal, they are taking away spaces from 'local' Midlothian children.

I understand your argument about expanding, and Midlothian has many new houses being built and more children needing spaces at the schools. However, as Midlothian Council pride themselves in having this great Catholic education with many primary school and St David's High School, not allowing Catholic children from Loretto RC to attend would mean less Catholic children in general.

I simply suggest an amendment to the proposal, and instead of removing the 'historical arrangement' between Midlothian Council and Loretto RC Primary, making this arrangement a formal written agreement between Midlothian and East Lothian Councils. Not to have 'special treatment', but to simply continue in this great tradition and capturing what is already in place, and has been for many years.

In an ideal world all Catholic children should have access to secondary Catholic education, however if St David's High School becomes over subscribed then priority needs to be Midlothian schools rather than an East Lothian school .In our case Sacred Heart Primary needs to be prioritised over Loretto Primary when it comes to allocation of spaces.

As a parent of two children currently attending Roslin Primary I was reassured to hear at the meeting at Beeslack Community High School on Thursday, 15 May that the arrangements outlined in the Report on the outcome of the consultation on the proposed relocation of Beeslack Community High School and realignment of the associated primary catchment areas as well as the secondary catchment areas of Penicuik and Lasswade High Schools. (25 June 2024) would not be superseded by this report.

Specifically (12.9) If your child is attending Roslin PS in August 2024 and they live in the Glencorse PS catchment area they will have the choice to attend either Beeslack CHS or Penicuik HS and be treated as a catchment pupil for their selected high school.

During the consultations for the Beeslack High School we were assured that children in the Mauricewood and Glencorse Primary catchments attending Roslin PS would have the choice to go to Beeslack CHS. Correspondence with your staff reneges this commitment now considering our children out of catchment at the risk of being separated from their friends in the future. This also contradicts your statements that nothing in the new policy would supersede what has been agreed in the closure agreement.

I believe that children in the catchment area, heading to secondary school that have siblings already attending that secondary school, should be prioritised to get a place before catchment area children with exceptional circumstances do.

The end of the informal relationship between Loretto PS and St David's High School

This proposal would break a long standing agreement between Midlothian Council and Loretto RC Primary school enabling our pupils to attend St David's. There is no other Catholic high school for Loretto RC pupils to attend. By removing Loretto pupils there will be a reduction in the number of Catholic children at St David's. This will mean that St David's will no longer have a majority of Catholic pupils which means there will be no need for an RC high school at all.

The proposal would break a long standing agreement between Midlothian Council and Loretto RC primary school enabling our pupils to attend St David's. There is no other Catholic high school for Loretto RC pupils to attend. By removing Loretto pupils there will be a reduction in the number of Catholic children at St David's. This will mean that St David's will no longer have a majority of Catholic pupils which means there will be no need for an RC high school at all.

My comments and concerns are set out as follows:

1. Paragraph 32 of the Consultation refers to the "informal arrangement" allowing Catholic children attending Loretto RC Primary School to attend St David's RC High School as if they were within the catchment area of St David's RC High School. The classification of this as an

“informal arrangement” has been stated by the Council but I consider that this is more than an “informal arrangement” and in fact has all the elements of a formal arrangement on the grounds that:

- (a) it has, by the Council’s own admission, been in place for a very long time;
- (b) it was not time limited, a one-off or subject to any other conditions where it could be withdrawn;
- (c) the Council, through its own conduct, has agreed to be bound by this exception to its normal rules in respect of the catchment area for St David’s RC High School – it would not be appropriate to unilaterally change that arrangement; and
- (d) the use of the term “informal” in the Consultation demeans what has been a significant and important arrangement which has been key to Catholic education within the local area for a long time.

2. Catholic education was integrated within the Scottish state system through the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 (“1918 Act”). The Catholic Church entrusted its schools to the care of the state. A purpose of the 1918 Act was to address inequality within education in Scotland but the proposals set out in the Consultation create inequality as regards Catholic education in Scotland. On a review of the proposed new order of priority, the Council is placing pupils of Loretto RC Primary at the bottom of the list of priority for entry to St David’s RC High School. Given the longstanding arrangement then this proposal is inherently unfair in that it has the effect of singling out, and disproportionately prejudicing, that group of Catholic pupils of Loretto RC Primary School who wish to, and would have expected to, continue their Catholic education at St David’s RC High School. The proposed new order of priority breaches the current arrangement and does not respect the 1918 Act as the Council is proposing to effectively remove the right to Catholic education from those pupils.

3. I believe that the Council’s proposals could be open to review on the following grounds:

- (a) Illegality - the Council has misinterpreted the formality of the existing agreement as regards Catholic pupils of Loretto RC Primary School continuing their education at St David’s RC High School. It has also unfairly prejudiced and singled out a specific group of pupils with a protected characteristic;
- (b) Irrationality – any decision to change the current arrangement is so unreasonable in the context of the 1918 Act and Catholic education in Scotland that no reasonable local authority would consider it;
- (c) Proportionality - the proposed actions are not proportionate to the aim the Council seeks to achieve; and
- (d) Legitimate Expectations – there exists a binding arrangement in place whereby pupils of Loretto RC Primary School continue their Catholic education at St David’s RC High School as if they were residing in the catchment area. Those pupils and their parents are entitled to rely on that arrangement continuing. Even if such proposed change to the order of priority were to be accepted (which it is not) then it should not (i) be changed by the Council unilaterally on what is effectively less than 6 months’ notice, and (ii) take place until at least 2033 (to allow the new primary 1 cohort to enter St David’s RC High School on the current terms).

In summary, the Council is proposing a course of action which will lead to prejudice and unfairness for the Catholic pupils of Loretto RC Primary School and Catholic education. To

remove Catholic education from such pupils by the proposed change in the order of priority would be contrary to (a) the will of Parliament through the 1918 Act, (b) the well-established view that Catholic schools are an integral and highly successful part of state education in Scotland, and (c) the existing arrangement.

Further, when I attended the public consultation on the 22nd of May at Easthouses Primary School, I did not obtain the level of clarity to my question as regards 'exceptional circumstances' and what they were. I have concerns that in the proposed changes to the order of priority to denominational schools in Midlothian, RC baptised children within Midlothian are now third in this list, after ERG placements and 'exceptional circumstances'. When I raised the question of what was meant by 'exceptional circumstances' the council officers did not provide a definitive answer on what these circumstances would be. This then leads this category to be open to interpretation and could have negative impact and unfairness on the categories below it.

Finally, my experience of Midlothian Council has been very positive, and it listens to and responds to feedback from stakeholders. I anticipate that the views of the Catholic community will be respected and considered in order that Catholic schools continue to be valued and make a positive contribution to the education of all children and young people.

I recently bought a house in Rosewell and a big factor in moving there was so that my daughter can attend Rosewell primary as have seen that it is a good school. I hope this proposal will ensure that my daughter can attend the school in her catchment area.

The proposals will cause great stress and anxiety for Loretto RC Primary students in the coming years if they are put in place as their only option for automatic progression to a RC High school is removed by these changes. Siblings will be forced apart during their high school years as older siblings will have been already automatically accepted to St David's whilst the pupils still attending Loretto RC will have to apply via placement requests where they will be in the bottom category of priorities. These are pupils who have already suffered more in their social and educational development due to the consequences of the covid pandemic (current P6 year was in P1 when the outbreak started) than other age groups. The new Children's rights legislation which came into law in 2024 mandates that decisions taken by public authorities have to be taken in "the best interests" of the child. These proposals clearly do not satisfy these requirements as it will take away their automatic right to a religious/faith based education, and probably split year groups of Loretto RC primary pupils up. I also believe that the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 which provides clear protections from the removal of rights to admission at denominational schools has not been mentioned in this context as part of the proposal document when clearly it's provisions should have been. Those provisions infer that the Midlothian council doesn't not have the legal authority to make this changes, only the Secretary of State can i.e. the Education Minister. The Proposal document does not properly state the current catchment school status of Loretto RC for St David's. The Education (Scotland) 1980 Act has provisions within it which confirms that previous catchment status of Loretto RC to St David's should have been grandfathered over under the Act. Midlothian council have not stated any reasons why they don't believe that to be the case. No-one from Midlothian council has been able to explain where the "historical arrangement" or agreement sits in the current admissions policy, or previous versions of that document either (is that because they are catchment so don't need to be on the placements priority list?) I believe therefore that the public consultation process has been flawed as the public have been given

incorrect information about the actual nature of the changes and therefore they have been properly consulted on the matter.

## **Appendix 2 - Pupil Questionnaire Responses**

### **Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

#### **Burnbrae Primary School.**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The Rights Respecting Group at Burnbrae Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses (5 out of 6) indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable, with one response expressing uncertainty.

#### **Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- so you don't have to travel really far to get to school and because it is a right to learn
- because it could be good in some ways but bad in others
- I agree about the changes because it is nice to be close to ur school and nice and near
- I think it is good for people that live near a school so they don't have to go to a further away school for no reason
- we think it is agreeable that children who live close to a school should go to that school.
- I think it would be agreeable if children that live near the school can go to the school.

#### **Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- It couldn't be too bad if you only have to travel a short but slightly longer distance to a school rather than a closer one
- no really but thanks for having me

### **Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

#### **Cornbank Primary School.**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The group of 6 Primary 7 House Captains at Cornbank Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The collective response indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- We need to consider catchment first and the order is reasonable.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No comments made.

### **Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

#### **Danderhall Primary School.**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The pupil groups which ranged from P3 to P7 at Danderhall Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- Because the kids that can't go to school can't learn
- Because every child has the right to access to education right
- If you and your friends live close together you will probably attend the same school.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No
- no really but thanks for having me

### **Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**



### **Hawthornden Primary School.**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The P7 group at Hawthornden Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses (18 pupils) indicated that the proposed changes do not seem reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- It was felt that there were an equal number of pros and cons to the proposed changes.
- We feel strongly that the first priority should be given to siblings who already attend a Midlothian school as we feel that this would add an unnecessary level of stress, anxiety and financial commitment to families.
- We wonder how it is possible for families to collect siblings from different schools and are worried about the impact of friendships being separated if children from residential areas are split.
- We want to know more about the 'exceptional circumstances' by which young people are admitted as we feel that this should not necessarily be the top priority.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

### **Lasswade High School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The S3 Year group representatives (8 students) at Lasswade High School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- Seems fair to kids in the catchment area that they get into their nearest school.
- It's good that we are prioritising Midlothian students.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No comments were made

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

**Lasswade Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The Junior Leadership Team at Lasswade Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- These changes open up opportunities for more pupils.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No comments were made

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

**Loretto RC Primary School, East Lothian.**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

Pupil Council Group. 2 representatives from each class – 14 in total. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes do not seem reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- P5 rep – I can see why they want to change it but if I think about me then one of the main reasons that my parents sent me to Loretto was because I would be able to go to St David's. I think it would mean that I couldn't go to a Catholic Secondary school and that would have an impact on me and my little sister.
- P6 rep – My brother has had a lot of worry this year because he was in P7. He has a place now but it looks like I will not get a place because of all the changes. This is not great for me or my family as we will be split and my little sister in P2 won't be at the same schools as her brothers.
- P2 rep – I love going to Loretto because of the church – does that mean that I won't be able to go to a Catholic school when I am older? Is this to do with money?
- P4 rep – I don't quite understand? Is this to do with the amount of houses that are being built? Why should Loretto suffer for this?
- P7 rep – This year has been very stressful! We have all been really worried and have not been able to do the same transition things as we would have. St David's has always been the secondary school which we have done the most with and there is a real connection with Loretto – you sense this when you are there!

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- We don't understand how we cannot attend St David's if there are enough spaces. We are worried that this is going to stop us from getting the education we want.
- It really will make a huge difference to how we are able to attend a Catholic High School. We were sent here because our parents wanted a Faith school and this is important to us.

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

### **Newtongrange Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The P5S group at Newtongrange Primary School (28 pupils) provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- Seems reasonable.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No comments were made

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

**Paradykes Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The P7 House Captains at Paradykes Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- We think that children who live in the area should have priority, so they don't need to travel to get into another school.
  - If someone who lived further away got into a school closer to us, we might be late travelling further away.
  - It sounds like there would be more chance with the changes of people getting into the school they live close to.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No additional comments were provided.

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

**Penicuik High School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All

Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The young people at Penicuik High School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The responses varied, with some pupils finding the changes reasonable, some finding them not reasonable, and others being unsure.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- there quite good
- Its is good for sibling to stick together.
- because if you and your siblings go to different schools that means 2 different uniforms and 2 different starting times that your parents need to get to.
- I feel this way because if you and your siblings go to different schools it will mean different starting times, different uniforms and maybe different school holidays.
- It seems fair and makes everyone have a fair chance of getting in.
- I think it is a good idea and more fair
- it makes sense
- I don't really mind
- Because it is good for siblings to stay together
- putting siblings together would make it easier to tell them info
- it sounds fair
- well because just because people have siblings that were here before you that doesn't mean there younger siblings already get a place in the school
- if you don't get along with sibling you don't want to get forced to go to their school
- we want to be with pals
- I think that siblings should be with siblings
- cause if your sisters or cousins go to a different school but you want to go to the same school but you live far away also in case you get bullied and you won't have any won there for you and you on want to go back to school
- because people might be getting bullied and you want to change school because of the bullying
- because-your-friends-might-go-too-another-school and-if-you-are-an-only-child-then-its-not-really-fair

- because personally if i was sent to a school with none of my friends just because it was closer id actually rather die than go without friends.
- I'm not young enough to be effected by this
- as some families could be in different situations
- Not sure
- i don't have an opinion on it, it doesn't bother me
- I am not sure as it might be better that you could get to a school that you want to go to
- i don't understand it fully
- I feel that you should go to the same school with your siblings
- i am not sure as it might be better that you could get to a school that you want to go to

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No additional comments were provided.

## **Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

### **Rosewell Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The Pupil Voice Group at Rosewell Primary School (P4 – P7) provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- The proposal to change admissions is better because if you need to go to your local school - you go first and get first choice over everyone else.
- We also think that siblings should be able to go to the same school no matter what (unless they don't want to!).

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- We agree that people with ASN needs should go before out of catchment requests.

- If someone is being bullied in another authority and they want to move to Midlothian, they should look at all other schools eg in Edinburgh first before they come here.

## **Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

### **Roslin Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The Pupil Voice Group at Roslin Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

#### **Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- We think the proposal protects some important things: we think it's important for siblings to be kept together because otherwise this can be really hard to get people to different schools.

#### **Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- We talked about worries about the impact of friends going to different places or being separated when it comes to going to High School. We worried that some people might have to move house if they couldn't get into the school they thought they were going to. One of us has to get a bus to school at the moment - they felt that even though this is normally ok, it can be loud and uncomfortable and they would rather not have to.

## **Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

### **Sacred Heart RC Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The Pupil Council group at Sacred Heart RC Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- The children think they should get the chance to continue their faith journey throughout high school rather than places being given to children that are not religious.
- They think that distance should not take priority over faith.
- The children shared their opinion that they could be missing out on education of their faith if they don't get a catchment space at their denominational high school, when they are passionate about being able to do this.
- They believe the policy should change so that their chance of continuing their faith-based education is as high as other children in Midlothian.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- No additional comments were provided.

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

### **St David's RC High School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The S2-S5 year group at St. David's RC High School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. All students were very understanding of the reasons for the proposed changes to the admissions policy but felt the proposed changes for denominational schools were unfair. The proposed changes do not seem reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- They felt that the current admissions policy was fair and prioritised Roman Catholic education for Roman Catholic students.
- They felt strongly that this was far more important than prioritising out-of-catchment students within Midlothian.



- These views were reflected by pupils from different year groups, living in both Midlothian and East Lothian - they were unanimous in their decision and feedback.
- Students felt that a lot of these changes would impact on St. David's RC High School and said they felt it was unfair that their school would change so much where others won't really change at all.
- The S4/S5 group at St. David's RC High School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. All members of the group acknowledged that Midlothian has to look at the issue of making sure there are enough school places for Midlothian children.
- 4/5 of the group felt very strongly that the proposed changes would reduce the connection with Loretto RCPS and felt this was very unfair. That their right to a catholic education shouldn't be taken away. The other pupil was "50-50".
- The group unanimously felt that Catholic education should be prioritised for Catholic pupils (even out of catchment) before non-RC pupil from Midlothian. They gave various reasons for this including "less catholic schools mean less choice - if you had an issue at Holyrood that meant you had to move then you should be able to go to the next nearest catholic school."
- They also felt the strong catholic values of the school were important to them and felt this might not be the same over time after the changes take effect. The group very much felt that Loretto RCPS students were part of the school and part of all of their friendship groups. They didn't know why anyone would want to change that.

#### **Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- Another point raised was that parents and young people of other faiths value catholic education and faith-based (denominational) education should be available for all. The example given was a friend that was Hindu who had joined Loretto RCPS as this was important to them and their family - and continuing to St. David's RCHS was a big part of this. They felt that their friend would be right at the bottom of the proposed changes as 'out of authority' and 'not baptised catholic' which would take away something extremely important to them and their family.

#### **Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

##### **St Lukes RC Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The P7 Focus Group at St Luke's Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes do not seem reasonable

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- The learners were very worried about the wording of the consultation summary document where it speaks of Catholic schools, 'if you are baptised in the RC faith and live in a Midlothian catchment area NEAR a Catholic school, you'll be given priority to go there'. Children picked up straight away that none of them are geographically close to a Catholic secondary school and were concerned that they should always be able to attend one.
- They also were worried about what would happen to those children who are Catholic, but maybe didn't have a Catholic primary school near them.
- They made it clear that they thought that all RC children should be allowed to go to a Catholic primary or high school.
- They were also concerned that children who were not Catholic might not be able to go to a Catholic school because they have chosen to come to one because of the ethos of the school.
- Our focus group were concerned that they would not get their faith promoted if they went to a non-denominational high school.
- They said that a lot of Catholic primary and secondary children don't have siblings already at a Catholic school, and that they would be discriminated against because of it.
- They want more clarity on the word 'near'.
- They want to know why they need to change what is working.
- One of the comments from our children was that 'near' shouldn't be where you live. It should be what you believe.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- Our children were very passionate and were concerned about their younger siblings - many of them have very young siblings and they are worried that if they have left St David's, that this puts their siblings down the priority order.

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

**Tynewater Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The School Ambassadors at Tynewater Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed changes seemed reasonable.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- It will be easier for people who live closer and with brothers and sisters, so that families can be in one school.
- This means people who live near the school won't miss out on spaces.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- Not really

**Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

### **Woodburn Primary School**

Council officers carried out digital Pupil Voice sessions as part of the consultation on proposed changes to admissions arrangements for primary and secondary education. All Midlothian schools, excluding Saltersgate (which is not directly affected by the proposal), were invited to take part. A Google Form survey was jointly developed by officers from the Education team and the Digital Inclusion and Learning Team. Alongside the survey, a presentation was provided to all Midlothian schools outlining the proposals as discussion points.

**Based on the information provided in the slides, tick a box below to tell us what your group thinks about the proposed changes in how children and young people will get into schools in Midlothian.**

The pupils at Woodburn Primary School provided feedback on the proposed changes to school admissions in Midlothian. The responses varied, with some pupils finding the changes reasonable and others expressing uncertainty.

**Could you tell us why you feel this way about the proposed changes?**

- It is good to keep siblings together but it might be unfair to only children. It is more important that children from the authority are given places first.
- It's good because people should be able to go to the school closest to them.
- There are a lot of pros and cons. If you don't have siblings, you might not get a place at the school closest to you and that is not fair.
- Drop all children off at same time and same place; keeping brothers and sisters together. Class thought and agreed that there should be more classes in school to make sure everyone in the catchment gets a place at Woodburn PS.

- It means that if you live closer to a school you will actually get in it - it seems more fair. It means it is easier for parents if all their kids are at the same school - one place to go, you don't need to do two school pick ups and drop offs.
- Not sure.
- P1 want to make sure that if they have siblings they go to the same school as them, if they live in Woodburn feel they should be allowed to come to Woodburn Primary.

**Is there anything else you would like us to know about the proposed changes?**

- People could get annoyed if their child does not get in to a school when someone else in a similar situation does.
- We think its fair if you have family there and you get to go because of them. Is it fair if you don't get in because of the numbers that year but your younger sibling does because there are less people going in their year.
- Maybe things should be clearer and a detailed reason given about why you're not allowed in.
- No clue.

## **Appendix 3 – Public Meeting Minutes**

### **Statutory Public Consultation Meeting**

#### **Proposal to vary admissions arrangements to primary and secondary education.**

**Location:** Dalkeith Community Schools Campus

**Date:** Tuesday 22 April 2025

**Attendees:**

Alastair Delaney, Independent Chair  
Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships  
Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer  
Magnus Inglis, Service Manager – Acting Up  
Rachel Tulloch, Principal Officer – Acting Up  
Katy Johnstone, Learning Estate Resource Officer  
Julie Fox, Quality Improvement Manager  
Neil Craik-Collins, Quality Improvement Manager  
Craig Murrin, Business Support Officer  
Mary Waterstone, Business Support Officer  
Catherine Jackson, Head Teacher (St David's RCHS)  
Peter Jeans, Depute Head Teacher (St David's RCHS)  
Education Scotland Representative  
Midlothian Elected Member  
36 members of the public were in attendance.

Alastair Delaney (AD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers.

Alastair Delaney introduced himself and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

Alastair Delaney explained the statutory consultation process and the work that would need to be undertaken by the Council in order to adhere to the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Fiona Robertson (FR) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then outlined the proposals and spoke through the presentation slides:

## Statutory consultation process



- Proposed permanent change – council must follow process contained in national legislation
- Consult for minimum 6 weeks
- Must hold a public meeting
- Must publish its final report

## Relevant legislation



- The duties placed on local authorities in relation to the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area in the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980*
- The responsibilities associated with the National Improvement Framework and the new duties imposed on Education Authorities by the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 as amended by the 2016 Act*
- The duties placed on local authorities to secure best value in the delivery of services

## Statutory Consultation Process and Timeline



- Proposal Paper including Educational Benefits Statement published 02 April 2025.
- Statutory Consultation Period – 02 April 2025 to 02 June 2025.
- Representations from interested parties are sought throughout the consultation period
- Report by Education Scotland within 3 weeks of end consultation
- Service takes account of all feedback

## Statutory Consultation Process



- Preparation of Final consultation Report– after 02 June 2025
- Final consultation report published 18 August 2025
- Decision by Midlothian Council– 09 September 2025

# Context



- Midlothian Council is recognised as Scotland's fastest -growing local authority, faces significant educational challenges due to rapid growth. Midlothian schools are under pressure, necessitating intake limits to several schools to ensure children and young people can attend their catchment schools.
- The growing population and housing developments in Midlothian are increasing pupil numbers, posing a significant risk that the council will not have a place for every pupil at their catchment school. The Council's Learning Estate Strategy addresses this strategically.
- In the short term, intake limits, placing request reviews, and prioritising baptised Roman Catholic children and young people at denominational schools mitigate this risk.
- Pupil enrolment for the 2025/26 school session has concluded, with 1,338 Midlothian primary and 1,187 Midlothian secondary pupils registered. This includes 213 pupils who intend to defer entry to primary school.

# Proposals



- Proposal to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education will be implemented from September 2025, subject to Council decision.
- The enrolment and allocation of Midlothian school places will change.
- The proposed changes **do not affect** the current admissions process for August 2025. A consultation report will be presented to Midlothian Council elected members for a decision.
- If approved, the changes will take effect from September 2025 for the August 2026 intake.
- Midlothian Children and Young People living within the designated catchment area of a Midlothian school will be given priority.
- Midlothian Children and Young People living within the designated catchment area of a Midlothian school and who are baptised in the Roman Catholic Faith will be given priority.
- Non-catchment and out of authority placing requests will be granted only if there are places available after all Midlothian catchment Children and Young People are placed.



# Non-denominational schools



Where there is insufficient capacity, priority will be given in the following order:

- Children who have been offered a place in the school's Complex Needs Provision class by the Education Resource Group (ERG).
- Catchment children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.
- Catchment children who will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
- Remaining catchment children
- Out of catchment placing requests.
- Out of authority placing requests.

# Denominational schools



Where there is insufficient capacity, priority will be given in the following order:

- Children who have been offered a place in the school's Complex Needs Provision class by the Education Resource Group (ERG)
- Catchment children who have been prioritised based on exceptional circumstances.
- Catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
- Catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith
- Catchment children, who are not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith and will have siblings attending the school at the same time.
- Remaining catchment children.
- Out of catchment placing requests.
- Out of authority placing requests.

# Educational Benefits Overview



- **Inclusion:** The proposals will ensure that local children attend their local catchment school, growing up as part of their community. The process for allocating places to children with additional support needs will not be affected by the variation to the School Admission Policy .
- **Fairness for Midlothian Pupils:** The proposal aims to eliminate the disadvantage for pupils living within a Midlothian catchment area when applying for school places, due to placing requests from pupils living outside Midlothian. This ensures that local pupils are not unfairly impacted by external placing requests
- **Transition:** The proposed School Admission Policy variation will not impact existing transition programmes but will improve the primary to secondary transition for pupils from feeder primary schools via placing requests. Prioritising these pupils ensures a smoother, more inclusive transition, maintaining continuity with their peer group.
- **Denominational Schools:** Baptised Roman Catholic pupils attending Midlothian denominational schools will be prioritised for places at the only denominational secondary school, ahead of non -baptised pupils or those without siblings at the school. This proposal supports their continued denominational education at the secondary level.

## Educational Benefits Overview (2)



- **Flexibility in Admissions:** Introducing more flexibility in admissions will help Midlothian Council prioritise catchment pupils, ensuring they transition to secondary school with their peer group. This approach enhances continuity and reduces the likelihood of separating Primary 7 pupils at a critical transition stage.
- **Learning and Teaching:** All children and young people in Midlothian follow the national Curriculum for Excellence, regardless of the school they attend. The proposals will allow local children to benefit from the agreed local curriculum arrangements, reflecting the local community and opportunities available to all young people.
- All Midlothian children have access to the Midlothian Learning and Teaching Frameworks, supporting their learning in Literacy, Numeracy, and Health and Wellbeing. Guidance and professional development are available to all Midlothian staff, ensuring consistent learning environments and quality universal provision for all children. This will not change as a result of the Admissions policy changes.

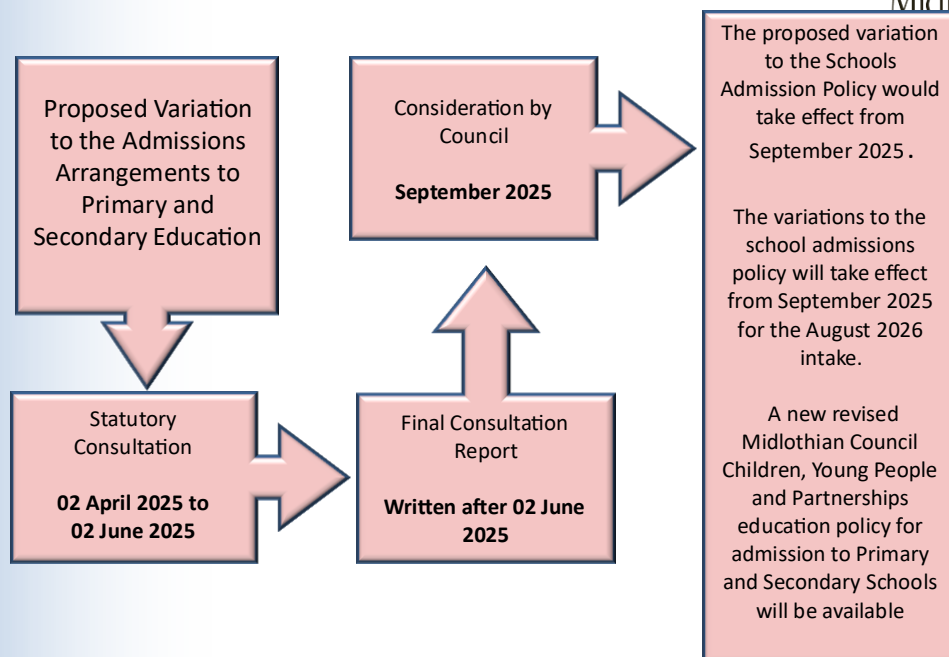
# Outcomes



If the decision is taken to vary the admissions arrangements to primary and secondary education:

- Subject to the decision by Midlothian Council elected members in September 2025, the proposed variation to the Schools Admission Policy would take effect from September 2025.
- The variations to the school admissions policy will take effect from September 2025 for the August 2026 intake.
- Midlothian Council will share the outcome of the decision made by elected members on our website, social media platforms and shared with the Head Teachers.
- A new revised Midlothian Council Children, Young People and Partnerships education policy for admission to Primary and Secondary Schools will be available.

# Project Timeline



# Questions?



For any further or more specific questions  
please email  
[educationconsultation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@midlothian.gov.uk)

For any further or more specific questions  
regarding East Lothian Council, please email  
[educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk)

FR spoke about number of Learning estate strategy projects (Replacement Beeslack, Mayfield community campus, Penicuik HS refurb, Shawfair etc)

FR advised that St David's RCHS capacity will not be reduced – (during the presentation).

AD then welcome questions from members of the public. Alastair Delaney (AD) then invited questions from the public.

***Representing parents from Danderhall PS – we have Shawfair coming up, I read in the proposal online that this was in proximity to Danderhall, Shawfair is still up in the air and not sure if 2028 is when it will be built. Worry is that Danderhall PS is outwith catchment and would not get spaces and would like a clause that Danderhall PS pupils can attend Dalkeith HS.***

FR – There cannot be any change at this time until we undertake a statutory consultation on Shawfair. There is absolutely no change – Danderhall feeds into Dalkeith HS. (Referred to replacement Beeslack CHS statutory consultation process). At the moment there is no change whatsoever and until we carry out a statutory consultation with proposals etc, and you would have an opportunity to have your say.

Magnus Inglis (MI) – Went back to slides and reiterated the priority order and explained the distance.

***Would Danderhall PS be at a disadvantage given the distance?***

FR- Danderhall is catchment to Dalkeith HS and there will be no change until a statutory consultation is carried out and Shawfair is established.

***Has Dalkeith HS ran out of space as they are using classrooms in St Davids RCHS?***

FR - Just to clarify this is a campus and shared space with two schools working together. (Explained Midlothian Aligned Curriculum Offer -MACO and how this would work in a shared campus). Explained timetabling and staff / resource of what we have.

Neil Craik-Colins (NCC) – Explained about MACO and delivering an equitable curriculum and best possible capacity. Regardless of where they are in Midlothian we have a very innovative and forward thinking how we grow in strength.

***I was concerned about the distance as we reside over the bypass near Danderhall.***

FR – Danderhall remains catchment, and this will be addressed and shared throughout the consultation on establishing Shawfair. Sibling rules will be included.

AD – Reiterated that any family from Danderhall will still be in catchment to Dalkeith HS.

***If a school is over capacity – How do we ensure that catchment children are prioritised?***

MI – This is where it comes down to distance and referred to slides.

***New catchment area of Shawfair - is the consultation this year and will a catchment area be identified at this point?***

FR – Yes. This will be shown on the maps and we will include in the proposal / consultation. (FR explained the replacement Beeslack CHS consultation and situation). If the Council approve a new catchment area, then the new school would be in the new catchment area.

***With the Consultation planned later on this year would the kids still remain in the Dalkeith catchment area until the school is built?***

FR – Yes. Dalkeith would remain where the kids go until the school is built. We can draw up an exemplar and go back to Parent Councils to go through the transition scale and timeframes etc.

***If there are no capacity issues at St Davids then why refuse Loretto children?***

FR – We are prioritising Midlothian children and young people and will follow the criteria to prioritise Midlothian children and referred to the slide. We are not excluding Loretto children, and we will be able to offer a place to those who submit a Placing Request if there are spaces available. There is no intention for Midlothian Council to reduce the capacity St Davids.

***Expense at the children from Loretto who make a significant contribution as well as parents. No discussion from East Lothian Council to explain what will happen and you appear to limit the number of catholic children attending St Davids.***

FR - We are securing the commitment to Midlothian Children who are baptised Roman Catholic and then referred to the list in the slide. We also receive placing requests from other RC Schools in other authorities and advised on equity and reiterated the criteria and proposal which aims to prioritise catchment Midlothian children.

***Going back to the fact Loretto was part of St Davids and now being excluded and because Midlothian is under pressure to take people into this campus due to the level of house building.***

FR – I would disagree. The capacity is sitting at 860 and there is no plan to reduce this further.

***Is there a growing number of Roman Catholic children seeking places in St Davids as five years ago I was at meetings when it was discussed that schools would be closed.***

FR – We have closed both denominational and non-denominational as intake patterns change. It has always been dependant on viability and capacity of the schools not because of their designation.

***At what point does it stop being a separate school?***

FR – This proposal is about prioritising Midlothian children and young people and there are no plans to make this one campus under one Headteacher and the schools will remain separate.

***What impact analysis have you and your colleagues undertaken in relation to Loretto and families who currently have children at St Davids. Why has this not been published?***

MI – We have carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) and we can check to see if this has been published. Midlothian Council has carried out an IIA for Midlothian. The intake from Loretto RC Primary School is approximately 20–25 pupils. Midlothian Council has a legal obligation and duty to look after children in its area and to provide an adequate and efficient provision of school education.

***How many pupils at St Davids are from Loretto?***

MI – There are 120 pupils at St Davids who are from the Loretto Musselburgh catchment area.

***So, you have not conducted an IIA for the children attending St Davids who reside in Musselburgh? Do you feel this is appropriate?***

FR - We do understand the impact on Loretto RC Children and their families moving forward. Midlothian have been in discussion with East Lothian, and they are aware of the impact this may have on the children and families.

***Will you make the impact assessment available?***

FR - We always do as part of the statutory consultations.

***Statements from a member of the public:***

*It is very sad to see a historical arrangement to cease after 80 years, when you have parents from Loretto who are high achievers, where will it leave St Davids.*

*This will be a big impact and why do you not include all information and put it up for everyone to see.*

*We will have gone from being a huge part of the school community to now going to the bottom of the list.*

MI – This means that all pupils will be treated the same and this list will only come into effect when there are not enough spaces.

***How can we have a proper consultation process if the IIA has not been published. There is no meeting at Loretto or in the Musselburgh area, you have not come to our***

***school and sought the views of the parents. No priority given to RC children and Midlothian Council are taking this away and not even spoken to us at the school.***

MI – The IIA will be published along with the report, and we usually complete these at the end of the consultation period however in this case we have completed this prior to the consultation period commencing.

***East Lothian Council have advised that they still have not heard if places have been granted for this year and why were the transitions stopped?***

FR – Letters will be sent on Friday to advise. Discussions between myself and East Lothian Council have taken place, and a communication was sent to the Headteacher of Loretto regarding transition arrangements, and transitions should not go ahead if a placing request has not been granted.

***Reasons why transitions were stopped due to a miscommunication in an email and Michelle Strong advised to stop all transitions arrangements and we were lied too. You lied to us.***

FR – I take exception to being called a liar and I explained why this had occurred and that an email had been sent out to all parents/carers who had received and gone through a transition to a Midlothian Secondary school. For example, a child who is in P7 at Bonnyrigg PS, who is taking part in transitions to Lasswade HS but does not live in the Lasswade HS catchment, participates in this transition at risk. The same principal applies to Loretto RC pupils and transitions should not be taking place without a placing request having been granted.

***Loretto still is the feeder primary school for St Davids.***

FR – It is a historical arrangement and advised this has been acknowledged in East Lothian Council's Learning Estate Strategy Report, which notes that the arrangement will be kept under review.

***I would like to raise a matter of order, October 2024 the job description for the acting Headteacher post of St Davids referred to a school list of associated primary schools and Loretto was named and now you are advising this is a historical arrangement?***

FR – This is a historical arrangement. I have been in contact with East Lothian Council and Midlothian Council officers have also been in contact with East Lothian and we have been given an email address to share which you can direct your queries to.

***Where is the documentation if there is a historical arrangement?***

FR – This predates from when Midlothian Council was Lothian Regional Council and to the disaggregation of local authorities in 1996 and the informal arrangement has allowed children attending Loretto RC Primary School (who live in the Loretto RC catchment area) to transition to St David's.

***So does that means that 120 Midlothian pupils have been prevented from attending St Davids, have they been prevented yes or no?***

FR – Midlothian was able to grant placing requests historically, there was not that pressure on places and there is a pressure now. We contacted East Lothian pre- Christmas to advise we are struggling regarding capacity.

***How many Midlothian pupils are being denied a place at St David's because of Loretto kids?***

MI – No Midlothian pupils have been denied a place and referred back to the slides and priority order.

***There is not a pressure at St Davids / Dalkeith. For those remaining catchment children, will they be given a place even if they don't want to go there?***

FR - This is the parents' choice and this is unlikely. The pattern changes year on year and we require a system to categorise and prioritise spaces.

MI – Advised on the process of how places are allocated in the main placing rounds and how alternative choices are offered to the parents.

***We know there is a parent who has three children at St Davids from Loretto and still has not heard anything. They have not had the information about whether their children will have a place or not. This is really bad PR by Midlothian and the public trust and relationship with Midlothian is very low. Midlothian are being un-inclusive and discriminating against Loretto and faith-based education. We have worked hard to build faith and trust, and Midlothian have widely missed the mark on how the families and communities will be affected. Midlothian have made the consultation very difficult to understand as it is full of jargon.***

***I think this is an attempt to erode Catholic education at St Davids. Will the council make available the number of placing requests made and denied?***

MI – We can make the data available and advised that if the numbers are very small for example under 5, we cannot release them as this may identify children.

AD – Advised that the principle of the priority has changed, the number of places in the school will not change.

***We want to continue our catholic education and there is no secondary in East Lothian, by doing this you are taking away our rights to a catholic education.***

FR – There are other RC primary schools in East Lothian who are not granted a place at St David's. There are RC secondary schools in other authorities and advised on the statutory obligation Midlothian has to provide an education for the children in their authority. Midlothian Council is required to put additional funding into St Davids which could equate to one teacher every year for the intake of the Loretto children.

***There are siblings attending St Davids currently and I worry that the proposal will potentially spilt families.***

***If there are 20 extra pupils less what will happen with all the space, will there be an expansion of Dalkeith HS?***

FR – To clarify I advised earlier that there is one campus with two schools with separate identities. Budget efficiencies and executive headships were considered for all schools previously and there are no plans to make this one campus under one Headteacher and the schools will remain separate.

***Is it a surprise to Midlothian Council the number of houses being built and do planning and education not speak to each other? For a lot people that come from***



***Loretto and contribute, do you not know where houses are being built or when you need schools.***

FR – We know when schools need to be built but we also need to consider the affordability of these. East Lothian Council is no different to Midlothian and have to deliver on projects. We have a clear Local Development Plan and have to determine the affordability of a solution which can mean an extension or new build of a school. This goes back to securing best value and every Local Authority in Scotland is under the same pressure.

***It states in the document there are no financial implications.***

FR – Advised there are none in terms of the admissions policy, and this is about prioritising admissions criteria for Midlothian children.

***It feels as though you are diluting the catholicity of St Davids.***

MI – Advised of the appendix in the proposal document on the priority list for denomination schools and how it prioritises Roman Catholic baptised children.

***Midlothian Council has turned it's back on the Roman Catholic faith, there is no public trust. Is there future plans to dissolve St Davids?***

FR – There are 6 denominational high schools serving the wider Lothian area. For any changes, we are required to carry out a statutory consultation. For the period I am here there are no plans to undertake a consultation on changing the denomination of St Davids.

***Do Non catholic Midlothian Council pupils have priority over Catholic pupils?***

FR – St Davids have a high number of RC and not all pupils who attend are from the Roman Catholic faith.

***This is a long term plan to remove catholic pupils from Loretto to reduce the roll of St Davids.***

FR – From a Midlothian Council perspective there is no intent to change the status of St Davids. If there were to be a change, we would conduct a consultation as I have mentioned (in terms of requiring a statutory consultation) and the balance is different across all of our denominational schools. There is an imbalance between RC and non RC.

***At a public meeting the old St Davids, no one wanted the campus here at this chosen location.***

***As a member of the Dalkeith Community Council, I was present and can confirm that there were a variety of options on the table at that point and it is unfair to say that no one wanted the campus here.***

***Midlothian Council has already made its mind up and it is already clear. This should be a consultation evening but looks like minds are made up and we are just here to listen.***

FR – We are officers from Midlothian Council and are here to advise on the proposals and for the information to be collated and produced in the final consultation report. This report will be presented to elected members to make a decision at the end of the consultation period.

AD – Advised of the consultation process and also the part of Education Scotland and key dates when the final consultation report will be published as well as the Council date.

***Will the letter going out on Friday be clear on what is going on and why are these always issued before breaks (Christmas, Easter etc)?***

FR – Yes. The letters will state clearly where each child has been granted a place. This proposal will not affect the 2025 intake and the letter for placing will be issued on Friday.

***Since Christmas it has been up in the air and feels that they have missed a crucial part for the transition arrangements. Will we definitely know on Friday if we have been granted a place?***

FR – Yes, you will know by Friday when the letters are issued.

***The Proposal talks about fairness, inclusion etc and what about Loretto as Midlothian Council are excluding pupils from younger years, and it appears that we do not have enough children attending. Reducing the likelihood of those transitioning. Do you not care about East Lothian Children?***

FR – It is not to say we do not care about East Lothian children. We receive placing requests from other authorities, and our statutory duty is to provide an education for Midlothian Children.

***You are saying you have enough spaces, but we as East Lothian are not going to be given them?***

FR -This proposal is to prioritise the Midlothian catchment children and we will where possible be able to offer places to those who submit an out of catchment and authority placing request based on the criteria.

Neil Craik-Collins (NCC) – Advised on the growth and capacities and pressures within the schooling system. We are under pressure here in Midlothian.

***Why can we not see the projections in the document and how many children are likely to be in the school?***

FR – The roll projections have not been released as they are commercially sensitive.

MI – We do not have data on those children who are Roman Catholic. Of the pupils wishing to attend St Davids, about 25% of the children attending from Loretto are not RC baptised.

***Reason we do not have automatic admissions is because Midlothian Council do not want to recognise the arrangement, I would ask that you please consider this as it is part of history.***

***You seem to know the percentage of Catholics in Loretto why do we not know the percentage of other Roman Catholic schools?***

MI – We ask for evidence as part of the S1 admissions process. For other schools, as they are part of Midlothian, we do not need to ask this.

***Does not make sense. You do not know the statistics, and this is an exercise of stats.***

MI – Pupil Roll projections use multiple data sources including birth rates, housing, and current pupil data. A formula is then applied and these are monitored regularly.

***The data that is relevant to this is not available you expect people to believe you?***

FR – Midlothian Council does not share Pupil Roll Projections as they are used in negotiations with housing developers. These are commercially sensitive and cannot be shared.

***Other faiths out with Catholicism may choose to attend a faith school as it may be the closest.***

FR -This is the same for those who attend any Roman Catholic school in Midlothian.

***Placing requests made in previous years have been granted, why is there now a change for Midlothian not to continue to grant them?***

FR – Midlothian Council was in a fortunate position a few years ago that out with placing requests were able to be granted. Due to the growth in Midlothian the landscape is different. FR advised on the proposed changes and other changes previously made by Midlothian Council, including the replacement Beeslack Community High School.

***Why should this come at the detriment of the Loretto RC Pupils?***

FR – Advised that Midlothian has a statutory obligation to provide an education for the children in their authority.

***Remember please this is a priority list of other Roman Catholics and as a member of the Community Council I will back Fiona up on this and the projections we have asked to see as some people cannot get a place in a primary school and I sympathise with Loretto.***

***The people coming into Midlothian Council and picking up on Councillor Winchesters point raised for military families how does this affect them?***

MI – We try to reserve a number of places for military families and the papers of deployment for example the assignment order and march in date, these will be considered.

***Loretto is a catchment school. Can you advise on the current status of Loretto and has this always been an out of catchment school?***

FR – We do not consider this to be catchment school as St David's is not catchment to Loretto, Loretto is an East Lothian Council primary school.

***Have you sought Legal advice, and can this be shared?***

FR - We have consulted with our legal team, and we are happy to share legal advice in the consultation report. *\*NB In terms of the request for Midlothian Council to share the legal advice it has received in relation to the consultation process, it has been confirmed that such advice is subject to legal advice privilege. It is therefore the Council's position that such advice will not be shared\*.*

***Why haven't East Lothian families been offered a meeting and parents of Loretto PS?***

FR - I would be happy to pick this up with East Lothian Council tomorrow to discuss further. I have spoken to the Chief Officer and sought permission to contact the Headteacher of Loretto to provide assurance for August 2025. In terms of East Lothian Council, we will give them their place.

***We as the parent council are happy for you to contact us directly.***

***Has East Lothian Council offered to contribute any funding for placing our children in Midlothian schools?***

FR – You would need to ask East Lothian Council if they would be prepared to contribute funding. I am happy to take this to East Lothian Council as a point raised. Funding for schools is complex, it is not as straight forward as cost per pupil there are a lot of other factors which are taken into consideration.

***What will happen with the transport, is this paid for by East Lothian?***

FR – East Lothian have previously paid for it. I am unsure what this will look like going forward as I believe there has been a change, however, East Lothian should be contacted with any queries in relation to transport and we have an email address which has been provided by them.

***Will there be priority for out of authority placing requests and will this include consideration for children who are baptised Roman Catholic?***

FR – This was addressed earlier by Magnus and the priority list is in the proposal document.

***Can we have a copy of the presentation which has been shown tonight?***

FR – Yes. You can request this via email the email address shown.

***Have other schools been sought as an option other than St David's and how will the places be allocated?***

MI – Advised St Davids is the only denominational high school in Midlothian and advised on the order of which places would be allocated.

***As we do not have access to the statistics, can the consultation period be extended? Also, how many elected members are there for Midlothian and will they have any sympathy for Loretto children?***

FR – The consultation period cannot be extended. Midlothian Council has 18 elected members, and all are aware of the public meetings and the consultation. We would not have been able to proceed without seeking approval to undertake this. Statistics have been used to inform the admissions policy, population, growth, school roll projections as St Davids is the only denominational high school which serves all of Midlothian.

***Are any of the elected members coming along to the meetings and are any here this evening?***

FR – Yes, they are here. They are aware of the public meetings and advised on how matters are discussed at cross party.

***When Shawfair is built, what happens if they cannot all attend?***

FR – We have planned and will continue to manage the capacity of Dalkeith Community Campus until Shawfair is delivered.

***Will everyone attending Dalkeith HS from Danderhall then attend Shawfair once it is built?***

FR – Not everyone. We will have to look at the catchment areas as part of that consultation and I have to clarify that Shawfair will be a Midlothian Council school.

***The votes which take place on the proposal, is this final?***

FR – Yes, these are final and we advise on recommendations and options to be considered by the elected members. If you take one of the most recent decisions taken that elected members which voted on which was the closure of Lasswade High School Childcare Service, we had to state and give recommendations for them to consider.

***Will Midlothian Council look to make the historic arrangement legal? Should it not be agreed to make the historic arrangement with Loretto legal? Can elected members amend the proposal to make this a legal arrangement?***

FR – This is down to the elected members to make a decision on the day, or they can amend the proposal. This could be considered by the elected members if they wanted to include the Loretto arrangement.

***Was the proposal document created by education and were elected members involved?***

FR – Yes, the proposal was created by officers within education. The elected members were not and cannot be involved in the creation of the document but are aware of what is in the document to allow them to make a decision.

***How long do they take to digest the information?***

FR – Advised on the timescales provided in the presentation and that they are presented with the full consultation report before they go into chamber on the day of Council.

***Can we have your assurance that the view of the wider group will be included in the Impact assessment?***

FR – All views will be included in the final consultation report.

***My question is will the views of the Loretto pupils be included?***

FR – The views will be proportionally included and advised on the process of themes and topics and how this is broken down and included in the final report. Loretto is not being disadvantaged it has to be balanced and they will also be included in our pupil focus groups.

AD – Closed meeting and thanked attendees for their time.

## **Statutory Public Consultation Meeting**

### **Proposal to vary admissions arrangements to primary and secondary education.**

**Location:** Penicuik High School

**Date:** Thursday 24 April 2025

**Attendees:**

Alastair Delaney, Independent Chair

Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships

Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Magnus Inglis – Service Manager – Acting Up

Julie Fox, Quality Improvement Manager

Rachel Tulloch, Principal Officer – Acting Up

Katy Johnstone, Learning Estate Resource Officer

Craig Murrin, Business Support Officer

Craig Biddick, Head Teacher (Penicuik HS)

Education Scotland Representative

Midlothian Elected Member

3 members of the public were in attendance.

Alastair Delaney (AD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers.

AD Introduced himself and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

AD explained the statutory consultation process and the work that would need to be undertaken by the Council in order to adhere to the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Fiona Robertson (FR) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then outlined the proposals and spoke through the presentation slides.

AD then welcome questions from members of the public.

***You are talking about fairness for pupils what about children who have started going to their catchment school. Our estate has been chopped off and put against another catchment school. We live in the Wester Kippielaw area and our catchment has changed from Dalkeith HS to Newbattle HS. Is this going to be changed again?***

FR – No, there are currently no plans to further change catchments areas for Dalkeith HS as part of this consultation. When a catchment change is proposed, there is always a timeframe for phasing, as well as a transition table and we would generally state there would need to be one child attending the school you would be looking for a future child to attend. FR then advised on previous consultations and the sibling rule.

***We got mucked about with the catchment change and no doubt you seen the emails about this. I am concerned with the stage my children are in, would they still be able to get a place? (Member of the public provided specific details in relation to their situation which Midlothian Council have chosen not to share.)***

FR – It sounds like the sibling rule will apply based on your circumstances.

Magnus Inglis (MI) – We look at transition arrangements and the circumstances of the school. We do not know when we are dealing with siblings who have been affected by a change as we only deal with the addresses.

***This seems like a serious flaw in the system***

MI –Advised on previous consultations which have been undertaken by Midlothian Council and stated if the catchment areas were established based on current criteria, you would not start the catchment areas where they are now.

FR – Added and advised that we have had families choosing to split siblings as one child could be attending one school, and a sibling then chooses to follow their peers to another school. We cannot prejudge that all children would want to follow on to the same school as their siblings.

***I reside in Danderhall and have children attending Danderhall PS. The general consensus is that children are going to be split up as part of this consultation. It makes sense how we have been prioritised, and we will fall into the remaining catchment. There have been wild rumours about sending Danderhall children to Penicuik HS.***

FR – There has been a lot of misinformation, and we are not sure where this is coming from. We are managing the capacities across all our schools and have set intake limits where required. We are also aware that there have been other things going around such as Midlothian Council taking classrooms away and running down the numbers in some of our schools. This is not true. We now have the Midlothian Aligned Curriculum Offer (MACO) with all secondary schools in Midlothian having moved to the common school day to enhance the curriculum across all our secondary schools. The curriculum could vary based on the subjects and choices of young people (*FR explained MACO*). For example, St Davids RCHS and Dalkeith Campus when we looked at this last year, higher business management numbers had 5/6 pupils in each class, and with MACO this will allow us to bring these classes together under one school, one teacher and the pupils will travel to the campus school offering the subject of their choice.

***Is there not a downside to this as they are missing class time to travel to other schools?***

FR – Not necessarily, as the time to travel will be taken into account based on the courses chosen.

***If they are at Dalkeith HS, I can see how this would work. I am also a secondary teacher not in Midlothian, for example they are missing period 3 to attend period 4 and in a joint campus etc.***

FR – I want to make it clear that both schools at the Dalkeith campus have their own identity. MACO will assist by making efficient use of the staffing resources available.

***This is a great idea, I do really like the idea.***

***Will there be a change in catchment area for Danderhall and when this will happen, when the new school is built and up and running?***

FR – We will have to establish the catchment area ahead of the build. For example, if the build was to be completed in 2028, we work back to determine which children would be the first to attend the new school. We always state with any build as soon as possible thereafter due to delays etc. I have been out to the school and spoken with some of the Danderhall PS staff re what is coming. There is no change for Danderhall children and families at this time, the change will come at another time when planning and undertaking the statutory consultation. This will set out proposals as well as the proposed catchment area, ages and stages. We will clearly set out sibling rules and in particular for Dalkeith HS for example. If you child is attending Dalkeith HS and they want to remain there, this will be detailed within the proposal document.

***My child who is in P4 / P5 would be caught up in this, if the child is placed elsewhere would they have to move?***

FR – Until Shawfair is built, they will still attend and remain at Dalkeith HS until the opening day. We will clearly set out the ages and stages of the children who will be attending Shawfair and the transition arrangements. They will not have to move if they do not wish, however they can if they want are already attending Dalkeith HS. Danderhall PS catchment will be changing, and we will set this out clearly in the proposals. We will speak to the Parent Council of Danderhall to discuss this and offer a meeting.

***If there are not enough spaces at Dalkeith HS what will happen as we are struggling with the amount of people coming into Danderhall PS.***

FR – Danderhall PS had a lot of requests from Edinburgh families, as there are a lot of developments taking place. We will manage (capacity), and we are committed to ensuring that the children can attend their catchment school and do this by ensuring that we make efficient use of the space.

***Very comforting to know this is the commitment with the children getting into Dalkeith HS.***

FR – We always have to have a Plan B. For example, if we need to decant a school and an example of this is what we have done with Mayfield PS being hosted Easthouses PS until their campus is ready as the building was interfering with the children's learning. I am happy to come back into the school to discuss with Parent Council and share this information with them. We will also be holding informal consultation sessions for Shawfair.

KJ – We are going to be holding informal information sessions prior to the consultation commencing in order to share the proposals and gain community views before we go out to full consultation.

***That is great and it is very comforting. There is a lot of kids with addition support needs in our school. I will share this information from tonight, and it would be great to check in with the Parent Council.***

AD and FR thanked the attendees for their time.

Meeting concluded.

## **Statutory Public Consultation Meeting**

### **Proposal to vary admissions arrangements to primary and secondary education.**

**Location:** Bonnyrigg Primary School

**Date:** Monday 12 May 2025.

**Attendees:**

Alastair Delaney, Independent Chair

Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Colin McLean, Quality Improvement Manager

Rachel Tulloch, Principal Officer – Acting Up

Katy Johnstone, Learning Estate Resource Officer



Craig Murrin, Business Support Officer

Education Scotland Representative

4 members of the public were in attendance.

Alastair Delaney (AD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers.

AD Introduced himself and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

AD explained the statutory consultation process and the work that would need to be undertaken by the Council in order to adhere to the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Michelle Strong (MS) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then outlined the proposals and spoke through the presentation slides.

AD then welcome questions from members of the public.

***With the proposal, is there a shift from prioritising RC children and what is this?***

MS – What we are saying is that Midlothian catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith will be top of the priority list as shown in the presentation slides. *MS then referred to slide for denominational schools and reiterated the proposed priority order.*

***What is out of authority placing requests?***

MS – Advised children who live in neighbouring authorities, for example Edinburgh, East Lothian, West Lothian and Scottish Borders who wish to attend a school in Midlothian would be classed as an out of authority placing request.

***I am from East Lothian and my son is baptised RC and I need to understand for my son who is baptised what does this mean, and will he be lower down on your list?***

Rachel Tulloch (RT) – Advised of the proposed priority list shown under the denominational schools' slide within the presentation and how the information for any child wishing to attend a Midlothian school is collated and considered by the placement panel when considering places.

***It might be a little selfish for me to say this, but my child will not get in from a religious point of view.***

***If you consider Loretto as it has been a catchment school, for a number of years there has been an arrangement, and it is shocking and extraordinary that what you are saying is that the catholic education provision does not matter and that is what is implied. That any pupil in Midlothian is higher than East Lothian and the transition has been in place for the last 78 years and we have been a community. As I understand it St Davids RCHS was built for a central location from all Catholics to attend and Loretto is the third closest school. It is shocking as it seems that catholic education does not exist in East Lothian as they do not have a school. Pupils from Loretto who live within certain areas of East Lothian attend St Davids RCHS and it looks like Midlothian are diluting the catholic faith, this proposal looks like it is discontinuing at least 80 years of tradition.***

MS – I welcome your views and comments. All your comments and suggestions will go into the melting pot so to speak, and we have a duty to respond to all of these in the final

consultation report. The proposal may change with recommendations or amendments before it goes to Council for a decision based on the feedback received. There are 3 recommendations for this proposal which are, approval, not to approve or elected members may wish for an amendment. I am keen to reassure you it is not diluting faith-based education or schools in Midlothian. We are currently looking to appoint a permanent Headteacher to St Davids RCHS in two weeks' time. We acknowledge there has been a partnership arrangement in place, we are looking at the learning estate and pupil numbers moving forward. I get that the Loretto catchment is only a few miles from the school, if we based it on distance then Loretto pupils would get places ahead of Midlothian pupils.

***You would get more support and if you treated Loretto as an 8<sup>th</sup> school and included them in the proposal and the priority order list. I would be happy for the school to be geographically lower on the list if it means they would still be considered for a place in St Davids.***

MS – What we are talking about and just to clarify that if there is insufficient capacity and there is a pressure right across the Midlothian Council estate and not necessarily just in denominational schools. Out of catchment children are lower on the priority list as we are looking to prioritise Midlothian children. People are making choices to buy a home and also factor in the catchment school in the area and the Council needs to future proof to ensure there are spaces.

AD – Summarised and picked up the key point that the member of the public has a concern about was in relation to out of authority placing requests and Midlothian Council needs to ensure that Midlothian catchment children can be placed in schools. This is reassurance that your comments are noted.

***I want to apologise for talking over you earlier. A few points, the gentleman mentioned the arrangement has been going on for a long time and the Council should have done something earlier. How can you adjust the prioritisation list of and den children who have been growing up with an RC education and faith. What options do we have, will we need to relocate to Midlothian as it seems like we are being forced to leave our community to give out children a RC education. Do you think this is fair?***

MS – My first point of clarity is that if the information I have given has been misconstrued in any way I apologise. It may be that on the 09<sup>th</sup> September our elected members may want, and request an amendment based on the report. We have had a learning estate strategy which we been looking at and updated. The biggest challenge is for us to build new schools which in itself is expensive and takes time. Obviously, we recognise there has been a long-standing partnership with East Lothian. Midlothian is not the only local authority which has denominational schools.

***But do you think this is fair?***

MS – Your question is not fair, as I work for Midlothian Council and this is my job. Our schools are creaking due to various factors, people moving into the local authority area and with a rise in ASN provisions etc. We do not want to get into a position like other local authorities and build lots of schools and then we are left with buildings not being utilised to the purpose they were built for. We need to ensure our policy and procedures are kept up to date.

***This has been going on for 80 years and there is growing population, I am paying my taxes and this is a public service for our children to have a RC education.***

AD – Reiterated the priority order and referred to the slides and confirmed that the views are being recorded by a minute taker.

***Will the catchment areas change?***

MS – The only way it will change if it goes through a consultation, and we went through it for Easthouses as an example. Anyone affected by the changes will be notified and people can feed into the consultation with their views just like you are this evening. Your point is important, and our next consultation will be for the new Shawfair.

***With this proposal being put forward, there is a bit of a sceptic in me, and I am aware I do not really know what was there before, if we had this information and were able to see what the differences are it would help. But actually, I do not feel equipped with the knowledge I have.***

*Alistair handed out the current and proposed changes table to the members of the public which were available on the table for attendees.*

RT – The proposed changes set out in the table solidifies that Midlothian catchment children will be priority.

***Is it being proposed because the representation body think this is best. I have been part of many consultations before and what would reinforce this towards local authorities that this is a good example is community feedback.***

MS – Advised that the Council is conducting its own consultation and further advised on the consultations dates and meetings being held, minute taker and consultation portal as well as all the comments and suggestions form part of the final report for Council to look at and then we see if there were any mitigations. Education Scotland also conduct their own consultation and provide their report and it the gets presented to elected members for a decision.

***The majority of people do not respond to consultations, what account is taken of Council apathy if there were 100 people in favour and 12 against and there are thousands and thousands who have not responded. It is tough for any type of public engagement. Has there been a thought for having a minimum threshold of responses received?***

MS – We have fourteen thousand pupils in Midlothian and rising fast. The team have been promoting the consultation via social media and engaging through our comms team etc. We have to go with the responses we have throughout the consultation period.

RT – Schools have been sending paper versions home, parent councils have also been informed.

***The PC have not been informed. I only seen it on the app and never seen on social media.***

KJ – Advised we have pushed the consultation on social media and emails have been sent to all Parent Councils. You can email us at the email address shown on the presentation and we can address this.

***The social media must have been effective for some as this is how I am here this evening.***

***Shawfair is the next consultation and if that happened 5 years ago, would that have taken away this one. Loretto are being put to the bottom of the list, would that***

***downgrade of the list still be there if there is an adequate capacity and would St Davids RCHS just be used as a spill over school. My concern is that we are breaking a link, for example East Lothian may not provide a school bus service, and pupils may not get to attend St Davids RCHS and access the transport provided by East Lothian. Something which will take a big effort to change formally, catholic education is still being diminished and this whole thing has thrown doubt. The transition days were also cancelled. I am part of the Parent Council at St Davids RCHS and we were advised that you instructed to cease the transitions. Out of the 24 that applied to attend St Davids RCHS, how many have been given a place? My other point is if this is a permanent change due to a short time capacity restraint are we still left at the bottom of the list.***

RT – I am aware not everyone who attends Loretto is in the catchment, and they are not entitled under the current arrangement, and it does not appear equitable. With the numbers that have come through, a very small number have decided not to go to St Davids RCHS and only one has withdrawn their place.

MS – To be clear, it is not just Loretto. The proposal outlines the priority order and if you remember the slide from the presentation for non-denominational, it is not that we are penalising Loretto in anyway. We also need to be clear that Shawfair will not be denominational school. There is growing population in the Danderhall area.

***The concern of the denominational nature of St Davids RCHS if there is not a Shawfair school built is that the school will be used as a spill over.***

RT – We would not ask a family to attend a non-denominational school if they do not want too.

MS – We have never said that pupils will attend Penicuik HS.

AD – Summarised and advised on denominational and non-denominational as well as capacity issues that Midlothian Council have addressed. And asked for clarity that If Midlothian Council hit capacity elsewhere, the Council would not just offer a place St Davids RCHS.

MS – That is correct. They would not be sent only to St Davids RCHS.

RT – The proposed changes are also for entry into primary and not only for secondary. This would prioritise RC families from the beginning from their education.

***It would prioritise Midlothian families only, and this is unfortunate and unfair***

RT – We can also change catchment areas for schools which have been in place for let's say 100 years.

AD – Summarised and clarified points raised.

***Going back to Shawfair – You might get people saying that they do not want to take a chance on this. We did not get a permanent Headteacher at St Davids RCHS when ours left.***

MS – All Local authorities are seeing budget constraints, and each directorate in Midlothian were asked to put forward proposals to cut at least 10% of budgets. Some of the proposals were for example were to stop P4 swimming. Elected members asked us to look at executive headteachers, some other local authorities already do this. Whilst we looked into this, we could not appoint a permanent Headteacher until we had explored all options as

budget decisions were being made at the time of Donny leaving which is why an acting Headteacher position was put in place. The post was released and this then allowed us to go out to recruitment for a permanent Headteacher.

***Is there a way to explain exceptional circumstances when applying for a school place?***

MS – Care experienced is one that comes under exceptional criteria, children who are looked after in foster and kinship care as well as parental bereavement etc. Some people think ASN is an exceptional circumstance, but this is not as schools have provisions and enhanced classes to support children.

RT – Advised that on the form there is a space to add information and what you think is relevant under exceptional circumstances. The placement panel use this information when considering places and making decisions. You can add in as much information as possible and it is confidential and not shared. The process is seen by a multi-agency group of professionals.

AD & MS thanked attendees for their time.

Meeting concluded.

**Statutory Public Consultation Meeting**

**Proposal to vary admissions arrangements to primary and secondary education.**

**Location:** Beeslack Community High School

**Date:** Thursday 15 May 2025

**Attendees:**

Alastair Delaney, Independent Chair

Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Julie Fox, Quality Improvement Manager

Magnus Inglis, Service Manager – Acting Up

Rachel Tulloch, Principal Officer – Acting Up

Katy Johnstone, Learning Estate Resource Officer

Craig Murrin, Business Support Officer

Lisa McGlade, Head Teacher (Beeslack CHS)

Education Scotland Representative

20 members of the public were in attendance.

Alastair Delaney (AD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers.

AD Introduced himself and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

AD explained the statutory consultation process and the work that would need to be undertaken by the Council in order to adhere to the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Michelle Strong (MS) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then outlined the proposals and spoke through the presentation slides.

***My question is in relation to the Glencorse catchment area, when this was changed, we were given assurance that we could feed into the Beeslack CHS. Will this override the previous promise for when they move with peers to Roslin to same secondary school.***

MS – This consultation is on admissions to schools and not changes to catchment. Yes, they will attend Beeslack CHS. Any changes to catchments will need to go through another consultation.

Magnus Inglis (MI) – Advised on recent catchment changes part of a previous consultation and those transition arrangements will stand.

AD – Summarised and advised there is no change to the catchment area for this consultation.

***This is reassuring they can stay with their peers.***

MS – This proposal will feed into the continuity of that.

***I am also from the Old Glencorse catchment area, and we have a child attending Roslin PS and a sibling who is 4 years younger. He would not be able to attend Roslin and would need to go to Mauricewood and would mean having two children at various schools. How do Midlothian Council draw the line and consider siblings?***

Katy Johnstone (KJ) – Explained the transition arrangement which was put in place at the time of the previous proposal and consultation, being a period of three years and further explained that the same was done for the Easthouses PS consultation.

***Could you review this and if a child started school before the change was implemented that any siblings would qualify for a place if a child was in a school before the changes. I do not think it is fair that I would need to make a placing request and to split families, this was really unfair.***

MS – I appreciate what you have said, and it will be noted.

MI – The points being raised were from a previous consultation and you can email the Pupil Placement, and we can take this offline.

***I believe it is important to raise this now and it is relevant as you are proposing more changes, would make sense to make the changes now to include siblings and take it into consideration.***

AD – Summarised, could the Council look at the time a child was in the school and if you enrolled a child before any changes that they would not be subject to any future changes.

***The Auchendinny catchment areas have changed. I need clarification, I assumed my child was in the catchment area for Mauricewood. Based on the list in the presentation, we will be further down when being considered for a place.***

AD – Advised that this priority list would only come into effect if there were insufficient places and referred to the slide.

MS – As I said earlier when going through and outlining the proposals, we want Midlothian catchment children to attend their catchment schools. Our schools are pretty full and looking at developments which are coming through, the pressure on the short term is high. Our roll projections show that some areas will plateau and tail off as developments finish. Our commitment is to get catchment children to attend their catchment school or if a parent wishes them to attend a different school, they can submit a placing request. The first point on the slide is for children with ASN and we have provisions across Midlothian.

***Part of my question is how is this any different to what is in place already?***

MI – Provided an overview of the slides and explained the difference between the current and the proposed variations. The second bullet point on the proposed table now states catchment children and this was not stated before. These numbers are low, so the number of people ahead of you would be smaller.

***Thank you that makes sense.***

***It is quite scary to see us 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> down the list – If you could include context for numbers going forward it would be very helpful in making sure it is clear.***

***Trying to establish with all the new housing going on, the criteria is important when there is surplus, what percentage increase are you intending to see for children coming through and looking to attend Midlothian schools?***

MS – To give a percentage for a particular area is difficult as it can look so different. To clarify, we regularly review our school roll projections, and we have had an external company who validated this to ensure these were accurate. We have a learning estate strategy and there will be things coming on board in the next few years, for example the new Shawfair. The new Beeslack will be double the size with more capacity as well as us looking at capacity across all of our schools in terms of extensions or new buildings and what do we need now, and both in the short term and long term. Other local authorities now have buildings with a lower capacity to what they previously required.

***Using Beeslack as an example and with this doubling in size, is the projected applicants for that school to be 600/700/800. Is there some estimated figure which can be shared?***

MS – The new Beeslack is to respond to the developments in the local area and we have also redefined the catchment areas to take the pressure off Lasswade HS as it is full to capacity and growing.

***Is it fair to say you do not know the numbers for the area?***

MS -We have commitments to go from a current capacity of 800 to 1600 and based on roll projections. We had to provide robust figures, and the changes are to address and help with the issues in terms of capacity at Lasswade.

MI – Provided context on how the calculations and pupil numbers are pulled together and explained that the Council know pupil roll numbers, housing land audit, and that a pupil product is applied to see how many children and young people will arise from housing developments. These are estimates and projections.

***Does this mean Beeslack will open with 1600 pupils?***

Lisa McGlade (LM) – Not quite, by 2027 from the current roll of 767 we will be at 875/879 somewhere like that, but I am not sure of the exact figure. This is an incremental rise and when the new school is open it will not open at the 1600 capacity. We believe we will go up by 150 pupils.

***Does this align going forward?***

MI – Reiterated the pupil product and numbers on how these are pulled together and also based on the census the numbers and then refined each year. The school is being sized on what we consider long term capacity.

***Can you clear something up for us, we are from Sacred Heart PS and our catchment school is St Davids HS. Is Loretto pushing to get priority over us and how if they are another local authority?***

MS – You are correct that Midlothian has a number of denominational primary schools, and they feed into our one denominational high school. There has been a partnership arrangement with East Lothian and a number of children each year attend St Davids's HS from Loretto. What we are proposing is a more significant change for denominational schools and we are looking to prioritise Midlothian catchment children and ensuring that those catchment children who are Roman Catholic can get a place at St David's HS.

***We have been advised and heard that the parents in Musselburgh want to be catchment and for their children to be priority. We are at risk of losing out to Musselburgh. How is this if they are out of authority. They feel they are geographically closer, but they are in a different county. They are trying to bully their way in and this is how we feel.***

MS – You are correct in that Loretto is in East Lothian and there has been a historic arrangement and we are not clear about the detail of that. They are not catchment, and in terms of the proposals, our commitment is to Midlothian children first and foremost and if we have additional capacity, we can then offer places based on the priority list.

MI – Reiterated the proposed priority list and advised we are provided with a list from East Lothian each year with the number of children looking for to attend St Davids HS. Sacred Heart will remain catchment to St David's HS as this is your catchment school. If this proposal is rejected, children in the West of Midlothian would not get a place if it comes down to the geographical distance.

***This would be unfair as we pay our Council Tax to Midlothian, and this is our local authority.***

***If Musselburgh families ask not to alter the arrangement and if the Council is pushed to keep the arrangement, Sacred Heart may not have the option to attend St David's if this is not approved.***

***There is no documented agreement for this arrangement and if this goes through and is approved it is great for Sacred Heart. There will be a challenge from Loretto on all of this.***

MI -Up until this point, St David's HS has been able to accommodate all of Midlothian and East Lothian children, these proposals are due to us seeing the rolls increasing across all of our schools. We do not have a copy of the arrangement, and it has been in place for decades. Advised on the disaggregation.



***Is it likely, that the number which usually request places from Loretto to attend St David's HS would get in?***

MI – We could project what the rolls could be. As St Davids HS is the only denominational secondary school servicing Midlothian, the numbers and rolls can change.

Rachel Tulloch (RT) – In terms of parental voices, you can go onto the portal and submit your views.

***Would you look into this further if it does not go through and get approved as it is not right or fair.***

***Loretto parents will oppose this strongly then, so an East Lothian school will get places ahead of a Midlothian school if it comes down to distance.***

***In this process what amendments can be made. Can a priority statement for Loretto children be added in somewhere if there is overwhelming support. When would Councillors get vision of this and agree to it?***

MS – We are trying to get as many people to respond as it affects everyone. We would like more engagement from the portal, and we have a final public meeting taking place next week. We need to respond to everything in the final report, based on the findings and views throughout the consultation. This final report will be published on the 18 of August and will detail the people we have engaged with, what has been raised and our responses to this. Education Scotland will also do their review and also provide a report which will be included in our final report. When elected members receive the final report, they can decide to approve, reject or make amendments.

***So that vote is purely on the proposal, or can this be amended?***

MS – We have set a list of proposals and the commitment we have given to elected members is that a full report will be returned for them to make a decision. We can make small changes.

KJ – Elected members can make an amendment prior to the vote in the chamber.

***That seems quite unfair on the day and would be quite fundamental for them to know and discuss and for us to know how they will vote.***

MS – On September 09<sup>th</sup>, the final report will be presented by the executive director, and a response will be given from the three parties, Labour, Conservative and SNP and they may want an amendment. Then there could be a vote on the day whether it goes ahead.

***Will the report and findings be made public for everyone to see?***

MI – Advised on the consultation timeline and that the final report will be made public on the 18 August.

***What is the difference between Complex Needs and ASN and how are children placed?***

MS – We have a duty to provide and meet the needs of the children and learners both legally and obligatory. For the more complex cases and need, a multi-agency will make that decision. The children would access a provision in Midlothian and aim to ensure that they remain and thrive in Midlothian. It may not been in their catchment, for example we have 111 learners at Saltersgate with complex needs. 44% of our population have ASN which range

from low level support requirements etc with the vast majority of the children being supported in mainstream schools/classrooms and a smaller number on shared placements.

***I live outside Roslin in an EH25 postcode. Our catchment is Lasswade, with the new proposal they will be out of catchment. It is important for them to go to high school with their peers, it sounds like Beeslack has a higher capacity. Will any consideration be taken for those children who have gone through a feeder primary school?***

RT – Referred to the list and advised on the Placing Request process and the information the placement panel receives when a placing request has been submitted and that you can include as much information as you want too, which remains confidential.

***My concern is with the Sacred Heart transition process as this starts in P6. If this goes through and for those starting enhanced transitions, my concern is on the impact and wellbeing of the children and Loretto may take places. Do the children get thrust elsewhere?***

RT – Advised that each year can be different and provided examples of previous years.

MS – Up until this point we have always been able to offer places at St Davids. As I said at the start when we went through the proposal and priority list, we are looking at prioritising catchment Midlothian children. The enhanced transition needs to start and if you do not get a place we would need to look at what support we could offer.

***What comes under exceptional circumstances?***

MS - Advised kinship care, parental death etc and these are small numbers we see each year to gain a place at a school through exceptional circumstances.

***My son is in P6 at Mauricewood PS, which high school will he be going to and if he comes to Beeslack will there be transitions for him?***

RT – The current P6 will now be part of the Penicuik HS catchment area. If you do not have a sibling attending the school at the same time, you would need to submit a placing request.

***What is happening to this school?***

RT – This will remain open until the new school is built, the transition and catchment changes take effect next year.

***It seems insane that we need to put in a placing request as I live closely. Where are you putting the children as the building (Penicuik HS) is a disaster.***

MS – Penicuik HS will be going through an upgrade and is receiving a £43-million-pound investment. There is a whole programme of works which will be happening.

***When will this be and how long will it take?***

MS – It will be this summer and will take two years. There have been public meetings about this, you can contact the Headteacher of Penicuik HS.

AD – Summarised and reiterated the website for views to be taken into account.

AD & MS thanked attendees for their time.

Meeting concluded.

## **Statutory Public Consultation Meeting**

### **Proposal to vary admissions arrangements to primary and secondary education.**

**Location:** Easthouses Primary School

**Date:** Thursday 22 May 2025

**Attendees:**

Alastair Delaney, Independent Chair

Fiona Robertson, Executive Director

Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Colin MacLean, Quality Improvement Manager

Magnus Inglis, Service Manager – Acting Up

Rachel Tulloch, Principal Officer – Acting Up

Katy Johnstone, Learning Estate Resource Officer

Craig Murrin, Business Support Officer

Louise McGuire, Head Teacher (St Lukes RC PS)

Anne-Theresa Lawrie, (Religious Representative)

Education Scotland Representative

3 members of the public were in attendance.

Alastair Delaney (AD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers.

AD Introduced himself and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

AD explained the statutory consultation process and the work that would need to be undertaken by the Council in order to adhere to the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Fiona Robertson (FR) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then outlined the proposals and spoke through the presentation slides.

AD then welcome questions from members of the public.

***I am a catholic church representative for Midlothian Council. For over 80 years the young people from Loretto RC Primary School have attended St Davids RC HS. You emphasised the importance of catholic education and I find it strange that this change has come through this consultation, and I don't know where this has come from Fiona. I urge that Loretto continue their faith journey in a denominational high school. At the council meeting last Tuesday councillors had not seen the consultation prior to going out and the Labour group were not happy they hadn't seen it.***

FR – Approval was given by the Council who delegated authority to myself to carry out a statutory consultation. The consultation has been met in terms of the delegated authority

granted by Councillors in November. This admissions policy is for all schools and to prioritise and ensure there are places available for Midlothian catchment children.

***We would like the young people from Loretto to continue their education as they are an integral part of St Davids RC HS.***

AD – Summarised the views and these are being recorded.

***If there is a historical agreement from the old Lothian region presumably that would have given the parents some comfort to continue their faith journey in catholic education, why are we changing it.***

FR – Advised it is a historical arrangement, and we have advised East Lothian Council what this change would be what it would mean in terms of the priority order, and this has also been shared with East Lothian. FR further advised that it was for East Lothian to determine how to offer denominational secondary education for pupils.

***So I can understand it, is this just a summary of the changes, and is there a more detailed document publicly available?***

FR – Yes, you can find a copy of the document online and there are copies available this evening.

***The question I have is in relation to exceptional circumstances would there be any changes to the definition of this or the categories they come under.***

Magnus Inglis (MI) – Explained the exceptional circumstances criteria and gave examples that it would be a child who may be care experienced or who has had a parental bereavement.

AD – Summarised and confirmed there is no change to this.

***For denominational schools I find it dubious and find the order quite perplexing.***

***I find it odd that the denominational schools have ERG and exceptional needs above RC. For exceptional circumstances is this just care experienced and children who have had a parental bereavement?***

FR – These are small numbers across Midlothian which we are prioritising in terms of their needs. Inclusion is one of our statutory duties and the prioritisation supports our duty to meet this.

MI – These are just two examples from a bigger list.

MS – Some people think ASN is an exceptional circumstance, but all of our schools can meet the needs out of learners.

Rachel Tulloch (RT) – We do not have a definitive list written down as exceptional circumstances are specific to each family.

***This could be open to interpretation.***

RT – A panel come together and go over the information provided to consider and reach a decision based on this information. Again, the numbers are really small.

***How confident are you that you have the capacity to accommodate all catchment children?***

FR- We have higher numbers of reserved places where we know there are still housing developments, for the predictions we track the birth rates in the area as well as house builds etc and some projects may come ahead of others, and we may need to make interim decisions. FR then gave examples of interim solutions that Midlothian Council consider and their ongoing commitment.

***Are there any plans to change the catchment areas?***

FR – We have changed catchments previously. *FR then spoke about and gave examples of the replacement Beeslack CHS and the Glencorse changes.* You can log onto the Council website and check what your catchment area is based on your address. You can also contact the central team, and they can advise if there are any upcoming changes, and any change would require a statutory consultation. We have one upcoming which is the new Shawfair that will be an all through 3-18 school.

AD – Summarised the consultation process and proposal.

***We were moved catchment recently though a prior consultation process. Our child is in an ASN provision out of catchment, which was the catchment primary before the catchment changed. We understand that their mainstream PS place is still allocated. We have another child due to start in 2026 who would be allocated to new current catchment PS. What is the definition of catchment children attending the school? We moved into the area when it was Woodburn PS and now this has changed to Easthouses PS, would we need to go between two schools.***

FR – You are already in the system and your best option would be to contact us to discuss your individual personal circumstances. We usually put in statements to the proposals for the numbers of years transition arrangements will be in place for. We would need to, and it would be helpful to have a discussion due to the personal nature and what that means for you. FR then advised on the mailbox and stated if you email your circumstances this will be passed to the relevant officers to deal with.

MI – When we have made changes to catchment areas, we have put in transitions arrangements, and we would need to check your specific circumstances and work that out.

***Fantastic, that is great as it feels complex.***

RT – This consultation if it goes ahead, will not override transition arrangements from a previous consultation. But we will look at your individual circumstances.

AD & FR thanked attendees for their time.

Meeting concluded.

## **Appendix 4 - Omissions, Corrections and Amendments**

### **Consultation on the proposal to vary the to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education.**

#### **Omissions, Corrections & Amendments - Version 1.0 (Updated 14/04/2025)**

This document highlights specific omissions, corrections and amendments regarding the published documentation relating to the above consultation. These have been identified after the documentation has been published so cannot be retrospectively included.

The document version number and date can be found at the top of this document to help establish the most recent omissions, corrections and amendments that have been made.

1) Correction: Consultation Document, page 7, paragraph 21:

The incorrect public meeting date was recorded for Beeslack Community High School. Within the proposal document it states that a public meeting will be held on Thursday 01 May 2025 at 6:30pm.

The sentence should state that a public meeting will be held on Thursday 15 May 2025 at 6:30pm in Beeslack Community High School.

2) Correction: Information Leaflet, page 1, Public Meetings will take place on:

The incorrect public meeting date was recorded for Beeslack Community High School. Within the information leaflet it states that a public meeting will be held on Thursday 01 May 2025 at 6:30pm.

The correct public meeting date should state that a public meeting will be held on Thursday 15 May 2025 at 6:30pm in Beeslack Community High School.

## Appendix 5 - Education Scotland Report

### 1 Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of a proposal by Midlothian Council to vary the Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Education. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the setting; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meetings held on 22 and 24 April, 12, 15 and 22 May 2025 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- visits to the site of Danderhall Primary School, Paradykes Primary School, St David's Roman Catholic (RC) High School, Sacred Heart Primary School, Hawthornden Primary School, Roslin Primary School, Dalkeith High School, Newtongrange Primary School, St Andrew's RC Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees; and

- meeting with representatives of the Catholic Church and officers from East Lothian and Midlothian Councils.

## 2 Consultation Process

- 2.1 Midlothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).
- 2.2 The public consultation ran from 2 April to 2 June 2025. The proposal was available on the council website and made available to stakeholders. The council held five public meetings and four virtual drop-in sessions. There were a total of 66 attendances at the public meetings. The council received 511 responses to their online consultation survey. They also received three emails, a response from the pastoral team and letters from St David's RC High School Parent Council and Loretto RC Primary School Parent Partnership. Most of the 511 survey responses were from parents and carers. The majority of respondents disagree with the proposal. Of those that expressed a view, 237 strongly disagree, 49 disagree, 87 agree and 111 strongly agree. In the public meetings, letters and survey results stakeholders raised a variety of points and queries. Comments supporting the proposal include agreement with prioritising children and young people living in school catchment areas, and/or those living in Midlothian. The suggestion that a clearer admissions policy may better support sustainable school planning. Concerns raised by stakeholders, include worries about ending the long-established link between St David's RC High School, Midlothian and Loretto RC Primary School, East Lothian and future risks to continuing catholic education for some children. Stakeholders also raised queries around siblings being able to attend the same school in future. A few stakeholders asked how this proposal might affect or relate to wider changes to the school estate.
- 2.3 The council consulted with children and young people potentially affected by this proposal through digital Pupil Voice sessions. This involved online sessions in 16 schools, including Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian. Overall, the majority stated that they think the proposed changes are reasonable, although a minority are unsure or disagreed. Children and young people from several schools commented on their preference to let siblings go to the same school for relationship and practical reasons. Children and young people at denominational schools raised the largest number of concerns. They are worried about how this proposal may reduce opportunities for some children and young people to access faith-based education, particularly if they are not near a denominational school, are not a baptised Roman Catholic or live outwith Midlothian.

## 3 Educational aspects of proposal

- 3.1 HM Inspectors agree that it is important that local authorities plan ahead in order to ensure school places reflect the number of children and young people in their local council area. The school population in Midlothian, and in several surrounding local council areas, is increasing. It is therefore appropriate for Midlothian Council to consider how it can best manage this change. HM Inspectors agree that there are



clear educational benefits to schools having sufficient and appropriate space for delivering educational experiences.

- 3.2 The majority of stakeholders that spoke to HM Inspectors, who live in Midlothian, support the proposal. They see the growing population due to increasing numbers of new housing developments and consider it appropriate that Midlothian Council prioritises children and young people within its borders. They would welcome a clear admissions policy that takes the changes in communities into account. They hope that this will minimise any anxiety for families about what schools children and young people will go to. However, parents that spoke to HM Inspectors who live outwith Midlothian, have concerns about how the proposal may affect their choice of school.
- 3.3 Almost all children and young people that spoke to HM Inspectors, expressed the view that they should be entitled to go to their nearest school. A minority thought this should be the case even where the nearest school is across a council border. Children that spoke to HM Inspectors, consider being able to sustain friendships by going to the same secondary school as their school peers to be very important.
- 3.4 Almost all parents, young people and children who spoke to HM Inspectors think that children should be entitled to attend the same school as their older siblings. A minority queried whether this is given a sufficiently high priority in the proposal paper. Most children and young people that spoke to HM Inspectors consider this the second most important criteria, after locality, for admissions priorities. Stakeholders would like the council to ensure that siblings are not separated as a result of implementation of the proposal, including those who are out of catchment. However, a few stakeholders also noted that children without older siblings shouldn't be penalised when it comes to allocating places. HM Inspectors recommend that the council consider further any potential negative impact of this proposal in regard to supporting sibling attendance at the same schools.
- 3.5 HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits in an admissions policy that supports well planned, communicated and delivered transition from primary school to secondary school. This should include enhanced transition for children with additional support needs. Transitions for children subject to placing requests, often starts later. Stakeholders would value the clarity of an admissions policy that would allow them to begin transition work at an early stage. This year, a few children have experienced interrupted transition due to uncertainty of which secondary school they would be allocated. This created anxiety for the children and their families. Staff who met with HM Inspectors are hopeful that, when implemented, the proposal will help them to start transition programmes earlier and avoid such situations in the future. HM Inspectors agree it is important effective transition is in place for all children, including those whose families are submitting placing requests. These families may wish children to attend transition activities at more than one school. The council should work with schools to support families putting in placing requests, to consider what transition activities outwith their catchment school children should attend, given they may not receive a place at their preferred school.
- 3.6 All stakeholders at denominational schools who spoke to HM Inspectors, want children and young people who are baptised Roman Catholic to be able to access faith-based education at primary school and secondary school. There are, however, a variety of views on the order within the proposal. A minority think that children living in Midlothian should have priority, regardless of their faith. Others disagree, and

consider those who are baptised Roman Catholic children, even if living outside Midlothian, should have priority. Stakeholders at St David's RC High School are concerned that the proposal could result in an increase in non-Roman Catholic children attending the school. They feel this could impact on the catholic ethos of the school.

- 3.7 Currently, around 120 young people at St Davids RC High School are from the East Lothian's Loretto RC Primary School catchment area. Most stakeholders who spoke to HM Inspectors from St Davids RC High School and Loretto RC Primary School, disagree with and are very concerned about this proposal. They are worried that this proposal will remove certainty about children being able to continue their education onto a denomination secondary school. Their preference is for Loretto RC Primary School to be a catchment primary of St David's RC High School, with the children prioritised for places alongside those living in Midlothian.
- 3.8 Young people at St Davids RC High School who spoke to HM Inspectors, who travel from East Lothian, are concerned about whether their current school transport will continue. East Lothian Council have confirmed transport will be provided for the coming year. If this proposal is agreed, it will be important for East Lothian and Midlothian Councils to work together to consider any travel implications this could create for young people and their families.
- 3.9 As this proposal includes denominational schools, HM Inspectors consulted representatives of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh. The archdiocese is concerned that this proposal will reduce the opportunity for children attending Loretto RC Primary School to access secondary education at a denominational school. The archdiocese considers children in Loretto RC Primary School to be part of the wider St David's RC High School community. The archdiocese believes that this proposal would impact adversely on these children's faith journey. If the proposal is agreed, HM Inspectors recommend the two councils work with stakeholders at Loretto RC Primary School to consider how best to reduce disruption to children's transition to secondary school.

## **4 Summary**

HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits in Midlothian Council having an admissions policy that will best manage the change in their school population. Many stakeholders that spoke to HM Inspectors recognise the challenging situation in Midlothian of rising school rolls at many of their schools. Should this proposal be agreed, it will be important for Midlothian Council to work with schools to support cohesive and effective transitions for all children. Stakeholders raised the need for Midlothian Council to enable younger siblings to attend the same school as their siblings. They would like this to be considered further by the council if they decide to change their admissions policy. HM Inspectors recommend the council further explore with stakeholders how to reduce any negative impact of this proposal in regard to siblings.

Families who live outwith Midlothian, but whose children and young people attend Midlothian schools, are worried by the proposal. In particular, there is a long history of children who attend Loretto RC Primary School in East Lothian being able to transition to St David's RC High School in Midlothian for secondary education. Both

the affected families and representatives of the Catholic Church are concerned that this proposal, if agreed, will potentially remove these children's access to denominational education once they reach the secondary stage of education. If the proposal is agreed, it will be important for the two councils to work together to minimise disruption to these children's learning journeys.

**HM Inspectors**  
**June 2025**