



People Directorate

Consultation Report

Proposed amendments to South Ayrshire Council's primary school admissions, P7-S1 secondary school transfers and placing request arrangements

August 2018

CONTENTS

| | Section | Page | |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|----|
| 1.0 | Introduction | 3 | |
| 2.0 | Considerations | 3 | |
| 3.0 | Outcome of the Consultation | 4 | |
| | 3.1 | Overview of responses to consultation | 5 |
| | 3.2 | Summary of the main points and views expressed during the consultation | 6 |
| 4.0 | Report by Education Scotland | 9 | |
| | 4.1 | Process | 9 |
| | 4.2 | Education Scotland summary | 9 |
| | 4.3 | Responses to main points raised by Education Scotland | 10 |
| 5.0 | Review of the proposal | 11 | |
| | 5.1 | Review | 11 |
| | 5.2 | Omissions and inaccuracies | 12 |
| 6.0 | Council decision making process | 12 | |

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Summary of responses from consultation process
- Appendix 2 Views/Comments expressed at public meeting
- Appendix 3 Education Scotland Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Leadership Panel of South Ayrshire Council at its meeting of 24th April 2018 agreed to undertake statutory consultation on the proposed amendments to South Ayrshire Council's primary school admissions, P7-S1 secondary school transfers and placing request arrangements.
- 1.2 The proposal document was made available to all consultees as prescribed by the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 and a copy of the proposal document was available from the Council's website at www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/consultations. The consultation process ran from 30th April 2018 to 15th June 2018, a period of more than 30 school days as required by statute.
- 1.3 As part of the consultation process, the Council undertook the following activities:
 - Advertised the consultation on the Council website.
 - Placed a consultation advert in the local paper.
 - Publicised the consultation exercise and a public meeting using the school text messaging service.
 - Placed copies of the document in the County Buildings, Ayr, all South Ayrshire Schools, Libraries and Customer Contact Centres.
 - Held a public meeting in the County Hall, County Buildings, Ayr on the 23rd May 2018.
 - Gathered responses using an online survey.

2.0 Considerations

The following proposed changes were issued for consultation:

- 2.1 That where there are more catchment children entering primary school at P1 or S1 in a secondary school, the placing request criteria will be used to determine which children are allocated a space, and
- 2.2 That the placing request criteria be amended to give priority to denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational school. The amended placing request criteria are included in section 2.3 below.
- 2.3 Where there are more placing requests for a school than there are spaces available the following criteria will be used in the first instance to allocate places to children or young people who live within the school's delineated area after which the criteria will be used to allocate places to children or young people who live outwith the school's delineated area:
 - (i) Those cases where the medical needs of the child or young person can only be met in the school requested;
 - (ii) Those children who do not live in the delineated area of a secondary school but attend an associated primary school;
 - (iii) To denominational children or young people who have a Roman Catholic baptismal certificate and who wish to attend their catchment denominational school;

- (iv) The presence of older brothers or sisters in the school requested; and / or
- (v) Allocation by ballot.

In relation to (i) to (iv) above, if there are more applications being considered than there are places available as each stage of priority criteria is being applied, a ballot will be held to determine the successful applications.

In applying (v) priority will be given to placing requests for children and young people who live in South Ayrshire, after which any remaining spaces will be allocated by a further ballot.

When a ballot is required it will be carried out by officers within South Ayrshire Council's People Directorate. Furthermore, for session 2019/20, independent verification of this ballot will be undertaken to provide transparency in our decision making processes.

3.0 Outcome of the Consultation

The consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and all prescribed consultees were given an opportunity to participate in the consultation process and submit views on the proposals. In addition to this, other individuals and groups with an interest in the proposals were also given an opportunity to participate and submit their views.

Full details of the proposals were made available to consultees who were given the opportunity to answer 2 questions and provide comments.

3.1 Overview of responses to the consultation

3.1.1 There were a total of 152 written responses received (including the Diocese of Galloway) during the consultation period.

3.1.2 Table 1 below provides a summary of the responses to each of the questions that people were asked. There was a small majority of respondents who were against the proposal to amend the admissions arrangements to include priority criteria should a school be oversubscribed. However, on further analysis of the responses, it can be determined that a number of respondents in the Girvan area misunderstood the question and based their responses on misinformation that was circulating on social media at the time of the consultation. This information related to restricting access to Sacred Heart Primary School to denominational children only, which in turn would restrict the opportunity of choice within the Girvan area. Such a widespread restriction or ‘capping’ was not included within the consultation document. With regards to the proposal to amend the placing request criteria there was a clear majority in support of the change.

Some respondents provided comments regarding the overall process for school admissions and not specifically on the proposals that were issued for consultation.

Table 1

| Summary of Responses (excl response from Diocese of Galloway) | Do you agree with the proposal to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | | | | Do you agree with the amended placing request criteria which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | | | |
|---|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Yes | No | No preference | Blank | Yes | No | No preference | Blank |
| Parent/Carer | 61 | 71 | 7 | 2 | 76 | 55 | 10 | 0 |
| Young People | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Other e.g. Community | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 64 | 75 | 10 | 2 | 82 | 57 | 12 | 0 |
| % | 42.4% | 49.7% | 6.6% | 1.3% | 54.3% | 37.7% | 8.0% | 0.0% |

- 3.1.3 Overall the responses to the proposed changes to the admission arrangements and placing requests criteria were mixed. A summary of the responses from the consultation process are listed in Appendix 1

Many responses were based on parents individual circumstances. There was also a view that parents should have freedom of choice as to which school their children attend. It would be impossible for the Council to accommodate such an arrangement which could lead to disarray in the process for admitting children and young people to schools.

- 3.1.4 A public meeting was held on the 23rd May 2018 in the County Hall, County Buildings, Ayr, with 2 people in attendance. The individuals indicated that they were there only to seek advice about their own specific circumstances and officers discussed these with them. The questions raised at the public meeting are listed in Appendix 2.

- 3.1.5 The Diocese of Galloway welcomed the Council's proposal to have guidelines in place to cover the potential oversubscription of schools. The Diocese appreciated the need to be sensitive to the provision of places for those children who are not Catholic but who already have a sibling in a denominational school. The Bishop also asked a number of additional questions relating to potential scenarios which were clarified in a subsequent response.

3.2 Summary of the main points and views expressed during the consultation

- 3.2.1 The main issues/views gathered during the consultation period are listed below along with a response from Council officers:

- 1) View expressed: The plans are to actually change some schools back to being denominational which could cause separation, conflict, stigma.

Response: The consultation was not about the provision of denominational or non-denominational schools. The consultation included how to manage oversubscription to schools giving an element of priority to Catholic children who wish to attend their denominational catchment school.

- 2) View expressed: No caps for Sacred Heart Primary. Parents must have a choice.

Response: The consultation does not include any proposal to cap the roll at Sacred Heart Primary. The capacity of the school will remain unchanged.

- 3) View expressed: Children should be allocated a place at their nearest catchment school and educational provision adapted to accommodate this.

Response: The Council monitors school rolls closely and where there is clear evidence that there is consistently insufficient space at a school for catchment children, will make arrangements to address any shortfall. Normally such a situation arises as a consequence of new housing. However, school rolls fluctuate and it would not be possible to change accommodation at short notice or for very small numbers.

- 4) View expressed: Access to good quality education should not be solely based on denomination.

Response: South Ayrshire Council's schools aim to provide consistently high quality education for children and young people. Data and inspection reports are in the public domain for parents to make their own judgments on the quality of schools.

- 5) View expressed: Parents should have a choice of school.

Response: Parents do have a choice of school. Children and young people are allocated a school based on catchment areas, however if space is available at another school, then a parent can choose to send their child to it under the placing request arrangements.

- 6) View expressed: Girvan only has 2 primary schools. One which is not very good and in need of a new building. The other which is amazing but is too small.

Response: South Ayrshire Council aims to deliver high quality education for children and young people in all schools and considers both schools in Girvan to provide good quality learning and teaching. Girvan Primary is a non-denominational primary school serving the town of Girvan. The school has sufficient capacity to accommodate current and projected numbers. Sacred Heart Primary is the only denominational school for the South Carrick area and is designed to accommodate current and future denominational children.

- 7) Question raised: Why has there been a significant increase in numbers at Sacred Heart Primary?

Response: The numbers have increased at Sacred Heart Primary due to successful placing requests from Girvan Primary and an increase in the number of primary 1 children who will be entering Sacred Heart Primary in August 2018.

- 8) View expressed: Placing Requests for denominational children from outwith the catchment area should be considered at the same time as catchment children.

Response: South Ayrshire Council has a policy which gives priority to catchment children attending their catchment school. Only once these children have been accommodated will placing requests be considered.

- 9) View expressed: The Council should not use criteria such as medical or sibling presence as a decider for places in a school which is near capacity.

Response: Giving priority to children with relevant medical conditions or who already have siblings at the school was subject to previous consultation and the Council is not proposing to change this as part of the current consultation.

- 10) View expressed: Some parents are giving false addresses to get their child in to their preferred school.

Response: Parents are required to provide a range of documentary evidence that confirms their place of residence. Where the place of residence is in doubt further checks will be carried out.

- 11) View expressed: Unfair that people move into an area because of schools to then be told they will not be able to attend said school.

Response: The Council closely monitors school rolls and a policy is already in place to retain some spaces for incoming catchment children. Unfortunately it is not possible to

guarantee a place for an incoming catchment child and arrangements are in place where they will be offered a place at another school nearby.

- 12) View expressed: The proposals do not align with “Getting it Right for Every Child”

Response: The respondent did not explain why they felt this was the case. However, the Council is fully committed to the aims and objectives set out in the GIRFEC policy and all schools are well placed to deliver these.

- 13) View expressed: The Council has failed to ensure that there are adequate school places to meet demand.

Response: On average South Ayrshire Council's schools are operating at 74% capacity although a few schools are operating close to full capacity. As mentioned above the Council closely monitors school rolls particularly when new housing is being developed in the area. Using projected rolls any issue will be highlighted and the Council will consider a range of options for mitigating this. This may include extending the school if space is available, restricting the intake to placing requests, rezoning part of the catchment area or building a new school.

- 14) View expressed: It should be based on the child having the opportunity to make their way to school without having to seek public transport.

Response: Where possible the Council encourages children to walk to school, however in rural areas or where there is an extended catchment area it is not possible to apply ability to walk to school as one of the admission criteria. Primary school children receive free school transport where they live more than 2 miles from the catchment school or 3 miles for secondary children or where there is a safety issue.

- 15) View expressed: Children with a sibling at a denominational school should be given priority over Roman Catholic children who don't.

Response: The proposal only gives this level of priority within the denominational sector. If a Roman Catholic child cannot get a place at their catchment school they would need to travel a significant distance to access another denominational school whereas a non-denominational child will have the option of another school within a reasonable distance.

- 16) View expressed: Children who stay closest to the school should get priority.

Response: The Council is of the view that all children who live within a catchment area should be treated equally and not disadvantaged as a result of their address.

- 17) View expressed: The Council should take into account the parents personal circumstances.

Response: Parents' personal circumstance can vary significantly and it would not be possible for the Council to respond to every individual case. Parents also have a responsibility to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that their children attend school.

- 18) View expressed: Children who stay outside the catchment areas should not get priority over catchment children.

Response: Catchment children always get priority over placing requests.

- 19) View expressed: Parents are not given a fair choice in where they wish to send their children.

Response: The Council is required to specify the school that a child should attend. This is done using catchment areas and the school admission arrangements are widely published. Under the placing request arrangements parents can choose an alternative school if space is available.

4.0 Report by Education Scotland

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the amendments contained in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires HM Inspectors from Education Scotland to be involved in the formal consultation process. As part of this process HM Inspectors undertook a number of activities in considering the educational benefits of the proposal. A copy of Education Scotland's report on the educational benefits of the proposal is attached as Appendix 3.

4.1 Process

- 4.1.1 Inspectors considered all relevant documentation provided by the Council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, as well as written and oral submissions from parents and others;

- 4.1.2 In addition, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 23 May 2018 in connection with the Council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, including representation from the Galloway Diocese; and
- visits to the site of Alloway Primary School, Forehill Primary School, Holmston Primary School, Sacred Heart Primary School and Struthers Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

4.2 Education Scotland summary

- 4.2.1 South Ayrshire Council has set out a fair and reasonable case for revising its guidelines on admissions and for managing placing request procedures in primary and secondary schools. If implemented, the proposal will be of overall educational benefit to the children and young people who reside permanently within the catchment areas of the primary and secondary schools of South Ayrshire Council. The proposal should in addition ensure that school places remain available for young people and their families who wish for them to be educated in a Roman Catholic faith establishment. However, the council does not yet have broad support from the wider parental community for this proposal. In taking forward the proposal the council needs to set out how it will address the range of concerns raised during the consultation, in particular the request for further engagement with the wider parental community regarding the implications of the proposal. It should in addition ensure that placing request decisions are made at the earliest opportunity to ensure all young people,

particularly those with additional support needs, are given the highest quality of support in transitioning into primary school and onto secondary school.

4.3 Response to the main points raised by Education Scotland

South Ayrshire Council welcomes the report by Education Scotland (attached as Appendix 3). The report recognises the benefits of the proposals and considers them to be fair and reasonable. Council Officers have considered the points raised by inspectors and responses to the various points are detailed below:

- 4.3.1 **Paragraph 2.2:** A number of respondents were concerned about the implications for their children's education and did not want their choice to be restricted.

Response: The Council is not required to provide a choice of school for parents as part of their admissions policy. The choice for parents is available under the placing request arrangements but only if a space is available at their chosen school.

- 4.3.2 **Paragraph 2.2:** A few objections came from the Girvan community where parents were anxious about their chosen primary school being capped.

Response: Capping Sacred Heart Primary is not part of this consultation and there are no proposals to cap the school.

- 4.3.3 **Paragraph 2.2:** A few parents would welcome the presence of siblings to be given higher priority in the outlined criteria.

Response: The proposal to give priority to denominational children over siblings only applies to the denominational sector. If a Roman Catholic child cannot get a place at their catchment school they would need to travel a significant distance to access another denominational school whereas a non-denominational child will have the option of another school within a reasonable distance.

- 4.3.4 **Paragraph 3.5:** Staff expressed concern about the possible negative impact on transitional planning on children and young people, particularly those with additional support needs, while waiting on the outcome of placing requests.

Response: Although the specific response dates for placing requests are enshrined in legislation, every effort is made to inform parents of the outcome as soon as possible.

- 4.3.5 **Paragraph 3.6:** A few parents wondered why the building of new schools or classrooms had not been considered.

Response: School rolls fluctuate for many reasons and it would not be practical to expect the Council to extend a school every time there is a slight increase in a school's roll. The Council closely monitors school rolls particularly when new housing is being developed in the area. Using projected rolls, if it is evident that there will be a sustained impact on a school, the Council will consider a range of options for mitigating this. This may include extending the school if space is available, restricting the intake to placing requests, rezoning part of the catchment area or building a new school.

- 4.3.6 **Paragraph 3.6:** A few parents felt they had insufficient opportunity to explore the proposal with council officers, reporting that they had been unaware of the date for the public meeting.

Response: The proposals were widely advertised in the local press and on the Council's website. Parents were also sent a text informing them that the consultation was underway and where to access the proposal document and information about the public meeting.

- 4.3.7 **Paragraph 3.6:** A majority felt that the document was over-technical and would welcome a more accessible document with which they and their children could more readily engage.

Response: We very much appreciate this feedback and although the format of the proposal document is in line with the guidelines relating to school consultations we will look at making the wording more user friendly for future consultations.

- 4.3.8 **Paragraph 3.6:** In the Girvan area, parents, while understanding of the rationale for prioritising the placement of Roman Catholic children from within catchment at times of oversubscription, were anxious about the placement of their own children and that of any siblings.

Response: It is not possible to guarantee children a place at their local catchment school and there is the possibility that siblings may need to attend alternative schools. The distance between Girvan Primary and Sacred Heart Primary is not significant and parents would be offered a place at Girvan Primary if they could not get a place at Sacred Heart Primary. The proposal to give priority to denominational children over siblings only applies to the denominational sector.

- 4.3.9 **Paragraph 3.7:** A few young people who were transferring to secondary school in August spoke about their earlier anxieties while waiting for a placing request decision.

Response: As explained above, although the specific response dates for placing requests are enshrined in legislation every effort is made to inform parents of the outcome as soon as possible.

- 4.3.10 **Paragraph 3.7:** Although this year they were all successful in transferring to the school of their choice, some children and young people were anxious that their siblings would, in the future, not be able to attend the same school.

Response: It is not possible to guarantee a space in a school for those children and young people who have submitted a placing request. However, the present criteria provides a degree of priority to siblings.

5.0 Review of the Proposal

- 5.1 The Depute Chief Executive/Director of People has considered the responses to the statutory consultation including Education Scotland's report and has provided an individual response to each of the points raised/views expressed.

Having considered the responses to the consultation the Depute Chief Executive/Director of People is of the opinion that the Council should proceed with the proposals that were issued for consultation. This will ensure that there are fair, open and transparent arrangements in place if a school finds that it is oversubscribed by children from the catchment area.

Furthermore, the additional criterion that supports a Roman Catholic child to attend their catchment denominational school reduces the need for significant travel to access an alternative denominational school.

5.2 **Omissions and Inaccuracies**

No omissions and inaccuracies were highlighted during the consultation process.

6.0 **Decision making process**

6.1 In accordance with the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010, this report will be published on Monday 27th August 2018 and made available for further consideration for a minimum period of 3 weeks. Copies of the report are available on the Council's website at www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/consultations.

A report will be submitted to a meeting of the Council's Leadership Panel on Tuesday, 18th September 2018 and will include a copy of the consultation report and recommendations for consideration and a decision.

Proposed amendments to South Ayrshire Council’s primary school admissions, P7-S1 secondary school transfers and placing request arrangements

1. Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available?
2. Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school?

Summary of responses and comments received.

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|--|
| 1 | 13/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Would like their children to go to a denominational secondary school although they are not Roman Catholic. Was informed that we do not have catholic schools in our area but schools that teach catholic beliefs but the proposal would suggest that. Proposals change some schools back to being denominational which could cause separation, conflict, stigma. This proposal is removing equality and reintroducing discrimination starting at the highest levels “our council”, what exactly is this teaching our kids??? |
| 2 | 12/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 3 | 12/06/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | No | All children should get a place at their catchment school and education provision should be put in place to support this |
| 4 | 12/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Access to good quality education should not be solely based on denomination. |
| 5 | 12/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 6 | 12/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Parents should have freedom to choose which school their children attend |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 7 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Parents should have freedom to choose which school their children attend. Siblings should be able to attend the same school |
| 8 | 11/06/18 | Maybole | Young Person | No | No preference | It's appalling that this is actually happening, there isn't enough catchment schools for Girvan kids and Sacred Heart is a great school. Soon there will be overcrowded schools with wild children because it's not manned properly and kids not getting on etc etc |
| 9 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 10 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Schools should be open to anyone. But Roman Catholic children should always get priority at Sacred Heart |
| 11 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 12 | 11/06/18 | | Other | No | No | |
| 13 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Young Person | No | Yes | |
| 14 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No preference | No preference | |
| 15 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | No | |
| 16 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Choose Sacred Heart because it's a small school. It's not big enough to take more children. Don't waste a good school |
| 17 | 11/06/18 | Crosshill | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 18 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | Sacred Heart should not be capped. Parents must have a choice. |
| 19 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 20 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | Girvan only has 2 primary schools. One which is not very good and in need of new building. The other which is amazing but is too small. There has got to be a better solution |
| 21 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 22 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Does not agree with proposal to cap places available at schools |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 23 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 24 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 25 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 26 | 11/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 27 | 11/06/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | No preference | |
| 28 | 10/06/18 | | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 29 | 10/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 30 | 09/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | Do not cap Sacred Heart Primary in Girvan. Build a new school. |
| 31 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | Would question why there has been a significant increase at Sacred Heart. Is it because there is increasing discontent at Girvan primary's performance and failure to deal with issues. |
| 32 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 33 | 08/06/18 | Kilmarnock | Parent/Carer | No | No | Kids should be near their parents |
| 34 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | A child from a faith driven family should clearly be given priority over a family who do not have a strong faith background |
| 35 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 36 | 08/06/18 | Maybole | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 37 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 38 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 39 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 40 | 08/06/18 | | Parent/Carer | No preference | Yes | |
| 41 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Other | No preference | Yes | |
| 42 | 08/06/18 | Kirkoswald | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Agrees with the amendments but also believes that Placing Requests for denominational children outwith the catchment area should also be considered at the same time as the catchment area. |
| 43 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 44 | 08/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 45 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 46 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 47 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | No | |
| 48 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | It should be based on the child having the opportunity to make their way to school without having to seek public transport. To increase exercise for the attendees and reduce the cost of having to pay for public transport or the cost of a school bus. |
| 49 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No preference | |
| 50 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Other | No preference | Yes | Prefers Sacred Heart Primary to stay a small school. |
| 51 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 52 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No preference | Yes | |
| 53 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 54 | 07/06/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 55 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Sacred Heart Primary is getting too big for the head teacher to manage. |
| 56 | 07/06/18 | GIRVAN | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 57 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Not happy with the education provided at Girvan Primary and have already moved one child to Sacred Heart Primary. |
| 58 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 59 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 60 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 61 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Sacred Heart Primary is a fantastic school and has become increasingly popular over the last few years and this must raise the question why is this? Children should have an opportunity to attend this school |
| 62 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 63 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 64 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Doesn't want Sacred Heart Primary to be full to capacity or overcrowded |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|--|
| 65 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 66 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | No | |
| 67 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 68 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Would like the freedom to choose where my children will go to school. |
| 69 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Other | No | No | Need a choice of schools. Girvan Primary is too big and there are issues with behaviour. |
| 70 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 71 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 72 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Intends sending their child who isn't Roman Catholic to Sacred Heart Primary School rather than Girvan Primary. Therefore doesn't agree with the proposal. |
| 73 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 74 | 07/06/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | No | No | Girvan only has two schools to choose from within 10 miles. We need Sacred Heart as another option and not just for Catholic children. It is a Catholic school not a school for Catholics. |
| 75 | 06/06/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | No | Does not agree with using criteria such medical or sibling presence as a decider for places in a school which is near capacity. Thinks that the catchment should be split and those staying closer should be prioritised. |
| 76 | 06/06/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | It's very unfair that people move to certain areas because of schools to then be told they will not be able to attend said school. |
| 77 | 06/06/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 78 | 05/06/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | No | |
| 79 | 04/06/18 | Maybole | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Have used the placing request system since moving house to ensure my children still attend a good school. As a South Ayrshire resident feel we should have the right to send our children to any school providing we provide transport and costs to do so. |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 80 | 04/06/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 81 | 04/06/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 82 | 03/06/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | No | No | Doesn't believe the proposed changes align with the 'Getting It Right For Every Child' programme being implemented at Government level. There are several areas in which these proposed changes may fail a child's development. Fundamentally the proposed changes, in my view, have been made due to the Council's inability to redirect additional Council Tax from populating popular areas (e.g. Alloway) to investment in building capacity at local schools. As such cannot support this proposed change. |
| 83 | 03/06/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 84 | 03/06/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | No | No | Thinks there needs to be more information given i.e. why were school provisions not thought out when all the new housing was built? Where will children go? etc. Catchment schools allow children to build up relationships with their peers that live in the same area this potentially won't happen if the proposed changes are put in place. What school will children attend if they do not get into their catchment school? How will they get there if parents do not have transport & its miles away? This will certainly not help children remain healthy & walk to school if they cannot attend catchment or schools that are close. Some people pay a premium for their houses & huge council tax bills & buy houses in specific areas to allow their children to go to specific schools & be able to walk & meet peers in their area and develop emotionally. Not sure this proposal is Getting It Right For Every Child! |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 85 | 31/05/18 | Maybole | Parent/Carer | Yes | No | Denominational schools are attended because of the parents choosing for their child to attend, places should not be allocated due to home address, and this would disadvantage those who happen to live further away from the school. You cannot have it both ways, either be a school whose student body because parents have opted for a religious schooling or you are a school which covers a catchment area and accepts all in it. Denominational schools should perhaps require attendance at church as a way of deciding who does or doesn't secure a place. |
| 86 | 31/05/18 | Kirkmichael | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 87 | 29/05/18 | Troon | Other | Yes | Yes | |
| 88 | 19/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 89 | 16/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 90 | 15/05/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 91 | 13/05/18 | LOANS | Young Person | Yes | Yes | |
| 92 | 09/05/18 | | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 93 | 08/05/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 94 | 06/05/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | | No preference | Agrees in theory to section 5.1 but what is the situation for children out with the catchment area who already have a sibling attending that school? For example respondent's son attends a primary school out with their catchment and their daughter is due to start next year (August 2019). Will they will need to submit a placing request. This could potentially mean she will attend a different school from her brother which would be problematic. Both parents work in Glasgow and rely on after school care. It would not be good for their daughter's wellbeing to be in a different school. |
| 95 | 06/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | No preference | |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|--|
| 96 | 05/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | Understands that something will need to happen if schools are full to capacity however feels more is needing done about people who trick the system to get into desired schools. Knows of many people who were allocated places and actually live out with the catchment. This needs to be a priority to make the system fair. |
| 97 | 05/05/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | No | No preference | Efforts need to go into ensuring children are resident in the catchment area and not using ghost addresses. Under no circumstances should a child that resides within the catchment area lose out to a child who does not or uses the address of a relative to claim residency falsely |
| 98 | 05/05/18 | | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 99 | 05/05/18 | | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 100 | 04/05/18 | AYR | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | Feels that the catchment area needs to be reviewed and distance should be a priority. The area could be split into zones for example zone 1 children within 1 mile of the school, zone 2 children within 3 miles of the school and zone 3 children within 5 miles of the school. Parents circumstances needs to be also considered. This is Unacceptable to expect a primary 1 child to get to school on their own. Also feels that a child who lives outside of the catchment area getting priority over a child within the catchment area due to having a brother or sister at the school is unfair and discriminating against parents who can only have one child. Surely the child who lives out the catchment area should move to the school within their catchment area. |
| 101 | 03/05/18 | Mauchline | Parent/Carer | No preference | No preference | |
| 102 | 03/05/18 | Troon | Other | Yes | Yes | Welcomes criteria being laid down. Denominational children who should be allowed to go to their catchment denominational school. |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|--|
| 103 | 03/05/18 | Mossblown | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 104 | 02/05/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 105 | 02/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 106 | 02/05/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | No | No | The placing request system is flawed. Parents are not given a fair choice in where they wish to send their children - some schools facilitate after school care, others don't. Parents feel forced into the placement request situation because of factors such as this. Where placing requests will be used for catchment schools, this will make the situation worse. The offering from each school is not consistent - the system is becoming a lottery and is very stressful for parents and children alike. |
| 107 | 02/05/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 108 | 02/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | There must be consideration for families who have no transport as it's unacceptable to expect a child starting off at school to get 2 buses to school every day when there is a school within view from their house! Understands there needs to be a fair system in place, however can the catchment areas not be split into zones so the children closest to the school get priority over children on the edges of the catchment area. |
| 109 | 02/05/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 110 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Young Person | No preference | No preference | |
| 111 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 112 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 113 | 01/05/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | All children who live in a catchment area should be accepted to their local school. |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 114 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | The proposals seem fair, and wholly agree that a denominational school should be able to use proof of baptism as a way of determining priority amongst applicants. Feels there should also be a section, after all the other categories, taking into consideration the proximity of the school, e.g. someone living next to their catchment primary school should get priority over someone living at the boundary of 2 catchment areas, as the first can walk to school and cut down on traffic etc, and the child would suffer more from the social effects of not going to school with all of their neighbours. This won't affect them as their children already go to the school which is on our doorstep, but it would be crazy to have to get in a car to take them elsewhere, outwith their own community. Glad to see that there is some priority given to children with older siblings already at a school as life can be difficult for parents when children are at different schools, and it is good for younger children's confidence to go to a school that they are familiar with where an older sibling can watch out for them and assist them in settling in. |
| 115 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 116 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 117 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 118 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Catchment children should be given priority then meeting needs of children social circles peer at S1 not because parents want their children to go to those schools. Children and young people have rights especially at 12/13 let's listen to them. |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 119 | 01/05/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | Feels that every child should be entitled a place at their local school. If there are not enough places then there should be additional teachers employed to support and educate our children. Doesn't feel pupils should miss out because the council can't keep up with educational needs. New schools have been created to meet the demand. |
| 120 | 01/05/18 | Irvine | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 121 | 01/05/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 122 | 30/04/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 123 | 30/04/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 124 | 30/04/18 | AYR | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 125 | 30/04/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Agrees with the criteria but this makes the respondent worried as their son is due to start P1 in August 2019 he's currently at Wallacetown Nursery and my daughter attends Dalmilling Primary School so I would wish their son to attend Dalmilling. This will make it harder for them to get their son into Dalmilling because it's not his catchment area? If it does it's physically impossible to do 2 school runs at the same time if he isn't accepted for Dalmilling. |
| 126 | 30/04/18 | PRESTWICK | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 127 | 30/04/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 128 | 30/04/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 129 | 30/04/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | Yes | No preference | |
| 130 | 30/04/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 131 | 30/04/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 132 | 30/04/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | While they agree with the criteria for placing requests, for oversubscribed schools, would like to know the criteria that will be used for pupils living within the catchment area. For instance if a family has lived within the catchment area for more than ten years and has had another child attend a school, would they be given priority over a child that has recently moved into the area with the express intention of attending the same school? |
| 133 | 30/04/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 134 | 30/04/18 | AYR | Parent/Carer | No | No | It is recognised that some parents/carers falsely use addresses of family members, rented accommodation to gain access to a school. It is however, extremely difficult to prove. With houses being built, it's difficult to "fit" all catchment pupils into schools built a number of years ago. It is a challenging predicament. I think there should be something implemented at nursery level so that a precedent is not set. All primary school should have an associated catchment nursery school/class. |
| 135 | 30/04/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | When allocating a child to a school all factors should be taken into consideration. |
| 136 | 30/04/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 137 | 30/04/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | Yes | No | Agrees that medical need is the most important consideration when placing children. However, thinks siblings should be higher up than they are at the moment; it's extremely difficult for parents to manage two drop offs at different schools at the same time and to get to work. |
| 138 | 30/04/18 | Maybole | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |

| No. | Date | Respondent's Town | Status | Do you agree with the proposal in section 5.1 to use the placing request criteria to allocate spaces in a school for P1 if the school has more P1 catchment children than there are places available? | Do you agree with amended placing request criteria set out in section 5.2 which includes priority for denominational children who wish to attend their catchment denominational primary school? | Please use this space for any additional comments |
|-----|----------|-------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
| 139 | 30/04/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | If there are too many catchment children will priority be given to those with a sibling in their catchment school. Asking a parent to drop off & pick up at 2 different schools is surely a child protection issue?? We can't be in 2 places at once. |
| 140 | 30/04/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | No | No | Believes the children living closest to the schools should get priority placement. In addition SA council simply cannot approve the huge amount of homes in Barassie and Loans without first providing education and health services for these residents and WITHOUT impacting on those already provided for current residents. They have a duty and are currently failing every one of us. |
| 141 | 30/04/18 | Maybole | Parent/Carer | No | No | |
| 142 | 30/04/18 | | Parent/Carer | | No preference | |
| 143 | 30/04/18 | south ayrshire | Parent/Carer | No preference | Yes | |
| 144 | 30/04/18 | Troon | Parent/Carer | No | Yes | |
| 145 | 30/04/18 | | Parent/Carer | No preference | Yes | Feels the catchment areas for high schools need revisited as from Coyllton children pass 2 high schools to get to their catchment school and majority go to Kyle which they feel should be the catchment school due to it being the closest high school |
| 146 | 30/04/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 147 | 30/04/18 | Tarbolton | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | |
| 148 | 30/04/18 | Prestwick | Parent/Carer | Yes | No | |
| 149 | 30/04/18 | Knockentiber | Parent/Carer | No | No | Older brothers/siblings at school should not determine placing requests. Denominational schools have no place in modern society. |
| 150 | 30/04/18 | Girvan | Parent/Carer | Yes | Yes | Council is doing the right thing. |
| 151 | 30/04/18 | Ayr | Parent/Carer | No preference | No preference | |

**Proposed Amendments to South Ayrshire Council's
Arrangements for Primary School Admissions, P7-S1
Secondary School Transfers and Placing Requests**

Notes of Public meeting held at County Buildings, Ayr, 7pm to 7.45pm

Number of attendees: **2**

- One attendee had a very specific question relating to their specific circumstances which didn't relate to the proposal which was answered and they left the meeting
- If I live in the catchment area will my children get a place in the school?
- I moved into the area during the year and my child couldn't get a place at nursery will this impact on their chances of securing a place in P1?

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by South Ayrshire Council on the arrangements for primary school admission, P7-S1 secondary transfers and placing requests.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of South Ayrshire Council's proposal to review arrangements for primary school admission, P7-S1 secondary transfers and placing requests. 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' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of 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 final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of South Ayrshire; 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 meeting held on 23 May 2018 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, including representation from the Galloway Diocese; and

- visits to the site of Alloway Primary School, Forehill Primary School, Holmston Primary School, Sacred Heart Primary School and Struthers Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1 South Ayrshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.
- 2.2 The formal consultation ran from 30 April 2018 to 15 June 2018. The council posted the consultation document on its website. A public meeting was held on 23 May 2018. In total, two people attended the meeting. There were over 150 responses to the online survey. Of these, less than half supported the proposal, which outlined changes to the admissions and P7-S1 transfer arrangements. While a few respondents felt this was a fair system developed to tackle overcrowding in their local schools, a number of respondents were concerned about the implications for their children's education and did not want their choice to be restricted. A few objections came from the Girvan community where parents were anxious about their chosen primary school being capped. In response to the proposed criteria for placing requests, the majority of respondents were supportive of the proposal. However, a few would welcome the presence of siblings to be given higher priority in the outlined criteria. The council also received a number of responses from young people who voiced a range of views, a few supported the proposal, a few were against the proposal and several expressed no preference. Responses were also received by letter, including from the Diocese of Galloway.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal has a number of potential educational benefits for children and young people. The proposal, if implemented, will provide an open and fair system for managing entry into primary school, transfer from P7-S1 and establishing placing request criteria in the event of oversubscription in any of South Ayrshire's schools.
- 3.2 The proposal will support the council in meeting its statutory requirements to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. The proposal has the potential to help the council to manage its school estate more effectively and efficiently ensuring best value in the delivery of its services.
- 3.3 The council will, where there is oversubscription in denominational schools, prioritise the requests of those children who have a Roman Catholic Baptismal Certificate. This will help the council in continuing to meet its legislative requirements in relation to denominational education.
- 3.4 In amending the policy on admission to primary schools, P7-S1 transfers and establishing placing request criteria, the authority is reducing the risk of high occupancy levels which may restrict curricular, achievement and social opportunities available for children and young people.
- 3.5 Overall, staff from denominational and non-denominational schools who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. They felt the proposal would reduce the existing pressure on accommodation and resources. Timetabling and planning would be improved. However, staff expressed concern about the possible negative impact of transitional planning on children and young people, particularly those with additional support needs, while waiting on the outcome of placing requests.

- 3.6 Most parents, carers and Parent Council representatives from denominational and non-denominational schools who met with HM Inspectors did not fully support the proposal. While they recognised the need to address overcrowding and make better use of resources and space to enhance learning, many proposed alternative options such as increasing the size of the establishment or amending the catchment areas. A few wondered why the building of new schools or classrooms had not been considered. A few felt they had insufficient opportunity to explore the proposal with council officers, reporting that they had been unaware of the date for the public meeting. A majority felt that the document was over-technical and would welcome a more accessible document with which they and their children could more readily engage. The level of priority given to siblings of children currently attending out of catchment non-denominational or denominational primary schools was a major concern for a number of parents. A few parents expressed the view that siblings be moved higher up the proposed priority list for placing requests. In the Girvan area, parents, while understanding of the rationale for prioritising the placement of Roman Catholic children from within catchment at times of oversubscription, were anxious about the placement of their own children and that of any siblings.
- 3.7 The majority of children and young people from denominational and non-denominational schools who met with HM Inspectors were not fully aware of the implications of the proposal. However, they recognised the pressures on their schools from overcrowding, providing examples of carefully timetabled lunch and break times. A few who were transferring to secondary school in August spoke about their earlier anxieties while waiting for a placing request decision. Although this year they were all successful in transferring to the school of their choice, some were anxious that their siblings would, in the future, not be able to attend the same school.
- 3.8 The Diocese of Galloway welcomes the proposal to have guidelines in place to cover the potential oversubscription of schools. In its written submission, the Diocese supports the council's intention to give priority to Catholic children when allocating places in denominational schools. The Diocese also appreciates the need to be sensitive to the provision of places for those children who are not Catholic but who already have a sibling in a denominational school. The Diocese also raised a number of questions regarding the criteria for oversubscription and asked the council to also look at expanding provision in individual establishments as well reallocating pupils to alternative provisions.

4. Summary

South Ayrshire Council has set out a fair and reasonable case for revising its guidelines on admissions and for managing placing request procedures in primary and secondary schools. If implemented, the proposal will be of overall educational benefit to the children and young people who reside permanently within the catchment areas of the primary and secondary schools of South Ayrshire Council. The proposal should in addition ensure that school places remain available for young people and their families who wish for them to be educated in a Roman Catholic faith establishment. However, the council does not yet have broad support from the wider parental community for this proposal. In taking forward the proposal the council needs to set out how it will address the range of concerns raised during the consultation, in particular the request for further engagement with the wider parental community regarding the implications of the proposal. It should in addition ensure that placing request decisions are made at the earliest opportunity to ensure all young people, particularly those with additional support needs, are given the highest quality of support in transitioning into primary school and onto secondary school.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
June 2018**