



Area Plan for Primary Education

Straid Primary School Pre-Publication Consultation

Original Consultation Period: 10 March 2020 – 21 May 2020

Restart Consultation Period: 6 May 2021 – 1 July 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

Before arriving at the final recommendation on the future primary provision at Straid Primary School, the Education Authority is seeking the views of those most directly involved at a local level. The Education Authority is seeking to engage in consultation with the Board of Governors, parents and staff of Straid Primary School, and other interested parties in the local community.

1.1 Vision

The aim of Area Planning is to facilitate the development of a network of viable and sustainable schools that can deliver the NI Curriculum effectively and provide access to a range of education provision that is appropriate to the needs of children and young people, so that every pupil can realise their potential and contribute to a caring, inclusive and progressive society.

In striving to realise this aspiration, the aim is to ensure that every pupil has:

- access to a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities to realise his or her potential;
- an education in which the learning outcomes are appropriate to their needs;
- access to quality teaching delivered in a caring and supportive environment; and
- education delivered in modern, well-resourced facilities, suitable for the delivery of education in the twenty-first century.

1.2 Education Authority Position

On 28 April 2017, the Education Authority published *Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision April 2017-2020*. Within the Annual Action Plans *Annual Action Plans for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools April 2018 – March 2019 and April 2019 – March 2021* actions for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Government District the Education Authority included the following:

Antrim and Newtownabbey Area	Key Issue	Action
Straid Primary School	Address school provision where sustainability is an issue	Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Straid PS by February 2020

At the January 2020 meeting of the Education Authority's Education Committee, it was agreed to initiate pre-publication consultation with the Board of Governors, staff and parents of Straid Primary School, and with the Trustees and Managers of other schools likely to be affected by the proposal to discontinue Straid Primary School with effect from 31 August 2021, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Re-Start Pre-Publication Consultation: 6 May 2021 – 1 July 2021

Pre-publication consultation commenced on 10 March 2020 closing on 21 May 2020. However, on 18 March 2020, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister announced that schools would close to pupils at the end of the school day on Friday 20 March 2020. This resulted in area planning activity being stood down. Area planning activity was given permission to resume by the Department of Education on 8 October 2020, and, as a result, the Education Authority is re-starting the pre-publication consultation.

All responses received during the pre-publication consultation 10 March 2020 – 21 May 2020 have been carried forward as applicable.

The Education Authority will re-start pre-publication consultation, running for a full 8 weeks, from 6 May 2021 to 1 July 2021, with the Board of Governors, staff and parents of Straid Primary School and with the managers of other schools likely to be affected by the proposal that:

Straid Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Note: the effective date of the proposal has been revised in light of the information above to 31 August 2023.

1.3 Nature of the Education Authority's Recommendation

Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 describes the process regarding the discontinuance of a school. This process requires the publication of a development proposal.

Therefore, as part of the pre-publication consultation on the development proposal the Education Authority is seeking any objections and/or other comments on the proposed discontinuance of Straid Primary School from the Board of Governors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents of children attending the school, as well as from other schools that may be affected by this proposal.

The Education Authority has met with the Board of Governors and Principal to discuss all options and based on available information the Education Authority is taking forward a development proposal for the discontinuance of Straid Primary School.

In taking forward the discontinuance of Straid Primary School the Education Authority has to ensure that there are sufficient places within the area to provide for the pupils of Straid Primary School. Therefore, an associated proposal to increase the admission and enrolment numbers at Ballynure Primary School. The increase in admission and enrolment numbers at Ballynure Primary School is predicated on the approval of the proposal for the discontinuance of Straid Primary School.

2 BACKGROUND

Straid Controlled Primary School is situated in the village of Straid in County Antrim. The majority of the children attending the school come from the village and within a five mile radius of the school.

The school serves the community surrounding the school and has an enrolment of 53 pupils. In consideration of a declining enrolment, the school was identified in the 2018/19 Annual Action Plan as 'Managing Authority to consult on options for future provision by March 2019.

Straid Primary School is a three class base primary school, has four teachers with composite classes for Years 1-2, Years 3-4, Year 5-6 and Years 6-7. There are four non-teaching staff.

2.1 Statistical Information

The school has an approved enrolment of 119 pupils and an admissions number of 17.

Over the past number of years, the school has experienced a downturn in enrolment numbers. Table 1, below, details the historical and current enrolment figures.

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total
2013/14	0	9	13	7	12	13	15	10	79
2014/15	0	11	9	13	7	12	14	15	81
2015/16	0	9	11	9	12	7	13	13	74
2016/17	0	10	9	10	9	9	7	12	66
2017/18	0	7	8	7	6	6	3	6	43
2018/19	0	9	6	8	6	5	3	4	41
2019/20	0	6	8	7	6	7	6	5	45
2020/21	0	10	6	9	8	7	7	6	53

The enrolment statistics show that the school population numbers have declined since 2009 resulting in 53 pupils currently enrolled at the school (based on DE Enrolment census figures).

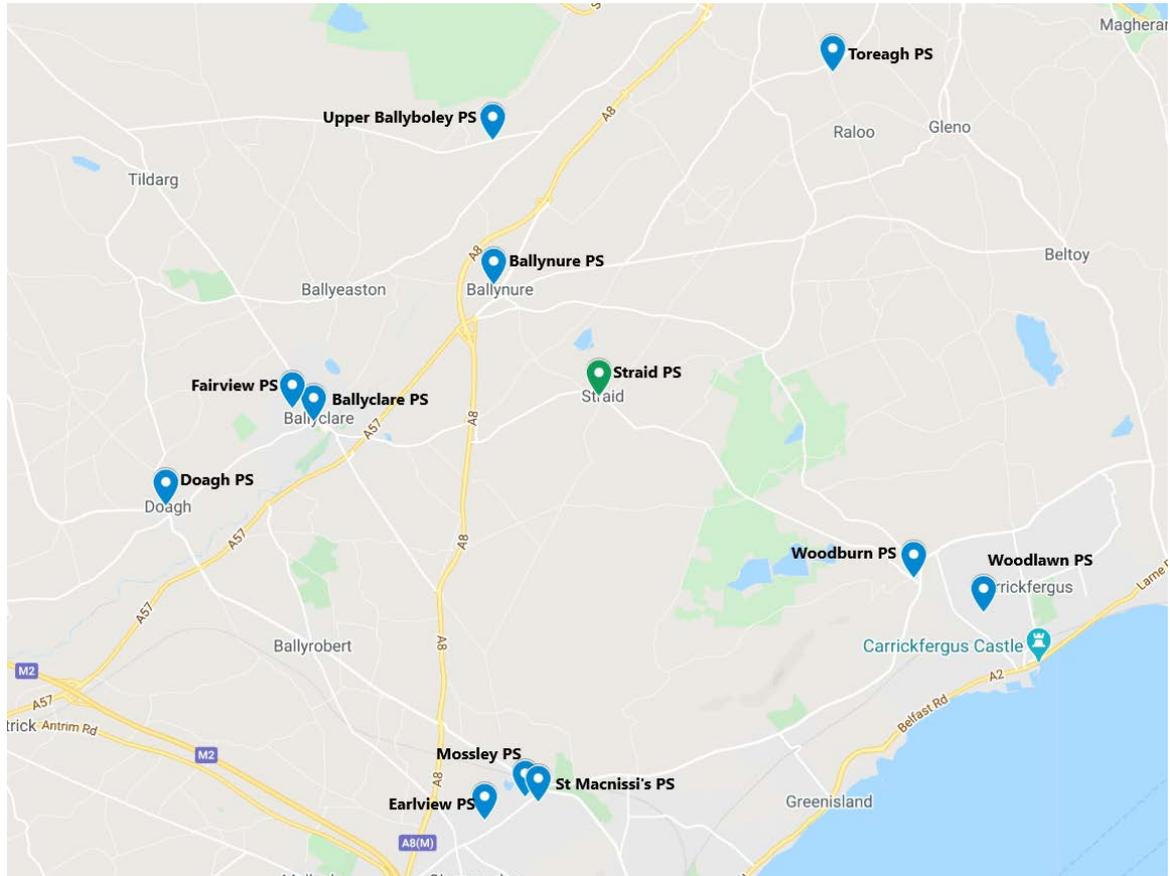
Table 2 lists the schools closest to Straid Primary School. The distribution map below shows in context the pupil distribution and the local schools. There is capacity within the local schools as detailed in Table 2.

	Distance (miles) From Straid PS	Sector	Enrolment 2020/21	Approved Enrolment Number 2020/21	Available Places 2020/21
Straid Primary School	-	Controlled	53	119	66
Ballynure Primary School*	1.9	Controlled	148	154	6
Upper Ballyboley Primary School**	5.0	Controlled	28	100	72
Toreagh Primary School	4.7	Controlled	111	105	0
Mossley Primary School	4.9	Controlled	609	610	1
Ballyclare Primary School	3.7	Controlled	555	572	17
Fairview Primary School	4.1	Controlled	501	525	24
St Macnissi's Primary School	5.2	Maintained	185	210	25
Woodburn Primary School	4.2	Controlled	188	193	5
Woodlawn Primary School	5.4	Controlled	180	310	130
Earlview Primary School	5.5	Controlled	227	221	0
Doagh Primary School	5.7	Controlled	115	138	23

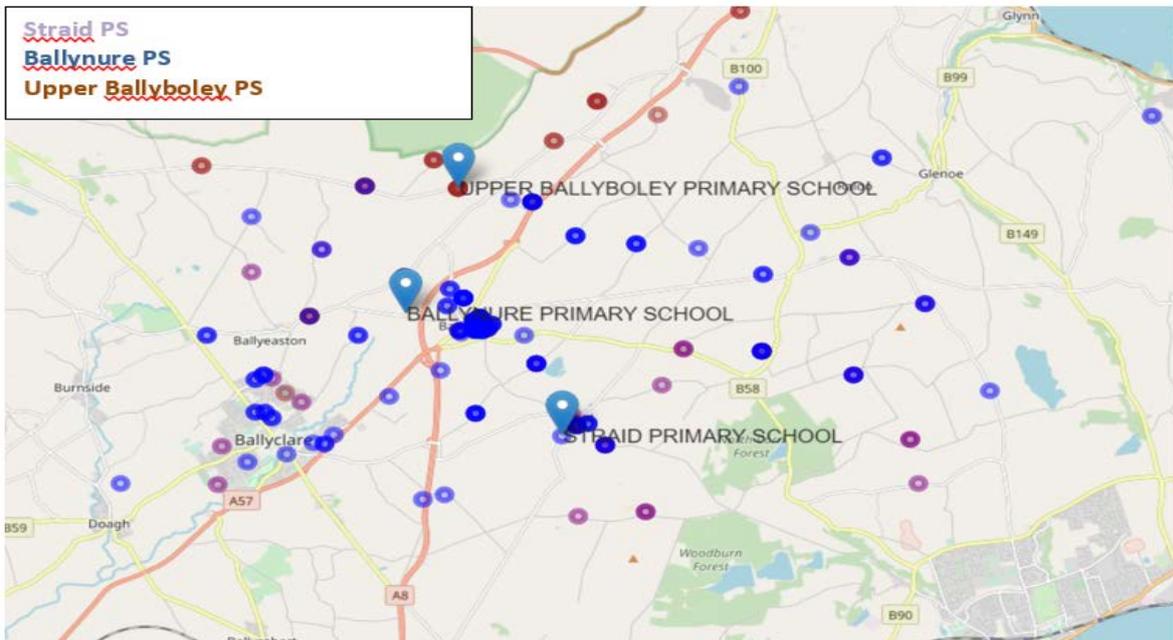
* associated proposal to increase the Ballynure PS's admission and enrolment number

** proposal to discontinue Upper Ballyboley PS is being brought forward by the Education Authority

Map 1: Highlights the schools within the surrounding area



Map 2: Highlights the current pupils attending Ballynure Primary School, Straid Primary School and Upper Ballyboley Primary School



Analysis of the above information shows there are a number of available places in the alternative schools. In terms of the existing catchment, there are a number of children within the Straid Primary School area attending other local schools, particularly Ballynure Primary School. The Education Authority is taking forward a development proposal to increase provision within the area through a proposed increase in the admission and enrolment numbers at Ballynure Primary School.

In consideration of the distance of the local schools, home-to-school transport arrangements will be implemented within transport regulations.

3 SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The main focus of the Area Planning process is embedded in the Sustainable Schools Policy first published in 2009 and applies to primary and post-primary schools. The policy outlines the criteria that school managing authorities should consider when making decisions affecting the best use of resources in order to deliver an excellent education to children and young people. The policy sets out 6 sustainability criteria, and associated indicators, which are identified as the key references for assessing existing and future education provision to ensure it adequately meets the needs of pupils.

3.1 Quality of Education

Straid Primary School is a controlled primary school situated in a rural community of approximately 3.8 miles from the town of Ballyclare. The majority of the children attending the school come from the surrounding area. The school enrolment has experienced a decline in pupil numbers over the past number of years.

An ETI inspection was undertaken in October 2011 with the overall findings of the inspection as very good:

The ETI report indicated:

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children, and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

The most recent ETI inspection was conducted in March 2019 (Involving Action Short of Strike), while the inspection still proceeded, it was not possible for ETI to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership and governance; impact of middle leadership; and action to promote and sustain improvement.

3.2 Stable Enrolment Trends

Straid Primary School has experienced a downturn in pupil numbers over the past number of years, see Table 1. The September 2019 enrolment was 45 pupils. The school enrolled 10 Year 1 pupils in September 2020, and as a consequence the enrolment is 53 pupils. The school's enrolment falls well short of the Sustainable Schools Policy criteria for a rural school of 105 pupils.

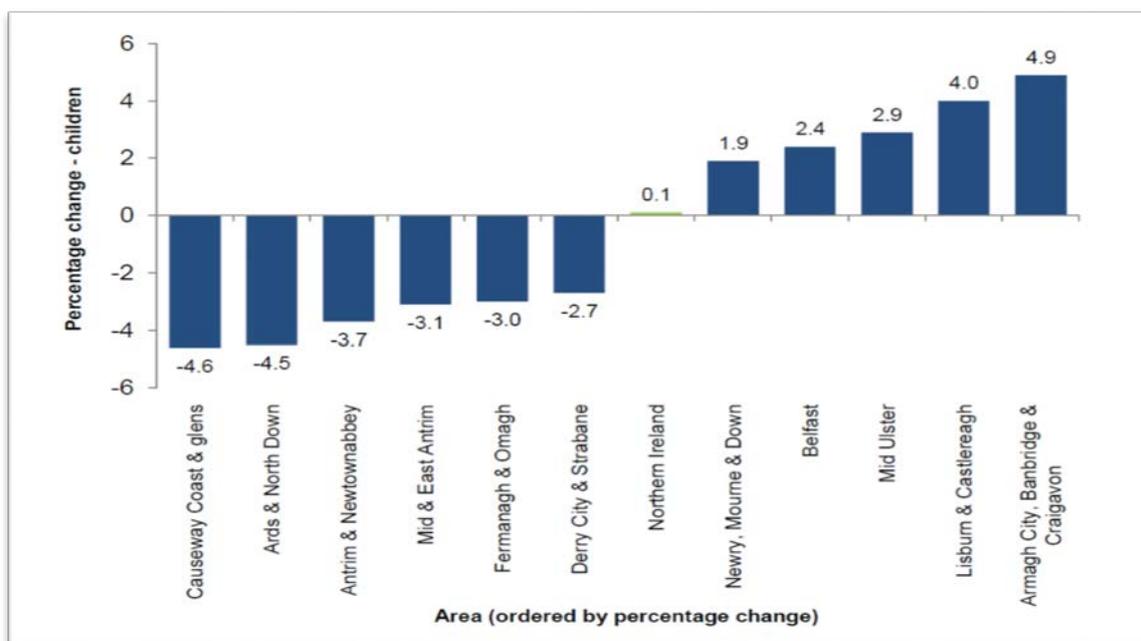
3.3 Population Change

Table 3 indicates a projected population reduction of children aged 0-15 years, within the Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD between mid-2016 and mid-2026. In Mid and East Antrim LGD there is also a reduction of 3.1% between mid-2016 and mid-2026. In addition the

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency predicts the population of children (4-11 years), in the Antrim and Newtownabbey to decrease by 5.9% (mid-2016 to mid-2026) and similarly the prediction for the reduction of 4-11 year olds in the Mid and East Antrim LGD is 9.4%

Table 3: Projected Population Change

Projected Change in Number of Children (i.e. those aged 0-15) by Local Government District (mid-2016 to mid-2026) (Source: NISRA)



The live birth information is:

Table 4 – Live Births (Source: NISRA)

Ward Name	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% Change from 2010 to 2018
Ballynure*	33	27	27	29	34	34	40	35	35	+6%
Kilwaughter	87	93	93	95	88	93	60	74	89	+3%
Glenwhirry	37	28	36	22	36	36	40	29	29	-22%
Doagh	51	46	51	39	52	46	42	53	34	-33%
Ballyclare Nth	51	60	49	44	52	68	49	44	61	+19%
Ballyclare Sth	71	42	63	64	42	47	41	34	42	-40%
Glynn	20	12	20	18	9	16	18	15	17	-15%
Woodburn	32	22	31	23	23	25	24	15	25	-22%
Total	382	330	370	334	336	365	314	299	332	
Year 1 - Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	

*Straid PS is located in the Ballynure Electoral Ward

3.4 Sound Financial Position

Straid Primary School began the 2019/20 financial year with an opening cumulative deficit of -£59,385. It should be noted that Straid Primary School currently does not operate within its in-year budget: -£70,533 for 2019/20. (As per LMS 3 Year Budget Plan: Passed by Board of Governors December 2019). It is estimated that the school will have a closing cumulative deficit of -£278,646 at the end of the 2021/22 financial year. Therefore, the budget deficit is predicted to increase year-on-year.

Table 5 shows the school's position compared to the sector average:

Table 5: Sector Averages				
Straid Primary School	Sector Average*	Year 1 (2019-2020)	Year 2 (2020-2021)	Year 3 (2021-2022)
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	17.5	11.8	11.8	11.6
Expenditure per Pupil	£4,477	£5,543	£5,703	£6,111
Staff Costs per Pupil	£4,308	£5,372	£5,438	£5,834

*Planning assumptions include Cost of Living Pay Award Estimate at 1% each year and estimated rate of inflation for Other Costs as 2% each year

Small Schools Support

The Small Schools Support factor is intended to target more resources towards smaller primary schools to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum. The amount to be allocated to eligible schools is determined by the number of pupils in the school. A lump sum equivalent to 1.0 times the salary (inclusive of employee and employer contributions) of a teacher on point UPS 1 of the Teachers' Upper Pay Scale as at October 2017, will be allocated to schools of up to 100 pupils tapering to zero at 300 pupils.

Straid Primary School receives the maximum amount of £47,726.

Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) Common Funding Formula, the level of funding is determined by pupil numbers. In a declining enrolment it is more challenging to live within the budget allocation.

3.5 Strong Leadership and Management

Straid Primary School operates with 4 teachers, including a teaching principal, appointed in April 2019 (in a temporary capacity).

The ETI report in October 2011 stated that the quality of leadership and management of the school was very good.

The Principal has been in post for 12 years, and gives very high priority to the current and future development and sustainability of the school. She has been successful in establishing a wide range of effective links with the local community and further afield through, for example, the Comenius programme. She holds a very high regard for the children's well-being and education and the welfare of the staff.

There are appropriate action plans to support the school development plan (SDP) and performance data is being used effectively to identify priorities for development. There is a developing culture of self-evaluation across the school to bring about improvement. There

are many examples of where the school has self-evaluated aspects of the provision and put in place developments which have led to improvement. Through this process the school has identified appropriate priorities for further development.

The leadership and management of literacy, numeracy, ICT and SEN is very effective. The school has appropriately identified the need to develop the role of co-ordinators further in supporting curricular changes and enhancing professional development.

It should be noted that subsequent to Straid Primary School's ETI Inspection in 2011 the school has since had two changes of school principal, one of whom has also now moved post and the most recent principal appointment commenced in April 2019 in a temporary capacity at the start of 2019/20 school year.

3.6 Accessibility

Straid Primary School is situated in a rural community, with a number of pupils transported to school by bus and car.

Many of the pupils already attending Straid Primary School come from the same geographical area as those pupils attending Upper Ballyboley Primary School and Ballynure Primary School - See Map 2.

3.7 Strong Links with the Community

Straid Primary School has excellent and long standing relationships with parents and the community e.g. The Women's Institute and Straid Historical and Cultural Society are welcomed and encouraged to use the school premises and facilities. The school offers an after school club and a breakfast club. The children benefit from the use of facilities at Straid Congregational Church for PE classes and concerts. The local church also use the facilities in the school for special events e.g. Bicentenary Event and the Christmas Tree lights switch on.

Straid Primary School has for many years cooperated with Tír Na nÓg Primary School, Doagh Primary School and Upper Ballyboley Primary School by organising professional development days, sharing expertise and support. Straid Primary School was also involved with Tír Na nÓg Primary School (closed on 31 January 2020) and Doagh Primary School in a Shared Education Partnership.

4 AREA PLANNING IMPACT

The proposal aligns with the key themes of Area Planning. The Area Plan for Northern Ireland aims to ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their needs in sustainable schools within a diverse system of education. It sets out the key priorities and objectives in providing access to a network of sustainable schools for the Education Authority, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectoral bodies in the light of Department of Education policy, in particular the need to raise standards and close the attainment gap through a network of sustainable schools. The focus of the plan is on the educational best interests of children and young people.

Since 2011, statutory planning authorities and school managing authorities have been engaged in implementing the objectives of the Sustainable Schools Policy through Area Planning. The first four objectives are:

- ensure that the excellent quality of education available to some young people is made available to all, in both urban and rural settings, in accessible, modern, fit-for-purpose accommodation;
- improve outcomes for all but, in particular, to provide additional support to those who require it, including those children with special educational needs, to realise their full potential;
- encourage schools to co-operate in sharing best practice to support children with special educational needs and those with other barriers to learning; and
- sustain strong, successful and viable schools, well-led by their governors representing local stakeholders, principals and their staff, to be the centre of the education system, supported by effective administrative and strategic direction;

As detailed in above, Area Planning is focused on the Sustainable Schools Policy. In October 2016, in the publication of the draft Education Authority's Providing Pathways - Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir, MLA, stated:

'The Sustainable Schools Policy, which is implemented through the Area Planning process, focuses on providing children and young people with high quality education that meets their needs and enables them to achieve their full potential.....'

The educational experience of our children and young people is greatly enhanced when they attend schools that are educationally and financially viable. The Sustainable Schools Policy is a framework for assessment of the sustainability of primary and post-primary schools. The six criteria and supporting indicators clearly illustrate what a sustainable educational experience should look like. Schools must: deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, offer extensive extracurricular activities, have high quality pastoral care systems and have the confidence of the communities they serve.

In primary schools pupils should be in a class with no more than two year groups but ideally they should be in single year group classes. They should be able to interact with peer groups and have the best chances to prepare for successful transition to post primary school. However there are still a significant number of schools that are struggling, for a wide range of reasons, to deliver the best for their pupils. This is particularly evident in the primary sector and, despite the best effort of teachers, it becomes harder to deliver a high quality education if pupils are taught in composite classes. We have too many small primary schools with more than two year groups in a single class.'

The Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 Annual Action Plans for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools 2018/19 and 2019-21 identified a key issue for Straid Primary School as 'address school provision where sustainability is an issue' with the action 'Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Straid Primary School by February 2020'. As a result the Education Authority engaged with the Board of Governors of Straid Primary School. Engagement discussions focused on the current position of the school and sustainable options for the school. Discussion focused on five options:

4.1 Do Nothing

This option would result in no change to the current provision. In consideration of the Annual Action Plan, the downturn in enrolment numbers and the school's financial position, do nothing is not an option.

4.2 Shared Education

Straid Primary School have explored the concept of education together with those of a different religious belief, those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not. Whilst the links with other schools including the shared education project with Tír na nÓg Primary School (closed on 31 January 2020), are to be commended, there is little evidence of an effective partnership that will bring sustainable benefits to pupils and the community beyond. There have been opportunities for some collaboration in areas such as sport between the children.

In order to be more viable and effective partnerships schools should be building towards shared opportunities for learning and sharing of resources across sites that would bring both efficiencies and increased effective use of resources and economies of scale. Both schools were keen to develop 'greater sharing' however, whilst it is accepted that this may be further developed in the future, any change to be effected would be longer term and not a realistic sustainable option.

As the Education Authority has a duty to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education the Education Authority discussed the potential for sustainable shared education within the area. However, a shared solution would not improve the sustainability of Straid Primary School.

4.3 Federation

A federation would involve local schools coming together either through a soft federation or hard federation. A soft federation would provide each school with its own governing body, own budget, with representatives on a joint committee. The schools would share a Principal, common goals, joint committee recommendations but it would be up to the individual governing bodies to authorise decisions/plans. A hard federation would provide for a single governing body with common goals and while each school would receive individual budgets, these could be used to pool budgets across the schools in the federation. In considering a federation, the sustainability of a federated school within the local area would not provide for a sustainable provision and would not improve the financial position of the school.

The Board of Governors at Straid Primary School identified 'Federation' as their preferred option. Various staffing structures, key stage permutations and options were explored by Straid Primary School and Upper Ballyboley Primary School [in conjunction with the Education Authority and Controlled Schools' Support Council], but no feasible nor sustainable federation option could be identified by the Education Authority.

4.4 Three School Model

The Board of Governors of Straid Primary School put forward the option of a Three School Model. The model, see below, would provide for Foundation/Key Stage 1 in Straid Primary School, Upper Ballyboley Primary School and Ballynure Primary School with Key Stage 2 provision in Ballynure Primary School only.

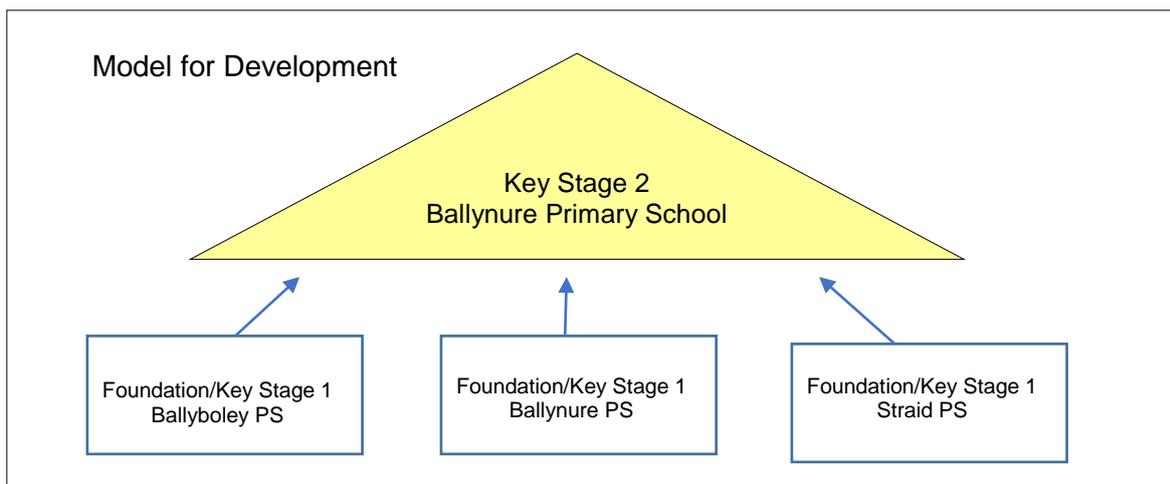


Table 6: Enrolment Projections: Three School Model: based on current 2020/21 enrolments

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total
Straid PS	10	6	9	8				33
Upper Ballyboley PS	1	3	3	11				18
Ballynure PS	19	24	20	15	34	35	31	178

Straid Primary School indicated that under the above model:

- A school would be retained in each community.
- Pupils may start school close to home.
- Age appropriate approach and opportunity to use facilities and management tailored to pupil needs and close working relationships and positive pupil experiences promote progression towards Key Stage 3.
- Key Stage 2 provider can benefit from 'natural referral'.
- Overall staffing may be saved, staff development by collaboration in federation.
- Principal led and lead staff with responsibility.
- Single Board of Governors representative of communities with a sub-committee to oversee and review harmonisation.

The three school model would provide a federated model with a single Board of Governors and Principal with senior teachers within each school.

As indicated in Table 6, there would be fewer than 20 pupils on one site and less than 35 pupils on another site. The small number of pupils would result in financial difficulties for the two Foundation/Key Stage 1 schools as the expenditure would exceed income and result in an accumulating deficit. For the Three School Model to be a workable solution it would also require the participation of all three schools, Straid Primary School, Upper Ballyboley Primary School and Ballynure Primary School. Having explored in detail the Three School Model this option is not considered by the Education Authority to be sustainable.

4.5 Amalgamation

The Education Authority examined the sustainability of amalgamating Straid Primary School and another local school. The nearest school, by distance, to Straid Primary School is Ballynure Primary School, as outlined in Table 2 above.

As with the options above, sustainability is the most important consideration. In accordance with DE policy on amalgamations (Circular 2018/15) it states that: *'...it should also be helpful to those who are considering a DP to amalgamate two or more schools of a similar size to create a new school regardless of management type'*.

Ballynure Primary School currently has an enrolment of 148 pupils and Straid Primary School has a current enrolment of 53 pupils. An amalgamation with both schools would not be in accordance with DE Circular 2018/15 as the schools are not similar in size.

The Education Authority is also taking forward a Development Proposal for the discontinuance of Upper Ballyboley Primary School which also has Ballynure Primary School as its closest school (2.6 miles). As with Straid Primary School, Upper Ballyboley Primary School has sustainability issues with a current enrolment of 28 pupils. To expand an amalgamation to include all three schools would again not be in accordance with DE Circular 2018/15 as both Straid Primary School and Upper Ballyboley Primary School are not similar in size to Ballynure Primary School.

Therefore, as such a school could not be identified that would satisfy the requirements of DE policy, an amalgamation was not a suitable option for Straid Primary School. Table 2 identifies the schools within the area where there is surplus capacity with the potential to accommodate pupils from Straid Primary School in the event of discontinuance of education at Straid Primary School.

4.6 Discontinue

In considering the future of Straid Primary School, all of the options for the school did not provide a sustainable provision for the school. In discussions with the Board of Governors, there was disappointment that the work of the governors could not provide a sustainable solution for the school. Governors put forward proposals to promote the school, however, these did not provide for future sustainability. The Education Authority recognises the commitment of the governors but the current circumstances would not provide for the curricular provision of pupils currently attending Straid Primary School.

In consideration of the options above, the Education Authority recommends that Straid Primary School discontinues with effect from 31 August 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter.

To provide for available places, the Education Authority is proposing to take forward an associated proposal for the increase in admission and enrolment numbers for Ballynure Primary School.

The Education Authority is also proposing the discontinuance of Upper Ballyboley Primary School, a school 5.0 miles from Straid Primary School.

5 RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

Straid Primary School has experienced a downturn in pupil numbers since 2014/15 when it had an enrolment of 81 pupils. The enrolment has now fallen to 53 pupils. The school was identified in the Annual Action Plans 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019-21, identified as 'address school provision where sustainability is an issue' with the action 'Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Straid Primary School by February 2020.'

In September 2020, the school admitted ten pupils in Year 1. This has resulted in an enrolment of 53 pupils with projections that the enrolment may fall further in September 2021. This will place increased pressure on the financial resources of the school and also on the teaching staff.

The closure of Straid Primary School in conjunction with the proposal to increase admissions and enrolments in Ballynure Primary School will support an area planning solution for the Antrim and Newtownabbey and Mid and East Antrim areas in addressing issues of sustainability and ensuring that school places are located as required. This is based on children availing of places in other local sustainable schools including Ballynure Primary School, who with an increase to admissions and enrolment numbers, will have sufficient places available to accommodate the pupils from Straid Primary School, consistent with ESaGS, the Sustainable Schools Policy and 'Providing Pathways'.

The discontinuance of Straid Primary School will result in the redistribution of approximately 53 pupils from Straid Primary School, supported by one further Development Proposal to increase admissions and enrolments in Ballynure Primary School.

The proposal will meet the outcomes for all including additional support to those who require it, ensuring those children with Special Educational Needs realise their full potential. Pupils with SEN will continue to have their special educational requirements met within local schools, supported by Children and Young People Services.

Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a statutory duty on the Education Authority to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and designing and delivering public services. The areas from which Straid Primary School attracts pupils is, according to the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group, defined as rural. The discontinuance of Straid Primary School will have an impact on the local area. The provision of home-to-school transport will provide for the safe transportation of pupils from the area to their nearest school. Transport will be provided for children who meet eligibility criteria.

In the case of any proposed action at Straid Primary School, the Education Authority has to consider the likely impact of removing controlled provision from the area. The area solution would seek to consolidate controlled provision in the area.

6 EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

The proposal would provide for the education needs of pupils in the area. Straid Primary School has a declining enrolment and, as a four teacher school, this places pressure on the staff at the school.

The schools within the area received good/very good/ outstanding ETI reports and can provide for the educational needs of the pupils of the area. Some local schools in the area have capacity and an associated Development Proposal to increase the admission and enrolment numbers at the nearest primary school, Ballynure Primary School, will provide places within sustainable provision. Resulting from the outcome of consultations with parents/guardians, discussions will be undertaken with the local schools regarding in year group capacity. The larger local schools have pupil numbers which meet the Sustainable School Policy of no more than two year groups in a classroom. The larger schools may enhance the learning experience of pupils in the provision of after school activities and having class sizes to facilitate participation both in school and inter-school activities eg sports teams and extra-curricular activities.

The pupils from Straid Primary School who have special educational requirements will continue to have these needs met within the local schools and supported through the Education Authority's Children and Young People's Service.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposal is for the discontinuance of Straid Primary School. As there are currently unfilled places within some local schools, there will be a requirement for additional accommodation to facilitate the relocation of pupils (to be identified by parental preference resulting from the consultation process). The Education Authority is taking forward an associated proposal to increase the admission and enrolment numbers of Ballynure Primary School.

There will be a cost saving in the recurrent costs of operating a school.

Finance The operational cost of Straid Primary School will be a cost saving from this proposal inclusive of a saving of £47,726 in terms of the Small Schools Support Factor would also be made.

Staffing The teaching staff is afforded employment protection under the School Re-organisation Agreement 2013/2 for two years. The non-teaching staff will be afforded employment protection for one year. The Education Authority will meet with staff to discuss options should the development proposal be approved and an action plan implemented for the discontinuance of the school.

Transport Most of the pupils attending Straid Primary School live within close proximity to the school and do not receive home-to-school transport. The discontinuance of Straid Primary School would require the provision of home-to-school transport for a larger number of pupils. Communication with the Education Authority transport service is ongoing. Any transport arrangement will be in accordance with transport regulations and identified preference school.

Accommodation No additional accommodation needs for Straid Primary School. Additional accommodation needs will be required at Ballynure Primary School as detailed in the Case for Change for a proposed increase in admission and enrolment numbers at Ballynure Primary School.

8 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (IF THE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED)

The proposal is being brought forward under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. The implementation date for the proposal is for 31 August 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter. The timetable, pending approval from the Education Committee, for the consultation process is:

Development Proposal Timeline	
Proposal: Straid Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter.	Proposed Timeline
<p>Consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents – (8 weeks)</p> <p>Consultation Responses to be forwarded to the Education Authority.</p> <p>Responses will be considered and a Case for Change document compiled before submission to the Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee. A deputation from the Board of Governors may also choose to attend the Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee or the Board meeting.</p>	6 May 2021 – 1 July 2021
<p>Consultation with other affected Schools (8 weeks)</p> <p>Consultation Responses to be forwarded to the Education Authority</p> <p>Responses will be considered and a Case for Change document compiled before submission to the Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee.</p>	6 May 2021 – 1 July 2021
<p>Strategic Planning and Policy Committee to seek Approval To Publish</p> <p>Case for Change to be taken to the September 2021 Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee for consideration.</p> <p>If approved to publish, a Development Proposal will be published in the local newspapers which begins the start of a two month statutory objection period.</p>	7 September 2021
<p>Statutory Objection Period (2 months)</p> <p>Objections/Comments to be forwarded to the Department of Education</p>	September 2021 – November 2021
<p>Await Ministerial/Department of Education Decision</p>	January 2022
<p>Implementation</p> <p>If approved, the Development Proposal would take effect from 31 August 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p>	

9 PRE-PUBLICATION CONSULTATION

“Effective consultation is a key part of the policy-making process. People’s views can help shape policy developments and set the agenda for better public services.”
(Code of Practice on Consultation, 2004)

Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 describes the process ‘to discontinue a controlled school’. This process requires the publication of development proposals.

Therefore, as part of the pre-publication consultation on the development proposals, the Education Authority is seeking any objections and/or other comments on the proposed discontinuance of Straid Primary School from the Board of Governors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents of children attending the schools, as well as from other schools that may be affected by this proposal.

The Education Authority will observe the principles of the Consultation Charter (Consultation Institute), which are:

Integrity	Honest intention, willing to listen and be prepared to be influenced.
Visibility	Stakeholders should be aware of the consultation exercise.
Accessibility	Methods that meet the needs of the intended audience.
Confidentiality	Ensure all stakeholders are aware as to the level of information that will be made public.
Disclosure	Disclosure of information that can influence the exercise and disclosure on behalf of consultees, for example, if the consultee represents an organisation.
Fair Interpretation	Objective collation and assessment of information and viewpoints.
Publication	Publication of both the output and the outcomes of the exercise.

By observing these principles, the Education Authority is demonstrating its commitment to best practice and to assisting stakeholders to participate fully in the process.

9.1 How to Respond

The Education Authority is seeking your views on the proposal to on the proposed discontinuance of Straid Primary School with effect from 31 August 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Education Authority would encourage you to respond using the online version of the Pre-Publication Consultation questionnaire by following the link below:

[Online Pre-Publication Response Form](#)

Should you be unable to respond online, the Consultation Questionnaire is attached, Annex A.

Alternatively you can e-mail written responses to: areaplanning3@eani.org.uk

Or by post to:

Education Authority
Area Planning Section
17 Lough Road
ANTRIM BT41 4DH

Responses must be received by the Education Authority by midnight on 1 July 2021.

Copies in other formats, including Braille, large print, etc may be made available on request. Please contact us using the link below if you need copies in an alternative format or a language other than English, and Education Authority officers will do their best to assist you:

areaplanning3@eani.org.uk or to the above address.

Please use the space below to comment further or provide alternative options (continued):

[It should be noted that this process cannot be used to consider specific issues as they currently relate to any individual pupil or adult associated with the school. If for example as a parent you have concerns relating to your child's present education you are advised to contact the Principal. Every effort will be made to address your concerns.]

Equality Consideration

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 all public bodies are obliged to consider the implications of any decisions on nine different groupings before decisions are implemented. The two duties within this Equality legislation include promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between all communities. The equality of opportunity duty requires that the Education Authority shall, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.

- 1 Between persons of different religious belief.
- 2 Between persons of different political opinion.
- 3 Between persons of different racial groups.
- 4 Between persons of different age.
- 5 Between persons of different marital status.
- 6 Between persons of different sexual orientation.
- 7 Between men and women generally.
- 8 Between persons with a disability and persons without.
- 9 Between persons with dependants and persons without.

The Good Relations Duty requires that the Education Authority shall, without prejudice to their equality obligations, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations:

- 1 Between persons of different religious belief.
- 2 Between persons of different political opinion.
- 3 Between persons of different racial groups.

In light of these obligations do you consider that the area planning solutions in the Antrim and Newtownabbey area, including the discontinuance of Straid Primary School will impact positively or negatively on either Equality of Opportunity or the Promotion of Good Relations in any way?

Section 75 Category	Positive	Negative	Don't Know
Religious Belief			
Political Opinion			
Racial Group			
Age			
Marital Status			
Sexual Orientation			
Gender			
Disability			
Dependants			

If you have ticked any of the above boxes, please clarify your reason:

Arrangements for returning your completed questionnaire

Please return the completed questionnaire no later than 1 July 2021 by post to:

Education Authority
Area Planning Section
17 Lough Road
ANTRIM BT41 4DH

Or by email to: areaplanning3@eani.org.uk

Source of Response (Please specify)

	Please Tick	Name of School(s) Representing
Board of Governors	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Teaching Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Non-Teaching Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Child/Young Person	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Data Protection Statement

The information provided by you in this form is required by the Education Authority (EA) to seek the views expressed by those most directly involved in the consultation and a Case for Change document. The Case for Change will be forwarded to the Education Authority’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee for approval to publish a Development Proposal and then to the Department of Education for consideration.

EA is obliged to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 when processing personal information. Where that the information you provide is your personal information, we will process such personal information on the legal basis that it is part of our public task to do so for the purpose referred to above.

We have published detailed Privacy Notices on our website [here](#) which provide further information on how EA processes your personal information as well as detail on how to contact us if you have any questions in this respect.