



## **Area Plan for Primary Education**

### **Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School, and other interested parties in the local community.

### 1.1 Vision

The aim of the Education Authority 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. The Education Authority is committed to excellence in the delivery of education so that every pupil can realise their potential and contribute to a caring, inclusive and progressive society. In striving to realise this aspiration, the Education Authority aims 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 Mid and East Antrim Local Government District the Education Authority included the following:

Mid and East Antrim Area	Key Issue	Action
Upper Ballyboley PS 36 Braepark Road Ballyclare BT39 9U	Address school provision where sustainability is an issue	Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School, and with the Trustees and Managers of other schools likely to be affected by the proposal to discontinue Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School and with the managers of other schools likely to be affected by the proposal that:

**Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School.

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

## **2 BACKGROUND**

Upper Ballyboley Primary School is a Controlled Primary School situated in a rural location approximately midway between Ballyclare and Larne in County Antrim (5 miles east of Ballyclare, 7 miles west of Larne and 2.5 miles north of Ballynure).

The school serves the wider community surrounding it and currently has an enrolment of 28 pupils. In consideration of sustainability concerns, the school was identified in the 2019-21 Annual Action Plan as 'Managing Authority to consult on options for future provision by February 2020'.

The school has an approved enrolment of 100 pupils and an admissions number of 14.

Over the past number of years the school has experienced low enrolment numbers with a current enrolment of 28 pupils. Table 1, below, details the historical and current enrolment figures.

<b>Table 1: School Enrolment History</b>								
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total
2013/14	7	6	5	4	7	5	7	41
2014/15	8	6	5	5	4	8	4	40
2015/16	5	8	6	5	5	5	7	41
2016/17	4	5	8	7	5	5	5	39
2017/18	13	4	5	7	7	5	6	47
2018/19	3	12	3	4	7	7	5	41
2019/20	3	3	12	3	3	7	8	39
2020/21	1	3	3	11	1	3	6	28

The school enrolment numbers have remained stable over the past number of years, however, the numbers fall short of the Sustainable Schools Policy. At September 2020, the school had a total enrolment of 28 pupils with one pupil enrolled in Year 1. It is not predicted that the numbers will increase significantly over the coming years. It is expected that the numbers will fall further in September 2021. (Enrolment figures from DE Enrolment Census).

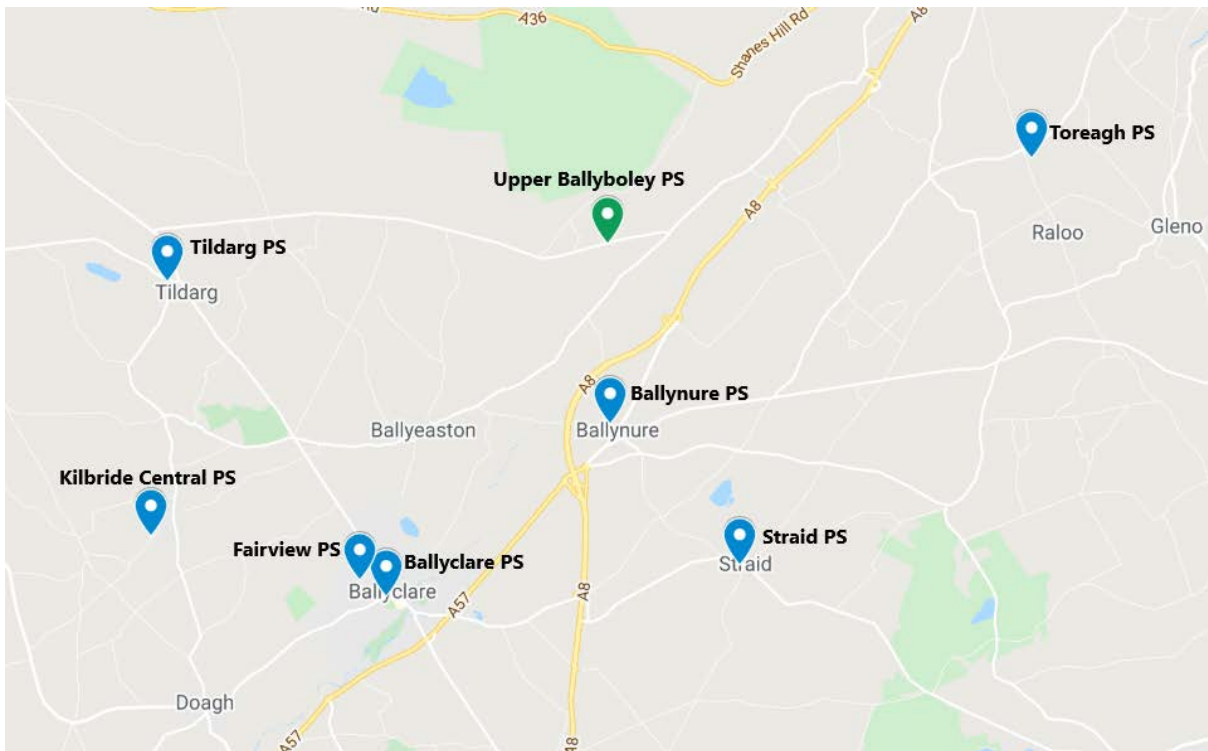
Table 2 lists the schools closest to Upper Ballyboley Primary School. The distribution map below shows in context the pupil distribution and the local schools. There is capacity within the local schools as detailed in Table 2.

<b>Table 2: Local Schools – Distance from Upper Ballyboley PS</b>					
	Distance (miles) From Upper Ballyboley PS	Sector	Enrolment 2020/21	Approved Enrolment Number 2020/21	Available Places 2020/21
Upper Ballyboley PS	-	Controlled	28	100	72
Ballynure PS*	2.6	Controlled	148	154	6
Straid PS**	5.0	Controlled	53	119	66
Tildarg PS	4.7	Controlled	61	80	19
Ballyclare PS	5.1	Controlled	555	572	17
Toreagh PS	5.2	Controlled	111	105	0
Fairview PS	5.2	Controlled	501	525	24
Kilbride PS	5.9	Controlled	126	135	9

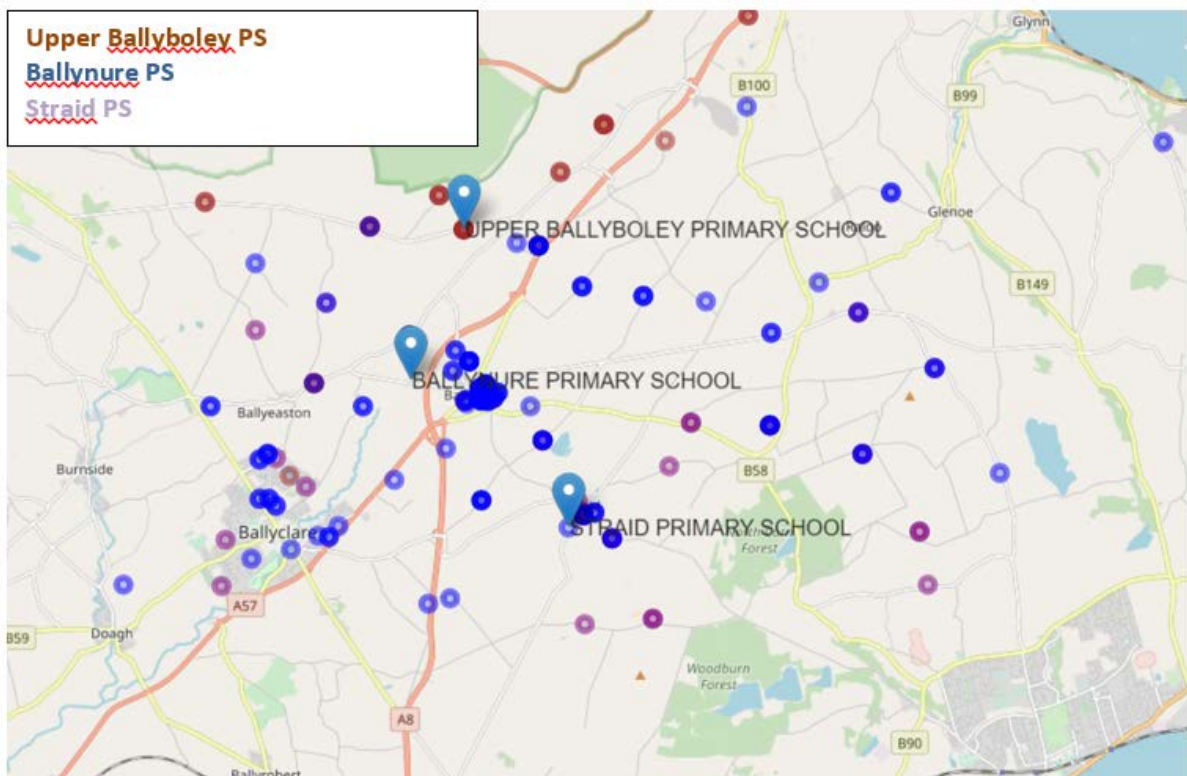
\* associated proposal to increase the Ballynure PS's admission and enrolment number

\*\* proposal to discontinue Straid Primary School 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 Upper Ballyboley 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**

Upper Ballyboley Primary School is a Controlled School situated in the rural community approximately midway between Ballyclare and Larne in County Antrim.

Almost all of the children attending the school come from the surrounding local area. The enrolment has remained low and reasonably static over the last number of years.

The Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) undertook an inspection in October 2015 and a follow-up inspection in December 2017.

While the school entered formal intervention in October 2015, with the appointment of a new principal with a focus on education outcomes, Upper Ballyboley Primary School successfully came out of formal intervention in April 2018.

A Follow-up Inspection was completed by ETI in December 2017, the overall findings of the inspection were described as 'good':

##### *'Key findings*

- The outcomes for learners are now good. The children engage enthusiastically with their learning; they are motivated and work productively in pairs, in groups and independently. Across the key stages, the children enjoy their learning in mathematics, talk enthusiastically about their work and engage well in practical activities. The standard of work in the children's books shows good progression and evidence of regular practical problem-solving activities. By KS2, the most able children display a very good understanding of mathematical concepts and processes, are flexible in their approach to mental mathematics and are confident in their use of mathematical language. The schools internal performance data shows that almost all of the children, including those who require additional support with aspects of their learning, are making progress as expected in mathematics. In English, most of the children are making progress as expected.*
- The quality of provision is now good. All of the lessons observed during the follow-up inspection were effective in developing learning and reflected the impact of the*

*improvement work undertaken since the original inspection. The quality of the teachers' planning is consistently good, and concise evaluations of the children's previous learning now informs well future planning. There is a clear focus on developing the children's thinking skills and personal capabilities and practical, engaging opportunities for problem solving and investigation are evident across the curriculum and in all key stages. The good use of information and communication technology engages the children well and supports their learning.*

- *The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement are now good. Leadership at all levels, through the effective analysis of internal performance data and evaluation of learning and teaching, identifies the individual needs of the children and tracks their progress with accuracy. There has been a measured approach to all aspects of school improvement, and staff have responded very positively to the collegial approach to leadership, taking on new roles and responsibilities. There has been significant improvement in how the school communicates with parents and governors.*
- *Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the Department of Education.*
- *It continues to be important that the employing authority, governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school's provision and budget in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.*

#### *Overall effectiveness*

*Upper Ballyboley Primary School demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement in:*

- *embedding further the self-evaluation processes leading to improvement in the areas identified by the school for future development.'*

### **3.2 Stable Enrolment Trends**

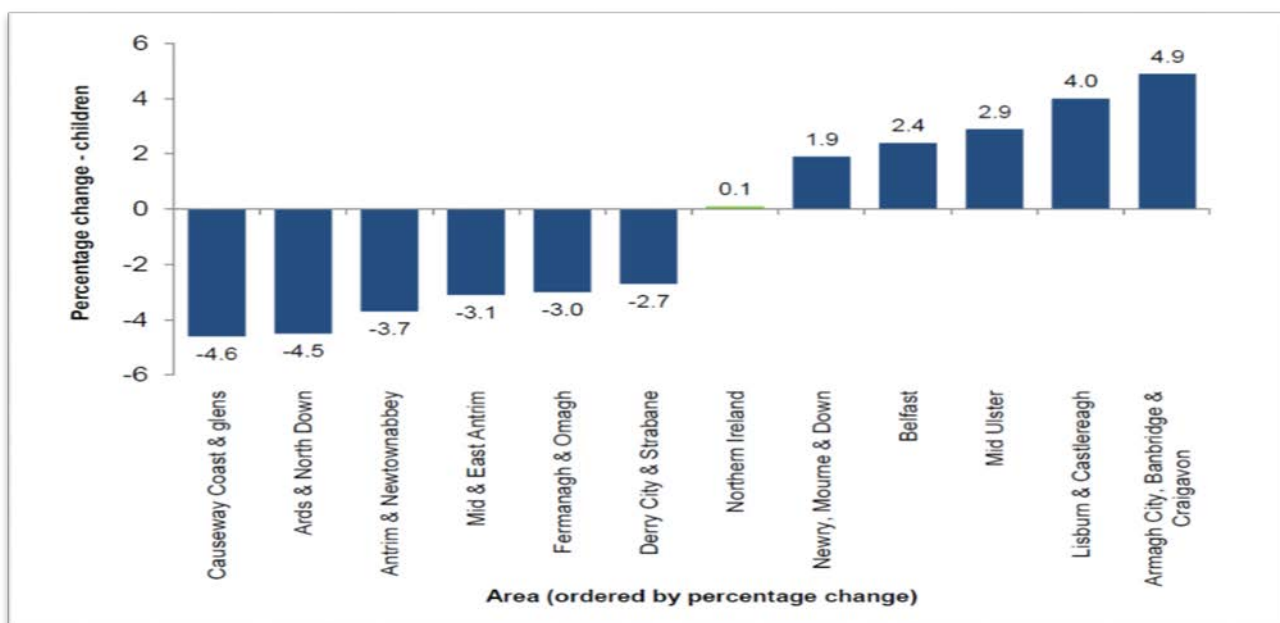
Upper Ballyboley Primary School has experienced consistently low pupil numbers over the last seven years, see Table 1. The school received one Year 1 pupil in September 2020, and as a consequence the enrolment is now 28 pupils for the 2020/21 academic year. The school's enrolment falls well short of the Sustainable Schools Policy criteria for a rural school of 105 pupils. It is not predicted that the enrolment numbers within the area will increase significantly over the coming years as show in Tables 3 and 4.

### **3.3 Population Change**

Table 3 indicates a projected population reduction of children aged 0-15 years, within the Mid and East Antrim LGD, of 3.1% between mid-2016 and mid-2026. In Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD there is also a reduction of 3.7% 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 Mid and East Antrim LGD, to decrease by 5.9% (mid-2016 to mid-2026) and similarly the prediction for the reduction of 4-11 year olds in the Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD is 9.4%. Table 4 shows the live birth information for the area, which while showing a slight upturn for available admission numbers in the Kilwaughter Electoral Ward for September 2020, shows a downturn for September 2021.

**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)



**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%
Gynn	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	

\*Upper Ballyboley PS is located in the Kilwaughter Electoral Ward

The ETI report in October 2015 and again in December 2017 stated that:

*“It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and school budget, in order to address the current and future needs of the children and the staff.”*

### 3.4 Sound Financial Position

Upper Ballyboley Primary School began the 2018/19 financial year with a surplus of £5,567 in part due to a large Year 1 intake in 2017/18 of 13 pupils.

It should be noted that Upper Ballyboley Primary School currently does not operate within its in-year budget, it is anticipated that it will have 'in year movement of in excess of -£13,459 and an anticipated carry-over of -£7,892 (-4.2%) by the end of 2019/20. At the end of the current 3 year financial plan it is projected that the school will have a deficit of -£17,547 (or -10.8%).

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

<b>Table 5: Sector Averages</b>				
Upper Ballyboley Primary School	Sector Average*	Year 1 (2019-2020)	Year 2 (2020-2021)	Year 3 2021-2022)
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	17.5	11.8	13.7	14.3
Expenditure per Pupil	£4,477	£4,852	£4,616	£4,169
Staff Costs per Pupil	£4,308	£5,080	£5,187	£5,097

\*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.

Upper Ballyboley 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

A new principal was appointed in 2015. The ETI Follow-up Inspection in December 2017 stated that the:

*'The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement are now good. Leadership at all levels, through the effective analysis of internal performance data and evaluation of learning and teaching, identifies the individual needs of the children and tracks their progress with accuracy. There has been a measured approach to all aspects of school improvement, and staff have responded very positively to the collegial approach to leadership, taking on new roles and responsibilities. There has been significant improvement in how the school communicates with parents and governors.'*

### 3.6 Accessibility

The school is situated in a rural community where the school can be accessed by car and taxi. The majority of the pupils attending the school are from the local area.

With regard to pupil safety and issues with restricted vision, the 2017 ETI Report stated under Health and Safety:

*'The restricted vision of ongoing traffic on the main road for vehicles leaving the school premises continues to be a potential hazard.'*

### **3.7 Strong Links with the Community**

The school has strong links with the locality as the school sits within the centre of close knit rural community. The school provides a breakfast club, 'wrap around care from 8.15am - 5.00pm and afterschool activities for the pupils including cookery classes, IT club, modern languages and sport's coaching in football, hockey, netball and gymnastics. The school recently were winners of local hockey and football tournaments. The school is twinned with Portleen PS in Donegal and is an Ulster-Scots Flagship school. The school has an a strong PTA that is proactive in fund raising and providing support to parents and pupils e.g. Heartstart and First Aid training for both parents and pupils. The local churches are involved weekly in school assemblies and a Good News Club is also held in the school.

## **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 continue to raise standards and close any 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School 'address school provision where sustainability is an issue' with the action 'Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Upper Ballyboley PS by February 2020'. As a result the Education Authority engaged with the Board of Governors of Upper Ballyboley 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 low enrolment numbers and the school's financial position, do nothing is not an option.

#### **4.2 Shared Education**

Upper Ballyboley Primary School has 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 a previous shared project with Tír Na nÓg PS, 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. Approval for the discontinuance of Tír Na nÓg Primary School with effect from 31 January 2020 was received in November 2019 and the school has since closed.

Upper Ballyboley Primary School is keen to develop 'greater sharing' however, whilst it is accepted that this may be developed further 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 Upper Ballyboley 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 of Upper Ballyboley Primary School identified 'Federation' as their preferred option. Various staffing structures, key stage permutations and options were explored by Upper Ballyboley Primary School and Straid 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 Amalgamation**

The Education Authority examined the sustainability of Upper Ballyboley Primary School's considered amalgamation with a local school. The nearest school, by distance, to Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School has a current enrolment of 28 pupils. An amalgamation with both schools would not be in accordance with 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 Straid Primary School which also has Ballynure Primary School as its closest school (1.9 miles). As with Upper Ballyboley Primary School, Straid Primary School has sustainability issues with a current enrolment of 53 pupils. To expand an amalgamation to include all three schools would again not be in accordance with Circular 2018/15 as both Upper Ballyboley Primary School and Straid 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School. Table 2 identifies the schools within the area where there is surplus capacity with the potential to accommodate pupils from Upper Ballyboley Primary School in the event of discontinuance of education at Upper Ballyboley Primary School.

### **4.5 Discontinue**

In considering the future of Upper Ballyboley 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, with one pupils in Year 1 in September 2020 and current enrolment trends have not provided for projected upturn in numbers. The Education Authority recognises the

commitment of the governors but the current circumstances would not provide for the curricular provision of pupils currently attending Upper Ballyboley Primary School.

In consideration of the options above, the Education Authority recommends that Upper Ballyboley 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 Straid Primary School, a school 5.0 miles from Upper Ballyboley Primary School.

## **5 RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL**

Upper Ballyboley Primary School has always been a small primary school with an enrolment over the past five years not exceeding 47 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School by February 2020.'

In September 2020, the school admitted one pupil in Year 1. This has resulted in the enrolment falling to 28 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 Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School, consistent with ESaGS, the Sustainable Schools Policy and 'Providing Pathways'.

The discontinuance of Upper Ballyboley Primary School will result in the redistribution of approximately 28 pupils from Upper Ballyboley 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 EA 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 Upper Ballyboley Primary School attracts pupils is, according to the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group, defined as rural. The discontinuance of Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley 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. Upper Ballyboley Primary School has a declining enrolment and, as a three 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 Upper Ballyboley 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 Upper Ballyboley 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.

<i>Finance</i>	The operational cost of Upper Ballyboley 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.
<i>Staffing</i>	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.
<i>Transport</i>	Most of the pupils attending Upper Ballyboley Primary School live within close proximity to the school and do not receive home-to-school transport. The discontinuance of Upper Ballyboley 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.
<i>Accommodation</i>	No additional accommodation needs for Upper Ballyboley 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:

<b>Development Proposal Timeline</b>	
<b>Proposal: Upper Ballyboley Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter</b>	<b>Proposed Timeline</b>
<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><b>Implementation</b></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 Upper Ballyboley 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:

<b>Integrity</b>	Honest intention, willing to listen and be prepared to be influenced.
<b>Visibility</b>	Stakeholders should be aware of the consultation exercise.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Methods that meet the needs of the intended audience.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Ensure all stakeholders are aware as to the level of information that will be made public.
<b>Disclosure</b>	Disclosure of information that can influence the exercise and disclosure on behalf of consultees, for example, if the consultee represents an organisation.
<b>Fair Interpretation</b>	Objective collation and assessment of information and viewpoints.
<b>Publication</b>	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 Upper Ballyboley 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 discontinuance of Upper Ballyboley 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](mailto: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/Guardian	<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.