

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (DPs) 710, 711 & 712

Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of Published DPs:

- (i) DP 710**
- (ii) DP 711**
- (iii) DP 712**

Appendix B: Case for Change - DPs 710-712

Appendix C: Statutory Two-Month Objection Period

- Summary of Objections received during the Statutory Objection
- Principal of Stewartstown Primary School (PS)
- Principal of Ballytrea PS
- Board of Governors (BoG) of Ballytrea PS
- Principal of Craigavon Senior High School
- Parent of Pupils at Stewartstown PS
- BoG of Coagh PS
- Controlled Schools Support Council

Appendix D: Sustainability Assessment – Ballytrea PS

Appendix E: Sustainability Assessment – Stewartstown PS

Appendix F: Copy of the Education Authority's Equality and Human Rights Screening Template – DPs 710-712

Appendix G: ETI Commentary Paper – DPs 710-712

Appendix H: Department of Education (Policy Team) Comments – DPs 710-712

EDUCATION AUTHORITY
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 710
NEW CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Notice is hereby given that a Proposal under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 has been submitted by the Education Authority to the effect that:

Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

(This proposal should be read in conjunction with Development Proposal Nos 711 and 712.)

A copy of the Proposal and Case for Change may be inspected at the offices of the Education Authority, 1 Hospital Road, Omagh, BT79 0AW, between the hours of 9.00 am and 4.30 pm and www.eani.org.uk/school-management/area-planning.

Any objections or support to this Proposal should be lodged with the Area Planning Policy Team, Department of Education, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7PR or emailed to dps@education-ni.gov.uk within two months of the date of publication of this notice. Any letters of objection or support may be published on the Department of Education's website, with appropriate redactions, if they are included in full in the submission on which the outcome of the proposal is decided.

The Department of Education and the Education Authority operate a regime of openness under the Freedom of Information Act. Letters of objection and information supplied to the Department of Education and the Education Authority may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, if requested. (A fee may be charged for supplying this information).

Sara Long
Chief Executive

EDUCATION AUTHORITY
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 711
BALLYTREA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Notice is hereby given that a Proposal under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 has been submitted by the Education Authority to the effect that:

Ballytrea Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approvals of Development Proposal Nos 710 and 712).

(This proposal should be read in conjunction with Development Proposal Nos 710 and 712.)

A copy of the Proposal and Case for Change may be inspected at the offices of the Education Authority, 1 Hospital Road, Omagh, BT79 0AW, between the hours of 9.00 am and 4.30 pm and www.eani.org.uk/school-management/area-planning.

Any objections or support to this Proposal should be lodged with the Area Planning Policy Team, Department of Education, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7PR or emailed to dps@education-ni.gov.uk within two months of the date of publication of this notice. Any letters of objection or support may be published on the Department of Education's website, with appropriate redactions, if they are included in full in the submission on which the outcome of the proposal is decided.

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Sara Long
Chief Executive

EDUCATION AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 712

STEWARTSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Notice is hereby given that a Proposal under Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 has been submitted by the Education Authority to the effect that:

Stewartstown Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of Development Proposal Nos 710 and 711).

(This proposal should be read in conjunction with Development Proposal Nos 710 and 711.)

A copy of the Proposal and Case for Change may be inspected at the offices of the Education Authority, 1 Hospital Road, Omagh, BT79 0AW, between the hours of 9.00 am and 4.30 pm and www.eani.org.uk/school-management/area-planning.

Any objections or support to this Proposal should be lodged with the Area Planning Policy Team, Department of Education, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7PR or emailed to dps@education-ni.gov.uk within two months of the date of publication of this notice. Any letters of objection or support may be published on the Department of Education's website, with appropriate redactions, if they are included in full in the submission on which the outcome of the proposal is decided.

The Department of Education and the Education Authority operate a regime of openness under the Freedom of Information Act. Letters of objection and information supplied to the Department of Education and the Education Authority may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, if requested. (A fee may be charged for supplying this information).

Sara Long
Chief Executive

**Area Planning
Case for Change**

Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School

Development Proposals Nos 710, 711 and 712

**Amalgamation of
Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School**

| Case for Change: Supporting Information - Summary/Overview | |
|---|--|
| Area Planning District | Mid Ulster |
| Development Proposal Numbers | 710, 711 and 712 |
| Proposer | Education Authority |
| School(s) Name | Ballytrea Primary School Stewartstown Primary School |
| School(s) Reference | 501-2615 501-2643 |
| Sector | Primary |
| Management | Controlled |
| Development Proposal Publication Date | Week commencing 10 April 2023 |
| Proposal | <p>Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.</p> <p>Discontinue Ballytrea Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of Development Proposal Nos 710 and 712).</p> <p>Discontinue Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of Development Proposal Nos 710 and 711).</p> |

(The Education Authority will seek capital investment for refurbishment/extension minor works for the amalgamated primary school.)

Case for Change: Statutory Consultation

Note: It may be necessary for documentary evidence to be provided to show that the statutory procedures have been followed. It is essential that relevant parties retain this information.

The following is to be completed by the Proposer and signed off by them.
EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE-PUBLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Proposer

Provide detail of consultation with the Board of Governors, teachers and parents of the affected school(s) – dates of meetings/letters. Good practice suggests all staff (including non-teaching) should be consulted as well as pupils.

Summary and assessment of views received – how were these taken into account before publication of the DP's 710, 711 and 712

In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 the Education Authority undertook pre-publication consultation from 14 November 2022 to 23 January 2023. Staff, governors and parents/guardians were notified of the launch of the pre-publication consultation with the publication of a suite of documents on the Education Authority's website on 14 November 2022 (consultation document, narrated PowerPoint presentation, easy read version and video and consultation response form). Affected schools (53) were notified of the pre-publication consultation on the proposal to:

Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2024, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

Discontinue Ballytrea Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of Development Proposal Nos 710 and 712).

Discontinue Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of Development Proposal Nos 710 and 711).

Staff, governors and parents/guardians were invited to attend virtual pre-publication consultation meetings which were held on:

Ballytrea Primary School

- Staff: 17 November 2022 – 4.00 pm
- Board of Governors: 17 November 2022 – 6.00 pm
- Parents/Guardians: 17 November 2022 – 7.30 pm

Stewartstown Primary School

- Staff: 17 November 2022 – 4.00 pm
- Board of Governors: 17 November 2022 – 6.00 pm
- Parents/Guardians: 17 November 2022 – 7.30 pm

A pre-publication consultation document and response form were available on the Education Authority's website for the period 14 November 2022 to 23 January 2023.

The Education Authority received a total of 148 responses. The information below provides a summary of overall responses and emerging themes of responses received.

| Respondent | Agree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Total |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|------------|
| Parent/Guardian (Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS) | 33 | 42 | | 75 |
| Staff – Teaching/Non-Teaching/ Principal (Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS) | 4 | 10 | | 14 |
| Governors (Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS) | 9 | 3 | | 12 |
| Child/Young Person (Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS) | | 2 | | 2 |
| Other – including past parents and future parents | 20 | 21 | | 41 |
| Education Sector - Little Flower Nursery School | 1 | | | 1 |
| Political Representative – K Buchanan | | | 1 | 1 |
| Board of Governors - Coagh PS | 1 | | | 1 |
| Controlled Schools' Support Council | | | 1 | 1 |
| Total Responses | 68 | 78 | 2 | 148 |

The information below provides a summary of the responses and emerging themes received.

Support the proposal – summary comments

- Amalgamation is better than closure of the schools.
- Very saddened that this decision has had to be made as a whole we do not support the closure of Ballytrea PS or even Stewartstown PS but understand that an amalgamation maybe the only way forward.
- The new school would require adequate funding to ensure it meets its full potential and not just be a few mobile classrooms set on the Stewartstown site.
- Believe the best location for the school is within the village, particularly with the proposed development of over 200 houses.
- Feel a town school is safer for children as there is street lighting during the darker months of the year and a crossing guard to allow children to cross safely. A school in the village means it is easily accessible by all means of transport and on foot.
- Stewartstown PS has a strong relationship with the two main churches within the village, and regularly shares resources, such as the use of the church halls to hold events and provides additional carparking. It is also so convenient to the Health Centre, nursery school, and other childcare facilities.
- The education provided at Stewartstown PS is exceptional, with so much additional support and guidance provided by all staff.
- The provision of controlled education within the village helps maintain religious balance in Stewartstown.
- The current site of Ballytrea PS is currently used for other community activities as well as education provision.
- Ballytrea PS is too close to Coagh PS catchment area as it is, without sending more children in that direction.
- A new school in the Stewartstown village can have a long term sustainable future free from the threat of closure and continue to provide the best possible education for the local children.
- Ballytrea PS lends a very generous site. In the future it would be able to be developed with regards to a 3g/4g/muga pitch.
- While supporting the proposal, some concerns with the Stewartstown drop off and pick up and have witnessed how town traffic struggles at such times.
- Ballytrea PS is a superb rural school that meets the needs of our children to an extremely high standard.
- Ballytrea PS is thriving. There have been new families come to the school and we know of other new families that are planning to send their children over the next few years despite all the uncertainty.
- In relation to the feasibility study we feel that Ballytrea PS should be the site for the amalgamated school.

- Ballytrea PS's distribution of pupils is larger than Stewartstown PS and Ballytrea PS parents are less likely to go to an amalgamated site at Stewartstown PS.
- Ballytrea PS has an extremely active parent support group that raises considerable amounts of funds supported by our families but also wider community.
- If amalgamation is the only option available moving forward then I'm willing to support the process, but I feel it is important that the people on the ground are listened to and any points raised are addressed.
- Important that the necessary capital is in place.
- Joint leadership options need to be explored in order to bring everyone together on board.
- A very active PTA in Stewartstown PS who organise many cross-community events.
- Stewartstown itself is becoming a social hub. New businesses have opened within the area, this will help attract new families to the area, who should have access to a controlled school within the village.
- The Education Authority should look at moving Tiny Tots Playgroup into Stewartstown PS. Make it into a cross community playgroup/nursery feeding both Ballytrea PS and St Mary's PS. This will ensure that there is still a sense of controlled provision both in Stewartstown and also for the rural community.
- Ensuring there is no disruption to the education of the children when a designated principal is appointed.
- For an amalgamation to work, EA and DE must listen to the people on the ground and act on the responses highlighted from both schools. The community will only invest and commit if they feel they are being listened to.
- Bus routes would need amended to accommodate the new catchment area of the new school.
- Ensure the Cypres Trust Fund attached to Stewartstown PS continues to benefit the pupils from Stewartstown.
- The seeds of good cross community work begin with the young. This is being fostered within the two local primary schools now.

Do not support the proposal – summary comments

- An amalgamation is probably the best way forward for both schools after looking at all the facts and figures provided but at the moment as parents, we cannot agree with the amalgamation of Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS as we do not know which site will be used for the new school.
- The location of the proposed new amalgamated school will have a big impact on whether parents will be able to send their children to the new school.

- I am located in the middle of the catchment area for all 3 schools my choice has always been Ballytrea PS and the main reason for that was it had a higher level of safety for children as the school is not located on the side of the road. There is an actual car park that parents can use rather than just staff.
- Please also take into consideration will buses be provided. Both to and from school if location is further away.
- I feel that the amalgamation of the two schools will have a negative impact on children attending in terms of the care, attention and support provided by a smaller school.
- Feel that removing Stewartstown PS from the town will result in a religious imbalance and further enhance the religious divide with the town itself.
- I am strongly opposed to this proposal; I believe that all children's best interests are served by remaining within their familiar settings.
- If the amalgamation goes forward, I propose that Ballytrea PS is the chosen site. It is already able to accommodate the pupils already attending both schools and the proposed estimations if the schools amalgamate and the building will need minimal work/additional buildings to accommodate all the pupils.
- This consultation has progressed at a particularly turbulent time for Ballytrea PS, the current principal is currently less than four years in post and has already made a positive contribution in promoting the school.
- Are guarantees being offered that the new amalgamated school will be exempt from any further area planning for a considerable length of time?
- Nursery provision, as currently sited in Stewartstown in temporary mobiles, be moved to the main building at Stewartstown PS to serve as a feeder for an amalgamated school on the Ballytrea PS site. This would have the effect of reducing the vehicular traffic stopping on the side of a major arterial route and provide much more space for said nursery unit.
- Ballytrea PS is a school with a unique and special identity. It educates and values the whole child in a very child-centred setting. The higher ratio of adults to pupils, ensures a level of attention and support for individual needs, which can only be envied by larger schools.
- Queen's University have recently carried out research about Small Rural Schools and the importance of these types of schools being a choice for parents is consistently ignored by the Education Authority/ Department of Education.
- One criteria of the proposal is financial sustainability, and capital spend on such a dated building does not make financial sense. Ballytrea PS could accommodate 105 pupils easily with minimal spend. While I do not agree with the overall

rationale for amalgamation, I would be in favour of same only if it were to be located at the Ballytrea site.

- Mixed grade classes helped me progress more in primary school, I was able to listen and learn from other children being taught this kept me interested.
- During Covid there was so much space for us to play in our bubbles and this helped me relax knowing I was safe in uncertain times.
- Alternative option - Keep Ballytrea PS and campaign to keep rural schools open, many smaller towns, villages, communities have been losing shops, buildings lying derelict and now schools, smaller schools can be as efficient as larger ones.




Notes the proposal – summary comments

- The proposal to close a site and amalgamate both schools is something that appears to be suggested given the low enrolment number at both schools.
- Imperative that this decision is not taken lightly as the consequences of closing either school will have a lasting impact in the area.
- Closing either school will impact other schools and support and resources may be needed in other schools in the area.
- Hope that there will be open dialogue with both schools and parents in each circumstance and the decision is made with the best intentions.

Section 75

64 responses commented on Section 75. These comments and all responses have been taken into account when assessing the equality impact of the proposal.

- Interest in access/parking and safety due to having a disability.
- Needs to remain in Stewartstown to ensure political and religious harmony.
- The young people attending Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS are being negatively impacted as their preferred choice of school is being taken away. The comparison of the number of Catholic schools and Controlled schools is vastly different. Therefore, I feel there is a negative impact on unionist/Protestant/neutral viewpoints in the area.
- Some foreign nationals live in the village and have no private means of transport to travel outside the village to another controlled school.
- As a parent of a child with additional needs this is extremely concerning that not only will all children receive less teacher input but especially those who need more time and not less.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------|----------------|--------------|-------------------------------|---------|---|-------|--------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Ballytrea PS is to close brothers and sisters of current pupils in Ballytrea will have to go elsewhere and they will have to be taken to a site possibly further away. • I think it will be good for my children to attend a bigger more sustainable school. • There is such a range of needs in these present times; children who have been disadvantaged by both covid and a delayed diagnosis of needs need the security of Ballytrea PS and the stability it offers. Further disruption to their lives would have a particularly negative impact on children with special needs. • Ballytrea PS has the strongest Christian ethos of any school in this area. The level of Christian input it offers to its pupils cannot be matched in another school and will not be equalled in an amalgamated school. | | | | | | | | |
| Confirmation by the Proposer | <p>I confirm that the Board of Governors, Staff and Parents/Guardians of pupils of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School were consulted on 17 November 2022 and Equality Screening of the proposal has been carried out and the statutory requirements of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (where appropriate) have been considered.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="491 1064 1404 1265"> <tr> <td data-bbox="491 1064 726 1108">Name:</td> <td data-bbox="726 1064 1404 1108">Cynthia Currie</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="491 1108 726 1153">Office Held:</td> <td data-bbox="726 1108 1404 1153">Interim Director of Education</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="491 1153 726 1220">Signed:</td> <td data-bbox="726 1153 1404 1220"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="491 1220 726 1265">Date:</td> <td data-bbox="726 1220 1404 1265">4 April 2023</td> </tr> </table> | Name: | Cynthia Currie | Office Held: | Interim Director of Education | Signed: |  | Date: | 4 April 2023 |
| Name: | Cynthia Currie | | | | | | | | |
| Office Held: | Interim Director of Education | | | | | | | | |
| Signed: |  | | | | | | | | |
| Date: | 4 April 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| Associated Proposals | N/A | | | | | | | | |


Case for Change: Statutory Consultation

EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTARY ON PRE-PUBLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION

The following is to be completed and signed off by the EA.

The Education Authority (EA)

I confirm that the schools which the Education Authority consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted on 14 November 2022 with a return date of 23 January 2023.

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Name: | Cynthia Currie |
| Office Held: | Interim Director of Education |
| Signed: |  |
| Date: | 4 April 2023 |

Provide detail of consultation with schools that may, in the EA's opinion, be affected by the proposal - list of schools, dates of letters issued to schools/meetings.

In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 a copy of the proposal was sent, on 14 November 2022, to schools which, in the opinion of the Authority, might be affected by the proposal. A total of 53 schools were forwarded the draft proposal for their comments. Comments were invited from the Boards of Governors and Trustees, to be returned to the Education Authority by 23 January 2023.

Summary of views received (number of responses, recurring themes, petitions, community support or opposition).

One response was received from an affected school, and one from the Controlled School Support Council

Responses/Assurances in respect of issues raised during consultation.

Support the Proposal

- Welcome the proposal because we believe it will consolidate primary school provision in the Stewartstown area for the long-term future.
- A newly amalgamated school on the existing site of Stewartstown PS will consolidate and strengthen school provision in the area for the long term as it will create sustainable primary schools in Stewartstown and Coagh that have catchment areas that don't overlap. If the newly amalgamated school was to be located at the existing site of Ballytreea PS, then the catchment area would significantly overlap with the catchment area of Coagh PS.
- The existing close links between Tiny Tots Playgroup – a newly amalgamated school on the

Dates of EA meetings eg Strategic Planning and Policy Committee/ Board etc

Details of issues raised by members of EA Board

site of Stewartstown PS would allow many parents to do one 'drop off' in terms of having siblings at the same location.


Notes the Proposal

- The current enrolments at Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS fall short of the Sustainable Schools Policy.
- Mindful that the proposals align with the Department of Education's Policy for Sustainable Schools 2009 and maintain sustainable controlled education provision within this rural area.
- Feasibility study to determine the site of the new school must take cognisance of the views of both school communities and that there is transparency in the processes to provide assurances to all stakeholders.
- Emphasise the importance of aligning development work with the establishment of the new school.

This development proposal was discussed by the Education Authority's Strategic Planning and Policy Committee at its meeting on 4 April 2023.

EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTS

In the context of planning on an area basis - what is the EA's view of the proposal, taking into account any pre-publication consultation. Does the EA support the proposal?

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Name: | Cynthia Currie |
| Office Held: | Interim Director of Education |
| Signed: |  |
| Date: | 4 April 2023 |

The Education Authority, as the proposer, supports Development Proposal Nos 710, 711 and 712 to effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School through the establishment of a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

While the effective date for the amalgamation is 1 September 2025, the Education Authority **is not taking forward the amalgamation of both schools in advance of accommodation on a single site. The amalgamation will not operate as a split site campus.**

During the consultations undertaken with governors, staff and parents/guardians the following recurring themes emerged:

Location of the Amalgamated School

The issue of location was raised by both those in support and not in support of the proposal. The location of the school will only be determined following a decision on the Development Proposals, the establishment of an Interim Board of Governors which will be representative of both Boards of Governors and the completion of a feasibility study.

If approved, in taking forward the amalgamation, Education Authority officers will work collaboratively with both schools to take forward an implementation plan which will be aligned to the Department of Education Circular 2018/15 - Guidance on Implementation of Approved Development Proposals for School Amalgamations.

Following approval, the first action will be the establishment of an Interim Board of Governors which will be made up of equal representation from the respective Boards of Governors. The Interim Board of Governors once established will take forward the appointment of a Principal Designate and commission a Feasibility Study to determine the most suitable and strategic location of the amalgamated school.

Substantial capital investment will be required to provide appropriate accommodation for the newly amalgamated school.

Pastoral Care

It was raised that the needs of pupils should be met in an amalgamated school. In planning for the new school, the focus will be on meeting the needs of all pupils and staff with the Interim Board of Governors and the Principal (Designate) putting pastoral care at the forefront of planning for the new school. This will be achieved through the pupils and staff of the two schools working together and in partnership with the Education Authority.

Availability of Places and Accommodation

Parents expressed concern on availability of places, accommodation and traffic management.

The Education Authority will, should the proposal be approved, liaise with the parents, local schools, managing authorities and the Department of Education to endeavour to ensure that pupils affected by the proposal be accommodated within current guidance/policies, where possible. The first

preferences for 2023/24 show a combined Year 1 intake of 17 pupils and with the proposal for an approved admission number of 20 pupils, there will be places for all pupils in the area.

Children with Special Educational Needs

Parents expressed concerns about the continuation of services to support children with special educational needs. The support, which the Education Authority provides for the pupils, will continue regardless of the school they attend, to ensure that the needs of all children are met. The statutory rights of children are the same irrespective of the school they attend.

Transport arrangements for the pupils

Any transport arrangements will be in accordance with transport regulations.

In consideration of the above, and the Case for Change, the Education Authority is proposing to publish Development Proposal Nos 710, 711 and 712 the week beginning 10 April 2023.

Area Planning: Coagh/Stewartstown Area

On 17 June 2019, Education Authority published Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision April 2017-2020 Annual Action Plan for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools April 2019–March 2021. Within the actions for the Mid-Ulster Local Government District, the Education Authority included the following:

| Primary School | Key Issue | Action |
|---|--|---|
| Coagh/Stewartstown Area: Ballytrea PS 52 Gortnaskea Road Stewartstown Dungannon BT71 5NY Coagh PS 31 Urbal Road Cookstown BT80 0DW Stewartstown PS 33 Hillhead Stewartstown BT71 5HY | Ensure school places are located as required and address school provision where sustainability is an issue | Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Ballytrea PS, Coagh PS and Stewartstown PS by September 2020 |

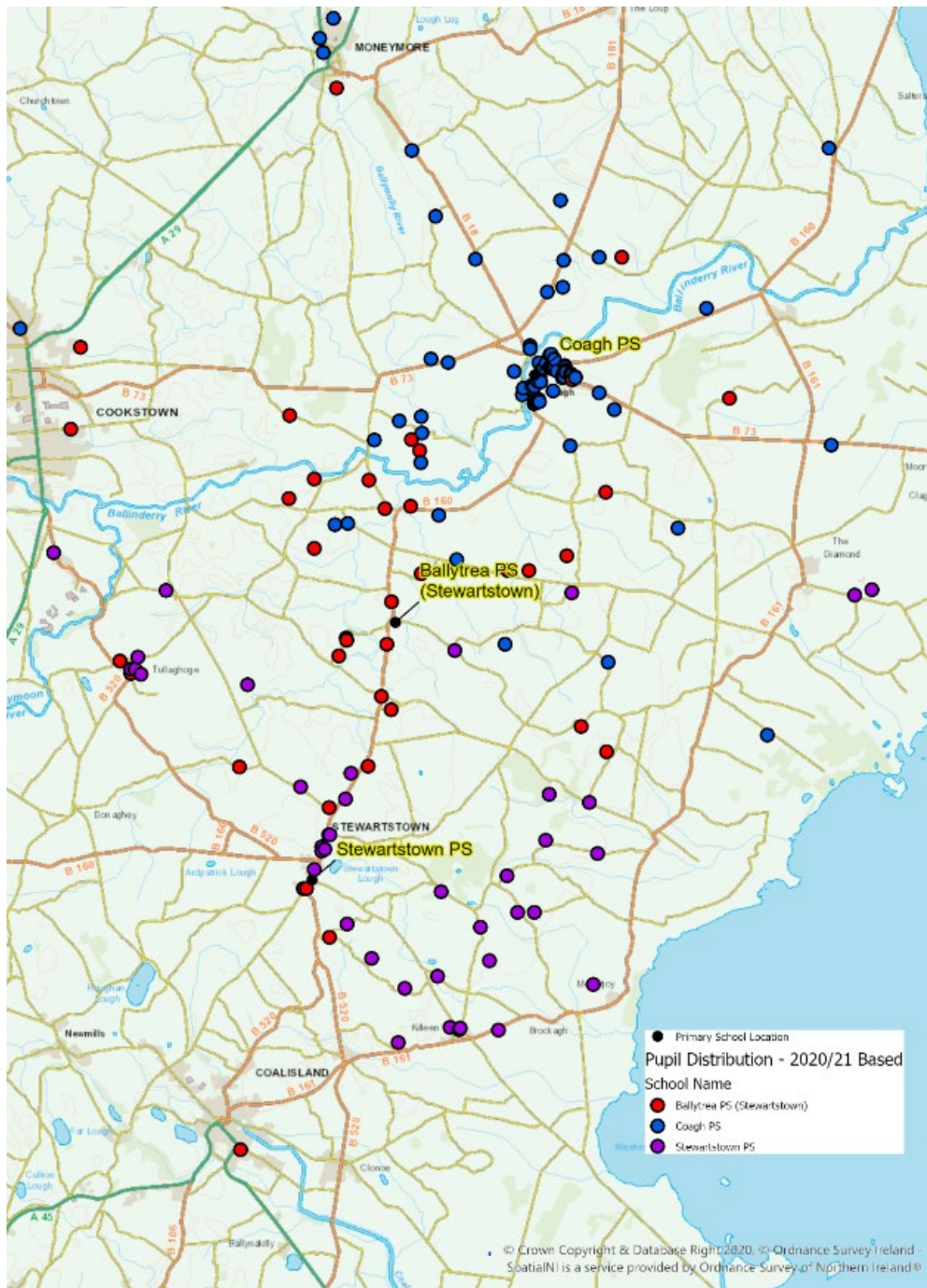
The Education Authority in addressing sustainable school provision in the Coagh/Stewartstown area has engaged with the Boards of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School, Coagh Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School. The Education Authority undertook an analysis of the area considering: pupil distribution, location of schools, finances and availability of places, on an individual school basis and on an area basis.

The Education Authority:

- Identified that Coagh Primary School was a sustainable school with its catchment area showing pupil distribution from the village and surrounding area. In Map 1, below, pupil distribution for Coagh Primary School shows the majority of its pupils come from the immediate village and surrounding area. At September 2022, Coagh Primary School had an enrolment of 115 pupils.
- Coagh Primary School over the last eight years has experienced an increase in its enrolment numbers and for the last three years the school's enrolment has achieved over the DE Sustainable Schools Policy criteria - a rural school should have a minimum enrolment of 105. The proposal will ensure sustainable controlled provision in the wider Stewartstown area and maintain the current sustainable provision within Coagh Primary School.

- The pupil distribution for Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School shows a shared catchment area. Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School are located within close approximately, 2.8 miles apart and as identified in Map 1 below, both have a cross over catchment serving the wider Stewartstown Area.
- Individually both schools' enrolment numbers fall below the Sustainable Schools Policy minimum threshold of 105 pupils for a rural primary school: at September 2022, Ballytrea Primary School had an enrolment of 50 pupils and Stewartstown Primary School had an enrolment of 49 pupils. However, together both schools would provide a consolidation of controlled primary school provision in the area and create a more sustainable provision.

Map 1 - Location and pupil distribution for Ballytrea Primary School, Coagh Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School



In considering all the information available, the Education Authority is:

- Not taking forward any area planning activity for Coagh Primary School. The Education Authority acknowledges the catchment and increase in pupil numbers at Coagh Primary School.
- Undertaking pre-publication consultation for the proposed amalgamation of Ballytrae Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The information below outlines the Education Authority's rationale for the proposal and is seeking the views of governors, staff, and parents/guardians.

Executive Summary: Ballytrea/Stewartstown Area - Amalgamation

The Proposal

The Education Authority is commencing pre-publication consultation on a proposal to:

Establish a new primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admissions number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

This proposal is the result of two years discussion between the Boards of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School to discuss future sustainability for both schools and educationally and financially sustainable school for the area.

In proposing the new primary school, this will result in the discontinuance of both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School. The new primary school will provide for all the pupils attending the two schools which currently have a combined enrolment of 99pupils. The proposed new controlled primary school will have a Year 1 admission number of 20 pupils and approved enrolment number of 140 pupils. This will provide a more sustainable school to meet the needs of current and future pupils for the area.

Next Steps: Should the Proposal be Approved

Should the proposal receive Ministerial approval, the guidance: DE Circular 2018/15 - Guidance on Implementation of Approved Development Proposals for School Amalgamations will be applied. The first action following the approval of the Development Proposal is for the establishment of an Interim Board of Governors. The Interim Board of Governors will have equal representation from the Boards of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School. Once established, the first action of the Interim Board of Governors will be the appointment of a Principal (Designate) who will, upon appointment, work with the Interim Board of Governors, Education Authority and Controlled Schools' Support Council to take forward the new school.

In planning for the new school, the focus will be on meeting the needs of all pupils with the Interim Board of Governors and the Principal (Designate) putting pastoral care at the forefront of planning for the new school. This will be achieved through working with the pupils and staff of the two schools working together. This is supported by the implementation time that has been built in to allow for these arrangements to be put in place.

1 INTRODUCTION

Before arriving at the final recommendation on the future primary provision at Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School, the Education Authority sought the views of those most directly involved at a local level. As the proposer, the Education Authority engaged in pre-publication consultation with the Board of Governors, parents and staff of both primary schools and Trustees, Board of Governors, and other interested parties in the local community from 14 November 2022 to 23 January 2023.

1.1 Aim

The aim of the Education Authority is to facilitate the development of a network of viable and sustainable schools that can deliver the Northern Ireland 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

At the 4 April 2023 meeting of the Education Authority's Strategic Planning and Policy Committee, it was agreed to publish the proposals below:

Development Proposal No 710

Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with

effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

Development Proposal No 711

Discontinue Ballytrea Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).

Development Proposal No 712

Discontinue Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).

The Education Authority will seek capital investment for refurbishment/extension minor works for the amalgamated primary school.

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 establishment of a new controlled school and 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 amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown 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 has met with the Board of Governors and Principals to discuss all options and, based on available information, the Education Authority is taking forward a Development Proposal for the amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School.

The pre-publication consultation process and a summary of comments and emerging themes is included in pages 3-11 of this Case for Change.

1.4 Amalgamation

Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School, following discussion with the Education Authority, consider that an amalgamation would provide for a more educationally and financial sustainable school to meet the future needs of the area. Both schools are located in rural areas and as Map 1 shows many of the pupils come from the same area. There is limited alternative controlled provision in the area, the nearest controlled primary schools with sufficient available places are located more than 6 miles from both schools.

As with all the options, sustainability is the most important consideration. The Department of Education's policy on amalgamations (Circular 2018/15) states that: *'...it should also be helpful to those who are considering a Development Proposal to*

amalgamate two or more schools of a similar size to create a new school regardless of management type’.

As shown in Tables 1 and 2 the 2022/23 enrolment figure of both schools will be 50 and 49, together they reach a total enrolment figure of 99, forming a more sustainable school will achieve an enrolment of more than 105 pupils.

Explained in the Sustainable Schools Policy and DE Circular 2014/21 [Guidance on Implementation of Approved Development Proposals for Amalgamations circular Number 2018/15](#), an amalgamation means the forming of a new school to replace two or more schools of a similar size coming together. Both schools are of a similar size and as Table 3 shows will achieve a combined enrolment figure of more than 105 pupils.

2 BACKGROUND

Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School are controlled primary schools situated in a rural area of County Tyrone.

The distance between both schools, Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School is 2.8 miles.

2.1 Ballytrea Primary School

Over the last eight years the enrolment at Ballytrea Primary School has been steadily declining from 80 pupils in 2014/15 to 50 pupils at September 2022.

The school has an approved enrolment number of 143 pupils and approved admissions number of 20 pupils. At September 2022, Ballytrea Primary School had an enrolment of 50 pupils. This number is not projected to increase significantly.

Ballytrea Primary School is operating with 3.40 teachers, including a teaching principal, with composite classes.

Table 1, below, details the historical and current enrolment figures.

| Table 1: Enrolment Statistics: Ballytrea Primary School | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Total |
| 2014/15 | 10 | 14 | 11 | 12 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 80 |
| 2015/16 | 8 | 10 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 78 |
| 2016/17 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 75 |
| 2017/18 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 72 |
| 2018/19 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 65 |
| 2019/20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 58 |
| 2020/21 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 54 |
| 2021/22 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 54 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| 2022/23 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 50 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|

2.2 Stewartstown Primary School

Over the last eight years the enrolment at Stewartstown Primary School has seen an increase from 41 pupils in 2014/15 to 49 pupils at September 2022.

The school has an approved enrolment number of 98 pupils and approved admissions number of 14 pupils. At September 2022, Stewartstown Primary School had an enrolment of 49 pupils. This number is not projected to increase significantly.

Stewartstown Primary School is operating with 3.80 teachers, including a teaching principal, with composite classes.

Table 2, below, details the historical and current enrolment figures.

| Table 2: Enrolment Statistics: Stewartstown Primary School | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Total |
| 2014/15 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 41 |
| 2015/16 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 44 |
| 2016/17 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 49 |
| 2017/18 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 7 | 43 |
| 2018/19 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 46 |
| 2019/20 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 11 | 53 |
| 2020/21 | 12 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 54 |
| 2021/22 | 9 | 12 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 59 |
| 2022/23 | 5 | 9 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 49 |

2.3 Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School

Both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School service the wider Stewartstown area. In the past, the schools shared a joint Board of Governors. The Education Authority has met with the Boards of Governors and Principals to discuss all options. There was acknowledgement of the sustainability difficulties both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School are currently facing, on the shared pupil distribution for both schools and on the agreement that an amalgamation of both schools would service the children and young people in this area and provide sustainable provision.

Table 3, below, shows the projected enrolments (based on current trends) for an amalgamated school. The numbers show an amalgamated school would remain steady and it is expected that following the amalgamation of the new school, this will attract more pupils from the surrounding area.

Table 3: Enrolment Projections: Proposed Amalgamated School

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Total |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 2022/23 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 14 | 18 | 9 | 12 | 99 |
| 2023/24 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 14 | 18 | 9 | 104 |
| 2024/25 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 14 | 18 | 110 |
| 2025/26 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 14 | 107 |
| 2026/27 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 108 |
| 2027/28 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 103 |
| 2028/29 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 103 |
| 2029/30 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 107 |

Table 4 shows the nearest schools to both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School and their enrolment data. Map 2 shows the location of local schools.

| Table 4: Local Schools to Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| School | Distance (miles) from Ballytrea PS | Distance (miles) from Stewartstown PS | Sector | Enrolment 2021/22 | Approved Enrolment Number 2021/22 | Available Places 2021/22 |
| Ballytrea PS | 0 | 2.9 | Controlled | 54 | 143 | 89 |
| Stewartstown PS | 2.8 | 0 | Controlled | 59 | 98 | 39 |
| Ballylifford PS | 7.1 | 9.8 | Maintained | 71 | 93 | 22 |
| Bush PS | 7.8 | 4.9 | Controlled | 180 | 198 | 18 |
| Coagh PS | 3.5 | 6.3 | Controlled | 110 | 106 | 0 |
| Cookstown PS | 6.1 | 6.7 | Controlled | 514 | 616 | 102 |
| Derrychrin PS | 6.3 | 9.0 | Maintained | 182 | 206 | 0 |
| Donaghey PS | 6.3 | 3.9 | Controlled | 111 | 142 | 31 |
| Edendork PS | 7.1 | 4.3 | Maintained | 294 | 320 | 26 |
| Gaelscoil Eoghain | 5.3 | 6.6 | Irish Medium | 106 | 135 | 0 |
| Holy Trinity PS | 5.3 | 7.0 | Maintained | 605 | 630 | 25 |
| Moneymore PS | 6.3 | 9.0 | Controlled | 225 | 223 | 0 |
| Newmills PS | 6.5 | 3.7 | Controlled | 114 | 113 | 0 |
| Phoenix Integrated PS | 4.9 | 6.2 | Integrated | 197 | 203 | 6 |
| Primate Dixon PS | 5.6 | 2.7 | Maintained | 506 | 610 | 104 |
| St Brigid's PS, Mountjoy | 5.8 | 4.1 | Maintained | 126 | 161 | 35 |
| St John's PS, Kingsisland | 8.0 | 5.2 | Maintained | 212 | 191 | 0 |
| St Malachy's PS, Drummullan | 3.0 | 5.7 | Maintained | 46 | 109 | 63 |
| St Mary's PS, Lisbuoy | 9.5 | 6.1 | Maintained | 78 | 77 | 0 |
| St Mary's PS, Stewartstown | 2.7 | 0.4 | Maintained | 91 | 140 | 49 |
| St Patrick's PS, Moneymore | 6.1 | 8.8 | Maintained | 100 | 136 | 36 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|------------|-----|-----|----|
| St Patrick's PS, Mullinahoe | 4.9 | 7.6 | Maintained | 237 | 284 | 47 |
| St Peter's PS, Moortown | 7.8 | 10.9 | Maintained | 152 | 188 | 36 |

Table 4, whilst showing there is capacity within the local schools, the nearest controlled primary school to both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School with available places is Cookstown Primary School, which is over 6 miles from both schools with 102 available places. The nearest integrated primary school is Phoenix Integrated Primary School, with 6 available places.

The map below shows the nearest primary schools for Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School.

Map 2 - Location of nearest local primary schools to Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary



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

Within Ballytrea Primary School, an Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspection was undertaken in March 2012 with the overall findings of the inspection as good. The report can be accessed by the link:

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/short-inspection-ballytrea-primary-school-stewartstown-dungannon>.

| Overall effectiveness | Capacity for sustained self-improvement |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievements and standards | Good |
| Provision for learning | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |

The March 2012 report indicated:

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. In addition, the negative impact of the enrolment of reception children throughout the year on the children, the staff and the funded provision from which the children are drawn needs to be reviewed.

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

Within Stewartstown Primary School, an Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspection was undertaken in September 2016 with the overall findings of the inspection as good and very good. The report can be accessed by the link:

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/primary-inspection-stewartstown-primary-school-stewartstown-county-tyrone>

| Overall effectiveness | Capacity for sustained self-improvement |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievements and standards | Very Good |

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Provision for learning | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |

The September 2016 report stated:

Across all key stages, the standards in mathematics are very good. The children in the foundation stage have a secure understanding of early mathematical language and number, and confidently make comparisons using the appropriate measurement terminology. The children with additional needs make good progress in line with expectation. Almost all of the children can use and explain a range of mental calculation strategies to solve problems and carry out investigations. The children in key stage (KS) 2 show an economic awareness and financial capability which they apply to a variety of real life contexts.

The children's application of the thinking skills and personal capabilities is very good; in particular, their self-management skills during play-based learning and group work. When working with others, they express their ideas confidently and with courtesy demonstrating very good personal and social skills. They persevere and engage in collaborative and sustained learning and take pride in their work and achievements. Increasingly, by year 7, the children manage and present information purposefully and for a range of audiences. They make effective and skilful use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.

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.

As noted by ETI the Education Authority, school governors and principals from both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School have discussed sustainability issues and are now progressing with the option of amalgamation. The high quality of teaching and learning in both schools, as recognised by ETI, will ensure the new school achieves high standards for the children and young people of the wider Stewartstown area. A newly amalgamated school will alleviate teaching pressures and ensure that no more than two year groups will be in a composite class.

3.2 Stable Enrolment Trends

Ballytrea Primary School has, as detailed in Table 1, experienced a downturn in pupil numbers over the past number of years. At September 2022, the school had 50 pupils, based on admission trends and birth rates within the area, the enrolment numbers are not projected to increase substantially. The school's enrolment falls well short of the Sustainable Schools Policy minimum threshold for a rural school, 105 pupils.

Stewartstown Primary School, as detailed in Table 2, had 49 pupils at September 2022. The school has not achieved its approved enrolment number over the last eight years. Based on admission trends and birth rates within the area, the enrolment numbers are not projected to increase substantially. The school's enrolment falls well short of the Sustainable Schools Policy minimum threshold for a rural school, 105 pupils.

As shown in tables 1 and 2 the 2022/23 enrolment figure of both schools will be 50 and 49, together they reach a total enrolment figure of 99 pupils. Table 3 above projects a sustainable school with an enrolment of more than 105 pupils.

3.2.1 Population Change

Tables 5 and 6 indicate the live birth registers for the electoral wards from which the majority of the pupils of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School are drawn.

| Table 5: Live Births for the electoral wards from Ballytrea Primary School pupils are drawn | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ward | Resident live Births 2014 | Resident live Births 2015 | Resident live Births 2016 | Resident live Births 2017 | Resident live Births 2018 | Resident live Births 2019 |
| Coagh | 49 | 42 | 38 | 33 | 42 | 45 |
| Cookstown East | 52 | 44 | 56 | 54 | 33 | 52 |
| Cookstown South | 59 | 45 | 53 | 44 | 50 | 39 |
| Cookstown West | 50 | 47 | 60 | 41 | 44 | 54 |
| Loughry | 26 | 39 | 44 | 42 | 40 | 42 |
| Stewartstown | 30 | 39 | 31 | 38 | 32 | 39 |
| The Loup | 63 | 95 | 71 | 70 | 68 | 76 |

| Table 6: Live Births for the electoral wards from Stewartstown Primary School pupils are drawn | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ward | Resident live Births 2014 | Resident live Births 2015 | Resident live Births 2016 | Resident live Births 2017 | Resident live Births 2018 | Resident live Births 2019 |
| Ardboe | 60 | 49 | 56 | 59 | 40 | 46 |
| Coagh | 49 | 42 | 38 | 33 | 42 | 45 |
| Coaliland North | 51 | 64 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 58 |
| Cookstown East | 52 | 44 | 56 | 54 | 33 | 52 |
| Cookstown South | 59 | 45 | 53 | 44 | 50 | 39 |
| Cookstown West | 50 | 47 | 60 | 41 | 44 | 54 |
| Loughry | 26 | 39 | 44 | 42 | 40 | 42 |
| Stewartstown | 30 | 39 | 31 | 38 | 32 | 39 |
| Washing Bay | 58 | 66 | 64 | 50 | 64 | 56 |

The tables above show that, whilst there is some fluctuation, the birth rates remain fairly constant. This would enable an amalgamated school to have, as its baseline, a combined enrolment number from Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School, which could further increase following the proposed amalgamation.

3.3 Sound Financial Position

The school's Financial Plan 2020-2023 shows that Ballytrea Primary School is projected to have a deficit of **-£124,139** at the end of financial year 2022/23. The three-year financial plan shows the school is not currently operating within its in-year budget.

| Table 7: Financial History: Ballytrea Primary School | |
|---|--------------------|
| Year | Surplus/Deficit |
| 2015/16 | -£7,290.00 |
| 2016/17 | -£19,053.00 |
| 2017/18 | -£32,706.00 |
| 2018/19 | -£31,923.00 |
| 2019/20 | -£16,141.70 |
| 2020/21 | -£19,889.46 |
| 2021/22 | -£39,049.34 |

Stewartstown Primary School as of 31 March 2022 end of year finances had a surplus of £24,854. The school is projected to live within its in-year budget for the financial year 2021/22, however, is projected to have a deficit of **-£12,455** by the end of financial year 2022/23.

| Table 8: Financial History: Stewartstown Primary School | |
|--|--------------------|
| Year | Surplus/Deficit |
| 2015/16 | -£16,677.00 |
| 2016/17 | -£3,867.00 |
| 2017/18 | £11,227.00 |
| 2018/19 | £28,828.00 |
| 2019/20 | £1,333.84 |
| 2020/21 | £9,043.05 |
| 2021/22 | £24,854.02 |

3.3.1 Small Schools Support

Both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School receive the full amount of Small School Support Factor currently £51,863 per school.

The Small Schools Support Factor is a lump sum equivalent to 1.0 times the salary of a teacher on point UPS 1 of the Teachers' Upper Pay Scale, allocated to schools of up to 100 pupils tapering to zero at 300 pupils. Small Schools Support Factor funding is intended to target more resources towards smaller schools to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum.

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.

A newly amalgamated school at 140 pupils would receive £41,490 in Small School Support Factor. As a sustainable school, the newly amalgamated school would be able to achieve financial sustainability and live within its in-year budget. The proposed amalgamated school would be in a more favourable financial position with a combined enrolment number thereby maximising resources and ensuring sustainability.

3.4 Strong Leadership and Management

For Ballytrea Primary School the ETI report, March, 2012 stated that the leadership and management of the school was good.

“The quality of leadership and management is good.

The Principal is committed to the life and work of the school and has worked diligently to promote the school in the neighbouring and wider community including forging important links with primary and post primary schools both locally and, through the Dissolving Boundaries initiative, wider afield.”

It should be noted that due to the long-term absence of the previous principal, support was provided by Education Authority officers during the 2017-2018 academic year and the school was led by a number of seconded principals.

The current principal has been in post since January 2020.

For Stewartstown Primary School, the ETI report from September 2016 stated:

The principal was appointed to the permanent post in January 2016 and two new part-time teachers were appointed in September 2016.

The leadership and management team is recently established and has begun to identify areas for improvement with a clear focus on improving further the quality of the children’s learning experiences and raising standards. This work is underpinned by an appropriate partnership between the staff and governors and commitment to the professional development of the staff in their new co-ordinator roles and responsibilities.

Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI’s evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

The newly amalgamated school will build on the current strong leadership and management skills of both schools, as recognised by ETI. This will help provide direction and good quality leadership to a new school, supported by the Board of Governors, who will take forward the implementation of the new school with the direction of a Principal (Designate) supported by the Education Authority and Controlled Schools’ Support Council.

3.5 Accessibility

Both schools can be accessed by car and bus; the majority of pupils attending the schools are from the local area. Both primary schools take pupils from a similar rural area.

3.6 Strong Links with the Community

3.6.1 Ballytrea Primary School

Ballytrea Primary School plays an active role within the local community. Throughout the year, the school hosts various events at which members of the community are invited into school. Events that have taken place include Breakfast with Santa, Harvest Tea, a charity Fashion Show, Spring Serenade, and a Ballytrea Primary School Vegetable sale amongst others.

Ballytrea Primary School also opens its doors and offers its facilities for use by community organisations, with the school being used to host regular piping and drumming lessons, a local church mission, a book week and a 'live' nativity tour, which members of the local churches, staff, pupils and governors took part in.

As part of its community involvement, Ballytrea Primary School works closely with local councillors and businesses, with different representatives coming into work with the pupils on different curriculum areas such as our KS2 Dragons Den event, as well as helping the school with various sponsorship and grant opportunities.

Ballytrea Primary School is partnered with St Mary's Primary School, Stewartstown through Shared Education.

3.6.2 Stewartstown Primary School

Stewartstown Primary School lies right in the heart of the Stewartstown village, and plays a pivotal role within the community. The school regularly is invited along to community events to perform, including local church services, vintage rallies and Christmas tree light switch on. Both the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors are representatives for the school at the Stewartstown Development Association meetings, assisting and helping where possible. The school works alongside local businesses, promoting their business through sponsorship opportunities.

The school has a very active PTA who organise many events. The school is used as a community hub, with circuit classes running weekly in the hall, bible clubs holding annual events within the school and sports clubs using the grass pitch during holiday periods. Local churches are involved in the life of the school with many assemblies led by local ministers taking place. Other Christian groups such as CEF help lead assemblies and deliver afterschool clubs for the pupils. Local charities are well supported by the school and community.

Stewartstown Primary School has strong links with other schools in the local area, including its Shared Education partner school Holy Family Primary School, Aghamullan. Stewartstown Primary School also partner with St Mary's Primary School, Stewartstown and the two schools have most recently committed to working

together in a council run good relations initiative and they continue to share local resources such as local counsellors as part of the Healthy Happy Minds programme and the EA bus transport service.

Both schools have strong links within the community, are part of a Shared Education programme and have active PTAs. In a newly amalgamated school these links will continue and further strengthen in a more financially and educationally sustainable 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 raise standards and close the attainment gap through a network of sustainable schools. The focus of the plan is on the best educational 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.

The Sustainable Schools Policy also notes:

In rural areas where it is practical and possible to replace small schools with better facilities, this can be a key factor in retaining rural populations and encouraging rural development. At the core of the issue of sustainability, is the need to find the most effective way of providing significantly improved educational opportunities for children within the context of their local and wider community. Amalgamation can provide a positive outcome for rural communities. Effective communication and collaboration, together with good leadership and management are central to achieving a positive outcome from a situation where amalgamation is determined to be the best option.

As detailed above, Area Planning is focused on the Sustainable Schools Policy. In October 2016, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir, MLA, stated:

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.

The Area Plan confirms that in some areas we have too many school places for the number of children and young people available to fill them. In other areas it highlights that there is a sufficient number of places but they are not in the right place. The challenge that faces almost all Local Government Districts is that we have schools that are too small to adequately provide for their pupils and ensure they have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Should there be a proposal for change in any school, local communities will be consulted and their views will be taken into account. I can assure you that the focus will be on providing quality education and providing pathways for all pupils. Pupils' needs must come first. And if that means that some schools have to close then I am prepared to take those difficult decisions.

The Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 Annual Action Plans for Primary, Post-Primary and Special Schools 2019-21 identified a key issue for Ballytrea Primary School, Coagh Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School 'address school provision where sustainability is an issue' with the action 'Managing authority to consult on options for future provision of Ballytrea Primary School, Coagh Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School by September 2020'. As a result, the Education Authority engaged with the Boards of Governors of all three primary schools and engaged in discussions. Following initial discussion, the Education Authority, in identifying the sustainability and catchment area of Coagh Primary School, disconnected Coagh Primary School from the Annual Action Plan action.

The Education Authority, in engaging with Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School, focused discussion with both schools on the options below:

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 in Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School and both schools' financial positions, do nothing is not an option.

4.2 Shared Education

Both schools are part of different Shared Education partnerships. Ballytrea Primary School is in a partnership with St Mary's Primary School, Stewartstown and Stewartstown Primary School is in a partnership with Holy Family Primary School. Both Partnerships engage in shared educational experiences and in promoting cross-community links.

As the Education Authority has a duty to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education, the Education Authority discussed the potential for sustainable shared education. However, given the sized and proximity to other schools, a shared solution would not improve the sustainability of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School.

A proposed amalgamation may change the shared education partnerships to build on and widen shared education in the area. Shared Education has advised that if resourcing is made available by the Department of Education as part of the mainstreaming of Shared Education, officers will look to explore a partnership reconfiguration between the new amalgamated primary school, St Mary's Primary School, Stewartstown and Holy Family Primary School.

4.3 Federation

A federation would involve local schools coming together either through a collaboration or federation. A collaboration 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 sustainable provision and would not improve the financial position of both schools.

4.4 Discontinue

In considering the future of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School it was noted that the discontinuance of one or both schools would not best serve the communities of either school. The fragmentation of controlled provision within in Ballytrea/Stewartstown community would be detrimental to primary school provision in the area. In bringing forward area planning activity for either school this will ensure that provision is more sustainable to provide for the educational needs of all current and future pupils from the Ballytrea and Stewartstown areas.

The distance between Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School is 2.8 miles.

4.5 Transformation to Integrated Status

The Boards of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School both enquired about the possibility of transforming to integrated status. Discussions took place in relation to transformation to integrated status and the process outlined. However, transforming to integrated status would not provide for a sustainable solution for either school.

The Board of Governors for Ballytrea Primary School advised that they had met with representatives from Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), however, the Board of Governors did not feel this was an option for Ballytrea Primary School.

The Education Authority advised both schools of the options for the Boards of Governors should it wish to independently explore transformation to integrated status.

4.6 Other Options

The Board of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School also outlined a five year plan as an option. However, with this option, sustainability in terms of enrolment and admissions would not be achieved.

The Education Authority considers that this option would not provide a pathway for a sustainable provision to meet the needs of the area.

4.7 Amalgamation

An amalgamation is when two or more schools close and a new school is established on a single site – the location of the new school could be sited on one of the existing school sites.

The Education Authority, in individual discussions with the Boards of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School, considered the above options and the sustainability of their school. However, sustainability was identified by the Education Authority and acknowledged by both Boards of Governors as an issue. Within each Board of Governors, there was disappointment that the work of the governors could not provide a sustainable solution for the school. The Education Authority recognises the commitment of the governors but the current circumstances would not provide for educationally or financially sustainable schools.

While individually sustainability is an issue, the Boards of Governors of both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School, in discussion with the Education Authority, realise the strength in the joining of both schools to provide a more educationally and financially sustainable school which would not only meet the needs of the current pupils at both schools but would consolidate and ensure future controlled primary educational provision for the wider area.

Both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School support the proposal for an amalgamation as both schools serve the wider Ballytrea/Stewartstown area and a newly amalgamated school would build on the strengths of both schools.

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

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, the 2022/23 enrolment figure of both schools is 50 and 49. Table 3 shows that together a projected enrolment would achieve above the Sustainable Schools Policy minimum threshold of 105 pupils for a rural primary school.

As outlined in the DE Circular 2014/21 [Guidance on Implementation of Approved Development Proposals for Amalgamations Circular Number 2018/15](#), an amalgamation means the forming of a new school to replace two or more schools of a similar size coming together. Both schools are of a similar size and currently have and are projected to have a combined enrolment figure of more than 105 pupils.

The Education Authority, along with the Boards of Governors from both schools, believe that an amalgamated school will enhance sustainability, meet the Sustainable Schools criteria and provide opportunities for children and young people in the Ballytrea/Stewartstown area.

In consideration of the options above, the Education Authority proposes the establishment of a new controlled primary school in the Ballytrea/Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

Discontinue Ballytrea Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).

Discontinue Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).

The Education Authority will seek capital investment for refurbishment/extension works for the amalgamated primary school.

5 RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

Both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School have always been small primary schools with a current combined enrolment of 99 pupils.

Over the last number of years, both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School have experienced low enrolment numbers and this will continue to place increased pressure on the already strained financial resources of both schools and on the teaching staff.

The proposed amalgamated school will be a sustainable school in accordance with the Sustainable Schools Policy, the newly established school will have an enrolment of 99 pupils. This will alleviate both teaching and financial pressures and ensure that no more than two year groups will be in a composite class. The proposed amalgamation will consolidate controlled primary school provision within the area.

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 Special Educational Needs will continue to have their special educational requirements met within the newly established school, supported by the Education Authority's Children and Young People's Services.

The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 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 all three primary schools attracts pupils is, according to the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group, defined as rural. The discontinuance of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School will have an impact on the local area. However, the establishment of a new school in the wider Stewartstown area will retain controlled provision in the area, which will be sustainable. 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.

6 EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

The aim of Area Planning is to ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their educational needs in a school that is educationally and financially viable and takes account of the expressed preference of parents for a diverse system of education.

Area Planning contributes to school improvement through evaluating the best use of resources within the system to ensure that available provision can meet the needs of all pupils. The educational experience of pupils is linked to the resources available to the school, which are in turn reflective of admissions and enrolment numbers. Both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School have low enrolment and Ballytrea Primary School has an FTE of 3.4 teachers with Stewartstown Primary School having an FTE of 3.8 teachers. This means that both schools currently operate with more than two year groups in one composite class.

In order to implement the Northern Ireland Curriculum, a school should have, in each year group, sufficient pupils to ensure appropriate personal development and mutual understanding between children. Where a school has a low enrolment, it can be challenging to attract sufficient resources to ensure a high quality educational experience.

Within the amalgamated school the FTE should be approximately 5.0 which will ensure no more than two year groups in each composite class and attract additional resources which in turn will improve the educational experience for these pupils.

6.1 Composite Classes

For a quality educational experience the Sustainable Schools Policy recommends "*no more than two composite year groups in a single classroom at primary school level*". This has been identified by the Minister of Education as one of the priorities for

'Providing Pathways – A Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 (extended to 2022)': *'to address sustainability issues in primary schools with no more than two composite year groups in a single classroom.'*

Both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School operate three composite year groups in a single classroom.

The Education and Training Inspectorate also identifies difficulties in *'two composite year groups in a single classroom'*. The Chief Inspector's Report 2014-16¹ stated that it is more difficult for a teacher to ensure adequate learning progression and meet all learners' needs in composite classes spanning more than two year groups. It also suggested that such classes can limit children's opportunities for social and emotional development with peers. This was further reinforced in the Education and Training Inspectorate's Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2018² which noted that too many schools are too small to provide adequately for their pupils, particularly primary schools with more than two year groups in composite classes.

The Education Authority, in proposing an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School, will provide places for pupils ensuring access to the Northern Ireland Curriculum in a more sustainable primary school. It would mean the pupils from Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School would be taught in classes with an adequate number of peers and this will allow for improved social interaction between the pupils.

6.2 Curricular Provision

The Northern Ireland Curriculum has at its heart the development of a range of skills and personal capabilities.

The named Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities skills in the Northern Ireland Curriculum are:

- Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making
- Self-Management
- Working with Others
- Managing Information
- Being Creative.

In extremely small class groups, it is very challenging to ensure that pupils can access opportunities as outlined in CCEA guidance, for example to learn from and value other people's ideas, generate possible solutions and communicate with a sense of audience and purpose.

¹ Chief Inspector's Report 2014-2016 www.etini.gov.uk/publications/chief-inspectors-report-2014-2016

² Chief Inspector's Report 2016-2019 www.etini.gov.uk/publications/chief-inspectors-report-2016-2018

Curriculum guidance from CCEA³ highlights that self-management (or self-regulation) is important so that pupils can manage their learning in new situations and in the longer term. To do this they need to experience the different demands of working with peers and children of other age groups, working with friends and working with other people they might not know and to recognise the different ways they need to adapt to new groupings and their own feelings and achievements in the variety of contexts.

While the pupils in Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School have opportunities to work with pupils from their own and other age groups, they are limited in accessing the full range of learning opportunities. It is very difficult for pupils to develop an understanding of group dynamics without the experience of working in a range of different peer groups and different roles within those groups. In extremely small class groups, it is very challenging to ensure that pupils can access these opportunities and even then, they will be limited to a small number of children with whom to work, even when cross-age interactions are considered. Working in larger and different groups in primary school is an important foundation for some children as they progress to larger post-primary settings. This is further noted, in the Sustainable Schools Policy, which outlines that smaller numbers of children in each year group limits the opportunities for children to work alongside their peers.

The amalgamated school based on the enrolment figure for 99 pupils will have approximately 28 pupils in each class. This will allow for a range of different peer groups and additional opportunities for group tasks and roles preparing pupils as they progress to larger post-primary settings.

6.3 Extra-curricular Activities

The Sustainable Schools Policy outlines that smaller numbers of pupils in each year group offers fewer opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Access to a full range of extra-curricular activities in a smaller school may only be achieved through the members of staff taking on multiple commitments in addition to teaching composite groups during the school day. Due to the falling enrolment in the school, the Education Authority does not deem it reasonable or sustainable for the small number of staff in the school to maintain curricular and extra-curricular provision which would be equitable to those offered by larger schools.

With additional staff in the amalgamated school there will be a more sustainable spread of responsibilities which should allow for increased and sustainable extra-curricular provision.

³ Curriculum Guidance CCEA www.ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/ccea-asset/Curriculum/Thinking%20Skills%20and%20Personal%20Capabilities%20for%20Key%20Stages%201%20%26amp%3B%202.pdf

6.4 Challenges for Staff

Teaching principals, who, in addition to the administration and managerial workload, fulfil a number of other duties, lead Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School. In a larger primary school, the workload associated with responsibilities for curriculum areas such as literacy and numeracy and other co-ordinator roles such as SENCo and Shared Education would be more widely distributed amongst the staff team.

The Sustainable Schools Policy highlights that a small school will also potentially have a smaller range of teacher specialisms, for example, music. Supporting areas of learning in which there is no specialist lead in the school can place additional pressure on the teaching staff. The Education Authority is also mindful of the professional isolation some teachers experience in small schools. The Sustainable Schools Policy notes that '*Teachers in small schools also face problems of having less scope for professional interaction and mutual support.*' The Department of Education strategy Learning Leaders⁴ highlights the value of collaborative planning of learning and teaching, and stresses the importance of ensuring opportunities for professional dialogue; the Sustainable Schools Policy highlights that these opportunities are significantly reduced in small schools.

Whilst the amalgamated school will have a teaching principal, based on the enrolment figure for 99 pupils, there will be four other teachers to share workload associated with responsibilities for curriculum areas such as literacy and numeracy and other co-ordinator roles such as SENCo and Shared Education. Staff may also benefit from professional learning opportunities with other staff members, greater staff interaction, and mutual support.

6.5 Educational Provision

The Education Authority recognises the generational learning and teaching provided by both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School. However, the Education Authority has a duty to ensure that the available resources are used in an appropriate way across the whole system to ensure equitable access to high quality education for all pupils. In proposing the discontinuance of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School and the establishment of a new controlled primary school for the wider Stewartstown area the pupils will have access to high quality learning and teaching in a sustainable school. Pupils from both primary schools 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 Services.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposal is for the discontinuance of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School and to establish a new controlled primary school. The current approved enrolment of Ballytrea Primary School is 143 pupils and the approved

⁴ Learning Leaders www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/strategy-document-english.pdf

enrolment of Stewartstown Primary School is 98 pupils. An amalgamation would not require a new build and would be proposed to be situated in one of the two existing sites, a feasibility study would be required to determine which site would be more suitable and any additional accommodation requirements needed.

Finance The operating cost of one of the primary schools will be a cost saving inclusive of a saving of £51,863 small schools support factor.

Staffing The teaching staff are 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 under the Collective Agreement (JNC Circular 224). The Education Authority will meet with staff to discuss options should the Development Proposal be approved, an action plan implemented for the discontinuance of both schools and the establishment of a new school.

The staffing complement of the new school will be determined through need following the establishment of an Interim Board of Governors and appointment of a Principal (Designate). The Day One costs for Principal (Designate) will be required.

Transport Any transport arrangements will be in accordance with transport regulations.

Accommodation The running costs of one existing school building would be more cost effective than the running costs of two existing school buildings of a similar size and would generally result in a more cost effective use of resources.

A feasibility study of both sites would determine if additional accommodation would be needed on the site of the new school. Substantial capital investment will be required to provide additional accommodation and refurbish existing provision to establish the amalgamated 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 | |
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| Proposal: | Proposed Timeline |
| <p>Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.</p> <p>Discontinue Ballytrea Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).</p> <p>Discontinue Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).</p> <p>The Education Authority will seek capital investment for refurbishment/extension works for the amalgamated primary school.</p> | |
| <p>Consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents – (8 weeks period plus 2 additional weeks for Christmas holidays)</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 may request to attend the Strategic Planning and Policy Committee or the Board meeting in accordance with the Education Authority’s Standing Orders.</p> | <p>14 November 2022 – 23 January 2023</p> |
| <p>Consultation with other affected Schools (8 weeks period plus 2 additional weeks for Christmas holidays)</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> | <p>14 November 2022 – 23 January 2023</p> |

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| Strategic Planning and Policy Committee to seek Approval to Publish Case for Change to be taken to the April 2023 Education Authority's Strategic Planning and Policy Committee for consideration 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 | April 2023 |
| Statutory Objection Period (2 months) Objections/comments to be forwarded to the Department of Education | May 2023 – June 2023 |
| Await Ministerial/Department of Education Decision | September 2023 |
| Implementation If approved, the Development Proposal would take effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter | |

8.1 Implementation: Next Steps

Should the proposal receive Ministerial approval, the guidance: DE Circular 2018/15 - Guidance on Implementation of Approved Development Proposals for School Amalgamations will be applied. The first action following the approval of the Development Proposal is for the establishment of an Interim Board of Governors. The Interim Board of Governors will have equal representation from the Board of Governors of Ballytreea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School. Once established, the first action of the Interim Board of Governors will be the appointment of a Principal (Designate) who will, upon appointment, work with the Interim Board of Governors, Education Authority and Controlled Schools' Support Council to take forward the new school.

In planning for the new school, the focus will be on meeting the needs of all pupils with the Interim Board of Governors and the Principal (Designate) putting pastoral care at the forefront of planning for the new school. This will be achieved through working with the pupils and staff of the two schools working together. This is supported by the implementation time that has been built in to allow for these arrangements to be put in place.

DEVELOPMENT PROOPOSALS 710, 711 AND 712

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED DURING THE TWO-MONTH
STATUTORY OBJECTION PERIOD – 12/4/23-19/6/23
BALLYTREA PRIMARY SCHOOL AND STEWARTSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

DP 711 - Ballytrea Primary School (PS) will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

| <u>Ballytrea PS Stakeholders</u> | <u>Closure of Ballytrea PS</u> |
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| Former Member of the Board of Governors | I wish to very strongly complain and lodge my opposition to your proposal to close Ballytrea School. Ballytrea is very much a rural school in a farming area with a large catchment area. It is at the heart of the community; very much supported by parents and friends. Population in the surrounding area is growing; school numbers are increasing and forecast to continue increasing, so why propose closure? |
| Parents of Pupils | The school is situated in an area surrounded by green space; plenty of room for children to play, to enjoy and appreciate the environment around them. It is a child-safe area; a healthy environment with no pollution, no traffic constantly passing school gates and there is a car park for parents. |
| Grandparents of Pupils | Ballytrea School has a future in this area as birth rate and forecasts prove. |
| Teaching Staff | We are strongly against the closure of Ballytrea PS and are only in support of amalgamation of Ballytrea and Stewartstown PS if Ballytrea is used as the site for the new school. |
| Past Pupils | The exceptional leadership of the Principal, along with the dedication and camaraderie of the staff, contributes to a supportive and nurturing school community. |
| Other | To close this site in favour of a less well resourced one would require significant capital. |
| | It is my clear preference that this amalgamation does not go ahead and that things are left as they are for the children and their families. |
| | I was extremely alarmed when attending the first meeting regarding this plan that the EA representative who spoke to Ballytrea parents informed us that the “town school” is usually chosen, thus raising severe doubts over the impartiality of this process and suggesting that a decision has been already made. From speaking with other parents, I cannot explain how imperative the location of this school is to it having any chance of succeeding. It makes much more sense for the location to be disclosed thus giving people a chance to know exactly what they are committing to rather than dragging out the process for it to break down should it be located other than Ballytrea as many |

parents like me will only be part of this should it be at the obvious location of Ballytrea PS

Map 1 in the pre-publication consultation is a clear indicator of the widespread distribution of children at Ballytrea PS in comparison to Stewartstown PS. Ballytrea PS is accessible to all the surrounding rural area and local towns as it is situated in the middle.

Stewartstown PS drop off/pick up is just not safe and we feel that the EA has responsibility to carefully risk assess this if it is the chosen site. Huge congestion for road users and safety issues as parents park on the side of the road and open car doors onto the main road to access Stewartstown PS.

Ballytrea PS is situated on a smaller and quieter road with parking spaces at the front which allows parents to drop off safely, turn the car and exit to the main road with relative ease. Ballytrea is a much safer location.

Many of Ballytrea PS' pupils live closer to Coagh PS, which is over-subscribed.

I know I am among the many other parents who would not send their children to the new Controlled primary school if its location is at Stewartstown.

I am concerned that the EA never give our BoG any other options despite having a list of five options to help improve the school. It was support amalgamation or we will close the school. We also were refused the option to change Ballytrea to Integrated status and bring the whole community together.

I honestly think it would be unfair and against our Human Rights to proceed with this proposal at this time and would like this decision to be postponed until a more fair and completely open process can take place or until we have had a chance to improve the school.

The school has already doubled its intake in the past two years with next year also already looking better even with everything that is going on.

During Covid, Ballytrea PS was one of the few schools that remained open for key workers.

Queen's University research about Small rural Schools, the importance of these types of schools being a choice for parents. The data used in coming to this proposal is extremely outdated. Ultimately, Ballytrea is less than 10 mins drive from Stewartstown so the argument that it is too far away is not valid.

The ongoing cost to transport children from Stewartstown would surely be a lot less than the cost to purchase additional land or build additional facilities within the village.

Stewartstown already has a primary school (St Mary's) that pupils can avail of if they so wish.

Should a feasibility study be completed, and one school outweigh the other on sustainability grounds, this whole process would be much more transparent and fair.

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| | <p>I feel that given time, Ballytrea PS would be able to meet the criteria for a sustainable school, given that pupil numbers are increasing, not only in intake classes, but also parents choosing to remove their children from other local schools in favour of Ballytrea PS.</p> <p>Locate the new school at the Ballytrea site, and retain the Stewartstown building as a feeder nursery school, allowing Tiny Tots to move to a permanent building.</p> <p>It would be more beneficial for Stewartstown PS and St Mary's PS to join to become an Integrated school which there is a demand for in our area.</p> <p>The increased population or number of houses mentioned in Stewartstown village are choosing the Maintained school so this is not a reason for the school to be located in Stewartstown.</p> |
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| <p>Grandparents of Pupils</p> <p>Former Teacher</p> <p>Teaching Staff</p> <p>Parents of Pupils</p> <p>Other</p> | <p><u>Accommodation</u></p> <p>If required, Ballytrea PS has land needed for extension and also being located on a quiet roadside unlike Stewartstown, it does not have same safety concerns for pupils and traffic attending.</p> <p>The extension which was completed when I was there, made an amazing difference to the school and this means that now the building is in fantastic shape.</p> <p>Ballytrea's building is larger and more modern and could accommodate the number of children as it stands with only small modifications required - less cost than having to renovate Stewartstown premises.</p> <p>Large playground - allowing for safe outdoor playtime for the children - that space would not need reduced to allow for extension of premises. This playground can also be accessed when necessary to be used as extra parking for school events.</p> <p>The facilities afforded by Ballytrea PS are far superior to those in Stewartstown PS, including an extension which is less than 20 years old, funded at substantial expense by the EA including purpose-built Foundation Stage facilities.</p> <p>To close this site in favour of a less well-resourced one would require significant capital funding and makes no financial sense whatsoever.</p> <p>The school is set on a spacious site with very good buildings and facilities where all school activities can be catered for.</p> <p>Table 4 in the pre-publication consultation clearly shows that Ballytrea PS can accommodate Stewartstown PS pupils but Stewartstown PS cannot accommodate Ballytrea PS pupils. We imagine there would be significant expense to the EA if Stewartstown PS was to be the chosen site.</p> <p>Ballytrea is on a better site to accommodate a child who may need disabled access both outside and within the school building. There is no disability parking at Stewartstown PS.</p> |
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| <p>Parents of Pupils</p> <p>Other</p> | <p><u>Enrolment Numbers</u></p> <p>The number of children currently attending Ballytrea PS is greater than the number attending Stewartstown PS therefore a slightly smaller interruption to the number of children/families if the Ballytrea site was used.</p> <p>Wanted our child to be in small classes where each child is an individual and not just a number in a large volume of students.</p> <p>Local knowledge would suggest that more people are moving to live in the rural area, many with young families. Therefore, future growth in pupil numbers could be possible – indeed Ballytrea’s initial figures for intake in September 2023 would suggest this trend.</p> <p>Ballytrea PS has a reception class for children. This reception class provides an excellent stepping stone for pupils entering P1 the following academic year.</p> <p>Ballytrea PS has the capacity for an approved enrolment of 140 and possible admission of 20, so this is the school to keep open. The awarding of additional placements to other locally Controlled primary schools in the area by DE has had an effect on Ballytrea PS and should be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Current pupil population of both schools are mainly rural based, with most pupils in the area between the two schools and very few pupils attending either school from the village of Stewartstown.</p> |
| <p>Grandparents of Pupils</p> <p>Former BoG</p> <p>Teaching Staff</p> <p>Parents of Pupils</p> <p>Other</p> | <p><u>Curriculum & Extra-Curricular Activities</u></p> <p>The Principal makes sure that the school is a happy place and its education and sports record is to be admired and held in high esteem by entire community.</p> <p>Teaching and pastoral care are both excellent. Already extra-curricular activities are showing signs of success.</p> <p>Ballytrea is able to meet our needs in terms of morning club and after school clubs. Many extra-curricular activities offered including Ballet and Ju-Jitsu in addition to football, hockey etc. There is a wide variety of activities available with something to suit every child.</p> <p>On the pre-publication consultation the EA has made reference to Peter Weir saying that the schools must “offer extensive extracurricular activities” and at present this is possible on the site at Ballytrea and not at Stewartstown PS.</p> |
| <p>Grandparents of Pupils</p> <p>Parents of Pupils</p> | <p><u>Community</u></p> <p>We do trust Ballytrea PS will remain open considering its past and present standing in the community.</p> <p>It is very much a community school and can offer events for community activities. It has its own function hall and kitchen to cater for such events.</p> |

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| <p>Former BoG</p> <p>Teaching Staff</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Councillor Eva Cahoon – Cookstown DEA</p> | <p>The hugely negative impact that removing an authentic rural school from the Ballytrea area would have on this community. Ballytrea has strong connections to the local community and promotes a family-orientated ethos.</p> <p>I have no attachment to Stewartstown, it does not form part of my community and would not wish it to do so in the future.</p> <p>The close-knit nature of a country school promotes an inclusive and supportive environment, allowing children to develop not only academically but also socially and emotionally.</p> <p>The school is at the heart of the local community. I urge the Department to consider the objections of the community which this school serves.</p> |
| <p>Grandparents of Pupils</p> <p>Parents of Pupils</p> | <p><u>Religious Balance</u></p> <p>Stewartstown village has a declining Protestant population, approx. 25% at last census.</p> <p>We have concerns that the decision on the location may be politically based as Stewartstown is the only Protestant school in the village and feel that this is very inappropriate if Stewartstown were to be favoured for that reason.</p> |

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| <p>Teaching Staff</p> <p>Parents of Pupils</p> <p>Past Pupils</p> | <p><u>Rural</u></p> <p>I do not feel our children ‘miss out’ due to attending a smaller rural school and being taught in composite classes.</p> <p>Ballytrea PS is a perfect example of a true rural school, surrounded by fields yet is very close to the main town of Stewartstown.</p> <p>We deliberately picked a rural school for our children to attend as we have a country background - we believe rural schooling is important in developing diversity in children especially when they move forward to secondary school.</p> <p>A rural education setting should not be discounted because of size or finances and instead should be afforded greater support because of the vital role it plays in the community.</p> |
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DP 712 - Stewartstown Primary School (PS) will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

| <p><u>Stewartstown PS Stakeholders</u></p> | <p><u>Location of New School Site</u></p> |
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| <p>Member of BoG</p> | <p>My concern is the disruption the amalgamation will bring upon an already excellent school. Stewartstown PS is prominent in the village and supports the local community. Should the amalgamation go ahead, there is great concern about the “new school” site.</p> |
| <p>Parents of Pupils</p> | <p>To remove a school from Stewartstown village impacts on religious harmony in the area and potential growth and development of the village and surrounding area.</p> |
| <p>Past Pupil</p> | <p>If Stewartstown PS and Ballytrea PS are to be amalgamated I propose Stewartstown is a far more appropriate site – has the relevant infrastructure in place to allow for a sustainable school, it is big enough as it stands to provide education for 140 pupils; it is accessible to the village and its amenities, unlike Ballytrea; it is equidistant between the other two Controlled schools in the area: Donaghy PS and Coagh PS, unlike Ballytrea.</p> |
| <p>Grandparents of Pupils</p> | <p>Child mental health support must be provided especially after the upheaval of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> |
| <p>Teacher</p> | <p>The name of the new school and the need for a new school uniform – if Stewartstown PS is kept open there is no need to change any of this.</p> |
| <p>Stewartstown Harps GAA Club</p> | <p>Joint Principal/leadership would be more preferable in the event of amalgamation.</p> |
| <p>Other</p> | <p>The amalgamation, if it goes ahead MUST be at the Stewartstown PS site. However, I feel that closing Stewartstown PS is a huge mistake. Instead Stewartstown PS should be kept open with Ballytrea PS closed and its pupils encouraged to attend Stewartstown PS and benefit from all it has to offer.</p> |
| | <p>Ideally consideration should be given to closing Ballytrea PS and pupils transferring to the most suitable site – Stewartstown PS.</p> |
| | <p>If our site was to be used there would need to be some capital invested in the building. Things that might need to be done include the provision of accessible washrooms and toilets, as well as looking at providing SEN provision by the means of a unit and/or extend the school to include a nursery unit. It should be noted that the EA have already spent significant funds upgrading the heating system in Stewartstown PS and a full boiler house refurb was carried out within the last two years.</p> |
| | <p>We are located on a commuting route with parents passing through the town to get to the M1 motorway.</p> |
| | <p>It is very important that for the interim period, when the new school structure is being decided, that the existing schools are managed as they always were and in a way that will minimise disruption and stress to our pupils, teaching staff and parents. I would therefore recommend that it be considered that no</p> |

existing school be left without their existing principal to manage their school during this time and right up to the opening of the new school. Anything other than this could potentially cause immense disruption amongst the school community.

One of the benefits of a new school is the opportunity to develop new facilities for the increased number of pupils who will be attending it.

Stewartstown is the best strategic location with regard to geographic location and proximity of other schools nearby with also the preschool in Stewartstown this makes the environmental impact more viable.

The newly amalgamated school which, if located in Stewartstown, creates excellent sustainable catchment areas for all the Controlled primary schools in the local area given that Moneymore PS is 4.4 miles from Coagh, Cookstown PS is 5.5 miles from Coagh, Woods PS is 7.4 miles from Coagh and Stewartstown PS is 6.2 miles from Coagh. This ensures that going forward all the Controlled primary schools in the local area have sustainable catchment areas allowing for long-term development of these schools. Ballytrea PS is currently just over 3 miles from Coagh PS and this would certainly create issues within the catchment area when the amalgamation happens from 1st September 2025 onwards.

In terms of cost and environmental implications, an amalgamation on the existing site of Stewartstown PS would be much more beneficial because of the infrastructure that already exists in the village of Stewartstown.

Ballytrea PS was formed when local primary schools were amalgamated including Ardtrea PS and a new school was built on the current site of Ballytrea PS. Given that these primary schools were amalgamated to the site of Ballytrea PS in the past and this is now deemed unsustainable under the rationale provided by the EA, it makes little long-term sense to now amalgamate Ballytrea and Stewartstown PSs and move them to a location that has already been viewed as unsustainable.

I believe the new amalgamated school should be located on the Stewartstown Primary School site.

The location of the amalgamated school could potentially have a huge impact on us. If this new school was to be located on the current Ballytrea site, this will overlap with the catchment area with Coagh and surely in a few years we would be revisiting the same problem of unsustainable schools in this area. Therefore, we feel that the new school should be located on the Stewartstown site as the catchment areas will not overlap and the wider Mid Ulster area will have sustainable schools.

Stewartstown makes more sense for the education of children as there are many facilities in the town that could be availed of.

I feel it would be such a poor decision on EA's behalf if the new school wasn't in Stewartstown site and would very much start to

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| | <p>question the Area Planning process and decisions if they were to create a future area planning problem.</p> <p>The proposed amalgamated school should be located in the village of Stewartstown.</p> <p>Stewartstown is a mixed community which enjoys very good community relations and has several thriving inter community groups such as the Amateur Drama Society, Environmental Club and Development Association. As a club we are keen to attract members /players from both sides of the community and have supported the primary school's application for a 4G playing area.</p> <p>Stewartstown PS is the most suitable site for the new amalgamated school. It is located within the village, within walking distance of village amenities, village is on all main bus routes, the site is large enough for expansion and could easily accommodate more pupils. Stewartstown PS has the infrastructure in place for a sustainable school. Ballytrea has no amenities within walking distance, no pavements nearby and is an isolated site. There are plans passed for building additional housing within the village of Stewartstown, so it is essential that the new amalgamated school is within the village and within walking distance.</p> <p>Ballytrea PS is located on an isolated site and not accessible to any other amenities. Ballytrea site is also closer to Coagh PS and their catchment area.</p> <p>Easy access is critical for additional needs pupils and moving the school outside of the town would make this more difficult.</p> <p>DE need to explore joint leadership options for the initial period only.</p> <p>Bus routes would need amended to accommodate the new catchment area of the new school.</p> |
| <p>Parents of Pupils</p> <p>Teacher</p> <p>Former Pupils and Parents</p> | <p><u>Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities</u></p> <p>The school is achieving great results. It has been World Athletics champion on several occasions and did well in the most recent inspection proving its worth as an educational establishment despite its size. Closing the school is a very poor decision.</p> <p>The Case for Change states that by having a bigger, amalgamated school, more after school activities will be available for children. We have a different after school activity every day for our children and these are changed on a termly, sometimes half-termly, basis. I'm not sure how much more variety they can get.</p> <p>EA should look at the lands connecting Stewartstown PS and St Mary's PS and explore shared sports pitches/facilities.</p> <p>A few years ago over £13k of playground equipment installed in our playground (funded by Big Lottery NI).</p> |

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| <p>Parents of Pupils</p> <p>Past Pupil</p> <p>Member of BoG</p> <p>Stewartstown Harps GAA Club</p> <p>Teacher</p> | <p><u>Community</u></p> <p>Stewartstown PS is an important part of village life contributing to the well-being of the community, across the community. The school and the PTA run and fund events attended and enjoyed by all members of the community.</p> <p>The school brings together those from the village and wider rural area, to see the site closed would be damaging to the connections it has worked long and hard to establish.</p> <p>On an economic point there are plenty of services/shops in the village which may lose some business if the primary school is no longer open.</p> <p>All main amenities are here from the Doctor's surgery to the Post Office to the hardware shop.</p> <p>A lot of links have been established within the Stewartstown community. The PTA organised a number of cross-community events in the last year which brought children and families from different communities together and engaged the whole Stewartstown community.</p> |
| <p>Parent of Pupils</p> <p>Past Pupil</p> | <p><u>Financial Position</u></p> <p>Financially Stewartstown PS is running within its financial limitations, Ballytrea is NOT.</p> <p>Stewartstown PS is in a sound financial position.</p> |
| <p>Parent of Pupils</p> <p>Past Pupil</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Parent of Pupils at Coagh PS</p> | <p><u>Tiny Tots PreSchool</u></p> <p>Tiny Tots preschool is a cross-community preschool based on the Stewartstown PS site. Stewartstown needs nursery provision. Tiny Tots benefits from the Stewartstown PS site with the staff using the car park and the children attending the school for plays/sports day etc.</p> <p>The existing close links between Tiny Tots Playgroup in Stewartstown and a newly amalgamated school on the site of Stewartstown PS would allow many parents to do one 'drop off' in terms of having siblings at the same location and again this would reduce the environmental impact the newly amalgamated school would have. This would ensure that there is a 'pathway' for children in the local Stewartstown community to attend pre-school and then continue their educational journey together to primary school.</p> <p>Stewartstown also has a pre-school setting located very close to the school and therefore good links are and will continue to be fostered, ensuring these children feed into the new school.</p> |

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| <p>Stewartstown Harps GAA Club</p> <p>Parents of Pupil</p> | <p>We believe that if the primary school were to close that there may be a reduction in the Unionist community to the detriment of the current healthy relationships.</p> <p>To maintain the representation of Controlled education within the town and the religious balance of the area.</p> <p>The removal of a Controlled school within the village of Stewartstown would have a negative impact on the religious harmony the village is currently experiencing.</p> |
| <p>Past Pupil</p> | <p><u>Shared Education</u></p> <p>Pupils participate in shared education with Holy Family PS, Aughamullan, cross-community projects with St Mary's PS, Stewartstown.</p> |
| <p>Other</p> | <p><u>Against the Amalgamation</u></p> <p>I wish to reject the Development Proposals 710,711 and 712. The original proposal included Coagh PS but with the new Headmaster given time their numbers have increased and they are therefore not included in this proposal. Ballytrea had also asked to be granted the same amount of time but this was just shunned as it was outside the list of options that we were asked to consider.</p> <p>I would like to emphasise the point that I am against the amalgamation of Ballytrea and Stewartstown PSs.</p> |

BESPOKE RESPONSES

Principal of Stewartstown Primary School

I am the Principal of Stewartstown Primary School.

I agree with the amalgamation and will support the process to the very best of my ability.

I would like to make the following points for consideration:

For an amalgamation to work, EA and DE **must** listen to the people on the ground and act on the responses highlighted from both schools. The community will only invest and commit if they feel they are being listened to.

I strongly feel it is of vital importance to keep the provision of controlled education within the village of Stewartstown. Stewartstown has come a long way through peace and reconciliation, and the removal of the controlled school would have a detrimental effect on religious balance and harmony within the village. The community want the newly amalgamated school to be within the village, giving the villagers the right to walk to their nearest school.

The long term (20/30+ years) vision for the village of Stewartstown would be the one school within the village. One school for all, regardless of religion, race etc. EA should look at the lands connecting Stewartstown PS and St Marys PS and explore shared sports pitches / facilities - small steps towards a brighter future in generations to come. Business owners and community members have voiced their wish to have the children united from both sides of the community.

Explore joint leadership options for the initial period only. This will ensure everyone is onsite. After an agreed set period of time, appoint the new principal of the new school. If Keith (Mr Black - Principal of Ballytrea) and myself were made non-teaching principals in our own schools for the transition period, it would allow us both to continue running our own schools as well as give us time to come together and jointly form the new school. This would be less disruptive to both schools, cause minimum disruption to teaching and learning in both schools and would help bring everyone on board together. Everyone would feel fairly represented as opposed to it being one-sided. I feel this is the **only** way forward.

Please do not cut us short - secure the necessary funding for an extension and refurb as mentioned by EA and think ahead to the future - provide disabled washrooms, toilets etc. look at providing SEN provision by the means of a unit and / or extend the school to include a nursery unit.

EA have already spent significant funds upgrading the heating system in Stewartstown Primary School. A full boiler house refurb was carried out within the last 2 years.

Bus routes would need amended to accommodate the new catchment area of the new school.

Ensure the Cypres Trust Fund attached to Stewartstown Primary School continues to benefit the pupils from Stewartstown.

Removal of the controlled school from the village of Stewartstown would have a huge negative impact upon religious belief and political opinion.

The village of Stewartstown **NEEDS** the provision of a controlled school to maintain religious harmony and maintain the level of peace currently achieved.

Principal of Ballytrea Primary School

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you this evening, to outline some of my thoughts and feelings towards the development proposals being put forward.

As principal of Ballytrea PS I have both professional and personal opinions on the proposals, and I will try to outline these below.

Firstly, whilst I understand the Education Authority's need to ensure sustainable controlled provision in the Stewartstown area, I am frustrated that I have not been afforded an opportunity to show that this can occur at Ballytrea PS.

Appointed as principal in January 2020, it was the EA's intention to move forward with the plan in that spring, only for covid to put a break on the process. I find it incredible that I was allowed to be appointed in a permanent role, when the EA knew that they would be moving forward with the proposal only a few months later.

I have now been placed in a position where I may not have long-term job security and where, as a new principal, I have had to face the complexity of leading a school through a pandemic and an area planning process, occurring at the same time, in my first years.

In September 2021 the governors and I presented the EA with both a 3- and 5-year plan, where post pandemic we would aim to increase enrolment at Ballytrea. This was instantly dismissed. However, working from that plan, we have in the time since, been able to increase enrolment at the school, and in September will welcome 11 P1 pupils and 2 reception pupils. (6 new families who want to send their children to Ballytrea, despite an area planning process going on in the background) This the largest pupil intake at the school in any year since 2015/16 in the case for change document.

Our school community is fantastic and provides our children with an authentic, rural education. This is what our parents and families want. The school is the centre-hub within the community and should be supported to grow.

As principal, I do understand the need for financial sustainability, and can see how a new, larger controlled school will achieve this. However, I urge that this is balanced alongside the education and opportunities that are provided to our young people in our rural school.

It is important that the children's views and wishes are sought, and I do not believe that this can be done through the current consultation process as it is beyond their knowledge and understanding. A more child centred process should take place.

The creation of a new, controlled school in the Stewartstown area will aim to ensure sustainability moving forward, and I am of the belief both professionally and personally

that if this is to succeed, placing the school at the site of Ballytrea PS is ideal, due to the current facilities and additional space.

It is also my understanding, from speaking to our current families and other prospective parents, that if a new school is placed elsewhere, their support will not be given and many will choose to send their children elsewhere.

I appreciate that this process is long and involves a lot of thought and planning, and I thank you for your consideration of the above viewpoints.

King regards,

Keith Black
(Principal - Ballytrea PS)

Board of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School

Response of the Board of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School to the Proposal of the Education Authority regarding establishing a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS)

The Governors of Ballytrea Primary School (BPS) took the difficult decision to support the Education Authority's (EA) preferred option of establishing a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area by amalgamating Ballytrea Primary School & Stewartstown Primary School. BPS has served this community very well since its inception in 1934 (89 years). It is a true rural school with families selecting BPS as their first preference due to the rural ethos of the school and the grounds that it is positioned on.

The difficulty in supporting this proposal was not helped by the Area Planning Department of EA making comments that swayed the location of this new school being placed within a village (Stewartstown), with very little chance of BPS site been given the necessary consideration as a viable location. We felt before the pre-consultation process, the location of the new school was weighted heavily against BPS before a fair process was even started. We found this very frustrating as we know BPS site has a lot to offer above the current Stewartstown Primary School site, we feel this will be evident on a feasibility study that will hopefully follow. It is important that we outline at this stage that we feel that the new school should be located on the current BPS site.

As part of the pre consultation process it was felt by the Governors of BPS that the Principal, Mr K Black should have been given time to implement his 5-year strategic plan that was presented to the EA in June 2022, this outlined plans on how enrolment would increase to the sustainable level. However, this opportunity was dismissed by the EA immediately. In September 2023, P1 will have 11 pupils starting, this is the highest intake for a P1 since pre 2015-2016 (evident in the Case for Change document). Trends are changing in this school and demonstrates that the Leadership of Mr K Black and the Teaching staff are attracting more families again to this school even with a low birth rate as outlined in census information.

It is also important to highlight that BPS has been approved for 143 pupils, this demonstrates that the site of BPS could manage the pupil numbers of both schools without expanding the building at all and no requirement of capital investment from the Department of Education. According to the case for change document Stewartstown Primary School is only approved for 98 pupils, this does ask significant questions on how Stewartstown Primary School could accommodate combined pupil numbers without significant capital investment of a dated building and very limited space.

It is important to acknowledge the quality of the building & grounds that BPS is set upon, the overall site is approximately 5325m². We have approximately 2736m² for outdoor playground space. Whilst there is always general maintenance required in any school the quality of the building is very good, the layout and facilities available for the pupils inside and outside is much better than many schools. If required in the years to

come there is adequate space to expand the school without reducing the space that children currently use.

Traffic is managed very well due to the layout of the car park, parents/carers can drop their children off within the school grounds and away from the risk of busy roads or fast-moving vehicles. The main Coagh- Stewartstown Road is a very busy road that commuters use to access the motorway; the position of BPS (off this road) allows for a much safer situation for everyone concerned.

As Governors we have agonised over this proposal, we would love to keep BPS as is and continue to increase pupil intake through the great work of the Principal and the staff. However, we have come to accept the need to amalgamate two schools to protect controlled provision within this area. We want to emphasise the need for this new school to be based on the current site of BPS due to all the reasons given above.

Kind regards,

Keith Black
(Secretary - Ballytrea PS BoG)

Principal of Craigavon Senior High School and Board of Governor of Ballytrea PS

To whom this may concern,

As a Governor of Ballytrea Primary School I would like to offer a response to the Development Proposal 710.

It was a difficult decision to accept the EAs preferred option of amalgamation between Ballytrea & Stewartstown Primary Schools. However, to protect controlled provision in this area we understood the rational.

I do want to highlight my desire that the 'new school' is based on the current Ballytrea site. This is an excellent building & set on a large site, this leaves plenty of space for pupils to experience learning outside the classroom whilst also use it for play time. The school has been approved for 143 pupils, this means the school is ready to accept all pupils as soon as the decision maker takes the decision. No capital investment is required, this is significant especially in the current climate. Stewartstown Primary is approved for 98 pupils, it is an aging building with limited outdoor space for expansion. If the 'new school' was based on the Stewartstown site it would require significant capital investment, again, a real challenge in the current climate.

I travel past both schools on my way to work in Portadown, I would have significant worries if an increase of parents/carers had to access Stewartstown Primary School, currently traffic causes significant congestion in Stewartstown. I witness parents/carers & pupils parked on the side of the road whilst they access the school. I also witness other road users becoming very frustrated with the traffic in this area. To increase the traffic using this site will result in even more traffic & safety concerns. To address this concern would result in possible capital investment & the reduction of a very small site that the school is situated on.

Thank you for considering my response.

Ruth Harkness



Ms RM Harkness | Principal

CRAIGAVON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL | 26 – 34 Lurgan Road | Portadown | BT63 5HJ | 028 3835 2222

Parent of Pupils at Stewartstown PS

Area Planning and Policy Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor
BT19 7PR

Dear Sir/Madam

**I am writing in response to the public consultation to:
“Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area”.**

I am writing this letter from the viewpoint of a parent of pupils at Stewartstown Primary School and XX XXXXX as a former pupil of Stewartstown Primary School.

We are in agreement to an amalgamation with Ballytrea Primary School if this is the only way forward to ensure our children will be given the best opportunity's possible in their education in the coming years. I think the bar is currently set very high for it to be exceeded as we are more than happy with the education and opportunity's our children are currently being given at Stewartstown PS. If an amalgamation is to go ahead it is of the **UP MOST IMPORTANCE** that the chosen site to use for the amalgamation is that of Stewartstown Primary school in the heart of the village of Stewartstown. Reasons why a controlled school needs to stay in the village are as follows:

- Controlled Primary provision is **NEEDED** in the village of Stewartstown. This will help to keep religious harmony and balance in the area. Not having controlled provision will mean that those not practising the Catholic faith – not just Protestants will feel further isolated and rejected in their own area.
- Close to all local amenities – Shop, Health Centre, Post Office and other businesses such as butchers, hardware merchant which are all used for learning opportunities.
- A school in the village is easily accessible by both foot and vehicles. Footpaths are in place to keep pupils safe. The school is on a main bus route with thousands of commuters passing daily to access the M1 with potential for new pupils. A car park is available for vehicles to park in, making it safe to enter and leave the premises.
- Plenty of lighting around the school with the added bonus of lights in the Village making it safer in dark evenings during winter.
- The grounds at Stewartstown PS are suitable for expansion to the school with room for modular classrooms if needed.
- In recent years £13,000 worth of playground equipment has been installed which the children love. It would be a shame to let this go to waste in the current financial situation facing new build schools.

- Stewartstown has had some new businesses opening in the last couple of years with the Tasting Rooms and Old Bank Café which is encouraging more families to visit the area and maybe encourage relocating to the area. Planning was passed for up to 200 houses to the rear of Stewartstown PS so there is potential to further increase numbers in the coming years.
- The school is used by the whole community out of teaching hours. Keep Fit and Pilates classes are held weekly. This is so important to those who are isolated and to keep balance with mental health. Those who attend would greatly miss the facilities to be able to attend these classes. The school is also used for Voting at elections. Where would voting take place at then if Stewartstown PS were to close? The health centre also uses the school for parking at times where there are large numbers attending at once for vaccine clinics. Where is an alternative safe parking place for these elderly and vulnerable people?
- Tiny Tots Nursery have access to their building via Stewartstown PS carpark. IF SPS is closed what happens to the access point?
- Stewartstown does not need another building lying vacant to be open to vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- Taking the school out of the village is like taking part of the village away!

All the above are just some of the reasons why a controlled school is needed in the village of Stewartstown.

The staff at Stewartstown PS have been there for a long number of years – some even there while XX XXXXXX attended. This shows they are all happy in their jobs and there has been no long spells of sickness by staff. Stewartstown PS have a strong PTA group chaired XXXXXX this year running different fundraising events throughout the year raising £2357.57 to date with one more fundraiser to go in June. Staff and parents work well together. Stewartstown PS have made the news in recent years by winning the Athletics World Championship which is some achievement for a small school in Co Tyrone to compete with schools on the other side of the world. I think smaller numbers in school excel the learning experience.

Ballytrea Primary School is not close to any local amenities and is out in the middle of the countryside. It was already amalgamated a number of years ago and from hear say has had long spells of sickness by staff. It is also very close to the catchment area of Coagh Primary school. There are no pavements or lighting to ensure safety for pupils and parents. Stewartstown PS is the obvious choice!

If this proposed amalgamation is to go ahead:

- Given recent news reports has the department of education any money to extend the chosen site?
- Will the extended building be up to standard and be forward thinking e.g. disabled access, toilets for those for additional needs?
- Will the amalgamation be smooth for all the children and no disruption to their learning e.g. pupils at the chosen site being taught in the middle of a busy and noisy building site?
- Will a new bus route be established to take all pupils to the chosen site? At present it is very hard to get any amendments made to the current bus route!

- How will the pupils be brought together successfully and gel before joining together permanently? Will any external help such a councillor/child physiologist be brought in to ensure the transition is smooth and successful?
- Will the car parking facilities be increased at Stewartstown Primary school should it be chosen to accommodate the increased volume of traffic?
- What will happen to the building not chosen? Will it be left to lie derelict and become an eyesore?
- The amalgamation will see the teacher/child ratio reduced how is this improving the education of our children?
- Would a joint Principal not be a better option rather than a Principal designate? The Principal not chosen will be feeling very demoralised and may not give their all in the interim period until the amalgamation takes place.
- Will all staff be given posts elsewhere and not loose employment after amalgamation?

These are just some concerns we have and wonder how much thought has been given to these points if any at all.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO DO THE JOB DO IT RIGHT AT THE TIME. NO SECOND BEST. THINK IT THROUGH!

Please if you are going to take action then do it sooner rather than later rather than going through the motions and nothing happening. A threat of closure has been hanging over Stewartstown Primary school since XXXXXXXXXXXXX and probably long before that. It has no doubt impacted on why the school has low numbers and people sent their children elsewhere thinking that it would close but we are still here and going strong. Recent local front page press reports regarding this amalgamation have probably already influenced those parents in the local area with children due to start school 2024/25, 2025/26. The numbers will not increase if this is always looming overhead.

A decision and action need to happen - please make it that if the amalgamation takes place that the chosen site is Stewartstown Primary School. It is the most sensible option.

Yours faithfully

Board of Governors of Coagh PS

Coagh Primary School

31 Urbal Road
Coagh
Co Tyrone
BT80 0DW

Tel: 028 867 37676

Email: ibayne452@c2kni.net

Website: www.coaghprimaryschool.com

Principal: Mr I Bayne B.Ed.(Hons), PQH (NI)



Response to Public Consultation on A new Controlled Primary School will be established in the Stewartstown area with effect from 1st September 2025 (June 2023)- Development Proposal Number 710

As the Board of Governors at Coagh Primary School we understand the rationale and need for Area Planning across Northern Ireland and have liaised with all the relevant authorities during the Area Planning process since being mentioned in the Providing Pathways Strategic Area Plan published by the Education Authority on 17th June 2019 which also included Ballytra Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School.

We understand the focus of Area Planning is to raise standards through a network of viable and sustainable schools that are of the right type, the right size and located in the right place.

We welcome the proposal for an amalgamation of Ballytra Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School because we believe it will consolidate primary school provision in the Stewartstown area for the long-term future, but we have the following concerns which we would like to highlight at this stage in the consultation process.

With regards to the location of the newly amalgamated school we would have major concerns that the focus and benefits of Area Planning could be very short term in the local area. One of the key aims is to have a network of viable and sustainable schools in the right location. As a Board of Governors, we at Coagh Primary School firmly believe that to achieve this aim the location of the newly amalgamated school must be at the existing site of Stewartstown Primary School.

A newly amalgamated school on the existing site of Stewartstown Primary School will consolidate and strengthen school provision in the area for the long term as it creates sustainable primary schools in Stewartstown and Coagh that have catchment areas that don't overlap and are sustainable even with fluctuations in population. If the newly amalgamated school was to be located at the existing site of Ballytra Primary School, then the catchment area would significantly overlap with the catchment area of Coagh Primary School. This means that the aim of area planning to create sustainable schools would fail from the outset because over the course of a few years there would be pupil migration from Coagh Primary School's catchment area to a potentially larger and more modern school at the current site of Ballytra Primary School. This would lead to a sustainability issue for Coagh Primary School which would the need to be addressed by Area Planning again at Education Authority.

The newly amalgamated school which, if located in Stewartstown, creates excellent sustainable catchment areas for all the Controlled Primary Schools in the local area given that Moneymore Primary is 4.4 miles from Coagh, Cookstown Primary School is 5.5 miles from Coagh, Woods primary School is 7.4 miles from Coagh and Stewartstown Primary School is 6.2 miles from Coagh. This ensures that going forward all the Controlled Primary Schools in the local area have sustainable catchment areas allowing for long-term development of these schools. Ballytra Primary School is currently just over 3 miles from Coagh Primary School and this would certainly create issues within the catchment area when the amalgamation happens from 1st September 2025 onwards.

In terms of cost and environmental implications, an amalgamation on the existing site of Stewartstown Primary School would be much more beneficial because of the infrastructure that already exists in the village of Stewartstown. As a school within a large village, there would be a greater number of pupils who could walk to school rather than the need for them to be transported by Education Authority buses to the site at Ballytrea Primary School which has no infrastructure outside of the school grounds in terms of allowing pupils to walk or cycle to school. All the pupils who currently attend Ballytrea Primary School require either transport by car or bus because of the location of the school. A newly amalgamated school on the site of Stewartstown Primary School wouldn't increase this as the pupils from Ballytrea Primary School already travel by car and bus whereas many pupils at Stewartstown Primary School are able to walk or cycle to school based on the location of the school within the village.

Ballytrea Primary School was formed when local primary schools were amalgamated including Ardrea Primary School and a new school was built on the current site of Ballytrea Primary School. Given that primary schools were amalgamated to the site of Ballytrea Primary School in the past and this is now deemed unsustainable under the rationale provided by the Education Authority, it makes little long-term sense to now amalgamate Ballytrea and Stewartstown Primary Schools and move them to a location that has already been viewed as unsustainable.

The existing close links between Tiny Tots Playgroup in Stewartstown and a newly amalgamated school on the site of Stewartstown Primary school would allow many parents to do one 'drop off' in terms of having siblings at the same location and again this would reduce the environmental impact the newly amalgamated school would have. This would ensure that there is a 'pathway' for children in the local Stewartstown community to attend pre-school and then continue their educational journey together to primary school.

Yours sincerely,



Mr I. Bayne
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Coagh Primary School
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16 June 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Development Proposal 710 – New Controlled Primary School, 711 - Ballytrea Primary School and 712 - Stewartstown Primary School

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) notes the Education Authority's publication of the following Development Proposals:

Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

Discontinue Ballytrea Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).

Discontinue Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).

CSSC welcomes the opportunity to respond and has consulted with Ballytrea Primary School, Stewartstown Primary School and other controlled primary schools in the area. CSSC notes that the proposals are the outcome of two years discussion with the Board of Governors of Ballytrea Primary School and the Board of Governors of Stewartstown Primary School.

CSSC notes that current enrolments at both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School fall short of the Policy for Sustainable Schools' minimum enrolment threshold for a rural school. CSSC acknowledges that the Education Authority's proposal, which will effectively amalgamate Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School, supports the priorities for area planning as outlined in the Ministerial statement on 9 August 2021.

CSSC is also mindful that the proposals align with the Department of Education's Policy for Sustainable Schools, 2009, which states that, "Amalgamations may provide an effective means of addressing the educational and financial sustainability issues facing smaller schools".

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CSSC recognises that the proposal should contribute to maintaining sustainable controlled education provision within this rural area and it is within this context that CSSC supports the Development Proposals.

CSSC is aware of the responses received during pre-publication consultation and notes that many of these articulated concerns regarding the location of the new school. CSSC notes that if these proposals are approved a feasibility study will be undertaken to determine at which of the current school sites the amalgamated school will be located. CSSC is aware that both schools have strong links with their local communities and emphasises the need for the views of both school communities to be considered within the feasibility study. It is vitally important that there is transparency in these processes to provide assurances to all stakeholders.

CSSC notes the requirement for substantial capital investment to provide appropriate accommodation for the new school. If the proposals are approved, CSSC would emphasise the importance of aligning this development work with the establishment of the new school.

CSSC will continue to provide ongoing support to both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Baker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Baker
Chief Executive

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT: BALLYTREA PS

Criterion 1: Quality Educational Experience

1. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Ballytrea PS in March 2012 and, although this evidence is now very dated, assessed the quality of education provided by the school as good and reported that *'The school is meeting effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement'*.
2. The report states *'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. In addition, the negative impact of the enrolment of reception children throughout the year on the children, the staff and the funded provision from which the children are drawn needs to be reviewed'*.

Composite Classes

3. Census data set out in Table 1 below show that Ballytrea PS operates three composite classes in 2023/24 – two classes with two year groups and one class with three year groups.

Table 1: Ballytrea PS – Composite classes 2023/24

| Year Group | P1 | P2 | | P3 | P4 | | P5 | P6 | P7 |
|------------|----|----|--|----|----|--|----|----|----|
| Pupils | 10 | 6 | | 7 | 9 | | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Total | 16 | | | 16 | | | 20 | | |

Source: Census data

4. The Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) states that there should be no more than two composite year groups in a single classroom at primary school level.

Teaching Staff

5. In 2022/23, Ballytrea PS had 3.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers including a teaching Principal. The SSP recommends a minimum of four teachers at primary school level.

Curricular and Extra-Curricular Provision

6. The Inspection Report of March 2012, although now very dated, notes a group of the Year 6 children talked with pride about their school and in particular about their enjoyment of learning, music, sports and extra-curricular activities and the

opportunities to express their ideas through involvement in the ECO council and circle time.

7. The ETI update of 26 April 2023 asserts that children at Ballytrea have access to a wide range of extra-curricular learning experiences, including opportunities to participate in sporting and arts activities/competitions.
8. The CfC states *'While the pupils in Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School have opportunities to work with pupils from their own and other age groups, they are limited in accessing the full range of learning opportunities. It is very difficult for pupils to develop an understanding of group dynamics without the experience of working in a range of different peer groups and different roles within those groups. In extremely small class groups, it is very challenging to ensure that pupils can access these opportunities and even then, they will be limited to a small number of children with whom to work, even when cross-age interactions are considered. Working in larger and different groups in primary school is an important foundation for some children as they progress to larger post-primary settings'*.
9. The CfC asserts that *'Due to the falling enrolment in the school, the Education Authority does not deem it reasonable or sustainable for the small number of staff in the school to maintain curricular and extra-curricular provision which would be equitable to those offered by larger schools'*.
10. The ETI update of 26 April 2023 states *'Children may benefit from access to a larger number of teaching and support staff. The pooling of staff experience and expertise has the potential to enhance the curriculum and extra-curricular activities provided for the children'*.

Pastoral Care

11. The ETI Inspection Report of March 2012 reported that the quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is 'very good'.
12. Pastoral care was raised during the pre-publication consultation that the needs of pupils should be met in an amalgamated school. The CfC asserts that *'In planning for the new school, the focus will be on meeting the needs of all pupils and staff with the Interim Board of Governors and the Principal (Designate) putting pastoral care at the forefront of planning for the new school. This will be achieved through the pupils and staff of the two schools working together and in partnership with the Education Authority'*.

Criterion 2: Stable Enrolment Trends

13. Ballytrea PS has approved admissions and enrolment numbers of 20 and 143 respectively. Chart 1 in the submission sets out the school's total actual enrolment for the last five years. It shows that historically the school has been significantly under-subscribed. Enrolments have been steadily declining from 59 pupils in 2019/20 to 52 pupils in 2023/24.

14. The school's enrolment is significantly below its approved enrolment number and significantly below the recommended minimum enrolment threshold of 105 for a sustainable rural primary school, as set out in the SSP.

Reception Class

15. Ballytrea PS operates a Reception class and Table 2 below shows that from 2020/21-2023/24 there were only * reception pupils admitted during this period. However, data at the conclusion of the admissions process for 2024/25, show that the school accepted eight applications for its Reception class which is a significant increase from previous years' intakes.

Table 2 – Ballytrea PS – Reception Class

| 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 0 | * | * | 0 | 8 |

First and Total Preference Applications

16. Table 3 below sets out the First and Total Preference applications to Ballytrea PS for Year 1. Applications have not increased beyond eight pupils from 2020/21 to 2023/24. However, EA data at the conclusion of the primary admissions process for 2024/25 show that the school received 12 first preference applications and a total of 23 applications. The school accepted 12 applications.

Table 3 – Ballytrea PS – First and Total Preferences for Year 1

| Year | First Preference Applications | Total Applications (all preferences) | Total Accepted* |
|---------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2020/21 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| 2021/22 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| 2022/23 | * | * | # |
| 2023/24 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 2024/25 | 12 | 23 | 12 |

*Excludes stated pupils and those admitted by appeal

17. Ballytrea PS' Year 1 admissions have been substantially and consistently below the school's approved admissions number of 20.

Criterion 3: Sound Financial Position

18. The school's provisional Deficit position as of 31 March 2024 is (£167,445).
19. The school's Deficit in the previous year, up to 31 March 2023 was (£93,614).

20. The school received a total delegated budget of £242,599 in the 2024-25 financial year for 52⁵ FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of £4,665. The average for all primary schools is £3,492.
21. The total Free School Meals Entitlement for the school is 9⁵ pupils, which represents 17.31% of the total FTE, which places the school in Band 1 for funding purposes.
22. The school received £51,829 for Small Schools Support funding, which represents 100% of the maximum funding for this factor, within the Nursery & Primary funding stream.
23. The school also received £16,420 in respect of Primary Principals' Release Time.
24. The CfC includes an extract of Ballytrea PS' financial history from 2015/16-2021/22 and shows that the school has been continuously in a deficit position. The CfC asserts that the school's Financial Plan 2020/2023 shows that Ballytrea PS is projected to have a deficit of **-£124,139** at the end of 2022/23 and confirms that the school currently does not operate within its in-year budget.
25. As shown at para 19 above, the school's deficit position was lower (**£93,614**) than was projected for 2022/23. However, provisional data for 2023/24 forecasts a substantial increase in the school's deficit to **-£167,445**. Ballytrea PS' enrolment continues to be significantly below the SSP threshold. Chart 1 in the submission shows that there is little sign of the school significantly increasing its numbers and this will only continue to further exacerbate the school's deficit position.
26. For 2023/24, Ballytrea PS' deficit was 72% which is significantly above the +/- 5% range or £75,000 for surpluses/deficits, as stipulated by the Department in LMS guidance.

Criterion 4: Strong Leadership and Management

27. Based on evidence at the time of the ETI inspection in March 2012, the report states the quality of leadership and management is 'good'. The Principal is committed to the life and work of the school and has worked diligently to promote the school in the neighbouring and wider community including forging important links with primary and post-primary schools both locally and, through the Dissolving Boundaries initiative, wider afield.
28. The CfC notes that due to the long-term absence of the previous Principal, support was provided by EA officers during 2017-2018 academic year and the school was led by a number of seconded Principals.

⁵ The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2023 census data was used to determine the 2024-25 CFF allocation). The census data on the Schools+ database relates to an academic year, as opposed to the financial year. In addition, differences between funded pupils and total pupils within the census count may occur for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, zero rated pupils, some reception pupils, and over age pupils (paragraph 7 of Annex B to the Common Funding Scheme refers).

29. The ETI update of 26 April 2023 states Ballytrea PS has a teaching Principal who has been in post since December 2019.

Criterion 5: Accessibility

30. Map 1 in the submission illustrates the locations of the pupils attending Ballytrea PS in 2023/24. The map confirms that the majority of Ballytrea PS' pupils live within a five-mile radius of the school.
31. The SSP includes guidance on the maximum travel times recommended for primary school pupils of 30 minutes for a single journey, i.e. one hour per day in total. Map 3 confirms that almost all pupils live within ten minutes travel time from Ballytrea PS therefore, the school is accessible to its pupils within the guidance stipulated in the SSP.
32. Map 1 illustrates that there are four alternative Controlled and one Integrated primary school within a five-mile mapping radius of Ballytrea PS, i.e. Stewartstown PS, Coagh PS, Cookstown PS, Donaghey PS and Phoenix Integrated PS. The map shows that some pupils bypass their nearest primary provision to attend Ballytrea PS.
33. Map 3 illustrates that all the pupils live within 30 minutes' travel time to their nearest alternative Controlled primary provision and journey times to these schools are within the SSP guidance should Ballytrea PS discontinue.
34. The CfC states that Ballytrea PS can be accessed by car and bus; the majority of pupils attending the schools are from the local area and asserts that Stewartstown PS takes pupils from a similar rural area which is clearly evidenced in Maps 5 and 6 in particular.

Criterion 6: Strong Links with the Community

35. The CfC asserts that Ballytrea PS plays an active role in the local community and includes information on various events to which members of the community are invited and that it offers its facilities for use by various organisations.
36. The CfC states that as part of its community involvement, Ballytrea PS works closely with local councillors and businesses, with different representatives coming in to work with the pupils on different curriculum areas such as a KS2 Dragons Den event, as well as helping the school with various sponsorship and grant opportunities.
37. The ETI inspection report of March 2012 states the school makes good use of a broad range of visits and visitors to the school to enhance the children's learning experiences and has developed many useful links and partnerships within the community.

38. The ETI update of 26 April 2023 confirms Ballytrea PS has links with local businesses, Churches and community groups and has an active and supportive Parent/Teacher Association (PTA).
39. Responses received during the statutory objection period reiterate that Ballytrea PS has strong connections to the local community and it is very much a community school and can offer events for community activities. Councillor Eva Cahoon commented that *'The school is at the heart of the local community'*.

Sustainability Summary

40. Although very dated, evidence shows that the quality of education provided by Ballytrea PS was assessed by the ETI in March 2012 as 'good' and that *'The school is meeting effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement'*. The school operates with three composite classes; two classes with two year groups and one class with three year groups. The SSP states that there should be no more than two composite year groups in a single classroom at primary school level. The school employs 3.2 full-time equivalent teachers which includes a teaching Principal and is below the recommended four teachers for a primary school, as set out in the SSP.
41. Ballytrea PS is not meeting the SSP minimum enrolment requirements having historically low admissions and enrolment numbers, which have declined from 59 pupils in 2019/20 to 52 pupils in 2023/24. However, for 2024/25 the school has accepted eight applications to its Reception class. Although this is a considerable increase, one year cannot be taken in isolation as evidence of demand for future years and there is no guarantee that all children will continue their education into P1 at Ballytrea PS. The school is operating in a continuing financial deficit position. The CfC confirms that the school currently does not operate within its in-year budget. The school's provisional deficit for 2023/24 (-£167,445) exceeds the +/-5% (72%) or £75k range for deficits as stipulated by the Department in LMS guidance.
42. There is no up-to-date information evidencing the strength of leadership and management at the school and there are no apparent sustainability issues in relation to links with the local community. The school is accessible to all of its pupils; however, there are other alternative primary schools within a five-mile mapping radius that are accessible with available places that the pupils at Ballytrea PS could attend if the school was to discontinue. However, Coagh PS, the nearest alternative at 3.5 miles, had no available places in 2023/24. EA data for 2024/25 show two available places at the end of the primary admissions process.
43. The ETI Inspection Report of March 2012 states *'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. In addition, the negative impact of the enrolment of reception children throughout the year on the children, the staff and the funded provision from which the*

children are drawn needs to be reviewed'. There is no demonstrable evidence showing that such a plan was developed and put in place to address and recover the sustainability issues that have existed at the school.

44. In conclusion, Ballytrea PS is currently not meeting the sustainability criteria in full in relation to Quality of Education, i.e. composite classes and staff numbers, Stable Enrolment Trends and Sound Financial Position. Although Reception numbers have significantly increased for 2024/25, there is no guarantee that this trend will continue and that the children will transition into P1 at Ballytrea PS. Declining enrolment numbers has put pressure on the school's financial resources and the evidence points to an unsustainable provision with little prospect of sustainability being achieved in the future.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT: STEWARTSTOWN PS**Criterion 1: Quality Educational Experience**

45. The ETI carried out an inspection of Stewartstown PS in September 2016 and, although this evidence is now dated, assessed the overall effectiveness of achievements and standards as 'very good' and concluded '*Stewartstown PS demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. There is an area for improvement that the school has demonstrated the capacity to address, i.e. to develop further the role of the co-ordinator in order to assess, monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of the children's learning experiences*'. In September 2019, the ETI attempted to carry out a Sustaining Improvement Inspection of the school but this was hampered by industrial action; and therefore there is no up to date inspection evidence that demonstrates the quality of the educational experience at this school.

Composite Classes

46. Census data set out in Table 4 below show that Stewartstown PS operates with three composite classes in 2023/24 – two classes with two year groups and one class with three year groups.

Table 4 - Stewartstown PS – Composite classes 2023/24

| Year Group | P1 | P2 | | P3 | P4 | | P5 | P6 | P7 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Pupils | 9 | 5 | | 9 | 12 | | 7 | 11 | * |
| Total | 14 | | | 21 | | | # | | |

Source: Census data

47. The SSP states that there should be no more than two composite year groups in a single classroom at primary school level.

Teaching Staff

48. In 2022/23, Stewartstown had 3.40 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers including a teaching Principal. The SSP recommends a minimum of four teachers at primary school level.

Curricular and Extra-Curricular Provision

49. The September 2016 Inspection Report, although dated, states '*In the best practice, in a majority of classes, the planning takes account of the children's interests and needs and connects and builds on prior learning across the*

curriculum'. The Report adds *'The whole-school programme is comprehensive, ensures a broad and balanced coverage of all areas of the mathematics curriculum and provides for progression in the children's learning'*.

50. The September 2019 Action Short of Strike ETI Report notes in its Key Findings that *'A group of year 6 and 7 children spoke positively about their learning across the curriculum; they highlighted their enjoyment of literacy, numeracy, art and physical education'*.
51. The CfC states *'While the pupils in Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School have opportunities to work with pupils from their own and other age groups, they are limited in accessing the full range of learning opportunities. It is very difficult for pupils to develop an understanding of group dynamics without the experience of working in a range of different peer groups and different roles within those groups. In extremely small class groups, it is very challenging to ensure that pupils can access these opportunities and even then, they will be limited to a small number of children with whom to work, even when cross-age interactions are considered. Working in larger and different groups in primary school is an important foundation for some children as they progress to larger post-primary settings'*.
52. The CfC states *'Due to the falling enrolment in the school, the Education Authority does not deem it reasonable or sustainable for the small number of staff in the school to maintain curricular and extra-curricular provision which would be equitable to those offered by larger schools'*.
53. The ETI update of 26 April 2023 states *'Children may benefit from access to a larger number of teaching and support staff. The pooling of staff experience and expertise has the potential to enhance the curriculum and extra-curricular activities provided for the children'*.

Pastoral Care

54. The ETI Inspection Report of September 2016 reported that the *'The quality of the pastoral care provision is very good exemplified in the personal development programmes, and the supportive and caring environment for the children'*.
55. The September 2019 Action Short of Strike Report states that the school provided evidence of arrangements for safeguarding children and added that the children report that they feel safe in the school and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being. Nevertheless, the Report added that *'owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school'*. The ETI has clarified that the inspection did not identify aspects of safeguarding/child protection to be followed up, but the lack of lesson observation and limited engagement meant that ETI was unable to evaluate the provision fully.

Criterion 2: Stable Enrolment Trends

56. Stewartstown PS has approved admissions and enrolment numbers of 14 and 98 respectively. Chart 2 in the submission sets out the school's total actual enrolment for the last five years. The chart shows that the school's enrolment (57) is significantly below its approved enrolment number and significantly below the recommended minimum threshold of 105 for a sustainable rural primary school, as set out in the SSP.
57. Table 5 below sets out the First and Total Preference applications to Stewartstown PS for Year 1. In the last five years, the school received between one and 13 first preference applications to Year 1. EA data at the conclusion of the primary admissions process for 2024/25 show the school received one first preference application and a total of 19 applications, however, only * application was accepted.
58. **Table 5 – Stewartstown PS – First and Total Preferences for Year 1**

| Year | First Preference Applications | Total Applications (all preferences) | Total Accepted* |
|---------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2020/21 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| 2021/22 | 7 | * | # |
| 2022/23 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 2023/24 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| 2024/25 | * | 18 | # |

*Excludes statemented pupils and those admitted by appeal

59. Stewartstown PS' Year 1 admissions have been consistently below the school's approved admissions number of 14.

Criterion 3: Sound Financial Position

60. The school's provisional Deficit position as of 31 March 2024 is (£23,461).
61. The school's Surplus in the previous year, up to 31 March 2023 was £25,585.
62. The school received a total delegated budget of £259,287 in the 2024-25 financial year for 57⁶ FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of £4,549. The average for all primary schools is £3,492.
63. The total Free School Meals Entitlement for the school is 10⁶ pupils, which represents 17.54% of the total FTE, which places the school in Band 1 for funding purposes.

⁶ The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2023 census data was used to determine the 2024-25 CFF allocation). The census data on the Schools+ database relates to an academic year, as opposed to the financial year. In addition, differences between funded pupils and total pupils within the census count may occur for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, zero rated pupils, some reception pupils, and over age pupils (paragraph 7 of Annex B to the Common Funding Scheme refers).

64. The school received £51,829 for Small Schools Support funding, which represents 100% of the maximum funding for this factor, within the Nursery & Primary funding stream.
65. The school also received £16,420 in respect of Primary Principals' Release Time.
66. The CfC includes an extract of Stewartstown PS' financial history from 2015/16-2021/22 and shows that the school has been in a surplus position from 2017/18 to 2021/22. However, the CfC asserts the school is projected to have a deficit of **-£12,455** by the end of the financial year 2022/23. This was not the case as the evidence above shows that Stewartstown PS was in a surplus position of £25,585 at the end of the 2022/23 financial year. However, for 2023/24 it is projected that Stewartstown PS will be in a deficit position of **-£23,461**.
67. Comments received during the two-month statutory objection period included: *'Financially Stewartstown PS is running within its financial limitations, Ballytreea is NOT'*.

Criterion 4: Strong Leadership and Management

68. The ETI Inspection report of September 2016, although dated, assessed the Leadership and Management as 'Good'. The report states that based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
69. The CfC includes an extract from the ETI report, i.e. *'The leadership and management team is recently established and has begun to identify areas for improvement with a clear focus on improving further the quality of the children's learning experiences and raising standards'*.

Criterion 5: Accessibility

70. Map 2 in the submission illustrates the locations of the pupils currently attending Stewartstown PS in 2023/24. The map confirms that almost all Stewartstown PS' pupils live within a five-mile radius of the school.
71. The Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) includes guidance on the maximum travel times recommended for primary school pupils of 30 minutes for a single journey, i.e. one hour per day in total. Map 4 confirms that all pupils live within 20 minutes travel time from Stewartstown PS therefore the school is accessible to its pupils within the guidance stipulated in the SSP.
72. Map 2 illustrates that there are four alternative Controlled primary schools within a five-mile mapping radius of Stewartstown PS, i.e. Ballytreea PS, Donaghey PS, Newmills PS and The Bush PS. The map shows that some pupils bypass their nearest primary provision to attend Stewartstown PS.
73. Map 4 illustrates that all the pupils also live within 30 minutes' travel time to their nearest alternative Controlled primary provision and journey times to these schools are within the SSP guidance should Stewartstown PS discontinue.

74. The CfC states Stewartstown PS can be accessed by car and bus; the majority of pupils attending the school are from the local area.

Criterion 6: Strong Links with the Community

75. The ETI Inspection report of September 2016 states the staff and governors are proactive in linking with business in the community to enrich the children's learning.

76. The CfC states Stewartstown PS plays a pivotal role within the community and is regularly invited to community events. Both the Principal and the Chair of the BoG are representatives for the school at the Stewartstown Development Association meetings, assisting and helping where possible. The school works alongside local businesses, promoting their business through sponsorship opportunities.

77. The CfC states the school has a very active Parents Teacher Association (PTA) who organise many events. The school is used as a community hub and local churches are involved in the life of the school with many assemblies led by local ministers taking place. Other Christian groups such as CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship) help lead assemblies and deliver afterschool clubs for the pupils.

78. The CfC states Stewartstown PS has strong links with other schools in the local area, including its Shared Education partner school, Holy Family PS, Aughmullan. Stewartstown PS also partner with St Mary's PS, Stewartstown and the two schools have most recently committed to working together in a council run good relations initiative and they continue to share local resources such as local counsellors as part of the Healthy Happy Minds programme and the EA bus transport service.

79. Responses received during the two-month statutory objection period commented:-

- Stewartstown PS is an important part of village life contributing to the well-being of the community, across the community.
- The PTA organised a number of cross-community events in the last year which brought children and families from different communities together and engaged the whole Stewartstown community.

Sustainability Summary

80. Although dated, evidence shows that the quality of education at Stewartstown PS was assessed by the ETI in September 2016 as 'very good'. However, the school has been operating with three composite classes, one of which comprises three-year groups and the school employs 3.40 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers including a teaching Principal. The SSP states there should not be more than two years groups in a composite class and recommends a minimum of four teachers at primary school level.

81. The school's enrolment has fluctuated between 49 and 59 pupils in the last five years. In 2023/24, the school has an enrolment of 57 pupils and is significantly below its approved numbers and the recommended SSP threshold for a sustainable rural primary school. Although Stewartstown PS had been operating in a surplus budget position, the CfC states that the school is projected to be in a deficit position of **-£12,455** by the end of the financial year 2022/23 but this was not the case as at the end of the 2022/23 financial year the school had a surplus of £25,585 as at 31 March 2023. However, the school's provisional financial position as of 31 March 2024 shows a deficit of **-£23,461**.
82. There is no up-to-date information evidencing the strength of leadership and management at the school; there are no concerns in relation to links with the local community. The school is accessible to all of its pupils; however, there are other alternative primary schools within a five-mile radius and within reasonable travel time that are accessible with available places if Stewartstown PS was to discontinue.
83. The ETI Inspection Report of September 2016 states *'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'*. There is no demonstrable evidence showing that such a plan was developed and put in place to address and recover the sustainability issues that have existed at the school.
84. In conclusion, the available evidence demonstrates that Stewartstown PS does not meet the criteria and indicators of the SSP in full, particularly in relation to Quality Educational Experience, i.e. composite classes and the number of teachers and Stable Enrolment Trends. The evidence points to an unsustainable provision with little prospect of sustainability being achieved in the future.

Copy of the Education Authority's Equality and Human Rights Screening Template – DPs 710-712



Screening Template

PART 1 – POLICY INFORMATION

| |
|---|
| 1.1. Policy title |
| <p>To establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140. (Development Proposals 710, 711 and 712)</p> |
| 1.2. Description of policy or decision |
| <p>Schools for the Future – A Policy for Sustainable Schools (SSP) – A Department of Education policy published in January 2009</p> <p>The Sustainable Schools Policy sets out six criteria and associated indicators that provide a framework for helping to consider issues of school sustainability. The primary objective of the policy is to ensure that all children get a first class education in fit for purpose facilities, regardless of background or where they live.</p> <p>The policy sets out six criteria to be considered in assessing a school's educational viability, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality educational experience • stable enrolment trends • sound financial position • strong leadership and management • accessibility • strong links with the community |

1.2. Description of policy or decision

The proposal is to effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School. To effect an amalgamation the following is proposed:

Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

Discontinue Ballytrea Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).

Discontinue Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of the new school).

The Education Authority will seek capital investment for refurbishment/extension works for the amalgamated primary school.

The Case for Change outlines background and rationale and can be accessed at: <https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/area-planning/development-proposals/new-controlled-primary-school>

The Schools

Ballytrea Primary School is a controlled school with an enrolment which has shown a decline from 80 pupils in 2014/15 to 50 pupils in the school year 2022/23. The school has an approved enrolment number of 143 pupils and approved admissions number of 20 pupils. The current enrolment numbers are not projected to increase with the school receiving 8 first preference applications for Year 1 admission in September 2023. Ballytrea Primary School operates with 3.40 teachers, including a teaching Principal, with composite classes.

Stewartstown Primary School is a controlled school with an enrolment which has shown a slight increase from 41 pupils in 2014/15 to 49 pupils in the school year 2022/23. The school has an approved enrolment number of 98 pupils and approved

1.2. Description of policy or decision

admissions number of 14 pupils. The current enrolment numbers are not projected to increase with the school receiving 9 first preference applications for Year 1 admission in September 2023. Stewartstown Primary School operates with 3.80 teachers, including a teaching Principal, with composite classes.

Background

Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School are controlled primary schools situated in a rural area of County Tyrone, located 2.8 miles from each other. Each school enrolment falls below the Sustainable School Policy threshold of a minimum of 105 pupils for a rural primary school.

Both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School service the wider Stewartstown area. In the past, the schools shared a joint Board of Governors. The Education Authority met with the Board of Governors and Principals to discuss all options. There was acknowledgement of the sustainability difficulties both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School face, the shared pupil distribution for both schools and on the agreement that an amalgamation of both schools would service the children and young people in this area and provide sustainable provision.

The proposal will address current sustainability challenges and adhere to Ministerial priorities in providing for a new controlled primary school that meets the requirements of the Sustainable Schools Policy.

The Education Authority has identified the preferred proposal as being to establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or a soon as possible thereafter. While the effective date for the amalgamation is 1 September 2025, the Education Authority is **not taking forward the amalgamation of both schools in advance of accommodation on a single site. The amalgamation will not operate as a split site campus.**

The proposal will provide:

- 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

Screening Template

1.2. Description of policy or decision

- education delivered in modern, well-resourced facilities, suitable for the delivery of education in the twenty-first century.

This is consistent with the Education Authority's Strategic Area Plan, Providing Pathways particularly in the Mid Ulster area the Education Authority seeks to:

- Ensure that school places are located as required
- Address school provision where sustainability is an issue

In considering this option, the Education Authority will ensure:

- Pupils are educated in the newly amalgamated sustainable school enhancing the quality of provision
- The reduced number of available places
- The more efficient use of resources
- The reduction of over provision within the controlled sector.

The key factors will be to ensure:

- Pupil transfer with minimal disruption particularly at transition and pupil examination stages, special needs and transport arrangements.
- Staff employment rights are respected, protected and preserved.

1.3. Who are the main stakeholders impacted? (Internal and external as well as actual and potential)

Pupils, staff (teaching and non-teaching), governors, parents, local community and trade unions.

| | | |
|---|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 1.4. Is the policy likely to impact people living in rural areas? <i>(If yes, please complete the rural sections of this document)</i> | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| |
|--|
| 1.5. Are there other policies or decisions with a bearing on this policy or decision? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools • The Northern Ireland Curriculum • Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement' (ESaGS) • Providing Pathways: Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 (extended to August 2022) • Area Planning Guidelines/Sustainability Baseline Report • Terms and Conditions of Employment (Staff) • Education Authority's Transport Policy • Programme for Government • The Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015 • Children and Young People's Strategy 2019-2029 • Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 • A Fair Start |

PART 2 – EVIDENCE AND MITIGATION

2.1. What information did you use to inform this screening?

E.g. census data, Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs), consultation reports, service level data.

Department of Education Schools Census Data
Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency data on population
Department of Education Sustainability Baseline Report
Department of Education Area Planning Guidance and Ministerial Priorities
Education Authority Staff Data
Education Authority Case for Change

Engagement with stakeholders

Pre-publication consultation meetings held with parents, staff and governors on 17 November 2022.

Pre-publication consultations with parents, staff, governors and affected schools took place between 14 November 2022 to 23 January 2023.

Screening Template

2.2. Quantitative and Qualitative Data - What is the profile of the people that are impacted by this policy or decision?

| Section 75 Group 1: Age | Makeup of affected group | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|--|--|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|---------|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|-----------|---------|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|---------|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|-----------|---------|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|-----------|---------|---|---|----|---|---|----|---|-----------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|-----------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | All affected pupils are of primary school age. Tables 1 and 2 outline the enrolment statistics for Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #d9e1f2;"> <th colspan="9">Table 1: Enrolment Statistics - Ballytrea Primary School</th> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #e0e0e0;"> <th></th> <th>Year 1</th> <th>Year 2</th> <th>Year 3</th> <th>Year 4</th> <th>Year 5</th> <th>Year 6</th> <th>Year 7</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2014/15</td> <td>10</td> <td>14</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>8</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015/16</td> <td>8</td> <td>10</td> <td>14</td> <td>10</td> <td>13</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>11</td> <td>9</td> <td>9</td> <td>12</td> <td>10</td> <td>13</td> <td>11</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017/18</td> <td>8</td> <td>11</td> <td>9</td> <td>9</td> <td>12</td> <td>10</td> <td>13</td> <td>72</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018/19</td> <td>9</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>9</td> <td>8</td> <td>11</td> <td>9</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>9</td> <td>8</td> <td>11</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>8</td> <td>7</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>9</td> <td>9</td> <td>8</td> <td>54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>7</td> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>10</td> <td>9</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>6</td> <td>9</td> <td>50</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Table 1: Enrolment Statistics - Ballytrea Primary School | | | | | | | | | | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Total | 2014/15 | 10 | 14 | 11 | 12 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 80 | 2015/16 | 8 | 10 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 78 | 2016/17 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 75 | 2017/18 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 72 | 2018/19 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 65 | 2019/20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 58 | 2020/21 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 54 | 2021/22 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 55 | 2022/23 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 9 |
| Table 1: Enrolment Statistics - Ballytrea Primary School | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2014/15 | 10 | 14 | 11 | 12 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 80 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2015/16 | 8 | 10 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 78 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2016/17 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 75 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2017/18 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 72 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2018/19 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 65 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2019/20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 58 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2020/21 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 54 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2021/22 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 55 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2022/23 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Screening Template

| Table 2: Enrolment Statistics - Stewartstown Primary School | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Total |
| 2014/15 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 41 |
| 2015/16 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 44 |
| 2016/17 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 49 |
| 2017/18 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 7 | 43 |
| 2018/19 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 46 |
| 2019/20 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 11 | 53 |
| 2020/21 | 12 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 54 |
| 2021/22 | 9 | 12 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 59 |
| 2022/23 | 5 | 9 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 49 |

What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?

Pupils

As detailed within the Case for Change, there is an acknowledgement of the sustainability difficulties both Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School are currently facing, of the shared pupil distribution for both schools and on the agreement that an amalgamation of both schools would service the children and young people in this area and provide sustainable provision.

Screening Template

Table 3, below, shows the projected enrolments (based on current trends) for an amalgamated school.

| Table 3: Enrolment Projections: Proposed Amalgamated School | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Total |
| 2023/24 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 14 | 18 | 9 | 104 |
| 2024/25 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 14 | 18 | 110 |
| 2025/26 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 14 | 107 |
| 2026/27 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 108 |

Those pupils with statements from the mainstream schools, will continue to have their needs met at the newly amalgamated school. No primary aged pupil will be disadvantaged.

Staff

The teaching staff is afforded employment 2 years protection under the School Re-Organisation Agreement 2013/2 (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-re-organisation-agreement>).

School Re-Organisation Agreement is in place for a period of one year for non-teaching staff (<https://www.eani.org.uk/ea-staff-hub/hr-online/redeployment-redundancy>).

Subject to the approval of the proposal Education Authority Human Resources will contact each member of staff individually and any concerns or issues can be explored via this engagement.

Screening Template

| | |
|---|---|
| Section 75 Group 2: Dependants | Makeup of affected group |
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> |
| | <p>In relation to this Section 75 group the Education Authority does not hold data on parents, teaching or non-teaching staff.</p> <p>Based on the 2021/22 enrolment there are no looked after children attending the schools.</p> |
| | <i>What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?</i> |
| | <p>The Education Authority understands there may be a potential impact on relocated staff with dependents, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase in travel time may mean additional care costs and difficulties in balancing work/life balance • potential negative impacts of changes in facilities • negative impacts if changes in work patterns are needed • negative impacts if needs are not taken on board if re-training is necessary • need to work near home in case of an emergency • negative impact on part-time workers <p>All pupils that are under care will continue to have their needs met via the Authority's Education Welfare Service.</p> |

Screening Template

| | |
|---|--|
| Section 75 Group 3: Disability | Makeup of affected group |
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> |
| | <p>There are pupils with a statement of special educational needs attending the school – where there are less than five cases the number has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.</p> <p>The Education Authority does not hold any disability related data for staff.</p> |
| | <i>What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?</i> |
| | <p>Pupils All pupils who have a statement of special educational need will continue to have their needs met, as specified in their statement. CYPS will contact parents specifically to discuss the school amalgamation, part of the Implementation plan will be to work with parents to meet the needs of the pupil with SEN at the new school.</p> <p>Staff Reasonable adjustments will be taken into consideration for any staff member with a disability. The Disability Employment Support Service can provide guidance and support to line managers.</p> |

Screening Template

| | |
|--|---|
| Section 75 Group 4: Religious Beliefs | Makeup of affected group |
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> |
| | <p>Ballytrea Primary School Pupils 71% Protestant / 0% Catholic / 29% Other religions includes Christians and non-Christians</p> <p>Stewartstown Primary School Pupils 80% Protestant / Less than 5 pupils Catholic / Other religions includes Christians and non-Christians number has been suppressed to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals</p> <p>Staff The Education Authority does not retain records of religious background for a section of the school staff – releasing breakdowns for a particular section would not be in keeping with GDPR best practice as it may allow for the identification of individuals.</p> |
| | <i>What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?</i> |
| | <p>Pupils A controlled school is open to pupils of all faiths and none. The newly amalgamated school will be a controlled primary school. Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School (and in the future, the newly amalgamated school) will continue to work together through the shared education programme with their relevant partner schools allowing children from all communities to work together in an inclusive way.</p> <p>Staff Reasonable adjustments will be taken into consideration for any staff member on issues raised.</p> |

Screening Template

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Section 75 Group 5: Gender | Makeup of affected group |
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> |
| | Ballytrea Primary School Pupils – 31 Male / 24 Female Staff – 12 – mixed gender |
| | Stewartstown Primary School Pupils – 21 Male / 38 Female Staff – 9 – mixed gender |
| | <i>What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?</i> |
| | <p>Pupils The pupils are currently being taught in a co-educational setting and should the proposed amalgamation go forward the Education Authority will be able to provide places for the pupils within co-educational provision in the area.</p> <p>Staff Irrespective of gender staff members will be treated fairly in keeping with agreed policies and legislation.</p> |

Screening Template

| | |
|--|--|
| Section 75 Group 6: Marital Status | Makeup of affected group |
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> |
| | The Education Authority does not monitor the marital status of staff - irrespective of the marital status all staff members will be treated fairly in keeping with agreed policies and legislation. |
| | <i>What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?</i> |
| | Not Applicable |
| Section 75 Group 7: Political Opinion | Makeup of affected group |
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> |
| | No specific needs or priorities can be identified |
| | <i>What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?</i> |
| | The Education Authority engaged widely with local political representatives in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School and changes planned for primary provision in the wider area. The views expressed during these discussions were taken into consideration when a decision was made to progress with the proposed Development Proposals. Interested parties have the opportunity to make their views known directly to the Department of Education during the two month statutory objection period after the publication of the development proposal. |

Screening Template

| | |
|---|---|
| Section 75 Group 8: Ethnicity | Makeup of affected group |
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> |
| | Pupils Less than 4 pupils in total for both schools were identified as newcomer pupils within the 2021/22 school census. Staff There is no data available on the ethnic background of the staff members. |
| | <i>What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?</i> |
| | The needs of pupils and staff from a minority group will continue to be met. |
| Section 75 Group 9: Sexual Orientation | Makeup of affected group |
| | <i>Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above categories impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.</i> |
| | The Education Authority does not hold data on the sexual orientation of pupils or staff. |
| | <i>What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?</i> |
| | There is no evidence at this stage to indicate different needs, experiences or priorities. The needs of all pupils and staff will continue to be met. |

Screening Template

Impact on Rural Needs

Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people from the above category impacted by this policy or decision. If the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.

In 2022/23 there were 50 pupils enrolled in Ballytrea Primary School and 49 pupils enrolled in Stewartstown Primary School with a combined total of 21 staff.

What are the social and economic impacts of the policy on people living in rural areas?

Please consider positive and negative impacts around issues such as access to education or youth provision, transport, broadband accessibility and employment impacts.

The positive impact for rural pupils will be **parity of access for all to appropriate pathways** through the operation of a new sustainable controlled primary school.

The areas from which the two primary schools attract pupils is, according to the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group, defined as rural. The establishment of a new school (being in effect the amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) in the wider Stewartstown area will improve the sustainability of controlled primary school provision in the area. An amalgamated school will provide for the minimum threshold enrolment number of 105, as required within the Sustainable Schools Policy.

The pupil distribution for Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary shows a shared catchment area as the schools are located within close proximity of each other, 2.8 miles apart and as identified in Map 1 in the Case for Change.

The negative impact on rural areas will be a potential increase in transport times for some pupils. Home to school transport arrangements will be in accordance with transport regulations.

The employment rights of permanent staff are protected under the agreed policy – see section 7 of the Case for Change.

The Education Authority is aware of the important community role both Primary Schools play and with the improved sustainability of the proposed amalgamated school this will build on the strengths and community links of both schools.

Screening Template

2.3. Policy / Decision changes

In developing the policy or decision, what changes did you make, or do you intend to make to address any equality issues that you identified?

No changes to the proposal to establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

The Case for Change outlines the responses received from the pre-publication consultation process.

Based on the rural impacts that you have identified, what changes (mitigation) can you make to the policy?

Due regard has been given to the Rural Needs Act and the consideration of the potential transport impact. This will be accounted for by the Transport section within the Education Authority. Parental discussions will be held on transport provision and routes following the outcome of the proposal and application for transport assistance.

PART 3 – GOOD RELATIONS

3.1. If we define Good Relations as 'tackling prejudice and promoting understanding', are there any changes to the policy or decision that you would make in this regard?

(Please enter N/A if not applicable)

| GROUP | Impact on Good Relations | Policy / Decision Changes |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Religion | No | No |
| Ethnicity | No | No |
| Political Opinion | No | No |

PART 4 – SECTION 75 EQUALITY SCREENING DECISION

This section is only relevant to the Section 75 Equality Duties.

| | | |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| <p>4.1. How would you categorise the impacts of the policy or decision? <i>Please refer to guidance notes on categorising impacts.</i></p> | Major Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Minor Impact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | No Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><i>Please provide reasons for your decision below.</i></p> <p>The Education Authority will work with parents/guardians and the school to mitigate any factors which they consider may disadvantage the pupils eg in the provision of transport in accordance with current policies and induction support for pupils who may find the change of site a challenging experience.</p> <p>The Education Authority will provide advice, support and assistance to staff in respect of the establishment of a new school.</p> | | |

| | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|
| <p>4.2. Does the policy or decision require a full Equality Impact Assessment?</p> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><i>Please provide reasons for your decision below.</i></p> <p>At this stage there is no need to move to an EQIA, there will be continued engagement with the schools and multiple stakeholders throughout the rest of the area planning process.</p> <p>This will be kept under review and if required, a decision to EQIA can be taken based on supporting evidence in line with the Education Authority Equality Scheme commitments</p> | | |

PART 5 – DISABILITY DUTIES

5.1. Does the policy or decision encourage the participation of disabled people in public life? Or is there anything you can do within the policy or decision to encourage participation of disabled people in public life?

| | How does the policy encourage the participation of disabled people in public life? | Is there anything further you can do to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life? |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Please provide details if applicable | As one of the key themes of the Providing Pathways: Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 (extended to August 2022) is to: 'secure parity of access for all to appropriate pathways' . | The Education Authority adheres to all current legislation: Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 |

5.2. Does the policy or decision promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? Or is there anything you can do within the policy or decision to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

| | How does the policy promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? | Is there anything further you can do promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Please provide details if applicable | As one of the key themes of the Providing Pathways: Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 (extended to August 2022) is to: 'secure parity of access for all to appropriate pathways' . | As in 5.1 |

PART 6 – HUMAN RIGHTS

6.1. Are Human Rights Relevant?

| Article | | Relevant (Yes/No) |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------|
| Article 2: | Right to Life | No |
| Article 3: | Right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment | No |
| Article 4: | Right to freedom from slavery, servitude & forced compulsory labour. | No |
| Article 5: | Right to liberty and security of person. | No |
| Article 6: | Right to a fair & public trial in a reasonable time | No |
| Article 7: | Right to freedom from retrospective criminal law & no punishment without law | No |
| Article 8: | Right to respect for private & family life, home & correspondence. | No |
| Article 9: | Right to freedom of thought, conscience & religion. | No |
| Article 10: | Right to freedom of expression. | No |
| Article 11: | Right to freedom of assembly & association | No |
| Article 12: | Right to marry & found a family. | No |
| Article 14: | Prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the convention rights | No |
| Protocol 1, Article 1 | Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions & protection of property | No |
| Protocol 1, Article 2 | Right of access to education | Yes |

If you answered 'no' to all human rights considerations, please go to Part 7 – Monitoring

Screening Template

6.2. If you have answered yes to any of the Articles in 6.1, does the policy or decision have a potential positive impact or does it potentially interfere with anyone's Human Rights?

| Article number | Positive impact or potential interference? | How? | Any legal issues arise? |
|-----------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| Article 2: | | | |
| Article 3: | | | |
| Article 4: | | | |
| Article 5: | | | |
| Article 6: | | | |
| Article 7: | | | |
| Article 8: | | | |
| Article 9: | | | |
| Article 10: | | | |
| Article 11: | | | |
| Article 12: | | | |
| Article 14: | | | |
| Protocol 1, Article 1 | | | |
| Protocol 1, Article 2 | <p>Potential positive impact</p> <p>Provide equality of access and delivery of a high-quality educational curriculum to all of its pupils.</p> | <p>A new sustainable controlled primary school will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | |

Screening Template

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education delivered in modern, well-resourced facilities, suitable for the delivery of education in the twenty-first century. <p>The UNCRC states that The purpose of education is to enable the child to develop to his or her fullest possible potential. The Education Authority believes the the proposal to establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) is in the best interests of the pupils. It would mean the pupils of Ballytrea PS and Stewartstown PS would be taught in larger classes and may allow for improved social interaction between the pupils.</p> | |
|--|--|--|--|

Screening Template

PART 7 - MONITORING

7.1. What data will you collect to monitor the impact of the policy in terms of equality of opportunity, disability duties or human rights compliance?

| | Data Collected |
|--------------------------|--|
| Section 75 | <p>During the pre-publication consultation the Education Authority engaged with staff, parents, Governors and affected school in order to gather information and understand their needs that related to section 75 characteristics. An outline of the responses received during this consultation is provided in the Case for Change.</p> <p>The issues raised helped to inform the equality screening process and were taken into consideration before a decision was made to progress with the proposal for the new school (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School).</p> |
| Disability Duties | <p>During the pre-publication consultation the Education Authority engaged with staff, parents, Governors and affected schools in order to gather information and understand their needs that related to section 75 characteristics. An outline of the responses received during this consultation is provided in the Case for Change.</p> <p>The issues raised helped to inform the equality screening process and were taken into consideration before a decision was made to progress with the proposal for the new school (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School).</p> |
| Human Rights | <p>During the pre-publication consultation the Education Authority engaged with staff, parents, Governors and affected school in order to gather information and understand their needs that related to section 75 characteristics. An outline of the responses received during this consultation is provided in the Case for Change.</p> <p>The issues raised helped to inform the equality screening process and were taken into consideration before a decision was made to progress with the proposal for the new school (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School).</p> |

Screening Template

SIGN OFF

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Approved: Head of Service: | <i>Michael McConkey, Head of Area Planning</i> |
| Policy screened by: | Sinead McCartan, Area Planning Lead Officer Nigel Freeburn, Special Education Lead Officer Carol Hall, Information and Planning Officer |
| Date: | 4 April 2023 |

ETI Development Proposal Commentary Paper

DPs DP 710, 711 and 712

DP: Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

Discontinue Ballytrea Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of Development Proposal Nos 710 and 712).

Discontinue Stewartstown Primary School with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter (predicated upon the approval of Development Proposal Nos 710 and 711).

Date of last ETI report: Stewartstown PS - September 2019

Ballytrea PS – March 2012. Inspection scheduled for October 2020 cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Web links: [Sustaining Improvement Inspection \(Involving Action Short of Strike\) - Stewartstown Primary School, Stewartstown, County Tyrone 501-2643 \(etini.gov.uk\)](#)

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/%5Bcurrent-domain%3Amachine-name%5D/short-inspection-ballytrea-primary-school-stewartstown-dungannon.pdf>

Date⁷: 26/04/23

1. Update on relevant/contextual information since the last published inspection report.

⁷ This commentary paper is based on the information and evidence available to ETI on this date. Please check the ETI website www.etini.gov.uk for any new inspection reports that may have published after this date.

A new permanent principal of Ballytrea PS has been in post since December 2019.
The learning environment at Stewartstown PS, including outdoors, has been developed and enhanced to support learning and teaching.
The enrolment in both schools remains steady, at approximately 50% capacity.
There are teaching principals in both schools.

2. Knowledge of **any contextual information on the quality of education** in the wider local area.

Both schools are involved in Shared Education, Stewartstown PS with Holy Family Primary, Aughamullan, and Ballytrea PS with St Mary's PS, Stewartstown.

Stewartstown PS and St Mary's PS, Stewartstown also work together.

3. Potential benefits/concerns associated with the claims of **educational** benefits for pupils made in the Case for Change.

Potential benefits include:

Children in a class with no more than two year groups may benefit from increased interaction with their peers to support their learning and social and emotional development.

Children may benefit from access to a larger number of teaching and support staff. The pooling of staff experience and expertise has the potential to enhance the curriculum and extra-curricular activities provided for the children.

A larger staff may facilitate a wider distribution of roles and responsibilities.

4. Any concerns about the **implementation date or phasing of implementation** should this be applicable (i.e. curricular, EF, accommodation, LSCs, etc).

A site for the proposed amalgamation has not yet been communicated, creating additional uncertainty for both school communities.

Road traffic access and safety of children arriving at either school should be factored into any decision about choice of site.

Whichever site is chosen, some children are likely to disperse to a range of schools. The number required to meet the criteria for a sustainable school may not be feasible; even if all the children in Stewartstown PS transfer to the Ballytrea PS site, or vice versa, the number of children may remain below 105.

5. The **SSP Criteria** indicators requiring ETI input (if known and/or for which information is available).

| Sustainable Schools Criterion | Indicator | Meets criterion | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|--|---------------------------|
| | | Yes | No (reason(s)) | Information not available |
| Quality Educational Experience | 1.1 Attainment levels of pupils, Key Stage tests pending development of new indicators for Primary Schools, GCSE results for Post-Primary Schools. | | | X |
| | 1.2 In primary, a single classroom contains no more than <u>two</u> year-groups in a composite class; for example, years 1 and 2. | | No – years 5,6 and 7 in one class in both schools. | |
| | 1.3 A <u>minimum</u> of four teachers at a primary school. This recognises both the needs of pupils and the demands on teachers. | | No – three teacher posts in both schools | |
| | 1.4 The ability of the school to cater for children with Special Educational Needs. | | | X |
| | 1.5 The ability at post-primary level to be able to provide suitable access to the entitlement framework including, where appropriate, linkages with other schools, the FE sector or other providers. | | N/A | |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|
| | 1.6 The standards and the quality of learning and teaching at the school. | | <p>ETI Inspectors visited the schools in 2019.</p> <p>In Stewartstown the children spoke positively about their learning and highlighted their enjoyment of literacy, numeracy art and PE.</p> <p>The children in Ballytrea PS were talkative, interested in their learning and had the opportunity to be creative and work independently.</p> <p>Both schools have access to a breadth of learning experiences including educational trips and visitors.</p> | |
| | 1.7 The range of curricular and extra-curricular activities available for children including career guidance, physical education, music, art, drama and science. | X | The children in both schools have access to a wide range of extra-curricular learning experiences, including opportunities to participate in sporting and arts activities/competitions. | |
| | 1.8 The quality of the <u>physical</u> environment for learning and teaching i.e. the condition, energy and water efficiency and suitability of the buildings. | X | Both schools make effective use of all available space for learning. | |
| | 1.9 The quality of, and arrangements for, pastoral care including the active promotion of the principles of social justice in all areas of the formal and informal curriculum. | | | X |
| Strong Leadership and | 4.1 Governors' views on the school based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. | | | X |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Management by Boards of Governors and Principals | 4.8 There is a school development plan in place and progress is being made to achieve the plan's aims and objectives. | | | X |
| | 4.9 Pupil behaviour, expulsions, suspensions and non-attendance as well as positive behaviours such as involvement in school management (e.g. buddying and mentoring schemes). | | | X |
| Strong links with the Community | 6.1 Degree and quality of parental involvement (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this). | X | Both schools have active and supportive PTAs. | |
| | 6.3 Contribution of the school to the community (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this). | X | Both schools have established shared education partnerships. They have links with local businesses, Churches and community groups. | |
| | 6.4 Presence of other features of provision, e.g. nursery or specialist unit. | | No | |

6. Summary of impact of the proposal

There are potential benefits for children and staff, including increased interaction for children with their peers to support their learning and social and emotional development, and a wider distribution of staff roles and responsibilities.

It will be important to communicate, as soon as possible, the site for the proposed amalgamation to reduce uncertainty for both communities.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DE) POLICY TEAM COMMENTS

DP 711 – Ballytrea PS and DP 712 Stewartstown PS

| | |
|----------|--|
| A | Financial Monitoring Team |
| B | Education Workforce Directorate |
| C | School Access Team (SAT) |
| D | Investment and Infrastructure Directorate |
| E | Transport and Food in Schools |
| F | Inclusion Directorate |
| G | Promoting Collaboration, Tackling Disadvantage Directorate (Shared Education) |

A Financial Monitoring Team**501-2615 Ballytrea Primary**

The school's **provisional** Deficit position as of 31 March 2024 is (£167,445).

The school's Deficit in the previous year, up to 31 March 2023 was (£93,614).

The school received a total delegated budget of £242,599 in the 2024-25 financial year for **52¹** FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of £4,665. The average for all primary schools is £3,492.

The total Free School Meals Entitlement for the school is **9⁸** pupils, which represents 17.31% of the total FTE, which places the school in Band 1 for funding purposes.

The school received £51,829 for Small Schools Support funding, which represents 100.00% of the maximum funding for this factor, within the Nursery & Primary funding stream.

The school also received £16,420 in respect of Primary Principals' Release Time.

⁸ The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2023 census data was used to determine the 2024-25 CFF allocation). The census data on the Schools+ database relates to an academic year, as opposed to the financial year. In addition, differences between funded pupils and total pupils within the census count may occur for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, zero rated pupils, some reception pupils, and over age pupils (paragraph 7 of Annex B to the Common Funding Scheme refers).

All schools receive a delegated budget for the financial year based on verified enrolments as at the October Census prior to the financial year. The figures below represent those figures estimated for the 2024-25 financial year.

Details of the school's budget allocation from the Common Funding Formula, for the last 3 years, is as follows:

| Factor | 2024-25 £ | 2023-24 £ | 2022-23 £ |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pupil AWPU | 136,455 | 129,814 | 139,996 |
| TSN – Social Deprivation | 5,522 | 5,522 | 7,977 |
| TSN – Additional Social Deprivation | 262 | 254 | 350 |
| Premises Area | 6,858 | 6,858 | 6,858 |
| Premises FTE | 4,512 | 4,385 | 4,698 |
| Small Schools Support | 51,829 | 51,829 | 51,863 |
| Primary Principals Release Time | 16,420 | 16,420 | 16,420 |
| Foundation Stage | 14,103 | 12,701 | 14,103 |
| Teachers Salary Protection | 6,637 | 4,300 | 0 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total School Funding | 242,599 | 232,083 | 242,265 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Pupil FTE (no.) | 52 | 51 | 55 |
| Per Capita | £4,665 | £4,551 | £4,405 |

501-2643 Stewartstown Primary

The school's **provisional** Deficit position as of 31 March 2024 is (£23,461).

The school's Surplus in the previous year, up to 31 March 2023 was £25,585.

The school received a total delegated budget of £259,287 in the 2024-25 financial year for **57¹** FTE pupils, which generates a per capita of £4,549. The average for all primary schools is £3,492.

The total Free School Meals Entitlement for the school is **10⁹** pupils, which represents 17.54% of the total FTE, which places the school in Band 1 for funding purposes.

The school received £51,829 for Small Schools Support funding, which represents 100.00% of the maximum funding for this factor, within the Nursery & Primary funding stream.

The school also received £16,420 in respect of Primary Principals' Release Time.

All schools receive a delegated budget for the financial year based on verified enrolments as at the October Census prior to the financial year. The figures below represent those figures estimated for the 2024-25 financial year.

Details of the school's budget allocation from the Common Funding Formula, for the last 3 years, is as follows:

| Factor | 2024-25 £ | 2023-24 £ | 2022-23 £ |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pupil AWPU | 149,576 | 124,723 | 150,177 |
| TSN – Social Deprivation | 6,136 | 4,295 | 6,750 |
| TSN – Additional Social Deprivation | 292 | 197 | 296 |
| Premises Area | 5,195 | 5,195 | 5,195 |
| Premises FTE | 4,946 | 4,213 | 5,040 |
| Small Schools Support | 51,829 | 51,829 | 51,863 |
| Primary Principals Release | 16,420 | 16,420 | 16,420 |

⁹ The school's funding allocation is based on the previous year's census data (e.g. the October 2023 census data was used to determine the 2024-25 CFF allocation). The census data on the Schools+ database relates to an academic year, as opposed to the financial year. In addition, differences between funded pupils and total pupils within the census count may occur for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, zero rated pupils, some reception pupils, and over age pupils (paragraph 7 of Annex B to the Common Funding Scheme refers).

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Time | | | |
| Foundation Stage | 13,402 | 13,402 | 15,855 |
| Teachers Salary Protection | 9,062 | 9,024 | 8,840 |
| Newcomer Pupils | 2,430 | 1,178 | 3,535 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total School Funding | 259,287 | 230,477 | 263,972 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Pupil FTE (no.) | 57 | 49 | 59 |
| Per Capita | £4,549 | £4,704 | £4,474 |

B Education Workforce Directorate

No issues or concerns have been identified, from a policy perspective, in respect of this development proposal for teaching and non-teaching staff.

Should the case be approved and subsequent staffing issues are identified, assurances should be sought from the Education Authority that any potential impact on terms and conditions of teaching and non-teaching staff are managed in accordance with the following policies:-

- TNC 2011/8 – Workload Agreement: should the Case for Change result in an increase to enrolment in a school, or surrounding schools, assurance should be provided regarding how potential impact on teacher workload, as a result of the increased class size, will be managed.
- TNC 2013/2 – School Reorganisation Agreement and DE Circular 2013/7 – School Reorganisation Allowances: a teacher who suffers a reduction in pay as a result of staff reorganisation or redeployment may be eligible to apply for a school reorganisation allowance;
- TNC 2010/1 – Procedure for Handling Teacher Redundancy: will apply where a teacher is considered, or wishes to be considered for redundancy;
- JNC 224 – Collective Agreement for School Reorganisations – Employment protection for Support Staff will apply where the Case for Change may impact on the terms and conditions of non-teaching staff.

C Schools Access Team (SAT)

DP 711 Ballytrea PS – Discontinue 501-2615

DP 711 sets out that Ballytrea Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. (This proposal should be read in conjunction with Development Proposal No 710 & 712.)

DP 710 - Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140. No name or DENI number decided as yet.

Ballytrea PS currently has approved admissions and enrolment numbers of **20-22** and **143** respectively.

Over the past five years the school has received the following applications for admission to Year 1 during the admissions process:

| Year | Admissions Number | First Preferences | Total Applications (all preferences) | Admitted* |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2019/20 | 20 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| 2020/21 | 20 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 2021/22 | 20 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| 2022/23 | 20 | * | * | # |
| 2023/24 | 20 | 8 | 8 | 8 |

*Excludes children with a statement of special educational needs.

DP 712 Stewartstown Primary School– Discontinue 501-2643

DP 712 sets out that Stewartstown Primary School will discontinue with effect from 31 August 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. (This proposal should be read in conjunction with Development Proposal No 711 & 710)

DP 710 - Establish a new controlled primary school in the Stewartstown area (being in effect an amalgamation of Ballytrea Primary School and Stewartstown Primary School) with effect from 1 September 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an admission number of 20 and an enrolment number of 140.

Stewartstown PS currently has approved admissions and enrolment numbers of **14-17** and **98** respectively.

Over the past five years the school has received the following applications for admission to Year 1 during the admissions process:

| Year | Admissions Number | First Preferences | Total Applications (all preferences) | Admitted* |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2019/20 | 14 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| 2020/21 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| 2021/22 | 14 | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| 2022/23 | 14 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 2023/24 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 9 |

*Excludes children with a statement of special educational needs.

D Investment and Infrastructure Directorate (IID)

Case for Change

The case for change (CFC) indicates an amalgamation would not require a new build and the new school would be proposed to be situated in one of the two existing sites. A feasibility study would be required to determine which site would be more suitable, identify any additional accommodation requirements and the extent of any refurbishment works.

IID Input

DP 711 & 712 - proposals are to discontinue 2 primary schools. There are no anticipated accommodation costs to facilitate the closure of Ballytrea and Stewardstown Primary Schools. Therefore, a nil return for both.

DP 710 - an amalgamation would not require a new build and is being proposed to be situated in one of the two existing sites (Ballytrea or Stewardstown sites), a feasibility study would be required to determine which site would be more suitable, any additional accommodation requirements and potential cost.

Whilst it is noted that the CFC states that substantial capital investment will be required to provide additional accommodation and to refurbish existing provision to establish the amalgamated school, IID cannot comment or provide estimated cost as the EA have not proposed any works or which site will be used to accommodate the new school; a feasibility study will have to be conducted to determine costs. Any minor works would be subject to available capital budget at that time.

E Transport and Food in Schools

Given the change involved, it would be anticipated the financial implications for the transport budget would not be significant. Nil return from Food in Schools team.

F Inclusion Directorate

Special Education Team (SET) Input

It is noted in the Case for Change (CfC) that Ballytrea Primary School (PS) and Stewartstown Primary School (PS) are not sustainable schools. Attendance at a sustainable school underpins the fundamental principles of the special educational needs (SEN) Code of Practice¹⁰, which focuses on a continuum of need and a continuum of provision, which may be made in a variety of forms. Children with SEN require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education, including the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

No information is provided the CfC in relation to the number of pupils with SEN at either school.

The CfC states that if the DP is approved, the proposed amalgamated school will ensure that, children with SEN will continue to have their educational needs met and realise their full potential, supported by the Education Authority's (EA) Children and Young People Services (CYPS).

SET would not oppose this DP, subject to any impact on pupils with SEN being considered and managed effectively.

Special Education and Inclusion Review Team (SEIRT) Input

Nil Return.

¹⁰ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-code-practice>

G Promoting Collaboration, Tackling Disadvantage Directorate (Shared Education)

Current Position

Ballytrea Primary School (501-2615) is involved in a mainstreaming partnership with St Mary's Primary School (503-2692)

Stewartstown Primary School (501-2643) is currently involved in a Collaboration and Sharing in Education project (CASE) partnership Holy Family PS, Aughamullan (503-2714)

List of neighbouring schools provided by Area Planning

| School | | Programme | Membership |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Ref No | Name | | |
| 5032585 | Edendork PS | Mainstreaming | Howard Primary School |
| 5032592 | St Mary's PS, Lisbuoy (Dungannon) | Mainstreaming | Newmills Primary School |
| 5032692 | St Mary's PS, Stewartstown | Mainstreaming | Ballytrea Primary School |
| 5032698 | St Brigid's PS, Mountjoy | - | - |
| 5032714 | Holy Family PS, Aughamullan | CASE | Stewartstown PS |
| 5032729 | St John's PS, Coalisland | - | - |
| 5036047 | St Patrick's PS, Coalisland | CASE | Orchard County PS |
| 5036590 | Primate Dixon PS | - | - |
| 5046637 | Gaelscoil Uí Neill, Coalisland | - | - |
| 5012649 | Coagh PS | CASE | Ballylifford PS |
| 5012726 | Cookstown PS | Mainstreaming | Cookstown Nursery School & Holy Trinity Primary School & Phoenix Integrated Primary School |
| 5016224 | Donaghey PS | CASE | Gaelscoil Eoghain & Lissan PS |
| 5032713 | Derrychrin PS | - | - |
| 5032717 | St Patrick's PS, Ardboe (Dungannon) | - | - |
| 5036057 | St Malachy's PS, Moneymore | - | - |

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|---------------|--|
| 5036567 | Holy Trinity PS, Cookstown | Mainstreaming | Cookstown Nursery School & Cookstown Primary School & Phoenix Integrated Primary School |
| 5036590 | Primate Dixon PS | - | - |
| 5046699 | Gaelscoil Eoghain, Cookstown | CASE | Donaghey PS & Lissan PS |
| 5066657 | Phoenix Int PS, Cookstown | Mainstreaming | Cookstown Nursery School Cookstown Primary School Holy Trinity Primary School Phoenix Integrated Primary School |

6 of these schools are engaged in Mainstreaming shared education partnerships and 5 in CASE.

SECRET CONSIDERATION

The Case for Change

The proposer, the Education Authority (EA), has acknowledged the current involvement of Ballytra Primary School (501-2615) and Stewartstown Primary School (501-2643) in their current Shared Education Programmes.

EA have commented that both schools have strong links within the community, are part of a Shared Education programme and have active PTAs. In a newly amalgamated school these links will continue and further strengthen in a more financially and educationally sustainable school.

Should the proposal for closure be approved it has been noted that proposed amalgamation may change the shared education partnerships to build on and widen shared education in the area. Also, if resourcing is made available by the Department of Education as part of the mainstreaming of Shared Education, officers will look to explore a partnership reconfiguration between the new amalgamated primary school, St Mary's Primary School, Stewartstown and Holy Family Primary School.

EA has complied with its duty to consider shared Education under Article 6 of the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

SECRET ASSESSMENT

The evidence provided in the Development Proposal states that the proposer would look to explore a partnership reconfiguration between the new amalgamated primary school, St Mary's Primary School, Stewartstown and Holy Family Primary School.

EA has complied with its duty to consider shared Education under Article 6 of the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016