

## COPY OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

### Cover Note

<b>DP No.</b>	496	
<b>School</b>	TULLYCARNET PRIMARY SCHOOL (PS)	
<b>Proposal</b>	The Education Authority proposed that Tullycarnet PS should close with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.	
<b>Department's Decision</b>	Approve DP 496 – to close Tullycarnet PS	
<b>Date of Decision</b>	17 May 2017	
<b>Permanent Secretary's Comments</b>	<i>Any decision to close a school is an exceptionally significant issue which merits careful consideration. However, in light of the clearly expressed views....decline in numbers which undermines the school's viability...educational experience for pupils....and availability of capacity in neighbouring primary schools, I accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 7.1 (of the official submission dated 5 May 2017 below).</i>	
<b>Additional notes</b>		
<b>Information redacted</b>	Some information and personal data may have been removed in line with the principles of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act.	
	<b>Key</b>	<b>Details</b>
	■	redaction
	*	refers to less than five cases where data is considered sensitive
	#	means figure has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of sensitive information under rules of disclosure

**From:** Lorraine Finlay  
Area Planning Policy Team

**Date:** 5 May 2017

**To:** Derek Baker  
Permanent Secretary

*Copy distribution below*

**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 496 – TULLYCARNET PRIMARY SCHOOL**

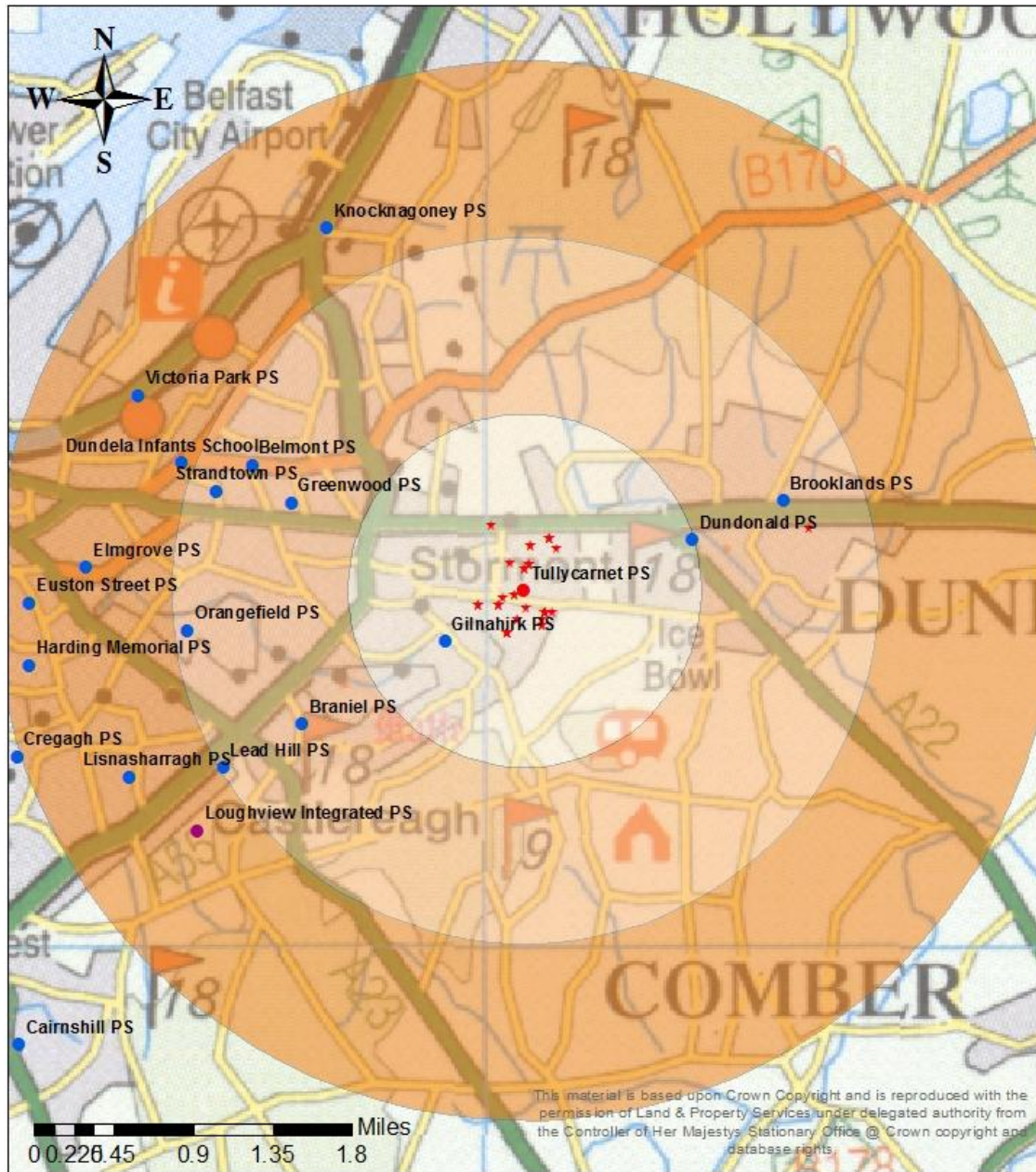
<b>Issue:</b>	Development Proposal No 496 published by the Education Authority (EA) on 16 February 2017 proposing the closure of Tullycarnet Primary School (PS) with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.
<b>Timescale:</b>	Urgent. The proposed implementation date is 31 August 2017.
<b>Financial/Resource Implications:</b>	<p>It is likely that the long term cost effectiveness of closure will outweigh the cost of keeping this school open. However, at this point in time it is not possible to identify the exact level of savings.</p> <p>Teaching and non-teaching staff are afforded employment protection under their respective School Re-organisation Agreements and are eligible for redeployment under transfer redundancy procedures. Staff unsuccessful in gaining redeployment or employment will be treated as supernumerary and a Centre cost. At this stage of the process these costs cannot be determined as there are too many variables.</p>
<b>FOI Implications:</b>	The contents of this submission are fully disclosable.
<b>Statutory Duty Implications:</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Presentational Issues:</b>	The closure of Tullycarnet PS may draw local and political interest. If approached, DE's Press Office can draw from the content of this submission. Agreed with Press Office.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	It is recommended that you consider the

**evidence and information in this submission and attachments and agree to the following:**

- (i) Approve DP 496 – to close Tullycarnet PS with effect from 31 August 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter.**
- (ii) Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) will be published on the Department’s website once the EA and school have been informed of your decision.**

**Map 1: Tullycarnet PS and other local Controlled and Integrated primary provision**

**Tullycarnet Primary School  
Neighbouring Controlled & Integrated Provision within a 3 Mile Radius**

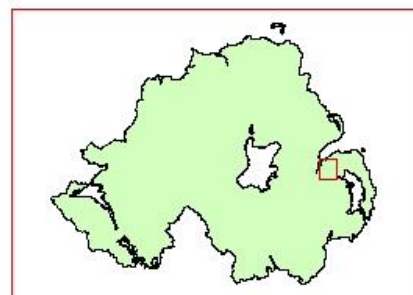


**Key**

- Tullycarnet Primary School
- ★ Pupil Location
- Controlled Primary Schools
- Grant Maintained Integrated Primary Schools

**Buffer distance in miles**

- ◊ 0.00 - 1.00
- ◊ 1.00 - 2.00
- ◊ 2.00 - 3.00



# **1. BACKGROUND**

## **Introduction**

1.1 The Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools (SSP) and the Area Planning and Development Proposal (DP) processes are explained at Appendix A.

1.2 On 16 February 2017 the EA published DP 496 to close Tullycarnet Primary School (PS) with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter. A copy of the published proposal is attached at Appendix B. The statutory two-month objection period on the proposal ended on 19 April 2017.

## **School and area**

1.3 Tullycarnet PS opened in 1968 and is situated on a 1.3 hectare site on the Kings Road, Belfast in the Local Government District of Lisburn and Castlereagh. On the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 the Gilnahirk Super Output Area (in which Tullycarnet PS is situated) is placed 877 out of 890 (1 being the most deprived and 890 being the least deprived). The school's pupils primarily come from the nearby Tullycarnet Housing development and immediate area as depicted in Map 1 above.

1.4 Tullycarnet PS has approved admission and enrolment numbers of 79 and 552 respectively. At the date of the October 2016 Census the school had a total enrolment of 46 pupils of which 5 are in Year 1.

1.5 In 2016/17 Tullycarnet PS has 506 available places representing approximately 91% capacity. The school has 7 non-teaching staff and 6 teaching staff (*comprising the Principal, two permanent and three temporary teachers*).

# **2. CASE FOR CHANGE**

2.1 The EA's supporting case for change for this proposal is attached in full (Appendix B). In this, the EA provides key information in relation to the background and rationale for the proposal which includes the following key points:

- The school has an approved enrolment of 552 and an admission figure of 79. At September 2016 the school had 45 pupils enrolled (*Note: The 2016 October school Census figures record a total enrolment of 46 pupils in the 2016/17 school year*).
- A number of pupils residing close to Tullycarnet PS chose to go to other schools in the area.
- The school's enrolment is below the SSP minimum enrolment threshold and there has been a pattern of low enrolment. The school is unsustainable.
- The level of available places at Tullycarnet PS has remained over 80% since 2006/07 and over a third of the school building is permanently used by outside groups providing various services to the local community.

- The level of unfilled places in the area.

2.2 The case for change also states that a total of five options were considered by the EA (summarised below -Table 1) with Option 5 emerging as the preferred one.

2.3 The case for change notes that the school's Board of Governors (BoG) and Principal agreed that the school's closure is the only way forward and that parents agreed it would be better for the pupils if closure occurs as soon as possible.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>EA Comments</b>	<b>EA Preferred Option</b>
1	Retain Tullycarnet PS.	<i>The Authority has to make the best use of its resources and ensure all pupils have access to the best educational experience possible. The continued decline....has placed extensive constraints on this accessibility.</i>	<b>No</b>
2	Downsize Tullycarnet PS ...in keeping with its actual enrolment.	<i>Based on the last three Year 1 admissions the school has a long term enrolment of 65. It would not be feasible to reduce a school in an urban setting to a three class base facility.</i>	<b>No</b>
3	Merge Tullycarnet PS with a neighbouring school.	<i>To make a merger viable it is important that the schools being merged are of or close to a similar size. All the neighbouring schools have enrolments well above their figures - merging Tullycarnet PS with one of these... would not be viewed as an amalgamation.</i>	<b>No</b>
4	Transform Tullycarnet PS to a controlled Integrated school and resize the school.	<i>There is already integrated provision in the area with the potential for more provision by way of a school relocating into the Castlereagh dual carriageway area. To make a transformation successful it need to be led by the parents and local community...no indication that there is support for this course of action.</i>	<b>No</b>
5	Close Tullycarnet PS.	<i>Officers met with the BoG, principal and parents to discuss all options. Based on all available information...the only viable option is to close the school. Governors and Principal have agreed and have indicated their preference for closure by September 2017; parents have agreed it would be better for pupils that the closure occurs as soon as possible.</i>	<b>Yes</b>

2.5 In relation to the area planning impact of the proposal, the case for change refers to the then South Eastern Education and Library Board's published Primary Area Plan (2014) which highlighted its intent to initiate discussions with Tullycarnet PS's Board of Governors about its future sustainability. This plan has now been superseded by the EA's "Providing Pathways – A Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020 which was published on 28 April 2017. The new plan does not refer to Actions in relation to Tullycarnet PS as the DP was published before the date the Area Plan took effect.

2.6 The case for change cites the educational benefits of this proposal which relate to pupils being able to access larger classes and greater social interaction with more opportunity for healthy intellectual competition

among peers. The case for change includes an outline implementation plan for the school's closure and notes that the EA (in the event of closure) will provide parents with relevant information on available places and also offer any necessary assistance.

### **3. Statutory DP Processes**

#### **Pre-publication consultation**

3.1 The EA confirms in the case for change that it has fulfilled its statutory pre-publication consultation obligations in relation to this proposal with Tullycarnet PS as well as with other schools which it considered could be affected by it. The EA received two responses to the proposal, one from the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) which did not want to raise an objection to the proposal and the other from an unknown respondent who raised a number of points of concern. The EA has included its response to those points of concern in its case for change and having considered the consultation findings decided that the closure of Tullycarnet PS remained the most appropriate course of action. It has undertaken to work with affected parents in order to minimise the impact on their children.

#### **Two-month statutory objection period**

3.2 During the statutory two-month objection period on this proposal which ran from 16 February to 19 April 2017, the Department received no letters of objection against this proposal.

3.3 The Department did receive an email from Mr Reg Magowan, MBE, Chair of the Board of Governors of Tullycarnet PS in which he stated that *'we are anxious to ensure closure moves ahead without delay'*.

3.4 Mr Magowan also requested a meeting with officials in order to explain the background to the proposal. That request was facilitated on 2 March 2017. An extract from the note of the meeting is attached at [Appendix C](#). Key points made included:

- Pupils are going past the school to attend other schools.
- 9 pupils will be going to other schools in September which would leave about 21 pupils in the school.
- There could not be a better time to close the school. The buildings were in a terrible state.
- Pupils lacked ambition.
- Standards would be raised as a result of more interaction with peers and opportunities for extra-curricular activities in a bigger school.

3.5 Mr Magowan also indicated at the meeting that there is acceptance by local political representatives regarding the school's closure and he did not expect any related objections to the proposal.

3.6 The Department also received a letter from the CSSC which stated that it did not raise an objection to the proposal but in the event that it is approved, the CSSC will seek assurances from the EA that the disruption to the pupils involved will be minimised and that they will be able to attend the same schools as their siblings. CSSC also intend to ensure that the members of staff employed at Tullycarnet PS are supported in the process of redeployment and/or voluntary severance in keeping with the School Reorganisation Agreement.

#### **4. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

4.1 The Department's SSP sets out six criteria which have quantitative and qualitative indicators which provide the framework for consideration of a school's longer-term sustainability. These are considered in all development proposals. The assessment of Tullycarnet PS against the SSP criteria is provided below.

##### Quality Education Experience

4.2 The SSP refers to the difficulties which small schools encounter in terms of offering pupils a broad and balanced curriculum as well as a wide programme of extra-curricular activities. In 2016/17, Tullycarnet PS has 46 pupils across seven year groups of which four year groups have five or less pupils enrolled. In these circumstances it is likely, as outlined in the SSP, that pupils experience limited opportunities in relation to working alongside their peers, interacting socially and getting involved in team or challenge based experiences . (*The school's enrolment is considered in more detail at paragraphs 4.6 to 4.9 below*).

4.3 The SSP also references the unduly demanding workloads which small schools place on teachers and the fact that they will have less scope for professional interaction and mutual support. It recommends a minimum of four teachers and no more than two composite classes in a single classroom. The EA has confirmed that in 2016/17, Tullycarnet PS has two permanent and three temporary teachers and 3 composite classes (covering Years 1 to 6) and one Year 7 class.

4.4 The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) supports this proposal and its comments on it are attached in full at Appendix D.

4.5 The ETI undertook an inspection of the school in 2013 and also a follow-up inspection in 2014. The 2013 inspection report found the quality of education provided by the school 'satisfactory' and identified areas for improvement in its leadership and management, standards and learning and teaching which needed to be addressed if the needs of children were to be met more effectively. The 2014 follow-up inspection notes a number



of ‘important’ improvements since the previous inspection and found that overall provision had improved by one level to ‘good’ with the capacity to address an area of improvement relating to the need for teacher to provide pupils with more opportunities to undertake extended writing.

### Stable Enrolment Trends

4.6 The SSP’s recommended minimum enrolment threshold for a rural primary school is 105 pupils. It also recommends that the minimum intake of Year 1 pupils required to sustain a rural primary school is 15 pupils (which equates to 105 pupils over seven years).

4.7 The figures below (at Tables 2 and 3) confirm that Tullycarnet PS falls short of both SSP recommendations regarding intake and total enrolment figures. Table 2 below highlights that the school is undersubscribed at Year 1 year on year. Its 2016/17 enrolment has fallen to 46 pupils of which 5 are in Year 1 as compared to the previous year (2015/16) when the school had 71 pupils enrolled of which 10 pupils were in Year 1 at the date of the school census.

4.8 Table 3 below highlights that a number of pupils have left Tullycarnet PS between the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years. For example, of the 10 Year 1 pupils enrolled in 2015/16 only 4 transferred into Year 2 in 2016/17. Of the 10 Year 5 pupils enrolled in 2015/16 only 2 transferred into Year 6 in 2016/17.

4.9 The EA has subsequently confirmed that Tullycarnet PS has not received any Year 1 applications for the 2017/18 school year.

<b>Table 2</b>	<b>Tullycarnet PS – Admission Details</b>					
	<b>Admission No</b>	<b>Year 1 - Applications Received</b>				
		<b>1st Pref</b>	<b>2nd Pref</b>	<b>3rd Pref &amp; Others</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Accepted Applications</b>
<b>2017/18</b>	<b>79</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>2016/17</b>		6	1	0	7	<b>7</b>
<b>2015/16</b>		10	2	1	13	<b>13</b>
<b>2014/15</b>		7	0	0	7	<b>7</b>
<b>2013/14</b>		7	0	0	7	<b>7</b>

<b>TABLE 3: TULLYCARNET PS – Enrolments (includes SEN Stage 5 as numbers attending were less than 4 pupils in each year)</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
<b>Total pupils</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>46</b>

Year 1	15	8	10	10	5
Year 2	7	16	9	9	4
Year 3	8	8	16	8	11
Year 4	9	10	11	14	5
Year 5	9	7	13	10	7
Year 6	5	8	8	12	2
Year 7	7	6	7	8	12

### Sound Financial Position

4.10 In 2015/16 Tullycarnet PS had a closing surplus of £68,965. In 2016/17, the school was allocated a total of £331,406 (which included £43,822 in relation to Small Schools' Support funding). A closing surplus of £63,212 is forecasted. It is also noted that in 2016/17 the pupil per capita allocation for Tullycarnet PS was £4,668 as compared to the primary school per capita average of £3,069.

### Strong Leadership and Management

4.11 ETI undertook an inspection of Tullycarnet PS in 2013 in which it describes the quality of leadership and management of the school as 'good'. No specific mention was made in the subsequent follow-up inspection report undertaken in 2014.

### Accessibility

4.12 Almost all pupils enrolled at Tullycarnet PS live within walking distance of it. (Map 1 above refers). If Tullycarnet PS closes there are other Controlled primary schools in its locality (with capacity) which its pupils could attend. A snapshot of the Controlled (and Integrated) schools in the area is attached in the snapshot at Appendix D.

### Strong Links with the Community

4.13 Tullycarnet PS has a website but the information on it is not current. The most recent information posted on it relates to the 2016/17 school year. The school's building is also used by a number of outside groups and services. Although the school's pupil catchment is local, the decline in the school's enrolment numbers highlights the fact that parents within its local community are choosing to send their children to other schools rather than to Tullycarnet PS.

### Overall Sustainability Assessment

4.14 The above assessment highlights that Tullycarnet PS's enrolments have been decreasing year on year to the point where they fall significantly below the SSP threshold of 105 pupils for a sustainable rural primary school.

4.15 The school's situation is further exacerbated by the fact that it received no Year 1 applications for the 2017/18 school year and that over

the past two school years a number of its pupils have transferred elsewhere. Although these particular matters are potentially attributable to the uncertainty about its future, the fact remains that the school has experienced a historical and sustained pattern of downward trends in both its pupil intake and enrolment numbers.

4.16 There are no evident issues regarding the quality of education provision, leadership and management and budget management at Tullycarnet PS but these matters have to be balanced against the future needs and requirements of the pupils involved at this important stage of their education journey.

4.17 In summary, the above assessment on Tullycarnet PS highlights serious concerns about its future viability and sustainability, particularly given its enrolment position. There is no evidence to suggest that its position in this regard is recoverable.

## **5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### Financial Implications

5.1 The closure of Tullycarnet PS would result in redundancy costs and the potential for additional transport costs (depending on pupils' home addresses and their next available school).

5.2 Teaching and non-teaching staff are afforded employment protection of two years and one year respectively under their respective School Re-organisation Agreements. Both are eligible for redeployment under the transfer redundancy procedure. Redundancy costs will apply to staff wishing to take voluntary redundancy at the time of closure or to those staff who avail of the transferred redundancy or those who, at the end of the two years, have not been successful in obtaining permanent employment. Staff unsuccessful in gaining redeployment or employment during the respective two year and one year protection periods will be treated as supernumerary and a Centre cost. At this stage of the process these costs cannot be determined as there are too many variables.

### Impact on other schools

5.3 The comments below should be read in conjunction with the table at Appendix E which provides a snapshot of Controlled and Integrated education provision around Tullycarnet PS.

5.4 In 2016/17 (including Tullycarnet PS) there were 6,074 Controlled primary places in this area with a total of 5,074 pupils enrolled (variance 100 places). Excluding Tullycarnet PS there was a total of 789 Controlled Year 1 places available with 759 Year 1 applications accepted through the admissions process (variance 30 places).

5.5 The October 2016 school Census records 759 Year 1 pupils actually enrolled between these schools (*and this figure includes SEN Stage 5 pupils*). Therefore, based on the historic Year 1 enrolment figures at Tullycarnet PS (which fell from 15 pupils in 2012/13 to 5 pupils in 2016/17) the figures suggest there is sufficient capacity at Year 1 locally to meet future demand should the school close.

5.6 It is noted that Gilnahirk PS, Dundonald PS, Braniel PS and Brooklands PS and Braniel PS are highlighted in the EA's case for change as the nearest schools to Tullycarnet PS.

5.7 Table 3 below highlights that three of the four schools (Braniel PS, Dundonald PS and Gilnahirk PS) have capacity to accommodate Tullycarnet PS's current enrolment (i.e. Years 1 to 6 = 34 pupils) in the event of its closure. These three schools provide either the same or a better standard of education provision as that provided at Tullycarnet PS.

5.8 Brooklands PS was inspected in January 2017 and ETI has highlighted significant areas for improvement and the need for external support to address these matters. The school is receiving support from the EA through the Formal Intervention Process (FIP - which it entered on 28 February 2017).

<b>Table 3</b> <i>Year 1 Approved/Actual Admissions</i>	<b>Appr'd Adm No</b>	<b>2013/14 Yr 1 Actual</b>	<b>2014/15 Yr 1 Actual</b>	<b>2015/16 Yr 1 Actual</b>	<b>2016/17 Yr 1 Actual</b>	<b>2016/17 Available Places</b>	<b>2017/18 Under/Over- subscribed Yr 1 first preference</b>	<b>ETI reports Overall Quality of Education Provision</b>
Brooklands PS	<b>95</b>	87	79	72	73	203	U	Significant areas for improvement identified/FIP
Gilnahirk PS	<b>60</b>	60	60	61	60	37	U	Outstanding
Dundonald PS	<b>116</b>	119	114	123	116	39	U	Very Good
Braniel PS	<b>58</b>	54	55	56	55	64	U	Good
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>343</b>		

5.9 The nearest Integrated primary school to Tullycarnet PS is Loughview Integrated PS. This school has limited capacity in 2016/17 with 3 available places (between Years 2 to 7 only). This position is likely to continue in 2017/18 given that Loughview IPS has accepted 60 Year 1 applications (for 58 places).

#### Tullycarnet PS Building – Future Use

5.10 The EA's case for change notes that over one third of the school's building is used by outside groups which include Tullycarnet Community

Support Services and Barnardos. It is also a matter which ETI has raised in its comments on this proposal.

5.11 The Department is aware that external organisations deliver a range of programmes and services from the Tullycarnet PS building, including Sure Start, Family Connections, a playgroup and a childcare grant scheme.

5.12 Future use of the Tullycarnet PS building, in the event of the school's closure, is a matter for the EA (rather than the Department) in the first instance. Issues related to the use of the building by outside agencies do not impact directly on the merits of this development proposal, the focus of which relates specifically to the future of the school only. The case for change notes the EA's intention to work with all affected groups, stakeholders, public agencies and interested parties if Tullycarnet PS is to close.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 The Department's vision is to ensure that every learner fulfils his or her full potential at each stage of development. All Departmental policies and processes, including Area Planning, contribute to the delivery of that vision and all have, as a central tenant, the educational well-being of children and young people.

6.2 The SSP implemented through Area Planning aims to provide a network of sustainable and viable schools that are of the right type, the right size, located in the right place and have a focus on raising standards. It contributes to the draft Programme for Government, particularly the (*We give our children and young people the best start in life*) outcome.

6.3 The SSP is clear that the core issue for a school's sustainability must be the continuing provision of a high quality education for the children. Generally it is acknowledged that as numbers in a school decline, the challenges it must overcome in order to provide a high quality education rise. In recognition of this the BOG of Tullycarnet PS has indicated that it would be in the best interest of the pupils enrolled if the school were to close.

6.4 The closure of any school is a difficult matter, but in the case of Tullycarnet PS, the school and its local community have accepted there is no alternative solution. This is evidenced by the fact that during the two-month statutory objection period on this proposal, no letters of objection were submitted to the Department.

6.5 The Department's overriding considerations relate to the pupils involved. Tullycarnet PS's intakes and enrolment have been at unsustainable levels for some years with no evidence that a recovery can be brought about. The future of Tullycarnet PS must be urgently addressed, not only to protect the overall educational experience for the pupils involved but also to provide certainty for local parents and the community.

6.6 Evidence suggests that there is sufficient capacity in the locality to enable pupils currently attending Tullycarnet PS (around 34 pupils in Years 1 to 6) to transfer to nearby schools which offer the same or a better standard of education provision as Tullycarnet PS in order to complete their primary education and that there are enough Year 1 places in the locality to meet future demand.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 Taking account of all of the evidence provided, the Department agrees with the EA's conclusion that closure of Tullycarnet PS is the only viable solution in this case. It is recommended that you:

- (i) Approve DP 496 – to close Tullycarnet PS with effect from 31 August 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- (ii) Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) will be published on the Department's website once the EA and school have been informed of your decision.

7.2 I attach the following for your consideration.

### Appendices:

- A: SSP, Area Planning and DP background information
- B: DP 496/EA's case for change
- C: Note of meeting - extract (DE/Chair BoG)
- D: ETI comments
- E: Supporting statistics



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CC

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS POLICY, AREA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PROCESSES**

*The purpose of this Appendix is to provide detailed background information on the policies and processes relating to Area Planning that have been in place up to the current time. These set the context within which Development Proposals for any significant change to a school are brought forward for consideration and decision.*

#### **Content**

- 1) Departmental Vision**
  
- 2) Sustainable Schools Policy**
  
- 3) Area Planning Process**
  
- 4) Development Proposal Process**
  
- 5) Glossary**



## **1. Departmental Vision**

1.1 The Department of Education (DE) has a vision for the education sector which is to see: *“Every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.”* This aligns with the commitment in the draft Programme for Government which identifies a number of key indicators for education. Although the work of the Department extends across many of the 14 outcomes its key focus lies with Outcome 14 namely that - *“We give our children and young people the best start in life”*.

1.2 All Department policies and processes are focussed on achieving its aim. “Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools” (SSP) plays a key role in delivering this vision as it aims to establish a network of sustainable schools offering high quality educational experiences and outcomes for all pupils, while making the best use of available resources. The process for implementing this policy is Area Planning. The SSP can be found on the Department’s website at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/policy-sustainable-schools>

1.3 The SSP does not apply to pre-school or Special Education provision these are taken forward under other relevant policies. However, Area Planning applies to primary, post-primary and special schools and ensures that provision is planned strategically to deliver sustainable, high quality education to all pupils.

1.4 Responsibility for Area Planning sits with DE’s Area Planning Policy Team (APPT) within the Area Planning, Admissions and Shared Campuses Directorate (APASCD).

## **2. Sustainable Schools Policy**

2.1 The SSP focuses on the longer-term viability of schools provision and its primary objective is to ensure that all children get a first class education in fit for purpose facilities, regardless of background or where they live, making best use of the resources available for education. This policy drives the Area Planning process to ensure there is a network of strong viable schools to meet the educational needs of children and young people.

2.2 The SSP sets out six criteria to be considered in assessing a school’s viability:-

- Quality Educational Experience
- Stable Enrolment Trends
- Sound Financial Position
- Strong Leadership and Management
- Accessibility

- Strong Links with the Community.

2.3 The policy also sets out the enrolment thresholds follows:-

School Type	Pupil Numbers
Rural Primary	105
Urban Primary**	140
Post-Primary*	500
Sixth Form	100

\*excluding 6<sup>th</sup> form provision

\*\* Urban is currently defined in the SSP as "Belfast and Derry City Council areas".

2.4 It is the SSP's intention that all those involved with schools, including Boards of Governors (BoG), teachers and the local community use these criteria to assess the sustainability of education provision at a school and to help determine whether early intervention is required in an aspect of the school's operation. The SSP is not intended to be used mechanistically but simply as a benchmark against which a school can be considered taking account of local circumstances on a case by case basis. The overriding priority must be the quality of education provided for children and young people, with the focus on pupils and not institutions.

### **3. Area Planning Process**

3.1 Area Planning is the process designed to implement the Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) It has been primarily developed to support the strategic planning of primary and post-primary education provision and is central to achieving the Departmental vision for education. The SSP aims 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 education system. It also takes account of the strategic planning for Special Education provision in line with the Review of Special Education.

3.2 Area Planning is a complex process and there are a number of key contributors with differing statutory and non-statutory roles, summarised as follows:

**DE:** The effective implementation of the SSP and embedding of the Area Planning process have been key priorities for the Department. DE responsibilities include: setting and reviewing policy and area planning support frameworks and ensuring planning operates within them; providing advice and guidance to the planning authorities and sectoral support bodies; and scrutinizing and challenging Area Plans and Annual Action Plans. DE requires that the Education Authority (EA) produces a 3-year

strategic regional Area Plan covering the primary, post-primary and special schools sectors, supported by an Annual Action Plan (further details at paragraphs 3.4 to 3.7 below).

- DE has a duty under Article 64 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 to encourage and facilitate Integrated education and a duty under Article 89 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1998 to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education.
- The Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 also places a duty on the Department of Education to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education. It also places a duty on DE, EA and CCMS to consider Shared Education when-
  - (a) developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans: and
  - (b) designing and delivering public services.
- **Education Authority (EA):** has overall operational responsibility for planning of provision within the policy and strategic framework set by DE as it has statutory duties to ensure that efficient primary and secondary education provision is available to meet the needs of all pupils and that schools, sufficient in number, character and equipment are available. In addition it also has a statutory duty to plan for controlled schools. It therefore plays a central role in the Area Planning process. Its activities include the production and publishing of Annual Area Profiles, Area Plans and Annual Action Plans in line with the Area Planning cycle, having represented and reflected the interests of all other school sectors.
- **Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS):** has a statutory duty to promote and co-ordinate, in consultation with the Trustees, the planning of effective provision of Catholic maintained schools. For the purposes of Area Planning, CCMS provides input for and represents the interests of the Catholic maintained sector. Its responsibilities also include engagement with the EA and other sectors in identifying innovative, creative and shared solutions for sustainable provision. The subsidiary planning role of CCMS was unaffected by the formation of the EA in 2015.
- **Sectoral Support Bodies:** within the Area Planning structures, other sectoral support bodies namely, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), Comhairle na Gaelscolaíocht (CnaG), the Controlled Sector Support Council (CSSC), the Governing Bodies Association (GBA) and the Catholic Schools Trustees Service (CSTS) reflect the views of their respective sectors. While not planning authorities these bodies are charged and funded by the Department with providing support to the sectors they represent in matters relating to Area Planning.
- **Other Participants:** the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), and the Department for the Economy (DfE) also have roles, the former as Professional Education Advisors and the latter in advising on compatibility with its plans for Further Education (FE).

3.3 The following Area Planning structures have been put in place by DE and the EA to provide strategic direction, operational consistency and opportunity to actively engage with key stakeholder bodies.

- **Area Planning Steering Group (APSG):** was established to support the Department as it takes forward work to establish the implementation process for Area Planning. It also provides a forum for Chief Executives and senior officials to discuss and agree a common approach to issues which arise in relation to Area Planning. Previously, the Education Minister chaired two of four quarterly annual meetings.
- **Area Planning Working Group (APWG):** was established to bring together representatives of the planning authorities and sectoral bodies involved in operational aspects of Area Planning. Its purpose is to provide a regular forum for discussing cross-district/cross-sectoral issues and concerns, agreeing solutions to be applied by all relevant bodies or, where necessary, raising them to the APSG for consideration and resolution.
- **Area Planning Local Groups (APLGs):** are geographically determined groups set up by the EA to bring together local stakeholders including planning authorities, sectoral bodies, voluntary grammar school representatives and any other relevant interests, including Further Education (FE). They contribute to any review or revision of an existing Area Plan and assist with the implementation process for Area Plans before they are sent to the EA for approval.

3.4 The **Area Planning Cycle** is the timetable which underpins the Area Planning process. An Area Plan will cover three financial years (April to March), with the current planning period commencing in April 2017, aligning with the start of the Community Planning cycle. The Strategic Area Plan (“Providing Pathways”) covers the period April 2017 to March 2020 is to be published shortly and will be accompanied by an Annual Action Plan for 2017/18.. In addition to this Annual Area Profiles for each primary and post-primary school are published by the EA around May/June each year.

3.5 The **Area Plan** is a single strategic regional plan covering the whole of Northern Ireland which sets out a series of key strategic themes and priorities for action at system level, applied locally to the 11 Local Government Districts (LGD). It has a three year life span which covers all primary and post-primary schools of all management types and all special schools.

3.6 The **Annual Action Plan** which supports the implementation of the Area Plan is a work programme for the schools managing authorities. It outlining actions to address the strategic issues and will contain details of specific proposals for action to determine the shape of education provision in Local Government Districts. These actions will include details of Development Proposals (DPs) for named schools to give effect to the proposed changes. The Action Plan will be monitored to assess the progress on the delivery of the Area Plan.

3.7 The **Annual Area Profile** provides a statistical snapshot of every grant-aided primary and post-primary school. Its purpose is to provide the public with a clear picture of the shape of education provision in their area and to encourage informed local involvement in the area planning process. The Annual Area Profiles are published on the EA website and contain a range of information in a common and accessible format. For all primary and post-primary schools, the information will include details about admissions and enrolments, first preference applications and budgets. Details on performance outcomes and compliance with the Entitlement Framework are provided for post-primary schools only.

3.8 **Population Trends** inform plans for future overall provision. The EA liaises directly with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to obtain information regarding population projection trends which it will use to inform Area Planning and to deliver a sufficient number of school places to meet projected demand in all sectors.

#### **4. Development Proposal Process**

4.1 A copy of DE Circular 2014/21 'Publication of a Development Proposal' can be found at the following link on the Department's website:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/2014-21-publication-of-a-development-proposal.pdf>

4.2 Any significant change to be made to a school can only be made through the publication of a DP as required by Article 14 (as amended) of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986. DPs are therefore the means by which any significant changes required to a school, identified through the Area Planning process, are made to reshape provision in an area to deliver the strategic vision outlined in the area plan.

4.3 DE seeks to ensure that, regardless of the reason for the proposal, all DPs are considered in the wider context of the Department's statutory duties and policies and that all proposals support the implementation of the Area Plan.

4.4 DPs are brought forward by a 'Proposer'. The Proposer is the relevant school managing authority which includes the EA (for Controlled schools), the CCMS (for Catholic maintained schools) as well as individual BoGs of voluntary maintained schools, VGSs and GMI schools. Owners of independent schools may also bring forward a proposal to seek grant-aided status subject to meeting all the statutory requirements of a grant-aided school.

4.5 A key role of the Proposer is the development of a detailed Case for Change to support the proposal. This will include the rationale for the

proposal together with supporting robust and verifiable evidence which clearly demonstrates that the proposal aligns to the Area Plan and is policy compliant.

4.6 The four main stages in the DP process are:-

- (i) **identification of need** in the Area Planning context; getting a proposal right at this stage will impact positively on the success of the proposal. The focus should be on educational benefits and provision of high quality education that meets the needs of children and young people and takes account of parental preference.
- (ii) **statutory pre-publication consultations**; the proposer must consult with the BoG, staff and parents of registered pupils of the affected school. On receipt of a DP, the EA (which publishes all DPs irrespective of sector) must consult with schools likely to be affected by it.
- (iii) **publication of a DP**; the EA publishes DPs on behalf of a proposer in newspapers.
- (iv) **statutory 2month objection period**; this is triggered at the date of publication and during this period anyone interested in or affected by a DP can submit their views (for or against a proposal) directly to DE. The public can request a meeting with Departmental Officials or the Minister at this stage of the process and these requests are normally facilitated, diaries permitting. At the end of the two month period, DE compiles and assesses all relevant information before making a recommendation on a DP to the decision maker. This decision is final and concludes the DP process.

4.7 All DPs are considered on a case by case basis within the general DP policy framework. In the case of Integrated and Irish-medium proposals full account must be taken of DE's duty to encourage and facilitate in accordance with the relevant legislation. A DP will be approved or not approved, although in some instances approval of a DP can be subject to modification in line with Article 14(7) of the 1986 Order.

4.8 DE's power to impose conditions on DPs is limited. The Education Orders provide that the only DPs to which specific conditions can be attached are those for the establishment of GMI and voluntary Irish medium schools). Other conditions (imposed when schools are opening or transforming) will relate to Department policies and not the approval itself.

4.9 A DP approved by the Department must be implemented in full. Further changes can only be made through the publication of another DP. Following approval, proposers may seek the Department's approval to defer implementation of the DP.

4.10 Although legislation does not provide for appeal, the Department's decision can be challenged through an application for judicial review (JR).



## Glossary

<b>ALB</b>	Arms Length Body
<b>APASCD</b> Directorate	Area Planning, Admissions and Shared Campuses
<b>APLG</b>	Area Planning Local Group
<b>APPT</b>	Area Planning Policy Team
<b>APSG</b>	Area Planning Steering Group
<b>APWG</b>	Area Planning Working Group
<b>BoG</b>	Board of Governors
<b>CCMS</b>	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
<b>CnaG</b>	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
<b>CSSC</b>	Controlled Schools Support Council
<b>CSTS</b>	Catholic Schools Trustees Service
<b>DE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DfE</b>	Department for the Economy
<b>DP</b>	Development Proposal
<b>EA</b>	Education Authority
<b>ETI</b>	Education and Training Inspectorate
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>GBA</b>	Governing Bodies Association
<b>GMI</b>	Grant Maintained Integrated
<b>IM</b>	Irish Medium
<b>JR</b>	Judicial Review
<b>NICIE</b>	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
<b>NISRA</b>	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
<b>SSP</b>	Sustainable Schools Policy
<b>VGS</b>	Voluntary Grammar School



## APPENDIX B



Chief Executive Gavin Boyd

22 February 2017

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

Dear Sir,

**Development Proposal 496** – The Education Authority has brought forward the following proposal:

**The Education Authority proposes that Tullycarnet Primary School should close with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

The Education Authority undertook formal written consultation with schools that may be affected by the proposal. This consultation phase closed on the 13 January 2017. A copy of the report on the consultation process is enclosed for your information.

The Authority believes that the closure of Tullycarnet Primary School is the most appropriate course of action due to the continued decline in the school's enrolment. As at September 2016, the school has 46 pupils enrolled – this is well below the 140 threshold indicated by the sustainable schools criteria.

It is anticipated that the Minister will give careful consideration to the proposal and approve the closure of Tullycarnet Primary School with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Martin', is written over a horizontal line.

**Stephen Martin**  
Development Officer

Education Authority, South Eastern Region

Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald, Belfast, BT16 2HS T: +44 (0)28 9056 6200 W: [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk)

# **EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

## **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 496**

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:

**The Education Authority proposes that Tullycarnet Primary School should close with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

A copy of the Proposal may be inspected at offices of the Education Authority located at Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald, Belfast, BT16 2HS between the hours of 9.00 am and 4.30 pm.

Any objections 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](mailto:dps@education-ni.gov.uk) within two months of the date of publication of this notice.

**NOTE:** 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 to 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).


**Gavin Boyd**  
**Chief Executive**

## CASE FOR CHANGE - Supporting Information

### SUMMARY / OVERVIEW

<b>EDUCATION AUTHORITY AREA</b>	Belfast
<b>DP NUMBER</b>	496
<b>PROPOSER</b>	Education Authority Contact: Stephen Martin, 028 90 566346, Stephen.Martin2@eani.org.uk
<b>SCHOOL(S) NAME</b>	Tullycarnet Primary School
<b>SCHOOL REFERENCE</b>	4013038
<b>TYPE</b>	Primary
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	Controlled
<b>DP PUBLICATION DATE</b>	16 February 2017
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	The Education Authority proposes that Tullycarnet Primary School should close with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

### STATUTORY CONSULTATION

<b>BY THE AUTHORITY</b>	<p>I confirm that the schools which the EA considers might be impacted by this proposal were consulted on 28 November 2016.</p> <p>In addition to formal meetings letters were forwarded to the Board of Governors, staff and parents of Tullycarnet Primary School to ask their opinion of the development proposal.</p> <p>Any schools that may be impacted by the proposal were also contacted in writing to asked for their views.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>SIGNED <span style="float: right;">DATE: 22.2.17</span></p>
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## **BACKGROUND**

Tullycarnet Primary school was opened in 1968 and is located on a 1.3 hectare site.

The school has an approved enrolment of 552 and an admission figure of 79. As of September 2016 the school has a total of 45 pupils enrolled. The enrolment history of the school is provided under the statistical information section of this paper.

A number of pupils who reside close to Tullycarnet Primary School choose to go to other schools in the area, i.e. Gilnahirk, Dundonald and Braniel.

The school building is 2,354m<sup>2</sup> in size with 18 class bases available however over a third of the school building is permanently used by outside groups

These outside groups are Tullycarnet Community Support Services and Barnardos. Both of these groups occupy large sections of the school buildings and provide various services to the local community.

Should Tullycarnet Primary School close the Education Authority will work with these groups and all affected stakeholders, public agencies and interested parties to ascertain the best future use of the school building and site. It should be noted that the Authority is limited in any direct action it can take on the future role of the building. Approval for any action would need to be obtained from the Department of Education and other Departments.

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## **RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL**

The only course of action is:

### **Option 5 - Close Tullycarnet Primary School**

Officers have met with the Board of Governors, principal and parents to discuss all options and based on all available information the Authority believes that the only viable option is to close the school.

The Governors and principal have agreed that closure is the only way forward and they have indicated that their preference is for a closure by September 2017.

The parents have agreed that it would be better for the pupils that the closure occurs as soon as possible.

### **The Education Authority has ruled out the following proposals:**

#### **Option 1 – Retain Tullycarnet Primary School**

The Authority has to make the best use of its limited resources and also ensure all pupils have access to the best educational experience possible.

The continued decline in the enrolment of Tullycarnet Primary School has placed extensive constraints on this accessibility, e.g. inability to take advantage of extra-curricular activities.

Therefore this option was ruled out.

### **Option 2 - Downsize Tullycarnet PS to a size in keeping with its actual enrolment**

Under this option the school's approved enrolment of 552 would be modified to a size more in keeping with the projected enrolment of Tullycarnet Primary School.

Based on the last three year 1 admissions, the school has a long term enrolment of 65. It would not be feasible to reduce a school in an urban setting to a 3 classbase facility.

This option was ruled out of consideration.

### **Option 3 - Merge Tullycarnet Primary School with a neighbouring school**

In order to make a merger viable it is important the schools being merged are of, or close to, a similar size.

In the case of Tullycarnet Primary school all the neighbouring schools have enrolments well above their figures – merging Tullycarnet Primary School with one of these schools would not be viewed as an amalgamation.

This option was ruled out of consideration .

### **Option 4 - Transform Tullycarnet PS to a controlled integrated school and resize the school**

There is already integrated provision in the area, with the potential for more provision by way of a school relocating into the Castlereagh dual carriageway area.

In addition, to make a transformation successful it needs to be led by the parents and local community and there has been no indication that there is support for this course of action.

This option was ruled out.

#### **Area Planning Impact**

The former SEELB published its Primary Area Plan in June 2014 and within this document the Board raised concerns over the long term sustainability of Tullycarnet Primary School. The proposal was as follows:

*"Given the issues in relation to Tullycarnet Primary School Board officers will initiate consultation with the Board of Governors to discuss the future sustainability of the school."*

The issues at the school are:

- School's enrolment for 2015/16, 71 pupils, is below the minimum enrolment threshold detailed in the Sustainable Schools Policy.
- Pattern of low enrolment however at present there are 27 in P1-P3 as opposed to 30 in P5-P7.
- The number of unfilled places in local area

The Authority believes that the closure of Tullycarnet Primary School is the only viable option

– Officers will liaise with other local schools to ensure that parents are provided with the most current information on the availability of places and will assist them throughout the process.

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## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Tullycarnet Primary School has a DE enrolment of 552 and an admission number of 79.

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Total	% Places Available
2015/2016	10	9	8	14	10	12	8	71	87.13%
2014/2015	10	9	16	11	13	8	7	74	86.59%
2013/2014	8	16	8	10	7	8	6	63	88.59%
2012/2013	15	7	8	9	9	5	7	60	89.13%
2011/2012	8	12	9	10	5	7	9	60	89.13%
2010/2011	14	13	12	7	10	11	12	79	85.69%
2009/2010	13	10	9	11	11	12	14	80	85.51%
2008/2009	8	11	9	10	11	14	15	78	85.87%
2007/2008	11	10	11	12	13	13	18	88	84.06%
2006/2007	10	11	14	12	16	20	24	107	80.62%
2005/2006	11	14	13	16	20	24	28	126	77.17%
2004/2005	16	14	19	22	24	33	30	158	71.38%
2003/2004	16	21	23	26	32	32	25	175	68.30%
2002/2003	25	24	28	33	34	25	40	209	62.14%
2001/2002	26	29	33	34	27	40	33	222	59.78%
2000/2001	28	35	34	28	39	33	36	233	57.79%
1999/2000	35	38	30	41	40	37	43	264	52.17%

The level of available places at the school has remained at over 80% since 2006/2007.

There are a number of available places in controlled primary schools in the area:

School	Enrol 2015/16	Special Unit	Nursery Unit	Capacity 2015/16	Available Places 2015/16	Approximate distance from Tullycarnet PS (miles)
Brooklands PS	473	0	26/52	665	192	2
Dundonald PS	773	0	0	813	40	2
Gilnahirik PS	427	0	0	445	18	1
Braniel PS	313	0	26/52	408	95	2
Total surplus places					345	

The schools detailed are maintaining an enrolment above the threshold stated in the Sustainable Schools Criteria and there are no plans to take any action at these locations. The school's annual area profile as at June 2016 is shown overleaf.

## Primary School Annual Area Profile June 2016

<b>DE Ref No:</b>	<b>School Name:</b>	<b>Status:</b>	<b>Council Area:</b>
4013038	Tullycarnet Primary School	Controlled	BELFAST

<b>Annual Census Information</b>			
Year	Total pupils Y1-Y7	IMU	FSME %
2012/13	60	0	61.7
2013/14	63	0	55.6
2014/15	74	0	73.0
2015/16	71	0	76.1
Approved Reception - Year 7 enrolment number			552
Approved Reception - Year 7 admissions number			79
Year 1 Pupils 2015/16			10
First Preferences Applications 2015/16			10

<b>Formal Intervention</b>
In formal intervention any period 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

<b>Budgets</b>			
Year	Available Delegated Resources £	Surplus/Deficit £	Surplus/Deficit %
2012/13	326,038	34,455	10.57%
2013/14	324,993	37,583	11.56%
2014/15	341,490	44,732	13.10%

KEY TO SYMBOLS & TEXT USED IN DATA ABOVE	
Symbol / Text	Definition
	Relates to fewer than 5 cases.
⋮	Means that a figure greater than or equal to 5 had been treated to prevent disclosure of a small number elsewhere
-	School not open in the relevant academic year
n/a	No year 7 pupils

## EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

With an enrolment of 46 in 2016/2017 the current level of available places at Tullycarnet Primary School is unsustainable and the Authority must take action to resolve the issue.

The educational benefits of this proposal will be that children will move to larger classes where they will have access to greater social interaction. There will be greater opportunity for healthy intellectual competition among peers.

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## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The proposal to close Tullycarnet Primary School has been brought forward due to the continued decline in the school's enrolment and the difficulties encountered by the school in providing the pupils the full educational experience.

The proposed timeline for action is as follows:

Proposed Actions	Timeframe
Meetings with parents, staff and BoG of Tullycarnet Primary School	28 November 2016
Consultation with Tullycarnet Primary School stakeholders and other affected schools	28 November 2016 to 13 January 2017
Report to Education Committee for approval to publish	09-Feb-17
Proposal published	16 Feb 2017
Proposal submitted to DE - 2 month Statutory Objection period.	16 Feb 2017 to 16 April 2017
EA officers meet with parents to identify preferred new schools	Spring / Summer term 2017
Engage in transition arrangements with chosen schools	Spring / Summer term 2017
HR issues regarding teaching and non-teaching staff	Summer term 2017
Closure of Tullycarnet Primary school	31 August 2017.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The closure of Tullycarnet Primary School will result in redundancy costs and the potential for additional transport costs (dependant on the home address of the pupil and the next nearest suitable school).



Those pupils with special educational requirements, and who are in receipt of a statement, will receive the same level of provision at whichever school they choose to attend.

The teaching staff is afforded employment protection under the School Re-Organisation Agreement 2013/2 for two years. Teaching staff are eligible for redeployment under the transfer redundancy procedure. Redundancy costs will apply to those staff wishing to take voluntary redundancy at the time of closure, or those teachers who avail of the transferred redundancy, or to those teachers at the end of the two year protection who have not been successful in obtaining permanent employment. Those teachers not redeployed to other schools under transferred redundancy or gain permanent employment elsewhere are treated as supernumerary during the two year employment protection period will be treated as a centre cost.

For those non-teaching staff made redundant a similar School Re-Organisation Agreement is in place for a period of one year. The staff can also avail of a transferred redundancy procedure. Redundancy costs will apply to those staff wishing to take voluntary redundancy at the time of closure, or those teachers who avail of the transferred redundancy, or to those staff at the end of the one year protection who have not been successful in obtaining permanent employment. Those staff not redeployed to other schools under transferred redundancy or gain permanent employment elsewhere are treated as supernumerary during the one year employment protection period will be treated as a centre cost.

## **STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

The Education Authority has undertaken a series of meetings with staff, parents and Governors of Tullycarnet Primary School to discuss options and obtain views on the best way forward for the pupils.

The first meetings took place on 7 March 2016 followed by meetings with the Principal, the Board of Governors and parents in September and October 2016.

A consultation meeting with the Governors, parents and staff took place on 28 November 2016.

The Authority has also carried out a written consultation exercise with the staff, parents and Governors of Tullycarnet Primary School. This consultation concluded on the 13 January 2017.

Those schools in the area that may be impacted by the closure of the school were also asked for their views.

A report on this consultation is attached.

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTS**

See attached letter.

SIGNED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. M. J.', written over a faint circular stamp.

POSITION: Development Officer

DATE:

22 Feb/2017

## Report on Preliminary Consultation

### 1. Request for Development Proposal

The Education Authority proposes that Tullycarnet Primary School should close with effect from 31 August 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

### 2. Consultation with schools affected by the proposal

In accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 a copy of the proposal was sent, on 28 November 2016, to schools which might be affected by the proposal. Comments were invited from the Boards of Governors and Trustees, staff and parents of pupils to be returned to the Education Authority by 13 January 2017.

A total of 22 schools were forwarded the draft proposal for their comments.

In addition all schools in the Belfast region were forwarded a copy of the proposal for their views.

### 3. Responses

There were two responses to this proposal.

Barry Mulholland, Controlled Schools Support Council  
Unknown Respondent

#### Barry Mulholland, Controlled Schools Support Council

- The CSSC does not wish to raise an objection in respect of the Education Authority's consideration of the publication of this proposal.

#### Unknown Respondent

- If money and resources had been invested in the school, especially in the building, fabric, heating etc and more support given by the Board, enrolment would not have declined so drastically, particularly in this last academic year when no intake was permitted.
- Smaller numbers in Tullycarnet PS are a positive benefit particularly those with disabilities and family members all at the one school.

### **EA response**

It is incorrect that Tullycarnet Primary School was stopped from admitting new pupils.

Due to the continued decline in the enrolment of Tullycarnet Primary School the Education Authority believes that the most appropriate course of action is the closure of the school. Officers from the Authority will work with the parents of the pupils to minimize the impact on their children.

#### **4. Action**

The proposal will be published in the Belfast Telegraph on 16 February 2017.

## **APPENDIX C     EXTRACT FROM NOTE OF 2 MARCH 2017 MEETING**

### **(DISCUSSION ABOUT DP 496)**

#### **NOTE FOR THE RECORD**

##### **Meeting on 2 March 2017 4.00 pm with Mr Reg Magowan, Chair of the Board of Governors (BoG) Tullycarnet Primary School (PS)**

Present:        Mr Magowan  
                  Fiona Hepper, Deputy Secretary DE  
                  Jacqui Durkin, Director of Area Planning, Admissions and Shared Campuses,  
                  DE

Mr Magowan explained his history with Tullycarnet PS and the Development Proposal (DP) to close Tullycarnet PS with effect from 1 September 2017. The DP is in its statutory objection period until 19 April 2017.

He made the following points:

- pupils are going past the school to attend other schools,
- the estate has grown old and has an aging population so there is no likelihood of increasing enrolment;
- there are 41 pupils at present, 12 of which are in P7, another 9 pupils will be going to other schools from September which would leave about 21 pupils in the school;
- there are 2 permanent (including an acting Principal) and 3 temporary teachers, 1 wants to retire and 1 would require redeployment;
- while the school wasn't under financial pressure the buildings were in a terrible state;
- there couldn't be a better time to close the school;
- pupils lacked ambition and in his view standards would be raised from more interaction with peers and opportunities for extra-curricular activities in a bigger school;
- he has met Gavin Robinson and Robin Newton to brief them and in his view they accepted the situation and he is not expecting them to object.

Fiona Hepper explained the process and timescale for a decision following the objection period and no Minister currently being in place, however, this should be resolved in due course.

Jacqui Durkin  
6.3.17

## Appendix D



### THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE RESPONSE TO A DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL (DP) 496

#### SECTION 1 RESPONSE FORM

PHASE	Primary
ELB	SE2
DP REFERENCE NUMBER (S)	496
PROPOSAL (S)	Closure of Tullycarnet Primary School
DATE OF RECEIPT OF DP (DI)	23.02.2017
DATE OF RETURN OF DP (DI)	
DATE OF RETURN to APPT Via ACI	
ACI DIRECTORATE TITLE	SCHOOLS
NAME OF DE CONTACT AND DATE AS STATED ON EMAIL	██████████
Note about this response: (where relevant)	
<b>DUE DATE</b>	<b>16 March 2017</b>

#### **EDUCATIONAL PROVISION**

- Tullycarnet Primary school is a controlled primary school situated in Tullycarnet Housing Estate in East Belfast.
- At the time of the last inspection, an analysis of the end of key stage (KS) 2 assessment data<sup>i</sup> over the previous four years showed that the school's performance in English had been consistently below the Northern Ireland (NI) average, while, in three of the previous four years, the performance in mathematics was also below the NI average.
- The inspection evaluated the overall provision for the school as being satisfactory though leadership and management were found to be good.
- The overall provision was evaluated as good in the follow-up inspection (FUI), in November 2014.

#### **ETI KNOWLEDGE**

- The enrolment has been declining steadily; at the time of the most recent inspection in January 2013, the enrolment was 61 children. It stands currently at 46 children which is well below the minimum enrolment threshold detailed in the Department of Education's *Sustainable Schools Policy*.
- It should be noted that the provision for the nurture group in the school was evaluated as very good.

#### **RATIONALE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETI EVIDENCE**

- There has been a long-standing 'Draft Area Plan for Primary Schools' originally published by SEELB in which a 'local area solution (involving Tullycarnet) is to be explored'. The acting principal reported that the uncertainty caused by the proposal has contributed to the falling enrolment.
- There are a number of primary schools in the area which range from Gilnahirk Primary School (PS) ('outstanding' in recent inspection), Dundonald PS (new build, and 'very good' in last inspection) and Brooklands (recently put into the Formal Intervention Programme (FIP)); so, there are at least two alternative good or better schools in the area to which parents can apply to enrol their children.

Given the above and the fact that enrolment has declined steadily and, at 46, is so far below the 140-pupil threshold, the ETI would agree with the development proposal.

#### **MATTERS ARISING OR FURTHER QUERIES BY ETI**

The school building has long housed some outside agencies including a community support service and Barnardos. These agencies have been serving well the local community.

#### **ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

N/A

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Based upon the evidence available, the ETI supports the proposal to close the school in the face of such a significant declining enrolment. However, due consideration must also be given to those agencies, such as Barnardos, who currently use the school premises.

<sup>1</sup> The key stage outcomes should be interpreted with caution for small primary schools as a large percentage change from year to year can often be attributed to a very small number of children

APPENDIX E		SNAPSHOT OF TULLYCARNET PS & LOCAL PROVIDERS								
Sector/School	EA REGION South-East/ Belfast	Appr'd Enrol (16/17)	2013/14 Enrol*	2014/15 Enrol *	2015/16 Enrol*	2016/17 Enrol*	2016/17 SEN Stage 5 pupils	2016/17 Available Places	Appr'd Adm Nos Year 1	2016/17 First Pref Applics
<b>Controlled</b>										
Tullycarnet PS	SE	552	63	74	71	46	#	506**	79	6
Gilnahirk PS	SE	445	399	404	412	409	13	37	60	70
Dundonald PS	SE	813	677	711	751	775	23	39	116	120
Brooklands PS	SE	665	427	440	456	462	16	203	95	71
Orangefield PS	SE	406	395	397	399	404	11	1	58	70
Leadhill PS	SE	210	99	108	122	132	8	78	30	22
Braniel PS	SE	408	283	287	300	344	18	64	58	48
Harding Memorial PS	B	210	195	198	202	204	5	6	30	36
Elmgrove**	B	620	554	534	613	602	20	18	87	80
Dundela Infants (Years 1-3)	B	252	248	239	238	232	7	20	84	78
Belmont PS (Years 1-3)	B	252	249	252	254	254	#	0**	84	100
Greenwood PS (Years 1-3)	B	261	259	262	261	260	#	1**	87	76
Strandtown PS (Years 4-7)	B	980	890	911	913	950	26	30	n/a	n/a
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>6074</b>	<b>4738</b>	<b>4817</b>	<b>4992</b>	<b>5074</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>1003</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>777</b>
<b>Integrated</b>										
Loughview IPS	SE	406	408	407	406	403	13	3	58	60
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>406</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>6480</b>	<b>5146</b>	<b>5224</b>	<b>5398</b>	<b>5477</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>837</b>

# Denotes 4 or less pupils

\*excludes SEN Stage 5 pupils (except where SEN Stage 5 numbers are 4 or less)

\*\*calculation includes SEN Stage 5 pupils due to small numbers attending that school