

COPY OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Cover Note

DP No.	448	
School	Forth River Primary School (PS), Belfast	
Proposal	To reduce the enrolment number of Forth River PS from 232 to 210, in line with the school's admissions number of 30, with effect from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.	
Minister's Decision	DP 448 – Approved.	
Date of Decision	17 June 2016	
Minister's Comments	n/a	
Additional notes	n/a	
Information redacted	Some information and personal data may have been removed in line with the principles of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act.	
	Key	Details
	■	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: 1 June 2016

To: PETER WEIR MLA

Copy distribution below

**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO 448 – FORTH RIVER PRIMARY SCHOOL,
BELFAST– DECREASE ENROLMENT**

Issue: Development Proposal No 448, published by the Education Authority, aims to reduce Forth River PS's enrolment number from 232 to 210 in line with the school's admissions number of 30, from 1 September 2016 *or as soon as possible thereafter*.

Timescale: Routine.

Financial/Resource Implications: None.

FOI Implications: The contents of this submission are likely to be fully disclosable.

Statutory Duty Implications: *n/a*

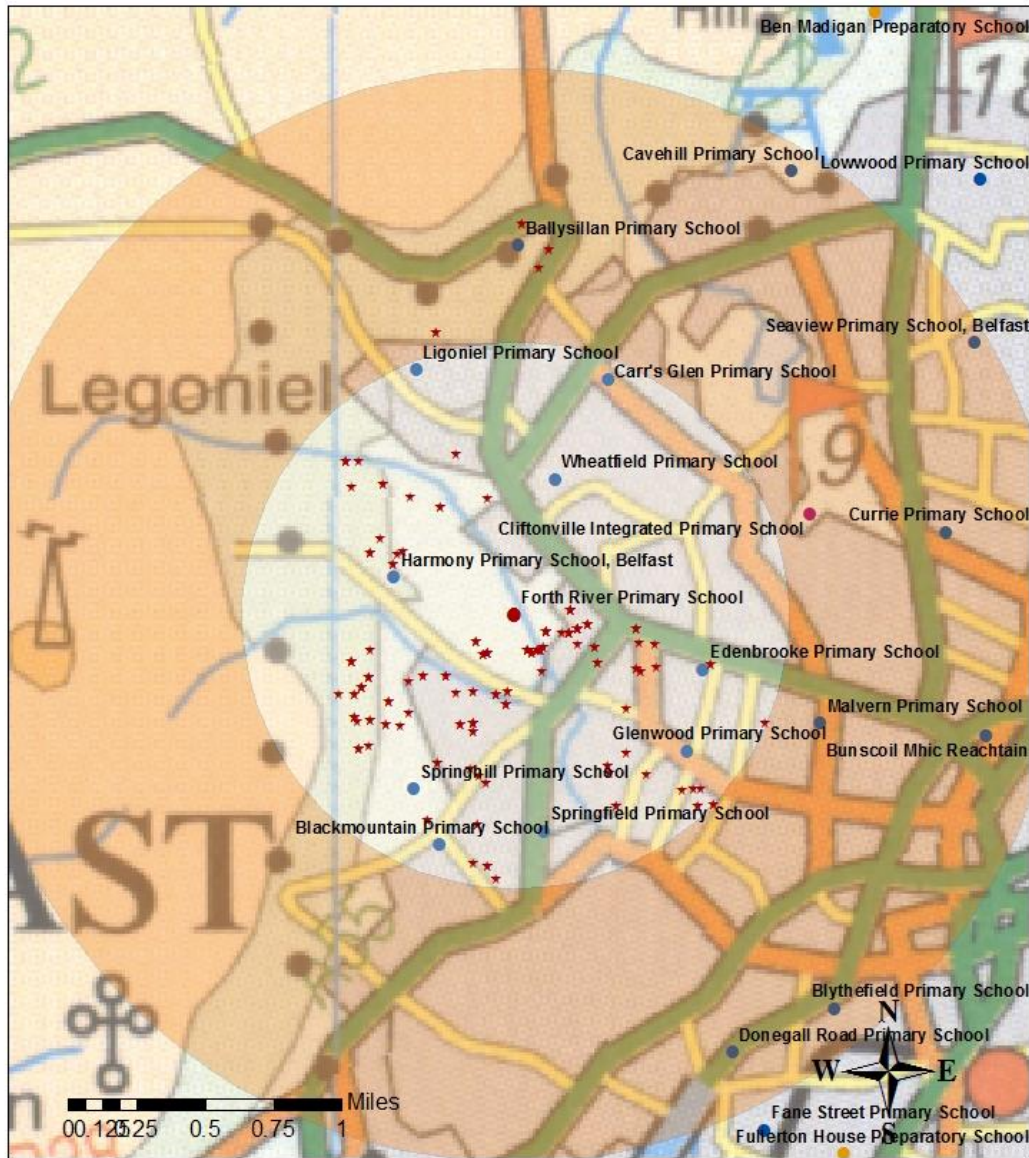
Presentational Issues: A decision on this proposal is unlikely to receive local media attention. If approached, the Communication Team can draw upon the content of this submission.
(Agreed with CT)

Recommendation: It is recommended that you:

- Approve DP 448 (as published). This will reduce the enrolment number of Forth River PS from 232 to 210, in line with its admission number of 30, with effect from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) will be published on the Department's website once the Education Authority and school have been informed of your decision and the press release issued.
- Agree that DE's School Access Team will work with the EA and the school to implement the new arrangements.
- Note that officials are available to discuss the submission should you wish.

Map 1: Forth River PS and other primary provision within a 2 mile radius

Forth River Primary School, Belfast



- Key**
- Forth River Primary School
 - ★ Pupil Location
- Buffer Distance**
- ◇ 1.00
 - ◇ 2.00
 - Controlled
 - Voluntary
 - Controlled Integrated
 - GMI



1. BACKGROUND

Introduction

1.1 A Development Proposal (DP) is the statutory mechanism to bring about a change to a school to support the implementation of the Area Plan. Appendix A provides detailed background information on the Sustainable Schools Policy, Area Planning processes and structures and the Development Proposal process which will set the policy and process context for your consideration of this proposal.

1.2 On 18 February 2016 the Education Authority (EA) published DP 448 to reduce the enrolment number of Forth River Primary School (PS) from 232 to 210, in line with the school's admission number of 30, with effect from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter. The two month statutory objection period for this proposal ended on 18 April 2016. A copy of the published DP is at Appendix B.

School and area

1.3 Forth River PS is a Controlled primary school located in the Ballygomartin Road area of west Belfast. It currently has 208 pupils enrolled.

1.4 On the Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 the Glencairn 2 area (in which Forth River PS is situated) is placed 102 out of 890 (1 being the most deprived and 890 being the least deprived).

2. CASE FOR CHANGE

2.1 The EA's case for change is attached in full at Appendix C. It notes that the school moved to its current site in 2004 and that its accommodation is broadly in line with DE's Building Handbook for Primary Schools.

2.2 In relation to the rationale for this proposal, the case for change highlights that an anomaly currently exists between the school's admissions number which is set at 30 and its enrolment number which is set at 232. Operationally, the school has a seven class structure (one for each year group) and the case for change highlights that an influx of pupils into year groups other than Year 1 would put a strain on the school's financial and classroom resources as well as its teaching and non-teaching resources.

2.3 In terms of educational benefit for pupils, the case for change notes that this proposal would remove the potential for composite classes and facilitate a more consistent approach to planning and delivery of the curriculum.

3. CONSULTATIONS

Pre-publication consultation

3.1 In the case for change, the EA provides details of its statutory consultation with the Board of Governors, staff and parents of pupils at Forth River PS. The EA also consulted with 178 other schools that may be affected by the proposal. In response to its consultations, the EA received ten responses received from staff members (all of whom supported the proposal) and no responses from any other school.

3.2 Having considered the consultation responses, the EA has stated its support for the proposal, which it subsequently published on 18 February 2016.

Two month statutory objection period

3.3 During the two month objection period from 18 February to 18 March 2016 no letters of objection or support were submitted to DE in relation to this proposal.

4. SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

4.1 The Department's current Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) sets out a number of quantitative and qualitative criteria and indicators which inform consideration about the sustainability of a school in terms of the quality of the educational experience it provides. The key criteria are:

- Quality Educational Experience
- Stable Enrolment Trends
- Sound Financial Position
- Strong Leadership and Management
- Accessibility
- Strong Links with the Community

Quality Education Experience

4.2 ETI's comments (attached at [Appendix E](#)) on this proposal note that a focused inspection of Forth River PS was undertaken in January 2011 at which the quality of education was assessed as *good* with very good leadership and pastoral care; good provision for learning and satisfactory achievements and standards.

4.3 ETI notes that the area for improvement identified at the time of the inspection was to focus more specifically on meeting the learning needs of all of the children (differentiation) and to share the good practice that already existed among the staff. ETI also highlights a number of local regeneration programmes being implemented in this area which may increase the demand for good quality schooling in the area.

4.4 A summary of the school's Key Stage 2 Outcomes is as follows:

- The Key Stage 2 performance data for 2012/13 confirms 83.3% (25 out of 30 pupils) achieved the expected level (Level 4) in both Communication (English) and Using Maths; this was above the 2012/13 NI average in both subject areas.
- For FSME pupils, 66.7% (8 out of 12 FSME pupils) achieved the expected level (Level 4) in both Communication (English) and Using Maths; this was above the 2012/13 NI average in both subject areas.

Stable Enrolment Trends

4.5 The SSP states that the recommended enrolment threshold for an urban primary school is 140 pupils and the enrolments at Forth River PS continue to exceed that threshold.

4.6 The table below confirms that over the five year period (2011/12 to 2015/16), the Year 1 intakes and total enrolments at Forth River PS have remained steady and broadly align with the school's approved admission number (30). In 2015/16 Forth River PS was oversubscribed at Year 1 first preference applications, receiving 35 applications for 30 places in respect of the 2015/16 school year. At the date of the 2015/16 school census the school had 29 unfilled places available to potential applicants, being the difference between the school's current approved enrolment number (232) and the number of pupils admitted through the competitive open enrolment admissions processes (203) Pupils admitted outside of these competitive admissions arrangements (i.e. five pupils admitted on the basis of a Statement of Special Educational Needs) are discounted from the calculation of unfilled places as they will always be admitted on a supernumerary basis, even if the school has admitted the maximum number of pupils it is permitted to, as defined by its approved enrolment number. In respect of 2016/17, the school has received 26 first preference Year 1 applications and has accepted a total of 30 Year 1 admissions.

Forth River PS/Enrolments	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
(A) Total pupils	201	208	209	211	208
(B) SEN (Stage 5)	*	6	6	6	5
(A-B) Mainstream pupils	201	202	203	205	203
Year 1	29	30	29	30	30

* less than 5 pupils

Sound Financial Position

4.7 The EA's January 2016 Monthly Expenditure Monitoring Report (MEMR) confirms that, at 31 March 2015, Forth River Primary School held a cumulative surplus of £82,000. In January 2016 the 2015/16 budget allocation was £662,996 and the EA has projected a closing surplus of £73,000 for March 2016.

Strong Leadership and Management

4.8 The 2011 ETI report notes that the quality of leadership and management is *very good*. It states that '*the Principal has a clear vision for the future direction of the school....she has created a cohesive management team and introduced an appropriate programme of continuous professional development.*'

Accessibility

4.9 Forth River PS is a popular school drawing pupils from its immediate locality. It is oversubscribed with Year 1 first preference applications. Pupils not accessing places at the school have suitable local alternative schools where the education provision ranges from *good* to *very good* (as assessed by ETI).

4.10 This proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on the operation of the home to school transport policy, given the number and spread of other schools in the area.

Strong Links with the Community

4.11 Forth River PS is a popular school which serves its local community and pupils attend from its immediate vicinity. The school has a website which highlights the range of after-school activities offered to pupils and its published prospectus refers to the school's active presence in both the local and wider community.

Overall Sustainability Assessment

4.12 In summary, the evidence above confirms that Forth River PS is a popular, viable and sustainable school. There are no significant issues regarding education provision and the school aligns with current policy on Sustainable Schools.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Area Planning position

5.1 The current area plan for primary school provision refers to a number of controlled and maintained school clusters (in North, South, East and West Belfast) designated by the respective school planning authorities for area planning purposes. Forth River PS is one of five schools located in what is referred to as the EA's *Controlled West B cluster*. Currently there are 749 unfilled places within this cluster representing around 38% of capacity.

Impact on other provision

5.2 Table 1 (Appendix D) highlights Forth River PS and neighbouring provision within a one-mile radius of the school. In total there are eleven schools listed.

5.3 It is noted that in 2015/16:

Two of the eleven schools (Forth River PS and Ligoniel PS) are oversubscribed with Year 1 first preference applications. These two schools and one other school (Carr's Glen PS) subsequently admitted the maximum number of pupils permitted, as defined by their approved admissions numbers. The other eight did not.

525 Year 1 places were available at the eleven schools within a one mile radius with 358 pupils admitted, leaving 167 Year 1 places unfilled.

3,794 Year 1-7 places were available at the eleven schools within a one mile radius with 2,431 pupils admitted, leaving 1,497 unfilled Year 1-7 places (around 39.5% capacity).

5.4 Focusing on provision within the five schools situated in the EA's *Controlled West B cluster*, it is noted that:

- Forth River PS is the only one of the five schools which is oversubscribed and filling to its Year 1 admission number. In 2015/16 the five schools offered a total of 280 Year 1 places between them with an uptake of 192 pupils (leaving 88 unfilled Year 1 places).
- Forth River PS has 29 unfilled places, but these occur between Years 2 to 7. The other four schools in the cluster have unfilled places across all year groups from 1 to 7.
- There are currently 749 unfilled places between the five schools in this cluster representing around 38% of capacity. This proposal has the potential to remove 22 primary places from this cluster of schools.

5.5 In relation to the issue of unfilled places within the EA's West B cluster of schools, the Annual Area Action Plan (December 2015 to March 2017) indicates that the EA is currently engaging with the Board of Governors, staff, parents and local political and community representatives to consider options for a local area solution for Edenbrooke, Glenwood and Malvern Primary Schools.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Forth River PS is a viable and sustainable school which provides good quality education provision to its pupils. The school's admission number (30) does not align with its enrolment number (232) and the EA's proposal has been brought forward to address that anomaly.

6.2 The EA identified three potential options in this case, which were to:

(i) Retain the status quo: *the school's admission and enrolment numbers would remain out of kilter with each other and continue to present the school with operational and planning uncertainties as it would still have capacity to fill to its approved enrolment (232) at Years 2 to 7 (despite filling to its Year 1 admission number of 30).*

(ii) Align the school's admissions number to its enrolment number (i.e. 33/232): *which would present a need for composite classes from Year 1 upwards.*

(iii) Align the school's enrolment number to its admission number (i.e. 30/210): *which would align the school's admission and enrolment numbers and facilitate a seven class operational structure. This option would enable the school to plan ahead with certainty.*

6.3 ETI does not support the published proposal on the grounds that the reasons for change are not unique to Forth River PS and that there is no evidence to suggest that an enrolment increase would not be managed well by the school.

6.4 DE has no concerns about the capacity of Forth River PS to manage an enrolment increase but notes that in the past five years (2011/12 to 2015/16) the school's mainstream enrolment (i.e. excluding SEN pupils) has not exceeded 210 pupils and that its pattern of enrolment aligns with an admission of 30 Year 1 pupils. This proposal seeks to facilitate an established pattern of enrolment through a seven class structure.

6.5 The impact of this proposal locally (on both pupils and schools) is considered to be negligible. It would remove 22 places from Forth River PS which, within the area context of the EA's *Controlled West B cluster*, would reduce the unfilled capacity there from 749 places (approximately 38% capacity) to 727 places (approximately 37% of capacity).

6.6 The other four schools in the EA's *Controlled West B cluster* (within which Forth River PS is situated) provide a quality of education provision which ranges from *Good* to *Very Good*. Together these four schools offer a total of 1,749 primary places of which around 720 (41%) were unfilled in 2015/16. All four are undersubscribed at Year 1 which means that each has the capacity to enrol more pupils (between Years 1 to 7), if required. The evidence confirms that pupils not able to access a place at Forth River PS would have a choice of suitable local alternative provision.

6.7 On balance it is considered that the evidence supports the EA's rationale for aligning the school's enrolment number with its admissions number, given that pupils' education will not be compromised when considered within a local area context.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is recommended that you:

- Approve DP 448 (as published). This will reduce the enrolment number of Forth River PS from 232 to 210, in line with its admission number of 30, with effect from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) will be published on the Department's website once the Education Authority and school have been informed of your decision and the press release issued.
- Agree that DE's School Access Team will work with the EA and the school to implement the new arrangements.
- Note that officials are available to discuss the submission should you wish.

8. APPENDICES

8.1 I attach the following appendices for your consideration:

- A: Contextual information on:- Sustainable Schools Policy, Area Planning and Development Proposal processes.
- B: DP 448 – as published.
- C: EA's Case for Change.
- D: Table 1 – Snapshot of Local Provision.
- E: ETI input.



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APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ON SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS, AREA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PROCESSES

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS POLICY, AREA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PROCESSES

The purpose of this Appendix is to provide the new Minister with 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 Ministerial 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.”*

1.2 All Department policies and processes are focussed on achieving this 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.

1.3 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 Independent Strategic Review of Education report (*“The Bain Review”*) was led by Sir George Bain and published in December 2006 and 35 of the 61 recommendations within the report related to area-based planning and Sustainable Schools. In response to the Bain Review, DE published “Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools” (SSP) in January 2009.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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 6th form provision*

2.5 It is the policy’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 policy 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 over-riding 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 of strategic planning of primary and post-primary education provision.

3.2 Area Planning has been developed to support implementation of the Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) and is central to achieving the Departmental vision for education. It 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.

3.3 Area Planning is a complex process and there are a number of key contributors to the process 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 under the current approach. Its responsibilities include: setting and reviewing policy and strategic frameworks and ensuring planning operates within them; providing advice and guidance to the planning authorities; and challenging Area Plans. DE requires that the EA produces an Area Plan covering a three year period, supported by an Annual Action Plan. 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.*
- **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 its areas. 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 Bodies:** *within the Area Planning structures, other sectoral bodies (namely, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), Comhairle na Gaelscolaíocht (CnaG) and the Controlled Sector Support Council (CSSC) reflect the views of their respective sectors. Sectoral bodies are not planning authorities but act as advocates for their school sectors.*

- **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). The Governing Bodies Association (GBA) also has a role to play, reflecting views on issues impacting on the voluntary grammar school (VGS) sector in all consultation processes associated with Area Planning.*

3.4 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.

- **The 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 Regional Directors to discuss and agree a common approach to issues which arise in relation to area planning. The Minister chairs two of four quarterly meetings each year.*
- **The 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.*

3.5 The **Area Plan** is a strategic document with a three year life span and there are likely to be separate plans for primary, post-primary and special provision (or possibly one plan with a primary, post-primary and special provision section). All primary and post-primary schools of all management types and all special schools will be covered by the plans. The plans will be a statement of how expected educational needs will be addressed through broad solutions for an area consistent with relevant policies.

3.6 The **Annual Action Plan** supplements the three year Area Plans and will be submitted annually to DE for scrutiny and challenge. It will outline the objectives from the Area Plan which will be addressed in the 12 months that the Action Plan covers and detail solutions and specific actions relating to development proposals (DP). The Action Plan will allow progress on the delivery of the Area Plan to be assessed.

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 by the EA on its 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 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 next planning period commencing in April 2017, aligning with the start of the Community Planning cycle. The Area Plans will be accompanied by an Annual Action Plan which will be produced in December each year for commencement in April of the following year. Annual Area Profiles are published around April each year.

3.9 **Population Trends** inform plans for future overall provision. The EA will liaise 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. The previously used "Needs Model" which provided population projections and cross-boundary flows of pupils from one LDC to another to attend schools has been superseded by this approach as the establishment of the 11 Local Government District to replace the former 26 Local District Councils rendered the "Needs Model" unfit for purpose.

4. Development Proposal Process

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 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 2-month 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 Minister. The Minister's decision is final and concludes the DP process.*

4.6 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.

4.7 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.

4.8 A DP approved by the Minister must be implemented in full. Further changes can only be made through the publication of another DP.

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

Glossary

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

EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Development Proposal No 448

Forth River 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:

The Education Authority proposes to reduce the enrolment number of Forth River Primary School from 232 to 210, in line with the school's admission number of 30, with effect from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.

A copy of the proposal can be inspected at the offices of the Education Authority located at 40 Academy Street, Belfast, BT1 2NQ, between the hours of 8.30 am and 4.45 pm and www.eani.org.uk.

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 email to dps@deni.gov.uk within 2 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 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

APPENDIX C EA's CASE FOR CHANGE

CASE FOR CHANGE

SUMMARY / OVERVIEW

BOARD AREA	Education Authority (Belfast Region)
DP NUMBER	Development Proposal 448
PROPOSER	Education Authority (Belfast Region) 40 Academy Street Belfast BT1 2NQ Telephone: 9056 4000
SCHOOL(S) NAME	Forth River Primary School
SCHOOL REFERENCE	101-0205
TYPE	Primary
MANAGEMENT	Controlled
DP PUBLICATION DATE	18 February 2016
PROPOSAL	The Education Authority (Belfast Region) proposes to reduce Forth River Primary School's enrolment number from 232 to 210, in line with the school's admission number of 30 from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

BY THE PROPOSER	I confirm that the school's Board of Governors, staff and parents of pupils were consulted as table below:		
	Board of Governors	23/11/15	7 Governors attended
	Staff	27/11/15	13 staff (teaching and non-teaching) attended
	Parents	27/11/15	0 parents attended

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hubert McHugh</i></p> <p>SIGNED: _____ DATE 29/01/16</p>
<p>BY THE AUTHORITY</p>	<p>I confirm that the schools which the board consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted between 27 November 2015 and 18 December 2015.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hubert McHugh</i></p> <p>SIGNED: _____ DATE: 17/02/16</p>

BACKGROUND

Provide information on existing school

Brief description of school

Forth River Primary School moved to its current location in September 2004 and is situated in West Belfast. The enrolment has remained constant and currently stands at 208 (Census, October 2015). Approximately 42% of the children are entitled to free school meals and around 2% of children have statements of special educational needs. The current approved admissions number is 30.

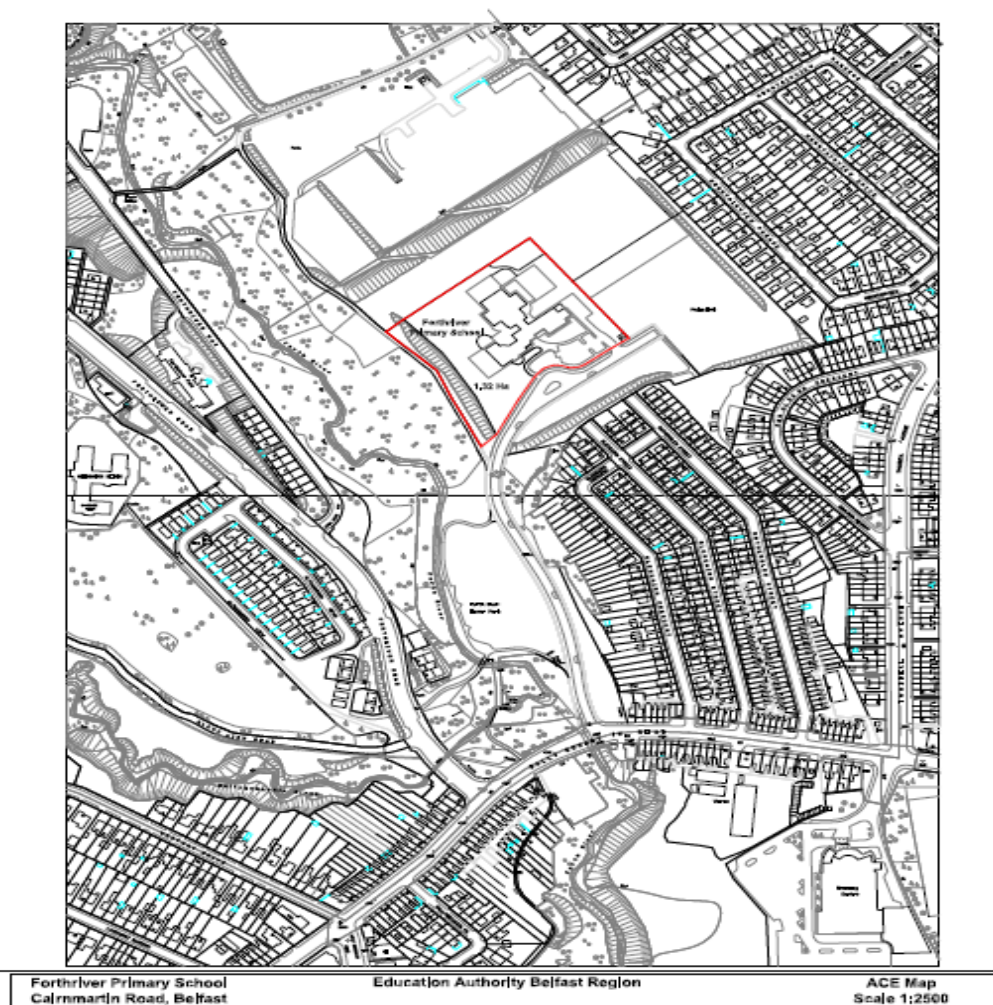
Location and school context

Forth River Primary School is a controlled primary school located in the Ballygomartin Road area of West Belfast. The school's modern buildings were opened in 2004.

Forth River Primary School is accessed from the Cairnmartin Road.

The internal area of the building, at 1367 m², is slightly smaller than the recommended area of 1443 m² for a 7 classroom school (176-205), as detailed in the Department of Education's Building Handbook for Primary Schools. However, the accommodation provided in the school building is broadly in line with Department's schedule of accommodation for a 7 classroom school building.

The school is located on a 1.3 hectare site. There are currently no capital proposals or minor works proposals.



RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

What is the reason for change?

The EA is aware that an anomaly exists currently between the school's admission number which is set at 30 and the school's enrolment number which is set at 232. The school has been operating a 7 class structure of 29/30 pupils in line with Department of Education (DE) guidance on class size. Additionally, the influx of pupils into year groups other than Year 1 would put a strain on the school's resources, teaching and non-teaching, as well as with regard to classroom resources and could lead to the creation of composite classes.

Forth River PS and Other West B Cluster Enrolment Trends

Primary School Name	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	13/14 Approved Enrol	Unfilled Places
Edenbrooke	180	182	188	190	201	214	223	408	185
Forth River	200	201	205	200	201	208	209	232	23
Glenwood	447	467	484	498	504	495	509	630	121
Harmony	155	162	159	155	168	166	172	375	203
Malvern	116	116	113	108	117	118	112	336	224
Totals	1098	1128	1149	1151	1191	1201	1225	1981	756

Table 1: BELB Area Plan for Primary Education (30 June 2014)

Table 1 above highlights that the school has had a consistent total pupil enrolment number over the last 7 years in line with its admission number of 30. Census data from October 2015 puts the school's current enrolment at 208, with 5 statemented pupils. Reducing the school's enrolment number would reduce unfilled places in the area by 22, in line with DE Area Planning guidelines.

Area Planning Impact

At the time of the publication of the Belfast Education and Library Board Area Plan for Primary Education in July 2014, it was noted that Forth River Primary School had no viability issues. The plan stated that the former BELB, now the EA, would look to consolidate education provision in Edenbrooke PS, Forth River PS, Glenwood PS and Harmony PS, which offered the best way of providing a network of strong, sustainable primary schools for the children and young people in this area.

Forth River PS is a strong sustainable school with no deficiencies in relation to the sustainable schools criteria. The school has a surplus of £47,450 (7% of budget) for the 2015/16 school year. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a short inspection of the school on January 2011, noting the following:

The quality of achievements and standards is satisfactory.

- In English and mathematics the children attain satisfactory **standards** in line with their ability. The standards attained by the majority of children are improving.
- The children identified with **special educational needs** (SEN) make very good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable.

The quality of provision for learning is very good.

- The school provides a **calm and secure environment** in which the children are valued.
- The **children's behaviour** is excellent; they are highly motivated to learn and they respond positively to the high expectations set by the teachers.
- The **teachers** work hard and are committed to continuous improvement. The **quality of the teaching** observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. A majority of the teaching was very good or outstanding.
- The provision for SEN is very good. Individual education plans containing suitable targets are devised for the children. The lessons provide effective challenge to extend the children's learning. A range of literacy approaches is used which integrate holistically the four skills of talking and listening, and reading and writing.
- The quality of **pastoral care** is very good. This is evident through the distinctive community ethos fostered by the school. There is a strong focus on involving the parents in the life and work of the school, and in particular, in the children's learning.
- The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. The arrangements reflect the **child protection** circulars issued by the Department of Education.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The Principal has a clear vision for the future direction of the school. She knows well the children and their families. She has created a cohesive management team and introduced an appropriate programme of continuous professional development which is influencing positively the staff. She receives very good support from the Vice-principal.
- The recently appointed co-ordinators and the special educational needs co-ordinator provide competent leadership in their areas of responsibility. They set high expectations for the whole school community and they are dedicated to providing high standards of education for all the children.
- Whole school self-evaluation and development planning processes are very good. Appropriate priorities are identified in the school development plan and they focus on learning, teaching, self-evaluation and on raising further the standards achieved by the children in literacy and numeracy. A good start has been made to using data effectively to monitor pupil performance and to continue to improve standards of pupil achievement.

Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is **good**. The school has important strengths in most of its educational provision and very good pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress in the area for improvement. The area for improvement is:

- to focus more specifically on meeting the learning needs of all of the children and to share the good practice that already exists among the staff.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

What are the educational benefits of this proposal?

An enrolment number in line with the approved admissions number would remove the potential need for the school to operate with composite classes, thus alleviating the logistical difficulties that this creates within a larger setting and allowing for a more consistent approach to planning and delivery of the curriculum.

Alternative schools

Table 2, below, indicates the unfilled places available within this cluster:

School name	Unfilled Places
1. Edenbrooke Primary School	154
2. Glenwood Primary School	118
3. Harmony Primary School	195
4. Malvern Primary School	243
Total Unfilled Places	710

Table 2: West B Cluster Unfilled Places (October 2015 Census)

Exam performance

No Key Stage Assessment data was received from this school covering the 2013/14 academic year

Key Stage One Assessments (Levels of Progression)			
% (No.) of pupils achieving			
	2012/13	2013/14	
KS1 Communication (English) (L2 or above)			
All Pupils	100.0 (30)	()	
FSM Entitled Pupils	100.0 (11)	()	
Excludes LSC Pupils	100.0 (30)	()	
KS1 Using Maths (L2 or above)			
All Pupils	100.0 (30)	()	
FSM Entitled Pupils	100.0 (11)	()	
Excludes LSC Pupils	100.0 (30)	()	
KS1 Communication (Irish) (L2 or above)			
All Pupils	()	()	
FSM Entitled Pupils	()	()	
Excludes LSC Pupils	()	()	

Key Stage Two Assessments (Levels of Progression)			
% (No.) of pupils achieving			
	2012/13	2013/14	
KS2 Communication (English) (L4 or above)			
All Pupils	83.3 (25)	()	
FSM Entitled Pupils	66.7 (8)	()	
Excludes LSC Pupils	83.3 (25)	()	
KS2 Using Maths (L4 or above)			
All Pupils	83.3 (25)	()	
FSM Entitled Pupils	66.7 (8)	()	
Excludes LSC Pupils	83.3 (25)	()	
KS2 Communication (Irish) (L4 or above)			
All Pupils	()	()	
FSM Entitled Pupils	()	()	
Excludes LSC Pupils	()	()	

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

If approved, implementation of the Development Proposal to reduce Forth River Primary School's enrolment number from 232 to 210 will be from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**Finance**

N/A

Staffing

No change.

Accommodation

N/A

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Pre-Publication Consultation with Board of Governors – 23 November 2015

Pre-Publication Consultation with school staff – 27 November 2015

Pre-Publication Consultation with parents – 27 November 2015

Pre-Publication Consultation with other affected schools – 3 week period:

27 November 2015 to 18 December 2015

Other Affected Schools

178 other schools that may be affected by the development proposal have been consulted.

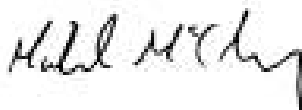
There were 0 replies.

Ten responses were received from staff members: all supported the proposal.

EDUCATION AUTHORITY COMMENTS

The EA would support the proposal. The proposal was discussed and agreement given to publish at the EA Education Committee at its meeting on 11 February 2016.

SIGNED:



POSITION: Assistant Senior Education Officer – Area Planning

DATE: 17/02/16

APPENDIX D TABLE 1: SNAPSHOT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Table 1 SNAPSHOT OF PROVISION WITHIN A 1-MILE RADIUS OF FORTH RIVER PRIMARY SCHOOL											
School	Appr'd Enrol	2012/13 Enrol*	2013/14 Enrol *	2014/15 Enrol*	2015/16 Enrol*	Unfilled Places**	Appr'd Adm Nos	2015/16 First Preference Applies	over/under subscribd at First Pref	2015 Actual Admission Nos	ETI report assessments
<i>Controlled West A Cluster</i>											
Springhill PS	370	179	174	154	147	230	46	14	U	15	Satisfactory (Sept 2012)
Springfield PS	172	127	142	158	174	7	25	23	U	24	Very good (Nov 2014)
Blackmountain PS	280	114	127	141	143	141	40	17	U	18	Good (Jun 2014)
Sub-total	822	420	443	453	464	378	111	54		57	
<i>Controlled West B Cluster</i>											
Forth River PS	232	208	209	211	208	29	30	35	O	30	Good (Jan 2011)
Harmony PS	375	166	172	192	181	205	54	20	U	23	Very good (May 2011)
Glenwood PS	630	495	509	513	530	118	90	72	U	73	Good (May 2014)
Edenbrooke PS	408	214	223	250	263	154	58	50	U	52	Very good (Nov 2014)
Malvern PS	336	118	112	99	98	243	48	14	U	14	Good (Dec 2013)
Sub-total	1981	1201	1225	1265	1280	749	280	191		192	
<i>Other schools within 1-mile radius of Forth River PS</i>											
Wheatfield PS	348	152	147	140	131	222	50	19	U	19	Inadequate (Mar 2013)
Ligoniel PS	171	156	160	168	185	0	24	31	O	30	Good (May 2015)
Carr's Glen PS	472	317	342	367	371	113	60	58	U	60	Good (Nov 2011)
Sub-total	991	625	649	675	687	335	134	108		109	
Grand Total	3794	2246	2317	2393	2431	1462	525	353		358	

* includes SEN Stage 5 pupils **based on 2015/16 Census enrolment data and excludes SEN Stage 5 pupils

APPENDIX E ETI COMMENT



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

SECTION 1 RESPONSE FORM

PHASE	Primary
Education Authority	Education Authority: Belfast Region
DP REFERENCE NUMBER (S)	DP 448
PROPOSAL (S)	The Education Authority proposes to reduce the enrolment number of Forth River Primary School from 232 to 210, in line with the school's admission number of 30 , with effect from 1 September 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.
DATE OF RECEIPT OF DP (DI)	22/02/2016
DATE OF RETURN OF DP (DI)	
DATE OF RETURN to APPT Via ACI	08/03/2016
ACI DIRECTORATE TITLE	W Crawford
NAME OF DE CONTACT AND DATE AS STATED ON EMAIL	██████████ 19/2/2016
Note about this response: (where relevant)	
DUE DATE	10/03/2016

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

In January 2011, the ETI evaluated the quality of education at Forth River Primary School as **good** with very good leadership, good provision for learning and satisfactory achievements and standards. Pastoral care within the school was evaluated as very good. The area for improvement identified, at the time of the inspection, was to focus more specifically on meeting the learning needs of all of the children (differentiation) and to share the good practice that already existed among the staff.

ETI KNOWLEDGE

The previous District Inspector (DI) carried out a district visit in 2014 and recorded that the work undertaken to address challenge (particularly for the more able children) was sound, particularly given the school's focus on developing reading in the school across all key stages and the development of ICT (two areas identified as needing attention at the time of the original inspection). The middle leaders were being empowered to bring about improvement in their respective areas of responsibility.

RATIONALE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETI EVIDENCE

(See below.)

MATTERS ARISING OR FURTHER QUERIES BY ETI

Pupil Information				
	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Total Pupils	201	208	209	211
Total Males	91	96	98	97
Total Females	110	112	111	114

The school's enrolment has increased steadily by 5% since 2011. The school's enrolment into year 1 was 31 in both 09/10 and 10/11, and with classes of 31 in years 5, 6 and 7 for this academic year.

As recently as the last academic year, the school's enrolment was above 210.

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

As noted in the non-approval of DP 225 relating to the proposed closure of Malvern Primary School, there are a number of local regeneration programmes being implemented in the area which may increase the demand for good quality schooling in the area.

RECOMMENDATION

The ETI does not support the proposal to reduce Forth River Primary School's enrolment number from 232 to 210. As recently as last year, the school's enrolment was 211.

The Education Authority's reasons for the change are not unique to Forth River Primary School and, if they arise, can be managed well. The reasons cited by the Education Authority are: the influx of children into year-groups, other than year 1, would put a strain on the school's resources, teaching and non-teaching, as well as with regard to classroom resources; and, could lead to the creation of composite classes. There is no evidence that any of these potential scenarios would not be managed well by the school. There is potential growth in demand for good quality education in this area.