

COPY OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Cover Note

DP No.	DP 449	
School(s)	Gaelscoil Éanna (304-6685)	
Proposal	The establishment of a statutory Irish-medium nursery unit at Gaelscoil Éanna, to provide 26 full-time places with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.	
Minister's Decision	Approve with modification	
Date of Decision	15/09/2016	
Minister's Comments	Approve DP 449 for establishment of a nursery unit at Gaelscoil Éanna, Glengormley, with a modification to 26 part-time places in line with the Departmental policy on the Learning To Learn Framework	
Additional Notes	<p>Modification from 26 full-time places to 26 part-time places.</p> <p>A copy of the final press release can be found at http://www.deni.gov.uk/news.htm.</p>	
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: Dorina Edgar
Area Planning Policy Team

Date: 9 September 2016

To: PETER WEIR MLA
Minister for Education

Copy distribution below

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL (DP) NO. 449 – PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A STATUTORY FULL-TIME IRISH MEDIUM (IM) NURSERY UNIT AT GAELSCOIL ÉANNA, GLENGORMLEY

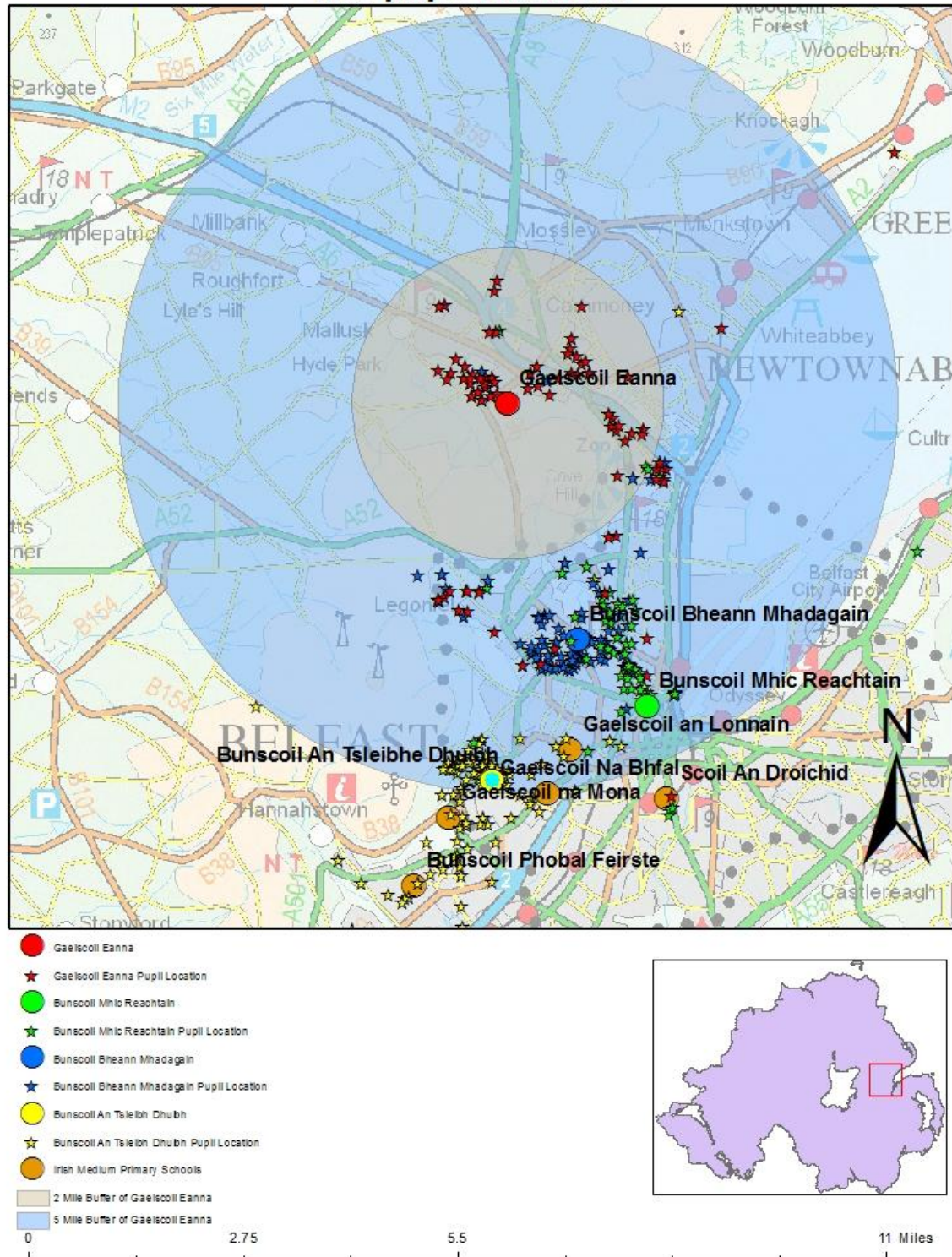
Issue:	To decide on the following proposal: DP 449 - A statutory Irish-medium nursery unit called Naíscóil Éanna, to be established at Gaelscoil Éanna to provide 26 full-time places with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.
Timescale:	Routine.
Financial/Resource Implications:	<p>Approval of the DP would require the employment of a nursery teacher and assistant which will be funded from within the school's budget.</p> <p>Should the proposed statutory provision be established, funding would transfer to the Aggregated Schools Budget. As such, the cost of the nursery class would be approximately £50,000 (full-year cost) and approximately £30,000 (part-year, 7/12ths basis).</p> <p>Construction costs for the relocation of Naíscóil Éanna are estimated at approximately £300,000. Site works costs cannot be estimated at this stage.</p>
FOI Implications:	This submission is fully disclosable.
Statutory Duties Implications:	Article 89 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 <i>to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education.</i>
Presentational Issues:	Your decision is likely to attract local media attention. The Communications Team (CT) can draw from this submission, if required. (Agreed with CT).

<p>Recommendation:</p>	<p>It is recommended that you:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Approve DP 449, proposing that a statutory Irish-medium nursery unit, called Naíscoil Éanna, be established at Gaelscoil Éanna with effect from 1 September 2017, with a <u>modification</u> from 26 <i>full-time</i> places to 26 <i>part-time</i> places. II. Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) will be published on the Department's website once the school, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) and the Education Authority have been informed of your decision and the press release issued. III. Note that officials are available to discuss the submission should you wish.

LOCATION MAPS

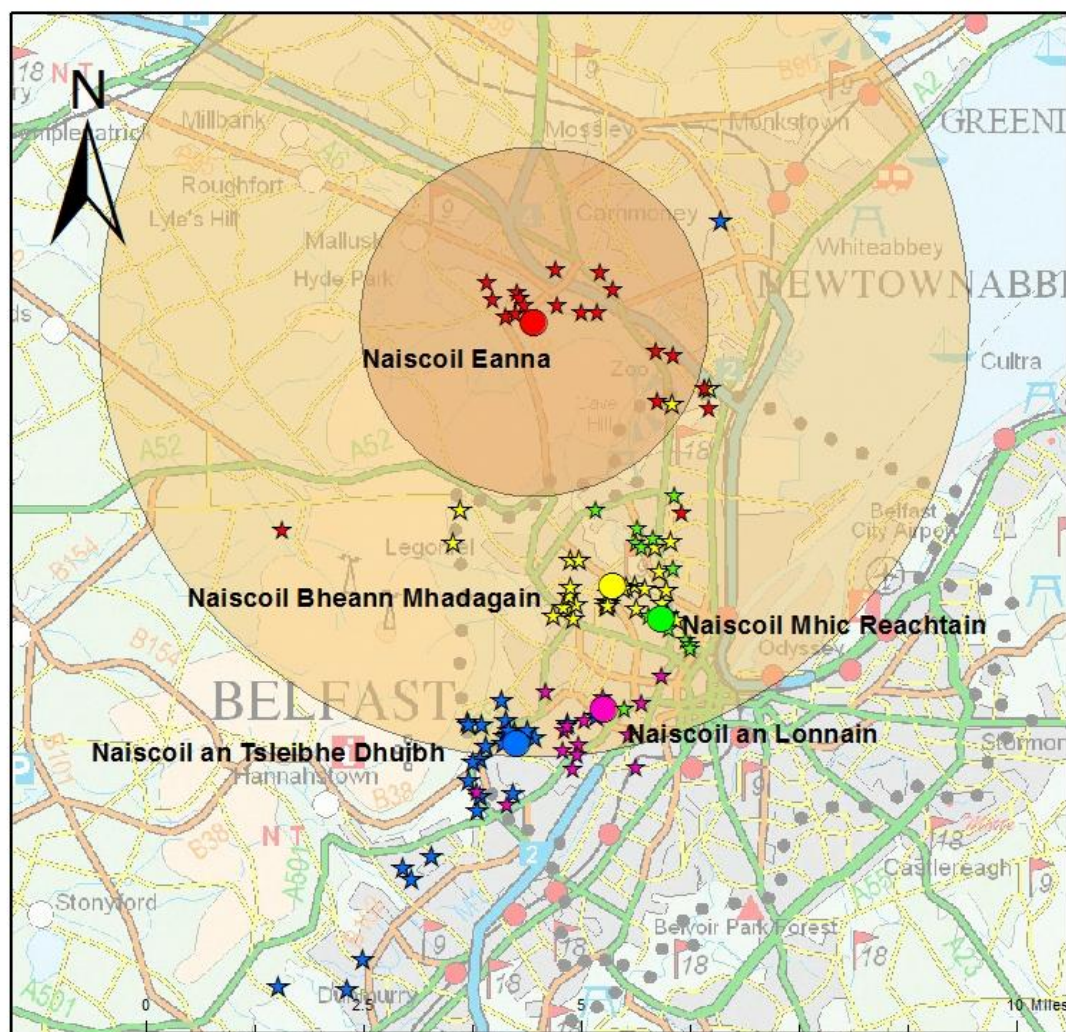
Map 1: IM Primary Provision

Gaelscoil Eanna - alternative Irish Medium provision and pupil locations



Map 2: IM Pre-school Provision

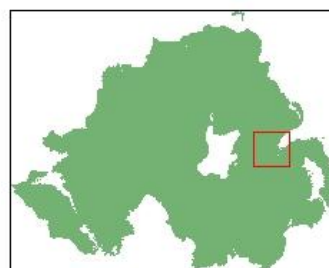
Naiscoil Eanna - alternative Irish Medium provision with pupil locations



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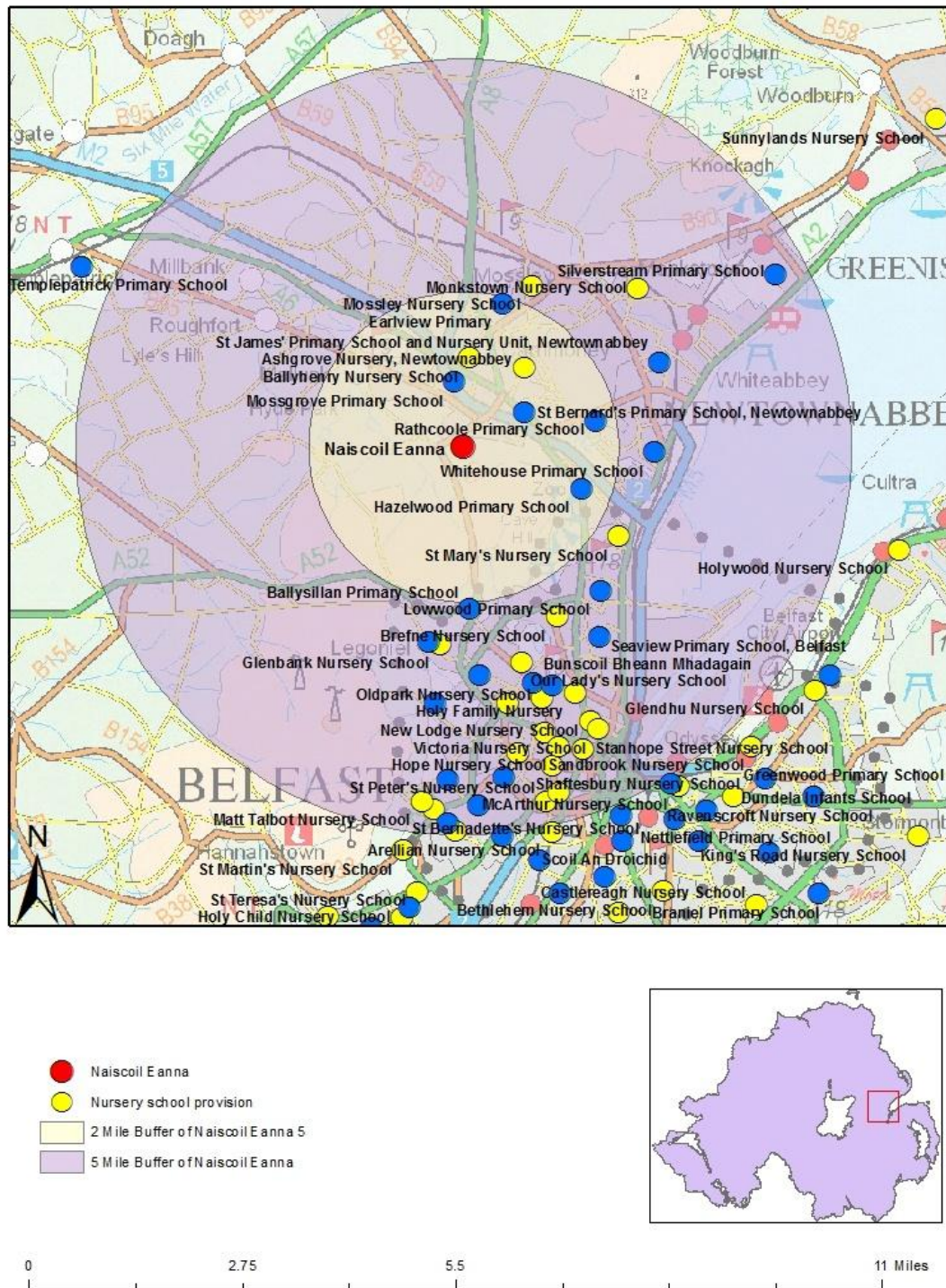
- Naiscoil Eanna
- ★ Naiscoil Eanna pupil location
- Naiscoil Mhic Reachtain
- ★ Naiscoil Mhic Reachtain pupil location
- Naiscoil an Lonnain
- ★ Naiscoil An Lonnain pupil location
- Naiscoil Bheann Mhadagain
- ★ Naiscoil Bheann Mhadagain pupil location
- Naiscoil an Tseibhe Dhuibh
- ★ Naiscoil an Tseibhe Dhuibh pupil location

- 2 Mile Buffer
- 5 Mile Buffer



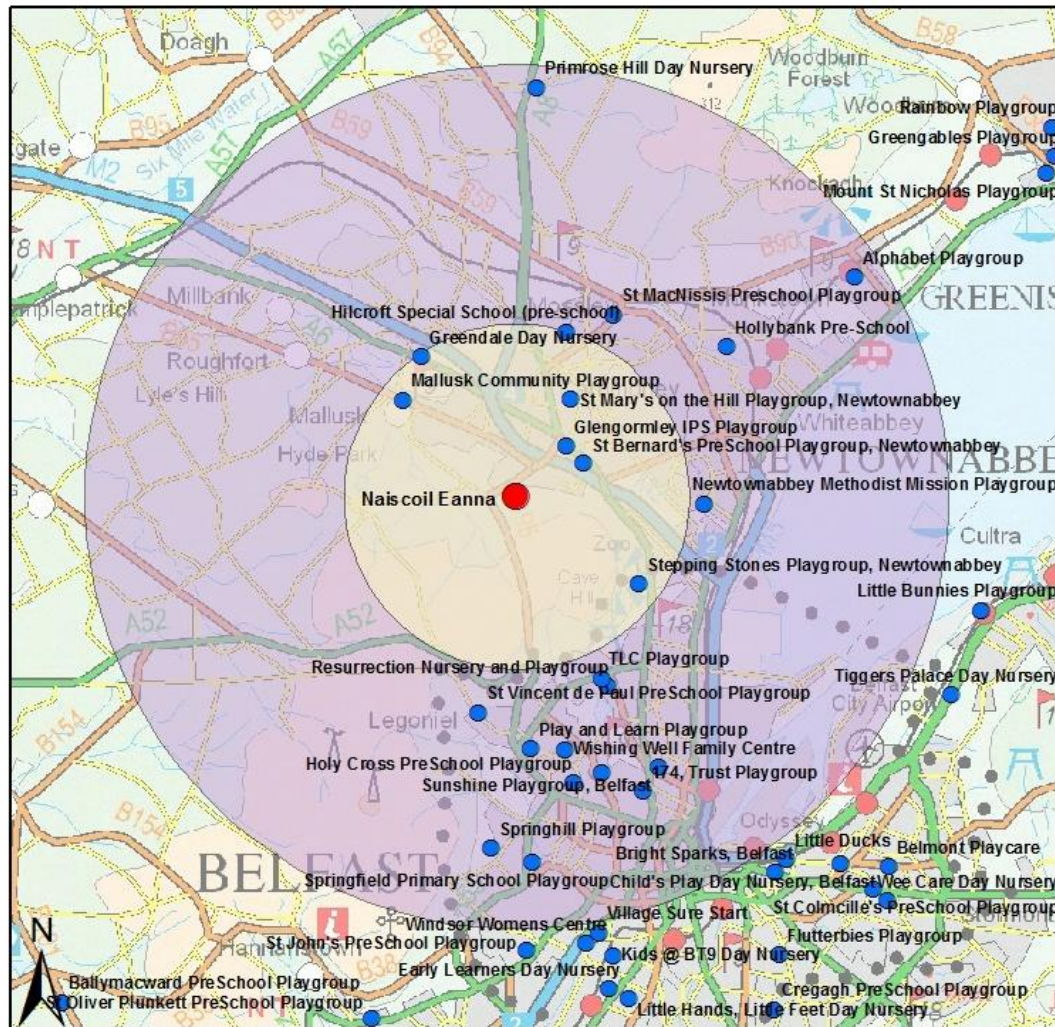
Map 3: Alternative English-medium Nursery Provision

Naiscoil Eanna - Alternative Nursery provision 2 & 5 Miles

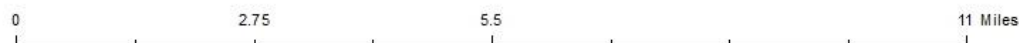
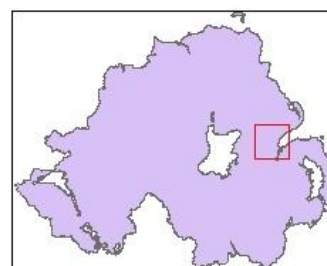


Map 4: Alternative English-medium Pre-school provision

Naiscoil Eanna - Alternative Pre-school provision 2 & 5 Miles



- Naiscoil Eanna
- Alternative Pre-school provision
- 2 Mile Buffer of Naiscoil Eanna
- 5 Mile Buffer of Naiscoil Eanna



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Appendix E:	CnaG Comments
Appendix F:	ETI comments
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INTRODUCTION

A Development Proposal (DP) is the statutory mechanism to bring about a change to a school, including the establishment of a nursery unit. **Appendix A** provides more detailed background information on the policy to date, processes for planning Irish-medium (IM) pre-school provision in line with the duty to encourage and facilitate the development of IM education and the Development Proposal process which will set the context for your consideration of this proposal.

2. On 18th February 2016, the Education Authority (EA) published DP 449 on behalf of the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna. The proposal aims to establish a statutory IM nursery unit with 26 full-time places at Gaelscoil Éanna with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.
3. The statutory two-month objection period for this proposal commenced on the date of publication and ended on 18th April 2016. Copies of the published DP and the proposer's 'Case for Change' are attached at **Appendices B** and **C** respectively.
4. If approved, the consequence of the establishment of a statutory nursery unit at Gaelscoil Éanna would be the closure of the existing voluntary pre-school, Naíscóil Éanna.

BACKGROUND

Naíscóil Éanna

5. Naíscóil Éanna is currently a non-statutory IM pre-school and is situated in mobile accommodation on the St Enda's GAC site. In 2015/16, it had 22 Pre-school Education Advisory Group (PEAG) funded places, and has offered places to 29 pupils for the 2016/17 academic year. The pre-school was established in 2004.

Table 1: Historical pre-school enrolments at Naíscóil Éanna

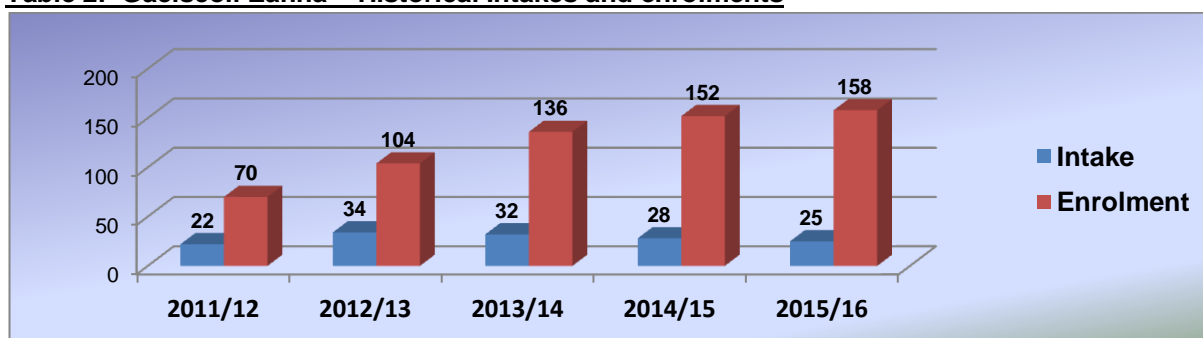
2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
Funded	Overall	Funded	Overall	Funded	Overall	Funded	Overall	Funded	Overall
33	41	33	33	25	25	26	26	22	22

6. The table above confirms that the number of PEAG funded places in the Naíscóil reached 26 in three of the past five years. In the outlying years, the number of funded places ranges between 22 and 25.

Gaelscoil Éanna

7. Gaelscoil Éanna is an “other maintained” co-educational, IM primary school. The school began as an independent school in 2004 and was awarded grant-aided status from 2007. It is situated on the Hightown Road in Glengormley, County Antrim. As per Table 2 (below), the enrolment of the school has risen significantly over the past five years and currently stands at 158 children. The approved admissions and enrolment numbers for 2015/16 for Gaelscoil Éanna are 29 and 174 respectively and preliminary figures for 2016/17 indicate a total of 22 P1 applications for September 2016.
8. The primary area plan for the former North-Eastern Board notes that the school has a rapidly rising enrolment trend, and a DP (No. 264) to increase the enrolment at the school to a maximum of 205 was approved in April 2013. The approved enrolment for 2016/17 has been increased to 205 in line with the approved DP.

Table 2: Gaelscoil Éanna – Historical Intakes and enrolments



Area

9. On the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 the Mallusk 2 Super Output Area (in which Gaelscoil Éanna is situated) is placed 780 out of 890 (1 being most deprived and 890 being least deprived). Birth statistics by academic year for all wards which fall at least partially within a 5 mile radius of Gaelscoil Éanna indicate an overall decrease of 0.6% from 3,248 to 3,227 children in the pre-school cohort between September 2016 and September 2018 admissions. Population projections for 3 year olds in the Antrim and Newtownabbey council area predict a steady decline between 2017 and 2039 of 11.2% (1,791 to 1,591). *Note: These figures are not an exact predictor of demand as they do not fully take into account population migration and other factors.*

Alternative IM Primary Provision

10. Map 1 (above) provides details of the location of Gaelscoil Éanna and the nearest alternative IM primary provision including pupil location.
11. As stated in the Case for Change, this shows that the school is the sole provider of IM primary education within a 2 mile radius. Beyond the immediate area, the map confirms that Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain is the nearest alternative IM primary

provider. This is an “other-maintained” co-educational, IM primary school with an associated nursery unit, and is approximately 4.4 miles south of Gaelscoil Éanna.

12. Historical enrolments at the school are detailed at table 3, below:

Table 3: Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain – Historical intakes and enrolments

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Intake	19	12	21	19	24
Enrolment (incl Nursery)	114	130	133	142	155
Enrolment (excl Nursery)	114	104	108	116	125

13. The overall enrolment at Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain has risen steadily across a five-year period, and is above the enrolment threshold identified within the Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP).

14. There are three further IM primary schools to the south of Gaelscoil Éanna, each of which falls within a 5 mile radius. These are Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain, Gaelscoil an Lonnain and Bunscoil Tsleibhe Dhuibh, all of which are in Belfast. Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain is a controlled IM primary school while both Gaelscoil an Lonnain and Bunscoil Tsleibhe Dhuibh are other maintained IM schools. The historical enrolment at each and the approximate distance from Gaelscoil Éanna (by road) are included below:

Table 4: Gaelscoil Éanna – Alternative IM provision

School	Distance from Gaelscoil Éanna (miles by road)	Total Enrolment (2015/16)
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	6.4	84
Bunscoil An Tsleibhe Dhuibh	7	159
Gaelscoil an Lonnain	6.2	54

15. As each of the schools outlined is situated within the greater Belfast area, the minimum enrolment threshold of 140 for primary schools in an urban area applies. While Bunscoil An Tsleibhe Dhuibh is considered sustainable in this regard, both Gaelscoil an Lonnain and Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain currently fail to meet this criterion.

Alternative IM Pre-school provision

16. The nearest alternative IM pre-school provision is the nursery unit on the site of Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain. Beyond this, the level of IM provision increases further, but includes settings in Belfast that parents in the area would be unlikely to travel to as confirmed in Map 2 above. The table below shows the number of first-preference applications received for admission to the closest IM settings for the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years:

Table 5: Applications to IM pre-school settings

Setting	Number of places available			Number of 1 st preference applications received		
	2016/17*	2015/16	2014/15	2016/17*	2015/16	2014/15
Naíscoil Éanna	29	28	26	29	19	26
Bunscoil An Tsleibhe Dhuibh	26	26	26	28	32	22
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	26	26	26	27	30	24
Naiscoil Mhic Reachtain	17	16	16	17	15	17
Naiscoil An Lonnain.	6	15	16	6	8	12

*2016/17 preliminary figures provided by EA

17. From the above table it is clear that there is a sustained demand for places in the statutory IM settings at Bunscoil an Tsleibhe Dhuibh and Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain.

18. Alternative English-medium pre-school provision is detailed in Maps 3 and 4 above.

Level of Need for Pre-school Provision

19. In determining need, the Department generally assumes a level of provision at 95% of target age children, predicated on the application rate for pre-school places which is approximately 92%; however the level of provision within local areas may be higher or lower based on historic patterns of demand and assessment of ongoing need.

20. The number of pre-school places and associated percentages are measured against the year one enrolments for 2014/15 and 2015/16. However Naiscoil Éanna is the only IM pre-school provider within a two mile radius. When extended to a five mile radius, the level of IM pre-school provision exceeds the planning figure of 95%, although it should be noted that that this includes the settings in Belfast. It should also be noted that the statutory IM settings Bunscoil an Tsleibhe Dhuibh and Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain have been fully or over-subscribed in each of the last two years.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

(i) Duty to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education

21. The Department has a statutory duty under Article 89 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 *to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education.*

22. The statutory duty does not equate to a duty to grant every proposal brought forward on behalf of an IM school and the Department must be mindful of its statutory duty under Article 44 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and under Managing Public Money to ensure effective and efficient use of public funds.
23. The Department has and continues to respond to parental demand for Irish-medium education and funds IM schools that are robust and do not involve unreasonable public expenditure.

(ii) Early Years

24. The policy to date is set out in '*Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning*', published on 7 October 2013. Among its key actions is placing a moratorium on any new or additional full-time provision or conversion from part-time to full-time (ie. over 4.5 hours) in advance of a review of the current levels of full-time provision, existing research, and the needs of children being served by it.
25. In the light of the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate IM Education (IME) and in recognition of the benefits of an immersion experience at pre-school for those pupils wishing to access IM primary provision, the Department considers the need for IM pre-school provision in the context of recommendation 2 of the IM Review (2009): that IM providers with sufficient children should be allowed to enter the existing funding programme, even where unfilled English-medium provision is available in the area.
26. The Department's practice is not to displace good quality pre-school provision already in existence with provision in an alternative statutory setting. This includes not ceasing funding for an existing Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) funded playgroup and establishing statutory nursery provision as an alternative.

CASE FOR CHANGE

27. The Case for Change confirms that the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna was requested by the Committee of Naíscoil Éanna to submit the DP. The Case for Change for DP 449 is attached in full at **Appendix C**. The key points highlighted in the Case for Change include:
- Parents of Glengormley and the surrounding area wish that their children receive pre-school education through the medium of Irish in a nursery setting in their local area. As there is no such facility in this area they feel that this provision is something they are entitled to, considering there are various options available for likewise provision through the medium of English.
 - If approved, it is anticipated that 26 children of pre-school age would attend the proposed new unit from September 2017, and that these children would subsequently progress to Gaelscoil Éanna. Approval to this proposal would

help attract more pupils and aid the sustainability of the Gaelscoil in the long term.

- There is an obvious demand in this area for IM education at pre-school level. A statutory Naíscoil Éanna would provide appropriately for this need.
- This pre-school setting will provide total immersion in the medium of Irish which cannot be provided in other local English medium pre-school settings.
- Arrangements under the current PEAG funding are inadequate in terms of providing the high level of education provided by other local statutory nursery units, none of which are IM.
- The Case for Change also identifies the strengthening of existing community links and associated benefits a unit would gain from the Gaelscoil's facilities; particularly its ICT equipment and extra-curricular provision.
- Other benefits a statutory unit would offer compared to voluntary provision include the employment of a qualified teacher to help improve educational and linguistic standards, and assist in the identification of pupils with learning difficulties.
- A qualified teacher in the pre-school setting will also help parental and community confidence and help maintain steady enrolment trends in the long term, in turn helping to ensure the future sustainability of Gaelscoil Éanna.
- The proposed nursery unit would be managed by Gaelscoil Éanna's Board of Governors and serve the Greater Glengormley area.
- The Gaelscoil, based on the efficient management of its current budget, could effectively manage the additional budget responsibilities of the nursery unit.
- The Case for Change refers to the Area Planning process and raises a number of issues including that the process does not adequately reflect DE's duty to encourage and facilitate the Irish medium sector. It points to an inconsistency of approach to planning IM provision and the failure of the area planning process to identify IM as a distinct entity.

CONSULTATIONS

Pre-publication consultation

28. The decision to submit this proposal was agreed by Gaelscoil Éanna's Board of Governors in September 2015. The Case for Change confirms that the school undertook the required statutory consultation involving its Board of Governors, teachers, and parents regarding the establishment of a statutory nursery unit.
29. The Education Authority (EA) has provided evidence of formal consultation amongst the Board of Governors and Trustees of schools which might be affected by the proposal. It received one response in this pre-publication period from Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta in support of the proposal which underlined the fact that there was (i) no alternative provision in the area; and (ii) that none was planned.

Two-month Statutory Objection Period

30. During the two-month statutory consultation period on DP No 449, which ran between 18th February to 18th April 2016, the Department received one letter of objection from the Board of Governors of Mossley Primary School. The key points raised in the letter of 18th March are summarised as follows:

- Within the context of budgetary cutbacks, it would be inappropriate to be undertaking the capital development of any non-compulsory provision;
- Any capital project would lead to consequential misappropriation of recurrent expenditure through the LMS/LMF scheme;
- It will either divert financial resources from existing provision to alternative provision and cause further cutbacks in staffing levels, loss of development and raise questions of viability etc. or else, non-compulsory provision will be expanded with the requirement that additional financial resources are re-directed to meet this need.

Education Authority (EA) Comments

31. The EA confirmed its support for the proposal, noting that there are no other IM providers in the area and there remain no plans to make additional provision. The full EA commentary can be accessed at **Appendix D**.

Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) Comments

32. CnaG wrote to the Department on 28 April 2016 to highlight its support for the proposal but was received outside the statutory two month objection period. However, as a response from CnaG had been commissioned by the Department, though not normal practice, it is included in full at **Appendix E**.

Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) Comments

33. In providing their view of the proposal, the ETI highlighted the Department of Education's practice not to displace good quality voluntary pre-school provision with provision in an alternative statutory setting, as outlined in this development proposal. The ETI also identified a lack of a clear rationale for the use of a full-time nursery unit rather than part-time sessions.

34. However, the ETI also recognises the value of an effective immersion environment with a qualified teacher who has a high degree of proficiency in writing and speaking the Irish language in a statutory nursery environment. It also recognises the potential of the proposal to improve the sustainability of the Gaelscoil Éanna.

35. The full ETI commentary is available at **Appendix F**.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

36. The Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) does not apply to pre-school provision. However, it is important when considering the establishment of a nursery unit at a

school that the host school is assessed. The following is an assessment of Gaelscoil Éanna against the six criteria of the SSP.

(i) Quality Education Experience

In relation to primary provision, the SSP indicators highlight KS2 attainment levels, no more than two composite classes, a minimum of 4 teachers, the ability of a school to cater for Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils, availability of curricular and extracurricular activities, quality of the physical environment for learning, and pastoral care arrangements.

37. Gaelscoil Éanna was inspected by the ETI in June 2014. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school was reported to be 'good', with the report listing important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision.
38. Gaelscoil Éanna's current teaching staff consists of 10 teachers in total, with a full-time equivalent figure of 9.6. (This figure is inclusive of staff working in the nursery unit). The school operated a total of 8 classes in 2015/16, including 3 composite classes - two for P2/3 and one for the P6/P7 year group(s).
39. The Inspection report identifies that provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. Pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early through close links with the naíscóil, and a range of effective intervention strategies are in place.
40. The report states that the school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity through the range of extra-curricular activities available to the children, and through the promotion of healthy breaks and lunches.

(ii) Stable Enrolment Trends

The SSP adopts the enrolment thresholds as recommended in the Bain Report. These are the minimum thresholds and apply to all grant-aided schools in all sectors. A rural primary school's minimum enrolment threshold is 105 pupils. Ideally a primary school should have 7 classrooms (1 per year group),

41. Gaelscoil Éanna has an approved admissions and enrolment number of 29 and 174 respectively for 2015/16 and an approved enrolment of 205 for 2016/17. The tables below confirm that the school's enrolment has been growing steadily over recent years to a 2015/16 total of 158 pupils. Currently, the school carries 19 unfilled places, and the enrolment is above the recommended threshold for a rural primary school (105 pupils), as recommended under SSP.

Table 6: Historical intakes and enrolments at Gaelscoil Éanna

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Intake	22	34	32	28	25
Enrolment	70	104	136	152	158

Table 7: Gaelscoil Éanna - enrolment by Year Group

YEAR	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Actual	25	27	31	34	20	15	6
P1-P3	83			P5-P7	41		

42. The tables above confirm the growth in the school with more pupils in P1-P3 than in P5-P7. While there was a slight decline in the overall intake in 2015/16, it should be noted that the school has otherwise been in a sustained 5-year period of growth. There are no enrolment or admissions issues with Gaelscoil Éanna.

(iii) Sound Financial Position

The SSP recommends that a school's annual finance indicates that it can live within its delegated budget and will be able to continue to do so. Where there is a deficit, the school's three-year plan should indicate that it can be reduced or recovered.

43. At 31 March 2015, Gaelscoil Éanna held a cumulative deficit of £592.00. As at March 2016, the 2015-16 budget allocation was £493,682 and the Education Authority have reported a closing surplus of £11,092 (or 2.2% of delegated resources) at 31 March 2016.

(iv) Strong Leadership and Management

The SSP highlights a number of indicators in relation to the BoG, staff and pupils. These include: BoG – views, skills and experience of the BoG; Staff - management (both curricular and organisational) attendance, turnover, morale; Pupils – behaviour, attendance, and involvement in school management. A school development plan must be in place and monitored.

44. The 2014 ETI inspection report of Gaelscoil Éanna found the quality of leadership and management of the school to be 'good'. The report states that:

'the principal is highly committed to the life and work of the school and has a clear vision for the continued development and improvement of provision'

45. The report also stated that:

'the governors have a clear and strategic vision for the future development of the school; they are well informed about the school and carry out effectively their support and challenge functions'

(v) Accessibility

The SSP highlights the need for reasonable distance and travel time to school and also suitable transport arrangements. It highlights travel times of less than 30 minutes for primary pupils.

46. Gaelscoil Éanna represents the only IM provision in the Newtownabbey area. While there are no alternative providers of IM education within the immediate area, there are alternative IM Primary Schools situated in North Belfast. As outlined at para. 11,

Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain is the closest alternative provider of primary and pre-school IM education and is located approximately 4.4 miles away by road.

47. Map 1 shows the location of pupils enrolled at the Gaelscoil. Most pupils who attend the school live within 5 miles travelling distance. The map indicates a minor overlap with the catchment area of Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain, however the majority of pupils have Gaelscoil Éanna as the closest available IM provider. The school is comfortably accessible to pupils within a 30 minute maximum travel time, as set out in the SSP.

(vi) Strong Links with the Community

The SSP refers to the degree and quality of parental involvement, contribution of the school to the community, presence of other features (nursery or specialist provision) and use of school buildings outside formal education.

48. The 2014 ETI report on Gaelscoil Éanna noted the high level of satisfaction expressed by respondents to parental questionnaires. Parental support is high, and parenting programmes, workshops and a dedicated Family Network worker are made available to provide training and skills throughout the community.
49. The Case for Change confirms that both the Gaelscoil and naíscail are embedded and well-connected to the local community, and the school works effectively and harmoniously with the support of the local GAA club and community organisations such as Croí Éanna (a community-based organisation which provides support, quality IM education and enhanced opportunities for the greater Glengormley area). The primary school in particular lists one of its strengths as its commitment to CPD, and highlights the invaluable work experience and qualifications offered to many local people and agencies.

Sustainability Summary

50. The quality of education provided by Gaelscoil Éanna was evaluated as 'good' when inspected in June 2014. The leadership and management of the gaelscoil was also assessed as 'good'. The enrolment levels of the gaelscoil are above the required threshold within the SSP and the school has shown a sustained pattern of growth over the past five years. There are no concerns surrounding Gaelscoil Éanna's financial position. The school is accessible to pupils within the 30 minute maximum travel time, as set out in the SSP, and it maintains positive links within the local community.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Quality of Education at Naíscail Éanna

51. A follow-up inspection of Naíscail Éanna was carried out by the ETI in May 2012, and the quality of the education provided in the voluntary pre-school setting was

evaluated as 'good' overall. The quality of leadership and management was at an early stage of effective self-evaluation and action planning for improvement.

Area Plan

52. The former NEELB Primary Area Plan (June 2014) aims at developing a network of viable and sustainable schools within the area. While pre-school and nursery provision do not feature within the Area Plan, it recognises the gaelscoil's rapidly rising enrolment trend and references the approved action for a previous DP to increase the approved enrolment of the school to a maximum of 205 (DP no. 264 refers).

Financial Implications

53. Places in the voluntary/private sector are funded on a per place basis and allocated annually, taking account of the number of statutory pre-school places available and assessment of demand. If a statutory nursery is opened at Naíscoil Éanna the requirement for recurring funding would transfer from the Pre-School Budget to the Aggregated Schools Budget. As such, costs have been estimated at approximately £50,000 for a 26 place Part-time IM Nursery Unit with some £30,000 falling initially to the in-year contingency fund. However, this funding is dependent on the number of pupils enrolled, identified pupil needs, and provision for approved premises for a Nursery Unit. These cannot be estimated at present as relevant data is not available.

Accommodation and Location

54. The naíscoil is situated in a mobile building at the rear of Gaelscoil Éanna, on a site owned by St Enda's GAC. There is currently no vehicular access and entrance to the naíscoil involves a walk of approximately 800 yards. The proposal seeks to initially relocate the existing building on to the school site and thereafter seek the provision of purpose built pre-school premises in a more appropriate area within the perimeter of the same existing school site.
55. In the longer-term, replacement accommodation with a modular single nursery unit is sought.
56. In general, the time frame for procurement of a modular nursery unit and for obtaining all necessary statutory approvals is at least nine months from the date of approval of the Minor Works application. The cost of such a unit would be in the region of £300k plus VAT and fees. This estimate has been verified by the EA.
57. As the Department is not yet aware of the ground conditions where the new unit is to be placed, the suitability of the site for the additional accommodation cannot be assessed nor can site works costs be estimated. In addition, information is not available regarding whether the existing site could accommodate this proposed additional accommodation.

58. However, it was announced in March 2016 that funding would be made available to advance the planning of a new school for Gaelscoil Éanna as part of a £40m capital investment for Primary Schools. Should DP 449 be approved, the provision of any new accommodation required to facilitate the nursery would be considered as part of the new build scheme which would offer better value for money. A typical timeframe for a new build primary school would be approximately 3 years.

Staffing requirements

59. The staffing complement for a proposed statutory nursery unit would be one part-time teacher and 1 part-time classroom assistant. This teaching complement would be further supported by a network of trained volunteers to ensure the highest level of provision. The costs involved would be met from within the school's budget.

CONCLUSION

Sustainability

60. The evidence suggests that Gaelscoil Éanna, to which the proposed nursery would be attached, has a growing enrolment and can be considered both viable and sustainable. The school's enrolment has increased from 70 pupils in 2011/12 to 158 pupils in 2015/16. The approved enrolment for 2016/17 has been increased to 205 pupils. The Case for Change states that it is anticipated that the children of the naíscail shall progress to Gaelscoil Éanna and the change of status and the development of the naíscail will further this growth. The host school at which a statutory nursery is to be established should be viable and sustainable. As stated above, Gaelscoil Éanna meets all six criteria of the SSP.

Need

61. In determining need for pre-school provision, as stated above the Department generally assumes a level of provision at 95% of target age children, predicated on the application rate for pre-school places which is approximately 92%; however the level of provision within local areas may be higher or lower based on historic patterns of demand and assessment of ongoing need.

62. Consideration has been given to the total level of pre-school provision within the two and five mile radii of Gaelscoil Éanna and, because IM providers may enter the Pre-School Education Programme even where unfilled English-Medium provision is available in the area, to IM pre-school provision specifically.

63. However, it should be noted that the proposal does not seek to increase the level of provision in the area. If approved, the level of provision would be broadly in line with the number of funded places made available in the voluntary setting over the last 5 years, and lower than in some years (as per table 1 it provided 33 funded places in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and has offered 29 children a place for the 2016/17 academic

year). Therefore the assessment of levels of provision does not carry the same significance in considering this particular DP as would normally be the case, as the level of provision will remain broadly the same.

64. In relation to pre-school provision overall the level of provision within the two mile radius is very close to the planning figure of 95%, both before and after the proposed change in provision. The level of provision within the five mile radius is in excess of the planning figure, although there are a significant number of underage children in statutory provision (41 in 2014/15 and 29 in 2015/16). While this suggests over-provision in pre-school places, the proposed change would not make a significant change to the level of provision.

65. The level of provision would therefore appear to be adequate to meet the level of demand for pre-school places in the area, whether or not the proposal is approved.

IM Pre-school Provision

66. In relation to IM provision, Naíscoil Éanna and Gaelscoil Éanna are the only providers of pre-school and year one within the two mile radius.

67. Although the proposed level of provision is higher than 100% (usually an indication of over provision), provisional 2016/17 enrolment numbers as well as historic enrolment trends at the voluntary setting suggest that the proposed level of statutory provision would be sustainable and would be filled with target age children.

68. In previous years the setting has provided more than 26 pre-school places (as per table 1, the naíscoil carried 33 places in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and has offered 29 children a place for the 2016/17 academic year). As the Case for Change seeks a single statutory nursery class, the number of pre-school places available at the setting if the proposal is approved would be limited to 26 (or a maximum of 30 if temporary flexibility were approved). It is possible, therefore, that the change of status sought by this proposal could limit capacity in the area to meet demand for IM pre-school provision.

69. The PEAG, in supporting the proposal, has raised no concerns that a change to statutory status could have a negative impact on the provision of sufficient IM pre-school places in the area.

70. Within five miles of Gaelscoil Éanna the level of IM provision increases further beyond 100%, but it should be noted that this includes settings in Belfast that parents in this area would be unlikely to travel to. Although this level again suggests over-provision, the IM settings have been fully or over-subscribed in each of the last two years.

Displacement

71. Should the DP be approved, the creation of a statutory IM nursery unit would displace the current good quality provision available in the existing voluntary setting.
72. Until now, the Department has been operating under an Early Years policy of not displacing good quality voluntary pre-school provision already in existence with provision in an alternative statutory setting, as outlined above. There is clear inspection evidence that the voluntary pre-school is providing a good quality of provision.
73. While the key consideration must be the provision of high quality education, non-statutory pre-school provision is not considered as less effective than statutory provision. The PSEP is a partnership between statutory and non-statutory/private pre-school providers. Both sectors are equally valued for their contribution to the education of pre-school children and both adhere to the same curricular guidelines and are inspected to the same standards.
74. The EA has advised that the PEAG does not consider this a displacement issue, but one of transformation of provision. In this case, however, the Case for Change confirms that the committee of Naíscoil Éanna requested that the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna submit a DP for statutory provision. It also states that *'the same committee, based on the educational needs of the children who attend its facility, made a decision to further enhance the current pre-school provision'* and that *'this will lead to a more comprehensive pre-school provision that will cater for the children in its care'*.

Impact

75. The Case for Change states that Gaelscoil Éanna is the sole provider of IM education in the area, and as such the change of status will not impact on any alternative pre-school IM provision. The nursery unit at Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain, 4.4 miles from Gaelscoil Éanna has filled to above its 26 places in the last two years as has the further statutory provision at Bunscoil An Tsleibhe Dhuibh as set out in table 5 above. It is clear that there is a sustained demand for places in these statutory IM settings and this proposal is not aiming to increase the number of places available.
76. The Case for Change also states that the Board of Governors regard the proposed change as a matter of equity, and cites various perceived benefits of a change of status, including the setting benefitting from the wide range of Gaelscoil Éanna's extra-curricular provision including morning, afterschool and homework clubs. It would also benefit from collaboration with foundation stage teachers and pupils in relation to ICT.
77. The perceived benefits of the employment of a qualified teacher are set out in the Case for Change, which it claims would aid the setting in catering for the needs of

pupils and in “competing” with other local statutory pre-school providers who provide ‘longer hours’ and ‘hot school meals’.

78. It does not acknowledge that voluntary pre-school settings may also employ qualified teachers, or advise whether the setting has made any attempt to do so. It is not clear why the Board of Governors appear to consider provision at the voluntary setting to be less effective than teacher led statutory provision
79. In addition, other than competing with other statutory nurseries, the Case for Change identifies no clear rationale for a full-time nursery unit rather than continuance of part-time sessions. As stated previously, ‘*Learning To Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning*’ (October 2013) places a moratorium on any new or additional full-time provision, or conversion from part-time to full-time, in advance of a review of the current levels of full-time provision; existing research; and the needs of the children being served by it.
80. Although the ETI recognises the value of an effective immersion environment with a qualified teacher, they also identified a lack of a clear rationale for the use of a full-time nursery unit rather than part-time sessions.
81. The EA has confirmed its support for the proposal but the PEAG in supporting the proposal pointed out that there is currently a moratorium on full-time provision.

Statutory Duty

82. DE has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate IM Education. In recognition of the benefits of an immersion experience at pre-school for those pupils wishing to access IM primary provision, DE considers the need for IM pre-school provision in the context of Recommendation 2 of the IM review (2009), that “*Irish-medium providers with sufficient children should be allowed to enter the existing funding programme even where unfilled English-medium provision is available in the area.*”
83. On the evidence available, the proposed statutory provision appears sustainable as there is clear evidence of demand for places in the current non-statutory setting and in both statutory settings in the wider area. The proposal does not seek to create additional places and has been requested by the existing non-statutory pre-school. Approval would also be in line with the statutory duty.
84. However, the proposal requests full-time provision which is not in line with the moratorium on new or additional full-time pre-school provision currently in place and therefore cannot be approved as published.

RECOMMENDATION

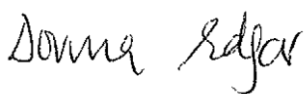
85. On the basis of available evidence, it is recommended that you:-

- Approve DP 449, that a statutory Irish-medium nursery unit, called Naíscoil Éanna, be established at Gaelscoil Éanna with effect from 1 September 2017, with a modification from 26 *full-time* places to 26 *part-time* places.
- Agree that this submission (with appropriate redactions) will be published on the Department’s website once the school, CnaG and the Education Authority have been informed of your decision and the press release has been issued.
- Officials are available to discuss the submission should you wish.

86. A draft press release will be provided for your consideration when you have made your decision.

87. I attach the following for your consideration:

Appendix A:	Contextual information on current policy and processes for planning pre-school provision and the Development Proposal process
Appendix B:	Copy of published DP 449
Appendix C:	Case for Change
Appendix D:	EA Comments
Appendix E:	CnaG Comments
Appendix F:	ETI comments
– Appendix G:	DE comments
Appendix H:	Annual Area Profile



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Appendix A

CURRENT POLICY AND PROCESSES FOR PLANNING PRE-SCHOOL PROVISION AND THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL PROCESS

Pre-School Policy

The policy position to date was set out in Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning, published on 7 October 2013. Its key actions included placing a moratorium on any new or additional full-time provision or conversion from part-time to full-time (defined as over 4.5 hours) in advance of a review of the current levels of full-time provision, existing research and the needs of children being served by it.

PEAG and the Pre-School Planning Process

The Education Authority's (EA's) Pre-school Education Advisory Groups (PEAGs) are responsible for planning pre-school provision and overseeing the allocation of places to the non-statutory sector.

DE in conjunction with the EA undertakes an annual exercise to estimate the level of provision required for the following academic year. When planning pre-school provision, decisions are made on the basis of providing sufficient places for approximately 95% of the live birth statistics provided on the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) website. While the figure of 95% is higher than the average annual application rate (usually 92%), this provides for slightly more places to be allocated than assessed as needed to account for fluctuations in patterns of demand and ensure the process runs smoothly.

Displacement

It is the Department's practice not to displace good quality pre-school provision already in existence with pre-school provision in an alternative setting. This includes not ceasing funding for an existing Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) funded playgroup and establishing statutory nursery provision as an alternative.

Provision Levels

In determining need, the Department generally assumes a level of provision at 95% of target age children, predicated on the application rate for pre-school places which is approximately 92%; however the level of provision within local areas may be higher or lower based on historic patterns of demand and assessment of ongoing need.

The numbers of pre-school places and associated percentages are measured against the Year One enrolments for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Application of the Duty to Encourage and Facilitate IM Pre-school Education

The Department has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate IM Education. In accordance with the Review of Irish-Medium Education, registered IM providers with sufficient children can be funded under the Department's Pre-School Education Programme even where unfilled English-Medium provision is available in the area.

Development Proposal Process

Any significant change to be made to a school can only be made through the publication of a Development Proposal (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.

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.

DPs are brought forward by a 'Proposer'. The Proposer is the relevant school managing authority which includes the Education Authority (for Controlled schools), the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (for Catholic maintained schools) as well as individual Boards of Governors of voluntary maintained schools, Voluntary Grammar Schools and Grant Maintained Integrated 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.

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 is policy compliant.

The four main stages in the DP process are:-

- (i) **identification of need** *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 Board of Governors, Staff and parents of registered pupils of the affected school. On receipt of a DP, the Education Authority (which publishes all DPs irrespective of sector) must consult with schools likely to be affected by it.*
- (iii) **publication of a DP**; *the Education Authority 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.*

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.

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 Grant Maintained Integrated and voluntary Irish-medium schools). Other conditions (imposed when schools are opening or transforming) will relate to Department policies and not the approval itself.

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

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

Appendix B – Copy of Published DP 449

EDUCATION AUTHORITY

NORTH EASTERN REGION

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL NO: 449

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

A statutory Irish-medium nursery unit, called Naíscoil Éanna, to be established at Gaelscoil Éanna to provide 26 fulltime places with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

A copy of the Proposal may be inspected at offices of the Education Authority located at 52-56 Ballymoney Street, BALLYMENNA, Co Antrim, BT43 6AN between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 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@deni.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 terms of the Freedom of Information Act, if requested. (A fee may be charged for supplying this information).

**Gavin Boyd
Chief Executive**

Appendix C - Case for Change

GAELSCOIL ÉANNA CASE FOR CHANGE – Supporting Information

SUMMARY / OVERVIEW

BOARD AREA	Education Authority, North Eastern Region
DP NUMBER	Unknown
PROPOSER	Maighréad Ní Chonghaile Principal, Gaelscoil Éanna Niall Murphy Chairperson, Gaelscoil Éanna
SCHOOL(S) NAME	Gaelscoil Eanna Hightown Road Newtownabbey BT36 7AU
SCHOOL REFERENCE	304/6685
TYPE	Voluntary pre-school provision requesting change to statutory provision
MANAGEMENT	Irish Medium
DP PUBLICATION DATE	ASAP
PROPOSAL	<p>I write to you on behalf of Gaelscoil Éanna proposing a fulltime Irish-medium nursery unit of Gaelscoil Éanna which will be established in September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter. As part of this Case for Change, you will find enclosed a Development Proposal for an Irish-medium nursery unit of Gaelscoil Éanna to be situated on the grounds of Gaelscoil Éanna, Hightown Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7AU.</p> <p>I would request that you present it to the appropriate committees at their next meeting.</p>


STATUTORY CONSULTATION

BY THE PROPOSER	<p>I confirm that the school(s) Board of Governors, staff and parents of pupils were consulted before and on 23 February 2015</p> <p>SIGNED: <i>M. Ni Chonghaile</i> (Maighr��ad N�� Chonghaile)</p> <p>(Niall Murphy) <i>Niall Murphy</i></p> <p><i>5/10/15</i> DATE:</p>
BY THE BOARD	<p>I confirm that the schools which the board consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted</p> <p>SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____</p>

ASSOCIATED PROPOSALS

<p>DP ...</p> <p>Published DD/MM/YY</p>	<p>Proposed to ... with effect from ... or as soon as possible thereafter</p>
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STATUTORY CONSULTATION

BY THE PROPOSER	<p>I confirm that the schools(s) Board of Governors, staff and parents of pupils were consulted before and on 23 February 2015</p> <p>SIGNED:</p> <p>(Maighréad Ní Chonghaile)</p> <p>(Niall Murphy)</p> <p>DATE:</p>
BY THE BOARD	<p>I confirm that the schools which the board consider might be impacted by this proposal were consulted</p> <p>SIGNED: </p> <p>DATE: 19.0.16</p>

ASSOCIATED PROPOSALS

DP ... Published DD/MM/YY	Proposed to ... with effect from ... or as soon as possible thereafter
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BACKGROUND

This Development Proposal from Gaelscoil Éanna is proposing a change in status from Voluntary to Statutory of the Irish-medium pre-school unit of Gaelscoil Éanna to serve the Greater Glengormley Area.

Introduction

A PROPOSAL FOR GRANT-AIDED STATUS:

This proposal is being sent to the by the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna with the support of the current committee of the voluntary Naiscoil Éanna.

The school shall be an Irish-medium nursery unit of Gaelscoil Éanna called Naiscoil Éanna. As is usual in Irish-medium nursery units, the enrolment number would be 26 in September 2016 as is recommended by the Department of Education and remain sustainable in subsequent years, should this nursery unit achieve recognition and state funding. It is estimated that the long term registration for the nursery unit will be 26 pupils.

1. Details on the proposed school:

- (a) *Type*
An Irish-medium nursery unit of Gaelscoil Éanna. Full-time places.
- (b) *Location*
Gaelscoil Éanna, Hightown Road, Newtownabbey, BT367AU
- (c) *Enrolment*
26 in September 2017

2. Background

Naiscoil Éanna (the current associated Irish-medium voluntary pre-school facility with Gaelscoil Éanna) was established September in the year 2004. It is at present located on the site of Hightown Road, Newtownabbey.

In the current school year the voluntary Playgroup has 26 children in the setting. It is anticipated that in the forthcoming and following school years 2016/17 and 2017/18, 26 children of pre-school age will attend the school. The children of this naiscoil shall progress to Gaelscoil Éanna. Gaelscoil Éanna's pupil numbers have increased steadily over the last 4 years and the change of status and development of Naiscoil Éanna, to remain on current on its site, will improve further this growth, which will strengthen and ensure the long-term viability of Gaelscoil Éanna.

- (a) The Committee of Naiscoil Éanna, in its current voluntary status, came together in 2004 as a group of parents and others interested in Irish-medium education, to ensure Irish-medium pre-school provision to accommodate the clear demand in the Greater Glengormley/Newtownabbey area. The same committee has, based on the educational needs of the children who attend its facility, made a decision to further enhance the current pre-school provision. This will lead to a more comprehensive pre-school provision that will cater for the children in its care. The Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna has been requested by the committee of Naiscoil Éanna to submit a development proposal proposing a change of pre-school status from voluntary to statutory.
- (b) It should also be recognised that this nursery unit is important to the community not only from an educational point of view but also as it has an important social and cultural role. Parents of Glengormley and the surrounding area wish that their children receive pre-school education through the medium of Irish in a nursery unit setting in their local area. As there is no such facility in this area, they feel that this provision is something that they are entitled to, considering that there are various options available for likewise provision through the medium of English for parents who wish their children to receive English-medium education.

3. The need for an Irish-medium nursery unit

- (a) There is an obvious demand in this area for Irish-medium education at pre-school level. This proposal has been written on the understanding that a statutory Naiscoil Éanna would provide appropriately for this need. Gaelscoil Éanna although sited in Newtownabbey serves families also from areas of high deprivation, with 35% of its pupils currently entitled to Free School Meals and 25% on the school's Special Educational Needs Register.
- (b) The children who will attend this Irish-medium nursery unit will require education in the full range of the pre-school curriculum just as is the case for children in other total immersion settings throughout Ireland and UK (Welsh in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland). This cannot be provided in English-medium nursery schools. The school will meet all the educational needs of the children in its care. Gaelscoil Éanna provides a comprehensive intervention programme, which includes providing high levels of additional support for SEN pupils, both of an educational and emotional nature.
- (c) Over 100 families in the Greater Newtownabbey and surrounding areas who have chosen Irish-medium education for their children have been consulted regarding a Development Proposal for Naiscoil Éanna. Staff and the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna along with the Management Committee, staff and parents of the voluntary Naiscoil Éanna have also been consulted regarding the development proposal for Naiscoil Éanna. The consultation affirmed that the development proposal should be sent to the Minister and given due consideration by the Department of Education.
- (d) According to the Good Friday and St Andrew's Agreements, special status should be given to Irish Medium Education and IME should be promoted. Flexibility around numbers required for capital status, or even parity with country schools, would fulfil that obligation.

It was recently agreed at DE level that the capital development of Gaelscoil Éanna should be prioritised; the current school site and accommodation have now been vested into the School's Estate with the final phases of building to follow. In terms of the Area Planning Primary Consultation Findings (June 2014), it is recognised that in Irish Medium Education:

- pupils get to speak two languages
- including Irish Medium Education (IME) in area planning is a mistake
- [the] process does not adequately reflect the statutory duty of the Department of Education and the EA to encourage and facilitate the IME Sector
- the needs of IME and proposals identified in the review of IME 2009 have not adequately shaped the criteria or proposals in the document
- failure to take into consideration the nature and needs of immersion education settings
- process fails to identify IME as a distinct entity (should not be aligned with CCMS)
- perceived procedures [are] not being followed.

4. Character and ethos of the Irish-medium nursery unit

Naiscoil Éanna will have a Gaelic-centred ethos in accordance with the ethos of Gaelscoil Éanna. Its primary objective will be to provide high quality education and high standards of attainment for all of its pupils and to ensure the holistic development of children through an education which nurtures their self-confidence and identity. Irish will be the working language of the unit and the language of instruction. As is currently the case with voluntary Naiscoil Éanna, should it be approved for statutory status, Naiscoil Éanna will continue to welcome and celebrate children of all backgrounds and will be interdenominational in nature.

5. Main catchment area of Naiscoil Éanna

Naiscoil Éanna will serve the greater Newtownabbey and surrounding areas.

The main school area of Naiscoil Éanna

- a) Mayfield
- b) Hollybrook
- c) The Beeches
- d) Farmley
- e) Elmfield
- f) Collinbridge
- g) Church Road
- h) Tobar Glen
- i) Ligoneil
- j) Whitowell
- k) Longlands
- l) Bawnmore
- m) Fairyknowe
- n) Antrim Road

RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

The current Naiscoil Éanna has operated as a voluntary playgroup since 2004, mainly through PEAGs funding and supported by ALTRAM. It has provided a good standard of education for its pupils, as confirmed by ETI and Social Services. It has good links with Gaelscoil Éanna through a transition programme. Arrangements under current PEAGs funding is inadequate in terms of providing the high level of education provided by other local statutory Nursery Units, none of which are Irish Medium.

Enrolment trends have steadily increased over the years, the sense of community, morale and team spirit of all project stakeholders is presently at a very high level.

In schools such as ours where sustainability is secure, the school works effectively and harmoniously with the support of local GAA club and community organisations e.g. Croí Éanna. Collectively we are charged with promoting Irish in the local community, we feel that with the establishment of a statutory IM nursery unit that community relationships would be further strengthened and that such provision would make a positive difference to the Newtownabbey community on the whole.

Gaelscoil Éanna continues to be committed to actively promoting its sustainability accompanied by a detailed annual action plan.

Area Planning Impact

Gaelscoil Éanna grounds and buildings are currently partly owned by DE and St Enda's GAC with quarterly rent being paid for portacabins and grounds through central funds. The school has recently been identified through a DE Minor Works Prioritising Exercise, as a school ready for further development; the project is currently being put through to pre-tender stage with a view of commencing when monies have been secured. The accommodation is currently at phase 2 of the development, the next phase will provide the school with 2 further classrooms with cloaks, stores and toilets, a small group room, a general store, a multi-purpose room, staffroom and resource room.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

A qualified teacher will be employed to teach in Naiscoil Éanna. This means that teaching is provided by someone who has a degree level qualification in Education, trained in every curriculum area, which will help improve the educational and linguistic standards and pupil attainment both in the pre-school and in the primary school at the end of Key Stages in both Literacy and Numeracy. It will also ultimately enhance skills, capacity and attainment in the local area, as the majority of pupils live in the local area.

ICT has also been a high priority for Gaelscoil Éanna, with every class having laptops and interactive whiteboards. Naiscoil Éanna will benefit from collaboration in this area with the other Foundation Stage teachers and pupils.

A qualified teacher in the pre-school setting will also help parental and community confidence and thus help maintain steady enrolment trends in the long term, in turn helping to ensure the future sustainability of Gaelscoil Éanna and Irish Medium Education in the Greater Newtownabbey Area.

Given that 25% of our pupils have Special Educational Needs at present, a qualified teacher will also help with the early identification of learning difficulties, in order to provide early intervention in both pre-school and Gaelscoil Éanna Primary School.

The Educational Psychology service will also have an input in assessing individual children's needs, thus ensuring that the specific needs of particular children are identified and met through the accessing of outreach supports, which is not permitted under the current voluntary status of Naiscoil Éanna.

Pupils in Naiscoil Éanna will also benefit from the wide range Gaelscoil Éanna's extra-curricular provision: Morning, Afterschool's and Homework Clubs, which promote well-being and provide wraparound services. There are also teacher-led interest clubs, with excellent attendance rates, which would be of great educational benefit to the pupils.

Parental support in Gaelscoil Éanna is of a high level. Parenting programmes, workshops and our Family Network worker would extend to pre-school parents to support the needs and allay fears about Irish Medium Education, while also providing training and skills to help them access employment / further education.

Gaelscoil Éanna is oftentimes commended on its commitment to, and high standard of, continued professional development, especially since it achieved its "good school" status from ETI, June 2014. That commitment to CPD has been part of the fibre of Gaelscoil Éanna; indeed many, many local people have gained invaluable work experience and qualifications through working with Gaelscoil Éanna. Additionally, Gaelscoil Éanna has reached out to other schools and agencies and offered them to join in its CPD programme. The Principal and Coordinators have been responsible for training / mentoring staff in other schools in management and core curriculum areas.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Provide supporting statistics and explain / highlight the evidence of need for change

School enrolments / admissions

The 4 years ranging from Pre-school to Primary 4 in Gaelscoil Éanna show the steady increase in enrolment trends:

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Pre-School	26	26	26	26
Rang 1	34	33	28	27
Rang 2	22	34	33	28
Rang 3	16	22	34	33
Rang 4	6	16	22	34
Average	20.8	26.2	28.6	29.6

Alternative schools

Naiscoil Éanna is a voluntary playgroup which has to compete with the major local nurseries being funded by the Department of Education such as; Ashgrove Nursery, Mossgrove P.S Nursery Unit and St. Bernard's P.S Nursery Unit all having attractive buildings, providing longer hours, hot school meals and employing qualified teachers etc. Naiscoil Éanna is the only Irish Medium Pre-School provider in the Borough of Newtownabbey and therefore the only feeder for Gaelscoil Éanna. It is vital that Naiscoil Éanna would be able to compete with recognised statutory nurseries in order to attract pupils and assist with sustaining Gaelscoil enrolment in the long term. All Naiscoil Éanna stakeholders believe that this new nursery development proposal should be supported by DE and that Naiscoil Éanna should be granted status as soon as possible.

The Board of Governors believes that an approved nursery school would aid the long term sustainability of the school, we regard this as a matter of equality as other sectors and other IME schools (Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí Nursery Unit, Gaelscoil an Chaistil Nursery Unit) are well provided for in this EA Region. Parents residing in Newtownabbey are unwilling to and cannot afford either time or money to travel to any of the 2 alternative IM pre-school providers in the region and therefore we suggest that both parents and children are currently at a disadvantage.

Primary Pupil Performance / Targets

Performance	End of Key Stage Result		Target	School Predicted Target 2015-16	
	13-14	14-15		All Pupils	FSM Eligible Pupils
Key Stage 1					
% of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Communication (or Irish in an Irish medium school) at the end of KS1	69%	68%	% of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Communication (or Irish in an Irish medium school) at the end of KS1	TBC	28%+ TBC
% of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Using Mathematics at the end of KS1	75%	82%	% of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Using Mathematics at the end of KS1	TBC	TBC
Key Stage 2					
% of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in Communication at the end of KS2	80%	80%	% of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in Communication at the end of KS2	TBC	TBC
% of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in Communication in Irish at the end of KS2	80%	80%	% of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in Communication in Irish at the end of KS2	TBC	TBC
% of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in Using Mathematics at the end of KS2	100 %	80%	% of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in Using Mathematics at the end of KS2	TBC	TBC

Attendance (please complete as appropriate)	Yes	No
Attendance policy in place	X	
Strategy and procedures in place promoting attendance	X	
Percentage		
Attendance Level 2013/2014 (%)	96%	
Target Attendance level 2014/2015 (%)	95%	

Map



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (if the proposal is approved)

Nursery Unit Management

Naiscoil Éanna will be managed according to common practice, whereby the majority of the Board of Governors will be appointed by trustees and founding members of the school. The board will, through its meetings, support the work of the Principal and ensure that the unit carries out its main functions and fulfils its obligations as a public educational institution.

- (a) The unit will be managed by the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna.
- (b) The school will follow the curriculum guidelines as they are laid out in the 1989 and 1998 Education Reform Orders, where relevant.
- (c) In conjunction with the CCEA, Gaelscoil Éanna will prepare the children who progress from the nursery unit into the primary school so that they may undertake their public examinations through the medium of Irish.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Detail finance / resource implications (both capital and recurrent) of the proposal and approximate costs where available.

Finance

Gaelscoil Éanna's Principal and BOG has managed the school's budget in an exemplary manner, despite recent budgetary constraints and would be adept at incorporating Naiscoil Éanna's budget with Gaelscoil Éanna's.

The current LMS budget for financial year 2015-16 for the Gaelscoil will balance out at less than a 9% deficit, this will slightly increase to 9.7% deficit in 2016/17. As pupil numbers increase though, at the end of the 2017/18 year the budget will balance with no deficit and an overall surplus at 0.38%. The additional budget which will accompany Naiscoil Éanna will cover additional staff and recurring costs we foresee it as similar to the following;

Gaelscoil Éanna (Naiscoil Éanna)

Grant Maintained IM Nursery Unit – 26 part-time places opening 31/8/2017

Statutory Funding

12 months (April – March 2018) LMS £46,696

7 months LMS (September – March) £27,239

Staff Costs

Teacher on M1 – M3 main pay scale:

12 months £27,837 - £32,563

7 months £16,238 - £18,995

Classroom Assistant (£7.49 - £11.24 / hr):	
12 months 32 hrs / week	£12,708 – £19,048
7 months 32 hrs / week	£ 7,423 - £11,111
7 months 16 hrs / week	£ 3,706 - £ 5,556

Running Costs

Electric / gas / photocopying / recurring equip:

12 months £5,000

7 months £2,917

Capital Cost

Based on recent similar capital developments of single unit Nursery Schools we would estimate that the capital cost of the development of a single unit nursery for Naiscoil Éanna would fall in the region of £250,000 - £300,000.

Other Income

- Procurement at EA through DE – EA apply to DE for funding for non-recurrent equipment / furniture for Naiscoil
- Possibility of registering with Social Services as Day Care & fulfilling SS Minimum Standards to lengthen school day to provide afternoon session. Fees can be charged for the afternoon & parents can then claim tax credits to help with costs (fees £100 / month typical)

The current Naiscoil Éanna provider has a good range of early play and educational equipment built up over the years with community and ALTRAM support. It also has a number of iPads for pupil use, gained through an application by the Principal of Gaelscoil Éanna. Naiscoil Éanna pupils and staff would undoubtedly further benefit from the ICT expertise now existing in Gaelscoil Éanna.

Staffing

Naiscoil Éanna will employ one part-time qualified Teacher and one part-time classroom assistant. We also have a network of volunteers who have been trained to a high standard along with Gaelscoil Éanna staff who will complement the teaching within Naiscoil Éanna. There will be a collegial approach and ethos to ensure the highest standards and provision possible for our pupils both in terms of curricular provision and Special Educational Needs.

Transport

The majority of pupils come from the immediate Newtownabbey area or have grandparents who live locally. Most children walk to school, with a number travelling by car. There will be no extra transport costs associated with the development of Naiscoil Éanna.

Accommodation

Naiscoil Éanna voluntary play group is currently located in a mobile building at the back end of Gaelscoil Éanna, on the site of St Enda's GAC. There is currently no

access for vehicles and a walk of 800 yards or so (which is too far in wet/winter weather) for small children. We will work with Iontaobhas na Gaelscolalochta, St Enda's GAC, all relevant stakeholders and Architects etc with the view to moving the existing building / erecting a purpose built pre-school premises into a more appropriate area within the perimeter of the same existing site.

Other

In conclusion, Gaelscoil Éanna provides an holistic education of a good standard to its pupils, the school is embedded and well connected to its local community. The high standards set by effective school leadership ensures the good quality provision for all, which in turn benefits society, as aimed through the DE Sustainable Schools Policy. The school is consistently praised by community activists and statutory agencies, a recent ETI inspection (June 2014) concluded that our organisation 'has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision'. Gaelscoil Éanna procedures, policies, documents and resources have been used to support other schools within the sector based on good practices. We believe that Gaelscoil and Naiscoil Éanna's dedicated BOG and staff, with the establishment of Gaelscoil Éanna's Nursery Unit, can continue to provide and develop further an outstanding level of Irish medium education for the young people of Newtownabbey and beyond.

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Throughout the school years 2012-13, 2013-14 and during this school year, pupils, parents, all staff and governors have been involved and consulted in planning the future for Naiscoil and Gaelscoil Éanna.

Stakeholder questionnaires, individual meetings, whole staff meetings, parents meetings and Board of Governors meetings have taken place and the overall findings show consensus in pursuing a statutory Nursery school, namely Naiscoil Éanna to be established on the existing Gaelscoil Éanna site, as the means for increasing excellent standards and collaboration between the pre-school and the primary school and also as a means of increasing public confidence and pupil enrolment numbers in Irish Medium Education in Newtownabbey.

Evidence of such consultation can be found in Appendix in form of extracts from minutes of Governor Meetings and sample questionnaires for parents/staff.

The decision to submit this Development Proposal was subsequently taken at Board of Governors meeting on 17th September 2015.

Comhairle na Gaelscolalochta have been involved in the process as well as Iontaobhas na Gaelscolalochta.

Proposer

Maighr  ad N   Chonghaile, Principal, Gaelscoil   anna
Niall Murphy, Chairperson, Gaelscoil   anna

EA
North Eastern Region

BOARD COMMENTS

SIGNED:

POSITION:

DATE:

Appendix D: Education Authority Comments

The Education Authority undertook formal consultation amongst the Board of Governors and Trustees of schools which might be affected by the proposal, which closed on the 17 December 2015. One response was received during the pre-publication phase of consultation. The response, from CNaG, was supportive of the proposal and underlined the fact that there was currently no alternative provision in the area and that none was planned.

In accordance with relevant Education Orders I write to inform you of the Education Authorities view of this proposal.

The Education Authority gives support to the Proposal. The following issues should be taken into consideration:

Budget

When a new nursery unit opens as a result of a development proposal during the course of the year after the relevant funding stream has been run, the host school will receive part-year LMS funding from the Department's New Schools and Units Contingency Fund:

AWPU - 26 FT Nursery Pupils @ £2,007 (cash value) x 1.35(weighting) x 7/12ths = £41,098

PREMISES – 26 FT Nursery Pupils @ £86.58 (Cash Value) x 7/12ths = £1,313

This would be the cost to EA centre funds should the development proposal be approved after the Funding Formula had been run.

Area Planning

There are no other Irish Medium providers in the area and the Education Authority notes that Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta supports the proposal and has no plans to make additional provision.

Accommodation

The Education Authority notes that the school will work with Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta, St Enda's GAC, all relevant stakeholders and Architects etc with the view to moving the existing building / erecting a purpose built pre-school premises into a more appropriate area within the perimeter of the same existing site. As a grant maintained school the responsibility for any capital work is with the Department of Education and accordingly the Authority.

Appendix E: CnaG Comments

Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, in the context of area planning and sustainable schools, fully supports the Development Proposal 449 to establish a nursery unit at Gaelscoil Éanna.

Gaelscoil Éanna is the sole provider of Gaelic-medium education (IME) in the Newtonabbey and surrounding areas and furthermore, there is no plan for additional IME provision in this area.

There is no other Irish-medium pre-school provision in the locality for those families who wish their children to progress to Gaelic-medium primary education. The provision of a statutory IME pre-school will enhance and enrich the children's educational experience and furthermore, prepare them for the immersion setting in Gaelscoil Éanna.

The nearest IME provision within the NEELB area to Gaelscoil Éanna is in Crumlin, approximately 20 miles away. All other pre-school provision within the Gaelscoil Éanna catchment area is English-medium.

In the context of sustainability, the NEELB Primary Area Plan 2014 – 2018, in relation to Proposals for the Structure of Future Provision in the Newtownabbey Council Area, states: The Minister approved the proposal to increase the enrolment to 176-205, citing, “rapidly rising enrolment trend”, as the reason for proposal.

The children (26) in the IME pre-school will progress to Gaelscoil Éanna thereby reinforcing this trend and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Gaelscoil Éanna.

Therefore, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta cannot see any adverse impact with this development proposal. On the contrary, it will add to and further enhance the overall IME provision within the Gaelscoil Éanna catchment area and ensure its long-term sustainability.

Background

Naiscoil Éanna (Gaelic-medium voluntary pre-school facility with Gaelscoil Éanna) was established in September 2004.

It is at present located on the grounds of St. Enda's GAC, Hightown Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7AU. The Committee of Naíscoil Éanna, in its current voluntary status, came together in 2003 as a group of parents and others interested in Irish-medium education, to ensure Irish-medium pre-school provision to accommodate the clear demand in the Greater Newtownabbey area.

The same committee has, based on the educational needs of the children who attend its facility, made a decision to further enhance the current pre-school provision.

Consequently, this will lead to a more comprehensive pre-school provision that will cater for the children in its care.

The Management Committee of Naíscoil Éanna has requested that the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna submit a development proposal proposing a change of pre-school status from voluntary to statutory.

Quality Education Experience

It should also be recognised that this nursery unit is important to the community not only from an educational point of view but also, it has an important social and cultural role.

Parents of Newtownabbey and the surrounding area wish that their children receive pre-school education through the medium of Gaelic in a nursery unit setting. As there is no such facility in this area they feel that this provision is something that they should be entitled to considering that there are various options available for similar provision through the medium of English for parents who wish their children to receive English-medium education.

Stable Enrolment Trends

It is anticipated that in the forthcoming school year 2016/17, 26 children of pre-school age will attend the school. The children of this naíscoil will progress to Gaelscoil Éanna and ensure the long-term sustainability of Gaelscoil Éanna.

The Minister of Education (John O'Dowd) commenting on Gaelscoil Éanna in April 2013 referred to the role of the naíscoil: Gaelscoil Éanna was established in 2007 and increasing intakes at the school **and the enrolments at the associated pre-school provision illustrate the demand for Irish-medium education in this area.**

Moreover, the NEELB Primary Area Plan 2014 – 2018, in relation to Proposals for the Structure of Future Provision in the Newtownabbey Council Area, states:

The Minister approved the proposal to increase the enrolment to 176-205, citing, “rapidly rising enrolment trend”, as the reason for proposal.

Strong Leadership

Naíscoil Éanna will be managed according to common practice, whereby the majority of the Board of Governors will be appointed by trustees and founding members of the school.

The board will, through its meetings, support the work of the Teacher in Charge and ensure that the unit carries out its main functions and fulfils its obligations as a public educational institution.

- (a) The unit will be managed by the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna.
- (b) The school will follow the curriculum guidelines as they are laid out in the 1989 and 1998 Education (Northern Ireland) Reform Orders, where relevant.
- (c) In conjunction with the CCEA, Gaelscoil Éanna will prepare the children who progress from the nursery unit into the primary school so that they may undertake their public examinations through the medium of Irish.

Rationale for Naíscoil

The children who will attend this Gaelic-medium nursery unit will require education in the full range of the pre-school curriculum just as is the case for children in other total immersion settings throughout Ireland and UK (Welsh in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland). This cannot be provided in English-medium nursery schools. The school will meet all the educational needs of the children in its care.

APPENDIX F - Education and Training Inspectorate Input

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Naíscoil Éanna was evaluated at a follow-up-inspection in 2012 as ‘good’ overall. At that stage, the leadership and management were at an early stage of effective self-evaluation and action planning for improvement.

ETI KNOWLEDGE

- The enrolment is secure in this pre-school setting with 26 children.
- There are no other Irish –medium pre-school providers in the greater Newtownabbey area.
- Statutory nursery provision on the same site as the gaelscoil will enable potentially the sustainability of Gaelscoil Éanna.

RATIONALE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETI EVIDENCE

- Pre-school education is delivered as a partnership between the statutory and voluntary/private sectors. Both sectors are valued equally for their contributions to the education of pre-school children, both teach a similar curriculum and inspected to similar standards.
The Department of Education’s Early Years practice has been not to displace good quality voluntary pre-school provision already in existence with provision in an alternative statutory setting, as in this development proposal.
- From an Irish-medium educational perspective, in order to create a more effective language immersion environment, it is important that the fully qualified teacher, who may be employed, has a high degree of proficiency in writing and speaking the Irish language.

There is no clear rationale for a full-time nursery unit rather than a part-time session.

APPENDIX G: DE Comments

(i) CURRICULUM, QUALIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS COMMENTS

EA Development Proposal Number 449 – a statutory Irish-medium nursery unit called Naíscoil Éanna, to be established at **Gaelscoil Éanna** to provide 26 full-time places, with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

1. This DP proposes that the existing ‘voluntary’ pre-school provision Naíscoil Éanna changes its status to ‘statutory’ pre-school provision as a nursery unit under the management of Gaelscoil Éanna. The level of provision proposed is 26 full-time places. The Naíscoil is located on the same site as the Gaelscoil.
2. Gaelscoil Éanna was inspected by the ETI in June 2014. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school was reported to be ‘good’. The school had important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection identified an area for improvement which the school had demonstrated the capacity to address, namely to review and develop further the process of monitoring and evaluation to ensure greater consistency in the quality of learning and teaching across all Key Stages. The leadership and management of the school was reported to be good.
3. The enrolment to Gaelscoil Éanna is robust – 25 pupils were enrolled in Year 1 in September 2015 and the total enrolment in 2015/2016 is 158.
4. Naíscoil Éanna was inspected in May 2012. This was a follow-up inspection and the provision was reported to be ‘good’. In 2015/16 there are 22 children enrolled in the Naíscoil.
5. The Case for Change paper sets out the educational impact of the proposal which include:
 - a qualified teacher will be employed to teach in the Naíscoil;
 - children at the Naíscoil would benefit from the Gaelscoil’s extra-curricular provision
 - parents with children at the Naíscoil would benefit from parenting programmes and the support network for parents currently provided at the Gaelscoil;

Conclusion: CQSD is content to support this proposal.

(ii) EARLY YEARS TEAM (EYT) COMMENTS

Introduction

The Education Authority, at the request of the Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Éanna, published Development Proposal Number 449 on 23 February 2016 proposing a 26-place full time nursery unit be established at the Gaelscoil Éanna site on the Hightown Road, Newtownabbey, from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Case for Change advises that Naíscoil Éanna would close and a new statutory unit would open within the same premises. This would essentially effect a change of management type, while at the same time changing the pattern of attendance from part-time to full-time and setting the number of places available to 26.

Naíscoil Éanna is an Irish-Medium voluntary pre-school provider currently located on the Hightown Road site. It provided 22 part-time Irish-Medium pre-school places in the 2015/16 academic year and has offered places to 29 pupils for the 2016/17 academic year.

Background

The Case for Change does not appear to suggest that the proposal seeks to address a lack of Irish-Medium pre-school places in the area; the level of provision if the Development Proposal is approved would be broadly in line with the number of funded places made available in the voluntary setting over the last 5 years and lower than in some years (it provided 33 funded places in 2011/12 and 2012/13¹ and has offered 29 children a place for the 2016/17 academic year).

As the Case for Change seeks a single statutory nursery class, the number of pre-school places available at the setting if the proposal was approved would be limited to 26 (or a maximum of 30 if temporary flexibility were approved).

The Case for Change states that the Board of Governors regard the proposed change as a matter of equity, and cites various perceived benefits of a change of status, including the employment of a qualified teacher, which it claims would aid the setting in catering for the needs of pupils and in “competing” with other local statutory pre-school providers who provide ‘longer hours’ and ‘hot school meals’.

It does not acknowledge that voluntary pre-school settings may also employ qualified teachers, or advise whether the setting has made any attempt to do so. It is not clear why the Board of Governors appear to consider provision at the voluntary setting to be less effective than teacher led statutory provision. Both the voluntary and statutory pre-school sectors are equally valued by the Department for their

¹ Source: DE Census

contribution to the pre-school education of children, with both following common curriculum guidelines and subject to the same education inspection standards.

Relevant Policies

The main policies relevant to this proposal are:

To ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it. As set out above, the voluntary setting has in recent years provided more pre-school places than would be available if the statutory nursery class requested were to be approved. It is assumed that the Board of Governors has taken this into consideration and is satisfied that the proposed provision is sufficient to continue to meet projected demand for Irish-medium pre-school places in the area. The PEAG, in supporting the proposal, has advised that demand in the area is sufficient to sustain the proposed class and have made no suggestion that its approval would be detrimental to the aim of meeting demand for Irish-medium pre-school provision in the area.

Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning - was published on 7 October 2013. Among its key actions is placing a moratorium on any new or additional full-time provision or conversion from part-time to full-time (defined as over 4.5 hours) in advance of a review of the current levels of full-time provision, existing research and the needs of children being served by it. This proposal is not in line with the moratorium, as it requests a change in pattern of attendance from part time to full time. No rationale has been given for the proposed change, although the Case for Change does mention the setting ‘competing’ with other settings who offer a longer pre-school day. The Early Years team recommend that if the proposal were to be approved, it should be on the basis of part-time provision.

The Department has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Irish-Medium Education. In accordance with the Review of Irish-Medium Education, registered Irish-Medium providers with sufficient children can be funded under the Department’s Pre-School Education Programme even where unfilled English-Medium provision is available in the area. The proposal is in line with this duty and its potential impact on meeting demand for Irish Medium pre-school provision in the area is considered below.

It is the Department’s practice not to displace good quality pre-school provision already in existence with pre-school provision in an alternative setting. The latest ETI inspection of the setting was ‘good’. The rationale and evidence set out in support of the proposal make a strong case that it represents continuation of existing provision under an alternative management structure, rather than the displacement of existing provision by an alternative provider.

Officials have also considered consultation responses submitted as part of the Development Proposal process, advice from the Education Authority and Education and Training Inspectorate colleagues and population data from NISRA.

Provision Levels

In determining need, the Department generally assumes a level of provision at 95% of target age children, predicated on the application rate for pre-school places which is approximately 92%; however the level of provision within local areas may be higher or lower based on historic patterns of demand and assessment of ongoing need.

The numbers of pre-school places and associated percentages are measured against the Year One enrolments for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

The analysis of provision below is based on the discontinuation of the part-time funded places currently provided in the voluntary playgroup and the introduction of 26 part-time statutory places, although it is full-time places that are proposed, the moratorium applies.

Consideration has been given to the total level of pre-school provision within the two and five mile radii of Gaelscoil Éanna and, because Irish-Medium providers may enter the Pre-School Education Programme even where unfilled English-Medium provision is available in the area, to Irish-Medium pre-school provision specifically. However, it should be noted that the proposal does not seek to increase the level of provision in the area, and indeed, if approved, the statutory unit could provide fewer places than the voluntary unit has in some recent years. Therefore the assessment of levels of provision does not carry the same significance in considering this particular development proposal as would normally be the case, as the level of provision will remain broadly the same.

The statistical information available in relation to the level of funded pre-school provision is as follows:-

All Pre-school provision

Level of Pre-school Provision – two mile radius of Gaelscoil Éanna

Year	Statutory places	Non-statutory places	Reception places	Total pre-school provision (ex reception)	P1 places	Level of pre-school provision (%age of P1 places)	Underage children in statutory places
2014/15	364	195	0	559	599	93.3%	16
2015/16	364	216	0	580	604	96%	8
2017/18 As proposed	390	194	-	584	604	96.7%	-

The level of provision within the two mile radius is very close to the planning figure, both before and after the proposed change in provision. The level of provision would appear to be adequate to meet the level of demand for pre-school places in the area, whether or not the proposal is approved.

Level of Provision – five mile radius of Gaelscoil Éanna

Year	Statutory places	Non-statutory places	Reception places	Total pre-school provision (ex reception)	P1 places	Level of pre-school provision (%age of P1 places)	Underage children in statutory places
2014/15	2031	495	0	2526	2485	101.6%	41
2015/16	2028	556	0	2584	2508	103%	29
2017/18 As proposed	2054	534	-	2588	2508	103.2%	-

The level of provision within the five mile radius is above the planning figure both before and after the proposed change in provision at 103% and 103.2% respectively. There are also a significant number of underage children in statutory provision (41 in 2014/15 and 29 in 2015/16), suggesting over provision in pre-school places; however, the proposed change would not make a significant change to the level of provision.

Irish-Medium Pre-school provision

In accordance with the Review of Irish-Medium Education, registered Irish-Medium providers with sufficient children can be funded under the Department's Pre-School Education Programme even where unfilled English-Medium provision is available in the area.

The statistical information available in relation to the level of Irish-Medium funded pre-school provision is as follows:-

Level of IM Pre-school Provision – two mile radius of Gaelscoil Éanna

Year	Statutory places	Non-statutory places	Reception places	Total pre-school provision (ex reception)	P1 places	Level of pre-school provision (%age of P1 places)	Underage children in statutory places
2014/15	0	26	0	26	28	92.9%	0
2015/16	0	22	0	22	25	88%	0
2017/18 As Proposed	26	0	0	26	25	104%	-

As the Naiscoil Éanna and Gaelscoil Éanna are the only Irish medium providers of pre-school and year one within the two mile radius, the percentage level of provision is of limited use. Although the proposed level of provision is higher than 100% (an indication of over provision), provisional 2016/17 enrolment numbers, as well as historic enrolment trends at the voluntary setting suggest that the proposed level of statutory provision would be sustainable and would be filled with target age children.

In previous years the setting has provided more than 26 pre-school places (33 places in 2011/12 and 2012/13² and it has offered 29 children a place for the 2016/17 academic year). As the Case for Change seeks a single statutory nursery class, the number of pre-school places available at the setting if the proposal as approved would be limited to 26 (or a maximum of 30 if temporary flexibility were approved). It is possible, therefore, that the change of status sought by this proposal could limit capacity in the area to meet demand for Irish medium pre-school provision.

It is assumed that the Board of Governors has taken this into consideration and is satisfied that the proposed provision is sufficient to continue to meet demand for Irish-medium pre-school places in the area. The PEAG, in supporting the proposal, have raised no concerns that a change to statutory status could have a negative impact on the provision of sufficient Irish-medium pre-school places in the area.

Irish-Medium Pre-school provision

Level of IM Pre-school Provision – five mile radius of Gaelscoil Éanna

Year	Statutory places	Non-statutory places	Reception places	Total pre-school provision (ex reception)	P1 places	Level of pre-school provision (%age of P1 places)	Underage children in statutory places
2014/15	52	58	0	110	103	106.8%	*
2015/16	52	53	0	105	97	108.2%	0
2017/18 As proposed	78	31	0	109	97	112.4%	-

Within five miles of Gaelscoil Éanna the level of Irish medium provision increases further beyond 100%, but it should be noted that this includes settings in Belfast that parents in this area would be unlikely to travel to. Although the level again suggests over provision, the IM settings have been fully or over-subscribed in each of the last two years.

² Source: DE Census

Applications to Irish Medium settings

The table below shows the number of places available and the number of first preference applications received for admission to Irish Medium settings within a 5 mile radius for the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years:

Setting	Number of places available			Number of 1 st preference applications received		
	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Naiscoil Éanna	29	28	26	29	19	26
Bunscoil An Tsleibhe Dhuibh	26	26	26	28	32	22
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	26	26	26	27	30	24
Naiscoil Mhic Rheachtain	17	16	16	17	15	17
Naiscoil An Lonnain.	6	15	16	6	8	12

*2016/17 preliminary figures provided by EA

It is clear that the area has a high level of sustained demand for IM pre-school places, and this is sufficient to sustain a 26 place pre-school unit at the setting.

Summary of Key Points

- The proposal requests full time provision, which is not in line with the moratorium on new or additional full-time pre-school provision currently in place.
- The level of provision in both the two and five mile radii indicates that there is currently sufficient provision within the Irish-Medium sector.
- All children in the area, whose parents wanted an IM place and remained in the admissions process to the end, were offered an IM pre-school place.
- It is the Department's practice not to displace existing good quality provision with alternative provision of a different management type. Naiscoil Éanna has been assessed as 'good' by the Education and training Inspectorate.
- A strong case has been made that the proposal represents continuation of existing provision under an alternative management structure, rather than the displacement of existing provision by an alternative provider.
- The level of demand in the area would sustain a 26 place statutory setting.
- Approval of the proposal would cap the number of places at the setting to 26 (30 if temporary flexibility were approved based on a request by the Board of Governors).

Early Years Team Conclusion

The proposal for full-time provision is not in line with the moratorium on new or additional full-time pre-school provision set as out in Learning to Learn.

It is the Department's practice not to displace good quality pre-school provision already in existence with pre-school provision in an alternative setting or management type. The current voluntary provider has been assessed by ETI as 'good'.

Having considered all the information available, including the consistently high enrolments to the IM pre-school over a number of years, the EYT has concluded that it unlikely that a statutory unit would be enrolling underage children. . Whilst the team is not satisfied that the case has been made that the proposed change is necessary to meet the requirements of the Pre-School Education Programme, it recognises the support of others such as the EA and ETI, which suggest that this about transformation rather than displacement.

EYT would recommend that if, having considered all relevant policy issues the Minister is minded to approve the proposal, this should be on the basis of a part-time nursery class, in line with the Learning to Learn Framework.

(iii) INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTORATE COMMENTS

Proposal Details

A statutory Irish-medium nursery unit, called Naíscoil Éanna, to be established at Gaelscoil Éanna to provide 26 fulltime places with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Current Position

The play group is based in mobile accommodation on St Enda's GAC site. The proposal seeks to initially relocate the existing building on to the school site and thereafter seeks the provision of purpose built pre-school premises in a more appropriate area within the perimeter of the same existing school site.

Additional Accommodation Requirements

In the longer term replacement accommodation with a modular single nursery unit is sought.

Costs and Timescales

In general the time frame for procurement of a modular nursery unit and for obtaining all necessary statutory approvals is at least nine months from the date of approval of the Minor Works application, the cost of such a unit would be in the region of £300k plus VAT and fees. This estimate has been verified by the Education Authority.

It should however be noted that EOT is not aware of ground conditions where the new unit is to be placed on the site and cannot comment on the suitability for the site for the additional accommodation nor can site works costs be estimated. In addition information is not available regarding whether the existing site could accommodate this proposed additional accommodation.

Additional Points to Note

The Minister has recently announced that funding would be made available to advance the planning of a new school for Gaelscoil Éanna as part of his recent £40m capital investment for Primary Schools. The provision of any new accommodation required to facilitate the nursery accommodation, should the Development Proposal be approved, be considered as part of the new build scheme

which would offer better value for money. A typical timeframe for a new build primary school would be approximately 3 years.

Education Advisory Board Comments

None

Provided by Estate Operations Team

(iv) IRISH MEDIUM AND INTEGRATED EDUCATION TEAM COMMENTS

Irish-medium and Integrated Education (IMIE) Team notes that this Development Proposal references the establishment of a grant aided Irish-medium nursery unit, based on 26 full time places, at Gaelscoil Éanna, with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

There is currently a voluntary playgroup operating at the school site which has 22 PEAG funded places, this is based on 2015/16 enrolments. (Further detail on the number of PEAG funded places historically can be seen in Table A)

IMIE commentary is based on the assumption that, should a new 26 full time place nursery unit open at Gaelscoil Éanna the playgroup managing committee will close the pre-school year within the existing voluntary playgroup.

The ETI inspection report for Gaelscoil Éanna from June 2014 reported that “In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this organisation is good.”

The Pre-school Education Programme is a partnership between statutory and voluntary/private pre-school providers and both sectors are equally valued for their contribution to the education of pre-school children. It has been practice not to displace voluntary provision through the establishment of statutory provision where there is sufficient pre-school provision in the area.

In light of DE’s statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium Education and in recognition of the benefits of an immersion experience at pre-school for those pupils wishing to access Irish-medium primary provision, DE considers the need for Irish-medium pre-school provision in the context of Recommendation 2 of the Irish-medium Review (2009) that *Irish-medium providers with sufficient children should be allowed to enter the existing funding programme even where unfilled English-medium provision is available in the area.*

Level of Provision

This proposal would increase the level of Irish-medium pre-school provision on this site from 22 PEAG funded places in 2015/16 to 26 full time places. The historical data for Naíscoil Éanna shows that the number of funded pre-school places has ranged from 33 in 2011/12 & 2012/13 to 22 (as above).

IMIE team understands the Minister recently announced that funding would be made available to advance the planning of a new school for Gaelscoil Éanna as part of £40m of capital investment planned for Primary Schools.

The latest enrolment figure for Gaelscoil Éanna shows that 25 pupils were enrolled in Year 1 in 2015/16. This shows a decrease on the 3 three previous years, however these were years of significant growth for the school. The enrolment figure for

2015/16 at 25 would indicate that 26 full time places in a statutory setting are sustainable in terms of available Irish-medium Primary school places in Year 1. It is envisaged that children will transfer from the naíscóil to Gaelscoil Éanna.

DE and the Education Authority plan to provide sufficient pre-school provision in local areas to meet demand for places: planning is on the basis of providing places equivalent to 95% of target age children across Northern Ireland. The provision is based on ensuring 1 year of pre-school to every family that wants to avail of it.

There is no alternative Irish medium pre-school provision within the area and the current playgroup is a natural feeder school for Gaelscoil Éanna. The proposed level of statutory provision would appear sustainable.

Demand for places at Gaelscoil Éanna

In looking specifically at Gaelscoil Éanna, the school has grown significantly in recent years, even though the pace of growth has slowed there would not appear to be any to question regarding the sustainability of current enrolment levels.

The existing playgroup has 22 PEAG funded places in 2015/16 and this has been as high as 33 in 2012/13. The proposed statutory provision would appear to be sustainable and may benefit from the proposed new build accommodation.

Table A PEAG Funded Pre-School Places at Naiscoil Éanna and P1 enrolments at Gaelscoil Éanna.

Year	PEAG Funded Places_at Naiscoil Éanna	P1 enrolments at Gaelscoil Éanna
2011/12	33	22
2012/13	33	34
2013/14	25	32
2014/15	26	28
2015/16	22	25

Conclusion and Recommendation

On the evidence available the proposed statutory provision appears sustainable. There is evidence of demand for the proposed places.

(v) SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM COMMENTS

SET would be supportive of the DP. As outlined in the 'Educational Impact' section of the supporting information, this DP should have beneficial effects on SEN provision as a result of the employment of a qualified teacher which will help improve the educational and linguistic standards and pupil attainment both in the pre-school and in the primary school; and in terms of Educational Psychology input which will ensure that the specific needs of particular children are identified and met.

(vi) STATISTICAL INFORMATION

NISRA local birth rates and population predictions

Officials have considered NISRA local birth rates and population predictions to identify potential future population trends in the area.

- Birth statistics by academic year for all wards which fall at least partially within a 5 mile radius of Gaelscoil Éanna indicate an overall decrease of 0.6% from 3,248 to 3,227 children in the pre-school cohort between September 2016 and September 2018 admissions.
- Population projections for 3 year olds for the Antrim and Newtownabbey council area predict a steady decline between 2017 and 2039 of 11.2% (1,791 to 1,591).

These figures can, however, only be indicators of the future pre-school population and do not fully take into account population migration and other factors. On that basis they are not an exact predictor of demand

Alternative Provision to Naíscoil Éanna BT36 7AU

Ref No	School	Distance (in miles)	October 2015 Funded Enrolment	Total Enrolment
Nursery Schools				
3116162	Mossley Nursery School-BT36 5NA	2.5	78	78
3116166	Ballyhenry Nursery School- BT36 5JD	1.5	53	53
3116214	Ashgrove Nursery School-BT36 6LJ	1.1	78	78
Nursery Units				
1016076	Ballysillan Primary School-BT14 8LT	3.1	26	26
1066531	Hazelwood Integrated PS-BT36 7EN	2.9	52	52
1016537	Lowwood Primary School-BT15 4BL	4.1	52	52
3010895	Rathcoole Primary School-BT37 9EL	2.4	52	52
3013323	Mossgrove Primary School-BT36 5DN	1.2	44	52

3016249	Earlview Primary School- BT36 5US	2.8	26	26
3033313	St Bernard's Primary School- BT36 6DW	1.2	52	52
Irish medium Nursery Unit				
1046596	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain- BT14 6HP	4.4	30	30
Voluntary Playgroups				
1AB0425	Stepping Stones Playgroup- BT36 7PG	3.0	24	24
3AB0092	Newtownabbey Methodist Mission- BT37 9AQ	3.7	22	25
3AB0258	St Bernard's Pre School- BT36 7QR	1.1	24	24
3AB0575	Mallusk Community Playgroup- BT36 4QE	2.1	16	27
3BB0094	Glengormley IPS Playgroup- BT36 6HJ	1.0	49	49
3BB0247	St Mary's on the Hill Playgroup- BT36 6JU	1.2	46	46
3CA0588	Greendale Day Nursery- BT36 4RF	2.0	24	24

The nearest alternative Irish-medium Pre-school provision is Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast, a Nursery Unit with 30 full time funded places which is 4.4 miles away.

APPENDIX H – ANNUAL AREA PROFILE

Primary School Annual Area Profile June 2016

DE Ref No:	School Name:	Status:	Council Area:
3046685	Gaelscoil Eanna (opened 0708)	Other Maintained	ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY

Annual Census Information			
Year	Total pupils Y1-Y7	IMU	FSME %
2012/13	104	0	26.0
2013/14	136	0	26.5
2014/15	152	0	33.6
2015/16	158	0	32.3
Approved Reception – Year 7 enrolment number			174
Approved Reception – Year 7 admissions number			29
Year 1 Pupils 2015/16			25
First Preferences Applications 2015/16			27

Formal Intervention	
In formal intervention any period 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016	

Budgets			
Year	Available Delegated Resources £	Surplus/Deficit £	Surplus/Deficit %
2012/13	355,728	24,268	6.82%
2013/14	423,050	-8,459	-2.00%
2014/15	440,511	-592	-0.13%

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