Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement

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Development Proposal 574

Objection on behalf of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

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Section 1: Introduction

The Education Authority published Development Proposal (DP) 574 on 22 April 2021 along with its Case for Change. DP 574 proposes the following

> *Craigavon Senior High School will operate on a single site, 26-34 Lurgan Road, Portadown, with effect from 1 September 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter.*
>
> *(The Education Authority will seek major capital investment for the construction of a new build Craigavon Senior High School, on a location to be determined, pending Department of Education approval and funding being obtained.)*

In accordance with §8.21-8.22 of Circular 2017/09 *Guidance on the Publication of a Development Proposal*, this paper represents an objection on behalf of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, following an independent review of DP 574 by Dr Noel Purdy and Dr Jonathan Harris from the Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement at Stranmillis University College, Belfast. The review process was initiated by the Council's Area Planning (Education) Working Group and was undertaken April-May 2021. It involved meetings with the Working Group, other elected representatives, the principals of Craigavon Senior High, Lurgan Junior High and Lurgan College, the Education Authority, as well as meetings with a wide range of community representatives in Lurgan (see appendix).

The discussion is situated with the broader context of a number of key policies:

- The draft *Programme for Government* (Northern Ireland Executive, 2016[1]) has for the past several years prioritised a number of measured and tracked outcomes through the Outcomes Delivery Plan. Listed among the indicators for Outcome 14 ('We give our children and young people the best start in life') the Programme for Government commits to 'improve educational outcomes', 'reduce educational inequality', 'improve the quality of education', increase the confidence and capability of people and communities' and 'increase reconciliation' (p.45)

- The *Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030*[2] was formally adopted by the restored Northern Ireland Executive on 10th December 2020. Led by the Department of Education (DE), but requiring input from all 9 government departments, and based around a set of 8 shared outcomes for the wellbeing of children and young people, this Executive Strategy will be accompanied by a Delivery Plan supported by a new cross-departmental Monitoring and Reporting Group. The Children and Young People's Strategy identifies learning and achievement as a priority in improving children and young people's well-being, and commits to supporting particular groups of children and young people including children and young people from families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, and in particular in "areas where there are large pockets of deprivation and the problems related to disadvantage are deep rooted."

[1] https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/newnigov/draft-pfg-framework-2016-21.pdf

[2] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/final-execuitve-children-and-young-people%27s-strategy-2020-2030.pdf

(DE, 2020, p.55). The Strategy also prioritises children and young people with special educational needs and notes the need to work collaboratively "to deliver services that are joined up and support children and young people with SEN, particularly at periods of transition in their school lives." (p.56)

- *Connected – A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017-2030*[3] spells out the importance of equipping and upskilling people to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by our dynamic economy. The plan notes that "The borough benefits from a diverse range of quality and accessible educational and training provision, dedicated staff and excellent relationships with a range of voluntary and community-based groups, services and facilities that promote and support lifelong learning and advancement." (p.26) The plan also acknowledges that although the borough as a whole performs at a similar level to the NI average in terms of 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C, the proportion achieving two or more A-levels is lower than the NI average.

- *A Fair Start – Final Report and Action Plan of the Expert Panel on Educational Underachievement in Northern Ireland*[4]. In July 2020 and under the terms of the *New Decade New Approach* political settlement of January 2020 an expert panel was established by the Education Minister to advise government how to address persistent educational underachievement linked to social disadvantage. *A Fair Start* has been endorsed by the Northern Ireland Executive (27th May 2021) and was launched on 1st June. The report proposes 47 actions around 8 Key Areas as follows:

    1. Redirecting the focus to Early Years.
    2. Championing Emotional Health and Well-Being.
    3. Ensuring the relevance and appropriateness of Curriculum and Assessment.
    4. Promoting a whole community approach to education.
    5. Maximising boys' potential.
    6. Driving forward Teachers Professional Learning (TPL).
    7. Supporting the professional learning and wellbeing of school leadership.
    8. Ensuring Interdepartmental collaboration and delivery.

  A Fair Start acknowledges the links between persistent educational underachievement and socio-economic disadvantages, acknowledges the particular challenges facing disadvantaged communities, confirms the underachievement of Protestant working-class boys, and argues for a meaningful partnership between children, families, local communities and schools.

[3] https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/resident/community-planning/#:~:text=Connected%3A%20A%20Community%20Plan%20for,overarching%20plan%20for%20our%20borough.&text=The%20plan%20will%20see%20the,their%20shared%20vision%20and%20outcomes.

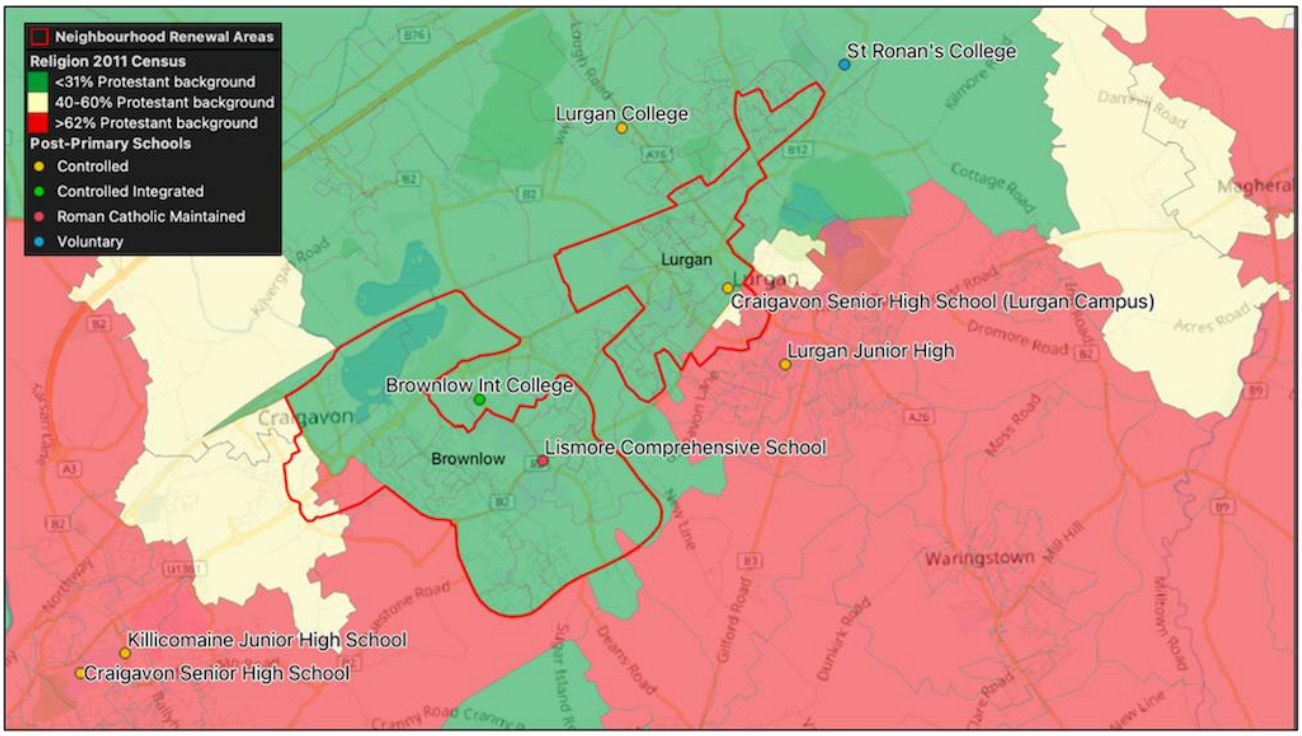
[4] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/fair-start-final-report-action-plan

Section 2: Contextual Information on Lurgan

Using a series of maps and publicly available data, this section gives some geographical context to DP 574.

Lurgan lies roughly six miles to the west of Portadown, both within the Craigavon urban area. Craigavon new town was designed and built from the 1965 to provide modern and rationalised residential and industrial development for the two plantation-era towns and the surrounding area within "a single, linked regional city"[5]. Only partially successful in creating a new 'city centre', this project included numerous attempts to provide centralised services including hospitals, schools, shopping and leisure centres within the central lakes area. In 2015, Craigavon Borough Council was merged with Armagh City and District Council and Banbridge District Council, to create Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. The estimated population of Lurgan in 2018 was 36,980, with 2011 census data indicating that 61% were brought up in the Catholic religion, and 35% were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian' religion. Geographically, Lurgan is divided between Protestant-majority and Catholic-majority areas either side of Union Street in the town centre, roughly along a North-West/South-East axis (Map 1).

Map 1: Religious background in Lurgan



Source: NISRA

The Dickson Plan, which sees schools in the Craigavon area operate a system of academic selection delayed to age 14 through a network of 11-14 Junior High Schools and 14-16

[5] TCPA Craigavon Factsheet available at: https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=751efab7-7ff0-433f-b6fd-2f0ecf54565c

colleges and senior high schools, dates to the years following establishment of the Craigavon 'new city' from 1967-1973. As Map 1 demonstrates, the Dickson Plan in Lurgan is fulfilled by the controlled sector through Lurgan Junior High, the Lurgan campus of Craigavon Senior High, and Lurgan College. The area's Integrated, Roman Catholic Maintained and Voluntary post-primary schools operate on a non-selective basis.

Census data also indicates that in 2011 of the Lurgan population, 20% had a degree/higher qualification whilst 44% had no or low qualifications, and 66% were economically inactive. Most recent published GCSE results (2018/19) indicated that Lurgan results were below the Northern Ireland average (75% vs 84% 5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent). The Lurgan Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA), within which the Lurgan campus of Craigavon Senior High School is situated, records a range of deprivation indicators above the Northern Ireland average. For the education domain, all eight indicators are significantly above average (table 1):

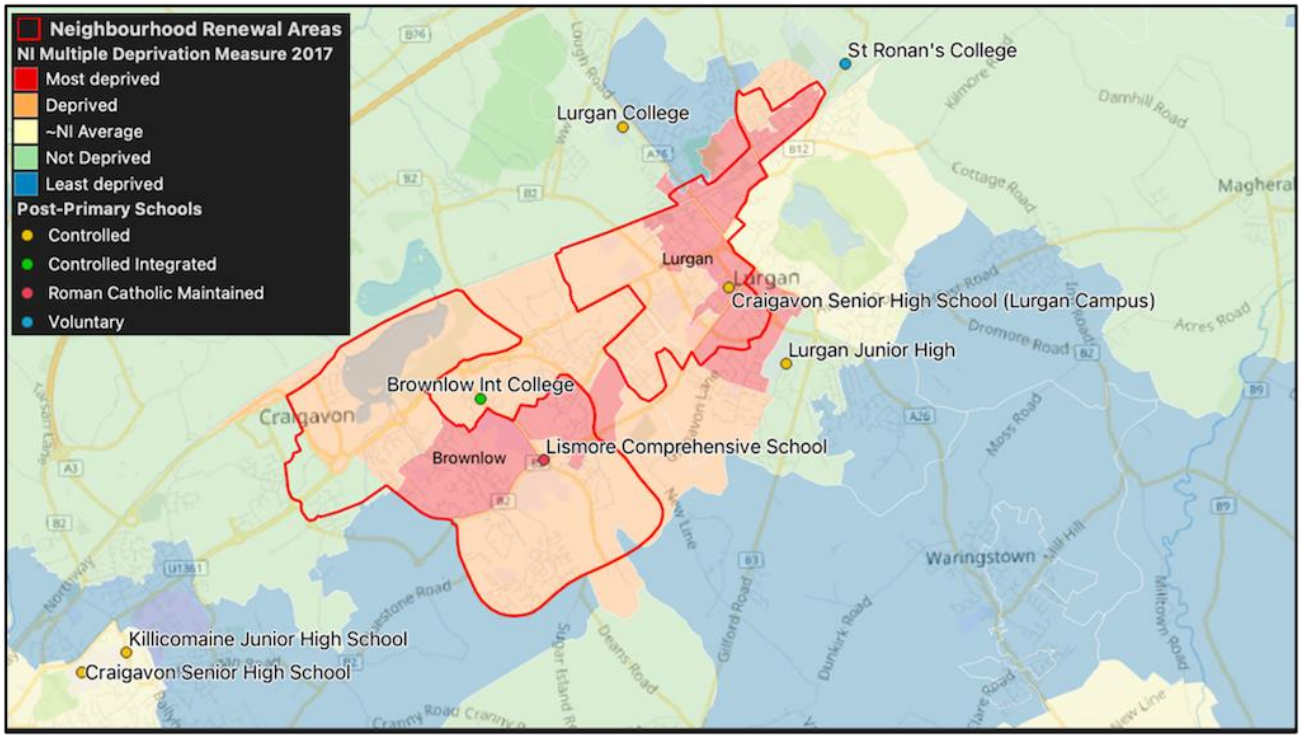
Figure 1: Education Indicators for Lurgan NRA compared with NI average (2017)

Education Indicators	NI Average (2017)	Lurgan NRA (2017)
Proportion of primary schools with SEN stages 3-5	9.1%	10%
Absenteeism at Primary Schools	4.6%	7%
Proportion of school leavers not achieving 5 or more GCSES at A*-C (or equiv.) including Maths and English	35.7%	60%
Proportions of those leaving school aged 16,17 and 18 not entering Education, Employment or Training	2.8%	4%
Proportions of 18-21 year olds who have not enrolled in Higher Education Courses at Higher / Further education establishments	64.9%	77%
Proportion of post-primary pupils with SEN stages 3-5	8.7%	11%
Absenteeism at post-primary schools	6.5%	10%
Proportions of working age adults (25-64) with no or low levels of qualification	35.6%	55%

Source: Lurgan Neighbourhood Renewal Area - Area Profile Report 2019

Populations living in the areas immediately outside the Lurgan NRA and neighbouring Brownlow NRA experience comparable levels of deprivation, as can be seen in Map 2 overleaf. Situated between the Lurgan campus of Craigavon Senior High School and Lurgan Junior High is the Protestant-majority Mourneview estate, which falls into a 'most deprived' area within the Lurgan NRA.

Map 2: Multiple Deprivation Measure in Lurgan

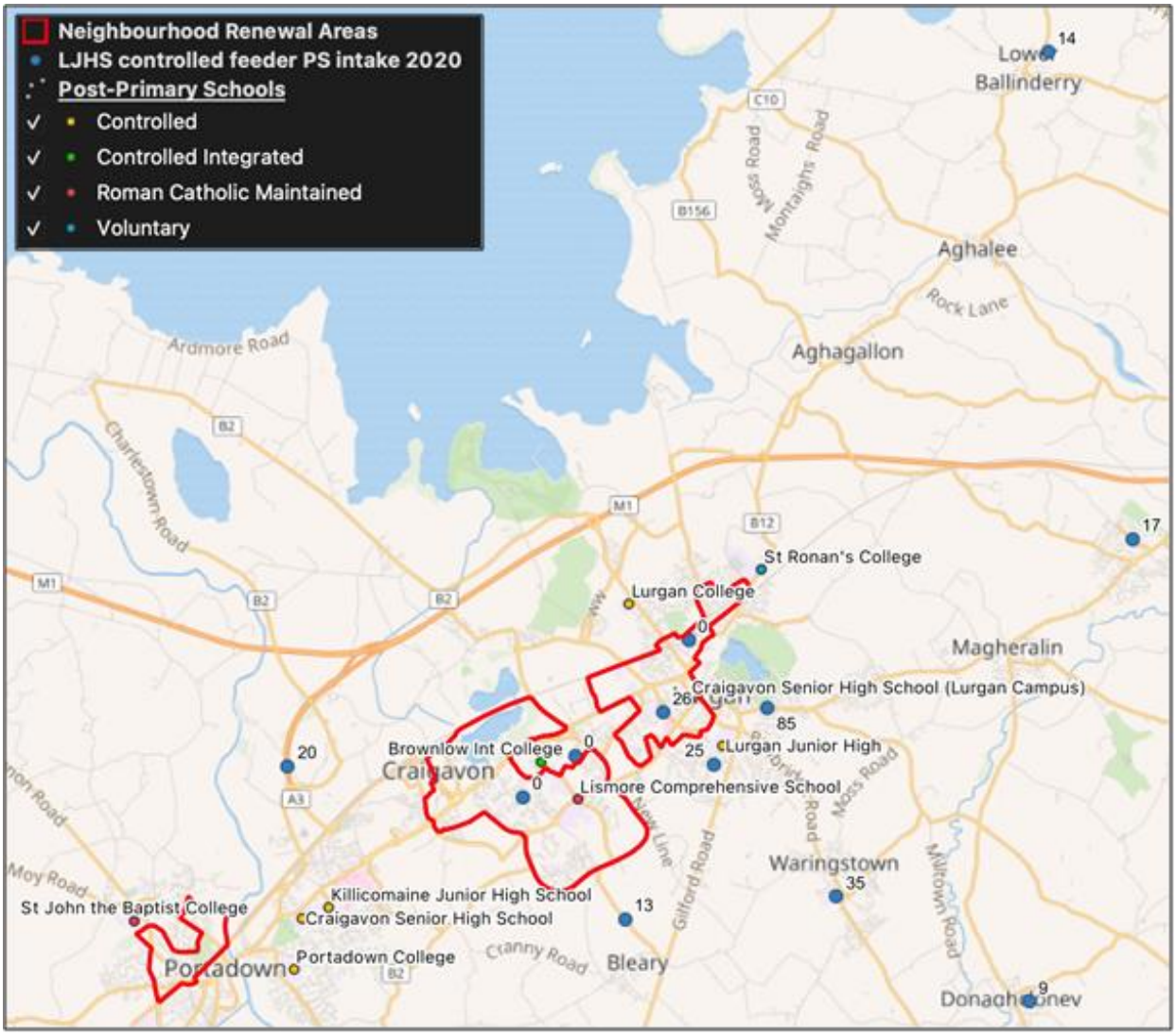


Source: NISRA

The population of south-eastern Lurgan, close to the CSHS Lurgan Campus and Lurgan Junior High, is a Protestant working-class community suffering from socio-economic deprivation and educational underachievement. Withdrawal of public investment through the closure of the CSHS Lurgan Campus would likely exacerbate socio-economic deprivation in the area, as argued by local businesses during the consultation for DP 574. Furthermore, research has repeatedly proven that effective school-community linkages and a high community value placed on education leads to improved educational outcomes, and that a disconnect between Protestant working-class communities and their schools is a key problem in tackling educational underachievement (see section 4). The proposed closure of CSHS Lurgan Campus in favour of transporting pupils to CSHS Portadown Campus does not have the support of the Lurgan community currently served by the school, and would detrimentally affect school-community linkages to the further disadvantage of pupils and the wider community.

Furthermore, the distance travelled by pupils attending post-primary schools in Lurgan is already substantial in many cases. Map 3 shows the range of controlled feeder primary schools for the Lurgan Junior High School, with the number at each location indicating the intake from that primary school. In 2020, significant numbers of pupils from as far away as Ballinderry, Moira and Donaghcloney are registered in the school's intake. As this is the only Junior High School in Lurgan, it is reasonable to assume that pupils from these same areas would normally transfer to CSHS Lurgan Campus and be expected to travel to the Portadown campus under DP 574.

Map 3: Lurgan Junior High School 2020 intake from controlled primary schools



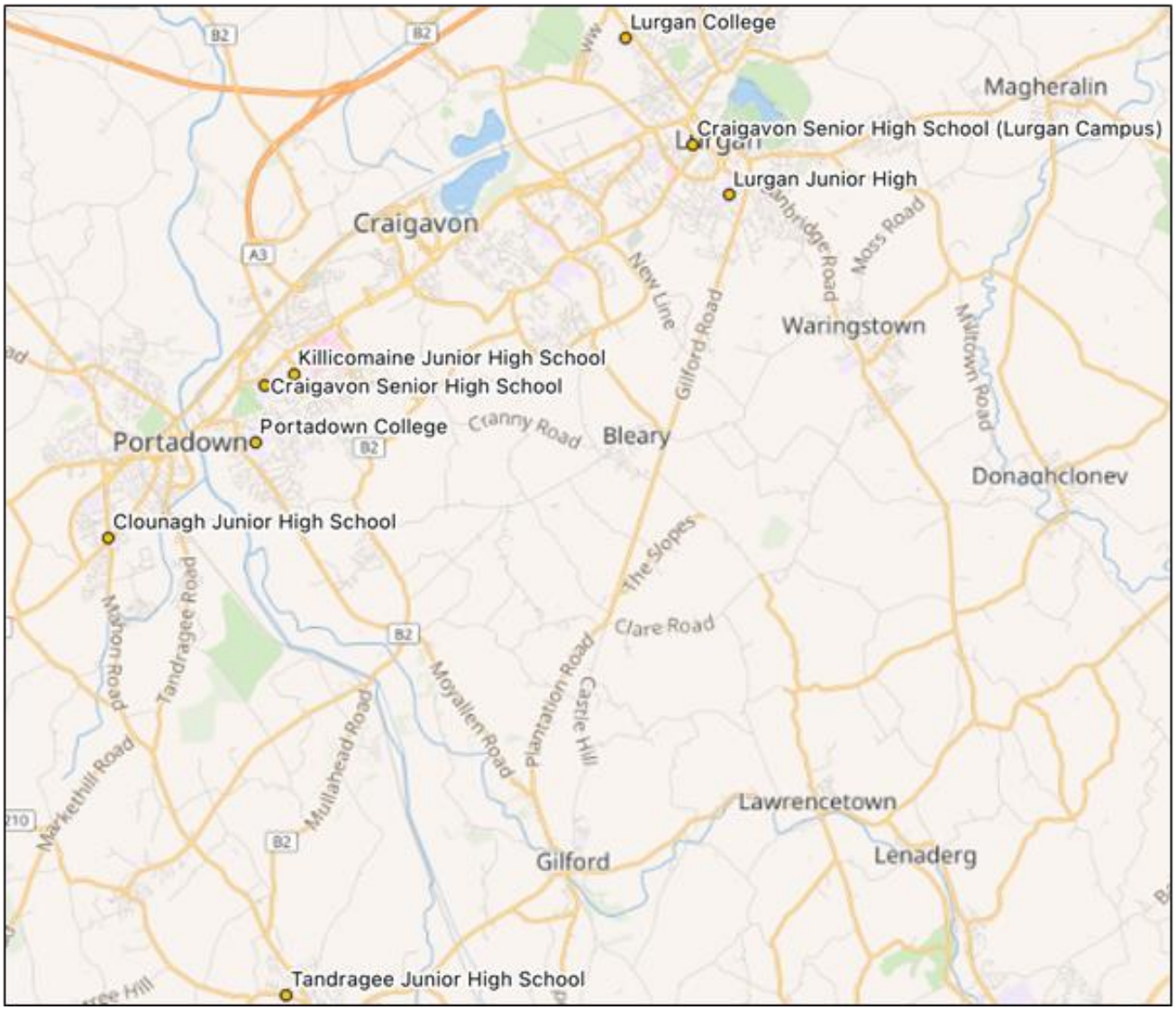
Source: Lurgan Junior High School

For many of these pupils, this will a) be too far to travel under departmental guidelines[6] (45 minutes maximum) and b) lead to fewer applicants to Lurgan Junior High from these feeder primary schools, in favour of Dromore, Banbridge or Lisburn options. Furthermore, if significant numbers of pupils are currently willing to travel to Lurgan Junior High, it is reasonable to think that they would continue to do so for an expanded 11-16 school, which we revisit as a serious option in this report.

Finally, map 4 overleaf shows only the locations of the Dickson Plan schools. It is immediately clear that Portadown is served by the greater number of schools, with three junior high schools (Killicomaine (680 pupils), Clounagh (660 pupils) and Tandragee (320 pupils)) feeding into CSHS Portadown Campus (483 pupils) and Portadown College (780 pupils). Lurgan, meanwhile, has a single junior high school (750 pupils), CSHS Lurgan Campus (169 pupils), and Lurgan College (440 pupils).

[6] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/a-policy-for-sustainable-schools.pdf (see p.49)

Map 4: Location of controlled sector Dickson Plan schools



Source: DE Schools Directory

Each serves a distinct geographical area, notwithstanding the (arguably failed) attempt to straddle both Lurgan and Portadown in the form of a two-campus CSHS. Whilst viability of the Dickson Plan in its current form in Portadown is assured by its interdependent network of post-primary schools, in Lurgan the loss of one of the three schools would render the Dickson Plan unworkable. Removing the Lurgan campus of CSHS would place this already fragile system under increased strain by closing the non-selective pathway within the town. DP 574's consultation report demonstrates the extent to which Lurgan parents desire their children to attend school in Lurgan, and so it is likely that DP 574 would lead to falling enrolment at LJHS and leakage of pupils to comprehensive post-primary schools such as Brownlow Integrated College or schools in Dromore, Banbridge or Lisburn, unless locally available post-primary education provision could be assured. See analysis of options in section 6.

Section 3: The Dickson Plan

The Dickson Plan, sometimes referred to as the two-tier system, has its origins in the 1960s and was influenced by the development of educational provision in Leicestershire, where at the time pupils transferred at the age of 14 but (in contrast to the Dickson Plan) without any form of selection. The plan is often attributed to Mr W.J. Dickson, then Director of Education in Armagh and later Chief Officer of the SELB. The two-tier system of junior high schools followed by progression to either a grammar school or non-selective high school was phased in from 1967 to 1973.

In the Controlled Sector, the plan currently involves a total of 7 post-primary schools: 4 junior high schools (Clounagh, Tandragee, Killicomaine and Lurgan) and 3 post-14 schools comprising 2 grammar schools (Portadown College and Lurgan College) and one non-selective 14-16 school (Craigavon Senior High School) which operates on a split site in Portadown and Lurgan.

While the Dickson Plan did originally extend to the Catholic maintained sector (including St Michael's Grammar School, St Mary's High School and St Paul's Junior High School), more recently a new all ability grammar school, St Ronan's, has opened in September 2015 with the motto "Pro Omnibus Excellentia" - Excellence for All. Work has begun to build a new single site school following a capital investment by DE of in excess of £30m. The new school will accommodate up to 1750 pupils and is due to open in 2023.

Several reports have been written on the Dickson Plan including McKernan and Sandy-Thomas (1981)[7], Alexander et al. (1998)[8] and NI Assembly (2008)[9]. Such evaluations have pointed to several key advantages of the system, for instance, the absence of academic selection at 11 (prevalent across the rest of NI) and the benefits in terms of reduced anxiety for pupils, the resulting lack of distortion to the Key Stage 2 curriculum, the opportunity offered to pupils to take on leadership and responsibility roles in the junior high schools, the opportunity of a fresh start at 14 in a new school, and the popularity of the grammar schools. However, concerns in the past were raised about, for instance, the impact on those pupils not selected for grammar school places at 14, particularly in the controlled sector, concerns about the lack of a consistent method of selection at 14, and a lack of evidence that the two-tier system provides a better educational experience for less able pupils than in a system which offers selection at 11 (Alexander et al., 1998). There has however been no substantial work carried out to review the Dickson Plan for over a decade.

Evidence from this consultation process would certainly suggest that while there remains support for the Dickson Plan in the sense that there is no strong community desire to move towards a system which selects at 11, there remain significant concerns in respect of the non-selective 14-16 provision within the controlled sector, and particularly for those attending the Lurgan campus of Craigavon Senior High School.

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[7] McKernan James and Sandy-Thomas M. (1981) *Transfer at 14: A Study of the Craigavon Two-Tier System as an Organisational Innovation in Education*, Northern Ireland Council for Educational Research.

[8] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/craigavon-evaluation-1998.pdf

[9] NI Assembly (2008) School Transfer at Age 14. Research Paper 18/08. Research and Library Services. Available at http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/committees/2007-2011/education/research-papers/school-transfer-at-age-14.pdf

Education Minister Peter Weir's comments on the Dickson Plan during a visit to the Birches Primary School on 6 June 2016 have often been cited in defence of the Dickson Plan and are published in the EA's Case for Change (p.11):

> "*It is important that lessons are learned to improve our system, but also that we protect what is working within our system. During the last mandate there were considerable concerns created by the threat to effectively dismantle the Dickson Plan system. The Dickson Plan has proved very successful in this local area with strong support from the local community.*
>
> *I want to assure people locally that I will be offering support and assurance for the continuation of the Dickson Plan system, and will be ushering in a period of educational stability on the issue. This is something that works, and so I will ensure that the Dickson Plan is not removed either directly or undermined through stealth, and that any threat is now lifted."*

However, in January 2019, Minister Weir moved to reassure readers of the Lurgan Mail[10] that his comments should not be taken out of context to refer directly to the current Development Proposal:

> *"Any comments made by me were made before there were any proposals. It is wrong for them to be presented in the way they are as it looks as though I am commenting on that proposal. There needs to be a development proposal for Lurgan but I won't dictate to people in Lurgan how things should be. I don't think comments I made some years ago should be used to support one educational option over another in Lurgan…"*

Consequently, it is important to note that the Minister has moved to distance himself from any suggestion that his 2016 comments indicate automatic support for any particular option, let alone unquestioning support for DP 574. Nor can it be assumed that DP 574 represents the continuation of the Dickson Plan as originally envisaged, in that it effectively removes non-selective 14-16 provision in the controlled sector from one of the two major towns. This represents a significant and potentially damaging change to the Dickson Plan rather than its "continuation".

[10] https://www.lurganmail.co.uk/news/wrong-use-my-words-support-any-school-plan-says-ex-minister-134613

Section 4: Addressing Educational Underachievement

Numerous academic and policy reports over many years have highlighted the underachievement of some pupils within the Northern Irish education system as a major, persistent problem[11]. Most recently, the 'New Decade, New Approach' agreement specifically identified educational underachievement amongst working class Protestant boys as a priority[12].

The more substantive Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030 formally adopted by the NI Executive and led by DE[13] set as one of its key outcomes that all "Children and young people learn and achieve". It reminds us that although the percentage of pupils in Northern Ireland achieving Level 2 (equivalent to five or more GCSEs at A*-C, including English and Maths) has risen each year since 2008, this headline figure masks wide inequalities. Repeatedly, analysis of school-leavers' educational attainment has shown that on average girls perform better than boys, Catholics perform better than Protestants, and pupils without Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) perform better than those with FSME. As a consequence, analyses of headline data have repeatedly associated underachievement with working-class Protestant boys in the Controlled Sector.

The stakes are high, as educational underachievement in childhood has long-term consequences. The most recent Chief Inspector's Report[14] stated that "too many under-achieve, struggle to learn in under-performing schools and organisations, and find educational and vocational routes needlessly blocked by decisions about curriculum and assessment made by schools and governors who prioritise the interests of their school or organisation over the needs of learners", and the previous report identified Protestant boys as particularly at-risk of underachieving[15].

The Centre for Shared Education's ILiAD study[16] identified higher levels of GCSE attainment in three predominantly Catholic wards compared with three predominantly Protestant wards (out of a total of seven wards surveyed), and noted differentials associated with the relative value placed on education; perceived levels of attachment or detachment of schools; varying levels of community cohesion; and variances in school absenteeism rates. The report found that at school level (particularly in Controlled schools), low expectations of students on the part of some teachers was reflected by some parents' perception of schools and teachers as "detached" and "middle class". Within this project's sample, Catholic-majority wards were found to outperform Protestant-majority wards, largely due to more effective school-community linkages and a higher community value placed on education.

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[11] Gallagher, T. and Smith, A. (2000) *The Effects Of The Selective System Of Secondary Education In Northern Ireland: Main Report* ; Purdy, N. and Sutherland, A. (2006) *Attitudes of the Socially Disadvantaged Towards Education in Northern Ireland*. Bangor: Department of Education ; Henderson, L., Harris, J., Purdy, N. and Walsh, G. (2020) *Educational Underachievement in Northern Ireland: Evidence Summary*. Belfast: Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement.

[12] Smith, J. and Coveney, S. (2020) *New Decade, New Approach*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Office.

[13] DE (2020) *Children & Young People's Strategy 2020-2030*. Bangor: Department of Education.

[14] ETI (2018) *Chief Inspector's Report 2016-18*. Bangor: Education and Training Inspectorate: p12

[15] ETI (2016) *Chief Inspector's Report 2014-2016*. Bangor: Education and Training Inspectorate.

[16] Leitch, R., Hughes, J., Burns, S., Cownie, E., McManus, C., levers, M. and Shuttleworth, I. (2017) *Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation: Final Summary Report*. Belfast: The Executive Office.

This division between Controlled schools and the communities they serve appears to be a long-running problem; the A Call to Action report to the Northern Irish Assembly[17] made the case for greater involvement in education and schools by parents and local communities in order to tackle underachievement.

Existing research evidence from Northern Ireland underlines the importance of accessibility for non-selective post-primary educational provision[18]. The findings of a review of free school transport within the Belfast area indicated that non-selective school parents were more concerned with convenience (school proximity) than whether their child qualified for free school transport to attend a school outside the local community, even if other aspects of the education offer appeared attractive[19]. Multiple qualitative studies of social class and educational attainment have agreed on the basic point that locality is key to understanding pupils' aspirations[20], with children from working-class communities less likely to aspire to attend schools beyond their local area. Finally, a large cross-sectional survey conducted in 2008 found that there was a statistically significant relationship between wellbeing and academic achievement scores[21]. Prioritising wellbeing requires a holistic approach at the scale of the whole school and community, promoting things like active travel (walking and cycling) and a stable social environment.

The ILiAD study also pointed to school leadership as a key area in which underachievement is conceptualised and remedial policies developed. The importance of school leadership and effective community partnership in raising attainment has been underlined in several studies in Great Britain over the past decade[22]. However, what makes school leadership and community partnership effective in one context may not be the same for another - what is important is the development and implementation of a strategic and coherent approach to improving educational outcomes.

[17] Purvis, D. (2011) *Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class: A Call to Action*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Assembly.

[18] Harris, J., Purdy, N., Walsh, G., Jones, S. and Rowan, A. (2021) *Educational Underachievement in Northern Ireland Review of Research 2021*. Belfast: Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement.

[19] Kelleher, L., Smyth, A. and McEldowney, M. (2016) "Cultural Attitudes, Parental Aspirations, and Socioeconomic Influence on Post-Primary School Selection in Northern Ireland.", *Journal of School Choice*, 10(2), pp.200–226.

[20] Connolly, P. and Neill, J. (2001) "Constructions of Locality and Gender and their Impact on the Educational Aspirations of Working-class Children.", *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 11(2), pp.107–129 ; Connolly, P. and Neill, J. (2001) "Constructions of Locality and Gender and their Impact on the Educational Aspirations of Working-class Children.", *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 11(2), pp.107–129.

[21] Miller, S., Connolly, P. and Maguire, L. K. (2013) "Wellbeing, academic buoyancy and educational achievement in primary school students", *International Journal of Educational Research*, 62, pp.239–248.

[22] Baars, S., Bernardes, E., Elwick, A., Malortie, A., McAleavy, T., McInerney, L., Menzies, L. and Riggall, A. (2014) *Lessons from London schools: investigating the success*. London: CfBT ; Demie, F. and Mclean, C. (2015) "Tackling disadvantage: what works in narrowing the achievement gap in schools", *Review of Education*, 3(2), pp.138–174.

Section 5: Area Planning Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Schools

The Department of Education's policy on area planning has been set out in *Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools*[23] published three years after *The Report of the Independent Strategic Review of Education* (the "Bain Report" - 2006[24]). In *Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools* (DE, 2009) a common vision is identified:

- *To ensure that every learner achieves his or her full potential at each stage of development.*

The policy then outlines a series of 11 objectives (p.4-5) for the education sector in advancing this vision:

- *ensure that the excellent quality of education available to some young people is made available to all, in both urban and rural settings, in accessible, modern, fit-for-purpose accommodation;*
- *improve outcomes for all but, in particular, to provide additional support to those who require it, including those children with Special Educational Needs, to realise their full potential;*
- *encourage schools to co-operate in sharing best practice to support children with Special Educational Needs and those with other barriers to learning;*
- *sustain strong, successful and viable schools, well led by their Governors representing local stakeholders, principals and their staff, to be the centre of the education system, supported by effective administrative and strategic direction;*
- *encourage schools to become closely integrated with their wider community, with much better links to early years' provision and to informal educational opportunities beyond the school;*
- *implement a revised curriculum offering fresh opportunities, particularly to those for whom education is currently not working well enough;*
- *move away from the division of academic and vocational education to ensuring access to a broader educational experience for all young people, supported by better quality careers advice, signposting the appropriate pathways to the future;*
- *ensure that each school or set of schools can sustain the ethos which it values and has upheld for many years;*
- *create a new set of relationships amongst schools and colleges, based on strong, successful and sustainable institutions, well funded and equipped but building on the expertise of the different sectors;*
- *sustain the quality, morale, health and well-being of the teaching workforce, youth workers and other educational professionals and support staff, helping them to prepare and implement the major education reforms and deal with the range of social challenges affecting young people, particularly in an increasingly diverse population; and*

[23] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/a-policy-for-sustainable-schools.pdf

[24] https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/9777/1/review_of_education.pdf

- *uphold an education system that plays a powerful and positive role in the normalising of society, helping to make it sustainable and vibrant, with greater sharing amongst communities.*

The DE policy establishes six key criteria for assessing the sustainability of schools. These are as follows with the most relevant indicators (selected from Annex A) listed below:

Criteria 1. Quality Educational Experience – identified as "the core issue for sustainability" (p.19) and it is noted that in small post-primary schools "the curriculum choices and specialist teaching open to learners may be diminished" (p.21)

> Indicator 1.1 "Attainment levels of pupils12, Key Stage tests pending development of new indicators for Primary Schools, GCSE results for Post-Primary Schools."
>
> Indicator 1.3 "The ability of the school to cater for children with Special Educational Needs."
>
> Indicator 1.5 "The ability at post-primary level to be able to provide suitable access to the entitlement framework including, where appropriate, linkages with other schools, the FE sector or other providers."
>
> Indicator 1.6 "The standards and the quality of learning and teaching at the school."
>
> Indicator 1.7 "The range of curricular and extra-curricular activities available for children including career guidance, physical education, music, art, drama and science."
>
> Indicator 1.8 "The quality of the physical environment for learning and teaching i.e. the condition, energy and water efficiency and suitability of the buildings."
>
> Indicator 1.9 "The quality of, and arrangements for, pastoral care including the active promotion of the principles of social justice in all areas of the formal and informal curriculum."

Criteria 2. Stable Enrolment Trends: "Post-primary schools are much more expensive to provide than primaries because of the need for specialist classrooms and other facilities. In addition to the financial implications, smaller post-primaries can have the effect of narrowing the range of provision available to pupils within their schools. The larger the school, the more scope there is to recruit, develop and retain teachers to teach subjects and to offer a broad range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities. It is a requirement of the Entitlement Framework that, when it comes to making decisions at 14 and again at 16, pupils have access to a genuine and much broader choice of courses. It will require schools to provide access to minimum numbers of applied and general courses in Key Stage 4 and post-16. This presents a particular challenge in a small school. While some larger schools may be able to deliver the full Entitlement Framework, it is likely that many schools will need to collaborate with other schools, further education colleges and other providers to provide the required access. It is the objective of sustainable schools to have as much of the Entitlement Framework as possible delivered in-school" (p.26)

> Indicator 2.3 "The minimum (not optimal) enrolment for newly established schools or existing schools should be 500 pupils for an 11-16 school, i.e. an annual average intake of 100 per year."
>
> Indicator 2.4 "The sixth form should be self-sufficient financially and have a minimum of 100 pupils."

Indicator 2.5 “Key Stage 4 and sixth form enrolments should enable pupils to spend 80% or more of their time in their home school.”

Criteria 3. Sound Financial Position: it is noted that financial viability is not just related to school size but also is related to the level of financial management in each school. Clearly smaller schools generally have higher funding costs per pupil, and some have operated on significant budget deficits.

Indicator 3.1 The school’s annual finances indicate that it can live within its delegated budget.

Indicator 3.2 The school’s financial trends indicate that it will continue to be able to live within its annually delegated budget.

Indicator 3.3 The school’s three year financial plans, based upon realistic assumptions, indicate that where there is a deficit this can be substantially reduced or recovered.

Criteria 4. Strong Leadership and Management by Board of Governors and Principals: the policy states that the absence of effective leadership and management can affect morale and motivation and lead to a lack of direction and accountability, as well as impacting on pupil attainment.

Indicator 4.1 Governors’ views on the school based on quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Indicator 4.2 Composition of Board of Governors – skills and experience of Board members and number of vacancies.

Indicator 4.3 Management of staff attendance and absenteeism.

Indicator 4.4 Levels and nature of staff turnover and unfilled staff vacancies.

Indicator 4.5 Teacher morale.

Indicator 4.6 Management of curricular and organisational demands on the principal and staff.

Indicator 4.7 Ensuring that the resource allocated is available so that the principal has at least 1 day per week to attend to leadership and management duties.

Indicator 4.8 There is a school development plan in place and progress is being made to achieve the plan’s aims and objectives.

Indicator 4.9 Pupil behaviour, expulsions, suspensions and non-attendance as well as positive behaviours such as involvement in school management (e.g. buddying and mentoring schemes).

Criteria 5. Accessibility: *the policy asks the following questions: Is the distance to school and the travel time for pupils reasonable? In the absence of a suitable alternative school in the local area should the school be retained? Are there suitable transport arrangements between local schools?*

Indicator 5.1 Home to school transport travel times of less than 30 minutes for primary pupils (i.e. 1 hour per day in total) and 45 minutes for post-primary pupils (i.e. 1.5 hours per day in total).

Indicator 5.3 Existing co-operative arrangements with other schools and further education colleges/ training organisations -max travel time 30 minutes for a single journey and total of 2 hours per week.

Indicator 5.4 Capacity in nearest schools.

6. Strong Links with the Community: the importance of positive links and relationships with parents and the local community is stressed.

6.1 Degree and quality of parental involvement (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this).

6.2 Number of children in the vicinity attending (and not attending) the school.

6.5 Multi-functional use of buildings outside formal education, for example, for sport, voluntary and community use.

In 2016 the Minister of Education Peter Weir (17 Oct 2016) gave a *Ministerial Statement* on the draft area plan in which he stated the following, reiterating his department's focus on the breadth of curricular and extra-curricular opportunity and his encouragement of innovative and creative solutions which will deliver a "strong educational presence" in a community:

"My Department is leading on four supporting indicators focused on improving child development, improving educational outcomes, reducing educational inequality and improving the quality of education. It is my aim that every pupil will have a first class experience at school and fulfil their potential. Regardless of which sector a pupil is enrolled in – all pupils deserve equality of access to high quality education. The educational experience of our children and young people is greatly enhanced when they attend schools that are educationally and financially viable.

Many of our schools demonstrate these characteristics and many of our children and young people thrive in them.

However there are still a significant number of schools that are struggling, for a wide range of reasons, to deliver the best for their pupils.

The Sustainable Schools Policy envisaged a network of schools delivering, where needed, creative and innovative models of provision through collaboration and federation however the appetite to demonstrate this have not been evident and there are opportunities which should not be missed…

I expect to see proposals to deal with Post-primary schools that are failing to provide a broad and balance curriculum for pupils in years 8-12. It is not acceptable that these pupils are denied opportunities because the schools are too small…

Communities need to ask - Do we want a strong educational presence in our community? Do we want certainty for our children and their parents?

> *Is one larger secure sustainable school better than two or more schools that are constantly facing sustainability issues?"*[25]

In 2017 the Education Authority published its *Providing Pathways: Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-2020* (EA, 2017a) which replaces the previous area plans in each Education and Library Board area, and sets out the following key principles:

> "So the central focus of the Strategic Area Plan is on meeting the needs of children and young people in order to improve educational outcomes and that this happens in the most efficient and effective way possible. This can only be achieved through a network of viable and sustainable schools that are of the right type, the right size, located in the right place and have a focus on raising standards." (p.9)

The Strategic Area Plan identified a number of key themes, which were agreed as the key drivers for the future planning of school provision, namely:

- Securing parity of access for all to appropriate pathways
- Enhancing choice for all children and young people
- Promoting co-operation, collaboration and sharing across all sectors
- Maximising the use of resources
- Informing strategic infrastructure planning.

[25] Ministerial Statement 17 October 2016 Available at https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Ministerial%20Statement%20-%20Area%20Plan%20-%2017%20October%202016.pdf

Section 6: Analysis of options

In the following section a visual Red-Amber-Green coding is used to assess the viability of the different options using the DE's Sustainability Criteria (A-F)[26] and several other key considerations, before arriving at our new, independent verdict. In the analysis 'red' indicates that the proposed option has a potential negative impact, is problematic or unlikely to be sustainable; 'amber' indicates that the option is more equivocal with some advantages and some disadvantages and/or varying levels of support; while 'green' indicates that the option is assessed to be predominantly positive in impact.

Option 0 - Current Situation/ Status Quo

		Current Situation / Split Site with Lurgan Campus on Alexandra Crescent site
DE Sustainability Criteria A-F	**A. Quality Educational Experience**	ETI 2018 concerns over poor results, restricted curricular offer (esp. on Lurgan site), lack of collaboration with local schools, health and safety issues on both sites / unsatisfactory arrangements for safeguarding, lack of after school activities on Lurgan site. Quality of accommodation is poor on Lurgan site.
	B. Stable Enrolment Trends	Yes in terms of CSHS overall, but consistent anecdotal reports of children transferring to Dromore, Banbridge, Lisburn schools at end of KS2 (especially from neighbouring small towns) as a result of uncertainty regarding future of CSHS - negative impact / taking pupils away from Lurgan. There is no potential to expand the low numbers currently on the Kitchen Hill site.
	C. Sound Financial Position	Accumulated deficit of £2.1m (March 2020) with annual increase of £0.5m, linked to split site inefficiencies.
	D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal	Previous "significant discontinuity in leadership" raised by ETI, and lack of monitoring/evaluation of pupil progress – now stabilized with appointment of principal.
	E. Accessibility	Accessibility is good for pupils, based on accessibility of provision in Lurgan
	F. Strong Links with the Community	Local children attending but community links are currently underdeveloped on the Kitchen Hill site as a result of poor accommodation.
Additional criteria	***Level of community support in Lurgan?***	Universal agreement that current provision on Kitchen Hill site is unsatisfactory and desire for change.
	Other implications/considerations	
	How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?	Selection at 14, but there is a strong sense that the children attending the Lurgan campus of CSHS are not being well served under the current configuration of the Dickson Plan.
	VERDICT	***REJECTED***

[26] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/a-policy-for-sustainable-schools.pdf

Analysis of Current Situation/Status Quo

The Education Authority has in its summary indicated that its rationale for change is being taken forward to address: the curricular provision on the site, the condition of the premises and the impact the environment has on staff and pupils; and the financial impact of operating across two sites.

There is no doubt that change is required to the current situation, a fact that is not disputed and which has been well made for many years.

A. Quality Educational Experience

Educational provision, despite the best efforts of the school governors, leadership and teachers, is thwarted by the split site arrangement and limited accommodation on the Lurgan campus, which have narrowed the curricular offer.

The EA's Case for Change (13 April 2021) claims that the school's GCSE results in 2020 were 27 percentage points above the NI average "for secondary schools":

> "Exam results have improved for the third consecutive year; resulting in the Craigavon SHS now above the national average for secondary schools in Northern Ireland: in 2020 Craigavon SHS students achieved 83% A*- C in GCSE or equivalent, whilst the national average for secondary schools in Northern Ireland was 56% A*- C." (EA Case for Change, p.17)[27]

While we welcome the rise in the school's results over the past two years, we would however question the accuracy of the figure of 56% cited as the "national average for secondary schools in Northern Ireland", and note that no source is provided for this "national average". This draws into question the EA's claim that the school's GCSE results (in terms of the percentage of year 12 pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C) were 27 percentage points above the NI average for secondary schools.

Results over recent years, as indicated in the 2018 ETI inspection report[28] (cited in the EA's Pre-Publication Consultation document), have fallen below and often well below the NI average. The latest figures obtained from the school show considerable improvement and that for 2019-20 82.9% of year 12 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (as cited in the EA Case for Change) but the most recently published Department of Education statistics (*Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2019-20*)[29] show that the NI average for all post-primary schools was 91.3% or 85.7% for non-grammar schools. Both figures are well above the figure of 56% cited by the EA above as their "national average".

Similarly, in 2019-20, 52.8% of year 12 pupils at Craigavon Senior High School achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and maths compared to the NI average of

[27] https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/DP%20574%20Craigavon%20SHS%20-%20Case%20for%20Change%20final%20Apr%2021_0.pdf

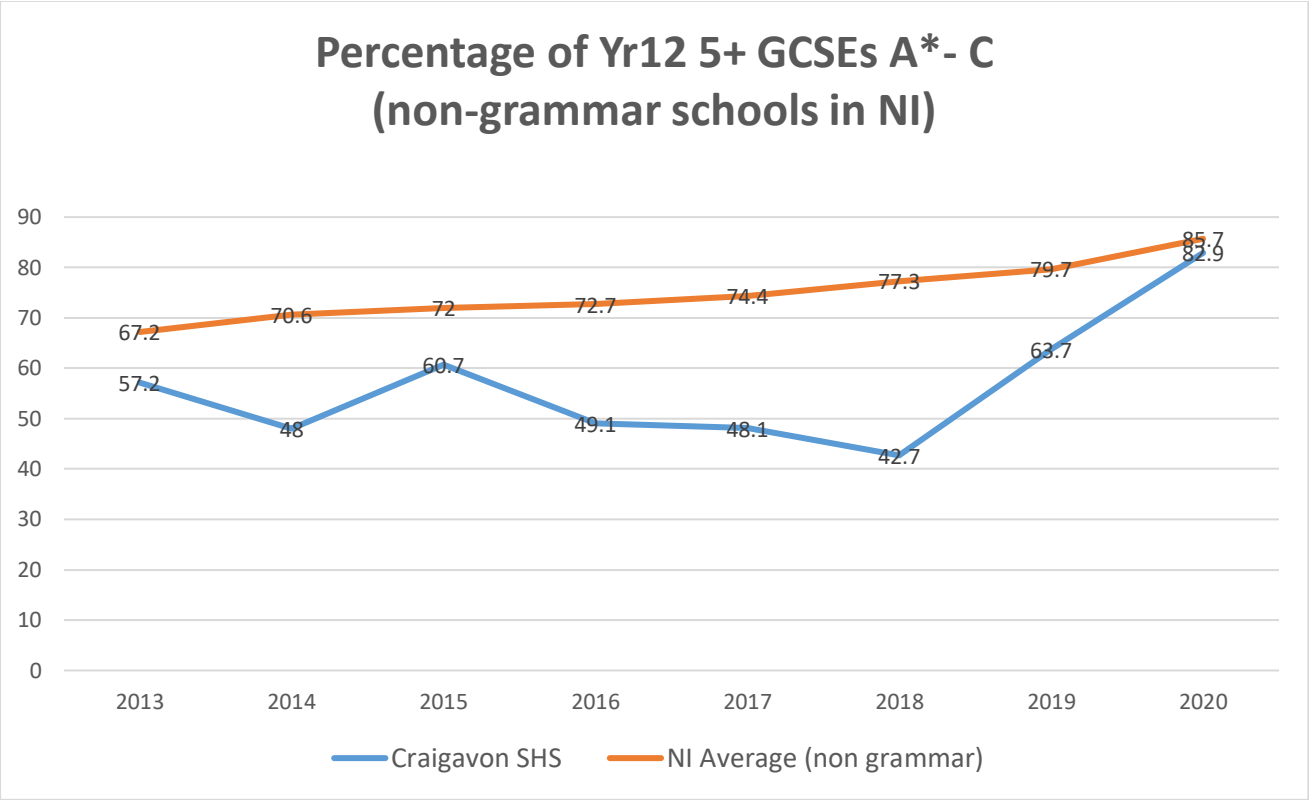
[28] https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/asos-post-primary-inspection-craigavon-senior-high-school-portadown-county-armagh-521-0282_3.pdf

[29] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Qualifications%20and%20Destinations%20of%20Northern%20Ireland%20School%20Leavers%202019-20.pdf

76.2% or a non-grammar average of 59.8% (also based on the DE's *Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2019-20*)[30].

While this would confirm that the gap is narrowing compared to previous years (which is to be welcomed), in sharp contrast to the claims made by the EA, the school's GCSE results (using the most common indicator: percentage of year 12 pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths) remain 7 percentage points below the average for non-grammar schools or 23 percentage points below the NI average for all schools. Additionally in terms of the other main indicator (percentage of year 12 pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C), results show that the school's results remain 3.8 percentage points below the NI average for non-grammar schools and 8.4 percentage points below the average for all NI schools. This analysis is once again based on DE's NI average results as published on 27 May 2021[31].

Figure 2: Percentage of Craigavon SHS Yr12 5+ GCSEs A*- C compared with NI average

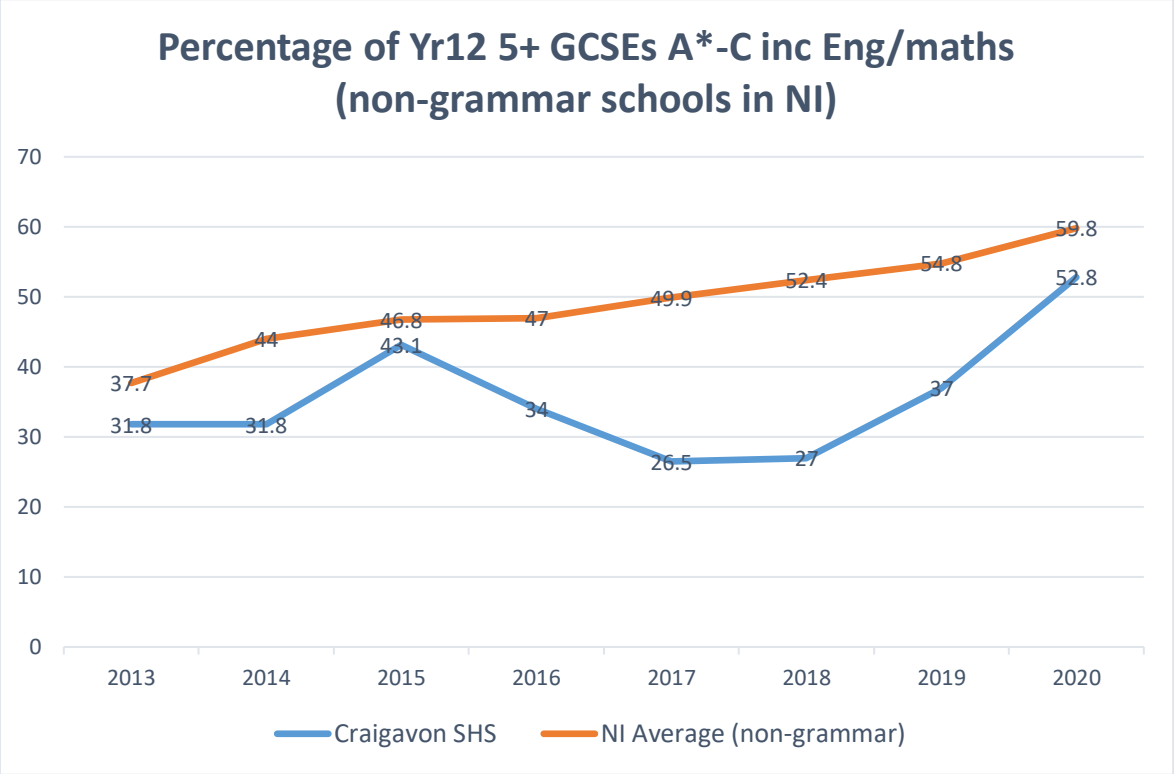


Source: EA Pre-Publication Consultation, School Data 2020 and DE Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2019-20

[30] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Qualifications%20and%20Destinations%20of%20Northern%20Ireland%20School%20Leavers%202019-20.pdf

[31] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Qualifications%20and%20Destinations%20of%20Northern%20Ireland%20School%20Leavers%202019-20.pdf

Figure 3: Percentage of Craigavon SHS Yr12 5+ GCSEs A*- C including English and Maths compared with NI average



Source: EA Pre-Publication Consultation, School Data 2020 and DE Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2019-20

Current accommodation on the Kitchen Hill (Lurgan) campus of Craigavon Senior High School is universally agreed to be unsatisfactory in terms of health and safety issues, the lack of Music and Drama facilities, the lack of on-site playing fields or outside playground area, shared classrooms with the Southern Regional College (SRC), and the lack of security on the site.

The ETI also raised concerns in their 2018 inspection report about the fact that the current curricular offer did not meet the Entitlement Framework and that there was no collaboration with any other post-primary schools in the Craigavon area. The ETI also record that attendance rates "are low and have declined over the past three years" (p.1).

The current consultation process has however noted that since 2018 there has been progress made by the new principal of Craigavon Senior High School in terms of an enhanced curricular offer and improving results and enrolments.

B. Stable enrolment trends

The enrolment at Craigavon Senior High School overall is strong and the principal has reported that projected numbers have risen for the 2021 intake. This is an encouraging picture. However there is a limit on the numbers who can be accommodated on the Lurgan campus (due to the limitations of the current site) and indications that the current uncertainty caused by the Development Proposal and the threat of closure of the Lurgan campus has already had a negative impact on applications to Lurgan Junior High School (the main feeder

school), especially from some of the peripheral towns (e.g. Waringstown, Donaghcloney) where there is “leakage” towards neighbouring non-selective schools outside the Dickson Plan in Dromore, Banbridge and Lisburn. This “leakage” from Lurgan and its periphery is likely to be exacerbated should the DP be accepted as a result of reduced accessibility.

C. Sound Financial Position

Craigavon Senior High School has an accumulated budget deficit of £2,154,395 at March 2020 (figures from the EA Pre-Publication Consultation). This is largely the result of the split-site arrangement which inevitably leads to duplication and smaller than expected teacher to pupil ratios. It is estimated that the deficit will grow by £0.5million per year unless action is taken. It is acknowledged that this is a challenge created by the design of the school on a split site campus which makes the efficient management of the school impossible.

D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal

The ETI (2018) reports a “period of discontinuity” in the leadership of Craigavon Senior High School which has been detrimental to its management:

> “Before May 2017, there was a sustained period of discontinuity in leadership, when some key posts were not filled. In May 2017, a new principal was appointed. Subsequently, the senior leadership team was re-structured and emerging curricular and pastoral teams were established. At the time of the inspection, the principal was in the process of leaving to take up a post in another school; interim plans to oversee the strategic leadership of the school were being reviewed by the governors and the employing authority.” (ETI, 2018, p.1)

Concerns were also raised at that time that the targets and success criteria in the school’s action plans were not specific enough and that there was a lack of robust baseline data to support the staff to make the required improvements. Safeguarding arrangements were also identified as unsatisfactory.

Nonetheless since the appointment of the current principal it is evident that there is now more stability in leadership, and widespread support for the new leadership team’s efforts to address the school’s challenges.

Accessibility

Accessibility in the current model is not a problem for children currently attending the school from Lurgan and its periphery.

Strong links with Community

The EA’s Case for Change notes that “The school has links with the community it serves. Craigavon SHS has the support of the local business community who provide work placements for the students annually. This is a very successful programme and is only successful due to the commitment and support of local business/community.” However, given the poor accommodation on the Kitchen Hill site, it is clear that the potential for the school to be a vibrant and attractive community hub is currently underdeveloped.

Level of Community Support in Lurgan?

There is universal agreement that the current provision on the Kitchen Hill site is unsatisfactory. Indeed there were many community expressions of frustration that the situation had been allowed to deteriorate to the current level, without either investment in the current site or alternative arrangements.

How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?

The current model is seen as representative of the Dickson Plan in the sense that it maintains non-selective provision in Lurgan and Portadown, and operates on a two-tier system of selection at 14. However there is a strong sense that the criticisms of the non-selective provision as expressed in earlier reviews of the Dickson Plan had not been adequately addressed to date, and that therefore the Dickson Plan in its current form is not serving all children in the town equitably.

VERDICT: REJECTED

Option 1: Craigavon SHS, Lurgan Campus – relocation of Craigavon SHS, Lurgan Campus on the Lurgan Junior HS site – new build 250 pupil post-primary

		EA Option 1: Relocation of CSHS (Lurgan) onto campus of Lurgan JHS
DE Sustainability Criteria A-F	**A. Quality Educational Experience**	Improved accommodation but continued concerns over implications of split-site provision on curricular offer
	B. Stable Enrolment Trends	Stable enrolment trends overall to CSHS. Anecdotal reports of leakage out of Lurgan caused by uncertainty around DP and some parental preference for 11-16 option (e.g. Banbridge)
	C. Sound Financial Position	Deficit is likely to continue to grow as a result of split site and limited numbers.
	D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal	Previous "significant discontinuity in leadership" raised by ETI, and lack of monitoring/evaluation of pupil progress – now stabilized with appointment of principal.
	E. Accessibility	Accessibility would be good for pupils, based on provision in Lurgan
	F. Strong Links with the Community	Local children attending, but potential of the school to contribute to the local community could be developed further, though this is not easy when operating on a split site.
Additional Criteria	***Level of community support in Lurgan?***	This option has not attracted popular support.
	Other implications/considerations	
	How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?	Selection at 14, but there is a strong sense that the children attending the Lurgan campus of CSHS are <u>not</u> being well served under the current configuration of the Dickson Plan.
	VERDICT	***REJECTED***

Analysis of Option 1

A. Quality Educational Experience

This would certainly lead to improved accommodation and ready access to playing fields on the current Lurgan Junior High School site but the solution retains the same challenges of having a small Lurgan campus and a larger Portadown campus of the same split site school. The present concerns would also remain about the limited curricular offer on the Lurgan campus as a result of the smaller numbers, and the sense that the majority of the school and its after school activities were based in Portadown.

B. Stable Enrolment Trends

The enrolment trends are stable overall to CSHS. There have however been anecdotal reports of "leakage" out of Lurgan caused by uncertainty around the current Development

Proposal and reports that some parents have expressed a preference for 11-16 options (e.g. Banbridge, Dromore, Lisburn).

C. Sound Financial Position

The existing deficit is likely to continue to grow as a result of the split site and limited numbers. This remains the major challenge to any split site option, even if there was the potential for some sharing of facilities with the Junior High School.

D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal

Previous "significant discontinuity in leadership" raised by ETI, and lack of monitoring/evaluation of pupil progress – but it is acknowledged that there is now greater stability following the appointment of the most recent principal.

E. Accessibility

Accessibility is good for pupils, based on provision in Lurgan. Indeed, the accessibility on the Lurgan Junior High School site is better for many of the pupils living in the surrounding working-class estates.

F. Strong Links with the Community

Local children attending, but potential of the school to contribute to the local community could be developed further. This would be possible on the Lurgan Junior High School site, but again there are challenges as a result of the split site model.

How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?

This option would represent a continuation of the Dickson Plan in the sense that it maintains non-selective provision in Lurgan and Portadown, and operates on a two-tier system of selection at 14. However there is a strong sense that the criticisms of the non-selective provision as expressed in earlier reviews of the Dickson Plan have not been adequately addressed to date, and that therefore the continuation of the split site CSHS, despite improved accommodation, would not represent a significant improvement on the current unsatisfactory arrangement.

Level of community support in Lurgan?

This option has not attracted popular support – possibly through a realisation that the split-site model has not worked until now and is unlikely to work much better even with enhanced accommodation on the Lurgan campus.

VERDICT: REJECTED

Option 2: Craigavon SHS operating on a single site, 26-34 Lurgan Road, Portadown (Portadown campus)

		EA Option 2: Craigavon SHS operating on a single site, 26-34 Lurgan Road, Portadown (Portadown campus)
DE Sustainability Criteria A-F	**A. Quality Educational Experience**	The single-site provision in Portadown with wider curricular offer and better facilities would enhance the educational experience for the pupils currently at CSHS (Lurgan campus). Results are improving across CSHS, but 2019/20 GCSE results are still below NI average.
	B. Stable Enrolment Trends	Enrolment is stable and rising at CSHS. There is however the potential that numbers wishing to travel from Lurgan to the Portadown campus could fall in future years, especially amongst children from the other side of Lurgan. It is more likely that they will choose instead to attend 11-16 schools in Lisburn, Banbridge or Dromore.
	C. Sound Financial Position	The move to a single site will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the current financial deficit, but would cost EA more in terms of additional travel costs for pupils from Lurgan and its periphery.
	D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal	Previous "significant discontinuity in leadership" raised by ETI, and lack of monitoring/evaluation of pupil progress – now stabilized with appointment of principal.
	E. Accessibility	Transport has been raised as a significant concern by Lurgan residents (inconvenience, motivation, impact on ability to participate in after-school activities in Portadown and recreational/sports activities in Lurgan after school). This is also an issue for children in outlying areas already taking 1 or 2 buses to get to Lurgan campus and would mean travel times in excess of 45 minutes for some. Lurgan would be the only large town in NI without controlled non-selective 11-16 provision.
	F. Strong Links with the Community	A move to Portadown would significantly hinder the development of strong school/family/community links in Lurgan. The community served by the school is opposed to the move.
Additional criteria	***Level of community support in Lurgan?***	Very low level of support from the community served by Lurgan campus of CSHS – seen as another loss for the Protestant community of Lurgan in particular. Strong support however from Lurgan College and staff/governors of CSHS.
	Other implications/considerations	Capital investment for new build not guaranteed. Location not decided but majority pupil population centred on Portadown. How likely is it that single site new build will materialise within 5-10 years? How likely is it to be in Craigavon rather than Portadown?
	How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?	Preserves the Dickson Plan in terms of selection/transfer at 14 but in practice removes 14-16 non-selective provision from Lurgan. The Dickson Plan design to date has always ensured provision in Lurgan and Portadown.
	VERDICT	***REJECTED***

Analysis of Option 2:

A. Quality Educational Experience

The single-site provision in Portadown with enhanced curricular offer and better facilities would certainly enhance the educational experience for the pupils currently at CSHS (Lurgan campus), with improved accommodation, enhanced curricular offer, and better access to on-site Music and Drama rooms. Results are improving across CSHS, but the most recent GCSE results are still below the NI average for non-grammar schools. In the minds of the Lurgan community served by the school, this does not represent a sufficient 'pull factor' to justify the inconvenience and inaccessibility associated with the proposed move to Portadown, and is not enough to justify the withdrawal of educational provision for this cohort of pupils from the town. There is a very strong desire from the community served by the Lurgan campus of CSHS to explore further the possibility of a 'Lurgan solution'.

In terms of the potential for a new build single site school, there is considerable scepticism that this will be realised in the medium or even the long-term, given the current financial climate. The EA have suggested that this would take place within 5-10 years, but many schools have been waiting much longer than this for capital investment. There is also some justification in questioning whether it is likely that the future single site school would be situated anywhere other than in Portadown, since three quarters of the pupils of CSHS currently attend the Portadown campus, and this Portadown weighting is likely to increase further following DP 574's closure of the Lurgan campus. It also questionable whether any future Development Proposal for a new build for CSHS in Craigavon would gain support from the majority of its (Portadown-centric) pupils or their parents for whom travel into the town of Portadown would be much quicker and more convenient.

B. Stable Enrolment Trends

Enrolment is stable and rising at CSHS. There is however the potential that numbers wishing to travel from Lurgan to the Portadown campus could fall in future years, especially amongst children from the eastern/southern side of Lurgan, including Waringstown, Aghalee, Lower Ballinderry etc. It is likely that the closure of the Lurgan campus of CSHS will lead to further 'leakage' to schools in Lisburn, Banbridge or Dromore. This could have a negative impact on the enrolment of CSHS but also Lurgan Junior High School (and consequently Lurgan College) as parents opt for more accessible options. This would not render CSHS unsustainable (since there are already around 500 pupils on the Portadown campus alone) but a fall in enrolment is likely.

C. Sound Financial Position

The move to a single site is certain to have a positive impact on the current financial deficit, and is likely to help redress the current accumulated budgetary deficit of over £2m. There is no doubt that running CSHS as a single site school makes sound financial sense, reducing the costs of duplication, preventing the loss of staff time in moving between campuses, and helping to achieve more efficient teacher to pupil ratios.

Nonetheless this is not a zero cost option, and there is considerable expense to be factored in for additional modular classrooms on the Portadown campus in the short and medium term and travel costs for pupils to travel from Lurgan and the surrounding area to and from Portadown. This would require additional bus services which to date have not been costed.

D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal

The ETI (2018) reports a "period of discontinuity" in the leadership of Craigavon Senior High School which has been detrimental to its management:

> Before May 2017, there was a sustained period of discontinuity in leadership, when some key posts were not filled. In May 2017, a new principal was appointed. Subsequently, the senior leadership team was re-structured and emerging curricular and pastoral teams were established. At the time of the inspection, the principal was in the process of leaving to take up a post in another school; interim plans to oversee the strategic leadership of the school were being reviewed by the governors and the employing authority. (ETI, 2018, p.1)

Concerns were also raised at that time that the targets and success criteria in the school's action plans were not specific enough and that there was a lack of robust baseline data to support the staff to make the required improvements. Safeguarding arrangements were also identified as unsatisfactory.

Nonetheless since the appointment of the current principal it is evident that there is now more stability in leadership, and widespread support for the new leadership team's efforts to address the school's challenges. Additionally it is clear that the leadership and management of a split site school is challenging, and that a single site school will offer opportunities for greater collegiality among the staff as well as the pupils.

E. Accessibility

Transport has been raised as a significant concern by many members of the community served by the Lurgan campus of CSHS and has been reflected on p.21-22 of the EA Consultation Report. Currently pupils travel from as far as Lower Ballinderry, Donaghcloney, Moira and Waringstown and travel times are already up to 30-35 minutes to get to Lurgan. The additional bus time to travel across Lurgan and over to Portadown will easily exceed the DE's own indicator of 45 minutes for post-primary transport to school (see Indicator 5.1 above and DE policy[32]). Map 3 (p.7 above) shows the feeder schools to Lurgan Junior High, the main feeder school to CSHS (Lurgan campus) and highlights the fact that this is not simply about the transporting of children from the town of Lurgan to Portadown, but involves children coming from many outlying towns and villages, for whom the closure of the Lurgan campus will necessitate an additional journey time, which is also likely to involve changes of bus *en route*. On these accessibility grounds alone, DP 574 should be rejected.

There are also negative implications for Lurgan residents. While the travel time will be under 45 minutes, there is research evidence that non-selective school parents are more concerned with convenience (school proximity) than whether their child qualified for free school transport to attend a school outside the local community, even if other aspects of the education offer

[32] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/a-policy-for-sustainable-schools.pdf

appeared attractive. As described in section 4, multiple qualitative studies of social class and educational attainment have agreed on the basic point that locality is key to understanding pupils' aspirations, with children from working-class communities less likely to aspire to attend schools beyond their local area. Lurgan has several wards which suffer from socio-economic deprivation and educational underachievement, and concerns have been raised that the necessity of additional travel to Portadown could have a negative impact on attendance rates at CSHS.

Finally, there is concern that Lurgan would be the only large town in NI without non-selective 11-16 controlled provision.

F. Strong Links with the Community

Removing the educational provision at CSHS from Lurgan would significantly hinder the development of strong school/family/community links in Lurgan. With a school based five miles away in Portadown, it would be difficult (though not impossible) to maintain current community links and develop new community links within Lurgan.

Area Planning depends on community support, and it is clear that a large majority of respondents to the EA's two periods of consultation are opposed to the Development Proposal. The EA's consultation report provides a table of the combined responses for the consultation processes in 2019 and 2021.

Figure 4: Reproduction of Table 3 from EA consultation report, p.7

Table 3: Craigavon SHS: Pre-Publication Consultation – Agree / Disagree				
Responses	Agree	Disagree	Blank	Total
Parent	92	317	3	412
Teaching	58	16	1	75
Non-Teaching	12	11		23
Board of Governors	13	3	3	19
Governor	21	1	1	23
Union		6		6
Other	26	83		109
Controlled Schools' Support Council	2			2
Pupil	1			1
Blank Response			1	1
Sub Total	225	437	9	671
Signed Statement LS for LC		807		807
Overall Total	225	1,244	9	1,478

The results of the consultation highlight that 84% (n=1244) of the 1478 respondents disagreed with the Development Proposal. This included over three quarters (77%, n=317) of the parents who responded to the consultation. There was also a consultation process which involved some pupils from the four junior high schools. Numbers were very small so cannot be seen as representative, but it is interesting to note nonetheless that 14 of the 16 pupils in Lurgan Junior High School disagreed with the proposal while large majorities in the other three junior high schools which feed into the Portadown campus of CSHS (Tandragee, Clounagh and Killicomaine Junior High Schools) agreed with the proposal.

Furthermore, significant concerns have been raised by recreational and sporting clubs in Lurgan (e.g. rugby, football, hockey, swimming) that children educated in Portadown are more likely to get involved in sporting and recreational clubs in Portadown with their classmates rather than in Lurgan. For instance, Lurgan Rugby Football and Cricket Club's Peace IV Building Positive Relations project won Project of the Year for all of Northern Ireland in 2020, and concerns have been raised that the future of such valuable peace-building work could be threatened by a drop in participation from Lurgan children as a result of the closure of the CSHS Lurgan campus.

Level of community support in Lurgan?

Option 2 is supported by the leadership and governors of Craigavon Senior High School, the Education Authority, the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) and the leadership and governors of Lurgan College. However, a large majority (84%, n=1244) of consultation respondents disagreed with the proposal and this includes residents' associations, sporting clubs, representatives of the business community, parents and pupils served by the Lurgan campus of CSHS. Examples of clubs and associations which have written to oppose DP 574 include:

- Glenavon Football and Athletic Club
- Lurgan Town Football Club
- Hill Street Football Club
- Lurgan Hockey Club
- Lurgan Rugby Football and Cricket Club

- Mourneview Community Association
- Avenue Road Residents' Committee
- Queen Street Residents Association

- Craigavon Protestant Boys Flute band
- Upper Bann Fusiliers Flute Band
- Portadown District LOL No1

Finally, and crucially, in terms of the three indicators listed in the DE policy on Sustainable Schools the Development Proposal to close the Lurgan campus of CSHS will inevitably reduce the degree and quality of parental involvement among the Protestant community but also the wider community as a result of the greater distances involved (*Indicator 6.1 Degree and quality of parental involvement*).

It is also likely to lead to further 'leakage' from pupils both in Lurgan and its peripheral towns and villages who will prefer to attend schools in Dromore, Banbridge or Lisburn instead *(Indicator 6.2 Number of children in the vicinity attending (and not attending) the school)*.

Thirdly it is difficult to imagine how the Lurgan community will be willing or able to take advantage of the multi-functional used of the Portadown campus following the closure of the Lurgan campus of CSHS (*Indicator 6.5 Multi-functional use of buildings outside formal education, for example, for sport, voluntary and community use.)*

How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?

This option preserves the Dickson Plan in terms of selection/transfer at 14 but in practice removes 14-16 non-selective provision from Lurgan. The Dickson Plan has always ensured 11-16 provision in Lurgan, so while the element of transfer at 14 is preserved by the move to a single site in Portadown, it comes at the price of educational provision itself in Lurgan for the non-selective controlled school population.

The EA *Case for Change* notes that DP 574 "disadvantages Lurgan children requiring to be bussed to Portadown, but it is the only viable option that sustains the Dickson Plan in the format in which it has existed for the last 50 years" (p.11). This is true in the sense that it maintains selection at 14, but it is completely untrue in the sense that the Dickson Plan has never before removed provision for an educational Key Stage (in this case Key Stage 4, non-selective controlled provision) from one of the two main towns in the plan. This represents a clear change to existing provision.

The split site CSHS model has been seen as problematic for many years, but in seeking to maintain existing school structures on a single site, another arguably greater problem is being created of the withdrawal of community support and buy-in for the school, the removal of provision itself within the town of Lurgan, significant accessibility issues for those travelling into Lurgan from outlying towns and villages, and a potential knock-on impact on the wider community in terms of sporting and recreational clubs.

VERDICT: REJECTED

Option 3 – Craigavon SHS, Lurgan Campus – Extension of Lurgan Campus following the relocation of the SRC, Lurgan

		EA Option 3: Extension of Lurgan Campus following relocation of SRC
DE Sustainability Criteria A-F	**A. Quality Educational Experience**	Larger accommodation but condition of buildings is a concern. Still no outdoor pitches.
	B. Stable Enrolment Trends	Stable enrolment trends overall to CSHS. Uncertainty as to whether this solution would significantly improve accommodation and so make the school more attractive for potential pupils.
	C. Sound Financial Position	Deficit is likely to continue to grow as a result of split site even if numbers increase slightly.
	D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal	Previous "significant discontinuity in leadership" raised by ETI, and lack of monitoring/evaluation of pupil progress – now stabilized with appointment of principal.
	E. Accessibility	Accessibility is good for pupils, based on provision in Lurgan
	F. Strong Links with the Community	Local children attending but community links are currently underdeveloped on the Kitchen Hill site as a result of poor facilities. This could be improved if campus was redeveloped.
Additional criteria	***Level of community support in Lurgan?***	This option has not attracted popular support
	Other implications/considerations	
	How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?	Selection at 14, but there is a strong sense that the children attending the Lurgan campus of CSHS are not being well served under the current configuration of the Dickson Plan.
	VERDICT	***REJECTED***

Analysis of Option 3

A. Quality Educational Experience

This option would provide more extensive accommodation on the Kitchen Hill site, but the condition of the buildings is a concern. Even with additional classroom facilities, there would still be no room for outdoor pitches or playing fields. This solution retains the same challenges of having a smaller Lurgan campus and a larger Portadown campus of the same school.

B. Stable Enrolment Trends

Stable enrolment trends overall to CSHS. Uncertainty as to whether this solution would significantly improve accommodation and so make the school more attractive for potential pupils.

C. Sound Financial Position

The deficit is likely to continue to grow as a result of retaining the split site model even if numbers increase slightly. This model doesn't change the inevitable inefficiency associated with a split site school. There would be considerable spend required to upgrade the accommodation but the end result would still be an unsatisfactory building with no outdoor pitches on site. This would represent a poor investment of public money.

D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal

Previous "significant discontinuity in leadership" raised by ETI, and lack of monitoring/evaluation of pupil progress – now stabilized with appointment of principal.

E. Accessibility

Accessibility is good for pupils, based on provision in Lurgan.

F. Strong Links with the Community

Local children attending but community links are currently underdeveloped on the Kitchen Hill site as a result of poor facilities. This could be improved if the campus was redeveloped and made more attractive and welcoming to the community. There is certainly potential for linkages with the community to be developed.

Level of community support in Lurgan?

This option has attracted no popular support possibly because of the realisation that the site remains very small (1.4 ha) and does not provide adequately for the needs of CSHS.

How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?

Selection at 14, but there is a strong sense that the children attending the Lurgan campus of CSHS are not being well served under the current configuration of the Dickson Plan. This is unlikely to change with this option which retains the unsatisfactory split site provision which to date has also proved challenging to manage.

VERDICT: REJECTED

Option 4: Lurgan Junior HS operating as an 11-16 school with the option to transfer to grammar provision at 14.

		EA Option 4: Lurgan JHS operating as a 11-16 school with the option to transfer to grammar provision at 14
DE Sustainability Criteria A-F	**A. Quality Educational Experience**	With potential for 140 pupils to stay on at JHS, there is the potential for a wide curricular offer (more vocational options etc.) and plans to collaborate with other Lurgan schools. Advantage of non-transfer for pupils with SEN, ACEs etc.
	B. Stable Enrolment Trends	Currently Lurgan JHS has admissions number of 750. With 2x140 additional pupils, this would be very stable and sustainable. Admissions numbers would have to be capped at 140 to allow continued transfer of 120 pupils to Lurgan College each year, thus removing any perceived threat to the grammar school provision in the town.
	C. Sound Financial Position	Lurgan JHS is currently in sound financial position. With an additional 280 pupils in years 11-12, this is not likely to change.
	D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal	Lurgan JHS has effective leadership. New principal has experience as curricular VP in highly successful 11-16 non-selective controlled school. Governors of Lurgan JHS support this option.
	E. Accessibility	Lurgan children and children from east/southeast of Lurgan would continue to be educated in Lurgan
	F. Strong Links with the Community	Much greater potential for strong school/family/community links given location of JHS and proximity to Lurgan Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership area.
Additional criteria	***Level of community support in Lurgan?***	Very popular option with local community served by the school, but currently strongly opposed by Lurgan College who see it as a threat to the Dickson Plan. Enhanced potential for the 11-16 school to engage with its local community in Lurgan to help raise aspiration, bring local parents into school etc.
	Other implications/considerations	This would require a new Development Proposal which could take a further 18 months, and could lead to objections. Maintains selective system. Children would still be required to leave Lurgan at 16 to go to FE etc.
	How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?	Arguably this option preserves/fixes the Dickson Plan in terms of selection/transfer at 14, with some pupils transferring to Lurgan College and others entering senior school at JHS.
	VERDICT	***Best medium/long-term and most feasible solution which honours the spirit of the Dickson Plan for Lurgan children***

Analysis of Option 4

A. Quality Educational Experience

With potential for 140 pupils to stay on at JHS, there is the potential for a wide curricular offer (more vocational options etc.) and plans to collaborate with other Lurgan schools. It should be recognised that a year group of 140 is more than adequate and larger than many other post-primary schools (including Lurgan College). The current principal of Lurgan JHS has experience of developing vocational curricular provision in 11-16 through his previous role as VP of a successful 11-16 controlled school (Markethill HS). Curricular provision would therefore be quite distinct from the more academic curriculum offered at Lurgan College.

It has been suggested that the selection out of children at 14 to attend Lurgan College will have a detrimental impact of those left behind, however the reality is that those children (who are more likely to have special educational needs and come from disadvantaged family and community backgrounds) are more likely to benefit from the continuity of relationships built up over the preceding three years (years 8-10). This removes the challenge and (often) the anxiety of transition for such children, and allows them to maintain and further develop their academic and vocational development into Key Stage 4 with the same teachers.

B. Stable Enrolment Trends

Currently Lurgan JHS has admissions number of 750. With 2x140 additional pupils, this would be very stable. For this model to work, the admissions number to years 11 and 12 would have to be capped at 140, thus allowing Lurgan College to continue to select 120 pupils and ensure its continued viability. This option must not be seen as a threat to the continuity of Lurgan College, a successful and respected grammar school in the town. Indeed, Lurgan Junior High has acknowledged that this cap on their Key Stage 4 enrolment would be necessary and welcome.

C. Sound Financial Position

Lurgan JHS is currently in sound financial position. With additional 280 pupils, this is not likely to change.

D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal

Lurgan JHS has effective leadership. New principal has experience as curricular VP in highly successful 11-16 non-selective controlled school, and has experience of introducing and managing a wide range of vocational courses and Prince's Trust qualifications. The leadership and governors of Lurgan Junior High support this option.

E. Accessibility

Lurgan children and children from east of Lurgan would continue to be educated in Lurgan.

F. Strong Links with the Community

Much greater potential for strong school/family/community links given location of JHS and location in proximity to Lurgan Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership area.

Level of community support in Lurgan?

Very popular option with the local community, but opposed by Lurgan College who see it as a threat to the Dickson Plan. See below.

Other implications/considerations

It must be acknowledged that the rejection of the current Development Proposal would mean the development of a new proposal which could take a further 18 months, and could lead to objections. Some might argue (especially those in favour of Option 5 below) that this option maintains a selective system which disadvantages those children from already disadvantaged backgrounds. It also contrasts with recent development in the Catholic maintained sector in Lurgan, where St Ronan's represents a move away from separate provision in separate schools.

It must be noted too that the creation of a 11-16 non-selective school would still require children to leave Lurgan at 16, unless the 11-16 offer were to be further developed in the future to include post 16 provision.

How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?

This option preserves the spirit of the Dickson Plan in terms of selection/transfer at 14, with some pupils transferring to Lurgan College and others entering senior school at JHS. While the leadership and governors of Lurgan College see the 11-16 option as a threat to the Dickson Plan, this perceived "threat" would be removed by the Key Stage 4 cap in numbers. Indeed, the continuance of steady enrolment to the Junior High School should help guarantee a steady stream of transfers to Lurgan College.

Responses to EA rejection of Option 4

The table below sets out the "disadvantages" to Option 4 as set out by the EA in their Pre-Publication Consultation[33] (p.21-22) with our analysis and counter-arguments, having re-examined the situation.

	EA "disadvantages" to Option 4 (11-16 school on JHS site)	Responses / counter arguments
1	The closure of Lurgan Junior HS to establish a new 11-16 school.	This would not mean the closure of Lurgan JHS rather a DP to extend/ change the nature of a successful 11-14 school to a 11-16 school. There is no reason why the main features of the successful 11-14 school could not be retained in the 11-16 school (e.g. junior school prefects etc.).
2	Detrimental impact on curricular provision and staffing at Craigavon SHS, as the school would experience a reduction in 174 students.	With c.500 pupils (250 per year group – larger than most post-primary KS4 cohorts) Craigavon SHS would still be able to offer a very wide range of courses on its Portadown campus.
3	Impact on the sustainability of Craigavon SHS as a 14-16 senior high school operating with approximately 460 students.	Craigavon SHS would remain sustainable with c.500 pupils – larger than many local post-primary schools.

[33] https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/DP%20574%20Craigavon%20Senior%20HS%20-%20Consultation%20Document%20-%203%20December%202020.pdf

4	Staffing, and time to plan and implement curriculum provision to meet the needs of students in GCSE course provision and delivery – Key Stage 4, as Lurgan Junior HS is currently a Key Stage 3 school.	A DP would be required to change provision at Lurgan JHS so there would be time to plan and recruit for more staff with GCSE experience. Many current JHS staff have experience of teaching/examining GCSE. The principal of Lurgan JHS is a former vice-principal of a successful 11-16 controlled non-selective school.
5	New build accommodation to include general classrooms, specialist and ancillary accommodation and site works would cost approximately £11m with a timescale of a minimum 5-7 years.	Temporary modular classroom provision could be facilitated relatively quickly. The delay in building additional accommodation is no more than in building the single site new build for Craigavon SHS, and could be quicker since the build would be smaller.
6	The need to have in place interim arrangements for the school until new accommodation is in place.	Temporary modular classroom provision could be facilitated relatively quickly.
7	The disparity between Lurgan Junior HS and the three other Junior HSs.	The other three JHSs all feed directly into the Portadown campus only. The Lurgan situation is quite distinct and can be resolved discretely. There is no suggestion from the other 3 junior high schools that they would be impacted by the situation in Lurgan or that they are dissatisfied with their current 11-14 status.
8	Potential that other Junior HSs would seek to be 11-16 schools and Senior HSs would seek to be 11-19 schools thereby moving away from the Dickson Plan.	The other three JHSs all feed directly into the Portadown campus only. The Lurgan situation is quite distinct and can be resolved discretely. There is no popular support among the other JHSs to transform to 11-16 schools.

VERDICT: Best medium/long-term and most feasible solution which honours the spirit of the Dickson Plan for Lurgan children

Option 5: (new) – 11-18 all-ability school (grammar + secondary)

		Option 5 (new) – 11-18 all-ability school (grammar + secondary)
DE Sustainability Criteria A-F	**A. Quality Educational Experience**	Potential for EA all-ability post-primary 11-18 school (mirroring St Ronan's), with up to 1500 pupils. Wide curricular offer. State of the art facilities. Future proof in terms of population trends in Lurgan. Could include a grammar stream.
	B. Stable Enrolment Trends	With up to 1500 pupils, enrolment would be high and future proof i.e. even if numbers fell, the school would remain viable.
	C. Sound Financial Position	A large school is likely to be financially viable.
	D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal	Unknown. New school would require new leadership, but it is likely that such a large school would attract strong field of candidates, including the serving school leaders of the JHS and Lurgan College.
	E. Accessibility	Lurgan children would continue to be educated in Lurgan, and could stay in the same school 11-18
	F. Strong Links with the Community	Excellent potential for strong school/family/community links.
Additional criteria	***Level of community support in Lurgan?***	This option has limited local support (despite the example of St Ronan's) with strong affiliation to the Dickson Plan model of selection at 14, and strong support for Lurgan College.
	Other implications/considerations	This would provide the most equitable education system for the controlled sector in Lurgan. It is future-proof, sustainable, and offers the greatest potential for curricular choice and financial viability, but would be v costly, slow to deliver and has limited support locally.
	How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?	This would remove Lurgan from the Dickson Plan in terms of transfer at 14, would retain the idea of no selection at 11. However, it is possible to create streamed classes after year 10.
	VERDICT	***REJECTED: Most future-proof option (in terms of demographics) but expensive, and likely to attract significant opposition.***

Analysis of Option 5

A. Quality Educational Experience

This option would effectively mean a merger of Lurgan Junior High, Craigavon SHS (Lurgan Campus) and Lurgan College to create a large post-primary 11-18 school (mirroring St Ronan's), with up to 1500 pupils. This could include a grammar school and streaming, thus preserving a grammar band option, which many in the community value. Such a large school could offer a very wide range of courses and qualification routes, including academic and vocational, easily satisfying the requirements of the Entitlement Framework. If capital

investment is secured (as it has been for St Ronan's) this would provide state of the art facilities for all children in Lurgan, and would remove any perceived disparity of provision between the maintained and controlled sectors. In terms of the potential for future population trends, this option offers by far the greatest security in terms of "future proofing" high quality controlled sector educational provision in Lurgan for a generation to come. This option is free from academic selection at 11 and 14 (success in which has been proven to be strongly linked to social background), provides greatest opportunities for social mobility and is the most socially equitable option.

B. Stable Enrolment Trends

With up to 1500 pupils, enrolment would be high and future proof i.e. even if numbers fell, the school would remain viable. This is an important consideration for the minority Protestant population in Lurgan and removes the threat of sustainability currently facing the Lurgan campus of Craigavon Senior High. If the community wishes to preserve a grammar band option within the 11-18 school, it also provides greater security for that, compared to the current model which has Lurgan College with under 500 pupils.

C. Sound Financial Position

A large school is likely to be financially viable, although there would inevitably be a major capital investment to create the new school.

D. Strong Leadership and Management by Boards of Governor and Principal

Unknown. A new school would require new leadership, but it is likely that such a large school would attract a very strong field of candidates, including the serving school leaders of the JHS and Lurgan College.

E. Accessibility

Lurgan children would continue to be educated in Lurgan, and could stay in the same school 11-18 without any need to transfer at 14 or 16.

F. Strong Links with the Community

Excellent potential for a single controlled school to develop strong school/family/community links in the town of Lurgan and beyond.

Level of community support in Lurgan?

This option has limited local support (despite the recent example of £30m funding to provide a new build for St Ronan's). There remains strong affiliation to the Dickson Plan model of selection at 14, and strong support for Lurgan College.

Other implications/considerations

This would provide the most equitable education system for the controlled sector in Lurgan. It is future-proof, sustainable, and offers the greatest potential for curricular choice and financial viability, but would be very costly, slow to deliver and (for the moment) has limited support locally.

How does the provision impact on the Dickson Plan?

This would remove Lurgan from the Dickson Plan in terms of transfer at 14, though would retain the idea of no selection at 11. However, it is possible to create streamed classes after year 10 through the implementation of a selective grammar band (as other 11-18 schools have done).

VERDICT: REJECTED - Most future-proof option (in terms of demographics) but expensive, and likely to attract significant opposition.

Summary/Conclusions

It is our contention that DP 574 should be rejected by the Minister on account of very strong community objection to the proposal (84% of respondents to the consultation disagreed with this proposal) but primarily in terms of the failure of DP 574 to meet key indicators in the Department's own sustainability criteria 5 *Accessibility* and criteria 6 *Strong Links with the Community.*

Criteria 5: Accessibility

- We believe that the distance to school and the time required for pupils to travel by school bus to Portadown are not 'reasonable' for pupils travelling from Lurgan and especially its periphery including Lower Ballinderry, Waringstown, Aghalee and Donaghcloney.
- Implementation of DP 574 will result in the failure to meet the following DE indicator:
    - Indicator 5.1 Home to school transport travel times of less than 30 minutes for primary pupils (i.e. 1 hour per day in total) and 45 minutes for post-primary pupils (i.e. 1.5 hours per day in total).

Criteria 6: Strong Links with the Community

- We believe that DP 574 will adversely affect the development of "positive links and relationships with parents and the local community"
- Implementation of DP 574 will result in the failure to meet the following DE indicators:
    - 6.1 Degree and quality of parental involvement (schools will be asked to provide evidence on this).
    - 6.2 Number of children in the vicinity attending (and not attending) the school.
    - 6.5 Multi-functional use of buildings outside formal education, for example, for sport, voluntary and community use.

We would urge the Minister to reject DP 574 and believe that the advantages of the following two options have not been fully or objectively explored:

- EA Option 4: Lurgan JHS operating as a 11-16 school with the option to transfer to grammar provision at 14
- Option 5 (new) – 11-18 all-ability school (grammar + secondary)

However, having examined the evidence and considered all of the options and analysis presented in this report, the position of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is a strong preference for the following 'Lurgan solution':

- Option 4: Lurgan JHS operating as a 11-16 school with the option to transfer to grammar provision at 14.

Appendix - Engagement

Members of ABC Council Area Planning (Education) Working Group

Alderman Stephen Moutray

Councillor Mark Baxter

Councillor Catherine Nelson

Councillor Liam Mackle

Alderman Kenneth Twyble

Councillor Louise McKinstry

Councillor Eamon McNeill

Councillor Declan McAlinden

Councillor Peter Lavery

Councillor Eoin Tennyson

Councillor Paul Berry

Principals

Ms Ruth Harkness, Principal, Craigavon Senior High School

Mr David Mehaffey, former Principal, Craigavon Senior High School

Mr Trevor Robinson, Principal, Lurgan College

Mr James McCoy, Principal, Lurgan Junior High School

Other elected representatives

Mr Doug Beattie, MLA

Ms Carla Lockhart, MP

Education Authority

Michael McConkey

Sinead McCartan

Community Consultation - 12th May 2021 at 6.00pm

Nicola McIlwaine	Emmanuel Church & Vice Chair Lurgan Junior High School
Megan Collins	Aspire NI

Tom McKay	Local Resident, School Governor of Craigavon SHS & Waringstown PS
Jonathan Mercer	Mourneview & Grey Estates Community Association
Raymond Acheson	Lurgan Football, Rugby and Cricket Clubs
Norman Wilkinson	Queen St Residents Association
Philip McKinley	Lurgan Town Football Club
Stephen Heasley	Emmanuel Church Schools & Youth Worker
Laura Wylie	Links Counselling
Robert Blake	Avenue Road Community Association
Chris Leech	Emmanuel Church
Dr Catherine Hanratty	Local resident and Lurgan Masters Swim Club

Lurgan Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership - 13th May 2021 at 7.00pm

Ms. L. Henderson	Education Authority (EA)
Ms. A. Logue	Department for Communities (DfC)
Mr. J Cunningham (VC)	Southern Regional College (SRC)
Ms. C. Regan	Southern Regional College (SRC)
Mr. J. Mercer	Mourneview & Grey Estates Community Association
Mr. M Tipping (C)	Mourneview & Grey Estates Community Association
Mr. A. Clifford	Sport in the Community (ABC)
Mr. G McAleenan	Sustainable Communities (ABC)
Ms. F. McNally	Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
Ms. A. Doran	Lurgan Women's Group
Ms. S. Taylor	Promoting Wellbeing (SHSCT)
Cllr. K. Haughian	North Lurgan Community Association

Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

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