

Dear Ms Tee

Consultation into proposals for the closure of Burdiehouse, Drumbrae, Fort and Royston Primary Schools

I refer to the consultation by the City of Edinburgh Council in relation to the above which is due to close on 16th October 2009.

I am writing to you to express my deep concern about the proposed closure of all four schools. As an elected representative, covering all of Edinburgh (and the rest of the Lothian's) I have been approached by parents of all four schools who are unhappy with the proposals. Infact, I have yet to meet a parent or any individual who has any satisfaction or support for the proposed closure.

My reasons for being opposed to the closures are as follows :

1. Number of school children in Edinburgh

The Council suggests that the number of school children in Edinburgh has dropped dramatically over the past ten years or so. However, what the Council does not appear to realise is that we are currently at the adere. Over the next ten years the number of primary school aged children in Edinburgh increase substantially. This will take us back up to where we were before. If the Council gets rid of schools at this stage then it would be unable to cope when the population increases again.

2. Cost of future new schools

When numbers increase again the Council will have to procure land and build new schools, as they are proposing to sell off three of the sites. What work has the Council done to reassess the cost of doing this? It seems to me that while there maybe potential short term savings it could be an enormous long term cost.

3. Short term savings

The Council has outlined what it believes to be short term saving. However, comments by parents have cast serious doubts on the Councils figures. For example projected savings in staff costs seem well wide of the mark. In addition, there will be substantial costs in heating and maintaining empty buildings. On top of that, if the Council sells off the sites in the current market will they get anywhere close to market value?

4. Scottish Government Class Size Policy

Has the Council done any analysis as to the effect on class sizes in surrounding schools? The schools that are closing seem to be in line with class size targets.

5. Educational impact on children

What work has the Council done in relation to this? Children in surrounding schools will face increased class sizes which could have a negative impact on their education. For the schools that are being closed, I understand there is a significant level of additional support needs. By disrupting their education their needs could have a negative result.

6. Wishes of parents

It seems to me the parents of the school children are strongly against the proposals. The Council surely has a duty to take their wishes, as Council tax payers, into account. How many parents have indicated to the Council that they support the closure programme?

In summary I believe this could have a negative impact on the education of our children, it could have negative financial consequences for the city and stores up capacity problems for the long term.

Yours sincerely