

1. I would like to make a statement at the outset of this meeting that all children are welcome at Trinity, however both Trinity and Fort parents are strongly opposed to this proposal. We already have many children from Fort at Trinity and happily accepted new children from Bonnington when this sector was hit with school closures **only last year**.

Our objection is **not** to children coming to Trinity from Fort, it is to 100 children being forced to move school as a short-term solution to the council's budget problems.

2. Right at the start of this evening I would like to establish what improvements you are proposing to make at Trinity to ensure that the educational needs of the children are maintained or even improved. Can you tell me (in some detail) what specific measures and building changes will be introduced and also where current space within the building will be lost or reduced?

3. Why haven't the Council kept their promise to match the consultation requirements of the new Schools Consultation Scotland Bill "as closely as the current legislation allows"?

4. Why is this proposal not damaging to Trinity and Fort children's education if it:

- Achieves savings of £145,000 on teachers' salaries = **less teachers**
- Increases class sizes to 39 P1, 33 P2, 37 P3 = **overcrowded classes**
- Reduces facilities = **science room, IT suite, support for learning, library**
- Pressurises space on other facilities = **39 in gym hall for PE, school assemblies, dining room etc**

5. How can this be cost effective and a permanent solution if:

- Trinity has only 17 spaces (456-439)
- Victoria has only 29 spaces
- Total 46 spaces

Population growth is 5-20% by 2013/2018, and Council forecast is need for 150 spaces from Waterfront development (June document), which is the fastest growing in Edinburgh.

How will you handle both schools being full in just a few years and how can you argue you are planning for anything but the short-term?

6. Your consultation document refers to keeping Fort because you anticipate it will have to be reopened in the future. How are you going to reopen Fort as a school in a few years' time? Will 100 children be moved back from Trinity?
Or are you going to build a new school in the Waterfront?
7. Why are you attacking the most vulnerable members of our society? Fort is a Positive Action Area school with the highest free school meal entitlement in Edinburgh? With properly funded support, they are achieving over 10% better than other socio-economic schools. Fort children will go from small classes to classes of 25-39. Trinity children will go from classes of c20-28 to 25-39.
8. At a time when you should be increasing transitional funding to Fort children for a disruptive change, you are planning to reduce Positive Action Area funding for Fort children after only 1 year. Why is this not being maintained for the duration of their schooling, as their support needs do not reduce, but increase in more overcrowded classes? You have a moral obligation to maintain this until the anticipated improvements in attainment are reached?
9. With Fiona Hyslop's announcement of a statutory limit on class sizes of 25 for P1, how will Trinity cope without additional classrooms? Do you intend to put Portakabins into a playground, which you already recognise is too small?
10. Why won't you request an independent HMIE report into educational benefits and drawbacks? Why haven't the pupils been consulted as recommended by HMIE and the childrens' commissioner?
11. Why don't you give proper consideration to Fort's alternative proposal, which gives capital receipts, revenue savings and avoids the destruction of two community schools and allows some spare capacity for future growth?
12. Are you aware of the Scottish Govt's own research (the Class Sizes Working Group) confirms that for lower-attaining children it is vital that they have smaller classes than 20, or their literacy falls by a whole year?
13. What would happen to Fort Breakfast Club and the After School Clubs at Fort, Trinity and Victoria?

14. You say that Trinity had occupancy of 443 ten years ago. But that was 443 pupils who wanted to attend Trinity, not 340 who chose to and 99 Fort children who are being forced to. With that level of occupancy Trinity was undoubtedly over-crowded.

Since then, things have moved on and Trinity's attainment has increased and the benefits of smaller class sizes have been recognised and targeted at both national and local level.

15. Will the SNP councillor (if present) be voting against this current proposal as it goes against the recently announced legislation on P1 class sizes?

16. Among the duties of a local councillor are three fundamental responsibilities.

- 1 Check on the effectiveness of the council in delivering services.
- 2 Act as a representative of his/her constituents.
- 3 Decide on policy

Given that it is has been made pretty clear that this proposal is all about money rather than the quality of the kids' education and that the constituents have made it very clear they oppose this move, can I ask the Lib-Dem councillor's view on this proposal?

17. According to your own strategy document your priority is to drive down class sizes (*not teacher to pupil ratios*). According to the Scottish Government they have "provided the resources to allow local government to make year-on-year progress in delivering smaller class sizes". This is obviously an important target for education in Scotland, why are you now driving up class sizes in this area?

18. The council have said they cannot continue to prop-up half empty schools and yet they have been presented with a proposal to address the current surplus capacity in this area. By your own figures the 46 spare spaces available between Trinity and Victoria will soon be taken up. Will you undertake to review the alternative proposal as a means to retain the capacity required in this area in the near future?

19. I am a parent with a child at Trinity primary from out-of-catchment. This proposal, if accepted, will disrupt the education of my family deny me my parental choice. Something you place great importance on when it suits you.

22. Are you aware of the Scottish Government's research on class sizes and attainment (Class Sizes Working Group July 2007)? They demonstrated

1. That there was a clear effect in class size difference on academic attainment in P1,
2. That small classes work best for literacy for children who are most in need academically, with a year's greater literacy if a class size is reduced from 25-15, and
3. For low achieving children, class size must be reduced to below 20 if they are to benefit from the reduction.

So why are you increasing class sizes?

23. You say that population trends differ across the city and cannot be easily predicted. Are you aware of your own Council report on Strategic Management of Falling School Rolls in October 2005, which confirmed that the largest developments in the whole City expected are in the Waterfront and Western Harbour, with 30% being family style and 25% affordable housing?

This is the biggest growth area in the entire City, but you are only leaving 46 spare places.

24. Let's highlight how the council have conducted this consultation ...

- They've changed the capacity of Trinity and Victoria without informing the school or parent council.
- They've moved Trinity's head to Fort, sending a message to parents that this is a fait accompli.
- They've apparently measured up Fort for its new offices over the summer.
- They've sent out selective and misleading facts in their Outlook newspaper to parents across all of Edinburgh at tax-payers expense.
- They've failed to fulfil their promise to match the requirements of the Government's new bill on schools consultation. This means there has been no consultation with children, affected teachers or prospective parents.

If they can't be trusted to consult fairly and not treat the process with contempt, how can they be trusted to deliver the benefits they claim in this proposal?

23. HMIe have recently stated that every child and young person has the right to have their views taken seriously whenever decisions are being made about them. Why have you failed to engage with the children affected by this proposal?

24. Has the Council followed the Scottish Govt guidance on determining capacities - Para 18 of the Circular states they will need to consider specialist areas for the teaching of specific subjects? These include:

Science labs

Sports facilities

Craft workshops

Teaching kitchens

ICT rooms

Music rooms and studios

Art rooms

Libraries

TV, video and multimedia rooms

Drama and studios plus other non-classroom areas such as general purpose rooms

[Need to have a summing up for parents – WHAT DO I DO NEXT

KEEP CONTACTING YOUR COUNCILLORS, PARTICULARLY SNP AND LIB DEM – STEVE CARDOWNIE AND ELAINE MORRIS IN FORTH WARD, ROB MUNN AND MARJORIE THOMAS IN LEITH]