

# Future Secondary School Provision for Kirkliston and Queensferry Areas

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## QUESTION & ANSWER

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Queensferry High School does not have capacity to accommodate new housing developments in Queensferry.

We want you to give us your views on what the solution should be.

For more information and to give us your views visit:

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/kirkliston-queensferry](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/kirkliston-queensferry)

The sections that follow answer some of the questions we think you may have about the potential solutions we have suggested.

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## QUEENSFERRY HIGH SCHOOL

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### **When will Queensferry High School exceed its capacity?**

We think that Queensferry High School could exceed its capacity of 1,200 pupils in 2025.

### **If Queensferry High School exceeds its capacity will my child still get a place there in the future?**

Yes. If you live in the Queensferry High School catchment area then your child will continue to be offered a place in that school. The capacity of the school is notional. Many schools regularly and consistently operate beyond their notional capacity. This is because the number of pupils a school can accommodate is not only determined by the size of a building but also by the number and type of spaces available, the way those spaces are timetabled, the courses offered, the number of staff and the way pupils are spread across year groups. We will work with the school management team to monitor accommodation pressures and deliver temporary accommodation if that becomes necessary before a permanent solution is completed.

### **Is there time to extend Queensferry High School or build a new school for Kirkliston pupils before Queensferry reaches its capacity?**

Probably not. We think that Queensferry High School may exceed its capacity in 2025. We estimate that an extension of Queensferry High School would not be complete until 2027 and so some temporary accommodation may be required for up to 2 years. However, many schools regularly and consistently operate beyond their notional capacity, and so we would work with the school management team to monitor accommodation pressures and deliver temporary accommodation only when it is most needed.

A new school either in West Edinburgh or Kirkliston would not open until at least 2028 or beyond. As with the extension solution, we would work with the school management team to monitor accommodation pressures and deliver temporary accommodation only when it is most needed. However, it is possible that temporary accommodation would be required for at least 5 years and possibly significantly longer. This is because the impact of a new school would be a gradual reduction in the Queensferry High School roll.

## **Where would temporary accommodation go?**

It may not be possible to deliver the long-term solution for Queensferry High School before it exceeds its capacity. If there were a requirement for temporary accommodation at Queensferry High School we think that the best location for it would be either the grassy area at the front of the school near the main entrance or the tarmac area at the rear of the school.

Temporary classrooms require significant planning to install. They are not a quickly delivered solution as they require many of the same permissions that a permanent building would. So that we are prepared if temporary classrooms are required, we will work with the school to develop a plan showing how and when they would be installed.

In addition to classroom space, plans for temporary accommodation would include breakout space and social spaces.

## **Why wasn't Queensferry High School built larger?**

There are three reasons why Queensferry High School was not built with more capacity:

- 1) Queensferry High School was designed in 2016 to accommodate pupils from Queensferry, including those from new housing. However, its design did not include for pupils from Kirkliston. This is because when the funding for the new school was approved by Council in [November 2016](#), it was on the basis that a catchment change would be required so that pupils from Kirkliston would go to a different secondary school.
- 2) In 2016 the Council was of the view that 1,200 pupils was the best size for a secondary school. The Council view was that this number was very efficient in terms of the way classes could be timetabled and staffed. A school of 1,200 was seen as providing the best balance of educational choice and inclusion.
- 3) The funding available to replace Queensferry High School's building was from the Scottish Government and was based on replacing only the existing capacity (i.e. 1,000 pupils). The way the funding formulas worked meant that a school with capacity for 1,200 pupils was better value for money than either a 1,000 or 1,400 capacity school.

## **What has changed between 2016 and now?**

The Council's School Roll [Projections in 2017](#) were similar to current projections, showing that the new Queensferry High School building would exceed its capacity if Kirkliston pupils did not go to a different secondary school.

In late 2017 the Council consulted with the Kirkliston community on three alternative secondary school options for Kirkliston:

- 1) A new secondary school in West Edinburgh at the International Business Gateway (IBG) site;
- 2) A new secondary school in Winchburgh;
- 3) A new secondary school at Ratho Station.

No clear preference was established and issues were raised with all three options – mostly around transport and safe routes to the proposed school sites.

Since 2017 the new secondary school at Winchburgh has progressed without Kirkliston's involvement. The site for a new secondary school at Ratho Station is no longer available. These are no longer options.

A new school in West Edinburgh was originally due to open in August 2023 on the IBG site between Edinburgh airport and the Royal Bank of Scotland headquarters at Gogarburn. However, the new school was dependent on the landowner's development of the IBG site which did not take place. A change in the proposals for the IBG site and the proposed development of other areas of West Edinburgh through the Council's CityPlan 2030 mean that a new West Edinburgh High School now appears more likely. However, the timescales for it being built remain unknown.

In 2018 a new school in Kirkliston was proposed as an alternative option for pupils from Kirkliston. The problem has been finding a site for a new secondary school in or around Kirkliston as most of the land is privately owned. The other issue has been that the release of 'greenfield' sites around Kirkliston has not been supported by Planning policy. We have waited for the release of the Council's CityPlan 2030 to see if it would change Planning Policy to support the development of a new school in Kirkliston. However, the policy has not changed.

The Council's view that 1,200 pupils is the optimum size for a secondary school has changed. Recent experience in some of our own schools and schools in other areas of Scotland shows that larger schools can offer many benefits. Seven of our schools have more than 1,200 pupils and three have more than 1,400 pupils which means that we have much better experience now of managing schools with more pupils. This has been helped by Head Teachers who have come from other areas of Scotland with experience of much larger schools.

## **SCHOOL SIZE & ROLL PROJECTIONS**

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The solutions suggested by City of Edinburgh Council would result in quite different sizes of school. An extended Queensferry High School would need to accommodate up to 1,800 pupils. A dedicated secondary school for Kikrliston may accommodate up to 600 pupils. A new school in West Edinburgh High School could have more than 2,000 pupils.

### **What is the best size for a secondary school?**

City of Edinburgh Council think that a school should provide a high-quality learning and teaching experience for all its pupils. The elements needed to achieve this in any school, irrespective of its size, are:

- the quality and flexibility of the learning and teaching environment;
- the quality of leadership available in the school;
- the level of parental engagement forthcoming for individual pupils; and
- the school's overall ethos and culture.

In 2021 James Gillespie's High School had Edinburgh's highest school roll (1,524 pupils). As of 2021 there were 15 schools in Scotland with a roll exceeding 1,500 pupils\* and 4 exceeding 1,800 pupils. The largest schools in Scotland were Larbert High School in Falkirk (2,021 pupils) and Holyrood Secondary School in Glasgow (2,210 pupils).

In 2021 Edinburgh had three secondary schools with rolls of less than 600 pupils. These were Castlebrae, Drummond and Wester Hailes High Schools. In Scotland 85 secondary schools (24% of all public secondary schools) had a roll of less than 600 pupils with most of the smallest being in the Highlands, Shetland and Orkney. The smallest secondary school in Scotland was Stronsay Junior High School with a roll of 12 pupils.

The average roll in a public secondary school in Scotland in 2021 was 860 pupils. The average capacity of a secondary school was 1,030 pupils.

While City of Edinburgh Council believe that the size of a school will not necessarily determine its success, it does think that larger schools provide more potential for learners to thrive.

A larger school roll requires more staff. More staff provides greater opportunities for leadership roles, and in terms of professional learning, greater collaboration and sharing of practice.

With more teaching staff available, with a wider range of skills, and with larger numbers of learners, there is greater likelihood that a larger school will be able to offer a wider range of courses and wider achievement opportunities. They also provide the opportunity to create truly personalised and flexible pathways for learners through maximising partnership working and vocational pathways.

With greater numbers, smaller classes can also be created in targeted areas, and good practice, such as mentoring and peer collaboration, can be maximized through the development of a stronger shared ethos. There can also be greater opportunities for staff to develop the skills required to meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs.

\*see [Scottish Government School Level Summary Statistics](#)

### **Are the Council's School Roll Projections reliable?**

This depends on how they are used and interpreted.

A projection is a snapshot from a point in time. They are based on rolling forward known historic data such as catchment populations, patterns of attendance and birth trends. We also add in estimates of the pupils we think will be generated by known housing developments.

A single projection cannot take account of changes in trends such as that within the birth rate because it is simply projecting forward what has happened in the past. Projections are also susceptible to future changes in patterns of attendance which may be driven by a high number of factors. For these reasons we update our projections annually to ensure they are produced based on the best available information.

As is the case with any population or financial market projection, the Council's school roll projections can only provide a guide to future school pressures.

They, along with capacity figures, are an early warning system which are designed to prompt closer investigation of a potential accommodation issue. We use school roll projections as an informative tool but do not solely rely on School Roll Projections when assessing future demand.

You can find our latest projections and more information about our methodology here:

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/school-places/school-roll-projections/1>

### **What impact could the new secondary schools at Winchburgh have on projections for Queensferry High School?**

We cannot be sure what impact the new secondary schools at Winchburgh will have on projections for Queensferry High School.

Winchburgh in West Lothian is a short distance from Kirkliston. Winchburgh will experience significant numbers of new homes being built over the next ten years. To meet this growing demand, West Lothian Council have built three new schools: a replacement Holy Family Primary School with initial capacity for 231 pupils – including a 64 place nursery; a non-denominational secondary school – Winchburgh Academy – with initial capacity for 660 pupils; and a denominational secondary school – Sinclair Academy – with initial capacity for 660 pupils.

Pupils from Kirkliston and Queensferry will be able to make out-of-catchment placing requests to the new Winchburgh Academy or Sinclair Academy if they wish to.

Parents from St Margaret's RC Primary School have requested a separate consultation be undertaken to consider whether pupils from Kirkliston and Queensferry who want to go to a Catholic school should have the new Sinclair Academy in Winchburgh as their catchment school. Currently the denominational secondary school for Kirkliston and Queensferry is St Augustine's RC High School in Edinburgh. If this proposal were to progress it may result in a small reduction in demand for S1 places at Queensferry High School.

### **EXTENDING QUEENSFERRY HIGH SCHOOL**

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Queensferry High School does not have capacity to accommodate new housing developments in Queensferry. One solution could be to extend Queensferry High School.

### **How much would Queensferry High School need to be extended?**

We think that if pupils from Kirkliston were to continue to attend Queensferry High School then we would need to extend the school from its existing 1,200 pupil capacity to 1,800 pupil capacity.

### **Is 1,800 pupils too many for a secondary school?**

You can read about our views on school size in the [section above](#).

### **What happens if more housing is built?**

The Council's view that the capacity of Queensferry High School needs to be 1,800 pupils is based on accommodating the existing housing in Queensferry, all of the Scotstoun development and the planned developments at Builyeon Road, Ferrymuir Gate and Springfield. It also includes the existing Kirkliston area.

Current Planning Policy means that it will be difficult for a housing developer to gain permission to build more houses around Kirkliston or Queensferry. If that should change in the future and more housing is built then we would most likely need a new secondary school in the area. It is unlikely that we would seek to extend Queensferry High School again.

### **How could Queensferry High School be extended?**

We can extend Queensferry High School by building additional accommodation and refurbishing some of the existing spaces.

We think we would need to refurbish some class spaces and social spaces such as the dining room and assembly spaces. These would need to be bigger to accommodate higher numbers of pupils. Extending these existing spaces could be disruptive and we would need to make sure that other spaces were available while this work was taking place. For this reason, we would plan to build new accommodation first.

We have estimated that a school with capacity for 1,800 pupils would need around 5,000-6,000m<sup>2</sup> of additional floor space. The existing school has approximately 14,000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space. This means that the new accommodation could be more than a third of the size of the existing school.

The safety of pupils and staff during any construction work would be our priority. We also want to limit any disruption. For these reasons we think the best way of creating additional accommodation may be to construct a new building next to the existing school. This would mean that the school could continue to operate as normal while construction took place.

Our initial thoughts are that a new four storey building could be constructed in-front of the school on the existing school car park. We have considered a site at the back of the school but think this may be too small.

### **Would planning permission be required for an extension of Queensferry High School?**

Yes. Securing planning permission would be necessary before we could build an extension of Queensferry High School. This may not be straightforward. The Council's Planning Department will be key in determining where an extension is built and what it might look like.

If people think that extending Queensferry High School is the right solution, we will work with the community to develop a design for the extension. Through the planning process people would have an opportunity to voice their support or opposition for the design.

### **What facilities would a new extension provide?**

A new building could provide both school and community space.

An extension of Queensferry High School would principally provide the classroom, social and support spaces the school needs to meet a growing population. However, we also want to consider what opportunities new accommodation at Queensferry High School might offer to improve other services in Queensferry. Could Queensferry High School become a community campus, offering a range of services? For example, could Queensferry's library, the community centre, the Police or even the NHS benefit from being part of the plans? Could it offer a cultural venue or more sports facilities?

The Council needs to reduce its running costs and its carbon emissions. This means reducing the number of older, less efficient buildings we have in our estate. We would like to do this and improve service delivery and a new building could provide that opportunity. We would welcome your views on this as you consider whether extending Queensferry High School is the right solution.

### **What measures would be put in place to deal with extra traffic?**

One of the concerns raised through our early engagement with community representatives has been drop-off and pick-up spaces for school buses coming from Kirkliston. If people think that extending Queensferry High School is the best solution, then we will work with the community to consider options to accommodate or create dedicated spaces for buses in or around the school site.

As part of the Local Development Plan the Council is already considering opportunities to improve walking, wheeling and cycling within Queensferry. A consultation run in [June/July 2022](#) asked people what improvements could be made to existing infrastructure and what new infrastructure might be needed to allow people to travel in a safe and sustainable way around Queensferry. This consultation has closed now, but we will feed back any ideas or comments – particularly those relating to the impact extending Queensferry High School might have. Give us your views here.

### **How much would an extension of Queensferry High School cost?**

Until we know more about the design of an extension proposal we cannot say with any certainty what the cost would be. However, a very high level estimate would be between £55m and £70m.

### **How would an extension of Queensferry High School be funded?**

An extension of Queensferry High School would be funded almost entirely from the Council's own capital budget. Some developer's contributions will be available but rising prices mean that their value is likely to be significantly less.

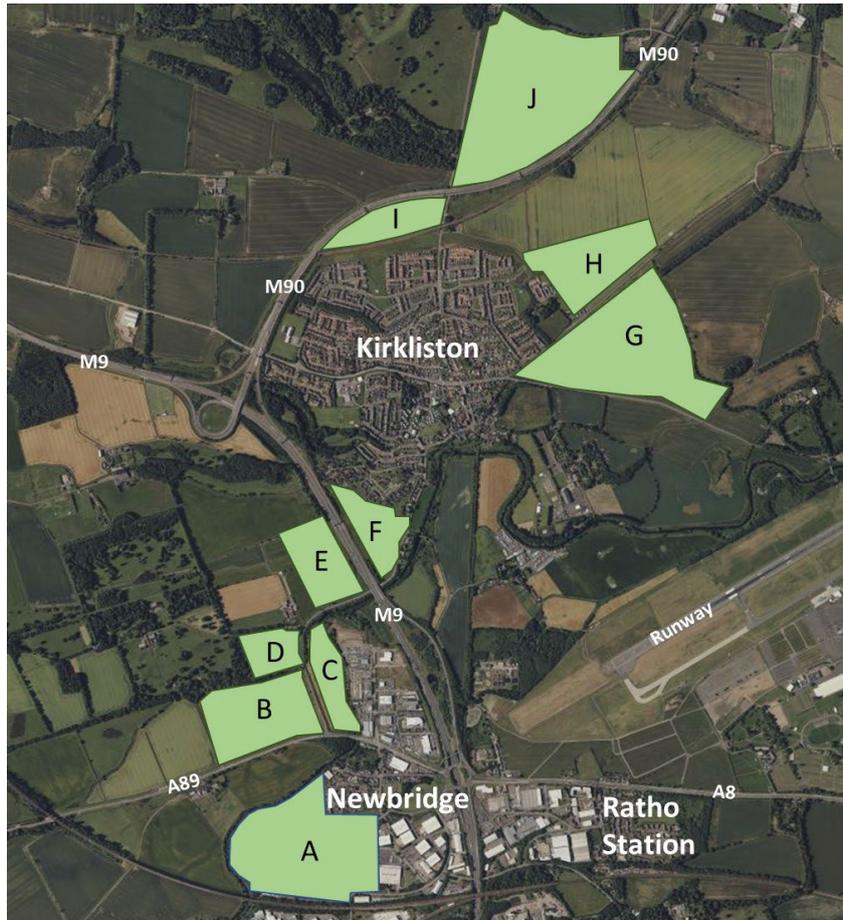
## **A NEW KIRKLISTON HIGH SCHOOL**

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Queensferry High School does not have capacity to accommodate new housing developments in Queensferry. One solution could be to change Queensferry High School's catchment area so that pupils from the Kirkliston area attend a new secondary school in Kirkliston.

### **Where would a new Kirkliston High School be built?**

The image below shows the sites we are investigating around Kirkliston:



Most of the land around Kirkliston is privately owned and the Council would need to negotiate to purchase the land or seek a Compulsory Purchase Order.

The location of a new school would also need discussions with the Council's Planning department. All of the potential sites identified are considered to be 'greenfield' sites. Building a school on a greenfield site would be contrary to current and emerging planning policy. This means that if the Council build a school on one of these sites then developers may argue that they should be allowed to build houses on greenfield sites as well.

Some of the sites will also have other issues that will make them challenging to develop. For example, some of the sites are on a flood plain which is likely to make the cost to develop the site too high. When we have more information about the availability of the sites we will undertake an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each site and share this with stakeholders from the Kirkliston community.

## **Would a new school in Kirkliston mean more housing in Kirkliston?**

A new school does not make more housing in Kirkliston a necessity or a requirement. However, as it would be built on a 'greenfield' site, it may mean that housing developers have a stronger case for arguing that they should be allowed to build houses on 'greenfield' sites as well. Landowners may also try and make permission to build houses part of the condition of the sale of the land to the Council.

## **What would be the capacity of a new secondary school in Kirkliston?**

A new secondary school located in Kirkliston would be built with capacity for 600 pupils. We would build it so that in the future it could be extended to accommodate more pupils if that becomes necessary. However, based on the number of pupils currently in the Kirkliston area we estimate that it would have a peak roll of around 500-550 secondary school pupils.

It may be possible to identify other primary schools that could benefit from attending a new Kirkliston High School. If people in Kirkliston think that a new secondary school in Kirkliston would be the right solution then the Council would consult with neighbouring communities before setting the new school's catchment area.

## **What would a new secondary school in Kirkliston be like?**

A new secondary school in Kirkliston would be similar in size to the new [Castlebrae High School](#) which has been designed to accommodate 700 pupils. Like Castlebrae, a new secondary school in Kirkliston would be designed so that it can be extended. This would allow us to accommodate any future housing developments we don't yet know about.

The way a new secondary school in Kirkliston would look and the facilities it would offer would be the subject of a design and planning process involving the Kirkliston community. Everyone would have the opportunity to have their say.

We also want to consider what opportunities a new secondary school in Kirkliston might offer to improve other services in and around Kirkliston. The Council needs to reduce its running costs and its carbon emissions. This means reducing the number of older, less efficient buildings we have in our estate. We would like to do this and improve service delivery and a new school building could provide that opportunity.

For example, could Kirkliston library, the Community Centre, the Leisure Centre, the Police or even the NHS benefit from being part of the plans? Could it offer a cultural venue or improved sports facilities? Give us your views here.

### **Would my child have to transfer to a new school in Kirkliston?**

No. If the solution taken forward is a new school and your child is already attending Queensferry High School when the new school opens, then you will not have to transfer if you don't want to.

When the new secondary school opened it would become the catchment secondary school for anyone living in the Kirkliston Primary School catchment area at that time. This means that P7 pupils from Kirkliston Primary School would attend the new secondary school when they reached S1.

### **Would there be a sibling guarantee?**

A sibling guarantee would mean that a child with an older sibling already in Queensferry High School could continue to that school even if they were in the catchment area for a new school when they reached S1.

The Council does not want to be in a position where siblings have no choice but to attend different schools. For this reason, in most cases involving changes to catchment areas the Council does offer a sibling guarantee.

However, it is too early to confirm whether a sibling a guarantee would be offered if a new Kirkliston High School were to open. We will need to assess the impact a sibling guarantee would have on both Queensferry High School and the new school based on numbers and circumstances closer to the time. Too many pupils continuing to attend Queensferry High School from Kirkliston may make establishing the new school more difficult and may prolong the requirement for temporary accommodation at Queensferry High School.

The Council would review the position closer to the time when a new school was opening.

### **How much would a new Kirkliston High School cost?**

Excluding purchasing a site, a very high level estimate would be £75m.

## How would a new Kirkliston High School be funded?

A new Kirkliston High School would be funded almost entirely from the Council's own capital budget. Some developer's contributions will be available but rising prices mean that their value is likely to be significantly less.

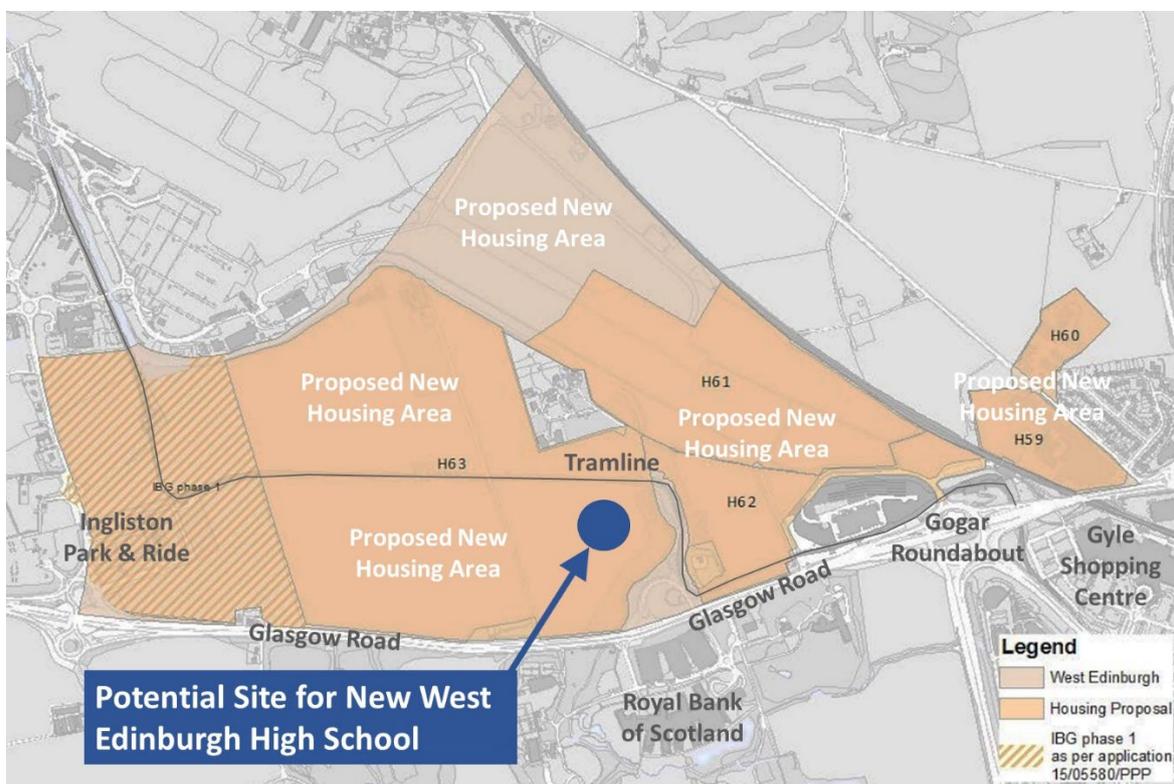
## A NEW WEST EDINBURGH HIGH SCHOOL

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Queensferry High School does not have capacity to accommodate new housing developments in Queensferry. One solution could be to change Queensferry High School's catchment area so that pupils from the Kirkliston area attend a new secondary school in West Edinburgh.

## Where would a new West Edinburgh High School be built?

The exact site for a new West Edinburgh High School is still to be determined. It is likely that it would be built in the first phases of the large '[West Town](#)' development. However, this development does not yet have approval and the site of a secondary school is yet to be agreed. The CityPlan 2030 development plan on which the masterplan for the West Town development should be based indicates approximately where the school may be located:



What size would a new secondary school in West Edinburgh be?

The size of the new school will depend on whether Kirkliston is part of its catchment area and also if Maybury Primary School is part of its catchment area. The Council is currently asking people in the Craigmount, Maybury and Cammo areas of the city if they think the new Maybury Primary School should feed to a new West Edinburgh High School or whether Craigmount High School should be extended.

If Kirkliston and Maybury were to be aligned with a new school in West Edinburgh then it could eventually have capacity for 2,200 pupils.

If only Kirkliston were to be aligned with a new school in West Edinburgh then it could have capacity for up to 1,800 pupils.

The new developments in the west of Edinburgh will take many years to complete and populate. Accordingly, we would anticipate that Kirkliston would be the biggest cohort in the new West Edinburgh High School for many years.

### **What would a new secondary school in West Edinburgh be like?**

A new school in West Edinburgh will be a community hub in line with the Council's 20-minute city initiative. In addition to the facilities that most secondary schools provide it will offer a range of other services. This could include, for example: health services such as a medical centre, public library services, Council Customer Services, cultural venues, wellbeing facilities for the wider community or public social spaces. As the plans for the wider West of Edinburgh development progress we will assess likely service demand and work with partners to realise opportunities to work closer together. We will also engage with the growing and existing West Edinburgh communities to get their views on the facilities a new community hub should offer. You can give us your initial views here.

The latest plans for the replacement [Liberton High School](#) are the most recent example of what plans for a new secondary school in West Edinburgh could be like.

### **Would transport links between Kirkliston and a West Edinburgh High School be improved?**

The CityPlan 2030 proposes new active travel routes between Maybury and Ratho Station. These improvements would be delivered as part of the ongoing development of the West Edinburgh area. If people think that pupils from

Kirkliston attending a West Edinburgh High School is a good idea then we will seek to deliver this in the same timescales as the school.

There are currently no plans in place to improve transport links between Ratho Station and Kirkliston. However, if people think that pupils from Kirkliston attending a West Edinburgh High School is a good idea then we will work with the Community to look at what improvements could be made.

### **Would my child have to transfer to a new school in West Edinburgh?**

No. If the solution taken forward is a new school and your child is already attending Queensferry High School when the new school opens, then you will not have to transfer if you don't want to.

When the new secondary school opened it would become the catchment secondary school for anyone living in the Kirkliston Primary School catchment area at that time. This means that P7 pupils from Kirkliston Primary School would attend the new secondary school when they reached S1.

### **Would there be a sibling guarantee?**

A sibling guarantee would mean that a child with an older sibling already in Queensferry High School could continue to that school even if they were in the catchment area for a new school when they reached S1.

The Council does not want to be in a position where siblings have no choice but to attend different schools. For this reason, in most cases involving changes to catchment areas the Council does offer a sibling guarantee.

However, it is too early to confirm whether a sibling guarantee would be offered if a new West Edinburgh High School were to open. We will need to assess the impact a sibling guarantee would have on both Queensferry High School and the new West Edinburgh High school based on numbers and circumstances closer to the time. Too many pupils continuing to attend Queensferry High School from Kirkliston may make establishing the new school more difficult and may prolong the requirement for temporary accommodation at Queensferry High School.

The Council would review the position closer to the time when a new school was opening.

### **How much would a new West Edinburgh High School cost?**

A new West Edinburgh High School will be required regardless of whether pupils from Kirkliston attend it. This means that the cost is for the additional capacity required for Kirkliston pupils rather than the whole school. A very high-level estimate for the additional cost to accommodate Kirkliston pupils in a new West Edinburgh High School is £40m-£55m.

### **How would a new West Edinburgh High School be funded?**

A new West Edinburgh High School will be needed for all the new houses being built in West Edinburgh. This means that regardless of the decisions made about Kirkliston, a new West Edinburgh High School will be built. If Kirkliston does not feed to this new school, then it will be funded from developer's contributions.

If Kirkliston were to feed to the new West Edinburgh School then the costs would be split proportionally between the developers in West Edinburgh and the Council according to the number of pupils estimated to be generated.