

Proposal to relocate St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School to a new site on Captains Road

Affecting St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation paper sets out the rationale for, and implications of, relocating St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School to a new site on Captains Road. The paper also sets out the consultation process and the means and timescales for making representations.

Contents

- 1.2 The consultation paper is divided into the following sections:

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Appendices

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Have Your Say

- 1.3 Your views will help inform the final decision about whether the replacement St Catherine's RC Primary School should be built on the site on Captains Road.
- 1.4 Comments on the proposals should be submitted by **no later than 5pm on Tuesday, 31st October 2023**.
- 1.5 Further information and an online questionnaire for feedback are available at: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/newstcatherines

- 1.6 A copy of the response questionnaire is provided in [Appendix 1](#). The response questionnaire can also be submitted by email or post to the addresses set out in [Section 9](#) of this paper.
- 1.4 A public meeting will be held as follows, further details of which are provided in [Section 9](#).

Venue	Date	Time
St Catherine's RC Primary School	Thursday, 12 October 2023	18:30 – 20:30

2 Proposal Summary

- A new 11 class primary school would be established on the South East Locality Office site on Captain's Road (see map in [Appendix 3](#));
- The new school would be designed so that it can be extended to 14 classes in the future;
- All staff and pupils from St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School would relocate to the new school building on its completion;
- The new St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School would include a 64 place nursery;
- Feasibility work would be undertaken to consider whether the school would reuse part or all of the existing South East Locality Office or be an entirely new building with new office spaces incorporated;
- The design of the new building would be informed by ongoing community engagement;
- The Council will consider alternative uses of the existing St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School site and make recommendations as part of the Outcomes of the Consultation Report to the Council meeting in January 2023.

3 Background and Context

- 3.1 Investigations in the summer of 2018 considering how best to upgrade St Catherine's Primary School concluded that the building needed to be replaced rather than upgraded.
- 3.2 A budget of £12.802m was secured for St Catherine's replacement in the Council's Capital Investment Programme in February 2019. This was increased to £20.3m in April 2023 to reflect updated cost estimates.
- 3.3 The school's condition makes it a priority for replacement and since securing funding in 2019, repairs have continued to be undertaken where necessary, to allow the continued, safe, operation of the school.
- 3.4 On [5 September 2023 the Education, Children and Families Committee](#) approved that a consultation be undertaken regarding the proposed relocation of St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School to a new site.
- 3.5 St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School currently has 7 classes. It is projected to be operating at capacity for the foreseeable future and significant new housing

developments will mean that at some point the school will exceed its capacity. Accordingly, the replacement school is planned to provide an 11-class primary school with the ability to be extended to 14 classrooms in the future.

Site Considerations

- 3.6 Several factors were considered during the assessment of potential site options for the replacement St Catherine's. The outcomes of the 'My Gracemount' engagement in 2018 revealed considerable demand for well-connected easily accessible community facilities. The Council's Net-zero priorities mean that the new school must be energy efficient and sustainable. The Council's commitment to best value by maintaining regard to quality and cost was also an important factor.
- 3.7 On evaluation of available land in the vicinity of the existing site, it was considered that the South East Locality Office and football pitches together offered the best opportunity to relocate the school. The close proximity to other services and functions could provide additional opportunities to co-locate services, develop a community hub, share space, and potentially offer improvements to the public space.
- 3.8 Retaining and reusing the South East Locality Office as part of the new school's accommodation could reduce the carbon footprint of the project. The opportunity to save carbon and reuse spaces in well-designed accommodation that feel like a completely new environment would be assessed as part of the design feasibility process.
- 3.9 Whilst the existing school site was considered, the existing St Catherine's site is 0.6 hectares, smaller than the prescribed size for an 11 class primary school and challenging to fit a larger building. It was also felt that the disruption caused by decanting to a temporary site during demolition of the existing building and construction of the new school would be detrimental to the experience of pupils and staff.
- 3.10 The size of site for any new (or replacement) school is prescribed in the School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) Regulations 1967 and the 1973 and 1979 amendments to those regulations. For a new double stream (or greater) primary school with capacity for a further 64 pupils in the nursery, the total site size should be 1.6 hectares comprising two elements for which the appropriate sizes are defined separately:
 - A main school site on which the actual school buildings are located of not less than 1 hectares (of which 0.2 hectares relates to the nursery); and
 - An area for playing fields of not less than 0.6 hectares.
- 3.11 St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School currently has a 20-place nursery. The Council's commitment to expand free child-care to 1140 hours and provide flexibility in the way that those hours are offered means that any new school would offer 64 places.
- 3.12 The new school site identified on Captain's Road is 1.2 hectares (see [Appendix 3](#)) which is greater than the minimum specified requirement for a main new school site and nursery without provision of play fields. This could provide area for creating community hub space and could include areas that serve other purposes or functions.
- 3.13 The existing pitches behind the Leisure Centre on Captains Road would provide play area for the new school and space for a new pitch.

- 3.14 In addition to its own pitch a new primary school would also be located adjacent to Gracemount High school which has artificial and natural pitches. The proposed site is also near a substantial area of parkland at Birdie house burn and it is anticipated that the new school would benefit significantly from access to these resources.
- 3.15 The new primary school would be located on land owned by Edinburgh Council therefore removing the requirement for any land purchase. Re-locating the school would also free up land for alternative uses. These uses would be developed through engagement with other Council services and the wider community.

4 Roll projections and Analysis

- 4.1 This section considers the historic, current, and projected roll and catchment population data and the accommodation issues and other factors that have resulted in this consultation being undertaken and that have shaped the proposal set out in this paper.

Area Overview

- 4.2 St Catherine's RC Primary School is situated a short distance from Captain's Road, on Gracemount Drive and sits close to Gracemount Leisure Centre, Gracemount Medical Centre and the Councils South East Locality Office. To the North of the school Gracemount Nursery and Gracemount Primary School are located and to the West the playing fields and Gracemount High School can be found. Valley Park Community Centre is also just a short distance away from the area.
- 4.3 Gracemount has many community assets, but they are not physically well-linked. Significant community assets near the school include the Gracemount Community Garden and Libertus Services. Private sector assets include the supermarkets, local businesses and shops.
- 4.4 A number of significant housing proposals are being planned or implemented in the catchment area which will eventually result in the school exceeding capacity.

Capacity and Growth

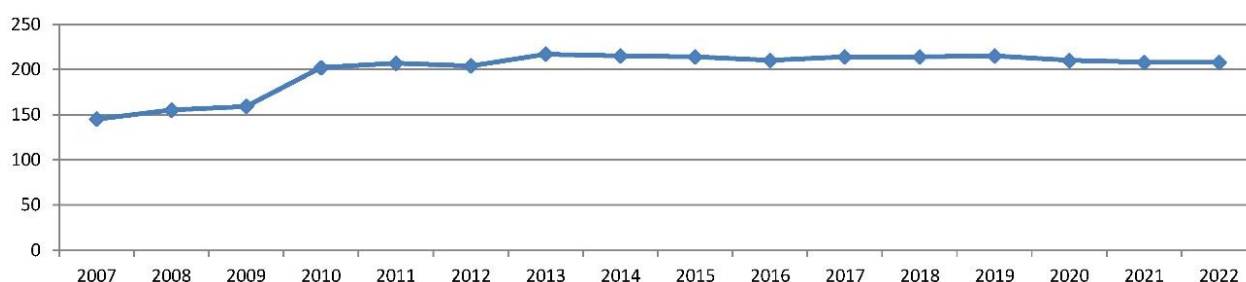
- 4.5 The principal rationale for replacing St Catherine's RC Primary School is its condition. However, there are also capacity pressures in this area of the city that mean expansion of Roman Catholic school provision is required.
- 4.6 Table 1 (below) shows the current capacity and roll data for St Catherine's RC Primary School. However, it should be noted that generic capacity figures do not take account of a school's capacity for team teaching arrangements; a practice which is increasingly commonplace across the Council's primary school estate.

Table 1: St Catherine's RC Capacity, Roll Data for August 2022

Notional Capacity	Roll (as of Sept 2022 census)	Estimated Occupancy Rate
7 Classes (210 Pupils)	7 Classes (208 Pupils)	99%

- 4.7 Table 1 shows that St Catherine's is currently operating within its available notional capacity. Figure 1 (below) shows that the roll has been relatively stable since 2010.

Figure 1: St Catherine's RC Primary School Roll, 2007 to 2022



4.8 As housing developments in the catchment area begin to mature it is anticipated that demand for catchment places will exceed the school's capacity. Demand may be managed by restricting places to baptised Roman Catholic pupils only. Without this control, St Catherine's could exceed its capacity by 2026. Table 2 (below) shows the primary school roll projections for St Catherine's.

Table 2: St Catherine's RC Primary School Roll projections, 2024-2033

School Capacity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
210	209	207	218	220	220	222	223	227	230	223

4.9 Accordingly, it is proposed that the new school be built as an 11-class school with the option of expansion to a double stream school (14 classes) at a future stage.

5 Details of Proposal

5.1 This section considers in more detail the implications and practicalities of implementing the proposal to relocate St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School to a new site on Captain's Road.

Process

5.2 If the proposals in this paper were to be approved and the project progressed, a working group involving Council officers, an appointed design team, the school management and representatives from the Parent Council would be established and meet at regular intervals to ensure the school community is fully informed and engaged throughout the process to design and deliver the new school.

5.3 Staff and service managers from the teams in the South East Locality Office as well as Edinburgh Leisure and other affected service providers would also be engaged in discussions to help shape the design proposals. Community groups would be involved in identifying how the new school could most effectively serve the wider communities.

5.4 Pupil and staff engagement will be a significant element in this engagement process, both in terms of their role in the design of the new building and in identifying any additional support that will be required to facilitate the move to the new school building.

Transport

- 5.5 The design process would also include consideration of traffic and transport implications for the area, travel routes from more distant areas of the catchment and the impact of the design on neighbouring properties.
- 5.6 The proposed new site for St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School is approximately 150 metres from the existing school site. [Appendix 4](#) illustrates the small difference in the travel distance.
- 5.7 The site will be designed and developed to create safe paths of travel along new and existing access routes. The potential to create an access to the new school site from the existing school site will be explored.
- 5.8 The frequent bus services along Captain's Road, mean that public transport routes will be more convenient for the new school. An existing bus stop is located on each side of the road in front of the proposed site. Additional bus services are available 5 minutes walk east on Lasswade road and 10 minutes walk west on Howdenhall road.
- 5.9 The size of the existing school catchment area means that the distances travelled are all within acceptable travel limits. If this proposal is progressed, the Road Safety team will be engaged to ensure that St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School's Green Travel Plan and the Safer Routes analysis is updated to reflect the change.
- 5.10 In summary, the proposal will result in little change to the journey to and from school undertaken by most pupils. The majority of pupils from existing areas of the catchment and in proposed housing developments will be within walking distance of St Catherine's and public transportation will be more easily accessible.

Community Priorities

- 5.11 Key community priorities were identified in consultation with the Gracemount community in the 'My Gracemount' report. Priorities included access to affordable physical activities and connectivity of public space that supports walking and cycling. Playparks, bins and improvement of the public space were also a priority.
- 5.12 The priorities identified in the report can be broadly grouped into eight themes:
 - Affordability / Access to / Awareness of Services
 - Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Youth Services and Opportunities
 - Community Hub
 - Traffic and Parking
 - Public Space
 - Green Space
 - Connectivity
 - Transport
- 5.13 In the development of the St Catherine's RC Primary School project a goal will be to identify how the investment made in this new community asset can address these community priorities and build on the work of the 'My Gracemount' consultation.
- 5.14 It is also recognised that there is demand within the local community for alternative uses of the St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School site to be considered, should it no longer be required to serve as a primary school site. The Council will consider the impact alternative uses of the current site may have on the affordability of

a new school and other Council budgets and make recommendations as part of the Outcomes of the Consultation Report to the Council meeting in January 2024.

6 Educational Benefits of Proposal

- 6.1 Under the proposal St Catherine's RC Primary School would relocate to the Council's South East Locality Office and football pitches site.
- 6.2 St Catherine's RC School is highly regarded for the quality of the service it provides for children and families and the Council believes that a new school building appropriate for a modern curriculum would enhance the learning and teaching environment for all pupils.
- 6.3 The new school building would mean that pupils attending St Catherine's Primary School would have access to indoor and outdoor learning and play facilities which are flexible so that children could work together in large or smaller groups with access to state-of-the-art ICT. Purpose-built physical education facilities would assist in the delivery of a better quality of two hours of PE as required by Scottish Government's Healthy Living Strategy.
- 6.4 The availability of a new, purpose-built facility including a gym hall and playing fields could also advantage the local community. The playing area would present an opportunity for the school to deliver an enhanced sports curriculum and benefit from access to green space.
- 6.5 The expansion of the nursery facility with a relocated St Catherine's RC Primary School would address demand for additional nursery capacity in the area and provide an opportunity for integrated learning across all Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- 6.6 No educational disbenefits have been identified. Challenges will include maintaining the village type school feeling into a new building, however every effort will be made to maintain this.

7 Finance

Capital Funding

- 7.1 The Capital Investment Programme, approved by Finance and Resources Committee in February 2019, included a budget of £12.802m for the replacement school. This was increased to £20.3m in the Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy 2023-33 to reflect updated cost estimates. The school's condition makes it a priority for replacement and since securing funding in 2019, repairs have continued to be undertaken where necessary, to allow the continued, safe, operation of the school.
- 7.2 Estimated capital costs for building a new school are up to £32m. However, this will vary according to the extent to which existing buildings may be incorporated in the design which would also assist in reducing the impact of embodied carbon. Further feasibility work will be required to identify the best value solution and this will be progressed as part of a wider engagement (see [Section 5.2](#))
- 7.3 Should this consultation ultimately lead to a commitment to a new school on the site proposed, a Business Case would be developed for this project. The Business Case would be presented to the appropriate Council Committees once finalised to seek approval for any additional capital funding necessary.

- 7.4 Although the Council can collect financial contributions towards delivering the new school from developers through Section 75 agreements, this will only contribute to the cost of extending the school from 7 to 11 classes. There is a risk both on the timing and achievement of developer contributions which could create a short-term or overall funding pressure.
- 7.5 A market valuation estimate suggests that a capital receipt of circa £1.2 m could be achieved through the sale of the existing St Catherine's Roman Primary School site which could be set against the capital costs of the project. It may ultimately be necessary for this sale to progress to provide funding for a new school. However, it is acknowledged that there is demand within the Gracemount community for alternative uses of the St Catherine's Roman Primary School site to be considered, should it no longer be required to serve as a primary school. The Council will consider these alternatives and the impact they may have on the affordability of a new school and make recommendations as part of the Outcomes of the Consultation Report to the Council meeting in January 2024.

Revenue Funding

- 7.6 The additional revenue costs associated with a new school would be met through current demography funding. While it would be a new building, it would replace an existing establishment; therefore, there is no gain in terms of the number of primary schools across the school estate. Accordingly, there are no additional revenue costs associated with additional management, teaching and non-teaching staff positions which would be required regardless of the new building.
- 7.7 The maintenance burden for the new building is likely to be low in the short to medium term but would increase over time. These costs would be partially offset against the savings made through the disposal of the existing St Catherine's Primary School building. However, the costs of running a significantly larger school with a nursery are greater than St Catherine's Primary School's current running costs.
- 7.8 The additional revenue costs incurred by the new, larger building will be considered in detail as part of the Business Case developed for this project should the proposals in this paper progress.

8 Indicative Construction Timescales

- 8.1 The timescales for the delivery of the new St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School are entirely dependent upon the necessary funding being approved and provided to deliver the project.
- 8.2 Table 3 (below) sets out the indicative construction timescales which would apply based on an assumed date of initiation following conclusion of the consultation and Council approval to progress being granted at the full Council Meeting in January 2024.

Table 3: Indicative Construction Timescales

Conclusion of consultation and approval of Option to be progressed	January 2024
Design Team appointments and Early Engagement	+3 months
Feasibility	+4 months
Design Development to RIBA Stage 2	+3 months
Design Development to RIBA Stage 3 (submit for Planning)	+3 months
Design Development to RIBA Stage 4 and completion of planning	+4 months
Enabling works on existing site	Concurrent
Complete construction contract tender process and award contract	+4 months
Construction Completion	+18 months
Estimated Opening Date	August 2027

9 Consultation Process

9.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, sets out the statutory consultation requirements for:

- The establishment of a new school;
- The relocation of a stage of education;
- Changes to existing admission arrangements (such as catchment change); and
- The closure of a stage of education.

9.2 The prescribed consultees vary for each of the above. Although a closure is not proposed, the requirements for a closure encompass all the necessary consultees and it is this process that will be followed to ensure full compliance with all the requirements of the Act. Accordingly, consultees will be as follows (where relevant):

- The Parent Council of any affected school;
- The parents of the pupils at any affected school;
- The parents of any children expected to attend any affected school within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper;
- The pupils at any affected school (in so far as the education authority considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity);
- The staff (teaching and other) at any affected school;
- Any trade union which appears to the education authority to be representative of the staff (teaching and other) at any affected school;
- The community councils (if any);
- The Roman Catholic Church;
- Any other education authority that the education authority considers relevant;

- Any other users of any affected school that the education authority considers relevant.

- 9.3 The extent of the consultation with pupils at the affected schools and the appropriate means of engaging with those pupils will be discussed in detail with each school's management team.
- 9.4 The consultation period will run for a 6-week period from Monday 11 September 2023 to Tuesday 31 October 2023 and the paper will be made available electronically and in paper format and copies will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Waverley Court, Central Library, Gilmerton Library, South East Locality Office and at the schools affected by the proposals.
- 9.5 One public meeting will be held in respect of the proposals at the venues listed below which will give interested parties a more formal opportunity to express their views. Representatives of the Council will be present at the meetings to outline the proposals, assist discussions and answer questions. A record of each public meeting will be taken by the Council.

Venue	Date	Time
St Catherine's RC Primary School	Thursday, 12 October 2023	18:30 – 20:30

- 9.6 All comments received will be recorded and represented in the final report regarding the outcomes of the consultation, along with the Council's response to those comments. Individual responses will not be provided to submissions made during the consultation.
- 9.7 Further information and an online questionnaire for feedback are available at: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/newstcatherines
- 9.8 A copy of the response questionnaire is provided in [Appendix 1](#). The response questionnaire can also be submitted by email to:

newstcatherines@edinburgh.gov.uk

or posted to the following address:

FAO: N. Thomson-Jack
Strategic Asset Planning (St Catherine's Replacement)
Business Centre 1.6
The City of Edinburgh Council
Council Headquarters
Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 8BG

- 9.9 All responses, whether by letter, e-mail or using the online questionnaire should be received no later than **5pm on Tuesday, 31 October 2023**.
- 9.10 Once the public consultation phase finishes, details of the representations received will be issued to Education Scotland for their consideration of the educational effects of the proposals. Education Scotland will issue a report on their findings which will be included in the final Council report on the consultation.

- 9.11 Following the conclusion of the consultation period and after consideration of the representations received and the views of Education Scotland on the educational benefits of the proposal, a report on the Outcomes of the Consultation will be presented to the Council for consideration. The report will be made publicly available, and notification will be given to those individuals or groups that have made representations during the consultation period. The report will include a summary of written representations received during the consultation period and representations made at the public meeting along with the Council response to representations made and also to any issues raised by Education Scotland.
- 9.12 It is anticipated that the consultation report, setting out recommendations, will be presented to a Meeting of the Council in January 2024. The report will be published three weeks in advance of the Council meeting.

St Catherine's Consultation QR Code



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Please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service at its@edinburgh.gov.uk quoting the unique reference **23-9036A**

Appendix 1 - Response Questionnaire

Proposal to relocate St Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School to a new site on Captains Road

Introduction

Due to the poor condition of St Catherine's RC School, it is necessary to progress a statutory consultation in order to establish a suitable site where a replacement primary school in the area can be delivered. The existing South East Locality Office has been identified as the proposed site. The full details of the proposal are available in the statutory consultation paper which you should read before completing this questionnaire. The statutory consultation paper is available online at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/newstcatherines and copies are available in the affected schools and local libraries.

Why we are consulting?

The Council has a legal obligation to carry out a statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The proposal put forward will have implications for families and we want to hear the views of anyone affected. All comments made during the statutory consultation period will be recorded and represented in a final report anticipated to be considered by Council in January 2023.

This questionnaire should be completed and returned by **no later than 5pm on Tuesday 31st October 2023**. All personal information in the questionnaire is for internal use only and will not be made public however the responses to questions 5 and 6 may be reflected either in whole, or in part, in the report to Council but on an anonymised basis. The questionnaire can be completed online at the following link www.edinburgh.gov.uk/newstcatherines or can be completed in the following pages and returned to the following address:

N. Thomson-Jack
Strategic Asset Planning (St Catherine's Replacement)
Business Centre 1.6
City of Edinburgh Council
Council Headquarters
Waverley Court
Level 1:2, 4 East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Responses can also be made in writing to the address above or by e-mail to the following address newstcatherines@edinburgh.gov.uk

Question 1

What is your name?

Name

Question 2

What is your email address (optional)?

Email

Question 3

What is your postcode?

Postcode

Question 4

What is your main interest in the consultation?

Please select (tick) all items that apply

- Parent/Carer of school child
- Parent/Carer of school child with younger sibling/s
- Parent/Carer of pre-school child
- School staff
- Pupil
- Local resident
- Local organisation
- Other

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, or for other reasons, please explain below.

Question 5

Do you support the proposal as detailed on the statutory consultation paper?

Please select (tick) only one item

Yes

No

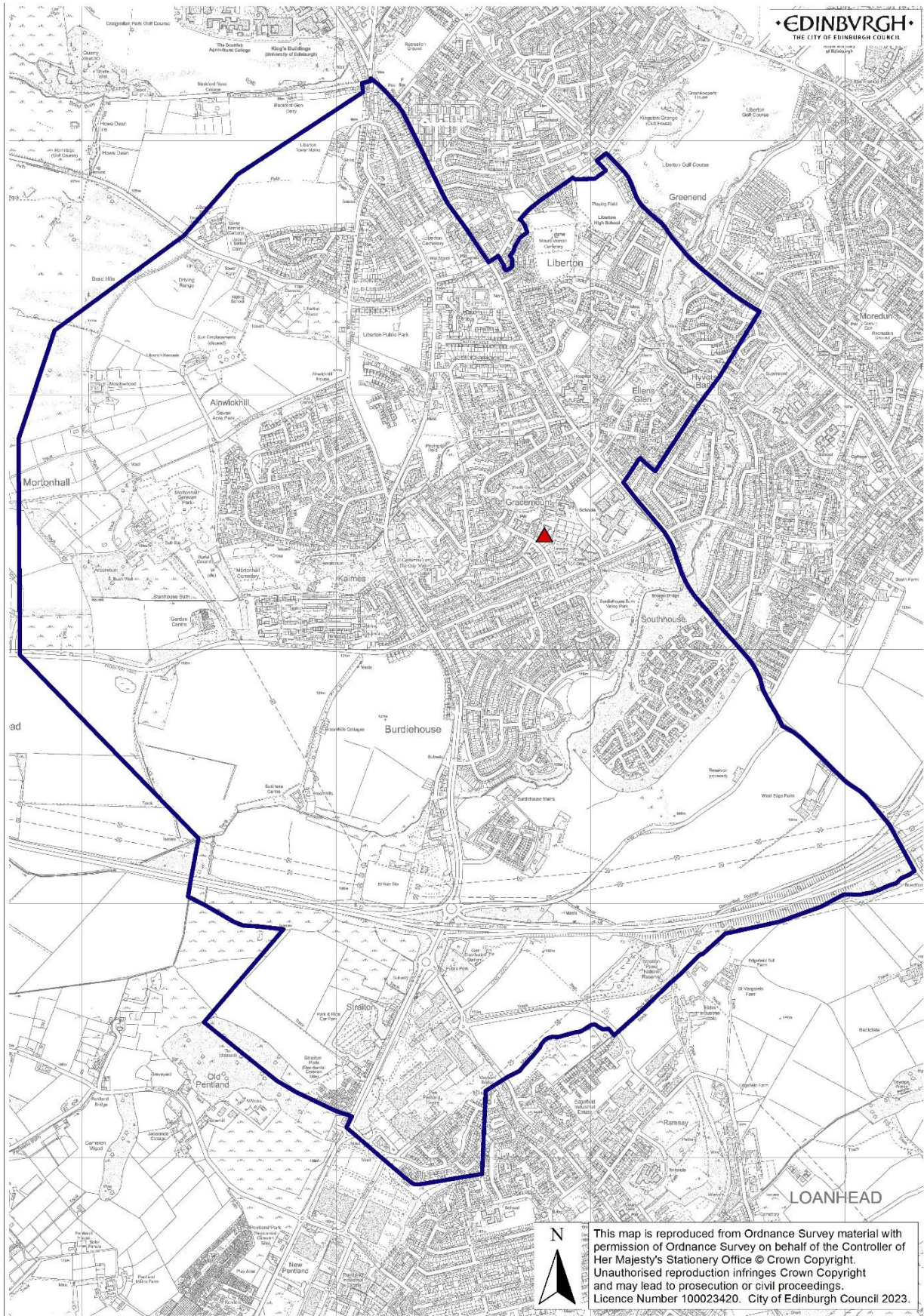
If you do not support the proposal, please give your reasons below:

Question 6

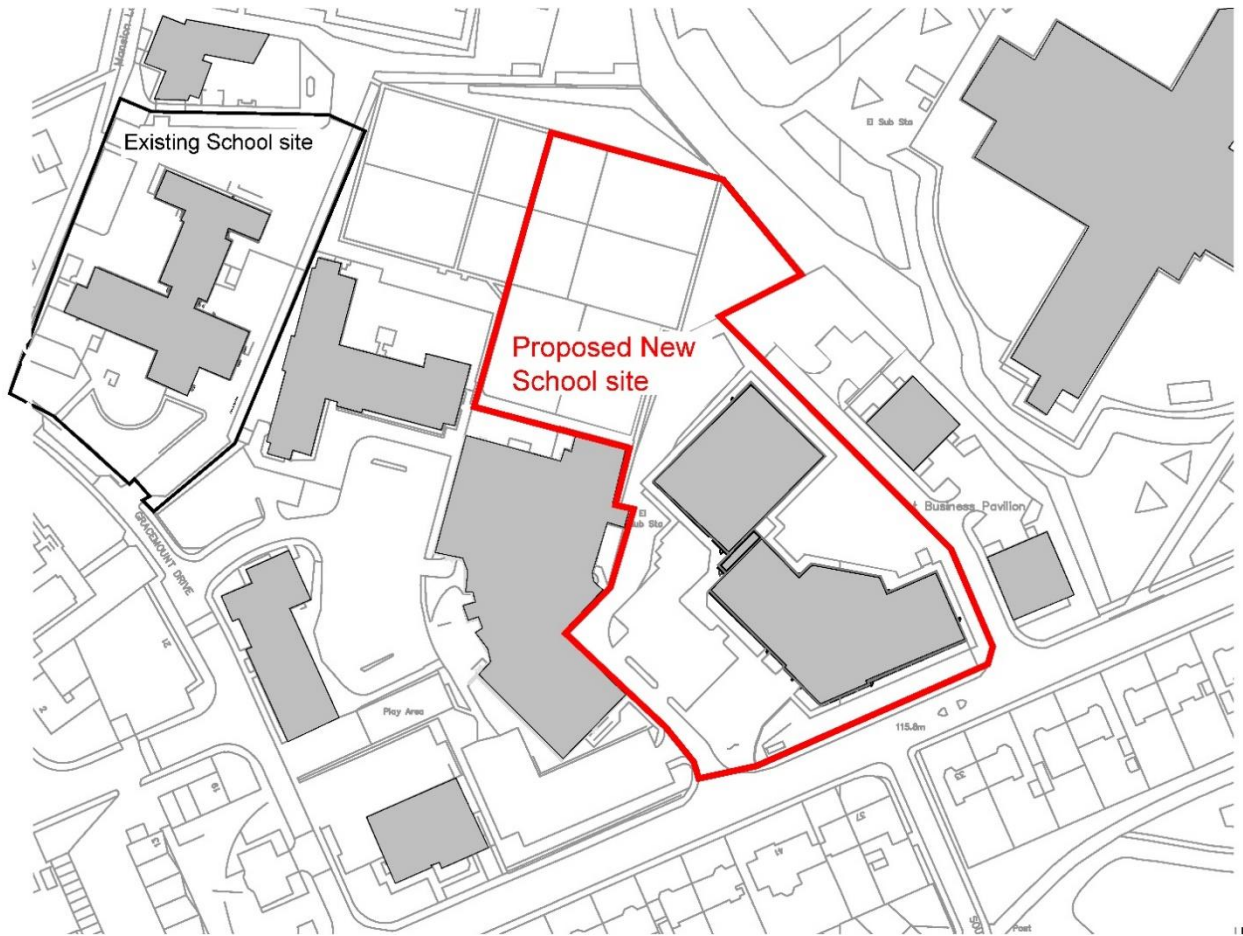
Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Comments or suggestions can also be emailed to newstcatherines@edinburgh.gov.uk

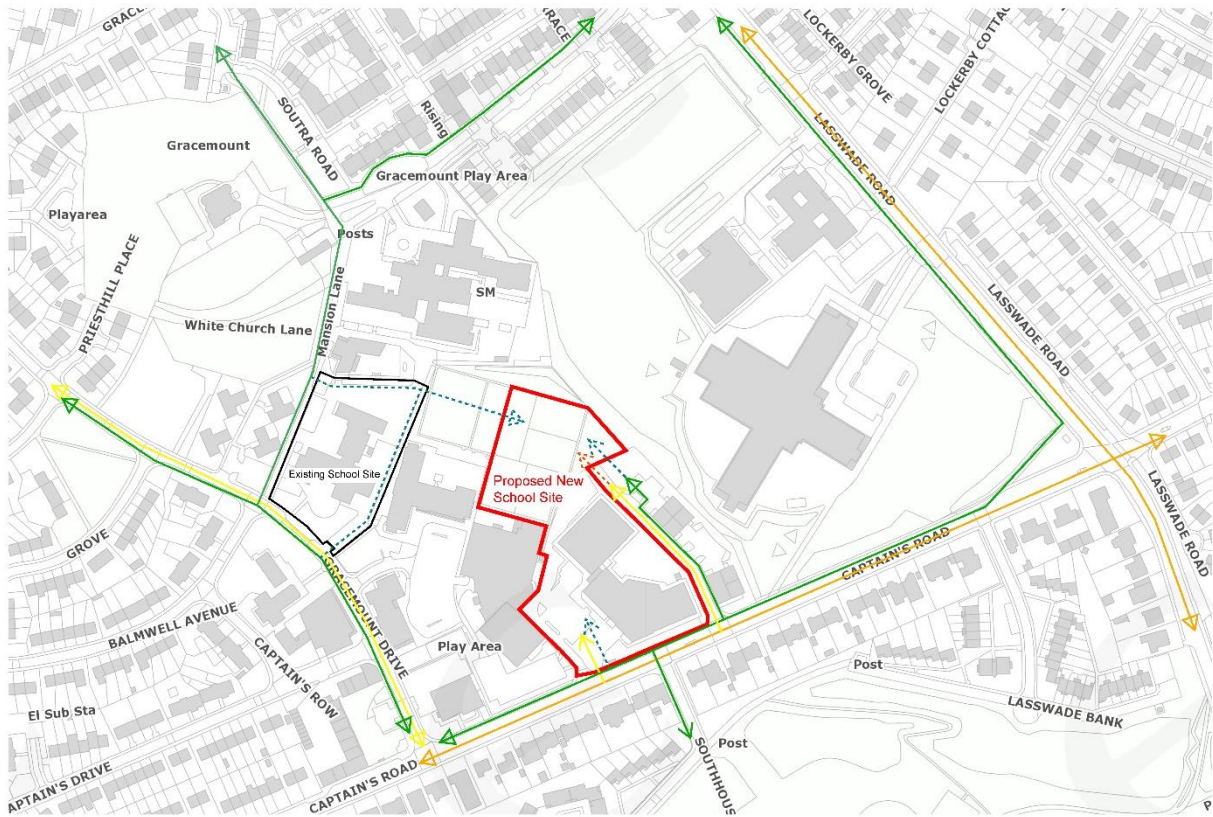
Appendix 2 – St Catherine’s RC Primary School Location and Catchment Map



Appendix 3 – Site Location



Appendix 4 – Travel Routes



- Potential Future Pedestrian Routes
- Existing Pedestrian Routes
- Potential Future Vehicular Routes
- Primary Vehicular Routes
- Secondary Vehicular Routes
- Proposed Primary School Site