



## **Strathaven Primary School Catchment boundaries due to change!**

After nearly 18 months of pushing: the Strathaven Primary School catchment area change finally made its way through the first hurdle, passing the South Lanarkshire Council Executive Committee unopposed on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

This work goes back to autumn 2016 when CLLR Bill Holman and I sat down with senior education officers to point out the ridiculous situation where kids from the new Strathaven West houses (Robertson, Stuart Milne & Cala) were actually going to have to walk passed the front door of Kirkland Park Primary School to attend Wester Overton, their actual catchment primary school.

This catchment decision goes back more than 30 years, when it was felt that anyone living west of Colinhill Road would live well beyond the Strathaven boundary in rural Avondale and would therefore have to be bused to school, which was Wester Overton. While I accept these historic decisions were made based on the needs at that particular time: I'm frustrated that SLC took this long to kick off the process to change the catchment area, which I believe should have started during the planning process.

OK, so what next? A public consultation will begin during summer 2018 and unless there is majority public condemnation of the suggested changes, then we hope to have this passed by January 2019; well in advance of the August-19 primary school registrations. This public consultation will listen to the Strathaven community before making the final changes so this will provide an opportunity for everyone to feed into the democratic process. Anyone will be able to see the proposed plans online or at the Strathaven library. Simply put, SLC officers have drawn a line down EK/Glasgow Road, Barn Street and Townhead Street (basically the A723). Kirkland Park will serve everyone living West of the A723 and Wester Overton will serve those living east of the A723.

I have to admit, that no catchment system is perfect and will certainly not suit everyone. However, I do know that SLC will do everything they can to ensure no one is adversely affected by these changes and we will prioritise placements (as usual) where siblings attend a particular primary school.

This has been a long time coming and I'm delighted to see it finally making its way through the democratic process. I never want to have to deal with the level of rejected placement requests I've had to manage this year. Strathaven is a fantastic small town, where I believe every child has a right to be able to walk (supervised) between their home and primary school.

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