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## **CONSULTATION REPORT**

This Consultation Report has been compiled in response to the recent public consultation on the proposal to create new primary and secondary school zones in the area of the planned new housing development at Countesswells in Aberdeen. The document summarises the responses received on the proposals set out below and Aberdeen City Council's response to the verbal and written comments submitted by interested parties, in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

### **Proposals:**

1. To create a new primary school zone to serve primary education provision in the Countesswells development, with effect from August 2016; and
2. To create a new secondary school zone to serve secondary education provision in the Countesswells development, with effect from August 2016, and to include the zone of Kingswells School within the zone of the new secondary school, with effect from the time of opening of the new school; and
3. To put in place arrangements for interim education provision until a primary school and a secondary school are constructed within the Countesswells development.

## 1. METHODOLOGY

This consultation was conducted in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. All requirements of the legislation have been met.

## 2. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

### 2.1 Public Events

A number of public consultation events were held during the consultation period to discuss the proposals. The table below details the number of attendees at each public meeting:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Recorded Attendees</i>
24 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	7- 8 pm	Bucksburn Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 parents</li><li>• 4 Aberdeen City Council officers</li></ul>
26 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	7- 8 pm	Kingswells School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 14 parents</li><li>• 3 local residents</li><li>• 4 Aberdeen City Council officers</li></ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	7- 8 pm	Hazlehead Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 parents</li><li>• 2 members of school staff</li><li>• 3 Aberdeen City Councillors</li><li>• 1 member of Aberdeen Parent Council Forum</li><li>• 2 Aberdeen City Council officers</li></ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2015	7- 8 pm	Cults Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 14 parents</li><li>• 2 Aberdeen City Councillors</li><li>• 1 member of Aberdeen Parent Council Forum</li><li>• 3 'others'</li><li>• 4 Aberdeen City Council officers</li></ul>

### 2.2 Comments Received

The following written submissions were received:

<i>Format</i>	<i>Number of submissions</i>
E-mail	16
Letters	4
Comment Forms	53

The submissions, anonymised as necessary, are available on the Council's website: <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/countesswells-rezoning/>

## **2.3 Issues Raised**

### **2.3.1 Comments on Proposals 1 and 2 (creation of new school zones)**

With regards to the first two proposals, to make changes to school zones to accommodate the new schools to be built within the Countesswells housing development, respondents to the consultation were generally supportive of these plans. Comments received on these proposals at the public meetings and through written submissions are summarised as follows:

- Several respondents commented that they welcomed the plans to build new schools at Countesswells, and that the proposals for new school zones would help alleviate long term pressures on the capacity of some of the existing schools in the area.
- Some respondents however questioned whether the Countesswells development would proceed as planned, due to the downturn in the oil industry, and whether this would result in the planned new schools not being built. There was concern that this may lead to existing schools in the area being expected to accommodate children at Countesswells permanently, which could create additional pressure on the capacity of those schools.
- One submission focused on the roads infrastructure around the Countesswells development, and the feeling that this is inadequate for the scale of the planned development.
- There were several comments made regarding the difficulties in recruiting teachers in the north east of Scotland, and respondents were concerned that this may make it difficult to recruit staff for the proposed new schools.
- In responding to the proposal to rezone Kingswells School to the new secondary school at Countesswells, some respondents were keen to highlight the current capacity pressures at Kingswells School.
- One resident who lives in an area that is proposed to be rezoned from Cults School and Cults Academy to the new schools in Countesswells, expressed concern that the school zone changes may result in the disconnection of some other local services in Cults which they currently benefit from.
- One respondent expressed concern that families moving into Countesswells may make placing requests for places at Cults School, which could ultimately result in Cults School going over capacity. They suggested that a cap should be introduced for placing requests for Cults School.

- Concerns were expressed about the long term future of Hazlehead Academy following the opening of a new secondary school at Countesswells. It was felt by some respondents that the age and condition of the building at Hazlehead Academy would make it less popular amongst local families, who may choose to request places for their children at the new secondary school at Countesswells instead. This could in time, it was felt, result in a fall in the school roll at Hazlehead, which could adversely affect its long term viability.

### 2.3.2 Comments on Proposal 3 (interim arrangements)

There was significant opposition within the consultation responses to the proposed interim arrangements for educating children from Countesswells at Airyhall School and Braeside School, prior to the new school at Countesswells being built. Comments raised on this proposal in the submissions received and at the public meetings are summarised below:

- Many of the respondents raised significant concerns about the proposed use of Braeside School, to provide additional capacity for children from Countesswells. There was a feeling that the information provided in the proposals document about how this would work in practice was not made clear, and many of the responses included requests for further detail on this point.
- Several respondents had heard that some children already attending Airyhall School would be educated at Braeside School, and they were very concerned about this. They highlighted the difficulties this would create for parents potentially being required to drop off and pick up their children from two different buildings. There was also concern about the detrimental impact this would have on the children themselves, if they were to be separated from their friends and familiar surroundings at Airyhall School.
- After receiving confirmation from the Council during the consultation period that children currently attending Airyhall School would not be expected to move to Braeside School, respondents indicated that there was a need for further clarity and confirmation of this point. They also raised questions about how many children from Countesswells would be required in order to begin using the classrooms at Braeside.
- Respondents suggested that Braeside School is inadequate for pupils to be educated there, as it does not, they felt, have the necessary equipment, security arrangements, or hot meal facilities.
- Many of the submissions included suggestions that it would be difficult to move Countesswells pupils to Braeside School if they had started initially at Airyhall School, as their parents would be reluctant for them to move, and respondents questioned the legal and practical implications of doing this. They also were keen to know when the

Council would inform parents moving to Countesswells of the plans to initially use the Braeside building to educate their children.

- Several respondents felt that having the management team at Airyhall School take on responsibility for the classrooms at Braeside would be detrimental to Airyhall pupils, as this would place greater demands on their time.
- There was also a feeling that due to a lack of teaching staff, senior management time might be taken up with them teaching, as a result of the increase in pupil numbers.
- There were concerns that the proposal to create new classrooms at Airyhall School, to accommodate the initial increase in pupil numbers, would result in the school losing its existing general purpose facilities for music and art activities.
- Respondents had concerns about general health and safety if the numbers of pupils at Airyhall School were to increase, and asked whether there was sufficient space at the school to accommodate the additional pupils.
- Road safety concerns were also raised as it was felt that additional traffic would be generated in the area of both Airyhall School and Braeside School, as a result of the additional pupils attending from Countesswells. It was highlighted that there are already pressures on car park spaces at Airyhall School and bringing more pupils to the school would only add to these pressures.
- Finally in considering the effect of the proposed interim arrangements on Hazlehead Academy, one respondent felt that there is insufficient capacity at this school to accommodate the additional pupils from Countesswells, prior to a new secondary school at Countesswells being built.

### 2.3.3 Comments from Airyhall School Parent Council

The response to the consultation from Airyhall School Parent Council was broadly in line with the individual comments summarised above. The Parent Council confirmed that it was in agreement with proposals 1 and 2, to create the new school zones for the planned schools at Countesswells, but stated that it had significant concerns with proposal 3 (the interim arrangements).

The response from the Parent Council made reference to conflicting information provided at one of the public meetings about the plans to move Countesswells children to Braeside School, and when this would happen. It also highlighted the Parent Council's serious concerns about the plans to split Airyhall School between two buildings, and the negative impact this would have on the school and its pupils.

#### 2.3.4 Comments from Cults School Parent Council

The Parent Council from Cults School also submitted a response to the consultation. In its response the Parent Council noted that the proposals would address and simplify anomalies with existing school zones, and that the new schools would accommodate children from Countesswells and Kingswells in the future. It was stated that the Parent Council is largely supportive of the proposals.

However the Parent Council suggested that the plans for the new houses at Countesswells may be affected by the recent economic downturn, and questioned whether this could result in the proposed interim measures becoming more permanent. It also asked how the interim proposals would affect Airyhall School, its teaching staff and community.

The response also included questions on how placing requests made by families moving in to Countesswells would be addressed, and how these parents would be made aware of the arrangements for educating their children. There was also some concern expressed about the ability to recruit teachers and support staff, both for the additional pupils during the interim arrangements, and longer term to staff the new schools.

#### 2.3.5 Alternative Proposals

Within the responses received during the consultation period, a number of alternative proposals were put forwards, and these are summarised below:

- Some respondents suggested that the new schools at Countesswells should be built first, or in parallel to the new housing, prior to any changes being made to school zones, so that children moving into the new houses can attend the new schools from the outset. This would remove the need to use other schools initially for Countesswells children whilst the new schools are being built.
- As an alternative to educating all Countesswells children at Airyhall School and Braeside School, prior to the new school at Countesswells being built, several consultees suggested that the children should instead be split between Airyhall School, Hazlehead School, Cults School and Kingswells School. This it was felt would avoid any one school becoming overcrowded and would remove the need to use Braeside School.
- Some respondents suggested that Braeside School should be opened as a school in its own right for Countesswells pupils, with its own head teacher and management team, rather than being managed by Airyhall School.

- It was also suggested that a replacement building for Hazlehead Academy should be built, which could also accommodate all children from Countesswells, as an alternative to building a new secondary school at Countesswells.
- One respondent suggested that the catchment area for Airyhall School should be reviewed, to help avoid overcrowding at the school, prior to any decision being made on educating Countesswells pupils there.

### **Education Scotland Report**

An essential element of the statutory consultation process is the involvement of Education Scotland, whose report is provided as Annex A of this Consultation Report.

In its report, Education Scotland noted that the proposal offers educational benefits to children and young people living in western areas of Aberdeen, and that it helps to address significant increases in actual and projected school rolls in the area. It also notes that the planned new schools will help to ensure that the children attending them can learn in modern, purpose-built environments designed to deliver the key entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence.

The report also notes the concerns raised by some school communities over the proposed interim arrangements prior to the opening of the new schools at Countesswells. It highlights the need for the Council to clarify and share its plans for initially accommodating children from Countesswells at Airyhall School and Braeside School, and to reassure parents and children about the quality of resources and educational accommodation at Braeside School.

The report comments on the need for the Council to clarify whether it has considered the alternative proposals put forward by stakeholders, and to explain how the final proposals were decided upon. Finally, the report highlights the need for the Council to demonstrate how the proposals will maximise the educational benefits for pupils attending Hazlehead Academy.

The Council's response to points raised by Education Scotland is set out in Section 3 of this document, below.

### **3. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD AND CONTAINED WITHIN THE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT**

The following paragraphs provide responses to the significant points raised at consultation meetings and in written submissions received during the consultation period:

### 3.1 Comments regarding the planned housing development at Countesswells

- Officers meet regularly with representatives from the main developer for the Countesswells development, and whilst work has not yet started on site, the plans for the development and for the new schools are still in place. Officers are therefore obliged to put proposals and procedures in place to ensure there is adequate education provision for the children likely to be living within the new development. The proposals put forward for consultation can only address the current plans for the housing development, and it would not be appropriate for the consultation to include speculation on changes which may or may not occur in the future.
- It would not be appropriate to comment in this document on the nature of the roads infrastructure serving the new development, as this is outwith the scope of this consultation. The concerns raised by consultees on this aspect of the housing development have been passed to the relevant Council services.

### 3.2 Difficulties in recruiting teachers in Aberdeen

- It is accepted that there are currently some significant challenges regarding teacher recruitment in Aberdeen. Other local authorities in the north east of Scotland are experiencing similar difficulties. The Council is working hard to recruit teachers to work in our schools, and a number of initiatives have recently been introduced to help increase the numbers of teachers applying for jobs within the city. This work will continue as the new schools are planned and built, to ensure that they will be sufficiently staffed at the time of opening.

### 3.3 Capacity pressures at Kingswells School

- It is accepted that there are concerns about the available capacity at Kingswells School. This is an issue which is outwith the scope of this consultation, which focuses on proposals for the secondary school zone only for Kingswells pupils. Officers are working separately to identify solutions for the increasing pupil roll at Kingswells School.

### 3.4 The impact on Hazlehead Academy

- Officers recognise the concerns raised by members of the Hazlehead Academy community, about the age and condition of the school building, and how the new school at Countesswells may appear to be a more popular choice amongst families in the area when it first opens. Officers will continue to work with the head teacher and staff at the school to identify opportunities for making improvements to the school building, in order to ensure that it can continue to provide a fit for purpose learning environment for all Hazlehead pupils.



- With regards to the comment by one respondent that Hazlehead Academy does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate children from Countesswells prior to the new secondary school opening, the Council's school roll forecasts indicate that there is sufficient capacity at the school to accommodate the expected numbers of pupils from Countesswells until 2021. From August 2021 the school roll forecasts suggest that the school will be over capacity by 7 pupils. These numbers will be monitored closely by officers and the necessary arrangements will be put in place to increase the capacity of the school as appropriate, to accommodate this small number of additional pupils. The new secondary school at Countesswells is expected to open in 2022, so from this point onwards new pupils from Countesswells would attend their new school and not Hazlehead Academy, and consequently from 2022 the pupil roll at Hazlehead is expected to fall back within the school's current capacity.

### 3.5 Concerns about the proposed use of Braeside School

- It is accepted that the information provided in the proposal document, concerning the use of Braeside School to provide additional capacity to accommodate pupils from Countesswells, was not made clear enough, and that this has caused some concern, particularly amongst members of the Airyhall School community.
- Following the end of the public consultation period, further detailed planning has taken place on how Braeside School will be used to accommodate children from Countesswells, and the comments received during the consultation have been considered carefully as part of this work. As a result the proposals for the use of Braeside School have been amended, and details of this are provided in Paragraph 3.9 below.
- With regards to the suitability of Braeside School to accommodate pupils from Countesswells, the suggestion by some respondents that the school is inadequate for this purpose is not accepted. The building includes a relatively recent modular extension comprising modern classrooms, general purpose space, toilet and cloakroom facilities. The building would be fully reviewed however, prior to it being put back into use as a school, to ensure it meets the necessary security and health and safety standards.

### 3.6 Classroom Capacity and General Purpose facilities at Airyhall School

- The need to create additional classroom space at Airyhall School over the next one to two years is a result of the general increase in pupil numbers at this school, and is not directly related to the proposals set out within this consultation. Officers have made a commitment that general purpose space at Airyhall School will not be lost, as a result of the planned changes to the use of some rooms in the building, which are necessary to accommodate the increasing pupil roll.

- In response to the health and safety concerns regarding the increase in numbers at Airyhall School, the use of space within school buildings for classrooms is governed by legislation on maximum class sizes. There are also specific requirements to provide adequate emergency exits and appropriate evacuation procedures according to the overall numbers of adults and children within a school building, and regular fire safety assessments are carried out in all buildings to ensure that the arrangements and procedures are adequate for the number of building users.

### 3.7 Road safety at Airyhall School and Braeside School

- Concerns raised by respondents regarding road safety at Airyhall School and Braeside School are acknowledged. Given that under the proposals children from Countesswells would attend Braeside School, it is not anticipated that there will be an increase in traffic within the Airyhall School car park, as a result of these proposals.
- It is accepted that as a result of the proposals there would likely be an increase in traffic in the vicinity of Braeside School. Officers would work with parents and with the local community to find ways to minimise the impact on roads in the area of the school.

### 3.8 Alternative Proposals

- With regards to the timing for building the new schools at Countesswells, the Council is bound by a legal agreement with the developers, which means that funding for the new schools will not be released until a specific number of houses have been built. In addition, building a new school before a viable number of pupils are living in the area to attend the new school would not represent best value. For these reasons, it was not possible for officers to consider building the new schools prior to the building of the new houses.
- Officers considered whether to distribute the children expected to be living in Countesswells across all of the primary schools in the area, as an alternative to educating them all at Braeside School. Unfortunately, most of the primary schools in this area of the city are very close to capacity, and it would not have been possible to accommodate the expected numbers of pupils from Countesswells in these schools. This option was therefore rejected.
- The proposal to review the school zone for Airyhall School, which was put forward by one respondent, was also considered by officers, and further proposals to make changes to the school zone are currently out to public consultation. Whilst these proposals if accepted will help to alleviate some of the pressure on the school roll at Airyhall School, they would not provide an adequate solution for accommodating all of the children expected to be living in Countesswells. Officers therefore felt it was more appropriate to separate the two sets of proposals and consult on them separately.

- The proposal to build a replacement school for Hazlehead Academy to serve both the Hazlehead and Countesswells communities, as an alternative to building a new school at Countesswells, was not considered in detail, as the numbers of pupils expected to attend the secondary school at Countesswells and Hazlehead Academy combined would be considered too high to be accommodated in one school. The creation of a new secondary school at Countesswells, and the proposal to rezone Kingswells School to this new secondary school, also helps to alleviate forecast pressures on space at Bucksburn Academy. If a school at Countesswells was not built, then alternative proposals would need to be made to create capacity within the Bucksburn and Newhills area of the city. This option was therefore rejected.
- Several respondents put forward the proposal to open Braeside School for Countesswells pupils as a school in its own right, as an alternative to opening it as an annex to Airyhall School. As a result of this, and having carefully considered the comments received during the consultation, officers feel that it would be appropriate to implement a revision to the proposals on the interim arrangements for educating children from Countesswells. This is set out in the paragraph below.

### 3.9 Revised Proposal

Having considered the comments received during the consultation process, officers have concluded that the following revisions to the original proposals are appropriate:

- (i) Prior to the opening of the new school at Countesswells, all children living within the newly created Countesswells school zone would be offered a place at a new school to be operated from within the Braeside School building. This would be known as “Countesswells at Braeside School” and would be run as a standalone school, separate from Airyhall School. Places at the new school would be reserved entirely for children living within the new Countesswells school zone.
- (ii) Officers would implement an appropriate management structure for the new school operating from within the Braeside building.
- (iii) Whilst the initial number of children who take up places at the new school remains below 25, these children would be accommodated in a separate classroom within the Airyhall School building. They would however continue to be registered to “Countesswells at Braeside School”, and not to Airyhall School.
- (iv) When the number of children registered to the new school reaches 25 or more, all of these children would move to the Braeside School building. From this point forward, any new children arriving in the Countesswells school zone who take up a place at the new school

would be accommodated within the Braeside School building, and not at Airyhall School.

- (v) When the new primary school building at Countesswells has opened, all of the pupils attending “Countesswells at Braeside School” would move to the new Countesswells school building, and from this point forwards all children arriving in the Countesswells school zone would be offered a place at the new Countesswells school.

#### **4. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSALS**

Following the conclusion of the consultation period, Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, requires the Council to review the relevant proposal, having had regard to: the written representations that have been received by it during the consultation period; oral representations made to it at the public meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015; and Education Scotland’s report.

In terms of Section 10(2) (e) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Consultation Report requires to contain a statement explaining how the Council complied with its duty under the above Section 9(1) of the Act.

With relation to Section 9(1) of the 2010 Act and having considered all of the information received during the consultation process, officers have revised the original proposal which was issued for public consultation and recommend that Braeside School is used for all Countesswells pupils and is operated as a new, standalone school, entirely separate from Airyhall School.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Education and Children’s Services Committee agree to implement the proposals to:

1. Create a new primary school zone to serve primary education provision in the Countesswells development, with effect from August 2016; and
2. Create a new secondary school zone to serve secondary education provision in the Countesswells development, with effect from August 2016, and to include the zone of Kingswells School within the zone of the new secondary school, with effect from the time of opening of the new school; and
3. Put in place arrangements for interim education provision until a primary school and a secondary school are constructed within the Countesswells development, which will include the use of Hazlehead Academy for secondary pupils from Countesswells and the use of Braeside School

(operating as a separate standalone school) for primary pupils from Countesswells.

4. In the unlikely event that the Countesswells housing development does not go ahead, then the existing school zone arrangements would prevail.

**Gayle Gorman**  
**Director of Education and Children's Services**  
**March 2016**

## REPORT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to create new primary and secondary school zones in the Countesswells area and to include the zone of Kingswells School within the zone of the new secondary school from the time of opening of the secondary school. The proposal also includes interim arrangements for educational provision in the area until the new primary and secondary schools are operational.**

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Aberdeen City Council's proposal to create new primary and secondary school zones in the Countesswells area with effect from August 2016, and to include the zone of Kingswells School within the zone of the new secondary school from the time of opening of the secondary school. The proposal also includes interim arrangements for educational provision in the area until the new primary and secondary schools are operational. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

### 1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools affected by the proposal; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 24 November 2015 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- consideration of further information on schools affected; and
- visits to the sites of, Airyhall School, Cults School, Hazlehead School, Kingswells School, Bucksburn Academy, Cults Academy and Hazlehead Academy, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 Aberdeen City Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The formal consultation on the council's proposal ran from 30 October 2015 to 18 December 2015. Notices about the proposal were issued to a wide range of stakeholders and were also placed in local libraries and other council buildings and on the council's website. Public meetings were held on 24 and 26 November and 1 and 2 December 2015. The council received over 70 completed comment forms, emails and written responses to its proposal. Most of these responses expressed concerns related to Airyhall School and how it may be affected by the proposal.

## **3. Educational Aspects of Proposal**

3.1 This proposal offers educational benefits to the children and young people living in the western areas of Aberdeen affected by the proposal. Significant increases in the actual and projected school rolls in the area will result in the primary and secondary school capacity becoming insufficient to meet likely demands. The establishment of a new primary school and secondary school has the potential to provide flexible and sufficient capacity to meet these demands. The proposal also has the potential to ensure that children and young people who will attend the new schools will be able to learn in modern, purpose-built environments which are designed to deliver the key entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence. By reducing the numbers of children and young people who would otherwise attend the existing schools in the area, the proposal should reduce overcrowding and resulting loss of space for learning and social activities.

3.2 Parents, children, young people and staff who met with HM Inspectors are supportive of the proposed building of new schools to meet increasing demand for places. However, in some school communities, there are considerable and reasonable concerns over the proposed interim arrangements prior to the opening of the new primary school (2019) and new secondary school (2022).

3.3 Parents and staff at Airyhall School are not clear whether children from the new development will be accommodated initially in the Airyhall building or in Braeside School as an annex. As a matter of urgency, the council needs to clarify and share its plans. In doing so, it needs to provide greater detail about how it will ensure that all children on the Airyhall roll will have their learning needs met effectively and equitably. The council should also seek to reassure parents and children about the quality of resources and educational accommodation which would be available to any users of Braeside School.

3.4 Several parents, young people and members of staff, from a number of schools, who met with HM Inspectors feel that the consultation process did not provide them with sufficient opportunities to discuss any concerns they may have or to make suggestions for alternative proposals. These proposals include: developing Hazlehead Academy as a possible alternative to a new, separate secondary school; consideration of using other primary schools for the interim accommodation of children from the Countesswells development; considering other models of accommodating children from the Countesswells development at Airyhall School. In taking forward this proposal, the council should clarify whether it has considered these, and other alternative, relevant suggestions from stakeholders and on what grounds it pursued, instead, the proposals in the proposal document.

3.5 Parents and young people at Hazlehead Academy, and parents at Hazlehead School, who met with HM Inspectors did not feel that the proposal offered significant educational benefits for young people at Hazlehead Academy. It is their view that any increases to the school roll would add further pressure to the school's existing accommodation and condition and leave them no better off once the new school is operational in 2022. Parents' and young people's views about the quality of their existing learning environment are reasonable. The proposal does make provision, in 2022, for a reduction in roll and over-capacity and this will be educationally beneficial. The council now needs to clarify how its proposal will maximise the educational benefits for pupils attending Hazlehead Academy as stated in the proposal document.

#### **4. Summary**

Aberdeen City Council's proposal to create new primary and secondary school zones in the Countesswells area prior to opening new schools in 2019 and 2022, respectively, offers important benefits to children and young people in the western area of Aberdeen. The proposal will reduce issues of overcrowding in existing schools in the area and provide two new, purpose-built schools, designed to support Curriculum for Excellence and meet the needs of learners. The proposal to create the new schools is popular with most stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors. However, views on the proposed arrangements for the interim period before the new schools are operational are more mixed. The council needs to provide clarity for the parents and children at Airyhall School regarding how it intends to accommodate children from the new housing development. Once this is clearer, the council should provide more detailed arrangements for how it will ensure that all children's learning needs are met effectively and fairly, especially during any transitions. The council needs to provide reassurance to all stakeholders that their views and alternative suggestions have been, or will be, considered carefully. Finally, in taking forward this proposal, the council should provide further detail about how the proposal will maximise the educational benefits for pupils attending the existing schools in this area, including Hazlehead Academy.