



## **CONSULTATION REPORT New Primary School at Countesswells**

This Consultation Report has been compiled in response to the recent public consultation on the proposal to develop a new two stream primary school and early years provision within the new Countesswells development. 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 as amended.

### **Proposals:**

- **To establish a new primary school on the identified site - N7 (see Annex A for location) within the Countesswells development, Aberdeen; and:**
- **To relocate pupils zoned to Countesswells School from their current temporary accommodation to the newly constructed school building at Countesswells following its completion; and:**
- **These proposals to take effect from August 2021 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

## **1. METHODOLOGY**

This consultation was conducted in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. All requirements of the legislation have been met.

## **2. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS**

### **2.1 Public Event**

A public consultation event was held on 21 May 2019 to discuss the proposals. The event took place at Airyhall School commencing at 7.00pm. The event was attended by thirteen members of the public and six members of staff.

### **2.2 Comments Received**

Two completed paper comment forms were received in response to this consultation, along with 21 online submissions via the Council's consultation portal. Pupils currently registered at Countesswells School at its temporary location within Airyhall School were also canvassed for their views about the proposals.

Overall, 30 respondents indicated that they were in support of the proposal, and 5 indicated that they were not.

The submissions, anonymised as necessary, are available on the Council's website: [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations)

### **2.3 Issues Raised**

The main issues raised at the public meeting and in the written responses to the consultation, are summarised below.

- Some respondents stated that they welcome the plans for the new school and the new opportunities that it will provide for children living in the Countesswells area, whilst also assisting with the development of the wider Countesswells community. Others also noted that the new school would help to relieve pressure on pupil capacity at other schools. Pupils from the school highlighted that they were looking forward to having their own space and access to larger facilities.
- Some of the parents who responded to the consultation requested to be kept up to date with progress of the project, and pupils also asked whether they would have an opportunity to contribute to the designs for the new school.
- Respondents also asked whether sufficient security and safety measures would be provided at the new school, particularly considering that it would be constructed close to a busy road.
- Concerns were raised within the responses regarding the possibility that there would be insufficient teaching staff available to be recruited for the new school
- Some of the respondents were also keen to know whether the new school would include a nursery, and out of school care provision.

- During the consultation meeting officers were asked to confirm when the new school would be completed and whether anything could stop this from happening, such as lower than anticipated pupil numbers.
- Some of those attending the consultation meeting were concerned that some stakeholders may not have been aware of the consultation about these proposals, and asked how the information about the consultation had been disseminated.
- In its response to the consultation, the Parent Council from Airyhall School raised questions about the planned interim provision for Countesswells pupils, who will be accommodated at Hazlewood School prior to a new school opening. They asked whether transport to the Hazlewood site would be provided, and highlighted the need for adequate additional support needs provision for the school. They were also concerned that there would be no nursery provision at Hazlewood.

## **2.4 Education Scotland Report**

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

In its report, Education Scotland noted that the proposed new school building will provide additional outdoor learning space that should contribute to the wellbeing of the children, and that the new school will also have early learning and childcare facilities on site which should help with the smooth transition from nursery to primary. It was also noted that the proposal should help ease the longer term capacity issues within Airyhall.

The report acknowledged questions raised by the Parent Council from Airyhall School, regarding the arrangements for interim accommodation for Countesswells pupils at the Hazlewood School building, specifically regarding early learning and childcare provision and additional support needs provision.

Finally the report recommended that the Council should keep parents fully informed as the development of the new school progresses.

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

### **3.1 Communication and Engagement**

It was confirmed at the consultation meeting that should the proposal to build a new school be accepted, there will be further communication and engagement with all stakeholders throughout the life of the project, including opportunities to view and comment on designs for the building as they are developed.

### **3.2 Safety and Security**

The design for the new school will include secure perimeter fencing, and the school grounds would be kept secure throughout the school day.

### **3.3 Sufficiency of teaching staff**

Whilst recruiting sufficient numbers of teaching staff within Aberdeen City remains a challenge, a range of initiatives have been put in place in recent years to encourage more teachers to apply for posts in our schools, and the situation is improving as a result. Officers do not anticipate staffing shortages creating any difficulties in opening the new school.

### **3.4 Nursery and out of school care provision**

The new school will be designed to include a nursery and space for out of school care provision.

### **3.5 Anticipated completion date and potential barriers to this**

Officers confirmed at the consultation meeting that the proposed completion date for the new school would be August 2021 or as soon as possible thereafter. It was also explained that it is unlikely that any changes in forecast pupil numbers would delay this opening date, although it was acknowledged that with any major capital project there is always a possibility that unforeseen circumstances may arise during construction, which could delay completion of the project.

### **3.6 Informing stakeholders about the consultation**

When launching a public consultation such as this, the standard procedure is to advertise details of the consultation via the Council website, in a local newspaper advertisement, sending letters to parents via pupils at the school concerned, and making information available within local libraries and community centres. All of these methods were employed prior to the launch of this consultation.

### **3.7 Interim arrangements at the Hazlewood School building**

Transport to the Hazlewood site for children living at Countesswells will be provided, and staff working at the school will ensure that pupils with additional support needs are appropriately supported. Given that the number of children attending the Hazlewood site prior to the new school being constructed will be relatively small, it would not be viable to provide early learning and childcare facilities at Hazlewood. Parents will however be able to apply for places for their children to attend other nurseries, prior to the proposed new school opening.

## **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 any written representations that have been received by it during the consultation period, any oral representations made to it at the public meeting held on 21 May, and Education Scotland's report.

In terms of Section 10(2) (e) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Consultation Report is required 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 are satisfied that no comments have been received which would have caused them to review the merits of the proposals to develop a new two stream primary school and early years provision within the new Countesswells development.

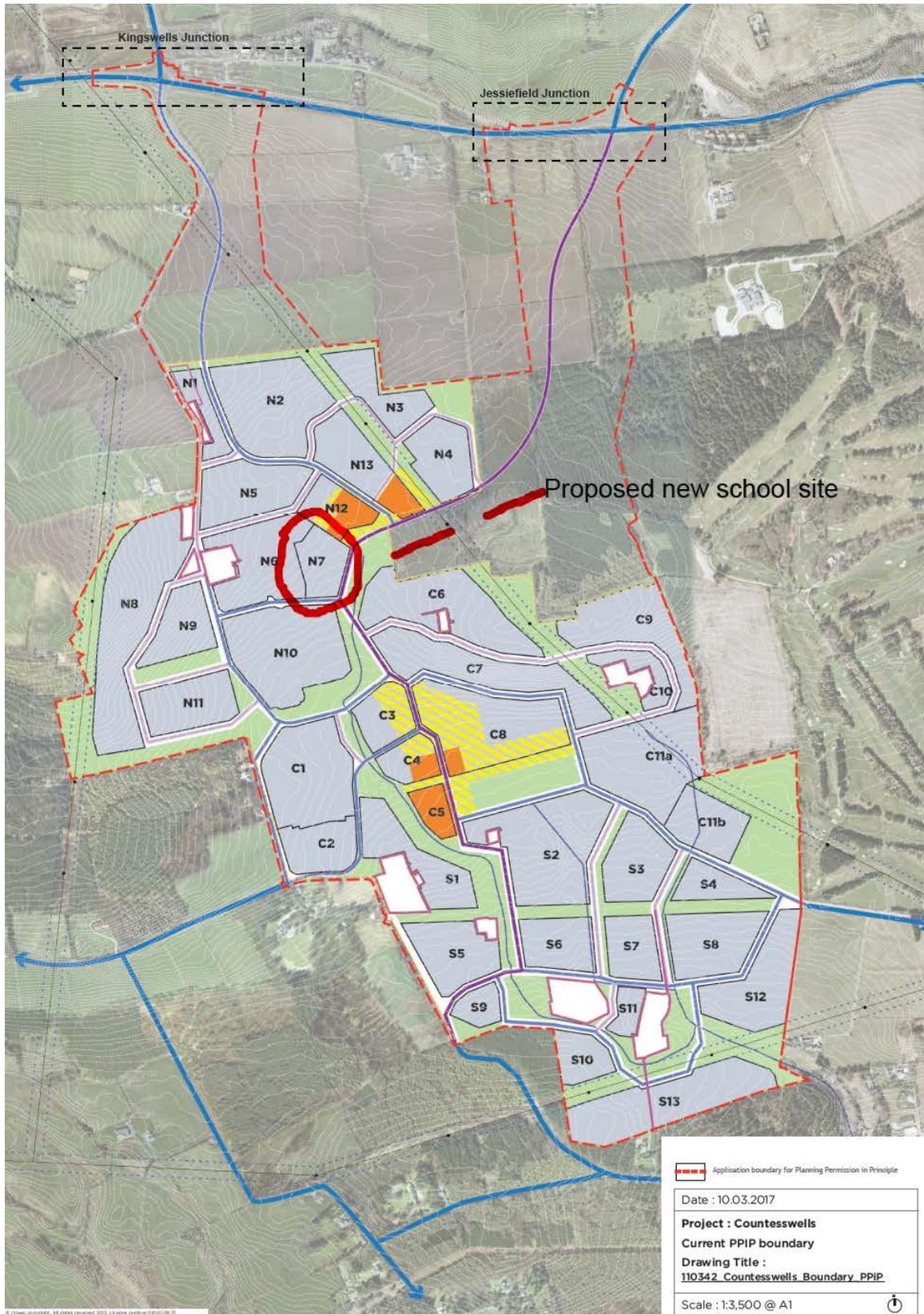
## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Education Operational Delivery Committee agrees to implement the proposals to:

- **establish a new primary school on the identified site N7 within the Countesswells development, Aberdeen; and:**
- **relocate pupils zoned to Countesswells School from their current temporary accommodation to the newly constructed school building at Countesswells following its completion; and:**
- **these proposals to take effect from August 2021 or as soon as possible thereafter.**

**Steve Whyte  
Director of Resources  
August 2019**

# Annex A : Proposed Location of New School





## **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to establish a new primary school within the Countesswells development and relocate pupils zoned to Countesswells from their current temporary accommodation to the newly constructed building following completion.**

June 2019

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Aberdeen City Council's proposal to establish a new primary school within the Countesswells development and relocate pupils zoned to Countesswells from their current temporary accommodation to the newly constructed building following completion. 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 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.

### 1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children 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 21 May 2019 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; and
- visit to the sites of Airyhall School and the new Countesswells School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

2.1 Aberdeen City Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 Aberdeen City Council is reshaping its service delivery model including forward planning for its entire estate. The proposal is to develop a new two stream primary school and early years provision within the new Countesswells development. It will provide a purpose built learning environment for children living within the Countesswells community school zone and provide capacity as the area continues to grow. Following a statutory consultation in October 2015, new school catchment zones were created. An interim arrangement was agreed in March 2016 whereby all primary-aged pupils from the new development would be housed at Airyhall School.

The original plan was for the children to then move to Braeside School which would provide additional classroom space. However, a subsequent decision was made in May 2018 to accommodate them in Hazlewood School instead of Braeside School due to its increased capacity as the school roll continues to grow. Aberdeen City Council set out their consultation from 22 April to 7 June 2019. They consulted with a range of stakeholders including parents. A public meeting was held on 21 May 2019 and attended by around 25 people. The council received 23 written responses to the proposal. Of those responses, 21 agreed with it and two disagreed.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council gave due consideration to the educational aspects of the proposal to build the new school. Almost all those who responded agreed with the proposal. The council recognise that a purpose-built school would deliver a much-improved learning environment for the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. The new building will provide additional outdoor learning space that should contribute to the wellbeing of the children. The new school will also have early learning and childcare facilities on site which should help with the smooth transition from nursery to primary. In addition, the proposal should help ease the longer term capacity issues within Airyhall.

3.2 Overall, feedback from stakeholders overwhelmingly supports the council's plans to build a new school at Countesswells. Parents, children and staff at Airyhall School were in general agreement with the planned move to Hazlewood in advance of the new Countesswells School being opened in August 2021. Whilst the current arrangements at Airyhall work well, children and parents agreed that the move to Hazlewood and then subsequently to Countesswells will give them their own sense of identity. However, the Parent Council from Airyhall School submitted a written response highlighting a few issues of concern. Parents have questions about early learning and childcare provision whilst the new school is being built and there is a perception that some families may not get access to the early learning and childcare that they require. Similarly, arrangements for after-school club provision and children with additional support needs was also highlighted by the Parent Council. Whilst these do not impact directly on the provision of the new school, the council needs to ensure that parents are kept fully informed as the development progresses. At both the public meeting and the visit to Airyhall School, parents expressed the view that they would like to be involved in the ongoing discussions about the design of the new school.

### 4. Summary

HM Inspectors consider that the council has laid out its plans for the development of a new school at Countesswells appropriately. Almost all of those who responded to the consultation exercise are in agreement with the proposal. The council should continue to keep parents and others in the local community informed about progress as the new school takes shape.

**HM Inspectors**

**June 2019**