



Consultation Report on the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to rezone the Foresterhill Hospital Complex area from Mile End School to Cornhill School and consequently from Aberdeen Grammar School to St Machar Academy from August 2014.

1. Methodology

All requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act, 2010* were met or exceeded.

2. Involvement of Stakeholders

(a) Public Events

A public consultation event was held to discuss the re-zoning proposal for Mile End and Cornhill Schools.

The number of attendees who signed in at the public meeting was:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Number of Recorded Attendees</i>
19 November 2013	7-8.30pm	Mile End School	7 parents/public plus elected members

(b) Further Engagement

Officers from Education, Culture and Sport also provided opportunities to meet separately with staff of both schools and representatives of the schools' Parent Councils.

(c) Comments Received

The following written submissions were received:

<i>Format</i>	<i>Number of submissions</i>
Email	4
Written	0
Comment Cards	4

Paper copies of all submissions were made available in the Members Library and have been circulated to external members of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee. Submissions, anonymised as necessary, were also made available on the council website.

(d) Issues Raised

There is general support for the proposal from parents living outwith the affected area but whose children attend Mile End School.

Concerns were expressed by some NHS (Grampian) staff that those families spending a relatively short period of time in Foresterhill Court would be no longer able to attend the school of their choice. Historically, families arrive in Foresterhill Court and their children are enrolled in Mile End School and Aberdeen Grammar School. As the maximum tenancy period is six months, these families then move on to more permanent accommodation but their children remain enrolled in these schools even though, in the vast majority of cases, these would no longer be the zoned schools of their residence.

The forecast roll at Mile End indicates that it will be close to capacity if no action is taken by 2015. The likelihood of the roll of Mile End School reaching its capacity will be reduced if the proposal is implemented. Otherwise, it likely that there may be a negative impact on the space available for pupils to undertake as wide a range of learning experiences as we would expect.

If the proposal is implemented, pupils of primary school age would attend Cornhill School and secondary age pupils would attend St Machar Academy, both of which currently have ample excess places. On moving to more permanent accommodation, pupils can either remain at Cornhill and St Machar Academy or enrol in their zoned school, if space is available.

Parents would retain, throughout, the opportunity to make a placing request to any school of their choice.

The proposal would support the council’s obligations to secure best value for the whole school estate, within the context of addressing over-capacity and suitability. The council would be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to the benefit of all children and young people in schools across the city.

The educational benefits for pupils attending all schools include a reduction in the likelihood that school rolls will reach or exceed capacity. This will increase the availability of spaces within all schools allowing as wide a range of learning

activities to be accommodated. Implementation of the proposal will also place the council in a better position to plan a more efficient and effective school estate in terms of sufficiency and location of pupil spaces and, in turn, this will allow more appropriate allocation of resources to areas of demand.

(e) Education Scotland Report

An essential element of the statutory consultation process is involvement of Education Scotland whose report is provided as Appendix 1(a).

The report identifies some positive aspects of the proposal in the following paragraphs.

Paragraph 2.2:

'Most people who expressed a view were in favour of the proposal.'

Paragraph 2.3:

'Parents, children and staff from Mile End School felt the proposal was a sensible solution to help the school deal with an increasing roll.'

Paragraph 2.4:

'Parents, children and staff in Cornhill School, St Machar Academy and Aberdeen Grammar School welcomed the proposal.'

Whilst the Education Scotland Report states that the proposal is strongly supported by parents, pupils and staff across all schools involved, it requires the council to provide more details on the educational benefits for all young people that the proposal will bring.

Section 3 provides the Council's response to the issue raised by stakeholders and Education Scotland in their report.

3. Addressing Issues Raised in Education Scotland Report

The following table indicates areas identified within the Education Scotland Report and the Council's responses.

Issue	Response/Proposed Action	Timescale
<p>The children of those NHS staff temporarily accommodated within the Foresterhill Complex will no longer be able to attend the school of their parents' choice.</p> <p>The council has not set out what educational benefits will accrue for children and young people who may move into the short-term accommodation as from August 2014.</p>	<p>Parents will always retain the right to make a placing request at any time to any school, including Mile End School and Aberdeen Grammar School. This will be granted unless the school has no available spaces or if additional staff would require to be employed as a result of granting a place.</p> <p>Pupils who attend Mile End School and Aberdeen Grammar School then move to a permanent address in another school's zone would have reduced capacity to attend school with their peers from their local neighbourhood. This may have a negative impact on relationships and the composition of friendship groups.</p> <p>Pupils may have to travel a significant distance from their subsequent permanent address to Mile End School or Aberdeen Grammar School and this may result in their having to leave home earlier. This may increase tiredness and have a detrimental impact on attention.</p> <p>Pupils who attend Cornhill School and St Machar Academy would have the opportunity to experience the same broad range of educational experiences available, particularly at St Machar Academy. This school's curriculum provides a broad range of both academic and vocational courses. Pupils attending this school also have access to courses at Oldmachar and Bridge of Don Academies through consortium arrangements and to Advanced Higher courses through the city campus programme.</p> <p>Performance at St Machar Academy has increased over recent years and</p>	

	<p>this is likely to continue under the broader range of courses and educational opportunities now being made available to all its pupils.</p> <p>The quality of learning experiences for all pupils potentially affected by the proposal is likely to be enhanced as they will attend schools where there is less pressure on spaces. The proposal will result in a reduction in the likelihood that the roll of all schools will reach or exceed capacity. If schools have more available space, they are better placed to provide a broader range of learning activities, including more active learning opportunities. The capacity of schools, particularly in primary, to provide two hours quality physical activity in appropriate accommodation is also enhanced if there is less pressure on space.</p> <p>For families who are initially resident in the Foresterhill complex, there will be greater potential for pupils to experience continuity of learning and fewer points of transition if there is less of a requirement to change schools during their primary school career. There is also greater potential for pupils to attend the school within their local community which will increase the occurrence of pupils attending school with their neighbouring peers as well as making the transition to secondary school accompanied by other pupils in their friendship group.</p>	
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