



ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

CONSULTATION REPORT

on the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to rezone Grandholm Village from Braehead School to Danestone School and consequently from Bridge of Don Academy to Oldmachar Academy from August 2014.

1. METHODOLOGY

This consultation was conducted in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act, 2010. All requirements of the legislation were met or exceeded.

2. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

(a) Public Events

A public consultation event was held to discuss the re-zoning proposal for Braehead and Danestone 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>
28 January 2014	7-8.30pm	Danestone School	10 parents/public plus officers and 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	10
Written	0
Comment Cards	0

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.

The public meeting, held at Danestone School, was attended by 10 individuals. Attendees commented that the new River Don crossing would significantly reduce the travel distance to Danestone. Parents were advised that if they had a child currently attending Braehead School then it would be possible for a younger sibling to also attend the school. In response to a question from a parent, officers also advised that there was a large housing development in Grandholm village which could potentially require a new secondary school and new primary schools. Comments were received which outlined concern about the timing of the decision, as it was noted that Committee would only make a final determination at their meeting in June 2014, which would leave little time for enrolment and ordering school uniforms. Officers were asked how parents could find information to determine which school was best for their children, responding that Education Scotland reports, School Standard and Quality reports and visits would provide this information.

(d) Issues Raised

Parent Councils

One response was received from the Parent Councils of Bridge of Don Academy. The response commented on a perceived unease that the Council may have a long term plan to “chip away” at the pupil roll for the school. The Parent Council noted the rezoning proposal from a primary perspective but commented on the increased distance pupils from Grandholm would require to walk to attend Oldmachar Academy. The response also commented on the need to clarify potential transport costs which could arise through the implementation of the proposal and questioned whether it would deliver the stated educational benefits.

Individuals

Of the nine responses from individuals, four were against the proposals, three were in favour and two expressed no comment either way.

Those opposed to the proposal commented on the additional distance pupils would have to travel to attend Oldmachar Academy rather than Bridge of Don Academy. Submissions also commented on the disturbance to children’s

education if they were taken out of Braehead School and zoned to Danestone School.

Those in favour of the proposal commented that Danestone School was closer than Braehead School, and the additional distance to Oldmachar Academy was negligible, being only 0.2 miles further than the distance to Bridge of Don Academy. It was also commented that parents would still have the right to access to choose which school they sent their children to, as all schools had surplus capacity.

Some respondents commented on the timescale for final Committee consideration of the proposal, noting that a decision on 12 June 2014 did not provide a great deal of time to enrol their children in the relevant school. One response focused on the existing issues found on the walking route from Grandholm village to Danestone School and commented that should these be addressed by the Council it would become a “quiet walk and a great idea”.

Education Scotland Report

Education Scotland’s report expressed uncertainty on the rationale behind the proposal, further commenting that the Council has not clearly defined the education benefits which would be derived from the proposal’s implementation.

Education Scotland also ask the Council to clarify the timeline for the proposal’s implementation with stakeholders and also to consult and communicate with all interested stakeholders, particularly those parents of children attending nursery or Primary 1 after the summer break.

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

The following paragraphs detail the issues identified by Education Scotland in their report on the Council’s proposals and the Council’s response.

(i) Road Safety and Distance

Most respondents were clear that the distance from Grandholm village to Danestone Primary was shorter than that between Grandholm village and Braehead School.

It is accepted that the current distance from Grandholm village to Oldmachar Academy is greater than that between the village and Bridge of Don Academy. However, the construction of the new River Don crossing and the new trunk road will provide easier access to Oldmachar Academy. Should pupils wish to attend Bridge of Don Academy they would be required to cross the new trunk road to get to school.

(ii) Available Spaces

It is noted that all of the schools affected by this proposal have surplus capacity. This should reduce the chance of any parent not having their choice of school

accepted. Based on the current pupil roll projections it would appear that Braehead School's roll is approximately 90-100 pupils below the school's maximum capacity, with the figures for Danestone School being 120-200 pupils below its maximum capacity.

(iii) **Educational Benefits of Implementing the Proposal**

Should this proposal be implemented it would, as stated within the Proposal Document, formalise the practice which takes place. The majority of parents from Grandholm village have enrolled their children into Danestone School. Access to the school by car will improve with the construction of new roads in the area.

The proposal will also ensure that pupils attending Danestone School are educated alongside their peers from the local community. Adding pupils to the school roll of Danestone will also enrich the educational environment for all young people who attend as the increased pupil cohort will result in greater ability to attract resources, in terms of both staffing and the school's delegated budget, providing additional flexibility for the Head Teacher to better meet the needs of all pupils.

A larger group of pupils will also enrich formal and informal learning as pupils will learn from and interact with a greater number of other pupils from different backgrounds, thereby increasing their knowledge and understanding to a greater extent. An example of this would be the increased ability to work with a greater number of peers and also in different cohorts.

For those pupils already attending either Braehead School or Bridge of Don Academy, the Council has committed to ensuring that their siblings will be able to attend the same schools. This will provide certainty for parents that siblings will be able to attend school together, therefore providing continuity of education.

(iv) **Continued Consultation and Communication**

The Council is committed to continue effective dialogue with the parents affected by this proposal. Should Committee approve the recommendation set out in Section 6 of this report, at its meeting of 16 June 2014, officers will contact both schools and correspond with parents who have enrolled their children into Primary 1 of either Braehead School or Danestone School.

(v) **Other Comments**

Should the Committee approve the recommendations contained within this report, parents would retain the opportunity to make a placing request to any school of their choice.

This proposal supports 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.

4. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OF RELEVANT INFORMATION AND ALLEGED INACCURACIES CONTAINED WITHIN THE PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

No responses asserting allegations of omissions or inaccuracies within the Proposal Document were received during the consultation period.

5. 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 meeting held on 27 January 2014 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 are satisfied that no comments have been received which would have caused them to review the merits of the proposal to rezone Grandholm village from Braehead School to Danestone School and consequently from Bridge of Don Academy to Oldmachar Academy, with effect from August 2014.

6. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education, Culture and Sport Committee agree:

- (i) To implement the proposed rezoning of Grandholm village from Braehead School to Danestone School and consequently from Bridge of Don Academy to Oldmachar Academy, with effect from August 2014.

Gayle Gorman
Director of Education, Culture and Sport
April 2014

REPORT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND**Consultation proposal by Aberdeen City Council
Report by Education Scotland, addressing educational aspects of the
proposal to re-zone the Grandholm Village area from Braehead School to
Danestone School and consequently from Bridge of Don Academy to
Oldmachar Academy with implementation from August 2014.****Context**

This report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act. The purpose of this report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of the council's consultation proposal. Section 2 of this report sets out the views expressed by consultees during the initial consultation process. Section 3 sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal and the 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 it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation 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. Introduction

- 1.1 Aberdeen City Council proposes to re-zone the Grandholm Village area from Braehead School to Danestone School and consequently from Bridge of Don Academy to Oldmachar Academy with implementation from August 2014.
- 1.2 The report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act.
- 1.3 HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspects of the proposal:
 - attendance at the public meeting held on 28 January 2014 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 all schools affected; and
 - visits to the site of Braehead School, Bridge of Don Academy, Danestone School and Oldmachar Academy, including discussion with relevant consultees.
- 1.4 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; 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
- benefits which the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

2. Consultation process

- 2.1 Aberdeen City Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.2 Children and young people at all four schools did not have strong views either way on the proposal.
- 2.3 Parents and staff had mixed views about the proposal. In general those at Danestone Primary School and Oldmachar Academy were broadly supportive of the proposal.
- 2.4 Parents of children and young people who live in Grandholm Village and currently attend Braehead Primary School had mixed views about the proposal. A few were supportive of the proposal and a few were against the proposal, particularly those that have children currently in school and younger siblings who are not yet attending nursery or school.
- 2.5 Parents at Bridge of Don Academy could understand the proposal for the primary school re-zoning with Danestone School being physically closer to Grandholm Village. However, regarding the secondary they were unsure as to the benefits of the proposal, stating that Bridge of Don Academy is closer to Grandholm Village than Oldmachar Academy. There is no mention of distance to schools in the consultation paper.
- 2.6 Staff at Braehead Primary School and Bridge of Don Academy were unsure of the rationale behind the proposal and the evidence regarding the educational benefits. Although they understand that Danestone School is physically closer to Grandholm Village than Braehead Primary School, particularly by foot, both schools have capacity, and they were concerned at the longer term effect of losing pupils from their school rolls.

3. Educational aspects of the proposal

- 3.1 Aberdeen City Council states that implementation of the proposal would ensure a coherent, continuous three to 18 education for children/young people in the Grandholm Village area and that it would also improve the quality of transition arrangements between primary and secondary schools for children living in the area. However, the overall educational benefits set out in the proposal are not fully evidenced. In taking forward the proposal,

the council needs to set out more detailed benefits for the children that will accrue from implementation of the proposal.

- 3.2 The rationale for the proposal is not fully clear. It states that this would formalise Aberdeen City Council's current zoning arrangements which reflect current parental choice for children/young people living in the area of the proposal. However, the number of pupils involved who attend the schools are split relatively evenly between the two primary schools and two secondary schools, all of which are operating under capacity. This is particularly the case for staff of Braehead School and Bridge of Don Academy, or for families who have children currently in either of these schools.
- 3.3 The council has stated that this proposal is one element of a coordinated approach to manage the pupil numbers at Braehead and Danestone Schools and other schools across the city. Given that both primary schools in the proposal are operating under capacity and the proposal states that there are no major housing developments planned for either of the catchment areas for the primary schools, it is not sufficiently clear how the coordinated approach to manage pupil numbers has any significance.
- 3.4 The proposal states that enrolments of pupils currently attending any of the schools would not be effected by this proposal. Parents at Braehead School reported that the proposal does not provide clarity or certainty for their children currently in the nursery or primary classes at Braehead School, particularly regarding which secondary school they would attend and potential disruption to friendship groups. Families with pre-nursery aged children and those who have children currently in nursery, primary and secondary could be particularly challenged if the proposal is implemented and their children are placed across different catchment areas. Children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper may be affected as above where they have siblings at either of the primary or secondary schools. However, those who do not have siblings at either school will not be affected in the future. The council needs to be clear and provide reassurance for parents as to how their children will be affected if the proposal is implemented.
- 3.5 Parents of pre-school and primary aged children at the schools are very concerned about the timing for the proposal. With the decision on the proposal not being made until mid-June, and a planned implementation of the proposal in August, the council has set a challenging timescale to take forward the proposal. Parents are particularly concerned about appointment of places for nursery-aged children and the potential for having children in either two or three schools at the one time. In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to clarify the timeline for implementation of the proposal.
- 3.6 Parents at Bridge of Don Academy understandably reported their concern that this is the second proposal for re-zoning of part of their catchment area in a very short space of time which is causing a feeling of unease in Bridge of Don Academy. They are anxious that, although in the short-term and with small numbers, there is no significant impact in the school from this

proposal, the longer-term effect has a potentially negative impact on their school roll.

- 3.7 Parents who live in Grandholm Village reported many issues and concerns relating to the current plans for the creation of a bridge adjacent to Grandholm Village which may make it longer or shorter to get to school. They had uncertainties with regard to the plans and the impact of the new bridge on journeys to any of the four schools mentioned in the proposal. There is no reference to the journey time to school or to the bridge in the proposal. However, in order to assist parents the council needs to share relevant information regarding any changes to school journeys as a result of the impact of the new bridge.

4. Summary

- 4.1 The number of pupils involved who attend the schools are split relatively evenly between the two primary schools and two secondary schools, all of which are operating under capacity, and the proposal states that there are no major housing developments planned for either of the catchment areas for the primary schools, therefore the rationale for the proposal is not fully clear.
- 4.2 It is not sufficiently clear how implementation of the proposal will bring clear educational benefit to children and young people. In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to set out more detailed benefits for the children that will accrue from implementation of the proposal.
- 4.3 In taking forward the proposal, the council will need to clarify the current timeline for implementation to ensure it provides sufficient time for effective consultation and communication with parents, staff and children to alleviate their concerns. This is particularly important for children currently in nursery or primary or pre-nursery aged siblings, who are directly affected by this proposal. In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to ensure that it provides sufficient time to consult and communicate effectively with parents, staff and children to alleviate these concerns.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
March 2014**