



ABERDEEN

CITY COUNCIL

CONSULTATION REPORT

This Consultation Report has been compiled in response to the recent public consultation on the proposal to create a new primary school zone in the area of the planned new housing development in Loirston and Cove, 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 South-East of the City, including the new housing development in the Loirston / Cove area, with effect from August 2016; and
2. To amend the existing Charleston School, Kirkhill School, and Abbotswell School zones to contribute to the proposed new school zone; and
3. To rezone an area of the existing Kirkhill School zone, east of the A956 trunk road, to the Loirston School zone.

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 Event

A public consultation event was held on 25th November 2015 to discuss the proposals:

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Time</i> | <i>Venue</i> | <i>Recorded Attendees</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|--|
| 25 th November 2015 | 7- 8 pm | Charleston School | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 parents• 2 members of Kincorth & Leggart Community Council• 3 Aberdeen City Council officers |

2.2 Comments Received

The following written submissions were received:

| <i>Format</i> | <i>Number of submissions</i> |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| E-mail | 2 |
| Comment Forms | 4 |

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

2.3 Issues Raised

2.3.1 General Comments

The majority of respondents to the consultation recognised that there was a need to plan ahead for the forecast increase in pupils numbers resulting from the new housing development at Loirston and Cove. Some general concerns were raised about the proposals, and these are summarised below:

- One respondent was concerned about potential future increases to the pupil roll at Loirston School, resulting from the proposals to rezone the area of land east of the A956 trunk road from Kirkhill School to Loirston School.

- Another respondent raised a concern about the cost of building a new school in the area, as well as the costs related to establishing a senior management team for the new school, and questioned whether this was necessary.
- At the public consultation meeting, a question was raised regarding the Council's ability to recruit sufficient numbers of teachers to staff the new school.
- One further respondent pointed out that establishing a new school would increase traffic congestion in the area. This issue was also raised during the public consultation meeting, where concerns about children needing to cross several busy roads to travel to and from the school were highlighted.
- A response to the consultation received by Kincorth and Leggart Community Council highlighted concerns about the safety of children who would be attending the new school, given its proximity to the nearby industrial estate and several ongoing building projects in the area.

2.3.2 Alternative Proposals

Within the responses received during the consultation period, an alternative proposal was put forward by one respondent. It was proposed that Charleston School could be extended, to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers resulting from the new housing development, as an alternative to building a new school. It was suggested that this would help to save costs, particularly given that it would remove the need to create a new school senior management team.

Education Scotland Report

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

In its report, Education Scotland noted that the proposals put forward offer potential educational benefits to children and young people living in the south-east area of Aberdeen, and that the respondents to the public consultation were broadly in favour of the proposals.

The report also highlights some concerns raised by respondents about the condition of existing schools in the area, and notes that some parents had questioned whether upgrading or expanding the existing schools might have been a viable alternative to building a new school.

The report also makes reference to some parents' concerns about the Council's ability to staff the new school, and whether Charleston School has sufficient capacity to accommodate children living in the new housing development prior to the new school being built.

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 The impact on Loirston School's pupil roll

- The Loirston School building is currently operating at approximately 70% of its capacity, and this is forecast to peak at no higher than 78% in the next seven years. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposals put forwards with regards to the rezoning of the area of land east of the A956 trunk road, from Kirkhill School to Loirston School, would result in a significant increase to the school zone area for Loirston School, it is not anticipated that this would have any material impact on the pupil roll at Loirston School. This is because the area of land in question is currently used mainly for commercial and industrial purposes, rather than residential properties.
- Should there be any plans for a significant change of use of this land in the future, then the available capacity of the school that the area of land is zoned to would need to be considered, prior to any planning consent being granted. It is therefore unlikely that the proposed change to the school zone would result in the pupil roll exceeding the capacity of the school.

3.2 The costs associated with establishing a new school

- The cost of building the new school at Loirston / Cove will be met through contributions received from the developer of the new housing in the area. It is recognised that the establishment of a new school will result in increased staffing costs for the Council. However, the increase in pupils numbers would in any case require additional teachers to be employed, so there would be an increase in staffing costs regardless of whether a new school was to be built.

3.3 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 school is planned and built, to ensure that it will be sufficiently staffed at the time of opening.

3.4 Concerns about traffic congestion and general safety of pupils

- The safety of our pupils is always a priority for the Council, and officers have noted the concerns raised by parents and members of the Community Council during this consultation. The new school would be designed with the safety of all building users in mind, and as part of the planning application process for the new school, any conditions laid down by the planning authority with regards to improving road safety in the area, would be required to be implemented prior to the new school opening.
- As part of the planning process for the new school, a school travel plan would be developed. This would help to identify safe and sustainable methods of travel for all pupils attending the school.

3.5 Alternative Proposal

- The proposal to extend Charleston School, as an alternative to building a new school within the new housing development, was considered by officers. The anticipated numbers of pupils likely to be generated by the new housing development at Loirston and Cove are significant; if the area was to remain zoned to Loirston School, 250 additional pupil places would be required at the school by 2022. This would take the pupil roll at Charleston School to 552, and the current capacity of the building is only 300. There is not sufficient space within the school site boundaries to create the additional accommodation which would be required for this number of pupils. As the building was not designed with the intention of adding a subsequent second storey to it, the costs of doing this would be prohibitive. For these reasons, it was not possible to take forward this proposal as a viable alternative to those detailed in the proposal document.

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 meeting held on 25th November, 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 proposals to: create a new primary school zone to serve primary

education provision in the South-East of the City; amend the existing Charleston School, Kirkhill School, and Abbotswell School zones; and rezone an area of the existing Kirkhill School zone, east of the A956 trunk road, to the Loirston School zone.

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 South-East of the City, including the new housing development in the Loirston / Cove area, with effect from August 2016; and
2. amend the existing Charleston School, Kirkhill School, and Abbotswell School zones to contribute to the proposed new school zone; and
3. rezone an area of the existing Kirkhill School zone, east of the A956 trunk road, to the Loirston School zone.
4. In the unlikely event that the Loirston / Cove housing development does not go ahead, then the existing school zone arrangements would prevail.

Gayle Gorman
Director of Education and Children's Services
February 2016

REPORT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to address primary school capacity and accommodation issues in the South-East area of Aberdeen.

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 address primary school capacity and accommodation issues in the South-East area of Aberdeen. The council consulted on two options:

- To retain the status quo and maintain the existing school zones in the area of the new development at Loirston and Cove; or
- With effect from August 2016, to create a new primary school zone to serve primary education provision in the south-east of the city, including the new housing development in the Loirston / Cove area; to amend the existing Charleston School, Kirkhill School and Abbotswell School zones to contribute to the proposed new school zone; and to rezone an area of the existing Kirkhill School zone, east of the A956 trunk road, to the Loirston School zone.

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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- The likely effects of the proposal for children 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
- The educational benefits the council believes will result from the 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 Wednesday 25 November 2015 in Charleston School in connection with the council's proposal;
- 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
- Visits to the sites of Abbotswell, Kirkhill, Charleston and Loirston Schools 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 contained 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. A public meeting held on Wednesday 25 November 2015 in Charleston School was attended by five members of the public. The council received six responses to its proposal which were broadly in favour.

3. Educational Aspects of the Proposal

3.1 The council's proposal offers potential educational benefits to children and young people living in the south-east area of Aberdeen affected by the proposal. The main benefits expected are that all primary schools in the area will have sustainable and viable school rolls allowing for continuing delivery of the full breadth of curriculum, effective teacher-pupil relationships, and a clear and distinct community association to help develop strong links for supporting learning. It is reasonable to expect that these benefits would be realised, should the proposal go ahead.

3.2 Almost all of those who spoke with HM Inspectors were in agreement with the aspects of the proposal which relate to the creation of a new zone for the new school and the rezoning of an area of the existing Kirkhill School zone, east of the A956 trunk road, to Loirston School.

3.3 Stakeholders who spoke to HM Inspectors had a number of reasonable concerns. Almost all would like to have been consulted more on possible alternative options to the current proposal, specifically, those relating to the upgrading or expanding of the existing primary school estate in the area. They were not clear why the council believes that this is the most reasonable and viable option open to it. The majority of parents who spoke with HM Inspectors were concerned about the material condition of some of those schools and were uncertain about their long-term sustainability. Parents were also keen to know whether the council had considered upgrading or expansion of existing schools.

3.4 Almost all parents who spoke to HM Inspectors had reasonable concerns about staffing a new school. They rightly reported that there were already significant issues in recruiting and retaining teachers in the area and were concerned that the addition of a new school would add to existing challenges. They would welcome further information from the council on plans to secure staff for a new school.

3.5 Parents from Charleston School who met with HM Inspectors raised concerns about its capacity to accommodate the projected increase in roll until the opening of the new school. They would welcome clarification about how the council will ensure that all children attending Charleston School will have their learning needs met effectively and equitably during the interim period while a new school is built.

4. Summary

The council's proposal has a number of potential educational benefits. If a housing development is built, a new school will assist in managing long-term capacity pressures within Charleston School in the coming years. The proposal has the potential to ensure that children who will attend the new school will be able to learn in a modern, purpose-built environment which is designed to deliver the key entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence. It is likely to result in viable school rolls which will allow for the continuing delivery of the full breadth of curriculum. The rezoning of an area of the existing Kirkhill School zone will also enhance safety for children who will no longer require to cross the A956 trunk road when traveling to and from school. Stakeholders have a number of reasonable concerns about the proposal. These relate mainly to the material condition of some of the current school buildings, the staffing of the proposed new school and proposed interim arrangements, including how all children affected will have their learning needs met effectively and equitably whilst the new school is being built. In taking forward its proposal the council will need to engage with stakeholders and address these concerns.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
January 2016**