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## CONSULTATION REPORT

on the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to rezone the former Victoria Road School zone and remove the dual zoning arrangement for Tullos School and Walker Road School, with effect from August 2015.

### 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 the former Victoria Road School zone.

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 May 2014	7-8.30pm	Torry Academy	Approximately 12 parents/public plus officers and Elected Members

#### (b) Further Engagement

Officers from Education, Culture and Sport also attended a meeting of the Torry Community Council on 19 June 2014 to discuss the proposal and wider education aspects within the Torry community.

### **(c) Comments Received**

The following written submissions were received:

<i>Format</i>	<i>Number of submissions</i>
Email	3
Written	1
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.

### **(d) Issues Raised**

#### **Public Meeting – 19 May 2014**

There were 12 parents and members of the public in attendance at the public meeting. Those present raised a number of issues, including the issue of siblings who live outwith a school zone being able to attend a school by placing request. The audience also sought comment on the capacity of the two primary schools and what, if anything, would be done to increase capacity to take account of potential new housing developments in the area. The discussion included commentary from the audience on the possibility of re-opening the former Victoria Road School or using the Torry Academy building to house Walker Road School.

Attendees expressed a desire to hear about the Council's long term educational plans for the Torry area, recognising that it was an area of deprivation.

#### **Parent Councils**

No responses were received from the Parent Councils of Tullos School or Walker Road School.

#### **Individuals**

Three e-mailed responses from individuals were received. All responses sought clarification on whether their children would still be eligible to attend Walker Road School should the rezoning proposal be implemented.

#### **Torry Community Council**

The response from Torry Community Council was received on 7 July, but due to the few submissions received it was agreed to record the comments as part of the consultation. A summary of the issues raised by Torry Community Council is provided in the following paragraphs.

The Community Council submission deals with the wider concerns Torry residents and is not solely focused on the actual detail of the consultation proposal. The

response states that the community have lost faith in the City Council's decision making and inability to communicate and that this has led to the low number of responses received.

The Community Council believe that investment is needed in both Tullos School and Walker Road School and that modular accommodation should not be considered to address perceived overcrowding as they do not meet the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence. The document comments on the need for siblings to attend the same school regardless if they are from outwith that school zone.

Further concerns are raised about the possibility of new housing in the Torry area at the former prison site and the former Victoria Road School site and its impact on overcrowding within both schools.

### **Education Scotland Report**

An essential element of the statutory consultation process is involvement of Education Scotland whose report is provided as Appendix 1 of this Consultation Document.

Education Scotland confirm that the Council "provided a clear rationale" for its rezoning proposals. The report also notes parental support in favour of the proposal to address over capacity issues.

Education Scotland also comments on the need for the Council to address concerns raised during the consultation exercise.

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

The following paragraphs detail the issues raised during the consultation process, and the matters identified by Education Scotland in their report on the Council's proposals.

#### **(i) Out of Zone Pupils**

The three responses received from parents all had children attending Walker Road School but who would reside in the Tullos School zone, should the rezoning proposals be implemented. These individuals were advised that the Proposal Document which was issued on 6 May 2014, had contained specific reference that:

"It should be noted that the enrolment of pupils currently attending either of the schools would not be affected by this proposal."

Respondents were further advised that if they wished future siblings to attend Walker Road School, they would need to submit a placing request application, but that such applications would be prioritised providing there was sufficient space available in Walker Road School.

(ii) **School Capacities**

The roll projection database shows that the capacity at Walker Road School will be reached by August 2015. Informal discussions have already taken place with the Head Teacher and it has been confirmed that there is one further room on the second floor which can be utilised as a classroom to create additional capacity.

Officers will be working with the Head Teachers of both schools to ensure that there are plans to accommodate all of the young people who wish to attend either Tullos School or Walker Road School. Any plans for reconfiguring buildings will be brought to a future Committee meeting for approval.

(iii) **Other Comments**

The Service has committed to engage with the community of Torry, through the Community Council and to keep them apprised of any educational developments in the area. This will include any work which is required for both primary schools and regular updates on the new Academy which is being built to replace Kincorth and Torry Academies.

In relation to the future use of the Torry Academy building, it will be a decision for the Council to take following an options appraisal exercise which will be conducted at the appropriate time.

**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 19 May 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 the former Victoria Road School zone and remove the dual zoning arrangement currently in place between Tullos School and Walker Road School, with effect from August 2015.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

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

- (i) To implement the proposed rezoning of the former Victoria Road School zone and remove the dual zoning arrangements which currently exist for Tullos School and Walker Road School, with effect from August 2015.

**Gayle Gorman**  
**Director of Education, Culture and Sport**  
**July 2014**

**REPORT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND**

**Consultation proposal by Aberdeen City Council**

Report by Education Scotland, addressing educational aspects of the proposal to remove dual zoning of the former Victoria Road School zone and define Tullos and Walker Road Schools' zones.

**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 remove dual zoning of the former Victoria Road School zone and define Tullos and Walker Road Schools' zones. Victoria Road School was closed in 2008.

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 Monday 19 May 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; and
- visits to the site of Walker Road and Tullos Schools, 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 proposal with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 Very few formal written responses were received by Aberdeen City Council. Parents, children and staff from both schools who spoke to HM Inspectors were broadly in favour of the proposal. They recognised the need for the council to address school roll and capacity issues in the area and believed the proposal would provide a short-term solution to rising school rolls. They raised a number of additional concerns on the proposal and the details for its implementation.

2.3 Parents who spoke with HM Inspectors were concerned about the council's policy on siblings and were concerned that a situation could arise where siblings would have to attend different primary schools. The council has stated in response to questions raised, that priority would be given to brothers or sisters when parents apply through a school placing request. Parents wanted a stronger level of reassurance. Parents at Walker Road School who spoke to HM Inspectors were also concerned that those parents who used Walker Road Nursery might be under the impression that their children would gain the right to a place at Walker Road School. They felt that the council needs to communicate clearly with parents of nursery children to enable them to make appropriate decisions on where to place their children at nursery stage.

2.4 Parents who spoke with HM Inspectors and representatives of Torry Community Council who attended the public meeting were concerned about the longer-term investment in education in Torry and the potential need for another primary school in the area to cope with rising rolls in the future. They were aware of potential for further housing development and were of the view that the council was potentially underestimating pupil numbers in school roll forecasts. They were concerned that the council, in working together with partners to tackle social and economic deprivation in Torry, should give greater priority to a positive long-term plan for improving primary education in Torry.

2.5 Staff at both schools who spoke with HM Inspectors were concerned about the potential impact of rising school rolls on class sizes and use of accommodation. They were keen to ensure that refurbishment of the schools was undertaken as planned to enable a positive approach to delivering all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence, including outdoor learning. In Walker

Road School, detailed plans to improve the playground area are in place and new equipment has been ordered. Staff felt it was important to avoid the need for temporary classroom units as a means of addressing the rising roll. Staff who met with HM Inspectors were not aware of recent building surveys or timescales for refurbishment of buildings.

2.6 Children who spoke to HM Inspectors at both schools were well informed about the proposal. They had no major concerns. They valued their schools and wished to continue to attend their school with their friends. They were reassured that the proposals will not impact on children currently attending schools.

### **3. Educational aspects of the proposal**

3.1 Aberdeen City Council has provided a clear rationale for its proposal. If implemented it will result in more clearly defined school zones and provide greater certainty for parents and children in the former Victoria Road School zone. School rolls are rising and there is a need to avoid overcrowding at Walker Road School.

3.2 Parents raised the need for greater certainty on the position of siblings attending different schools. If the council implements its proposal it will need to provide more information on how it will allocate places to siblings of those children currently attending each of the schools affected.

3.3 If implemented, the proposals will require joint planning between Tullos School and Walker Road School, particularly in the transition from nursery to primary stages. The council will need to ensure it provides clear information to parents of nursery children about the catchment areas for each school to enable them to make informed choices.

3.4 Staff, parents and representatives of Torry Community Council expressed a need for a longer-term plan to address rising school rolls in the area and the council's approach to improving educational provision in the future. If the proposals are implemented, the council will need to work closely with stakeholders on its longer-term plan and vision for education in the Torry area. Aberdeen City Council officers agreed to accept a late written submission from Torry Community Council. The council will need to consider this submission in preparing its final report.

### **4. Summary**

A limited number of responses were made to Aberdeen City Council on its proposal. Parents, staff and children who spoke to HM Inspectors thought the proposal made sense in addressing school capacity and rising school rolls in the area. In its final consultation report, the council needs to address the concerns raised by stakeholders and consider the submission from Torry Community Council.

HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
June 2014