

To Re-Zone the Grandholm Village Area from Braehead School to Danestone School and Consequently from Bridge of Don Academy to Oldmachar Academy

Email Submissions

13/1/14

I received an e-mail from braehead saying the council are thinking about moving grandholm pupils at braehead to danestone primary.

I strongly disagree with the councils proposal as my daughter is settled at braehead and has lots of friends there. My son is excited about starting there as well as he has friends there too. As I drive my children to school braehead is closer.

Im sure I will not be the only parent to disagree as moving children from school to school is not a good idea from my point of view.

15/1/14

(The following email has been received from 2 individual respondents containing the same text.)

I would like to register my strong note of objection to the proposal to rezone the catchment areas of Braehead School: To rezone Grandholm Village from Braehead School to Danestone School and consequently from Bridge of Don Academy to Oldmachar Academy.

I have 2 children, a son aged 15 who attends Bridge of Don Academy, and a daughter 9 who attends Braehead School. I'm making an assumption that my son would continue to attend Bridge of Don Academy till 6th Year. Clearly it would be extremely damaging to him to move schools. Furthermore, the impact on my daughter hugely negative. She has attended Braehead School for 5 years and built strong relationships with her classmates and the staff. "Local catchment" area should be the nearest school. For example to walk to either Danestone or St Machar Academy, you have to walk past the road which leads you to Braehead and St Machar and then walk approximately another 1.5 miles. This is a nonsensical proposal which lacks logic and basic common sense. The approximate distance from our house to St Machar is 2.7 miles vs 1.5 miles. From a personal safety and road safety perspective, I would not allow my daughter to walk to school with these risks to her safety.

1/2/14

I am a resident of Grandholm Village with 2 children and am strongly in favour of the rezone for the following reasons;

1. Danestone is a shorter and safer walk from my house than Braehead. I would not let my children walk to Braehead, it is too far and there is too much traffic on the route.

2. The third Don Crossing is scheduled to be complete next year. This would make Danestone within both closer walking and driving distance than Braehead.

3. In my view the difference of 0.2m, as shown on the council map, in walking distance between the two secondary schools is negligible. Also the new road will significantly reduce the driving distance to Oldmachar.

4. As the proposal would be effective from August 2014 children already settled in either Braehead or Bridge of Don would remain there so there would be no disruption to existing pupils.

5. For those people with one child already at Braehead or Bridge of Don and another child still to attend either school, those parents can still make a placing request to the school of their choice. Based on the fact that the second child already has a sibling in the school and the tables published by the council show that both schools have capacity then they will still be able to send their child to the school of their choice.

1/2/14

I was recently at the meeting regarding the rezoning of the schools from Braehead to Danestone. From a parents viewpoint I totally support the proposal to implement this by August 2014. My main reason for choosing Danestone for my children is the benefits of the school being closer in terms of walking while to walk to Braehead introduces a main road to cross. My son is currently in P5 and I have confidence in him walking home from Danestone which is a small but important part in him gaining independence. This is something I would not have allowed him to do if he had been at Braehead, due to the speed the cars travel down Balgownie road despite the zebra crossing. I also feel that his fellow pupils are closer at Laurel than at Balgownie which is also important. I have applied for my daughter to attend Danestone for the same reasons.

If you would like to discuss any points with me please reply to me and I would be happy to help.

Regards

2/2/14

I would like to make a point regarding the proposed rezoning.

First of all I would like to make it clear that I wholeheartedly support the rezoning as it would formalise the current situation whereby the majority of parents in Grandholm send their children to Danestone (then Oldmachar) via placing requests. I live in the original part of Grandholm Village which is already zoned for Danestone plus my own child attends Danestone and this would mean that all children from Grandholm Village are zoned for the same school.

My point relates to pedestrian access. The quickest route on foot or bike takes children up Buckie Brae, a private road which connects Grandholm with Laurel Avenue. The problem section begins at the fork at Woodbine cottage where the pavement ends. There is a padlocked gate at Laurel Avenue and residents of the older properties in Grandholm plus the market garden and royal mail hold keys. Unfortunately the gate is regularly left open. Keys may have fallen into the wrong hands, and for whatever reason the gate is deliberately left open on an almost daily basis. On occasion the padlock has been vandalised so that it remains open for weeks. The result of this is additional traffic hurtling up and down the brae. There are no pavements, the brae twists so that visibility is poor and it is quite narrow so children are forced onto the verge when cars have to pass them. Even if children cut off the brae onto Laurel Park or Laurel Avenue at the bottom they still have to walk a little way up or down it.

I believe that subject to suitable access arrangements for View Cottage which is on the brae, it should be closed to vehicular access. I understand that this may take some time.

In the shorter term, pavements and traffic calming measures such as speed bumps could be constructed to make it safer for pedestrians. Many children use the brae at present and after rezoning many more will do so. We want to encourage children to walk to school and it is unrealistic to expect them to take a huge detour when there is a much quicker route available which could easily be made far safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

7/2/14

I am one of the parents of Grandholm Village who you spoke to at the recent public consultation regarding the re-zoning

I have a few concerns about the transition of my children should this proposal go ahead.

Firstly, let me explain my situation. I have a daughter who currently attends Braehead Nursery and I have already submitted my admission form for her to start Primary 1 in August 2014. I also have a son who is enrolled to start his anti-preschool year at Braehead on 1st May 2014.

If this proposal was to go ahead then I would want my children to attend Danestone Primary/Nursery. I guess my question to you is how would this transition work? The 12th June seems too late for the decision to be made as most places for Nursery and Primary are decided in March. How will my daughter settle from Nursery to Primary 1 in such a short space of time?

If my daughter does start Primary 1 at Danestone then I must have a place at Danestone Nursery for my son at the same time. I know that Danestone Nursery is at capacity but I can't have my children in two different schools. This would be extremely difficult to manage whether I was walking or driving to and from school.

In the case that my son is not granted a place at Danestone Nursery then I believe I do not have the right to appeal, is this correct? And if so, then why would they not consider this in my position?

In the mean time I have submitted admission forms for Braehead and Danestone for both my children for the new school year in August and just hope I get good news.

Please could you also submit this email to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee as my concerns on the re-zoning proposal.

Kind Regards

26/2/14

Good Morning,

I am submitting this e-mail on behalf of the Parent Council at Bridge of Don Academy.

The first point to be made is that Aberdeen City Council are causing a feeling of unease within Bridge of Don Academy by proposing consecutive rezoning arrangements. These appear on the surface to have little impact on the school and its current and future rolls but on further consideration could be an indication of a longer term plan to 'chip away' at the school roll.

It would therefore be appreciated if Aberdeen City Council could give some sort of assurance that this is not the intention and we would also seek clarification that future house building is expected to result in an increased roll for Bridge of Don Academy. As we all know a reduced roll has implications for many areas of school life including a reduced breadth of subject choice and difficulty in providing the range of learning experiences, both curricular and extra-curricular, so valued by our pupils and their families.

Secondly, while we understand the rezoning from the primary perspective, ie Danestone School being physically closer to Grandholm Village than Braehead, the same cannot be said from a secondary school view. Not only is Bridge of Don Academy closer to Grandholm Village, it can also be accessed without the need to cross the Parkway, one of Aberdeen's busiest roads, with speed limits of 50mph along much of its length. Is it sensible to zone pupils to Oldmachar Academy when to reach this school they will have to walk past Bridge of Don Academy?

Does it then not make much more sense to rezone Grandholm Village to Danestone Primary but also to rezone Danestone primary in its entirety to Bridge of Don Academy? This would make road safety sense all round by preventing the need for any pupils crossing the Parkway and tie in with Safer Routes to School.

The proposal makes no mention of any financial implications resulting from the proposed rezoning, ie the requirement for school transport provision, it would be appreciated if ACC could confirm the position with regard to rezoned (or not) pupils.

In the proposal document the educational benefits of the rezoning are listed as :

1. Improved quality of transition between primary 7 and secondary 1
2. Greater coherence of educational programmes
3. Formalisation of the zoning arrangements which reflect current parental choice

There are already very strong and effective transition procedures in place which we do not feel would be improved by any rezoning and indeed, considering the numbers of pupils quoted in the proposal, we would question whether 1 and 2 would be brought about as a result of this process. In particular we would be interested in what ACC mean when they say 'greater coherence'. Should educational programmes be anything other than coherent regardless of whether a school is involved in a rezoning exercise and if so, where will improvement be made?

Also, given the numbers of pupils attending each school at present, is the proposal really going to 'reflect parental choice' and will it result in an educational benefit?

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to your response.

Regards

26/2/14

I would like to reiterate all the points so eloquently expressed by a respondent on 02/02/14 regarding the proposed rezoning as above and pedestrian access. I am a resident of the original Grandholm Village and still have one child at Danestone.

Buckie Brae which would be the walking route of choice has no pavement, an almost permanently open gate and lots of dog excreta on the grass verges at the sides. From experience meeting a 4 X 4 with a toddler and a pushchair is difficult. Traffic speeds down the hill and visibility at the bottom is poor.

Some of the walls next to the pavement leading from the roundabout at the bottom of the old village to the bottom of Buckie Brae are also crumbling and require attention to make them safe.

As we are encouraging all children to walk their safety is paramount and I feel this cannot be guaranteed until the above points are addressed. If these points are addressed it is a nice quiet walk and a great idea.

Kind Regards

27/2/14

I wish to submit our views with regards to the proposed re-zoning of Grandholm Village Schools.

Firstly we decided to buy our home because it was in the catchment for Braehead and we are in a different position to most as we have four children. The eldest is at Bridge of Don Academy we have one child in Braehead P6 one who has been accepted in to P1 and a baby who has not started nursery yet. Clearly we can't be in a position of trying to get our kids to/from 3 locations at the same time?

I can see your point that once the new road is built Danestone School will be the closest however Oldmachar Academy is almost twice as far as Bridge of Don Academy by foot and further by car.

I thought the whole idea of the pedestrian under passes on the new 3rd Don Crossing was in main for children from the Village walking to and from Braehead school and Bridge of Don Academy without crossing a main trunk road?

Your proposed change forces Grandholm Village children to walk twice as far to Academy and cross the Parkway trunk road which is a very busy fast road.

We want our children to remain at Braehead & Bridge of Don Academy.

Regards
