

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to make a number of small adjustments to the school zones of Airyhall School, Broomhill School, Hazlehead Academy and Harlaw Academy, with effect from 1 August 2017; and to rezone an area of ground which lies south of North Deeside Road and west of Pitfodels Station Road, from the Airyhall School zone to the Cults School zone, with effect from 1 August 2017.

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 make a number of small adjustments to the school zones of Airyhall School, Broomhill School, Hazlehead Academy and Harlaw Academy, with effect from 1 August 2017; and to rezone an area of ground which lies south of North Deeside Road and west of Pitfodels Station Road, from the Airyhall School zone to the Cults School zone, with effect from 1 August 2017. 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 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
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from 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:

- 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 Airyhall, Broomhill and Cults schools, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Aberdeen City Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 Aberdeen City Council undertook a statutory consultation which ran from Monday 16 January until Friday 3 March 2017. Information was provided to stakeholders including parents of children attending relevant schools. The proposal document was available on the council website and at the council's headquarters, local libraries and local council offices. A public meeting was held on the 8 February 2017 which was attended by three stakeholders, none of whom lived in the areas affected. Attendees at the public meeting wanted further clarification about the proposal. The council received a few written responses to the proposal.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The council proposes to realign the school zones of Airyhall, Broomhill and Cults schools and to match these with the school zones for Hazlehead Academy and Harlaw Academy. The proposed new school zones are better aligned and this will ensure that children will always be moving to secondary school with the peer group of children with whom they attended their local primary school. In making the proposed changes, the council hopes to continue to manage effectively demand for places since very few children and families will be involved. The proposal supports safe routes to school by cutting out the need for children currently living south of North Deeside Road from crossing to attend Airyhall School.

3.2 Parents who met with Inspectors were supportive of the proposals. They recognised the council's need to provide clarity around school zones for both primary and secondary schools in the area. A few parents at the public meeting wanted further clarification on the proposal which council officers provided.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors consider that, if implemented, the proposal to alter the school zones has the potential to help children, young people and their families. There are potential gains for improving the transition of a small number of children as they transfer from primary to secondary school. Children will no longer need to cross North Deeside Road to get to Airyhall School. If the proposal goes ahead, the council have given re-assurance to parents of children already attending school in

the areas affected that they and their siblings will be able to attend their current school and the secondary school for which existing links are in place.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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