

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning ground to a new, third primary school in Torry, with effect from August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.

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 amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning ground to a new, third primary school in Torry, with effect from August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter. 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 of the school; 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:

- attendance at two public meetings held on 9 and 10 November 2016 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 sites of Tullos School and Walker Road School, 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 in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The consultation process ran from 24 October 2016 to 9 December 2016. During this period the council held two public meetings: one in Tullos School and one in Walker Road School. Notification of the proposal was provided to all statutory consultees and the documentation was made available on the council's website, in council offices, public libraries in the vicinity and in Tullos and Walker Road Schools. A proforma was made available for submissions. The council received 13 submissions of which nine were in favour and four were against the construction of a new primary school on the proposed site. Eight stakeholders attended the public meetings and they were in favour of the proposal. The main issues raised were concerns about whether the new school could be staffed and whether investment would continue in the current schools.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The proposal to amend the current school zones and build a third primary school and early years provision in the Torry area has strong educational benefits. The existing primary schools are at or over capacity and there is very little flexible space to provide different learning experiences. A new primary school will ease pressure on the current schools and provide a modern learning environment and much needed provision for 200 nursery children. This has the potential to improve the delivery of early years education and improve the learning experiences of children in all three schools.

3.2 All parents, pupils and staff who met with HM Inspectors support the proposal. They agree that the new primary school offers many benefits, including the potential to increase the interaction with the local community, easier access and improved facilities in which to teach and learn. They have some concerns about safe routes to school for primary aged children and whether the council will be able to staff the new school in light of the current difficulties in appointing teachers in Aberdeen. If the proposal goes ahead, they are very keen to work with the council on the design of the new school and community hub.

4. Summary

Aberdeen City Council's proposal to amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning ground to a new, third primary school in Torry has strong educational benefits. It will provide modern purpose-built facilities for nursery and school children. There will be increased space and more

flexible facilities for staff and pupils in all three schools. The new school and early years provision will result in more space for children in the current schools. This will have the potential to help staff improve learning and teaching for all children. In taking forward its proposal, the council should continue to work with all stakeholders to deliver safe routes to the new school, reassure stakeholders that the school can be staffed and develop a design, within the council's budget, which meets the needs of pupils, parents, staff and the local community.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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