

## **Consultation proposal by Aberdeen City Council**

**Report by Education Scotland, addressing educational aspects of the proposal to rezone the former BP Headquarters part of the Stoneywood School catchment area to Dyce School and consequently from Bucksburn Academy to Dyce Academy.**

### **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 rezone the former BP Headquarters part of the Stoneywood School catchment area to Dyce School and consequently from Bucksburn Academy to Dyce Academy. It is planned that 164 houses will be built on this site. In addition to this development, a further 500 houses will be built in other parts of the Stoneywood catchment area. It is anticipated that Stoneywood School will exceed its capacity by 2014/15.

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 27 January 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 Stoneywood School, Bucksburn Academy, Dyce School and Dyce Academy 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 proposals with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. The consultation process took place between 13 January to 28 February 2014 including a public meeting on 27 January 2014.

2.2 Overall, there was strong support for the proposal. It was realised that the proposal formalised what was already happening in the area with children and young people in the relevant part of the Stoneywood catchment area not attending Stoneywood School or Bucksburn Academy but almost all attending Dyce School and Dyce Academy. Other school age children in the area attended other schools in Aberdeen.

2.3 It was the view that the proposal made sense as it did start to address, albeit on a small scale, accommodation issues which have been identified for Stoneywood School and in due course Bucksburn Academy. Both Dyce School and Dyce Academy have the extra capacity to accommodate additional children and young people. This was recognised by the Parent Council at Dyce Academy. It was also recognised by stakeholders including community representatives that Dyce School and Dyce Academy would actually be a shorter walking distance for children and young people residing in the area.

2.4 Young people who currently attend Dyce Academy and reside in the area referred to in the consultation paper felt the proposal was logical as it was simply reinforcing what was happening already.

2.5 It was recognised by all who responded to the consultation, and at the Public Meeting, that pedestrian crossing lights would be essential on Riverview Drive to ensure a safe walking route to Dyce School and Dyce Academy from the area concerned.

2.6 A few responses expressed concern about staffing in Dyce School being able to accommodate this. This comment was also related to the nursery. It was commented upon that no figures for nursery children were stated in the proposal.

2.7 Comment was also made in one written response about the need for Aberdeen City Council to take a greater overview of house building in the area, the available school places and the school places that will be necessary in the future. The need for a more strategic plan to address the future accommodation issues for schools in the area was expressed verbally by several consultees.

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

3.1 Implementation of the proposal states that the proposal would formalise Aberdeen City Council's current zoning arrangements which reflect current parental choice for children/young people living in the area of the proposal. It would formalise arrangements to ensure a coherent, continuous three to 18 education for children/young people in that part of the current Stoneywood catchment area. This would also formalise quality transition arrangements between Primary and Secondary Schools for children living in the area.

3.2 The proposal would have educational benefits for other children/young people in the area as there would be a small reduction in potential pupil numbers at Stoneywood School and Bucksburn Academy. Aberdeen City Council is aware that this would provide minor alleviation for the potential of the school rolls, in particular at Stoneywood, reaching capacity. It is acknowledged that further future proposals would be necessary to address the pressure on places at Stoneywood School and other schools in the area.

3.3 The enrolments of pupils currently attending any of the schools would not be effected by this proposal. Children and young people who are due to attend the two schools within two years of the publication of the proposal paper would experience the same benefits as those currently attending.

### **4. Summary**

4.1 Aberdeen City Council presents a clear rationale to rezone the former BP Headquarters part of the Stoneywood School catchment area to Dyce School and consequently from Bucksburn Academy to Dyce Academy. As this will formalise what is already happening in the area through parental placing requests, there are clear educational benefits within this proposal in reinforcing a continuum in learning experiences for pupils from three to 18 who live in the area. This benefit will be similar for children/young people attending Dyce School and Dyce Academy now and for those who will be in attendance in two years from the date of this proposal. There will also be some benefits for children/young people attending Stoneywood School and Bucksburn Academy as this proposal will have some impact on not increasing pupil numbers in both schools in the short term.

4.2 Overall, there was strong support in favour of the proposal and consultees saw the proposal as making sense and the most suitable option available at this time. In taking forward the proposal, Aberdeen City Council needs to continue to

liaise closely with all stakeholders to address the few operational concerns which surround this proposal. In particular Aberdeen City Council should continue to consult with stakeholders in the Dyce / Stoneywood community, including young people who are attending Dyce Academy, as to the exact location(s) for the installation of crossing lights on Riverview Drive. In so doing, Aberdeen City Council should reassure the community about a timescale for this. Reassurances should also be given about concerns raised about staffing issues at Dyce School, particularly within the nursery, which may not be directly associated with this proposal.

4.3 Aberdeen City Council is aware that, as part of its estates strategy, it should continue with plans to give a strategic overview to the increasing pupil numbers, including nursery children, in the area and how they will be accommodated. Specific attention should be given to the implications for Stoneywood School, in the first instance, to ensure that the educational benefits coming from this proposal are not negated.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
March 2014**