

# **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to establish a new primary school within the Countesswells development and relocate pupils zoned to Countesswells from their current temporary accommodation to the newly constructed building following completion.**

June 2019

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Aberdeen City Council's proposal to establish a new primary school within the Countesswells development and relocate pupils zoned to Countesswells from their current temporary accommodation to the newly constructed building following completion. 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 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.

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 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 the public meeting held on 21 May 2019 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
- visit to the sites of Airyhall School and the new Countesswells School, 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](#).

2.2 Aberdeen City Council is reshaping its service delivery model including forward planning for its entire estate. The proposal is to develop a new two stream primary school and early years provision within the new Countesswells development. It will provide a purpose built learning environment for children living within the Countesswells community school zone and provide capacity as the area continues to grow. Following a statutory consultation in October 2015, new school catchment zones were created. An interim arrangement was agreed in March 2016 whereby all primary-aged pupils from the new development would be housed at Airyhall School.

The original plan was for the children to then move to Braeside School which would provide additional classroom space. However, a subsequent decision was made in May 2018 to accommodate them in Hazlewood School instead of Braeside School due to its increased capacity as the school roll continues to grow. Aberdeen City Council set out their consultation from 22 April to 7 June 2019. They consulted with a range of stakeholders including parents. A public meeting was held on 21 May 2019 and attended by around 25 people. The council received 23 written responses to the proposal. Of those responses, 21 agreed with it and two disagreed.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council gave due consideration to the educational aspects of the proposal to build the new school. Almost all those who responded agreed with the proposal. The council recognise that a purpose-built school would deliver a much-improved learning environment for the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. The new building will provide additional outdoor learning space that should contribute to the wellbeing of the children. The new school will also have early learning and childcare facilities on site which should help with the smooth transition from nursery to primary. In addition, the proposal should help ease the longer term capacity issues within Airyhall.

3.2 Overall, feedback from stakeholders overwhelmingly supports the council's plans to build a new school at Countesswells. Parents, children and staff at Airyhall School were in general agreement with the planned move to Hazlewood in advance of the new Countesswells School being opened in August 2021. Whilst the current arrangements at Airyhall work well, children and parents agreed that the move to Hazlewood and then subsequently to Countesswells will give them their own sense of identity. However, the Parent Council from Airyhall School submitted a written response highlighting a few issues of concern. Parents have questions about early learning and childcare provision whilst the new school is being built and there is a perception that some families may not get access to the early learning and childcare that they require. Similarly, arrangements for after-school club provision and children with additional support needs was also highlighted by the Parent Council. Whilst these do not impact directly on the provision of the new school, the council needs to ensure that parents are kept fully informed as the development progresses. At both the public meeting and the visit to Airyhall School, parents expressed the view that they would like to be involved in the ongoing discussions about the design of the new school.

### 4. Summary

HM Inspectors consider that the council has laid out its plans for the development of a new school at Countesswells appropriately. Almost all of those who responded to the consultation exercise are in agreement with the proposal. The council should continue to keep parents and others in the local community informed about progress as the new school takes shape.

**HM Inspectors**  
**June 2019**