

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

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to relocate Walker Road School and alter the existing catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School**

February 2023

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His 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 relocate Walker Road School and alter the existing catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School. 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 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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 18 January 2023 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;
- visits to the sites of Walker Road School and Tullos 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 The council ran a public consultation from 5 December 2022 to 31 January 2023. Copies of the proposal document were made available to stakeholders, including parents and children from both schools. The proposal was also available on the council's website. Stakeholders were invited to respond to the consultation online using a form or by email. The council received two emails and 20 responses to the online form. Of the people that completed the online form or emailed 77% were in favour of the proposal. The council held a public meeting at Walker Road School on 18 January 2023. This was attended by six members of the public as well as school staff and elected members. Overall, most stakeholders are positive about the opportunities the new build presents for children. However, stakeholders raised worries about road safety for children who

walk to school. They feel there is a need for improvements such as new road crossings and school patrol officers. For a few parents, the proposed changes to the catchment areas have caused some confusion and concern. This is partly as a result of previous plans for the new school to be a third school in the area with both Tullos School and Walker Road School remaining open. This resulted in changed catchment areas. The Council should consider how to provide further reassurance to parents about the proposed catchment areas.

2.3 Walker Road School opened in 1897 and is a landmark building in the community. Many stakeholders have positive memories of the school. Local people, including parents, are concerned about what will happen to the existing school site if the proposal is approved. The community have recent experience of a closed school becoming derelict. They would like the council to prevent that happening to Walker Road School.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits the council presents in its proposal. The proposed design for the school should provide an enhanced environment for delivering teaching and learning. All stakeholders that HM Inspectors spoke with are enthusiastic about the opportunities the new site offers. In particular, they look forward to the improved play and outdoor learning facilities if the proposal is approved. A few stakeholders mentioned that the planned onsite school kitchen and larger dining area should improve children's dining experience. Children are excited about the improved playground, toilets, changing facilities and social areas. Stakeholders, including children at both local schools, would like to be involved in the naming of and designs for the new school site. A few stakeholders queried the timing of the consultation given that the development of the new site is well underway.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders that HM Inspectors met with are positive that the site will host a wider range of services and organisations alongside the school. Children attending both Walker Road and Tullos Schools would like to access the hub for after school and weekend activities. However, staff and parents have concerns regarding the costs for the use of the premises and any negative impact that this may have on its use by local organisations, such as after school groups. A few children are anxious about moving to a larger site and suggest that having tours of the new building would help them to become familiar with the school prior to moving. Parents want the council to explore further how the new site will complement and build on the existing range of community and sports facilities in the area. Walker Road School Parent Council would appreciate the council providing more information on what safeguarding processes and procedures will be put in place, given the school will be part of a multi-use hub.

3.3 The children and parents that HM Inspectors spoke to raised concerns about traffic on the main roads near the new school site. If the proposal is approved, children's routes to walk or cycle to the new school site will include busy through roads that have cars parked on either side. If the proposal is approved, the council should work with stakeholders, including Walker Road School Parent Council, to ensure that there are safe routes to school.

### 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits the council has laid out in its proposal. The design for the new building will have enhanced learning spaces, including for outdoor learning. Almost all stakeholders are positive about the learning and social spaces the new building should provide for children and members of the wider community. Children are enthusiastic that the plans show that there will be more child friendly play areas than is available at the current Walker Road School site. The council should consider how best to provide reassurance for those parents who are confused or concerned about the proposed catchments areas. If the proposal is approved, the

council will need to work with stakeholders to ensure children have safe routes to the new school building. Similarly, the council should consider how it can best work with the community to explore the future use of the current Walker Road School site.

**HM Inspectors**  
**February 2023**