

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by South Lanarkshire Council to realign the catchment areas of Newton Farm and Hallside Primary Schools, including altering the secondary school those pupils in the rezoned area would attend from Uddingston Grammar School to Cathkin High School.

December 2021

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 South Lanarkshire Council's proposal to realign the catchment areas of Newton Farm and Hallside Primary Schools, including altering the secondary school those pupils in the rezoned area would attend from Uddingston Grammar School to Cathkin High 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 2010 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 virtual public meeting held on 9 November 2021 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
- virtual visits to the site of Newton Farm Primary School and Hallside Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees and discussions with the headteachers of Uddingston Grammar School and Cathkin High School.

2. Consultation process

2.1 South Lanarkshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The consultation ran from 25 October until 6 December 2021. Copies of the consultation proposal document were made available in local council buildings, council libraries and via the council website. In the light of public health concerns, virtual public meetings were held on 9 and 10 November 2021. Sixteen stakeholders attended the virtual meeting on 9 November 2021 and 11 stakeholders on the 10 November 2021. The council received 225 responses from stakeholders to their online questionnaire. Thirty-nine per cent were in favour, 51% against and

10% were undecided. Overall, the response rate from parents was low. There was stronger support for the proposal from parents of children and young people attending Hallside Primary School and Uddingston Grammar School. The majority of parents of children and young people attending Newton Farm Primary School and Cathkin High School were against the proposal. All of the pupils who responded from Hallside Primary School were in favour, and the pupils from Newton Farm were evenly split.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines the main educational benefit from the proposal as being of assistance in managing capacity pressures at Newton Farm Primary School and making better use of the underutilised capacity at Hallside Primary School.

3.2 Stakeholders from Newton Farm Primary School who met with HM Inspectors recognise that the current situation where the use of the gym hall as a teaching area limits its use for wider celebrations and activities. Currently, physical education requires to be outdoors in varied weather conditions. All children, staff and parents are pleased that the extension to the building will resolve these issues. They are more mixed in their support for the council's proposal to alter the schools' catchment areas but are aware that future house building could add to the school roll in the future.

3.3 Staff and children at Hallside Primary School who met with HM Inspectors are positive about the proposal. They believe there are sufficient grounds, space and classrooms to accommodate any additional pupils in the future. Growing pupil numbers will also help to stabilise staff numbers, management time and posts which all stakeholders see as helping to raise morale in the school.

3.4 Parents from all schools welcomed the commitment by the council to allow children and young people to continue to attend their current school. They were also positive about the provision for siblings to attend the same school as their older brothers and sisters.

3.5 In terms of secondary provision, the proposal will assist in managing pupil rolls in the future. Stakeholders in the schools affected broadly welcome the proposal. They see the value in limiting pressures in any one school and having a more even distribution of young people. They view this as important in terms of facilities, resourcing and the curricular offers. In finalising the proposal, South Lanarkshire Council should give further consideration to outlining more clearly the educational benefits for children, young people and their parents. Greater background detail on the rolls and capacities of the secondary schools will assist the community. This will help stakeholders to understand better the potential pressures facing schools in the future and how actions taken now can mitigate against these.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors' agree that the proposal has potential educational benefits. The proposal will, if approved, support a more even distribution of children and young people in the affected schools in the future. New catchment areas should be clear and provide assurance for parents as to which areas and neighbourhoods are linked to each of the catchment schools. The council could provide more detail outlining its position with regard to the educational benefits, particularly in secondary schools, to support stakeholders in understanding better the issues.