

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Dunbartonshire Council on the relocation of Lenzie Academy from Myrtle Avenue to Whitegates Playing Fields, Lenzie.

September 2024

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 a proposal by East Dunbartonshire Council. The proposal is to relocate Lenzie Academy from Myrtle Avenue to Whitegates Playing Fields (also known as Whitegates Park), Lenzie. 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' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's 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 consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper;
- 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 drop-in session held on 20 August 2024 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;
- 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 Lenzie Academy, Lairdsland Primary School (PS), Lenzie Meadows PS, Lennoxton PS, Millersneuk PS and Auchinloch PS, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The council undertook the consultation from Tuesday 7 May until Friday 23 August 2024. The proposal document and notification of the drop-in session were distributed to stakeholders, including parents and the local community council. The council hosted a drop-in session on

20 August 2024 at Lenzie Academy. A total of 69 people attended the drop-in session. Two hundred and eighty-nine stakeholders completed an online survey. Overall, most of the survey respondents were parents, of which, most were in favour of the proposal. Although most respondents agree with the proposal a significant minority do not support the chosen site. Those who do not support the proposed site have concerns about the potential environmental impact, suitability of the site for building, increase in traffic and loss of a community resource. Council staff engaged with children and young people at Lenzie Academy and associated primary schools to gather their views on a new school. The children and young people were also invited to complete a survey that asked if they would benefit from a new-build school. Most of the 409 respondents agreed with the statement.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits outlined in the council's proposal. The current state of the existing Lenzie Academy is negatively impacting on learners. For example, a few areas of the building cannot be used at times due to water ingress. The building has narrow corridors and is not fully accessible. The council's plan to create a modern school with up-to-date resources and technology will help support their aim to provide a flexible learning environment that meets learners' needs. Children and young people will benefit from improved indoor and outdoor facilities that have the potential to better support the delivery of the curriculum.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with children and young people, parents and staff. Almost all stakeholders agree that the current school building is no longer fit for purpose and that a new school building is needed. Should the proposal be approved, the children and young people look forward to learning in a bright, welcoming space with the resources and technology needed to meet their aspirations. Parents would like confirmation of the timescale. They are concerned that the current building will deteriorate further while the new building is constructed. Staff at Lenzie Academy are keen to embrace the opportunities of a new school and outdoor space, including upgraded technology, new equipment and flexible learning spaces. They are keen to offer their expertise and experience to inform the design of the new building. This will help to ensure that the space and equipment meets the needs of learners. A few stakeholders would like assurance that the proposed new building will have the capacity to meet the future population of the school catchment. The majority of stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors would like more information on the design of the new school and the facilities it will have.

3.3 The majority of stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposed site. A minority of stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors do not agree with the council's choice of the site at Whitegates Park. They have concerns about the location, potential environmental impact and safe routes to school. A few parents and staff raised the issue of the land being contaminated. They would like assurance from the council that the land is safe to use. A few stakeholders wish to have more clarity on the council's reasons for choosing this site.

3.4 During the consultation period stakeholders identified alleged inaccuracies in the proposal. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to investigate these alleged inaccuracies. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it.

4. Summary

In summary, HM Inspectors agree with the education benefits of the proposal to build a new Lenzie Academy. The current building is not able to provide the modern education environment to support learners' aspirations. HM Inspectors noted stakeholders concerns about the suitability of the identified site. Should the council take this proposal forward, they should continue to engage

with stakeholders to address these concerns. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it.

HM Inspectors
September 2024