

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Stirling Council to relocate Callander Primary School to a site adjacent to McLaren High School.

November 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 Stirling Council's proposal to relocate Callander Primary School to a site adjacent to McLaren 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 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 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 public meeting held on 18 September 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; and
- visits to the site of Callander Primary School and McLaren High School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The statutory consultation ran from 28 August to 11 October 2023. Copies of the consultation proposal were made available to statutory consultees. The council engaged with statutory consultees through the Stirling Council Engage Platform, additional social media platforms, and by making paper copies available in the Callander public library.

2.3 A public meeting took place at Callander Primary School on 18 September 2023. Twenty-three stakeholders took part in this meeting. The council arranged consultation sessions with small groups of children from Callander Primary School and young people from McLaren High School. All of the children from Callander Primary School who participated in the consultation

session supported the proposal to relocate their school. Young people from McLaren High School raised a few concerns in relation to the proposal. This related to the potential impact of the primary school build on existing spaces and resources, as well as the suggested shared outdoors spaces contained in the proposal. They were particularly concerned about the impact to the delivery of physical education (PE). The council received 121 responses to an online questionnaire relating to the public consultation, in addition to two email responses from stakeholders. Seventy percent of these online responses were in favour of the proposal, 15% were against, and 15% indicated that they were not sure if they were in favour of the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council identify a number of problems impacting on the suitability of Callander Primary School. These include limitations to the space available, environmental and accessibility issues, and aging toilet and cloakroom facilities. The building is not well-designed or equipped to support children with additional support needs (ASN) who access the enhanced provision. The school's external grounds are inadequate for outdoor play and learning. The listed building status also present challenges to replacing the building in the current location.

3.2 The council has set out clearly a number of important educational benefits in its proposal paper. A new 2-18 education campus at the site of McLaren High School has the potential to improve the learning environment for children. Purpose-built classrooms and flexible teaching spaces could improve learner experiences significantly. The proposed new location could also help build further partnership working between the early learning and childcare, primary and secondary school. The council anticipate that this will enhance children's and young people's transitions, and provide opportunities to develop their skills for learning, life and work. The proposed school would offer an enhanced provision for children with ASN, with access to appropriate toilet and changing facilities, and improved access to outdoor spaces. Staff and parents recognise this has the potential to improve children's daily transitions and the quality of support they receive.

3.3 All of the children and young people, staff and parents who met with HM Inspectors welcomed the improved facilities offered by the proposal. Children look forward to accessing better sports facilities and specialist areas for art and music. Teachers see the potential to take more creative approaches to learning and teaching in a modern setting. This includes increased group work and collaborative projects with children and young people from across the campus.

3.4 Young people and staff from McLaren High School who met with HM Inspectors would like further information and consultation in relation to aspects of the proposal. These include the transition arrangements during the school build and the repurposing of green space to replace land currently used for PE. A few parents and staff expressed concern about the potential increase in road traffic around the campus and the ongoing need for improved infrastructure to support safe walking routes to school. Parents also questioned whether the capacity of the new building would be sufficient to meet the demands of recent housing developments in the area. Young people and children who met with HM Inspectors would like more opportunities to contribute their ideas for the development of the plans for the new campus.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that Stirling Council's proposal to establish a new primary school has clear potential educational benefits. The proposal addresses accommodation pressures due to the age of the current building. Children attending the new Callander Primary School will benefit from a modern, improved learning environment. The new school will help to promote creative and engaging teaching approaches and offer facilities that better support children's wellbeing and

access to outdoor learning. In taking forward the proposal, the council should provide further reassurance that the new school meets the demands of the local community in terms of roll capacity. They should consult further with young people and staff in relation to the transition period and repurposed green spaces. The council should continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure all children and young people can confidently access safe walking routes to the new campus. Finally, the council should consider how ongoing engagement and communication with key stakeholders ensures that all feel included and informed in the next stages of development.

HM Inspectors
November 2023