

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Fife Council to relocate Inverkeithing High School from its current site of Hillend Road, Inverkeithing to a new site at The Fleet Grounds, Rosyth.

June 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 Fife Council's proposal to relocate Inverkeithing High School from its current site of Hillend Road, Inverkeithing to a new site at The Fleet Grounds, Rosyth. 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 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; 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 20 April, 15 May and 22 May 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;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal; and
- visits to the site of Inverkeithing High School (HS), Aberdour Primary School (PS), Camdean PS, Dalgety Bay PS, Donibristle PS, Inverkeithing PS, Kings Road PS, North Queensferry PS, Park Road PS and Treetop Family Nurture Centre, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation period ran from 18 April to 2 June 2023. The council advertised the consultation process in local newspapers and made copies of the proposal document available to the public and stakeholders. Fife Council held three public meetings at Inverkeithing HS, Kings Road PS and Dalgety Bay PS. A total of 43 stakeholders attended across all the meetings. In addition, 216 stakeholders responded to the online survey and another five written submissions

were received by the council. Most of these responses were submitted by parents and carers. Of the responses to the online survey, 64 were in favour and 141 against the proposal.

2.3 The council facilitated consultations sessions with 478 pupils in Inverkeithing HS and the eight cluster primary schools. The council also issued an online questionnaire to all S1–S3 pupils and P4–P7 primary pupils within the cluster. The majority of primary pupils and most secondary pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the replacement high school should be relocated to a new site proposed in Rosyth. Most children and young people agreed that there is a need to replace the existing building and were positive about the facilities that would be offered in a new build school.

2.4 Stakeholders expressed a range of concerns about the impact of this proposal. These were mainly related to the proposed location at the far west of the catchment area. Stakeholders, including children and young people, were concerned about the increased travel time for pupils from the east of the catchment and potential negative environmental impact because of the additional journeys. Stakeholders were concerned that the proposal would reduce the number of pupils choosing active travel to school and will increase local road traffic.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council has set out a clear rationale how the proposal to relocate Inverkeithing HS will provide educational benefits. They state that a new learning environment will better support learning. The current building is in poor and deteriorating condition and has very limited accessibility. They state that a new school will offer modern and inclusive accommodation that better meets the needs of all learners. The new building should improve use of digital technology to better support the delivery of the curriculum. The council outlines how the proposal will create flexible indoor and outdoor learning spaces for school and community use to support the wellbeing of all learners. HM Inspectors agree that there is the potential for a new school building and grounds to offer educational benefits. Almost all children and young people who met with HM Inspectors are positive about the development of a new school. They are excited about having modern, purpose-built facilities and resources that will support their learning. A few noted that it is important that the new school will be more inclusive and accessible. This will enable all children and young people in the cluster, including those with additional support needs, to transition to the same high school. Children and young people would strongly value being included in influencing the planning and design of their new school. The council predict that the school roll will be over capacity in the first two years. However, parents who met with HM Inspectors are concerned that the council may have underestimated the projected school roll and the new school may not have the space that is needed.

3.2 A majority of parents and carers who met with HM Inspectors, expressed concern about the proposed relocation to the west of the catchment area and prefer the current central location. The school catchment is divided by a motorway and the main access to the new school will be via a busy trunk road. A few parents in Rosyth that met with HM Inspectors are concerned about a potential increase in traffic and the potential reduction in green space. They feel this could have a negative impact on the environment. They suggest that speed limits on the roads around the proposed site should be reduced to lower the risk of accidents. Stakeholders have significant concerns about safe walking and cycling routes to school. They are concerned that this could reduce the number of young people who will choose active travel routes. If the proposal is accepted it will be important that the council works with stakeholders, including young people, to ensure there are safe walking and cycling routes to school prior to the school opening. Stakeholders raised the need for the new site, if agreed, to have a wider range of entrance and exit routes, ideally that separate those walking, those cycling and vehicular traffic. A few

stakeholders are concerned about the availability and accessibility of public transport and the implications for those who need to commute to and from the school.

3.3 The proposal sets out that almost all current community use and range of activities available will transfer to the proposed new secondary school. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors have mixed views on this aspect of the proposal. They are positive about the prospect of a new school including community use facilities for leisure, sport and cultural facilities. However, most stakeholders are concerned about the reduction in facilities including the swimming pool. A few stakeholders raised concerns that moving facilities from the current site could reduce the uptake of out of school activities. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors, are concerned about what will happen to the existing community facilities and expressed the need for some green space and facilities to be retained or created at the site. It will be important for the council, if the proposal is agreed, to continue to consult with stakeholders, where appropriate, about the design of what is included in the new school and in considerations about the use of the existing site.

3.4 Overall, all stakeholders recognise the need for a new school. Several stakeholders that met with HM Inspectors expressed concern about the condition and suitability of the current learning environment. They appreciate that the council's resources are limited. However, they would like the council to look at what more can be done to improve the school site while it remains in use. HM Inspectors agree that it is important that schools provide a safe and suitable learning environment, even when they have a limited life span.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential to provide educational benefits. The new building should provide improved indoor and outdoor learning facilities which support effective delivery of the curriculum. Any new school site will also be more accessible and inclusive than the current school. Almost all stakeholders agree that there is a need for improved facilities. However, the majority of stakeholders have concerns about the proposed location for the new school. They are concerned about young people having access to safe walking and cycling routes to school. They are also worried about the potential impact of increased traffic on an already busy trunk road. Should the proposal be approved, it will be important that the council ensure there are safe routes to school and viable plans to manage any increased traffic. If the proposal is agreed, HM Inspectors recommend that the council work with stakeholders to help mitigate their concerns and involve them, as appropriate, in the development of the new school.

HM Inspectors
June 2023