

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

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The City of Edinburgh Council to realign the catchment areas of Clovenstone Primary School, Sighthill Primary School and Wester Hailes Education Centre to accommodate the proposed Edinburgh Park and Curriemuirend development sites.**

October 2019

## 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 The City of Edinburgh Council's proposal to realign the catchment areas of Clovenstone Primary School, Sighthill Primary School and Wester Hailes Education Centre to accommodate the proposed Edinburgh Park and Curriemuirend development sites. 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 19 September 2019 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 site of Clovenstone Primary School, Sighthill Primary School and Wester Hailes Education Centre including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation ran from 26 August to 7 October 2019. The council posted the proposal on its website and paper copies were also available in the council offices at Waverly Court, at Wester Hailes library and at the schools affected by the proposals. A letter was also sent to the parents of children currently attending each of the schools affected by the proposal. A public meeting was held in Wester Hailes Education Centre on 19 September 2019 and one member of the public attended. The council received six electronic responses to the consultation. There were no strong objections to the proposal to realign school catchment areas.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council set out a clear rationale for the realignment of catchment areas across several schools in the west of Edinburgh. The council's projections show that these schools will continue to have a viable and sustainable school roll over time as a result of these proposals. The council acknowledges that there are currently few immediate educational impacts as the proposals do not affect any of the existing children or young people attending these schools. In the longer term, should new housing be built on either of the two identified sites, the current proposals will help to ensure that effective teacher staffing levels can be maintained in each of these schools. The council has also considered to what extent these proposals promote active travel to school. As a result of these proposals, the walking distance from the potential development sites to the catchment schools is shorter than the current arrangements. HM Inspectors are of the view that this will encourage more children and young people to walk to school safely and benefit from active travel.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with a few children, young people and staff in the three schools most likely to be affected by these proposals in the longer term. All staff and almost all children and young people were supportive of the proposed changes to the school catchment areas. Children in the primary schools were happy that the school roll would be maintained or increased over time as a result of these proposals. The children recognised that this could provide more friendship groups in the future and opportunities to work with a greater variety of their peers. HM Inspectors discussed the educational benefits that might result from a larger school roll with the pupil council at Wester Hailes Education Centre. Most of the young people agreed that there would likely be more opportunities for extra-curricular clubs and activities if the school roll increased. Through discussion with school leaders and the pupil council, it was also recognised that a larger school roll could further extend curriculum choice, particularly within the senior phase.

3.3 Parents and carers were given the opportunity to speak to HM Inspectors at each of the three schools visited however no one attended. The three headteachers had each discussed the proposals with their respective Parent Councils and they reported that there were no concerns raised regarding the council's proposal.

### 4. Summary

The proposal is a sensible and practical solution to the possibility of increased population in the area as a result of potential future housing developments. Whilst there are few immediate educational benefits, there is potential for these to be realised in the future. This includes increased active travel, enhancements to the curriculum and an increased variety of peer group opportunities. The proposal will also assist the council to realise best value through efficient and effective management of its school estate.

**HM Inspectors**  
**October 2019**