

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Clackmannanshire Council to relocate Lochies School to The Pavilions at Alloa West.

January 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 Clackmannanshire Council's proposal to relocate Lochies School to The Pavilions at Alloa West. 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children 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 30 November 2022 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
- visit to the site of Lochies School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 Clackmannanshire Council conducted the consultation in line with the requirements of the Act. The consultation period organised by the council took place between 1 November and 16 December 2022. The proposal was communicated to stakeholders via the council website, digital media outlets, the Lochies school newsletter and local press. The council made all documents available to all relevant parties by request through translation services and provision for the deaf and hearing impaired. Staff and parent consultation at Lochies School took place in November 2022. The council held a public meeting at Lochies School on 30 November 2022. No members of the public attended the meeting.

2.3 The council received 104 responses to the online public consultation. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents were in favour of the proposal and 21% were not. The main reasons given by those that opposed the proposal were about access to the site, issues with possible flooding, parking and congestion.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council believes that a new building will bring clear benefits for the children of Lochies School and HM Inspectors agree with them. The council carried out an options appraisal as part of its survey of the school estate. It used the Scottish Government's criteria to assess the condition and suitability of school buildings. Lochies School was the only school in the authority to be graded as category D, unsatisfactory. As a result the council considered a new build on the site of The Pavilions at Alloa West. The recent approval of a Wellbeing Hub on the same site would have the potential to share costs in terms of services and construction.

3.2 The council has outlined the educational benefits to those children from Lochies School transferring to the new building in around four years. The current building restricts the delivery of the curriculum for children with severe and complex learning needs. Learning time is lost due to the layout and condition of the building. The council believes that greater access to outdoor learning at the new site will further enrich children's experiences. Improved connectivity and access to technology should facilitate increased independence, for example, for children in wheelchairs. HM Inspectors agree with the view of the council.

3.3 All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors were positive about the proposed new school. Parents, staff and children all recognise the benefits of a purpose-built school which will better meet their educational needs. Staff feel that the current building restricts their ability to deliver learning programmes. This is due to limited space for teaching, outdoor learning and storage. The demographic of the school has changed considerably in recent years with many children requiring greater levels of additional support. As a result, the current building has become less suitable for the cohort of children attending. Children at Lochies School feel it is important that the school name does not change.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal for the new school has the potential to bring clear educational benefits for the children attending Lochies School in the coming years. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should continue to keep parents, staff and other stakeholders informed about progress of the new build.

HM Inspectors
January 2023