

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeenshire Council to replace and relocate Peterhead Academy.

January 2020

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 Aberdeenshire Council's proposal to replace and relocate Peterhead Academy. 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 12 November 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; and
- visits to the site of Peterhead Academy and a selection of its associated primary schools; Dales Park Primary School, Boddam Primary School and Meethill Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The statutory consultation period ran from 14 October 2019 to 13 December 2019. Copies of the consultation proposal were made available to statutory consultees. Copies were also available at local public buildings, on the council website and at the public meeting. A public meeting, advertised in the local press and on social media, was held on the 12 November 2019 in Peterhead Academy.

2.3 The public meeting was attended by around 50 members of the public. In addition, 139 responses were received through the online survey and another six written comments were

received by the council. Of the responses to the online survey, 110 were in favour and 29 against the proposal. The main areas of concern raised through the comments and from stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors were related to the proposed location rather than the development of the new school building. Stakeholders were concerned about whether the Kinmundy site had sufficient space for both the Academy and any other potential establishments such as primary schools. They were concerned about the effect on local road traffic and the reduction in local, green space. A minority of stakeholders were concerned about the potential negative impact on the town centre of the proposed move and about any loss of the existing community facilities attached to the present academy building.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines how the proposal to relocate Peterhead Academy will provide a new school building that will better support learning. There are clear educational benefits to this proposal given the current building's increasingly outdated condition and complex design. A new building should better meet modern teaching and learning requirements. This includes the potential to improve accessibility for learners with disabilities, improve digital technology and create a more pleasant learning environment. It would also have the potential to improve the flow within the school and improve the security of the school site.

3.2 The council outlines how the proposal will improve social, general purpose and outdoor spaces. The current site has limited communal, flexible or outdoor space. HM Inspectors agree that this aspect of the proposal provides potential educational benefits by increasing space for young people to socialise, to undertake collaborative work and take part in outdoor learning and sports.

3.3 The proposal sets out that existing facilities at Peterhead Community Centre located in the current Academy building will transfer to the new facility. Stakeholders have mixed views on this aspect of the proposal. They acknowledge that the current site requires upgrading and almost all are positive about the new site including sporting, leisure and cultural facilities. However, a minority are concerned that moving facilities from the current site could see a reduction in what is available, such as the diving pool, would make them less accessible to those without private transport and could reduce the viability of the town centre.

3.4 A minority of stakeholders are concerned about traffic management around the proposed site. The council needs to consider how to best ensure good transport access to the proposed site including safe walking, cycling and vehicle access routes. A few stakeholders raised concerns about the potential to move other establishments to the proposed site and how this could increase pressure on access routes and reduce green space at the site.

3.5 Most stakeholders, including pupils currently at the Academy and in its associated primary schools, were positive about the development. They consider that there will be educational benefits in having a new building with modern facilities and resources. Should the proposal be approved there will be merit in involving stakeholders where appropriate, including pupils, in design, planning and influencing transition arrangements for the new site.

4. Summary

Given the current standard of accommodation at Peterhead Academy, the proposal has the potential to provide clear educational benefits. A new building would provide improved learning, social and outdoor space and better support staff in delivering modern learning and teaching. There will be a need to address transport and access concerns around the new site if the proposal is approved. The council should also consider how best to mitigate against any negative consequences from moving all or part of the community facilities which are currently sited in the town centre Academy campus.

HM Inspectors
January 2020