

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Ayrshire Council to develop an education and community campus at Ardrossan North Shore.

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 North Ayrshire Council's proposal to close and relocate both Ardrossan Academy and Winton Primary School to a new 3-18 education and community campus at Ardrossan North Shore. 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 Ardrossan Academy, Winton Primary School and Early Years Class, Dykemains Primary School, Stanley Primary School and West Kilbride Primary 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 on 7 November 2019 and 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 Ardrossan Academy, Winton Primary School, Dykemains Primary School, Stanley Primary School, West Kilbride Primary School, Auchendarvie Leisure Centre and the proposed site at North Shore including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 22 October 2019 to 6 December 2019. Copies of the proposal were made available electronically on the council website. An online response form was set up on the consultation website. Paper copies were made available at all the schools affected, local libraries, local community centres and local health centres. Public information meetings were

held at Ardrossan Academy on 7 November 2019 and on 13 November 2019 at Ardrossan Civic Centre and Winton Primary School.

2.3 The council received 826 online and two email responses. Of these, 628 were supportive of the proposal. The current Ardrossan Academy was not seen as fit for purpose. One hundred and fifty-eight respondents did not support the proposal. The main area of objection concerned the suitability of the proposed site due to its previous use as an industrial site. Forty-two online responses were incomplete. Highly effective pupil consultation events organised and run by S1 young people from Ardrossan Academy were carried out at each of the affected primary schools. In total, 1,005 children participated. Of these, over 81% (818) were supportive of the proposal with over 18% (187) against. The need to replace Ardrossan Academy with a modern well-equipped facility including a swimming pool were the main reasons for support.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Ardrossan Academy provides non-denominational education for young people who live in Ardrossan, Saltcoats and West Kilbride. There are several buildings on the current site, ranging in construction date from 1934 to 1971. Many of the building components are either at the end, or beyond the end, of their economic lifespan. The condition of Ardrossan Academy is assessed as condition 'D' (economic life expired and/or risk of failure) and 'C' (showing major defects and or not operating adequately) for suitability. The teaching environment is not conducive to the delivery of high quality learning and teaching. Inclusion and accessibility are seriously impaired due to the multi-building site; teaching spaces are not functional, flexible or futureproof. There is a lack of effective information technology infrastructure and connectivity. Existing physical education facilities are located out-with the school grounds situated across a busy road.

3.2 Winton Primary School and Early Years Class provides non-denominational education for children who live in the south of Ardrossan. The school enjoys a very positive ethos shared by children, parents and staff alike. The original school was built in 1899. As a 19th century building, it is not fit for the future delivery of learning and teaching. The school is assessed as 'B' (performing adequately but showing minor deterioration) for both condition and suitability.

3.3 The council has set out a strong case in support of its proposal to close and relocate both Ardrossan Academy and Winton Primary School and Early Years Class to a new 3-18 education and community campus at Ardrossan North Shore. The existing accommodation at Winton Primary School and Early Years Class and Ardrossan Academy is no longer fit for purpose. In arriving at its proposal, the council has given good consideration to identifying a site that best meets the needs of children and young people and maximising opportunities through co-location with the swimming pool, public library and Health and Social Care Services. The proposed 3-18 campus will provide modern, fit for purpose accommodation and facilities. School and community users will enjoy the benefits of modern purpose built facilities. Access to improved information technology, science, sport and physical education facilities (including a swimming pool) and library will encourage children and young people to achieve. Enhanced drama, performance and media facilities will allow children and young people to showcase their talents. There is greater potential for more collegiate and interdisciplinary learning within and between faculties and departments and between the primary and secondary departments. The co-location of Health and Social Care Services will assist school staff in progressing 'Team around the Child' and Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC).

3.4 The new campus will be fully accessible to children and young people with mobility issues and additional support needs and help in the delivery of a fully integrated education service which meets the needs of all learners. Dining, physical education and social areas will be improved. Access to the onsite swimming pool will improve opportunities to develop health and wellbeing.

The proposed site offers scope for the school to actively engage with other partners in the regeneration of Ardrossan. Implementation of the proposal will help the council make better use of its resources, meet its duty to secure best value through property rationalisation and ensure a locality approach in the delivery of services.

3.5 All parents, staff, children and young people who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the 3-18 campus and the potential benefits it, along with co-located community facilities would bring. These included improved accommodation, a more attractive learning environment, access to modern technology and improved disability access. They agreed that Ardrossan Academy and Winton Primary School and Early Years Class were not fit for purpose and in urgent need of replacement. Almost all stakeholders supported the proposed location. They expressed a confidence in the council's ability to ensure the site would be fit for purpose. All stakeholders felt the council had taken all necessary steps to seek their views and that they would wish this engagement to continue should the proposal proceed. All children and young people were excited about the opportunities that access to an onsite swimming pool and library would bring. More young people would use the facilities to improve their fitness and to support their studying. Parents and pupils at Winton Primary School and Early Years Class felt transition would be improved. However, they expressed concerns about the potential loss of the much valued Winton school identity within a larger campus. West Kilbride parents and staff felt the proposed campus would offer a more cost effective and attractive alternative to sending their children to other secondary schools which currently incurs considerable travel time and costs. All stakeholders expressed concern about the need to ensure effective safeguarding measures for children and young people are in place when the public are accessing facilities. Parents and children from Dykesmains Primary School expressed concern about the additional distance to the proposed site and the potential for increased traffic congestion. The council will need to take these concerns into account should the proposal proceed.

4. Summary

The council's proposal is of clear educational benefit. The majority of stakeholders who submitted responses were supportive of the proposal. All children, young people, parents, carers and school staff who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the 3-18 campus and the potential benefits it, along with co-located community facilities would bring. These included improved accommodation, a more environmentally friendly and attractive learning environment, access to modern technology and improved disability access. They agreed that Ardrossan Academy and Winton Primary School and Early Years Class were not fit for purpose and in urgent need of replacement. All children who met with HM Inspectors were particularly excited by the prospect of having a new swimming pool as part of the community campus. Stakeholders felt their views had been actively sought and listened to by the council. The proposal offers a good opportunity for the school to be an active partner in the regeneration of Ardrossan. Implementation of the proposal will help the council meet its duty to secure best value. In taking forward the proposal the council needs to set out how it will address the concerns raised during the consultation. In particular, how it will effectively safeguard children and young people when the public are accessing facilities; its proposed remediation strategy to ensure the proposed site is suitable for its intended purpose; and provide re-assurance with regard to traffic management and safety measures.

**HM Inspectors
January 2020**