

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	16 January 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Proposed consultation on changes to school zoning for Grandhome
REPORT NUMBER	RES/20/003
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Purpose 1 Remit 2, 5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek committee approval to launch a statutory consultation on proposals to make changes to the Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy school zones, to accommodate the new housing development at Grandhome.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee :-

- 2.1 instructs the Chief Officer, Integrated Children's and Family Services to undertake a statutory public consultation on proposals to make changes to the Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy school catchment zones, so that the new housing development at Grandhome is included entirely within the Oldmachar Academy catchment zone with effect from 1 August 2020, and to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of this consultation at its meeting in May 2020; and
- 2.2 notes that temporary primary education provision for children living within the Grandhome development, prior to any new schools being constructed at Grandhome, will be moved from Danestone School to Forehill School, with effect from 1 August 2020.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The masterplan for the housing development at Grandhome includes provision for up to 7000 new homes, along with supporting infrastructure including new primary and secondary schools. The first phase of the development is under way, and families have begun to move in to the first of the newly constructed houses.
- 3.2 A Section 75 Agreement has been entered into between the Council and the landowners, which ensures that allocations of land and financial contributions from developers will be available for the provision of the additional school capacity, which will be required to serve the new development.
- 3.3 The payment of developer contributions and the trigger date for the delivery of new school provision will be dependent on the number of completed housing units, and the number of pupils living within the development. It is therefore anticipated that the first new primary school provision will not be available until after 2023, depending on progress with the development. New secondary school provision is expected to follow a number of years after the opening of the primary school.
- 3.4 There is therefore a requirement to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate education provision in place, to serve the needs of the families moving in to the development, prior to any new school provision being available.

Secondary School Zone

- 3.5 Currently, the Grandhome development falls partly within the catchment zone for Bucksburn Academy, and partly within the catchment zone for Oldmachar Academy. This is illustrated in the map at Appendix 1, which shows the existing school zone boundaries, along with the planned extent of the Grandhome development shaded in yellow. The current zoning arrangement means that, as the development continues to grow, children living within the eastern side of the development will be entitled to attend Oldmachar Academy, whilst those living to the west of the development will be entitled to attend Bucksburn Academy.
- 3.6 Whilst the development lies in close proximity to Oldmachar Academy, with relatively easy and safe walking routes to school available, travelling to Bucksburn Academy is likely to be more difficult for pupils living in the part of Grandhome which falls within the Bucksburn Academy zone.
- 3.7 The River Don runs between Grandhome and Bucksburn, and with limited roads and footpaths directly connecting these communities, walking to school for many pupils would involve a journey of over 3 miles, and could take over an hour. Any pupils aged over eight and living more than three miles' walking distance from their zoned school would be entitled to free school transport.
- 3.8 In order to ensure that there are safe and appropriate walking routes to school for all pupils living in the Grandhome development, it is proposed that changes should be made to the school zone boundaries for Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy, so that the whole of the Grandhome development is

contained within the Oldmachar Academy zone. This would mean that all secondary aged pupils living within the new Grandhome development would be entitled to attend Oldmachar Academy.

- 3.9 The proposed change would involve adjusting the zone boundary between the Oldmachar Academy zone and the Bucksburn Academy zone, so that it follows the line of the River Don. This would mean that following the change, all of the land to the East of the river, including the whole of the Grandhome development, would be zoned to Oldmachar Academy, whilst land to the West of the river would remain zoned to Bucksburn Academy. The proposed change is illustrated in the map at Appendix 2.
- 3.10 The proposed changes would also help to maintain manageable pupil numbers at the schools. Bucksburn Academy's pupil roll is expected to continue to increase over the foreseeable future, as new housing developments within Newhills and Bucksburn continue to grow. Ensuring that part of the Grandhome development is not also zoned to Bucksburn Academy will help to avoid further pressure on available space at this school.
- 3.11 School roll forecasts for Oldmachar Academy indicate that there is sufficient space at the school to accommodate the initial numbers of pupils expected to be generated by the Grandhome development, prior to new secondary school provision for Grandhome becoming available.
- 3.12 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended requires that proposals to make changes to school catchment zones are subject to public consultation. It is therefore recommended that the Committee instructs officers to undertake a statutory public consultation on proposals to make changes to the Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy school catchment zones, with the changes to take effect from 1 August 2020, and for officers to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the consultation at its meeting in May 2020.
- 3.13 The Committee would then have an opportunity to review the responses made to the proposals by members of the public and other key stakeholders, before making a decision on whether to implement the proposed changes.
- 3.14 If the changes are approved, it is envisaged that the new school zoning arrangements would remain until new secondary school provision for Grandhome is in place, at which point it may be necessary to make further school zone changes, such as the creation of a new school catchment zone for Grandhome, which would be subject to further statutory consultation.

Primary School Zone

- 3.15 At its meeting on 11 March 2015, the Education and Children's Services Committee agreed to the creation of a new primary school catchment zone for the Grandhome development, prior to the construction of a new primary school for Grandhome. This new zone took effect from August 2015, and prior to the construction of a new school, a temporary arrangement was put in place for

primary aged children living within the new Grandhome zone to be entitled to a place at Danestone School.

- 3.16 School roll forecasts now indicate that pupil numbers at Danestone School are expected to exceed available capacity at the school, and so the Committee is asked to note that the temporary arrangements for primary school provision for Grandhome are to be changed, with effect from August 2020.
- 3.17 Under the planned new temporary arrangements, children living within the Grandhome development will instead be entitled to a place at Forehill School, prior to new primary school provision for Grandhome becoming available.
- 3.18 School roll forecasts show that there is sufficient capacity at Forehill School to accommodate the initial numbers of pupils expected to be generated by the Grandhome development, prior to the first new primary school provision for Grandhome becoming available.
- 3.19 Those children living within the new Grandhome primary zone who are already attending Danestone School will be entitled to remain there, and any children living within the Grandhome primary zone who have not yet reached primary school age but who have older siblings attending Danestone School prior to August 2020, will also be entitled to attend Danestone School, in order to keep family groups together. The changes to the temporary arrangements will therefore only apply to new families living in Grandhome who do not currently have children attending Danestone School.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The creation of new school provision for the Grandhome development will be subject to separate budget approval, which will be presented to the relevant committee(s) when the timescales for requiring the new provision are known.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended requires local authorities to carry out a public consultation on proposals to make permanent changes to school zones, and for the outcomes of that consultation to be considered, before making a final decision on whether to implement the proposals. If the recommendation within this report is accepted, the consultation on changes to the Bucksburn Academy and Oldmachar Academy zones will be carried out in full compliance with the legislation.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	No risks identified		
Legal	Risk that the Council is seen to make significant changes to schools without considering the views of stakeholders	L	All aspects of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended will be complied with.
Employee	No risks identified		
Customer	<p>Risk of negative impact on pupils and on learning and teaching if the proposed changes are not implemented and schools become overcrowded</p> <p>Risk that the new Grandhome community will not grow and develop as one single community, if children living within it are attending two different secondary schools.</p>	<p>H</p> <p>M</p>	<p>If the proposed changes are implemented following consultation, there will be sufficient school capacity in the schools concerned to accommodate forecast pupil numbers</p> <p>If the proposed changes are implemented following consultation, the whole of the Grandhome community would be zoned to the same secondary school, which will help ensure Grandhome can develop as a single community</p>
Environment	Requiring some pupils to travel each day from Grandhome to Bucksburn Academy would lead to an increase in car / bus journeys to school and would make it more difficult to encourage walking to school	H	If the proposed changes are implemented following consultation, secondary aged pupils within the Grandhome development would be better able to walk to school.
Technology	No risks identified		
Reputational	No risks identified		

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous People	The proposals within this report support the delivery of the Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 3 to 5 in the LOIP. Ensuring that pupil rolls at the schools concerned are maintained at manageable levels will assist in the delivery of quality learning and teaching, which will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for young people.
Prosperous Place	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Stretch Outcomes 14 and 15 in the LOIP. Ensuring pupils have safe and appropriate routes to school will help to encourage walking or cycling to school and reduce Aberdeen's carbon emissions.

The proposals in this report have no impact on the Target Operating Model.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Education and Children's Services Committee, 11 March 2015 : *Statutory Consultation – Rezoning of Schools* (ECS/15/018)

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Existing School Zones

Appendix 2 : Proposed Changes to School Zones

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Andrew Jones
Service Manager, Assets & Finance
ajones@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel. 01224 523042