



CONSULTATION REPORT

New Primary School – Torry, Aberdeen

This Consultation Report has been compiled in response to the recent public consultation on the proposal to develop a new primary school with early education and childcare facilities, on the site of the existing Torry Academy. The document summarises the responses received on the proposals set out below and Aberdeen City Council's response to the verbal and written comments submitted by interested parties, in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Proposals:

- **To amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning the area of ground south of Balnagask Road which is currently within the zone of Walker Road School to the Tullos School zone, with effect from the start of the 2017/18 Academic Session on 22 August 2017;**

Further,

- **To amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning the following ground to a new, third Primary School in Torry with effect from the start of the 2020/21 Academic Session in August 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter:**
 - **ground to the north and east of houses on Brimmond Place;**
 - **north and east of Balnagask Road from Brimmond Place;**
 - **east of Oscar Road from Morven Place to Glenbervie Road;**
 - **north and east of Grampian Road from Glenbervie Road to Victoria Road;**
 - and**
 - **north and east of Victoria Road from Grampian Road to Victoria Bridge**

Further,

- **To locate and construct the proposed new Primary School, early education and childcare facilities and Community Hub on the site of the existing Torry Academy, once education provision at Torry Academy has ceased and pupils**

are relocated to the new Academy, with effect from the start of the 2018/19 academic session on 21 August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter; and

- That the new Primary School, early education and childcare facilities and Community Hub is operational with effect from the start of the 2020/21 Academic Session in August 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Maps illustrating the proposed changes to the above school zone boundaries are included at Annex A of this report.

1. METHODOLOGY

This consultation was conducted in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. All requirements of the legislation have been met.

2. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

2.1 Public Event

A public consultation event was held on 9 November 2016 at Walker Road School, and on 10 November 2016 at Tullos School, to discuss the proposals. A summary of the attendance at the events is shown below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Recorded Attendees</i>
9 November 2016	7 - 8 pm	Walker Road School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 parents
10 November 2016	7 - 8 pm	Tullos School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 parent (and chair of Tullos School's Parent Council)

2.2 Comments Received

Thirteen written comments were received in response to this consultation. Two of these were in the form of emails, whilst the remaining eleven responses were submitted via online or paper based comment forms.

Copies of the responses, anonymised as necessary, are available on the Council's website: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Torrynewschool.

2.3 Issues Raised

The main issues raised at the public meetings and in the written responses to the consultation, are summarised below:

- One respondent commented positively on the proposals, noting that the opportunity to co-locate services, early years and childcare along with community facilities within a single campus in Torry was in line with the community's aspiration to increase access to facilities and services.

- A separate response, submitted by the Community Planning Partnership, suggested that a new school in Torry would help to improve outcomes for the Torry community, and that as such the proposals were very much welcomed.
- At the public meetings, a small number of parents asked for assurance that children would still be able to attend one of the existing Torry primary schools, if they have older siblings already attending those schools, and if they are zoned to a different primary school following the rezoning exercise.
- Similarly, some parents asked whether children who remain zoned to one of the existing primary schools, would be able to attend the new school if they wished to do so.
- Attendees expressed some concern about the long term sustainability of operating three separate primary schools in Torry, and held the view that investment in the existing two schools would be needed in order to maintain the buildings.
- Some respondents also expressed concern about the availability of teaching staff, and whether it may be difficult to recruit staff for a new school.
- It was suggested by some respondents that existing buildings in Torry could be used to create community facilities, and also the new school, rather than constructing a new building.
- Whilst some respondents felt that the Torry Academy site was ideal for the construction of a new school, others suggested that it was too close to the existing Walker Road School building.

2.4 Education Scotland Report

An essential element of the statutory consultation process is the involvement of Education Scotland whose report is provided as Annex B of this Consultation Report.

In its report, Education Scotland suggested that the proposal if accepted would offer strong educational benefits, noting that the existing primary school provision in Torry has little flexible space to help provide different learning experiences. The report argued that the proposed new school would have the potential to improve the delivery of early years education and the learning experiences of children in all three schools in Torry.

It was noted that all parents, pupils and staff who met with HM Inspectors to discuss the proposals were supportive of them, although some had concerns about safe routes to school for primary aged children and whether it may be difficult to recruit teachers for the new school.

The report suggested that the Council should work with stakeholders to deliver safe routes to the new school, and reassure them that the school can be appropriately staffed.

3. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD AND CONTAINED WITHIN THE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

The following paragraphs provide responses to the significant points raised during the consultation period.

3.1 Rezoning of existing schools

In response to the queries raised relating to pupils' entitlement to attend specific schools in Torry, should a third primary school be constructed, the following arrangements would apply:

- Any pupil living in an area which is to be rezoned as a result of these proposals, and who is already attending either Tullos School or Walker Road School when the changes are implemented, would have the option of remaining at their current school.
- Similarly, if the proposals are accepted, any pupil living in an area to be rezoned as a result of these proposals, who reaches primary school age after the changes to the zone boundaries are implemented, and who at that time has an older sibling who attends Tullos School or Walker Road School, would have the option of attending the same school as their older brother or sister, in order to keep family groups together.
- Any pupil living in an area which remains zoned to Walker Road School or Torry School, who wishes to attend the new primary school, would be entitled to make a placing request to the new school. Where available, places at a specific school are allocated to children from outwith the school's zone according to set criteria, details of which can be obtained from the Council's website.

3.2 Sustainability of operating three schools in Torry

Whilst current school roll forecasts for the existing schools in Torry indicate that the pupil rolls at the schools will slowly reduce over the next six years, it is recognised that the potential development of housing sites in Torry, including the potential development of the former Craiginches prison site for housing, would impact on the available capacity at these schools in the future.

Moreover, recent national developments in early learning and childcare will also add additional pressures to the capacity of both schools, as children will be entitled to thirty hours per week of provision by 2020, and the Council will also be required to provide places for two-year-olds.

For these reasons, the Council is confident that a third primary school in Torry is required, and that the existing two schools will remain viable in future.

3.3 Availability of teaching staff

The recruitment and retention of teachers has been challenging in recent years, throughout Scotland and more significantly in the north-east of the country. However, the Council remains committed to recruiting high quality teaching staff for schools in Aberdeen City, and has introduced a number of strategies which have been successful in attracting teachers to work in the city.

3.4 Location of the new school

In preparation for this public consultation, the Council carried out an assessment of potential sites in Torry for the construction of a new school, and identified two possible sites: the existing Torry Academy site, and the former St Fittick's Depot site.

Public engagement events were held in April and June 2016 with members of the wider Torry community, and as a result of this, it was concluded that the St Fittick's Depot site was too distant from the centre of Torry, and therefore not appropriate for the siting of a new school and community hub.

Other sites in Torry which were identified during the public engagement process, including the site of the former Victoria Road Primary School, were considered to be unsuitable for the construction of a modern primary school, and were therefore discounted.

As a result, the site of the existing Torry Academy was identified as the best strategic fit for the range of services which are proposed to be included in the building, and was therefore put forward as the preferred site for the new school.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSALS

Following the conclusion of the consultation period, Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, requires the Council to review the relevant proposal, having had regard to any written representations that have been received by it during the consultation period, any oral representations made to it at the public meetings held on 9 and 10 November, and Education Scotland's report.

In terms of Section 10(2) (e) of the said Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Consultation Report is required to contain a statement explaining how the Council complied with its duty under the above Section 9(1) of the Act.

With relation to Section 9(1) of the 2010 Act and having considered all of the information received during the consultation process, officers are satisfied that no comments have been received which would have caused them to review the merits of the proposals to develop a new primary school with early education and childcare facilities, on the site of the existing Torry Academy.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education and Children's Services Committee agree to implement the proposals to:

- To amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning the area of ground south of Balnagask Road which is currently within the zone of Walker Road School to the Tullos School zone, with effect from the start of the 2017/18 Academic Session on 22 August 2017;

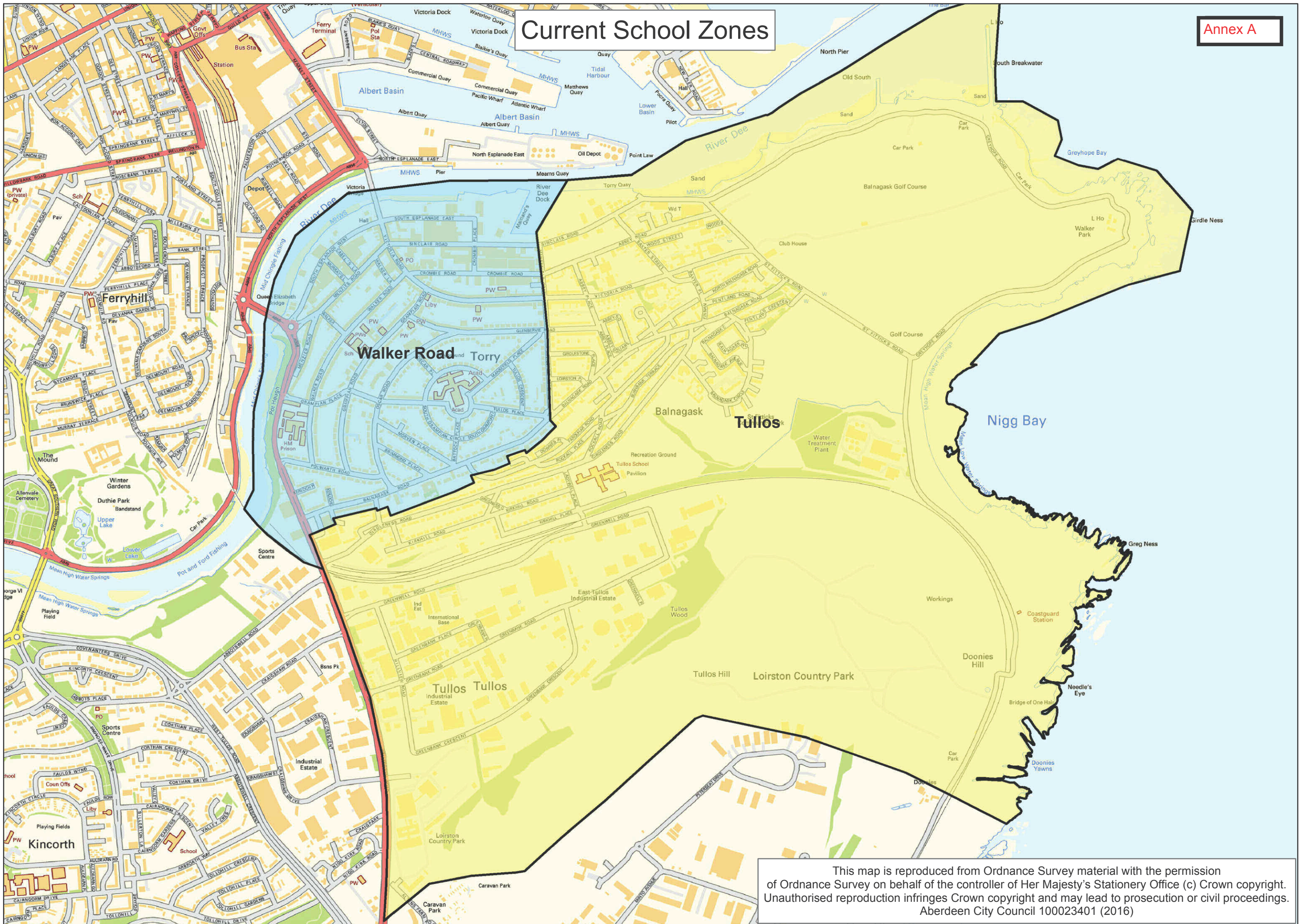
Further,

- To amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning the following ground to a new, third Primary School in Torry with effect from the start of the 2020/21 Academic Session in August 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter:
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 - north and east of Balnagask Road from Brimmond Place;
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 - north and east of Victoria Road from Grampian Road to Victoria Bridge

Further,

- To locate and construct the proposed new Primary School, early education and childcare facilities and Community Hub on the site of the existing Torry Academy, once education provision at Torry Academy has ceased and pupils are relocated to the new Academy, with effect from the start of the 2018/19 academic session on 21 August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- That the new Primary School, early education and childcare facilities and Community Hub is operational with effect from the start of the 2020/21 Academic Session in August 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Gayle Gorman
Director of Education and Children's Services
February 2017



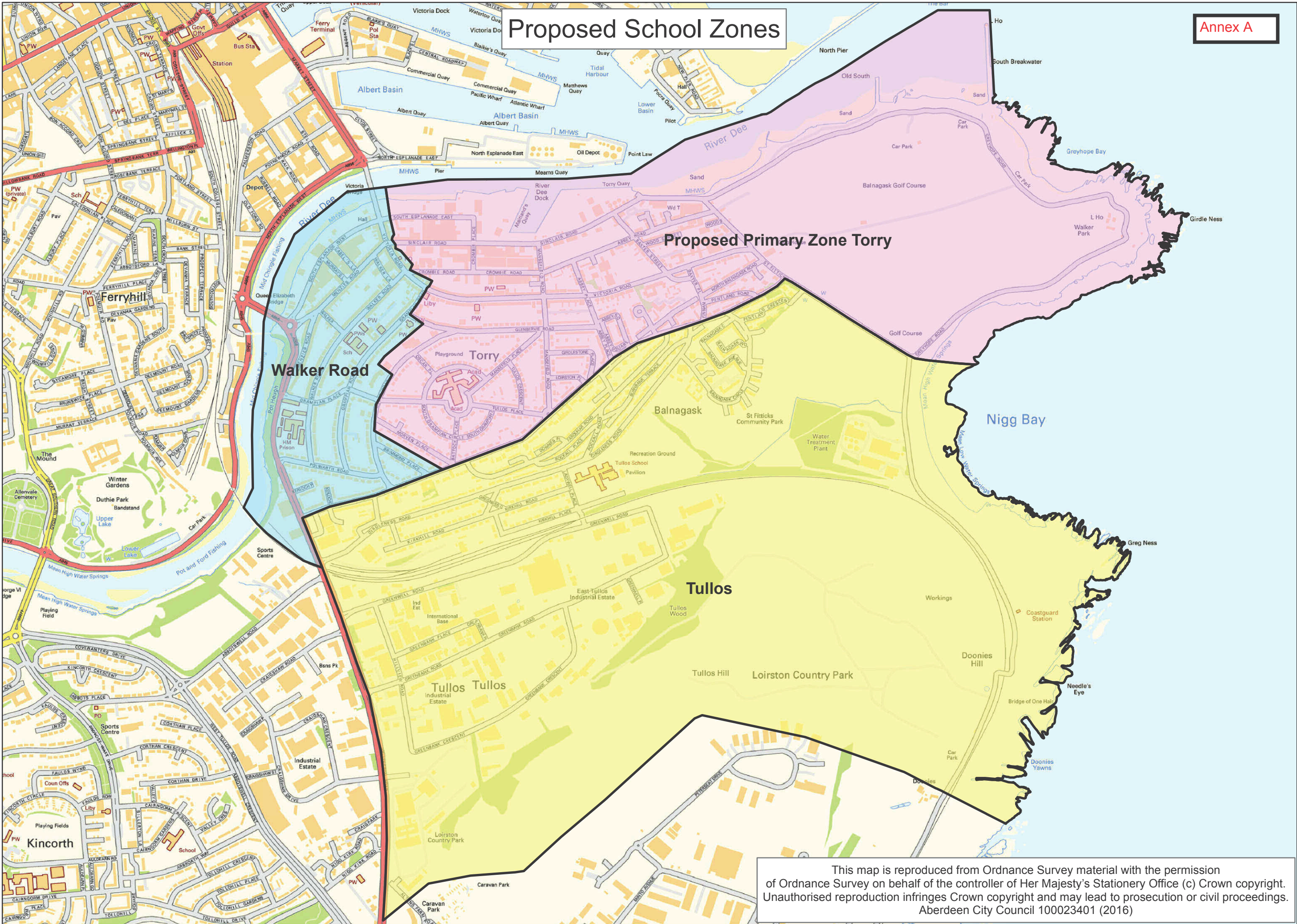
Current School Zones

Annex A

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Proposed School Zones

Annex A



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REPORT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning ground to a new, third primary school in Torry, with effect from August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Aberdeen City Council's proposal to amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning ground to a new, third primary school in Torry, with effect from August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter. 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 a copy of 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 legislative 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; 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 two public meetings held on 9 and 10 November 2016 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 sites of Tullos School and Walker Road School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Aberdeen City Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The consultation process ran from 24 October 2016 to 9 December 2016. During this period the council held two public meetings: one in Tullos School and one in Walker Road School. Notification of the proposal was provided to all statutory consultees and the documentation was made available on the council's website, in council offices, public libraries in the vicinity and in Tullos and Walker Road Schools. A proforma was made available for submissions. The council received 13 submissions of which nine were in favour and four were against the construction of a new primary school on the proposed site. Eight stakeholders attended the public meetings and they were in favour of the proposal. The main issues raised were concerns about whether the new school could be staffed and whether investment would continue in the current schools.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The proposal to amend the current school zones and build a third primary school and early years provision in the Torry area has strong educational benefits. The existing primary schools are at or over capacity and there is very little flexible space to provide different learning experiences. A new primary school will ease pressure on the current schools and provide a modern learning environment and much needed provision for 200 nursery children. This has the potential to improve the delivery of early years education and improve the learning experiences of children in all three schools.

3.2 All parents, pupils and staff who met with HM Inspectors support the proposal. They agree that the new primary school offers many benefits, including the potential to increase the interaction with the local community, easier access and improved facilities in which to teach and learn. They have some concerns about safe routes to school for primary aged children and whether the council will be able to staff the new school in light of the current difficulties in appointing teachers in Aberdeen. If the proposal goes ahead, they are very keen to work with the council on the design of the new school and community hub.

4. Summary

Aberdeen City Council's proposal to amend the existing school zones of Tullos School and Walker Road School by rezoning ground to a new, third primary school in Torry has strong educational benefits. It will provide modern purpose-built facilities for nursery and school children. There will be increased space and more

flexible facilities for staff and pupils in all three schools. The new school and early years provision will result in more space for children in the current schools. This will have the potential to help staff improve learning and teaching for all children. In taking forward its proposal, the council should continue to work with all stakeholders to deliver safe routes to the new school, reassure stakeholders that the school can be staffed and develop a design, within the council's budget, which meets the needs of pupils, parents, staff and the local community.

HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
December 2016