

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	1 March 2017
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Statutory Consultation – Consultation Report on the proposals to develop a new primary school with early education and childcare facilities on the site of the existing Torry Academy.
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/17/016
CHECKLIST:	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to Committee on the outcome of a recent statutory consultation on the proposals to create a new primary school with early education and childcare facilities in Torry.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to implement the following proposals:

- (i) 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,

- (ii) 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,

- (iii) 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 Lochside Academy, with effect from the start of the 2018/19 academic session on 21 August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- (iv) 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.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At the budget setting meeting of the Council on 25 February 2016, £20 million was allocated from the 5 year capital programme to increase the Primary School capacity in Torry and create an integrated community hub. Final costs will be dependent on updating and refining the financial profiling for the project.

In creating the new early learning and child care provision, funding may be available from the Scottish Government. The Council may also be able to apply for a Regeneration Capital Grant which could be used as a contribution to the costs of developing a community hub in Torry. If available, the application would be submitted in April 2017. Developer Contributions may also be available for the development of community facilities in Torry.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Legal – The public consultations have complied with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. As these proposals do not refer to the proposed closure of any school in either consultation exercise, any decision to implement them by this Committee cannot be called in by Scottish Ministers.

Resources – Officer time and expenditure associated with these consultation exercises has been met from existing service budgets.

Personnel – Implementation of the recommendations will not result in any significant personnel implications.

Health and safety – Any new build proposals will require health and safety plans in accordance with Construction, Design and Management legislation..

Policy – there are no policy implications or risks related to this report.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Background

At its meeting on 8 September 2016, the Education & Children's Services Committee instructed officers to undertake a programme of formal consultation, regarding proposals to develop a new primary school with early education and childcare facilities and a community hub, on the site of Torry Academy. This report details the outcomes of the statutory consultation process.

5.2 Educational Implications

The Education Authority has a programme to ensure the provision of an affordable and suitable education service for all its pupils. Implementation of these proposals will assist in the delivery of these objectives, thereby meeting the Council's statutory obligations as set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended).

5.3 Statutory Consultation Feedback

The Consultation Report and associated maps for the proposed new school, and associated proposed changes to the school zone boundaries for the existing schools in Torry, can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

The following sections provide a synopsis of the written submissions, public consultation meetings and the reports from Education Scotland, and the Service's response to these.

Methodology

All requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended were met in full.

Feedback from Stakeholders and Education Scotland

Two public consultation events were held on 9 and 10 November 2016 to discuss the proposals. The events were attended by a total of six members of the public. Thirteen written comments were also received in response to the consultation.

Responses to the proposals were largely positive, with consultees stating that they welcomed the opportunity for services to be co-located with the new school. Some respondents raised questions with regards to the Council's ability to recruit staff for the new school, and whether operating three school in Torry in the long term would be sustainable. Several respondents also commented that the existing schools in Torry would require investment in order to maintain the buildings.

In its report on the proposal, Education Scotland noted that the existing primary school provision in Torry has little flexible space to help provide different

learning experiences, and that the proposal for a new school if accepted would offer strong educational benefits.

It was noted in the report that the 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.

Finally, the report from Education Scotland included a suggestion that 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 which meets the needs of pupils, parents, staff and the local community. Should the recommendation to construct the new school be accepted, officers will work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that consideration is given to each of these areas.

Overall View of the Proposals

Officers were satisfied that no comments had been received which would have caused them to review the merits of the proposals to construct a new primary school and community hub on the site of the existing Torry Academy, and to make adjustments to the existing school zone boundaries in Torry to accommodate this new school.

Consequently it is recommended that Councillors approve the original proposals, which are set out in the consultation report and illustrated in the associated maps at Appendix 1.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience

The creation of a new primary school in Torry and the implementation of the rezoning proposals for the existing schools in the area will help to ensure sustainable and manageable pupil rolls in Torry, which in turn will help to ensure that pupils attending the schools have access to high quality learning and teaching. It will also help to ensure that pupils living in the affected areas have access to safe walking routes to school.

Improving Staff Experience

Implementation of the proposals will allow school staff to plan for children's learning more effectively.

Corporate

Aberdeen the Smarter City

- (i) We will enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our citizens by offering support and activities which promote independence, resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- (ii) Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st Century.
- (iii) Again, working with partners, we will create a City of Learning which will empower individuals to fulfil their potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our communities.
- (iv) We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city economy.

Public

A full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been submitted for this report.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

If the recommendations are accepted, management of risk will be identified monitored and mitigated in accordance with the ability to meet risk policy and programmed objectives. As with all Council capital projects, this project will form part of the overall reporting and progress updates reports via the Strategic, Asset and Capital Group.

If the recommendations are not accepted and a new school and community hub is not constructed in Torry, there is a high risk of reputational damage to the council, as there is strong support for such a facility amongst the Torry community. There is also a medium level risk that there would be insufficient capacity within the existing schools in Torry, particularly for early learning and childcare provision, where demand is expected to increase significantly over the coming years as a result of the increased entitlement which families will have to early learning and childcare hours.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Consultation Report on the proposals to develop a new primary school with early education and childcare facilities, on the site of the existing Torry Academy

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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