

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 new primary school provision with early education and childcare facilities in Tillydrone.
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/17/015
CHECKLIST:	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- That a new 3 stream non-denominational school building with early education and childcare facilities is constructed on the site of the former St. Machar School and former Tillydrone School, and to relocate Riverbank School to this new building;
- That the new school building will become operational with effect from January 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That St Peter's School remains at its present site and officers to assess how best to alleviate short term capacity pressures at St. Peter's School;
- That officers carry out an options appraisal to determine the long term future of education provision at the existing St Peter's School site and the possibility of building a new St. Peter's School on a new location, subject to a suitable site being identified in the school zone and sufficient capital funding becoming available. Further, that officers to present the findings of this options appraisal exercise to a future meeting of this Committee in 2017.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At the budget setting meeting of the Council on 25 February 2016, a capital budget of £17m was allocated for the Tillydrone new school project. Final costs for the new school will be dependent on updating and refining the financial profiling for the project.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Legal – The public consultation has 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 6 October 2016, Council instructed officers to undertake a programme of formal consultation on options for reviewing the primary school provision at Riverbank School and St Peter's School. 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 Options for Consultation

Two options were put forward for comment by members of the public, as part of the statutory consultation. These options were:

Option A

- To construct a new school building on the site of the former St. Machar School and former Tillydrone School, to relocate St Peter's RC School to this new building, and to create a new shared campus on this site, incorporating St. Peter's RC School, a new one-stream non-denominational school, and early education and childcare facilities; and:
- To create a new primary school zone to be served by the new non-denominational school, with effect from August 2019; and:
- To amend the existing Riverbank School zone to allow for the creation of the new school zone, with effect from August 2019; and:
- The new school building to be operational with effect from 1st January 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Or:

Option B

- To construct a new three stream non-denominational school building with early education and childcare facilities on the site of the former St. Machar School and former Tillydrone School, and to relocate Riverbank School to this new building; and:
- To relocate St. Peter's School into the current Riverbank School building; and:
- The new school building and relocated schools to be operational with effect from January 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.

5.4 Alternative Proposals

Within the responses received during the consultation period, a number of alternative options were put forward, and these are summarised below:

Option C: To build a three stream denominational school with Early Learning Education facilities on the former St. Machar/Tillydrone primary school site.

Option D: To extend Riverbank School to a three stream school, and build a new two stream building for St. Peter's School on the former St. Machar/Tillydrone School site.

Option E: To build a new St. Peter's School on the Dunbar Halls site, Old Aberdeen.

Option F: To build/expand on the existing site of St. Peter's School.

Option G: To explore building a new school on available land in the Seaton area.

5.5 Statutory Consultation Feedback

The Consultation Report, detailing a full summary of the responses to the consultation, 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

A series of five public consultation events were held in November and December 2016 to discuss the proposals. The events were attended by approximately 120 members of the public. 267 written comments were also received during the consultation period.

A wide range of views were conveyed in response to this consultation, with no clear overall preference being expressed for any one of the options put forwards.

In commenting on Option A, respondents most closely associated with Riverbank School were concerned about the Tillydrone community being split, if it were to be served by two separate schools, whilst respondents associated with St Peter's School raised concerns that a shared campus model would limit the capacity which would be available for the school to continue growing. It was also felt that this option could result in increased tensions between communities.

Some responses in support of Option A were received, with consultees suggesting that this option would help resolve the capacity issues and allow St Peter's School to retain its values, ethos, culture and traditions.

In commenting on Option B, respondents associated with Riverbank School were largely in support of this proposal, as it was felt that this would help to build on the strong community links which had developed following the merger of Donbank School and St Machar School. Others felt that keeping the two schools on separate sites would be preferable to them sharing a campus.

Respondents associated with St Peter's School were strongly opposed to Option B, stating that the location, size and condition of the Riverbank School building would not meet the needs of St Peter's School. Some respondents felt that St Peter's School was more in need of additional space than Riverbank School, and that this option would not adequately deal with that issue.

Feedback from Education Scotland

In its report on the proposals, Education Scotland noted that the two options provided by the Council were of equal merit, and that they had strong educational benefits.

The Education Scotland report included a summary of the discussions held between stakeholders and HM Inspectors with regards to the proposals, and it was noted that whilst the staff and representative pupils of St Peter's School who spoke to HM Inspectors were positive about Option A, parents of pupils at the school were strongly opposed to this option. The report noted that parents of St Peter's School pupils were also opposed to Option B, and that they had proposed an alternative Option C, to build a new three-stream denominational school.

Stakeholders from Riverbank School who met with HM Inspectors, it was noted, were however supportive of Option B. The report highlighted the fact that these stakeholders had strong concerns about the splitting of the Tillydrone community, if Option A was to be accepted.

The Education Scotland report recommended that the council should contemplate taking more time to consider the additional proposals which were put forward during the consultation.

5.6 Overall View of the Proposals

Having considered the comments received during the consultation process, and the range of views which were put forward regarding the options for consideration, officers have concluded that it would be appropriate to revise the original proposals. It is therefore recommended that elected members approve the following:

- To construct a new three stream non-denominational school building with early education and childcare facilities on the site of the former St. Machar School and former Tillydrone School, and to relocate Riverbank School to this new building;
- That the new school building is operational with effect from January 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- To instruct Officers to investigate options in the short term to help alleviate capacity pressures at St. Peter's RC school, and to examine the possibility of building a new St. Peter's School in a new location, subject to (a) a suitable site being identified in the school zone, and (b) capital funding availability.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience

The creation of a new primary school in Tillydrone and the further investigation of options for St Peter's School will help to ensure sustainable and manageable pupil rolls in this area of the city, which in turn will help to ensure that pupils attending the schools have access to high quality learning and teaching.

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 is not built in Tillydrone, there is a high risk of the pupil roll at Riverbank School continuing to increase year-on-year over the next seven years, taking the school far beyond its current capacity. Alternative measures would need to be introduced in order

to accommodate the numbers of pupils expected to be living in the Tillydrone area, and opportunities to increase the capacity of the school on its existing site are very limited. Consequently there would be a significant negative impact on the school and its ability to deliver high quality learning and teaching, as a result of this additional demand on school capacity.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Consultation Report on the proposals to create a new primary school in the Tillydrone area, in order to alleviate capacity pressures at both Riverbank and St. Peter's RC School.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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