



Proposal Document

Proposal:

To permanently close Cordyce School in Aberdeen, with effect from 1 April 2018

Statutory Consultation Period

Wednesday 30 August 2017 to Friday 13 October 2017 (inclusive)

All submissions expressing views on the proposals detailed in this document should be made in writing or by email by 5.00pm on Friday 13 October 2017.

It is intended to respond to issues raised from correspondence within a report presented to the Education and Children's Service Committee in January 2018.

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LIST OF CONSULTEES

Notice of the issuing of this Proposal Document will be provided to:

- The City-Wide Parent Forum
- All Aberdeen City secondary school head teachers and ASN staff
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- Constituency MSPs for Aberdeen
- Regional MSPs for the area
- Constituency MPs for Aberdeen
- Community Planning Partnership Board
- The Director of Corporate Governance, Aberdeen City Council
- The Director of Communities, Housing and Infrastructure, Aberdeen City Council

A copy of this document is available from:

- Aberdeen City Council, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1AB
- Central Library, Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen, AB25 1GW
- All secondary schools in Aberdeen City

The Proposal Document is also available on the Aberdeen City Council website:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/XXXXXXXX

This document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to Education and Children's Services, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1AB, by telephone on 01224 522273; or by e-mail:

schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

1. BACKGROUND

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL’S VISION FOR EDUCATION

- 1.1 Aberdeen City Council has a Vision which conveys a picture of the aspirations and expectations of our service users, stakeholders and the wider community and makes clear linkage to the Corporate Vision and six key strategic priorities:

Our Corporate Vision is:

for Aberdeen to be an ambitious, achieving, smart city with the following strategic priorities:



- 1.2 Our vision for Education is:

Improving learning opportunities to deliver better outcomes.

- 1.3 This Proposal Document seeks comment on the proposal to close Cordyce School in Aberdeen, following the adoption of an alternative provision for supporting secondary aged children with emotional and behavioural support needs.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Cordyce School in Aberdeen was established to provide secondary education for pupils with additional support needs arising from social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children have previously attended the school from all parts of Aberdeen City.
- 2.2 The Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act 2000 introduced the presumption of mainstreaming, which requires local authorities to start with the assumption that all children and young people should access learning within their local school, alongside their peers, rather than necessarily attending a separate school specifically for children with additional support needs.
- 2.3 Since then, further legislation and national guidance has promoted the need for local authorities to put children and young people at the centre of our processes, and to engage them and their families in the process of planning for their learning as well as their wellbeing.

- 2.4 During 2013/2014, Aberdeen City Council commissioned a review of Inclusion within the city, which was conducted by two national experts. Following this review a number of recommendations were made. These included:
- Implementation of the presumption of mainstreaming
 - Providing earlier intervention and support
 - Reducing exclusions, particularly of vulnerable children and young people
 - Reducing out of authority placements
 - Streamlining processes to support improvements in multi- agency working
- 2.5 In planning to implement these recommendations, the transformation of services for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs, including the services provided by Cordyce School, has been a key focus. The main objective of this transformation has been to ensure that all of our children and young people have timeous access to an appropriate level of support to address their individual needs, and not just those who are placed in a specialist school.
- 2.6 In bringing about this transformation, Aberdeen City Council has worked with its third sector partners to support the development of bespoke pathways for young people, focused on the needs of individuals and consisting of a range of interventions and opportunities to promote learning and wellbeing. In light of this there has been a gradual reduction in the pupil roll at Cordyce school, and an increase in the number of children and young people whose needs have been met within mainstream schools.
- 2.7 It is anticipated that this work will continue, and that there will no longer be any young people placed within Cordyce School. Since August 2017, there have been no pupils enrolled at the school.
- 2.8 Given the changes described above and the introduction of this new approach to supporting young people's development, it is proposed that Cordyce School is permanently closed, with effect from 1 April 2018.
- 2.9 The likely effects of the proposed changes are described below.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

Cordyce School

- 3.1 Cordyce School is situated in Riverview Drive, Dyce, Aberdeen. The school site is spread over three separate buildings, two of which were originally built as accommodation blocks as the school was previously operated as a residential school.
- 3.2 The building is generally considered to be in a poor condition. The most recent assessment of the building resulted in the school being rated C (poor) for both its condition and its suitability for use as a school. It also has an energy performance rating of G (very poor).
- 3.3 When the school had a full pupil roll, it had the highest running cost per pupil of all schools in Aberdeen. The average annual running costs for the building are shown below:
- Oil & Electricity - £48,800
 - Carbon Charges - £5,400
 - Water - £5,400

- Cleaning - £26,660
- Repairs/Maintenance - £32,400
- Grounds Maintenance - £4,700
- Waste Collection - £5,900

Total annual running cost: **£129,260**

- 3.4 Closure of the school would help to bring about a reduction in running costs for the Council, as in the short term there would be a reduced need for fuel and facilities management costs, even whilst the site remains within the Council's ownership. However, whilst the site remains within the Council's ownership but not operating as a school, the payment of non-domestic rates relief would be required, at a cost of approximately £80,000 per year after an initial rates relief discount period.
- 3.5 If the Council should later decide to dispose of the site altogether, then all of the above costs including non-domestic rates would be removed.
- 3.6 Should the proposal to close Cordyce School be accepted, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant negative impact on pupils, given that there are no longer any pupils enrolled at the school. Details of the likely education benefits of the proposed change for all pupils in Aberdeen City are detailed in Section 4 below.
- 3.7 As there are no pupils enrolled at the school, members of staff who previously worked at the school have already been deployed elsewhere within Education and Children's Services. A decision to close the school would therefore have no significant impact on staff.

Secondary Schools in Aberdeen City

- 3.8
- Should the proposals be accepted, this will have a small impact in how secondary schools provide support for young people who have experienced a number of exclusions. However this in line with the changes which have been put in place with the implementation of presumption of mainstreaming as recommended in the 2014 review of Inclusion. Further details of the full arrangements for providing support for children with social and emotional needs can be found in appendix 1.

4. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

- 4.1 The proposals described in this document will have the following benefits:

Context

4.1 An appreciation of the educational benefits related to the closure of Cordyce School requires an awareness of the background to the recent history of the school and the recent work which has been undertaken to transform services within Aberdeen City. The transformation of services is directly linked to the delivery of improved outcomes for all children and young people but specifically those with additional support needs which relate to social, emotional and mental health needs. (See **Appendix 1** for Aberdeen City's Continuum of Provision)

Background

4.2 As Cordyce was originally a residential school the staff compliment was made up of teachers, PSAs, Education Social Workers and Education Support Workers. The school can accommodate up to 44 young people. The ratio of staff to pupils was high and latterly, as the number of young people on the roll decreased (May 2017 total of 4) did not provide best value, especially given the high level of management posts.

TEACHERS AND PSAs	EDUCATION WORKERS	SOCIAL	ADMIN POSTS
Head Teacher Depute Head Teacher x 2 Principal Teachers x 2 Class Teachers 14.42fte	Principal Social Worker 4 Senior Social Workers Social Workers	17	Administrator Support Assistant 64 hours
PSAs 165 hours	Education Workers 1.5	Support	

Recent History

4.3.1 There has been a steady decline in the number of pupils attending Cordyce School and only 6 pupils were on the school roll for session 2016/17. A number of factors led to this reduction: an increased level of understanding amongst teaching staff of the needs of children and young people with social and emotional needs; an awareness of these within the continuum of additional support needs; increased skill level of staff, within our secondary schools, which enables the majority of young people to have their needs met within mainstream provision; more effective multi-agency working to address a broader range of needs.

4.3.2 In preparing for the transition of these 6 young people, a full review of each individual pupil took place, considerable work was then undertaken to plan appropriate Learning Pathways to meet the diverse needs. Account was taken of the fact that individuals were embarking on key transitions either from the Broad General Education to the study of qualifications with an exam component; or a move into the world of work / further education.

4.3.3 The Bespoke Pathways for the young people ensured that they experienced appropriate challenge and relevance in their learning. This approach had a positive impact on attendance and engagement. The young people benefited from a range of experiences beyond the school campus, which built their confidence and helped them to transition to life beyond Cordyce school.

4.3.4 This model was also deployed across the city to successfully support those young people for whom full-time mainstream education provision was a challenge.

Limitations of provision at Cordyce School

4.4.1 The recruitment difficulties faced within the service has impacted on Cordyce School, creating significant limitations as a result. The school is unable to provide a broad curriculum which meets the needs of all learners. Although the school had experienced teachers the range of subject specialisms was limited and it was not possible to offer a breadth of options to provide sufficient personalisation and choice for the young people. Significant demands were placed on individuals who had to develop many aspects of the curriculum in order to provide sufficient

breadth. Any changes in staff e.g. maternity leave impacted on the school's ability to provide coherence and progression. As a result it was increasingly challenging for the school to deliver the entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence to all of the young people.

4.4.2 The setting of Cordyce school provides a positive environment for Outdoor Learning and this was capitalised on, however, the school building itself does not provide a suitably stimulating environment for the most vulnerable learners. Unfortunately, incidents of vandalism, sometimes carried out by the young people themselves, have contributed to the decline in the state of the building.

4.4.3 During 2016 – 17 discussions with the young people confirmed that they had a positive view of the school, however, many of them referred to the fact that they were 'the worst behaved' young people in the city. It is of great concern to think that the young people, and presumably others across the city, hold this view. From this it is clear that there is the potential for young people to be stigmatised / gain a reputation for having attended Cordyce. This is detrimental to the school but more importantly to the young people themselves.

4.4.4 In 2014 the Review of Inclusion in Aberdeen City recommended the transformation of services to implement the presumption of mainstream, to increase the number of children being educated within their local school and to reduce the number of children being placed out with the authority. As a result of the focus on presumption of mainstream; the reduction in the number of children and young people being permanently removed from the roll has led to a steady decline in the number of pupils attending Cordyce School. There are no pupils on the school roll for session 2017/18.

Aberdeen City's Continuum of Provision

4.5.1 Following the transformation of the service there is now a clear continuum of provision, which sets out the supports available for children and young people at Universal, Targeted and Specialist level and which reflects the requirements outlined in the Children and Young People's Act (2014). The continuum supports the delivery of timeous and proportionate support for individual children and young people, who will remain on the roll of their mainstream school. This will ensure that young people continue to have access to a broad curriculum and those who know the child best will continue to lead and coordinate the supports they require to access learning.

4.5.2 Schools will be supported to ensure that where it is required appropriate adjustment is made in order for individual children and young people to access their learning. To ensure the diverse needs of the individual young people are met planning meetings involve the young people, staff, parents / carers as well as personnel from the agencies working with them, to ensure every young person has a Child's Plan and where appropriate a Person-centred Risk Assessment. The focus of these plans is:

- the delivery of an appropriate curriculum, with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and health and Wellbeing
- the provision of therapeutic interventions to address social, emotional and mental health needs
- the identification of family supports
- the preparation for transitions and in particular transitions beyond school

Revised Targeted and Specialist Provisions

4.6.1 Targeted provisions will be delivered in schools, supported by the teams of staff based within the Partnership Forums. These teams represent 75% of the resource previously deployed from the centre. Signposting and advice continue to be provided by the Education Support team.

4.6.2 Off-site provision has been reviewed and in place of Cordyce a number of satellite hubs will offer shared placements for young people, allowing them to maintain a place within their mainstream schools. These provisions will address the needs of the children and young people whose presenting behaviours result from: poor attachment; significant mental health issues, engagement in high risk behaviour, or from the challenge of being a young parent.

4.6.3 Hubs will operate within the context of highly inclusive mainstream provisions, where skilled staff will be able to meet the needs of the majority of learners. Hub provisions will:

- have high aspirations for children and young people, demonstrating creativity, flexibility and ambition
- work in partnership with other agencies to deliver a range of bespoke pathways
- deliver appropriate therapeutic interventions
- have well planned and supported transitions
- deliver effective engagement with families

4.6.4 Education Support Officers will work in partnership with colleagues from within the service, Children's Social Work and partners, including third sector organisations, to ensure a broad and appropriate range of interventions are available for the most vulnerable children and young people.

4.6.5 The new Centre of Excellence to replace Pre-School ASN, Hazlewood and Woodlands schools will meet the needs of Aberdeen City's children and young people with the most severe and complex needs. The provision will also be the hub for a number of Outreach Services and will host key partners.

4.7 Educational Benefits

- Maintaining their place within a mainstream provision is, for the majority of children and young people, the option most likely to promote success. Children and young people can continue to be supported by those who know them best and in the company of peers. The continuum of provision in Aberdeen City will reduce the number of children and young people removed for the roll of their school and placed in an alternative location / out of authority.
- The transfer of 75% of central support to Local Partnership forums will enable schools to enhance their capacity for inclusive practice. The impact of an inclusive ethos in schools will benefit all learners, their families and the wider community.
- Improved Outcomes for all children and young people with additional support needs will result from the restructuring of education support services. The transformed additional support needs service will deliver earlier intervention to a broader range of children and young people. By intervening early there is less likelihood of children and young people becoming disengaged from their learning, therefore, more likely to meet their potential.
- Teaching and support staff will continue to have access to a broad range of Continuous Professional Learning opportunities to ensure that they can make reasonable adjustments in the classroom at Universal level. Staff who previously supported children out with the

mainstream setting will work alongside school teams, providing further CPL through modelling of best practice.

- More immediate access to time-defined support from the Partnership Forum teams will provide targeted interventions for individuals and small groups. Vulnerable young people will be supported during the transition to S1 by the Targeted Transitions Team (previously Pupil Support Service).
- In early primary the Specialist Early Intervention Team will support schools to better meet the needs of children who require significant support to transition to full-time mainstream education.
- Outreach provisions from Hubs and the Centre of Excellence will focus on improving literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- For young people who face barriers to learning due to social, emotional and mental health needs Bespoke Pathways, which take account of their strengths and interests will seek to provide opportunities for attainment and achievement.
- Bespoke Pathways will provide the flexibility to focus on the key skills individual young people need. By building on existing partnerships with key third sector partners e.g. Foyer Futures and SHMU (Station House Media Unit) young people will have access to a range of opportunities, which will develop their skills for learning, life and work. Key workers will work alongside young people to develop their skills, enabling them to complete Employability Skills programmes and to participate in work experience.
- Shared Placements, which support continued mainstream attendance, will ensure young people have access to universal provisions to support the development of skills for life, work and learning e.g. careers support, financial management. Accessing this support within mainstream schools will allow for continued engagement with peers and the promotion of social and team skills.
- Earlier intervention is designed to support young people to access more of the Broad General Education. If there is a need for additional support, delivered off-site, children and young people will remain on the school roll. As a result, schools will retain responsibility for the delivery of a curriculum which provides challenge, enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and relevance. Child's Plans and Bespoke Pathways will ensure that these principles are upheld and will ensure accountability for the delivery of the actions within the plan / pathway.
- Aberdeen City's GIRFEC procedures highlight the need for children and young people to be engaged in planning processes, either by attending meetings or sharing their views with the Named Person / an advocate. Ensuring that the voice of the child or young person is heard means plans should reflect their preferences and choices.
- At specialist level all young people and families will be invited to engage with the Multi-Agency Specialist Team to allow them to develop an awareness of the provisions on offer, enabling them to engage more fully in the planning process when the Bespoke Pathway is being created.

- There has been an ongoing focus on the promotion of children and young people's wellbeing and reinforcement of the need to consider social and emotional needs within the context of additional support needs. This focus will continue as the recommendations from the Mental Health strategy (2017) are taken forward.
- At all stages school staff are advised to use the Wellbeing Indicators as a key tool for carrying out a holistic assessment of need. Children and families are engaged in this process and at targeted level a multi-agency plan requires input from a range of partners. Through this process personal, social, health and emotional needs are identified and planned for.
- Extension of the partnership between Foyer Futures and NHS School Nurse team will provide a higher level of direct input to children and young people, thereby addressing wellbeing needs. This includes support for young people with mental health issues who may face challenges engaging learning within the mainstream environment.
- All central teams will have a responsibility for the promotion of inclusive practice and for the provision of support for all learners. This will enable school leaders to identify aspects of systemic practice for which they require support. Curriculum Officers will have a key role to play in promoting effective classroom practice.
- The transformation of the service provides school leaders with access to managers of the targeted and specialist provisions. This interface will enable officers to reinforce key messages and to provide signposting and advice to enable schools to further develop their inclusive practice in order to meet the needs of all learners.
- The Virtual School Head Teacher will retain responsibility for promoting improved outcomes for Looked After Children and those on the edge of care. This will include tracking and monitoring of this group of children and young people. Feedback will be provided to the Quality Improvement Manager.
- Specialist provision for those with severe and complex needs and those with social, emotional and mental health needs will be overseen by one Service Manager. A key aim is to further develop Outreach Services from the Centre of Excellence to support schools to meet the needs of a more diverse group of children and young people.
- Parents will be engaged in the development of Child's Plans, Person-Centred Risk Assessments and Bespoke Pathways. Named Person training will continue to encourage colleagues to acknowledge and respect the role of parents in identifying the needs of children and young people and the unique perspective they bring to planning to address these needs.
- A strong feature of the Continuum of Provision is the focus on the development of partnerships as a means of enhancing capacity. Through the partnership with Foyer Futures young people will benefit from a range of services which this organisation can deliver or can access on behalf of young people. With employability being a strong feature of the work of Foyer Futures vulnerable learners will have access to a range of provisions otherwise not available to them.
- The transformation of the service will bring more effective and efficient use of resources. Local Partnership Forums will secure support for ASG schools from local services, including

the third sector and business. This support will be in the form of contributions to systemic change and interventions for individuals / groups of learners.

- The partnership with Foyer Futures will have a significant impact on securing best value. The cost of the resource and provisions which will be delivered within the Service Level Agreement will in fact lead to a reduction in the current costs. Access to dedicated accommodation within a high quality location will be significantly less than the costs related to the upkeep of Cordyce School. In addition, through joint planning of projects we will be able to access funding not normally available to support educational establishments.
- In this new model as each school maintains responsibility for all of its pupils the Quality Improvement Officer will be well placed to review the outcomes for all children and young people. Where necessary they will be able to broker further support for schools to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

5. OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

5.1 The options under consideration and for which the Council seeks comment from interested stakeholders are:

- (i) To retain the status quo and maintain the existing Cordyce School;
- (ii) To permanently close Cordyce School in Aberdeen.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1 To assist stakeholders in accessing relevant information, a dedicated area of Aberdeen City Council website has been populated with all information within this consultation document and further detail on the consultation process and data relating to the proposal.

The relevant web pages can be accessed at:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/XXXXXXXX

Please contact us on the telephone number below if you want this document in Braille, large print or on an audio CD, or if you want the document translated into another language.

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه الوثيقة بالخط العريض أو البريلا أو الأشرطة الصوتية المدمجة أو كنت تود ترجمتها الى لغة أخرى فالرجاء الاتصال بنا على الهاتف أدناه.

আপনি যদি এই দলিলটি ব্রেইলে, বড় ছাপার অক্ষরে বা শোনার জন্য সিডি, অথবা দলিলটি অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনুদিত চান তবে অনুগ্রহ করে নীচের টেলিফোন নম্বরে ফোন করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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01224 522273

6.2 A copy of this statutory consultation document will be available for public consultation during the period of consultation at the following venues:

- Marischal College
- Central Library
- Aberdeen Grammar School
- Bridge of Don Academy
- Bucksburn Academy
- Cults Academy
- Dyce Academy
- Harlaw Academy
- Hazlehead Academy
- Kincorth Academy
- Northfield Academy
- Oldmachar Academy
- St Machar Academy
- Torry Academy

7. PUBLIC MEETING

7.1 A public meeting to discuss the proposals will take place on:

Wednesday 20 September 2017, from 7.00pm to 8.00pm at Bucksburn Academy.

8. SUBMISSION OF VIEWS

8.1 Any interested stakeholders may respond to the consultation online, via the Council's Consultation Hub: <https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk/>

Responses can also be submitted by completing the comment form attached at Appendix 1, and sending it to:

Cordyce School Consultation
Education & Children's Services
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 13
Second Floor North
Marischal College
Broad Street
ABERDEEN
AB10 1AB

Alternatively comments can be submitted in writing to the address above, or by sending an email to:

schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk

All responses should be submitted before 5.00pm on Friday 13 October 2017.

9. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

9.1 A summary of submissions will be published on the council website at

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/XXXXXXXXX

9.2 A report on the consultation will be delivered to the Education & Children's Services Committee in January 2018. This will provide information for Elected Members to make a final decision on the proposal.

Comment Form Cordyce School Proposals 2017

Public Consultation

Proposal:

To permanently close Cordyce School in Aberdeen, with effect from 1 April 2018

All completed comment forms will be included in a final Consultation Report to the Education & Children's Services Committee.

Contact Information (Optional)

Provision of personal information is optional. Your personal details will not be published, nor will they be used for any purpose without your expressed consent.

First name(s):	
Last name:	
Address:	
Postal Code:	
Phone:	
Email:	
I am a	Please tick (✓) all applicable boxes
parent/carer of current primary pupil(s) <input type="checkbox"/>	School name: _____
parent/carer of current secondary pupil(s) <input type="checkbox"/>	School name: _____
parent/carer of future pupil(s) (pre 5 child) <input type="checkbox"/>	
local resident <input type="checkbox"/>	
other <input type="checkbox"/>	
If other, please describe:	

What is the most positive part of the proposal (if any)?

What is/are your main concern(s) about the proposal?

What would you like the Council to know about the proposal?

Overall, do you support the proposal? (Please tick) Yes No

Any other comments?

Thank you for your comments.

Please send this form to:

Cordyce School Consultation
Education & Children's Services
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 13
Second Floor North
Marischal College
Broad Street
ABERDEEN
AB10 1AB

or by email to schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk

by 5.00pm on Friday 13 October 2017

Further information about the consultation process, including a full list of all meetings, as well as the Consultation Document, is available from the Council website at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/XXXXXX