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## **CONSULTATION REPORT**

### **Proposed Relocation of Walker Road School**

This Consultation Report has been compiled in response to a public consultation carried out from 5 December 2022 to 31 January 2023, on proposals to relocate Walker Road School to a new school building at Tullos Circle in Torry, Aberdeen.

The report summarises the feedback 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 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

#### **Proposals:**

- **To relocate the existing Walker Road School to a new primary school building at Tullos Circle, Aberdeen, with effect from 1 August 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter**

Further:

- **To alter the school catchment area for Walker Road School, so that all houses which are north of Balnagask Road and west of Mansfield Road are permanently included within the Walker Road School catchment area, with effect from 1 August 2023**

Further:

- **To alter the school catchment area for Tullos School, so that all houses which are north of Balnagask Road and east of Mansfield Road, and the area of land to the north and east of St Fittick's Road, are permanently included within the Tullos School catchment area, with effect from 1 August 2023**

Maps illustrating the current and proposed changes to the school catchment boundaries are included at Annex A of this report.

## **1. METHODOLOGY**

This consultation was conducted in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. All requirements of the legislation have been met.

## **2. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS**

### **2.1 Public Event**

A public consultation event to discuss the proposals was held on 18 January 2023, at 7.00pm. The event took place at Walker Road School and was attended by six members of the public, along with five members of school staff.

### **2.2 Comments Received**

Twenty responses to the consultation were submitted via the Council's online consultation portal. In addition, two responses were received via email. Eleven of the respondents indicated that they were parents of pupils currently attending Walker Road School, and one respondent declared that they were a parent of a pupil at Tullos School. Six respondents told us that they have children yet to reach primary school age.

In total, 17 respondents indicated that they were in support of the proposals. Five respondents stated that they did not support the proposals.

All of the submissions, anonymised as necessary, are available to view on the Council's website: [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations)

### **2.3 Issues Raised**

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

#### **Comments from respondents in support of the proposals**

- All of the online respondents who were in support of the proposal expressed a view that children would benefit from the improved, modern and fit-for-purpose facilities which the new school building would provide.
- In particular, the improved outdoor facilities, including larger playgrounds, at the new school site were highlighted by six of the consultees as a positive aspect of the proposals.
- Two of the respondents also felt that moving to the new school building would help improve road safety, given that the new building is not located on busy roads, as the current building is, although one of these consultees suggested

that improvements for safe crossing may be required at the crossroads at Grampian Place and Oscar Road. This point was also raised by an attendee at the public meeting.

- One respondent who stated they supported the proposals, and also some of the attendees at the public meeting, highlighted a concern about the future of the existing Walker Road school building if the relocation goes ahead. They stated that it would be important to reach a decision on the future of the building quickly, to avoid it being left empty, which it was felt would be a security concern, and to ensure the building can continue to be used to its full potential.
- Another respondent was concerned about the possibility of losing the “Walker Road School” name, as they felt that this is part of the Torry community’s heritage.
- Four of the respondents who were in support of the proposals raised concerns that children who were already attending Walker Road School would be expected to move to Tullos School, because their home address falls within the Tullos School catchment area.

#### Comments from respondents not in support of the proposals

- Two respondents expressed a view that a relocation would be unsettling for pupils and would impact negatively on their learning, and so the school should remain where it is. One of these respondents also stated that the existing building should be preserved, as it is a historical building in Torry and remains fit for purpose.
- One respondent who indicated that they did not agree with the proposal, and who stated that they were a parent of a child at Tullos School, had concerns that these proposals may lead to a decision in the future to relocate Tullos School, and that this would have a negative impact on children there, due to them being taken away from their friendship groups and teachers. They were also concerned that this may lead to the closure of the Tullos swimming pool.
- One further respondent who indicated that they did not agree with the proposals, asked what would happen to the existing Walker Road School building, if the proposed relocation was to go ahead.

#### Additional points raised at the public meeting

- The majority of the discussion at the public meeting was made up of questions about the facilities at the new school building, and what the arrangements and timescales would be for transitioning to the building, if it is decided that the relocation should go ahead.

- There were concerns in particular about parents being required to purchase new school uniforms for their children, should the name of the school be changed, as it was felt that this may be unaffordable for some.

## **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 noted that overall, most stakeholders were positive and enthusiastic about the proposed move to a new school building, and the opportunities this would present for pupils at the school. It was stated in the report that HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits which were set out in the Council's proposal paper, and that the new school building would provide an enhanced environment for supporting learning and teaching.

The report also referred to the concerns raised by some stakeholders about traffic in the vicinity of the new school building, and questions which were raised during the consultation about the future of the existing building. It was also noted that there had been some confusion amongst consultees in relation to the proposed changes to catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School.

The report suggested that if the proposals are approved, the Council should ensure children have safe routes to the new school building, provide reassurance to parents who may be confused about changes to the catchment areas, and consider how best to work with the community in considering the future of the existing Walker Road School site.

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

### **3.1 Road Safety**

Whilst some consultees raised concerns about road safety and increased risks which may be brought about by the proposed move to the new school building, others expressed a view that the new school is in a better location than the existing Walker Road site, as it is away from busy roads, and as such the proposed move would, it was suggested, improve road safety.

As no material changes are being proposed for the catchment area which is currently in place for Walker Road School, the actual walking routes for pupils travelling to school from within the catchment area will remain the same, and so there should be no increased risk in terms of road safety. Children who currently live on the eastern side of the catchment area, near to Tullos Circle, currently have the same walking routes to reach the existing Walker Road School, as those who live in the vicinity of Walker Road would have when walking to the new site at Tullos Circle, albeit in the opposite direction. Children will be crossing the same roads to reach the new school site as children currently cross to reach the Walker Road site.

To help address the concerns about road safety which have been raised during the consultation, should the proposed move go ahead, staff at the school will be asked to work with pupils and parents to develop a revised travel plan, to set out and promote the safe and sustainable routes to the new building.

### 3.2 The future of the existing Walker Road School building

No decisions have yet been taken on what would happen to the existing Walker Road School site, if the proposed relocation of the school is approved. It is recognised that if the move goes ahead, there will be a need to make early decisions on the future of the site, to ensure that it can be used to its full potential, to avoid any negative impact on the local community, and also to minimise any unnecessary costs to the Council. The Council has a surplus building procedure which would be followed in the event that the building is declared surplus to requirement, and this would ensure all potential options for the future of the site can be carefully considered, prior to a decision being taken.

### 3.3 The name of the school

As highlighted in the consultation proposal document, if the proposed move goes ahead, the name of the school is likely to need to be reviewed, given that the school would no longer be located at Walker Road. Retaining the Walker Road name may cause some confusion in the future, for anyone who is trying to find the school for the first time.

If the proposed move to the new building is agreed, Council officers would work closely with the school to gather the views of pupils, staff and the wider school community, on what the school should be called in the future, before any decision on this is taken.

### 3.4 Impact of changes to school catchment areas

The changes to school catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School which have been proposed as part of this consultation were necessary because previously, it was anticipated that the new school building would operate as a third primary school in Torry, with the existing Walker Road School and Tullos School also remaining open. To support the opening of a third primary school, it was necessary to consider which parts of Torry would form the catchment area for the new school, and which parts of Torry would remain in the catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School.

A new catchment area for the new school was therefore created in 2020, so that it would be clear which children would be entitled to attend the new school when it opened. This catchment area is indicated in Map A at the end of this report. Until the new school was open, temporary arrangements were put in place so that children living in the eastern side of the new catchment area remained entitled to attend Tullos School, and children living in the western side of the new catchment area remained entitled to attend Walker Road School, as indicated in the map.

Given that the proposed relocation of Walker Road School to the new school building would mean that it would no longer open as a third primary school for Torry, there is no

longer a requirement for the new catchment area which was created in 2010. The proposal, therefore, is to remove this new catchment area. The eastern side of the area would then become a permanent part of the Tullos School catchment area, and the western side would become a permanent part of the Walker Road School catchment area.

The proposed changes to catchment areas, therefore, are simply to remove the new area created in 2010, and for the temporary arrangements which were in place before the new school opened, to become permanent parts of the existing catchment areas. This means that there will be no changes to any existing pupil's eligibility to attend Walker Road School or Tullos School.

During the consultation some parents queried whether their children who currently attend Walker Road School would be expected to move to Tullos School, because they live within the Tullos School catchment area. These parents were contacted directly by officers who confirmed to them that this would not be the case. No children would be expected to move from Walker Road School to Tullos School, or from Tullos School to Walker Road School, as a result of the proposed changes to catchment areas.

### 3.5 Impact on Tullos School

In relation to the concerns raised about a possible future relocation of Tullos School, this is not currently being considered. There would be no clear reason or identified benefit in making such changes to Tullos School.

### 3.6 Impact of the move on children

If the proposed relocation is approved, careful planning would be put in place, with officers working closely with school staff, to ensure the transition to the new building is smooth and well managed. Minimising the impact on pupils, particularly those who may find such a move unsettling, would be a high priority and considered carefully as part of the planning process.

### 3.7 School uniform

The concerns raised by consultees about the potential cost of new uniforms if these were required as part of a move to a new building have been noted, and officers will give careful consideration to this, prior to any decision being taken on such changes, to minimise any negative impact on families.

## **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 meeting held on 18 January, 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.

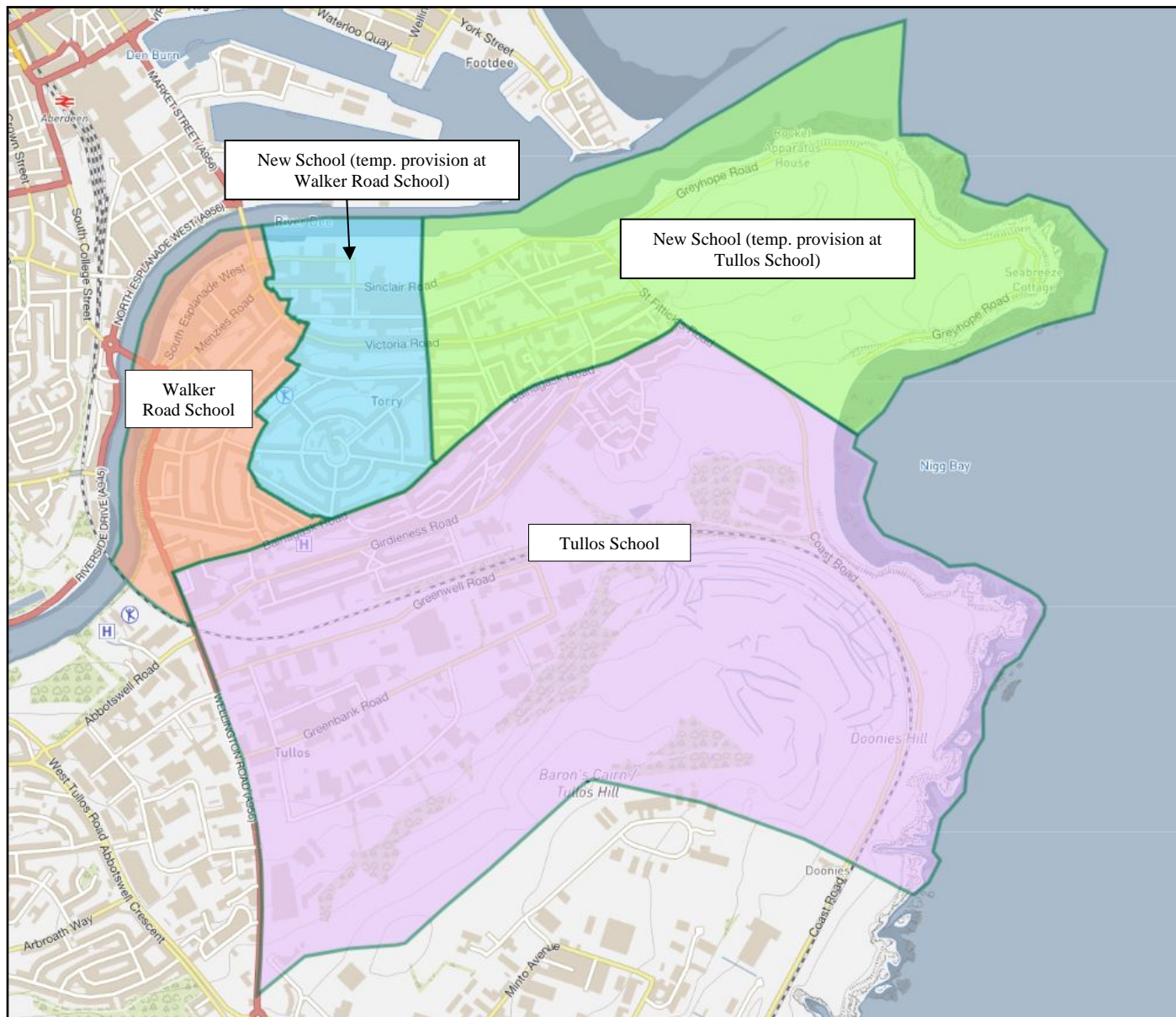
With relation to Section 9(1) of the 2010 Act and having considered all of the information received during the consultation process, officers have concluded that the proposed relocation of the school remains appropriate, and that there is no reason to change the original proposal.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Education and Children's Services Committee agrees to implement the proposal to relocate Walker Road School to the new school building at Tullos Circle in Torry, Aberdeen, with effect from 1 August 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter, and to implement the proposed alterations to the catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School, as defined within the maps at Annex A, with effect from 1 August 2023.

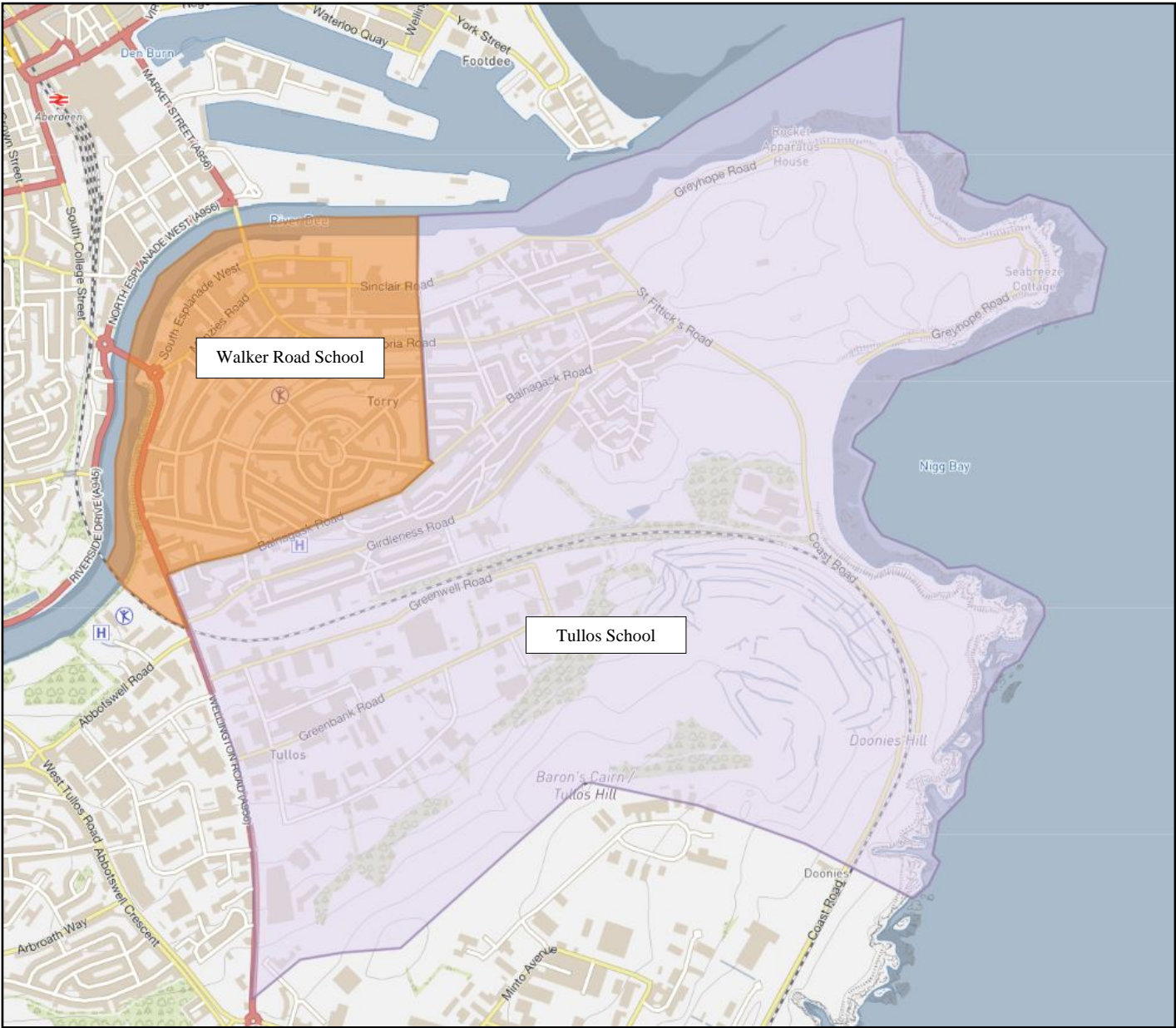
**Steve Whyte**  
**Director of Resources**  
**February 2023**

Map A: Current Catchment Areas for Primary Schools in Torry





Map B: Proposed catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School



REPORT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND



# Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeen City Council to relocate Walker Road School and alter the existing catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School**

February 2023

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Aberdeen City Council's proposal to relocate Walker Road School and alter the existing catchment areas for Walker Road School and Tullos School. 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 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; 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 the public meeting held on 18 January 2023 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;
- visits to the sites of Walker Road School and Tullos School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

2.1 Aberdeen City Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The council ran a public consultation from 5 December 2022 to 31 January 2023. Copies of the proposal document were made available to stakeholders, including parents and children from both schools. The proposal was also available on the council's website. Stakeholders were invited to respond to the consultation online using a form or by email. The council received two emails and 20 responses to the online form. Of the people that completed the online form or emailed 77% were in

favour of the proposal. The council held a public meeting at Walker Road School on 18 January 2023. This was attended by six members of the public as well as school staff and elected members. Overall, most stakeholders are positive about the opportunities the new build presents for children. However, stakeholders raised worries about road safety for children who walk to school. They feel there is a need for improvements such as new road crossings and school patrol officers. For a few parents, the proposed changes to the catchment areas have caused some confusion and concern. This is partly as a result of previous plans for the new school to be a third school in the area with both Tullos School and Walker Road School remaining open. This resulted in changed catchment areas. The Council should consider how to provide further reassurance to parents about the proposed catchment areas.

2.3 Walker Road School opened in 1897 and is a landmark building in the community. Many stakeholders have positive memories of the school. Local people, including parents, are concerned about what will happen to the existing school site if the proposal is approved. The community have recent experience of a closed school becoming derelict. They would like the council to prevent that happening to Walker Road School.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits the council presents in its proposal. The proposed design for the school should provide an enhanced environment for delivering teaching and learning. All stakeholders that HM Inspectors spoke with are enthusiastic about the opportunities the new site offers. In particular, they look forward to the improved play and outdoor learning facilities if the proposal is approved. A few stakeholders mentioned that the planned onsite school kitchen and larger dining area should improve children's dining experience. Children are excited about the improved playground, toilets, changing facilities and social areas. Stakeholders, including children at both local schools, would like to be involved in the naming of and designs for the new school site. A few stakeholders queried the timing of the consultation given that the development of the new site is well underway.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders that HM Inspectors met with are positive that the site will host a wider range of services and organisations alongside the school. Children attending both Walker Road and Tullos Schools would like to access the hub for after school and weekend activities. However, staff and parents have concerns regarding the costs for the use of the premises and any negative impact that this may have on its use by local organisations, such as after school groups. A few children are anxious about moving to a larger site and suggest that having tours of the new building would help them to become familiar with the school prior to moving. Parents want the council to explore further how the new site will complement and build on the existing range of community and sports facilities in the area. Walker Road School Parent Council would appreciate the council providing more information on what safeguarding processes and procedures will be put in place, given the school will be part of a multi-use hub.

3.3 The children and parents that HM Inspectors spoke to raised concerns about traffic on the main roads near the new school site. If the proposal is approved, children's routes to walk or cycle to the new school site will include busy through roads that have cars parked on either side. If the proposal is approved, the council should work with stakeholders, including Walker Road School Parent Council, to ensure that there are safe routes to school.

## 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits the council has laid out in its proposal. The design for the new building will have enhanced learning spaces, including for outdoor learning. Almost all stakeholders are positive about the learning and social spaces the new building should provide for children and members of the wider community. Children are enthusiastic that the plans show that there will be more child friendly play areas than is available at the current Walker Road School site. The council should consider how best to provide reassurance for those parents who are confused or concerned about the proposed catchments areas. If the proposal is approved, the council will need to work with stakeholders to ensure children have safe routes to the new school building. Similarly, the council should consider how it can best work with the community to explore the future use of the current Walker Road School site.

**HM Inspectors**  
**February 2023**