



EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: MARCH 2015**

**REPLACEMENT MARKETHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## Proposal for the future provision of primary education in the Turriff area

### **SUMMARY PROPOSAL**

**It is proposed that:**

**Education provision at the existing Markethill Primary School should be discontinued with effect from July 2017;**

**Pupils of the existing Markethill Primary School and future pupils from the Markethill catchment area should continue their education at a new primary school located at Meadowbank Road from August 2017.**

This document has been issued by Aberdeenshire Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

### DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Aberdeenshire Council web-site: [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk), or by e-mail at rezoning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

This document will be provided to:

- School Parent Council of Markethill Primary School
- Parents of the pupils at Markethill Primary School
- Pupils at Markethill Primary School
- Parents of pre-school age children who would be zoned to attend Markethill Primary School
- Teaching and ancillary staff at Markethill Primary School
- Trade union representatives of the above staff
- Turriff and District Community Council
- Relevant users of Markethill Primary School
- Education Scotland

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB
- Turriff Library
- Markethill Primary School
- Gateway Community Centre

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Aberdeenshire Council strives to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.
- 1.2 The Council's aims for its Education Learning and Leisure Service are:
  - the building of capacity
  - the realisation of potential
  - the achievement of excellence
- 1.3 In order to fulfil the above vision it is necessary to adapt to changing circumstances. It is essential that the Council regularly reviews the pattern of educational provision across all establishments, with a particular focus on school rolls, accommodation and quality of education.
- 1.4 In September 2011 it was agreed by Aberdeenshire Council's Policy and Resources Committee that a replacement school with increased capacity should be built in Turriff and the site at Meadowbank Road was approved.
- 1.5 Markethill Primary School is situated in the town of Turriff in the Formartine area of Aberdeenshire. The Markethill Primary School catchment area comprises the town of Turriff and the immediate surrounding rural area.

## **2. Reason for Proposal**

- 2.1 Primary education for the Turriff area is currently provided at Markethill School in a single storey building with a capacity of 360 pupils. The current roll of the school is 456 (correct on 16.2.15).
- 2.2 The roll of Markethill Primary School has remained relatively high over the last decade with the town of Turriff having experienced a steadily growing population.
- 2.3 The existing Markethill Primary School building rates as B in terms of condition and C in terms of suitability as outlined in the Core Facts returns that go to the Scottish Government as part of Aberdeenshire Council's School Estate Management Plan.
- 2.4 The core facilities within the existing school are not sufficient for a roll which currently sits at 127% of its capacity. The school is limited for classroom size, P.E and dining facilities. Dining is currently managed on a rota schedule. Provision of two hours indoor P.E is not possible at the school and the nearby Baden Powell Centre is used in the winter months. The ability of the school to fully deliver the curriculum is under pressure due to both classroom and core facilities limitations.

2.5 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that when a school is to be relocated then a consultation must be undertaken with all relevant stakeholders. This is because in practice the old school must close in order for the new school to open.

### 3. Details of the Proposal

3.1 The current capacities and predicted rolls for Turriff network schools, based on the September 2014 census data, are shown in Table 1 below. These figures are working data and differ from the published 2013 School Roll Forecasts which can be found on the Aberdeenshire Council website at the following web address:

[http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parents/carers/information/school\\_roll.asp](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parents/carers/information/school_roll.asp)

Table 1 – Turriff Network Updated 2014 School Roll Forecast						
School	Capacity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Turriff Academy	760	661	649	624	637	624
Auchterless	71	26	28	27	24	24
Crudie	47	31	35	31	29	26
Easterfield	19	22	23	23	23	26
Fintry	46	27	26	23	19	19
Fisherford	47	16	16	17	15	14
Fyvie	171	140	129	133	120	117
King Edward	47	27	29	31	36	38
<b>Markethill</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>474</b>
Monquhitter	198	149	144	136	129	119

3.2 The school roll forecast information shown in Table 1 takes in to account housing development information. Table 2 on the following page identifies approved housing developments within the current Markethill School catchment area.

Table 2 - Housing development in the current Markethill Primary School catchment area

Location	Settlement	Total Units	5 Year Effective	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Mains of Carnousie	Carnousie	6	6	0	0	2	2	2
Mains of Carnousie East	Carnousie	15	9	0	0	3	3	3
North Of Shannocks View	Turriff	150	80	0	20	20	20	20
Muiresk Drive	Turriff	7	3	1	1	1	0	0
Balmellie Crofts	Turriff	450	60	0	0	20	20	20
Collyburn View Ph 2	Turriff	7	7	3	2	2	0	0

- 3.2 The council proposes that education provision at the current Markethill Primary School on Baden Powell Road in Turriff be discontinued with effect from July 2017; and that from August 2017, pupils continue their education at the new Markethill Primary School which will be located at Meadowbank Road in Turriff.
- 3.2 The catchment area for the school will not change with the new location. All pupils currently zoned to Markethill Primary School would continue to be zoned to the school and would attend the new establishment.
- 3.3 The existing Markethill Primary School and the proposed site for the replacement school are approximately 0.4 miles apart. The travel time for pupils attending the new school who are currently transported by bus or by car would not significantly vary from the travelling time to the current establishment. However, the travelling time for pupils walking to school this could either increase or decrease by a couple of minutes depending on where they live within the town.
- 3.4 Pupils living outwith 2 miles of their zoned Primary school would have an entitlement to school transport. There may be some minor changes in transport entitlement. Some children living to the South of Turriff may become eligible for free transport, whilst other families living to the North of Turriff may find they are no longer eligible for free school transport.

- 3.5 The locations of the existing and replacement Markethill are shown in the map below:



#### 4. Educational Benefit Statement

- 4.1 Table 1 identifies that there is increasing pressure on capacity at Markethill Primary School. The current Markethill School has a capacity of 360. The roll is forecast to be 474 (132% capacity) in August 2018. The new Markethill Primary School will be built with an increased capacity of 505 pupils. This capacity takes in to account all allocated sites within the local development plan which would push the current building further over capacity. These developments are listed in table 2 above. It should be noted that any new schools are building in capacity for additional development, and with sufficient core areas that additional accommodation could be provided for a future increase in roll should this be required. A four classroom extension has been predetermined and outlined on the building plans so that, should this be required in future, it will merge easily with the new build school.
- 4.2 The current Markethill School includes two temporary accommodation units, these comprise three classrooms. All pupils in the new build Markethill will be taught in the main school building further enhancing coherence in the provision of educational programmes.
- 4.3 The new Markethill Primary School will be built with a new sports hall which will significantly enhance opportunities for PE (and related activities) and will improve pupil safety. This will result in the Baden Powell centre no longer being used to deliver physical education in the winter months. The new sports facility will enable pupils to receive all of their educational entitlement at the same location, and allow greater coherence of educational programmes.

- 4.4 In addition to a new indoor sports hall, the new establishment will have one 7-a-side grass pitch and one all-weather pitch. The remaining area around the school will be utilised for outdoor learning and play facilities which will promote positive engagement in outdoor education.
- 4.5 Classrooms will have direct access to outdoor spaces, increasing engagement with outdoor learning.
- 4.6 The new build school will have an increased dining capacity. This would mean that lunch times can now be carried out in two sittings.
- 4.7 Social and general purpose spaces are very limited at the current Markethill Primary School. The new build school will include social spaces which will ease circulation around the new school and provide more opportunities for social interaction. Improved access to communal social spaces will facilitate active learning and collaborative work within and between classes.
- 4.8 Improved core facility spaces such as those mentioned in 4.3-4.4 and 4.6-4.7 will provide greater opportunities for social interaction and enhance learning activities by allowing more group and team activities.
- 4.9 The new building could adapt to future learning requirements, and the design process will ensure that all spaces support the learning and teaching styles of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century according to a curriculum for excellence. The school has been designed using the Aberdeenshire New Build Primary Brief (2012) to ensure that learning opportunities are maximised.
- 4.10 The new school will provide more space per pupil; it will be fully accessible and equipped with modern ICT solutions to ensure that the best learning opportunities are afforded to every pupil.
- 4.11 A new Markethill Primary School will provide a high quality learning environment offering greater flexibility for all school activities. The suitability of the new school building is at the heart of the design process. It should be an attractive place to learn that inspires pupils to engage with the curriculum.
- 4.12 The condition of the building will be an improvement on the current establishment, making the environment more attractive to learners.
- 4.13 In addition the new school will have a larger nursery facility on site, increasing the quality and availability of pre-school provision for local parents.

## **5. Alternatives to the proposal**

5.1 A range of alternative possibilities have been considered as noted below.

- Continuing the status quo – this does not address the concerns regarding the school being over capacity, with restrictions on classroom size, dining and children having to leave the premises for PE. This option would not meet the council's aims to provide the best possible education opportunities for the young people who are due to attend Markethill Primary School from August 2017 onwards.
- Placing the school at a different site in Turriff – an options appraisal on a number of suitable sites was carried out at an earlier stage in the planning process for this school. Input was sought from stakeholders for the options appraisal and the proposed site is the one that scored the highest in terms of feasibility.
- To ensure the school remained within the settlement of Turriff, no other options were available.

## **6. Effect on the local community**

6.1 The new primary school is being built with suitable access restrictions to allow community use of the multi-purpose spaces in the school outwith teaching hours.

6.2 Currently Markethill Parent Council, the local nursery support group, and active schools are regular users of the school for community purposes. Activities range from meetings, toddler groups and sporting activities. It is expected that these groups will relocate to the new school once it is open.

## **7. School Transport**

7.1 As the location of the proposed replacement Markethill Primary School is approximately 0.4 miles to the North of the existing establishment, and the current Markethill catchment area will remain the same, it is not believed that there will be any significant impact upon current entitlement to school transport.

7.2 Some families to the South of Turriff may find that they are now entitled to free school transport, whilst other families living to the North of Turriff may find they are no longer eligible for free school transport once the new school is opened. Based on the current geographic distribution of pupils, it is expected that less than 5 families will be affected.

## **8 Sustainability**

8.1 The new school will be built following Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) guidelines, which is a scheme that seeks to minimise the impact of new buildings on the environment. A target of a 'Very Good' BREEAM rating has been set for the new school. Sustainability is a key factor in the design of the

new school and is being incorporated into every feasible aspect. This ranges from the materials used to the heating system and the lighting provided, and also to the landscaping of the external site to encourage biodiversity.

## **9 Equal Opportunities**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact on the education service. In addition an EIA can provide more information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 9.2 The aim of an EIA is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on groups with protected characteristics are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.
- 9.3 With regards to the replacement of Markethill Primary School, it is not believed that this will have a negative impact on any of the groups with protected characteristics.
- 9.4 Under the Equality Act 2010 education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. Existing arrangements in place for pupils within the Turriff network with additional support needs will continue.
- 9.5 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers and young people, and will address comments about equality during this consultation.

## **10. Implications for staff**

- 10.1 On completion of the new Markethill Primary School it is anticipated that all staff based at the existing school will transfer to the new school, in line with their existing contract and HR policies and procedures.
- 10.2 Consultation will take place with individual members of staff themselves and with Trade Unions representing these staff at a time closer to the opening of the new school, should this proposal be accepted.

## **11 Consultation Arrangements**

- 11.1 This document was considered by Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning and Leisure Committee on 26 March 2015 when it was agreed that it should be issued as a basis for consultation. No decision will be taken by the Council on the proposal contained in the paper until

after the end of the consultation period. The Council will then receive a report on the consultation and will reach a view on the proposal.

- 11.2 As this consultation is occurring as part of wider capital building project, activity will continue in terms of the planning process to ensure that if this proposal is accepted the building programme will be able to finish within the timescales required by the Council's Capital Spending Plan.
- 11.3 A copy of this document will be issued free of charge to all of the consultees listed on the first page of this document and it will also be published on the Council's website: [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
- 11.4 The period for consultation will extend from 30 March 2015 until 29 May 2015 which covers a period of 30 school days.
- 11.5 A public meeting will be held on Wednesday 20 May at Markethill School in the main hall at 7pm. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 11.6 A meeting will be organised for Markethill Primary School staff in April, and opportunities will be arranged for all current pupils at the school to engage in the consultation during April and May 2015.
- 11.7 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Mrs Maxine Booth Quality Improvement Officer, to be received no later than 5pm on Friday 29 May 2015. They should be posted to Aberdeenshire Council, Learning Estates Team, Education & Children's Services, Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie, AB51 3WA or emailed to [rezoning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:rezoning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
- 11.8 A copy of this document will also be sent to Education Scotland (ES). ES will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if ES agree, a summary of them. ES will further receive a copy of any oral representations made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. ES will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, ES may visit the school and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

#### **Consideration of Consultation Responses**

- 11.9 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the ES Report, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available on the Council web-site and from Council Headquarters, as well as at Markethill Primary School,

free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting, the Authority's response to the ES Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the ES Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the ES Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

### **Decision Making**

- 11.10 In the event that the Council approves the closure of the existing Markethill Primary School in order to open a new school, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

## **12 Conclusion**

- 12.1 There are strong educational and financial arguments in favour of this proposal.
- 12.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will enhance the provision of primary education in the Turriff area.