

Appendix 1



**EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF  
BANCHORY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND HILL OF BANCHORY  
SCHOOL ZONES**

**AUGUST 2015**

**This Consultation Report has been issued by Education & Children's Services  
of Aberdeenshire Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation)  
(Scotland) Act 2010**

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## 1. THE PROPOSAL

- 1.1 At its meeting on 4 December 2014, Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning & Leisure Committee authorised the launch of a statutory consultation in early 2015 to review the catchment areas for Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School. This rezoning exercise was prompted by a masterplan application for sites M2 and H2 in the local development plan. The majority of the development at Lochside of Leys (M2 and H2) would have been zoned for Hill of Banchory School which would result in the school being over capacity. It was proposed that a rezoning exercise was carried out to realign the majority of this development to Banchory Primary School where there would be sufficient capacity for the pupils generated from these houses. The Proposal Document was issued on 4 March 2015 to the individuals and bodies listed under Distribution within the document. The Proposal Document was also published on the Council website:  
<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/education/EducationConsultations.asp>.  
The Proposal Document made clear to consultees that the consultation period would run from Wednesday 04 March 2015 to Thursday 30 April 2015 – incorporating the required 30 days of term time consultation.

The proposal on which consultation took place was that:

*The existing primary school catchment areas within Banchory are amended with effect from 31 August 2015;*

*The proposals will only affect new pupils in the network. Current pupils and their siblings could continue to attend their existing school.*

- 1.1.1 The proposal document provided a new catchment area option for Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School.

### 1.2 Educational Benefits Statement

The Proposal Document contained within it an educational benefits statement. It stated that the proposed changes will address any future capacity issues at Hill of Banchory School and will also provide additional learning space for pupils. The re-distribution of pupil numbers across the primary schools in Banchory will allow for the equitable distribution of resources.

## 2. THE PUBLIC MEETING

- 2.1 A public meeting was held at Banchory Primary School on Wednesday 18 March 2015. The meeting was attended by around 10 parents, staff, councillors and members of the community. A note of the minutes of the public meeting can be found at:  
<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/education/EducationConsultations.asp>

Officers also gave a presentation on school roll forecasts and how the figures were formulated for this proposal. There were several comments and questions raised regarding the capacity at Banchory Primary School and its ability to cope with the additional pupils generated by the rezoning exercise,

however there was a feeling of overall support for the proposals. Comments and questions received are summarised below.

- Concerns about getting extra teachers for the rising pupil roll at Banchory Primary School if the proposals went ahead.
- Concerns regarding the capacity of Banchory Primary School being able to cope with the extra pupils generated from the development.
- Questions regarding the dropping roll of Banchory Primary School and the accuracy of past school roll forecasts.
- Concerns regarding the developer changing the number of houses and how this would affect the capacity at Banchory Primary School.
- GP spaces being used as extra classrooms at Banchory Primary School
- Question asking if there is any spare capacity at Hill of Banchory School to cope with the development
- Concerns regarding the capacity and condition of Banchory Academy to cope with the extra pupils generated from this development.

## 2.2 Discussions with Pupils

As part of the consultation process, the head teachers at Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School posed a short set of questions to pupils about the proposal to rezone part of the Lochside of Leys development to Banchory Primary School.

A summary note of the responses from pupils is appended (Appendix B).

## 3. **WRITTEN RESPONSES**

A total of 8 written responses were received by email. A summary of the written responses highlight:

- Questions from the Community Council Chair asking how the figures for the projected numbers were formulated, what factors are taken into account and concerns about the number of pupils that would be generated from the housing development at Lochside of Leys.
- Why was only one preferred option? What else has been considered? A suggestion that a new school could have been built to take in children from the smaller outlying schools.
- Concerns regarding the condition/space of the playground for existing pupils at Banchory Primary School.
- There was a request from a parent to have Tillybrake Road included in the zone for Hill of Banchory. This request was noted and will be taken into consideration when Aberdeenshire Council looks at a wider rezoning of the Banchory network in the future.
- The need for increased resources and IT facilities at Banchory Primary School to cope with the extra pupils generated from the rezoning.
- The need to put the onus on the developers to improve infrastructure in Banchory.
- Some comments questioning that Banchory Primary School has the extra capacity for the increasing numbers of pupils generated by this development.
- Comments stating that there should be a proposal which addresses

the schooling and community requirements in light of all future developments in and around Banchory instead of a piecemeal approach.

- The Banchory Community Council supported the proposed revised catchment areas for both schools and agreed that the rezoning would make the best use of the existing buildings resources. There were concerns however regarding the safety of the school route from the rezoned catchment area at Lochside of Leys and requested that speed reducing measures and a second pedestrian crossing be constructed across Raemoir Road to provide a safe route to school. The Community Council also commented on the effect the increase in school rolls would have on Banchory Academy and stated that a timescale should now be agreed to replace the existing Academy building on the reserved site at Hill of Banchory.

### 3.1 ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

An online survey was issued to all parents of existing pupils at Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School, all parents of pre-school age children who would attend school in Banchory and all members of staff. There was a response rate of 37. This would suggest a broad acceptance of the proposed zones. The following questions were asked:

#### **Question 1 Do you agree with the proposed catchment area for Hill of Banchory School?**

Out of a response rate of 37, the answers were as follows:

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Yes                    | 19 |
| No                     | 7  |
| Not sure/no preference | 11 |

There were 6 written responses in the comments section relating to the rezoning. Of the 6 comments received 3 of them were related to the proposed boundary changes. A summary of these comments is given below.

- Concerns about the distance pupils living in the rezoned area would have to walk/cycle to get to school. Also concerns around the potential for increased traffic/cars at Banchory Primary School with parents dropping off pupils.
- Comment about the way the information was presented on the online survey
- Comment that the catchment for Hill of Banchory School should be split by Raemoir Road but excluding the new development as there is no more room at Hill of Banchory
- Question regarding why there are out of zone children at Hill of Banchory School when they all have perfectly good schools where they live.
- Concern regarding the age of Banchory Primary School and the limitations should it need to expand. It is already the school in the cluster for additional support needs and has a bigger catchment than the Hill of Banchory.
- Question as to how the amendments can be significant when there

appears to be no houses in the area removed from the current catchment area.

## **Question 2 – Do you agree with the proposed catchment area for Banchory Primary?**

Out of a response rate of 35, the answers were as follows:

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Yes                    | 19 |
| No                     | 9  |
| Not sure/no preference | 7  |

There were seven written responses in the comments section. A summary of these comments is given below.

- Concerns that Banchory Primary doesn't have the capacity to have so many extra pupils and that the development is much closer to Hill of Banchory School
- Mention of the transient nature of Banchory and you cannot account for families moving into the area.
- Hill of Banchory was built with expansion in mind and an extension should be built to accommodate the growing catchment area at the developers cost
- Concern that Banchory Primary School will lose common areas and rooms will be taken over as classrooms. Space currently allocated to other uses would likely be lost to formal teaching space. Just because Banchory Primary School is relatively well off in terms of space and resources doesn't mean that these should be eroded to save money
- Although Banchory Primary School appears to have the larger capacity the school do not have a number of resources like an IT suite, decent break out space

## **4. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED ZONING OPTIONS**

- 4.1 A new catchment area for Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School, was consulted upon. One option was to maintain the status quo. A summary of these options is provided below.

### **Option 1 – Maintain the Status Quo, no change to catchment areas**

This would not address the fact that the capacity at Hill of Banchory School would be put under increasing pressure from the number of pupils generated from the Lochside of Leys development at the same time as the roll at Banchory Primary School was decreasing. An extension would need to be built at Hill of Banchory School to accommodate additional pupils at a significant cost.

### **Option 2 – Implement the new zones for Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School as proposed**

This option would address the capacity issues at Hill of Banchory School and would maintain the roll at Banchory Primary School, which is currently forecast to decrease in future years. Should the proposal be implemented, the majority of pupils will be able to walk or cycle to school. Pupils already at

Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School will be able to continue their education at the school they currently attend and any siblings would also be entitled to attend.

## **5. EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO WRITTEN AND ORAL REPRESENTATIONS**

### **5.1 Educational Benefits**

For Aberdeenshire Council, Education & Children's Services, educational benefit to pupils affected by the proposal is the key issue. Pupils are already receiving high quality education at both primary schools in Banchory, and parents are happy that their children are receiving quality education in their chosen setting.

The rezoning will help to relieve physical pressure on Hill of Banchory School from future housing developments and will redistribute pupil numbers across the two primary schools in Banchory. Hill of Banchory School has converted GP areas into classrooms in recent years as a result of the rising roll.

Siblings of existing pupils will be entitled to attend the same school, thus keeping families together. No children will be forced to move schools, however parents who wish to move their children would be able to do so.

### **5.2 Travel times & Road Safety**

There were some concerns raised about the travel time and the distance to school that would affect pupils at the Lochside of Leys development if the proposal to rezone the area was adopted. The majority of pupils from this area will be able to walk or cycle to school. Banchory Primary School and the transport team of Aberdeenshire Council will be involved in identifying safe routes to school from the new housing development. If additional crossings or traffic calming measures are felt to be appropriate, this will be identified as part of the safe routes to school assessment process and recommendations will be made to Infrastructure Services for further investigation.

Pupils living out with 2 miles of their zoned school would have an entitlement to free school transport. Any changes to catchment areas will not affect the arrangements of existing pupils if the proposals are adopted.

### **5.3 Why Only One Proposal For Each School?**

It was anticipated that a review of the schools in the Banchory network would take place as part of the wider review to be carried out by the Learning Estates team. However after the Education, Learning & Leisure Committee approved the initial plan for consultation exercises, a housing masterplan was received for Banchory which prompted an earlier consultation for the two schools within the town.

### **5.4 School Roll Projections**

There have been some comments as to the accuracy of the projections used to determine the rolls for each school after rezoning. Aberdeenshire Council

have taken reasonable steps to project the future rolls of each school in Banchory. The projected rolls take into account birth rate data along with any planned new housing developments in the area.

#### **5.5 Playground and Capacity at Banchory Primary School**

The play areas for the different stages and nursery pupils are well managed at Banchory Primary School. All Aberdeenshire school playground surfaces are addressed on a priority basis. Work is currently underway to assess the playground surface and if necessary, this will be addressed accordingly.

There have been concerns raised regarding the capacity at Banchory Primary School and its ability to cope with the increased pupil numbers generated by the Lochside of Leys development. The revised methodology for assessing primary school capacities was approved at Education, Learning & Leisure Committee in 2013. The capacity at Banchory Primary School was revised and it decreased from 600 to 550 pupils. On this basis Aberdeenshire Council are confident that there is sufficient capacity at Banchory Primary School to cope with the additional pupils generated from this development. There are currently 16 classrooms occupied, in addition to the new Life skills room, Art & Science, Music & Drama, 2 Libraries and a Resources/Literacy Room.

Offers were made to discuss any capacity concerns raised by parents, from the parent council meeting in greater detail during and after the consultation period. No requests from individual parents or the parent council were received.

### **6. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT**

6.1 The Education Scotland report is reproduced in full (Appendix C).

6.2 Education Scotland acknowledges that Aberdeenshire Council's proposal to amend the catchment areas of Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School is reasonable and is of educational benefit to future children who may attend either school. The proposal will enable the council to manage the accommodation within the Banchory network more efficiently. Education Scotland also noted that the majority of stakeholders support the proposal to amend the catchment areas and welcomed the fact that it would not have any adverse effect on the placements for children currently attending either school, or their siblings.

6.3 Education Scotland note that some parents raised concerns for potential congestion in Banchory Primary School playground. This point has been addressed in paragraph 5.5 above.

6.4 Education Scotland also comment upon alleged inaccuracies regarding the school roll forecast figures. This has also been addressed by the Council in paragraph 7 below.

### **7. ALLEGED INACCURACIES**

A couple of respondents suggested that the school roll forecasts were inaccurate as they showed a drop in the overall school roll when there is

continued house building in the area.

At the public meeting a presentation was given explaining how school roll forecasts are formulated and the reason for the temporary drop in pupil numbers. This was discussed further in the question and answer session following the presentation.

Aberdeenshire Council is confident in the accuracy of the school roll forecasts and will continue to work with developers to ensure that build out rates are monitored.

## **8. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 AND CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that:

*After the Education Authority has received HMle's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to*

- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,*
- (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,*
- (iii) HMle's report.*

Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meeting and have considered equally carefully the written representations. The Education Authority's position is set out in this document.

### **8.2 Conclusions and Recommendation**

The Council now has 3 broad options for the proposed changes;

- (a) adopt the proposal in its entirety; or
- (b) amend the proposal in some way and undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal; or
- (c) abandon the proposal and maintain the status quo

There are no obvious ways of amending the proposal other than possibly postponing its implementation. The main purpose of the consultation is to address capacity issues at both primary schools and allow for the equitable distribution of pupils and resources. If all the new housing from the Lochside of Leys development were to continue to be zoned for Hill of Banchory School, this would put significant pressure on the school to deliver the curriculum effectively. Aberdeenshire Council will be looking at a wider rezoning of the all schools in the Banchory Network and Aberdeenshire at a later stage, however the timescales for this housing development has instigated the need for earlier consultation.

In abandoning the proposal and maintaining the status quo, capacity issues at the primary schools could not be addressed until a later stage as part of a wider rezoning consultation of the Banchory network schools. Delay in addressing the issue would result in considerable pressure on the capacity of Hill of Banchory School, which has already undergone reconfiguration of GP space to create extra learning space for pupils.

If the council adopts the proposal it would be on the basis that the educational benefits set out in the proposal document would materialise. Aberdeenshire Council will continue to work closely with stakeholders including community groups and parents to ensure that the concerns they have raised are addressed. The consultation was issued to over 600 consultees, and the response rate of under 50 was quite poor, suggesting that the majority of consultees are either supportive or have no concerns to raise about the proposed changes.

**8.2.1 The recommendation of officers is that the Council should adopt the proposals and implement the new catchment areas for Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School with effect from 31 August 2015.**

**The map in Appendix A shows the recommended catchment areas for Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School if the proposals are adopted.**



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

| Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions). |   |
|---|---|
| Service   | Education and Children’s Services   |
| Section   | Learning Estates  |
| Title of the activity etc.  | Consultation regarding the review of Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School Zones  |
| Aims of the activity  | The EC&S is entering into a statutory consultation regarding the rezoning of Banchory PS and Hill of Banchory School                  |
| Author(s) & Title(s)  | Gemma Dacre, Learning Estates Research and Analysis Project Officer   |
| Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.   |   |
| Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).                                   | School Roll Forecasts<br>School Capacity Information<br>Placing Request Information<br>Housing Land Audit Data                        |
| Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.   | Discussions with primary school head teachers in Banchory.  |
| External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).  | Briefing meeting with local elected members for Banchory and Mid Deeside in December 2014 to gain feedback on proposals.              |
| External data (census, available statistics).   | Census data, school roll statistics, school capacity information, statutory performance indicators and Scottish Government Statistics |

## Appendix 2

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Other (general information as appropriate). |  |
|---|--|

| Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.                                   |   |
|---|---|
| Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold? | Feedback from parents, pupils, community groups, staff and stakeholders as part of the consultation process will fill any gaps in evidence and knowledge.<br>School roll statistics can be subject to variance. |

| Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.   |   |                              |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form. | Measures:   | Timescale:                   |
|  | Consultation on proposal as per Dec 14 ELL committee report | 4 March 2015 – 30 April 2015 |
|  | Public Meeting  | 18 March 2015                |
|  | Head teacher meetings                                       | October & December 2014      |
|  | Pupil sessions  | March/April 2015             |

| Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Please complete for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below. |          |          |         |         |
|--|----------|----------|---------|---------|
|  | Positive | Negative | Neutral | Unknown |
| Age – Younger  | Yes      |          |         |         |
| Age – Older  |          |          | Yes     |         |
| Disability   |          |          | Yes     |         |
| Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)   |          |          | Yes     |         |
| Religion or Belief   |          |          | Yes     |         |
| Gender – male/female   |          |          | Yes     |         |

Appendix 2

|   |  |  |     |  |
|---|--|--|-----|--|
| Pregnancy and maternity                               |  |  | Yes |  |
| Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual) |  |  | Yes |  |
| Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)          |  |  | Yes |  |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership                        |  |  | Yes |  |

**Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?**

| Impacts.   | Positive<br>(describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)        | Negative<br>(describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected) |
|--|---|--|
| Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected. | Young people – improved access to primary education in enhanced facilities with more space. |  |
|  |   |  |

**Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps? | Young people have been consulted as part of the process. The consultation was well publicised and open to all members of the community. |
|--|---|

**Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?**

| These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form. | Mitigating Steps                          | Timescale           |
|---|---|---------------------|
|   | No negative impacts have been identified. | March – August 2015 |

Appendix 2

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**Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| These should be included in the action plan. | The wider consultation should support good relations with all identified groups. |
|--|--|

**Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?**

|  |
|--|
| Broad consultation with as many stakeholders as possible. Various methods have been identified for them to engage to make the process as accessible as possible. |
|--|

**Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place?**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires). | Education Scotland involvement will ensure that all factors have been considered. All consultation responses have been carefully considered and any issues raised have been addressed in the consultation report. |
|---|---|

**Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?**

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Please complete the appropriate box/boxes | 1 | No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.   |
|   |   | No negative impacts have been identified. The consultation has been extensive and positive impacts have been identified for younger people.     |
|   | 2 | Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain.<br>* Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.          |
|   |   |   |
|   | 3 | The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain.<br>* Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen |

Appendix 2

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\* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

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Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Sign off and authorisation.   | 1) Service and Team  | E&CS Learning Estates Team   |  |
|   | 2) Title of Policy/Activity  | Proposal Document: Review of Banchory Primary and Hill of Banchory School Zones                      |  |
|   | 3) <b>Authors:</b><br>I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity. | Name: Gemma Dacre<br>Position: Research and Analysis Project Officer<br>Date: 12/03/15<br>Signature: | Name: Gemma Dacre<br>Position: Research & Analysis Project Officer<br>Date: 02/07/15<br>Signature: |
|   |  | Name:<br>Position:<br>Date:<br>Signature:  | Name:<br>Position:<br>Date:<br>Signature:  |
|   | 4) Consultation with Service Manager   | Name:<br>Date:   |  |
|   | 5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service  | Name: Craig Clement<br>Position: Head of Resources & Performance<br>Date: 12/03/15                   | Name: Craig Clement<br>Position: Head of Resources & Performance<br>Date: 17/07/15                 |
| 6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee. e.g. Social Work and Housing Committee. | Date:  |  |  |

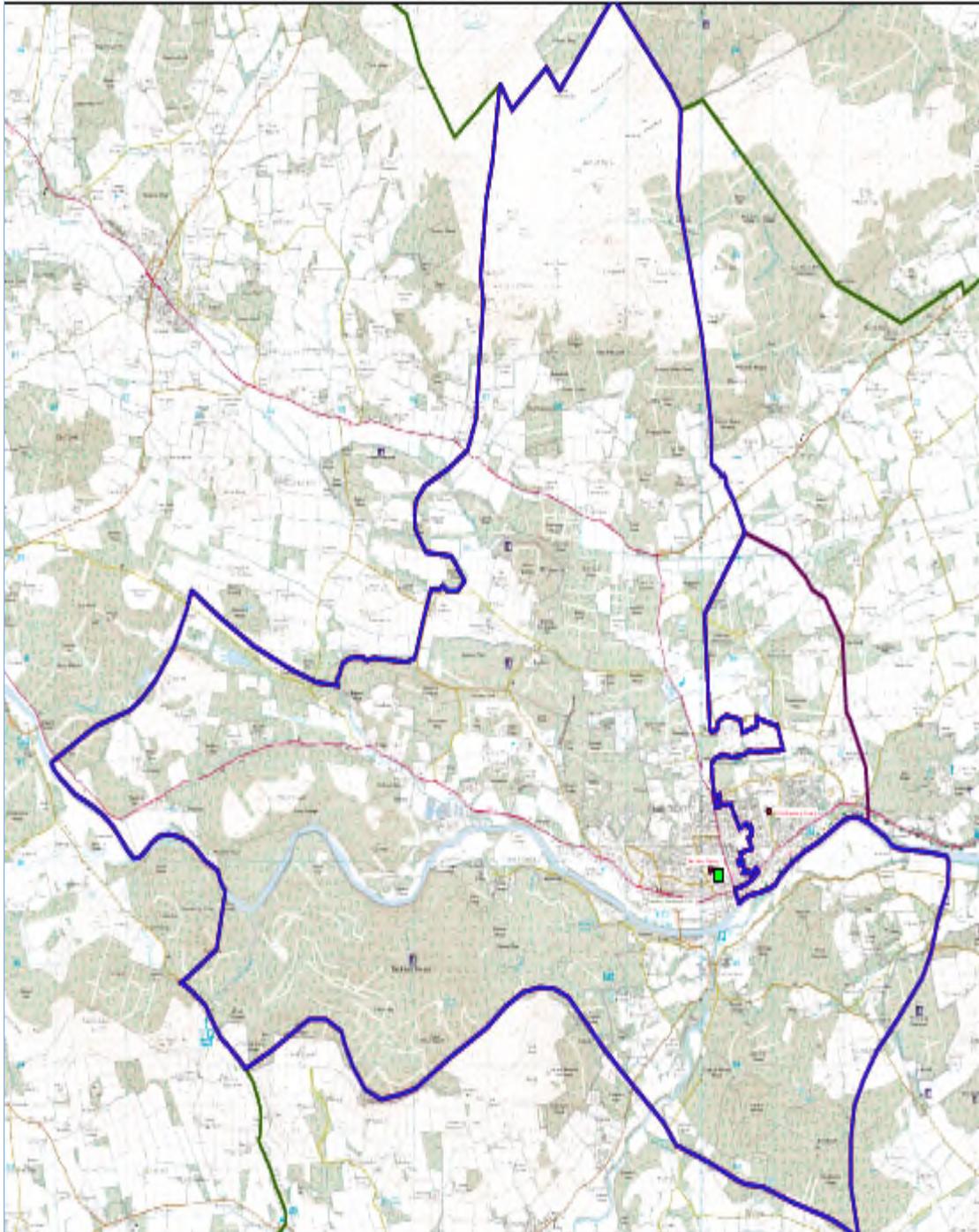
## Appendix 2

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|---|--|-------|
|   | 7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: eia@abdnshire | Date: |
| (Equalities team to complete)<br>Has the completed form been published on the website? YES/NO |  | Date: |

Appendix 2

| Action Plan                    |               |               |                  |  |                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Action                         | Start         | Complete      | Lead Officer     | Expected Outcome   | Resource Implications |
| Consultation                   | 5/1/15        | 27/2/15       | Rachael Goldring | Responses will need to be analysed and further report written                                | Staff time            |
| Public Meeting                 | 28/1/15       | 28/1/15       | Rachael Goldring | Opportunity for stakeholders to engage in consultation process                               | Staff time            |
| Pupil Engagement               | February 2015 | February 2015 | Rachael Goldring | Opportunities for pupils to participate in consultation process                              | Staff time            |
| Staff Engagement               | October 2014  | October 2014  | Rachael Goldring | Opportunity for staff at existing establishment to participate in consultation process       | Staff time            |
| Education Scotland Involvement | January 2015  | May 2015      | Rachael Goldring | Feedback from Education Scotland will need to be incorporated into final consultation report | Staff time            |
| Final Consultation Report      | April 2015    | May 2015      | Rachael Goldring | Depends upon response to consultation  | Staff time            |
|                                |               |               |                  |  |                       |
|                                |               |               |                  |  |                       |
|                                |               |               |                  |  |                       |
|                                |               |               |                  |  |                       |
|                                |               |               |                  |  |                       |
|                                |               |               |                  |  |                       |

**Appendix A – Map of the proposed changes to Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School Catchment Area**



## **Appendix B - Note of Meetings with Pupils**

### **Banchory Rezoning – Pupil Questions**

The school that children in Banchory (and the rest of Scotland) go to is decided by which street and sometimes which house they live in. Each school in Banchory has a catchment area. A catchment area or zone is a line on a map which shows the streets and houses that are grouped together for that school.

Aberdeenshire Council wants to change the school catchment areas so that both of the primary schools in Banchory have the right number of pupils for the number of classrooms and teachers.

The council have drawn some lines on the maps and are asking parents, teachers and pupils what they think about the changes they are suggesting.

The only change the council is suggesting, is a change between the zone for Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory School up beside the Loch of Leys area. There will be new housing getting built and at the moment, all these pupils when they move in, will be zoned for Hill of Banchory School.

The council wants to change the zones so that some of these pupils will go to Banchory Primary School and some to Hill of Banchory School.

Your teacher will be able to show you a map with the changes for your school.

1. Do you think that your school needs to have a different catchment area – are there too few or too many pupils at the moment?
2. Do you think that the change suggested for your school is a good idea?
3. Is there anything that worries you about this?
4. Is there anything that interests you or excites you about this?
5. Is there anything that you think the council needs to think about if they do this?

**Summary of pupil responses to questions about rezoning**

| School           | Q1   | Q2   | Q3  | Q4   | Q5   |
|------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| Banchory PS      | Space is fine at the moment. Worries that assembly will be tight for space. Some pupils are happy for the zones to change and look forward to meeting new friends and having more pupils to fill up the school, others worry about the space with more children attending. | Some children thought the changes to the zones were a good idea, some did not think the change was a good idea.  | Worries about the amount of children in the hall at assemblies, the classes will become too big, not enough toilets, too noisy, no room in the canteen, space in the playground, more chance of bullying, friendships being split up, losing the art room. Worries about the school losing the close community feeling and siblings not being able to attend the same school. | Children were excited to make more friends, might get a better playground, more children could be in each house (Crathes etc.). It's exciting to meet new people, interesting to hear different languages, Some children did not find anything that interested them about the changes. | The council needs to think about how big the school is and how many children can fit in. There aren't enough learning resources for everyone, need more chairs and tables, would there be enough money, space in the playground, improving the playground, class sizes, space in the Academy, BPS may need to be extended, would need new equipment – I Pads and new staff. One class wondered if what they think will affect anyone's decision. Some mentioned the council should build a new school at Upper Lochton and have 3 primary schools in Banchory. |
| Hill of Banchory | Most pupils feel there are too many pupils already at HOB and were sad to have lost the ICT suite and Music room already to make more space in the school.   | Some pupils thought the changes were not a good idea and that people should be able to choose which school they go to. Many children worried about losing space in the playground if HOB needed an extension for the extra pupils. Many children felt that the school was already at capacity. | Children were worried about losing any more space at HOB and too many pupils, classes getting too big, losing the GP room,  | Excited about getting new friends, more neighbours with children.  | The council needs to think about how many pupils are currently in each school. They should put a limit on each school and each class   |

## **Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Aberdeenshire Council to amend primary catchment areas within the town of Banchory.**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Aberdeenshire Council's proposal to amend the existing primary school catchment areas within Banchory with effect from August 2015. These changes will predominantly affect pupils moving into the new houses at Lochside of Leys once they are built. 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 a copy of 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

#### 1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory Primary School; 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 March 2015 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; and

- visits to the site of Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 Aberdeenshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The consultation took place between 4 March and 30 April 2015. A public meeting held on 18 March 2015 was attended by six members of the public. The council received 80 responses from stakeholders. An online survey on the council's website received 72 responses, of which most agreed with the proposal or had no preference. The council also held meetings for staff and children at each of the schools concerned.

## **3. Educational Aspects of Proposal**

3.1 Aberdeenshire Council's proposal to amend the catchment areas of Banchory Primary School and Hill of Banchory Primary School from August 2015 will alleviate anticipated capacity issues within the two schools which will arise as a result of the planned housing development at the Lochside of Leys site. The proposal sets out a clear case of educational benefit by ensuring current and future children across both schools will have sufficient and appropriate accommodation for learning. The proposal will reduce the potential for overcrowding at Hill of Banchory Primary School.

3.2 The majority of stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors supported the proposal. Staff at Hill of Banchory School felt the proposal provided educational benefit by addressing the pressure on their accommodation for children to learn across the curriculum. During the consultation period parents identified alleged inaccuracies in the proposal with regard to the long-term roll predictions for Banchory Primary School. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to investigate these alleged inaccuracies. Most children who met with HM Inspectors at both schools agreed with the proposal. A few stakeholders questioned safe walking routes to Banchory Primary School for children who may live on the Lochside of Leys site. The council will need to clarify how it will address these concerns.

3.3 The majority of parents who responded to the consultation were in favour of the proposal. They welcomed the council's assurances that it would not have any adverse effect on the placements for children currently attending the schools or their siblings. A few expressed concern about accommodation at Banchory Primary School. In particular, the potential for congestion in the playground if the school roll rises.

#### **4. Summary**

Aberdeenshire Council's proposal to amend primary catchment areas within the town of Banchory is reasonable and is of educational benefit to future children who may attend either school. The proposal will enable the council to manage the accommodation within the Banchory Network more efficiently. There will be no impact on placements for existing children or their siblings as a result of the amendment to the catchment areas. The majority of stakeholders support the proposal. The council should seek to reassure parents regarding their concerns for potential congestion in Banchory Primary School playground. In its final consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it. It will also need to work with stakeholders to address their concerns related to safe walking routes for children who may in future live on the Lochside of Leys development.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
May 2015**