

Public Consultation Meeting
Review of Mintlaw Network Primary Schools
2nd November 2016
7.00 pm to 9.00 pm Mintlaw Academy

Aberdeenshire Council Officers/Elected Members present:
Cllr Alison Evison – Chair, Maxine Booth Quality Improvement Manager (Learning Estates), Rachael Goldring – Learning Estates Team Leader, Michael Paterson – Learning Estates Officer, Carole Sneddon – Learning Estates Officer

1	Welcome and Introductions
	<p>Councillor Evison welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the Aberdeenshire Council officers present and laid out the format of the meeting.</p> <p>Peter Hamilton – HM Inspector of Education at Education Scotland was also present at the meeting.</p>
2	Consultation Overview
	<p>Maxine Booth gave an overview of the consultation and proposals including the historical context that has led the Learning Estates team to undertake the consultation.</p> <p>The continued housing developments across the Mintlaw Network has put pressure on primary schools across the network especially Mintlaw Primary School and Stuartfield School.</p>
3	Questions from the Floor
	<p>Councillor Evison welcomed questions from the floor and asked that participants state their name/role to aid the minute taking process.</p> <p>Parent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am concerned about the safety of children who live in Northwoods and have to go to Pitfour School, they have to cross Station Road and Longside Road. What will be done to ensure their safety? <p>Rachael Goldring explained there are plans within Buchan Area Committee to install a pedestrian crossing on Station Road. The preferred option to send children from Northwoods to Pitfour is partially due to road safety. If children from Northwoods attend Mintlaw Primary School they would have to cross two main roads, if they attend Pitfour School they would only have to cross one main road and there will be traffic calming measures in place if the proposal goes ahead.</p> <p>Mintlaw Community Council Member</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My question is regarding Stuartfield, what is the long term plan with the school? Will there be a building extension as the roll will take the school well over capacity.

Maxine Booth replied – The rezoning takes the pressure off for the moment and we will look at options for an extension or replacement of the temporary building. The renewal of the temporary building will not be immediate due to the cost implications, but we will look at the option of removing the temporary building and replacing it with an extensions.

Mintlaw Community Council Member

- **Pitfour has a hut.**

Maxine Booth – both schools would need capital investment if the roll was to increase.

Mintlaw Community Council Member

- **There is a huge development for Mintlaw planned**

Mintlaw Resident

- **There are major schemes in Mintlaw but what are the facilities for education? We don't want four primary schools we want one primary school.**

Maxine Booth replied – Originally it was decided that there would be two schools in Mintlaw due to the boom of housing within the village. The suitability and condition of both schools sits within the capital plan, both schools have the ability to be extended similar to what has been done in Bervie and Insch.

Parent

- **Why is there not an option for one big school at Mintlaw Primary? One large school in an area where you own the land?**

Rachael Goldring – If we moved to one school we would have to complete a statutory consultation on a school closing and prove there are educational benefits for closing a school and moving all the pupils to one larger school. The children that attend Pitfour School would have even more roads to cross and that would not be deemed as an educational benefit.

Maxine Booth – If we were to consider building a new school wherever it would be sited it would have to go into the capital plan. There are many factors that are considered when looking to build a new school, the feasibility of the current buildings, the boom in housing within an area these all drive the priorities of school builds. There is a lot of investment needed in a new build and there is no room within the capital plan for a new school in Mintlaw nor is it deemed necessary.

Mintlaw Community Council Member

- **There has not been a new school in Buchan in the last ten years, the last school to be built here was Longside School.**

Maxine Booth replied – we would not build a primary school that would accommodate 700 pupils. We are finalising our school roll figures right now and we can forecast more accurately.

Parent

- **I have a child due to start nursery, I have chosen to send my child to the nursery in Mintlaw Primary, but if the proposal goes through my child will be zoned for Pitfour School. This means my child would have done two years at Mintlaw Primary in the nursery and then have to move.**

Maxine Booth – you would be entitled to submit an out of zone placing request.

Parent

- **There are only a few children in our area and some go to Mintlaw Primary**

Maxine Booth replied – there will be a crossover period to ensure the transition of rezoning will be done sensitively and carefully.

Mintlaw Community Council Member

- **Will the safety crossing be in place in time?**

Maxine Booth – Yes we would make sure the crossings are in place before the rezoning is implemented. We have done similar things in Peterhead and Westhill, with one of the proposals for rezoning in Peterhead not going ahead due to parents concerns over road safety.

Mintlaw Community Council Member

- **Will it be a zebra crossing or a lollipop lady?**

Rachael Goldring – it will be a crossing patroller.

Maxine Booth – to reiterate there is more than proposal here, it is important your input drives the consultation. Comments from your neighbourhood could change the outcome, or responses to the pupil survey. The more response we receive the better.

Mintlaw Community Council Member

- **It is disappointing there is not just one school in Mintlaw. I have been involved with young people for years and there is an “us and them” view from the children. Children need to run together from an early age.**

Maxine Booth- We wanted to build two schools in Turriff, but the community wanted one school. Each community has a different view on what they would prefer.

DHT Mintlaw Academy

- **The local authority should consider moving from two schools to one school from an educational perspective. The main benefit would be bigger classes. A lot of schools up here (meaning the North) are composite classes and this can disrupt the social skills development of children who don't mix with their own age group.**

Maxine Booth – There are educational benefits for children attending small schools. Smaller schools can be advantageous to pupils attending them. Some of our best schools are small schools.

DHT Mintlaw Academy

- **I'm not suggesting all small schools should close**

Maxine Booth – We need to be wary of ensuring benefits for all pupils and not putting them at a disadvantage.

Mintlaw Community Council

- **When Pitfour was built you said you would never build a new school. Two was probably not the right amount**

Maxine Booth – This is a consultation on rezoning; expressing views on a new school will not have an influence on the outcome of this consultation but we can take your views and comments on a new school

	<p>Mintlaw Community Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Council are meeting tomorrow and will deliver their response. <p>Councillor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitfour was built a long time ago, when it was built it was not intended to last as long as it has. It is a prefab building with a short life span. This was forty years ago and new housing estates and the growth of Mintlaw were never envisaged. Although you would say you can invest in the school it's probably good to discuss a replacement for Pitfour due the size and the age of the building. <p>Cllr Evison - replacing the school is a long term plan but we need to look at now, at 2017 and we need to have solution in place for August 2017; your comments will be recorded but we need to focus on rezoning.</p> <p>Parent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Nothwoods is going to Mintlaw and the rest is going to Pitfour, what about the row of houses on Station Road, why should they have to go to two schools? <p>Rachael Goldring – We walked round Mintlaw and thought long and hard about the rezoning. The rising roll at Mintlaw Primary means we need to rezone to relieve pressure on the school. Going to Pitfour they only have to cross one road whereas if they go to Mintlaw they would have to cross two roads. If anyone living in the houses in question would like to comment we will take all comments into consideration.</p> <p>Parent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You mentioned a walk around, why was the CC not involved in this? <p>Maxine Booth – Opportunity for input is given at the community engagement stage</p> <p>Mintlaw Community Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would Rowan Circle and High View under proposals come into Pitfour? <p>Rachael Goldring - Under current proposals yes</p>
4	Next Steps
	<p>Councillor Evison highlighted the next steps for the consultation, including the end date for the consultation period, how comments could be submitted and how the proposal documents and Survey Monkey questionnaire could be accessed.</p> <p>Councillor Evison also detailed the process for consulting with pupils within the cluster to gain their views on the proposals, along with the timeline for the reporting process which involves submissions to Education Scotland and the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee.</p>
5	Close
	<p>Councillor Evison thanked everyone for their attendance.</p>