



EDUCATION, LEARNING & LEISURE

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT: AUGUST 2011

ELLON ACADEMY COMMUNITY CAMPUS

Appendix 2

Proposal for the future provision of secondary education in the Ellon area

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

Education provision at the existing Ellon Academy should be discontinued with effect from 3 July 2015;

Pupils of the existing Ellon Academy and future pupils from the Ellon Academy catchment area should continue their education at a new Ellon Academy Community Campus located at Cromleybank from 18 August 2015.

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, or by e-mailing education@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

This document will be provided to:

- Parent Councils of the Academy and the zoned primary schools
- Parents of the pupils at the Academy and the zoned primary schools
- Pupils at the Academy and the zoned primary schools
- Teaching and ancillary staff at the Academy
- Trade union representatives of the above staff
- Slains and Collieston Community Council
- Ellon Community Council
- Foveran Community Council
- Belhelvie Community Council
- Ythan Community Council
- Relevant users of Ellon Academy
- HMIE

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Council Headquarters, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB
- Ellon Library
- The schools affected by the proposal

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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 2009 the Scottish Government detailed a school building plan that included partial funding from Scottish Futures Trust for a replacement academy for Ellon (amongst others).
- 1.5 Ellon Academy is situated in the town of Ellon in the Formartine area of Aberdeenshire. The academy catchment area comprises the towns and villages of Ellon, Ardallie, Arnage, Auchterellon, Balmedie, Foveran, Cruden, Meiklemill, Newburgh Mathers, Slains and Tippetty and the surrounding rural areas.

2. Reason for Proposal

- 2.1 Secondary education at Ellon Academy is currently provided on a split site between Schoolhill Road and Bridge Street. Whilst the two sites are close in distance, this is less than ideal from a safety position, with pupils having to navigate a busy road to attend certain classes.
- 2.2 The roll of Ellon Academy has risen considerably over the last decade as the Aberdeen commuter belt in Formartine has become more densely populated.
- 2.3 The current roll of Ellon Academy is 1074 pupils and the maximum capacity of Ellon Academy is 1200 pupils. When the current school building opened in 1979 there were only 500 pupils. Since its opening, there have been little other than cosmetic improvements made in the past 30 years.
- 2.4 The existing Ellon Academy building rates as B in terms of condition and D 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.
- 2.5 The funding from Scottish Futures Trust for a replacement Ellon Academy was confirmed in June 2010. Aberdeenshire Council has also

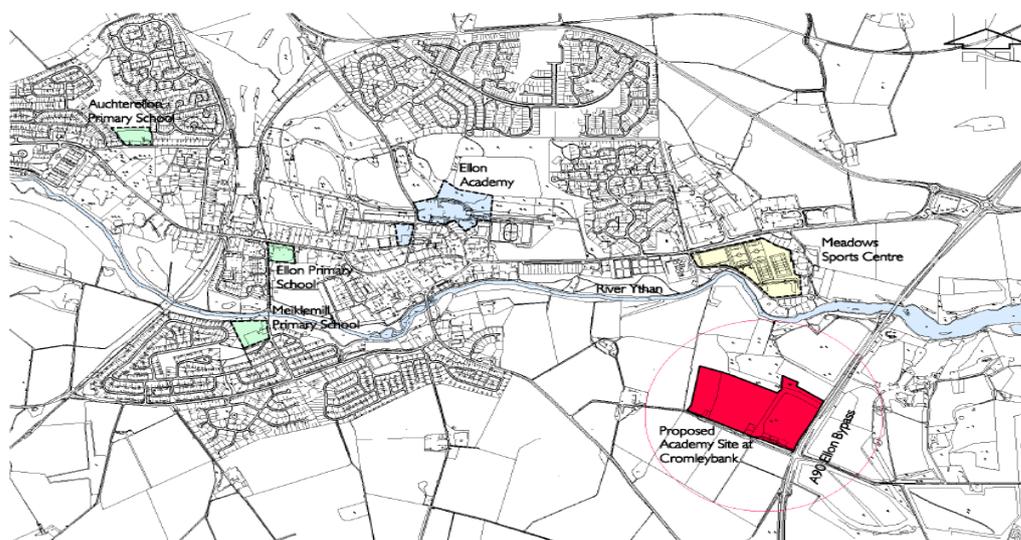
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identified the balance of funding required to proceed with the capital building project.

- 2.6 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that when a school is to be relocated then a school closure 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 council proposes that education provision at the current Ellon Academy on Schoolhill Road and Bridge Street in Ellon be discontinued with effect from 3 July 2015; and that from 18 August 2015, pupils continue their education at the new Ellon Academy Community Campus which will be located at Cromleybank in Ellon.
- 3.2 The catchment area for the academy will not change with the new location. All primary pupils currently zoned to Ellon Academy would continue to be zoned to the school and would attend the new academy.
- 3.3 The existing academy and the proposed site for the replacement academy are one mile apart. The travelling times for pupils attending the new academy would therefore vary from the travelling time to the current establishment, although this could be either an increase or a decrease depending on where they live.
- 3.4 Pupils living outwith 3 miles of their zoned secondary school would have an entitlement to school transport. There will be a change in transport entitlement for some families with some living to the north of Ellon become eligible for free transport, whilst other families living to the south of Ellon may find that they are no longer eligible to free school transport.
- 3.5 The locations of the existing and replacement Ellon Academy are shown in the map below.



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4. Educational Benefit Statement

- 4.1 The new academy will be built on a single site, improving pupil safety and enabling them to receive all of their educational entitlement from the same location.
- 4.2 The new academy will be built with a capacity of 1200 pupils, but with sufficient core areas that additional accommodation could be provided for future roll increase should this be required.
- 4.3 Aberdeenshire Council is committed to delivering entitlements to learners in the 21st century according to a Curriculum for Excellence.
- 4.4 A new Ellon Academy Community Campus 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.
- 4.5 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 21st Century.
- 4.6 The condition of the building will be a significant improvement on the current establishment, making the environment more attractive to learners and ensuring days are not lost as a result of building failures which would become a growing concern with the existing building.
- 4.7 The new school will provide more space per pupil; will be fully accessible and equipped with modern ICT solutions to ensure that the best learning opportunity is afforded to every pupil.

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 split site at the existing academy and suitability of the current building. and would not meet the council's aims to provide the best possible education opportunities for the young people who are due to attend Ellon Academy from 2015 onwards. This would also result in the loss of Scottish Future Trust funding and so a replacement or improvement to Ellon Academy at a later date would have to be funded entirely by Aberdeenshire Council.
 - Placing the new academy at a different site in Ellon – 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.

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6. Effect on the local community

- 6.1 The new academy will have purpose built community and leisure facilities as part of the complex.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that the groups and individuals making use of the existing facilities available at Ellon Community Centre located at the current academy campus which includes a swimming pool will transfer to the new academy facilities on completion. There will also be a refurbishment of the All Weather pitch at the Meadows Sports centre which will be of benefit to both the local community and the school.
- 6.3 There may be a slight increase in distance for some individuals attending the new community and leisure facilities as they will no longer be as centrally located within the town. However, there may also be a reduction in distance for other members of the public living to the south of the town. It is believed that the improved quality of facilities available for community use will outweigh any inconvenience caused by a slightly longer journey to use them.

7. School Transport

- 7.1 There will be a change in school transport provision for some families living between 2 and 4 miles away from the current academy.
- 7.2 As the location of the proposed replacement academy is approximately 1 mile to the south of the existing establishment, some families living to the south of Ellon may find that they no longer live more than 3 miles from the school and as such would no longer be entitled to free transport. Conversely there will be some families, mainly to the north of Ellon who will find that they live further than 3 miles from the new school and become eligible for free school transport.
- 7.3 As the school is still in the planning stage, it is not yet possible to provide accurate figures to identify how many families will be affected and what the financial implications of this will be. However further work will be undertaken in the next two years to clarify this.

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 Ellon Academy. 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 A Multi Equality Impact Assessment (MEIA) is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet

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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 a MEIA 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 a MEIA is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on equality target groups 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 Having regard to the replacement of the existing Ellon Academy, it is not believed that this will have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) education providers must not treat disabled pupil less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. The new academy will be DDA compliant and so would not have a negative impact on any child who has a disability.

10. Implications for staff

- 10.1 On completion of the new academy it is anticipated that all staff based at the existing academy at that time 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 25 August 2011 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

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within the given timescales set for securing the funding from Scottish Futures Trust.

- 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
- 11.4 The period for consultation will extend from 5 September 2011 until 28 October 2011 which covers a period of 30 school days.
- 11.5 A public meeting will be held on 13 September 2011 at Ellon Academy 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 Ellon Academy staff in September 2011, and a number of opportunities will be arranged for all current pupils at the academy and future pupils in the network primaries to engage in the consultation during September and October 2011.
- 11.7 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Mr Wilfred Weir, Head of Resources, to be received no later than 5pm on Friday 28 October 2011. They should be posted to Aberdeenshire Council, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB or emailed to NewEllonAcademy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
- 11.8 A copy of this document will also be sent to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). HMIE will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period or, if HMIE agree, a summary of them. HMIE will further receive a copy of any oral representations made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the academy 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 HMIE 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 Ellon Academy, 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

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public meeting, the Authority's response to the HMIE Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the HMIE 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 HMIE 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 Ellon Academy in order to open a new academy, 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. The Scottish Ministers have a 6 week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal they may refuse to consent to it, and they may grant their consent to it subject to conditions or unconditionally. Within the first 3 weeks of the 6 week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them. Until the outcome of the 6 week call-in process has been notified to the Council, no action will be taken to implement the proposal.

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 secondary education in this area.