



EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

APPENDIX 1

**CONSULTATION REPORT REGARDING THE MERGER OF
FRASERBURGH NORTH & ST ANDREWS SCHOOLS
JUNE 2023**

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

**If you have difficulty reading this document please contact
Learning Estates Team on 01771 676600
or LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk**

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1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared following a consultation on the proposal to merge the existing Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School within a new Primary School in Fraserburgh.

1.2 This report has been prepared in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the above proposal. The objective of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number and a summary of written and oral responses received during the statutory consultation period;
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- Provide a statement on how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the statutory consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the proposal document and state how the Council acted on it;
- State how the Council has obeyed Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposal;
- Provide officer's conclusions and recommendations.

2 Consultation Process

2.1 The requirement for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools is set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 At its meeting on 8 December 2022 Education and Children's Services Committee authorised the launch of a statutory consultation regarding the merger of Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School.

2.3 The proposal document made clear to consultees that the consultation period would run from 12 December 2022 until 24 February 2023. This adequately covered the required minimum of 30 days term time consultation.

2.4 On 12 December 2022 copies of the proposal document were distributed to:

- Parent Councils of Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools
- Parent Council of Fraserburgh Academy
- Parents of nursery/primary pupils of Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools
- Parents of pupils of Fraserburgh Academy
- Parents of preschool-age children living within the Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools catchments
- Pupils at Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools
- Pupils at Fraserburgh Academy

- Staff at Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools
- Staff at Fraserburgh Academy
- Relevant users of Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools
- Relevant users of Fraserburgh Academy
- Local Early Years Partner Providers in Fraserburgh
- Fraserburgh and District Community Council
- Trade Union representatives of Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools staff
- Education Scotland

- 2.5 The consultation proposal was emailed to all consultees. Paper copies were posted where a delivery failure notification was received from the email address provided.
- 2.6 A copy of this document was available from Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School, Fraserburgh Library, Fraserburgh Community and Sports Centre, and Aberdeenshire Council Learning Estates Team.
- 2.7 Fraserburgh North School, St Andrews School, Fraserburgh Library, Fraserburgh Community and Sports Centre were provided with a copy of a poster to be displayed during the consultation period. The poster contained information about the Education Consultations webpage, public meeting, online survey and postal address for comments.
- 2.8 The proposal document was also published on the Council website:
<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/education-consultations/>
- 2.9 Communication regarding the consultation and public meeting was published on the Council's Website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages as well as on Fubar News pages.
- 2.10 The consultation was also advertised in Fraserburgh Herald on 26 January 2023, which included details of the public meeting.
- 2.11 An online survey was available throughout the consultation period.
- 2.12 The public meeting was held on 1 February 2023 at 6.30 pm at Fraserburgh Academy.
- 2.13 The consultees were given the option to submit their comments on the proposal via email to LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or posted to: Learning Estates Team, Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie, AB51 3WA.
- 2.14 An overview of the proposal was translated into Polish, Lithuanian and Russian.
- 2.15 Copies of the translations were issued to Fraserburgh North School, St Andrews School and Fraserburgh Academy for distribution.

- 2.16 The education consultations page on the Aberdeenshire Council website was also updated with copies of the translations.
- 2.17 Education Scotland received a copy of the proposal document and attended the public meeting. At the end of the consultation period, they were sent all written representations received by the Council. HM Inspectors visited Fraserburgh North School, St Andrews School and Fraserburgh Academy and discussed the proposal with relevant consultees. Following their involvement, Education Scotland prepared a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. This aspect is covered in more detail under Section 7 of this report.
- 2.18 In line with the statutory requirement this consultation report was published on the Aberdeenshire Council's website on 6 June 2023, exactly one week prior to the Banff & Buchan Area Committee and more than three weeks prior to the Council taking the decision on whether to implement the proposal.
<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/education-consultations/>

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal document included as Appendix A to this report, was issued to those individuals and bodies listed under 'Distribution' within the proposal document. The proposal document was also published on the Council website:
<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/education-consultations/>
- 3.2 The schools affected by this proposal are:
- Fraserburgh North School
 - St Andrews School
- 3.3 The proposal on which the consultation took place was:
- To close existing Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School on completion of the new school building and continue education provision as a merged primary school located at the Fraserburgh Academy site.***
- 3.4 The proposal document stated that the new primary school would be planned to open in Autumn 2025.
- 3.5 The new primary school would be a non-denominational school which would accommodate up to 450 primary pupils.
- 3.6 All existing Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School pupils enrolled at the point of closure would continue their education within the new Primary School located at the Fraserburgh Academy site once the building is completed. This would also apply to their siblings.
- 3.7 A new catchment area would be created for the new school. The rezoning exercise would be carried out before the opening of the new school to prevent the new school from exceeding the planned capacity in the future and to ensure the sustainability of the remaining schools. The rezoning would consider the

catchments of Fraserburgh North School, St Andrews School, Lochpots School and Fraserburgh South Park School. This would ensure that all pupils, including those generated from the new housing developments, are in the correct school. This would be subject to an outcome of a separate statutory consultation and the new catchment areas would come into effect when the new school opens.

- 3.8 The name of the new merged school and the uniform would be subject to further engagement prior to the school opening. As the schools are merging it would not be appropriate to name the new school either 'Fraserburgh North School' or 'St Andrews School'. Pupils of both schools and the local community would be involved in deciding what the new school name and uniform would be.
- 3.9 The proposed school would be a Primary Enhanced Provision, fully accessible, designed in line with the Aberdeenshire Council Primary School Design Brief and Accessibility Design Brief.
- 3.10 The details of the final designs would be determined through the design process. It would be a two-storey building and would comprise of purpose-built accommodation designed to meet the learning and care needs of mainstream pupils and those with additional support needs, such as:
- Classrooms and associated breakout spaces;
 - General Purpose spaces, such as a hall, dining area, music and drama room;
 - Enhanced Provision spaces, such as life skills area, therapy room, nurture space, quiet area, sensory room and low stimulation area;
 - Multi Use Games Area, outdoor learning spaces and garden.
- 3.11 Given the site at Fraserburgh Academy is approximately 0.3 miles from both Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools, it is not anticipated that there would be any changes to the current school transport arrangements. There would be minimal impact on travel time for pupils attending the new school who are currently transported by bus or by car or those who walk or cycle to school.
- 3.12 On the completion of the new primary school, the teaching and support staff based at the existing schools would transfer to the new school, in line with their existing contracts and HR & OD policies and procedures. There would be one Head Teacher appointed prior to the new school opening, selected in line with the Aberdeenshire Council Recruitment & Selection Policy.

4 Educational Benefits Statement

- 4.1 The proposal document contains within it an educational benefits statement. This statement is replicated here for reference.
- 4.2 The proposal will provide an improved working environment and access to modern facilities and resources. The condition of the new building will be a significant improvement on the current establishments, making the environment more attractive to learners, inspiring to engage with the curriculum.

- 4.3 Pupils of both schools will benefit from Multi Use Games Area provision, which will enable more opportunities for activities and will increase participation time resulting in positive impact on pupils health and wellbeing.
- 4.4 The new school will be fully accessible and equipped with modern ICT solutions to ensure that the best learning opportunity is afforded to every pupil.
- 4.5 The new school will ensure that accessibility for all including learners with additional support needs complies with the Council's Accessibility Strategy and the Equality Act (2010). It will be designed in such a way as to promote accessible and inclusive learning which will meet the needs of all learners including those with additional support needs.
- 4.6 Both schools will benefit from improved enhanced provision spaces and resources, including life skills/nurture rooms, small group rooms, sensory rooms, low sensory stimulation rooms and disabled parking spaces. Designated nurture spaces would support individual and small group work.
- 4.7 There are a number of pupils within the Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools catchments recorded to be living in socio-economical deprived households. More details on how it is calculated can be found in Section 10.7. It is believed that the new modern fit-for purpose school building will support the improvement of attendance, attainment, achievement and allow children to reach their full potential.
- 4.8 Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools are in receipt of pupil equity funding for a large number of pupils and both schools have invested in additional staffing, such as Pupil Support Workers. Combining this resource on one site and creating a bespoke team dedicated to the NIF priority of closing the poverty related attainment gap will allow more targeted interventions with our most vulnerable children and their families.
- 4.9 Pupils will further benefit from increased circulation space, improved dining facilities and sport facilities as well as improved access to digital learning and IT resources.
- 4.10 The proposal presents an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging, engagement and ownership for all pupils and staff of both Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School with a richer cultural, learning and teaching experience.
- 4.11 Spaces for learning will be designed in a way to allow a range of learning and teaching approaches including active, interdisciplinary and outdoor learning. New and flexible learning environments inspire pupils and have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. They can also increase ethos, aspirations, attainment, achievement and positive destinations beyond school.

- 4.12 Outdoor learning and learning outdoors is vitally important to promote and develop social, wellbeing and curricular experiences for the whole school community. To ensure this was front and foremost in the main principles and designs for the new builds, landscape architects were appointed at the start of the project. The architects were part of a working group to explore requirements for the outdoor environment and the cohesion of this to the indoor spaces. This working group engaged fully with staff members from the school and a cross section of pupils both from the primary setting and from the associated secondary schools.
- 4.13 Flexible learning spaces will provide opportunities for inclusive and collaborative learning and can further promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference.
- 4.14 All pupils will have the opportunity to receive all their educational entitlement at the same location under one roof. It is expected that improvements in facilities and the associated impact on practices will have a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing. This will be significantly important for St Andrews pupils who currently access lunch in the kitchen building.
- 4.15 Pupils from both schools will be able to work collaboratively to develop and personalise their identity as a newly formed school community. They will be supported to identify existing partnerships they wish to sustain and to identify key values and ways of working they want to embody in the life and work of the new school.
- 4.16 At both schools pupils are encouraged to participate in a range of pupil groups. Currently Fraserburgh North School have Pupil Council, Rights Respecting School Group, House Captains, Eco-committee, Young Leaders, Road Safety Officers, Librarian Group, Buddy System and Playground Leaders. St Andrews School have Pupil Council, Rights Respecting School Group, House Captains, Eco-Committee, Lunchtime Clubs, Young Volunteers, Buddy System and Digital Leaders.
- 4.17 St Andrews School offers pupils the opportunity to participate in basketball, yoga, football, rugby and cricket and Fraserburgh North School pupils could benefit from participation in these activities which are not currently offered to them.
- 4.18 The new school with shared and flexible learning spaces would encourage staff to work collaboratively and provide more opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively supporting depth, pace, and challenge to learning.
- 4.19 The new school will amalgamate the Enhanced Provision from the other schools in the Fraserburgh Cluster into one setting. Therefore, centralising staffing, facilities and expertise.

- 4.20 There will be a greater number of staff than at either Fraserburgh North School or St Andrews School. Being part of a larger professional community, including mainstream and enhanced provision, will promote opportunities for joint professional learning and increased opportunities for leadership development. A greater concentration of teaching staff in one location, with a broader range of staff experience will allow for better sharing of good practice as well as a broader range of materials and resources. Staff will be able to work more collaboratively and effectively on improving professional and reflective practice and self-evaluation.
- 4.21 Through a newly reformed Parent Council, parents from both schools will have the opportunity to become part of a large parent community, providing more opportunities to engage in their children's learning and development. The benefits of parental involvement in their children's education are clearly recognised and any increase in parental involvement has the potential to directly benefit children and their learning.
- 4.22 The new school will provide excellent facilities for children, families, and other users out with core school hours and will support engagement across the community.
- 4.23 Aberdeenshire Council is committed to delivering entitlements to learners in the 21st century according to Curriculum for Excellence.
- 4.24 The educational benefits statement noted the new building will adapt to future learning requirements and the design process will ensure that all spaces support the learning and teaching styles of the 21st Century.

5 Public Engagement

5.1 Public Meeting

All parents/carers and stakeholders were invited to the public meeting to discuss the proposal which was held on 1 February 2023 at 6.30 pm at Fraserburgh Academy.

The meeting was attended by one member of the public.

During the meeting there were questions and comments that covered the following topics:

- New school capacity
- Traffic
- Safe routes
- Circular economy

A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix B which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting.

5.2 Online Survey

During the consultation period parents/carers, stakeholders and community members were invited to take part in the online survey to express their opinion on the proposal.

The survey provided a summary of the proposal to merge Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School. Participants were also given the opportunity to leave comments regarding the proposal.

A total of 91 consultees completed the survey and 95 open-ended responses were received. Of those 91 respondents, 26 were parents/carers, two were pupils, 48 were teachers/staff members, 14 were community members and one was a Ward Councillor.

Of those who completed the survey, around half is in favour of the proposal, and a third is against the proposal with a smaller number of participants having no preference.

The summary of submitted feedback has been provided in Appendix C.

It is not appropriate to share the full transcript of responses, as some responses could identify respondents. The responses have been redacted to prevent the identification of any individuals and have also been appended to this report as Appendix D.

5.3 Discussion with Pupils

As part of the consultation process, Head Teachers at Fraserburgh North School, St Andrews School and Fraserburgh Academy discussed the proposal regarding the merger with their pupils.

In general, both Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools' pupils are supportive of the proposal while the majority of Fraserburgh Academy pupils are in opposition.

Full details of feedback received from the schools have been provided in Appendices E, F & G.

5.4 Staff Engagement

Staff within Fraserburgh North School, St Andrews School and Fraserburgh Academy have been given the opportunity to discuss the proposal. No further staff feedback has been received.

However, the staff provided their feedback through the online survey. Of the 48 teachers/staff members who completed the survey, the majority are in favour of the proposal to merge Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools together at the Fraserburgh Academy site.

6 Written Responses

6.1 During the consultation period between 12 December 2022 and 24 February 2023, representations were invited from statutory consultees and interested parties. No written responses to the consultation were received.

7 Education Scotland Report

7.1 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal.

7.2 Education Scotland attended the public meetings held on 1 February 2023 regarding the Council's proposal.

7.3 Education Scotland visited Fraserburgh North School, St Andrews School and Fraserburgh Academy and carried out discussions with relevant consultees.

7.4 Meetings were held with staff and pupils at Fraserburgh North School, St Andrews School and Fraserburgh Academy to gather their views. In addition, a small number of stakeholders emailed and wrote to HM Inspectors.

7.5 The Education Scotland report is reproduced in full as Appendix H.

7.6 The Education Scotland report supports the proposal and is summarised below:

- HM Inspectors agree that the proposed new school should provide an enhanced environment for delivering teaching and learning and that this is of educational benefit. The existing sites and buildings of both Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School present some challenges that have the potential to be addressed with a new building. This includes enhanced accessibility and improved accommodation for inclusive practice. Fraserburgh North School currently has one of two additional support needs bases in the school cluster and staff there can see the potential a new school could present for specialist support spaces. St Andrews School currently has to adjust how years move round the school as it cannot provide access to the upstairs classroom for a few children with mobility differences. St Andrews School is also a split site with the lower school being across a busy road from the upper school.
- HM Inspectors agree that the proposed new school has the potential to enhance outdoor learning and play facilities. At both St Andrews School and Fraserburgh North School, playground spaces are primarily hard surface and limited in their capacity for outdoor learning. Stakeholders are positive about the potential opportunity a new school would present for having a space large enough for whole school assemblies and events.
- Stakeholders that HM Inspectors met with, raised some worries and suggestions about the proposed merger of St Andrews School and Fraserburgh North School. Children would like lots of opportunities to meet children and staff from the school they do not attend before any merger. A few children have

transferred between these schools as the different approaches and ethos in one or other suited them better. Stakeholders at Fraserburgh North School are concerned about how well children who are used to attending a small school will adjust to a larger, potentially noisier school and playground. If the proposal is agreed, the council will need to ensure that stakeholders of both existing schools feel they have an equal say in the planning around the merger. This will include in regard to how the new school can best support every child's needs. Almost all stakeholders would like to be involved to the design of the new school and play facilities and in developing transition plans. A minority of stakeholders spoke about the issue of current school catchment areas in Fraserburgh needing to be addressed. They are aware this will be the focus of a further school consultation by Aberdeenshire Council.

- The stakeholders that HM Inspectors met expressed a range of concerns about the site of the proposed new school being beside Fraserburgh Academy. Young people are worried they could be seen to be negative role models for children. They also have concerns about noise from the primary playground during exams. Parents and a few children said they are worried about the potential for bullying of children by young people. A minority of stakeholders could see potential benefits of the new school being beside the secondary. They think there is potential for young people to become positive role models. For example, young people could support and increase the learning, sporting and cultural opportunities the children at the new school would have. Stakeholders stated that the site already has traffic and parking issues, especially at the start of the school day.
- Stakeholders commented on the potential benefits to the proposal, for example, in providing better spaces and resources to meet additional support needs and more modern learning facilities. Many stakeholders are positive about the opportunities a merged school presents in terms of taking forward the best practices in both existing schools. However, stakeholders have a variety of concerns. Stakeholders, especially those from Fraserburgh North School, have concerns about how well the individualised support available at the existing schools will be able to continue at a new, larger school. Stakeholders commented on the need to consider how current school buildings and sites will be used if the proposal is agreed. A few stakeholders question the capacity of the planned site to hold sufficient and separate learning, play and sport facilities for the primary and secondary, including if the new school roll is greater than anticipated.
- Some staff expressed worry about the proposal's potential impact on their remits and roles. Many children are looking forward to making new friends with pupils from the other primary. However, children and young people expressed concern about potential negative effects on children at primary school being on a shared site with Fraserburgh Academy. They have fears about the potential of children being bullied or influenced by young people with negative behaviours such as smoking.

7.7 The Council welcomes the Education Scotland report and accepts its findings. In response to the findings contained within the report, Aberdeenshire Council's response is as follows:

- The Council has acknowledged that the staff have experienced security and littering challenges in how their school grounds are accessed and used by those not involved with the school. The Cluster Officers and School Management are aware of the situation. Police and Environmental Health are involved with this ongoing concern as well as staff within the school who check the playground daily for discarded waste.
- The Council has recognised the need for robust planning arrangements to support a smooth transition to alleviate the concerns raised, including relevant stakeholders' involvement in transition arrangements. It is fundamental that children feel safe and listened to.
- The Council agrees that there is a need for multiple opportunities for staff and children of both schools to meet and get to know each other prior to the merger. An appropriate plan will be developed by the New Primary School Project Board which will work with the whole school community on all aspects of the transition and creating of the identity of the new school.
- The Council has acknowledged that a few stakeholders noted the need to have space in the new school to provide support and family learning opportunities for parents and families. Details of the final designs are being determined through the design process. There will be a number of general purpose spaces that could be available for community use. Stakeholders will continue to be consulted about the design of the new school.
- If the proposal is agreed, the Council will ensure that stakeholders of both existing schools feel they have an equal say in the planning around the merger. This will include in regard to how the new school can best support every child's needs.
- The Council has recognised that stakeholders would like to be involved in the design of the new school and play facilities. The Council will work with the Head Teacher to ensure parents/carers, staff, pupils and other key stakeholders are engaged in further discussions regarding the design.
- The Council has acknowledged the community's concern about noise from the primary playground during exams and about the potential bullying of children by young people. This can be managed in a campus approach with both schools' Leadership Teams.
- If the proposal is agreed, the Council will work with stakeholders to look at traffic and options for locations of parking both on the site and in the wider area. The Council will also ensure safe routes to school.
- The Council will consider how the location of a new school beside Fraserburgh Academy can become of benefit rather than a challenge in regard to young people being role models for children.

- Since the proposal means that senior leadership roles will change, the Council will ensure that this aspect is carefully managed and leaders at both schools are well supported through the process.
- The Council has acknowledged that the proposed new school should have improved and more inclusive play and learning facilities indoors and outside.
- The Council has recognised the community's concern about the future of the existing school buildings. Aberdeenshire Council has an Asset Disposal Policy which must be followed when assets become surplus to requirements. The St Andrews Infant Building may be used as a nursery after the merger, but this is still to be decided. The education service may declare the other school buildings surplus to requirement and these will first be offered to other council services. Any alternative uses of the buildings would have to be fully assessed through the asset disposal procedure. There are also opportunities for community groups to submit a Community Asset Transfer Application.

8 Education Authority Response to Written and Oral Representations

8.1 All comments received during the consultation period have been carefully considered and the Council response is provided below. The comments fall into the following themes.

8.2 Road Infrastructure

Concerns were raised regarding the road infrastructure, congestion on surrounding streets, in particular on Dennyduff Road, insufficient parking facilities, the area not being able to cope with increased traffic and pupils' safety on busy roads.

The Council are working with the architects on the design of the new school, road infrastructure and a solution to minimise the impact on the roads. All comments made during the consultation period and feedback from stakeholder groups will be considered. There will be representation from Roads Department on the stakeholder group to ensure their full involvement in the design of the new primary school.

A road traffic and pedestrian survey will be undertaken to identify routes to school. This will ensure that the design accommodates these and introduces any necessary safety measures. Traffic will be fully controlled through an approved Access Strategy to ensure pupils' safety during drop-offs and pick-ups.

To alleviate congestion on the adjacent roads, there will be separate entrances for primary and secondary pupils and separate pick up/drop off points for both primary and secondary age pupils with separate car parks for staff and visitors to both buildings. There will be increased car parking compared to what currently is at Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools.

8.3 Site Size

Concerns were raised regarding the size of the proposed site and whether there would be enough space to accommodate the Academy and the new Primary School.

The site is 5.37 acres. It is large enough to accommodate the new primary school and its associated infrastructure. An indicative school layout has been created which ensures that all facilities, gardens, MUGA and parking can be accommodated.

In addition, further analysis was carried out and the footprint of Ellon Academy was also placed on the site, to show that in the future a replacement academy could be built without needing to demolish the existing school first.

8.4 Other Sites Consideration

There were questions whether other sites for the new primary school have been taken into account and suggestions as there are other better areas in Fraserburgh that could be designated for the new school.

Assessments for a new school in Fraserburgh have been ongoing since 2016. The Council has investigated several locations for a new primary school.

Other sites that were considered include areas at Kessockbank and Memsie; the site of the JIC building and the existing school sites. These were ruled out through an options appraisal process due to size or distance from the current catchment areas.

Other school sites were discounted due to not offering the required space for a 450 primary education provision and distance for Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools pupils.

On 21 June 2022 Banff & Buchan Area Committee endorsed the Fraserburgh Academy site as the preferred location to accommodate the new primary school. It was concluded that the Academy site provides an opportunity for a campus-style educational approach and a central location within Fraserburgh.

8.5 New School Size

Some pupils of Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools and other stakeholders were of opinion that a bigger environment may be too overwhelming for younger and immature children.

Aberdeenshire Council looks to the maximum capacity of a primary school to be no more than 600 pupils. It is proposed to build the new primary school with a capacity of 450 for P1-P7 pupils. There are already 18 primary schools across Aberdeenshire with a capacity of 450 and greater. The most recent new builds with a capacity greater than 450 are Uryside School, Hillside School, Turriff

School and Kinellar School; with Uryside being designed for 589 P1-P7 pupils. These modern, fit-for-purpose facilities offer pupils excellent opportunities, they can adapt to the changing needs of learners to inspire learning and teaching.

8.6 Mixing Academy and Primary Pupils

Many comments were made that primary pupils should not be mixed with secondary students due to bad influence, wrong behaviours and potential bullying. Some were concerned about the relations between both schools.

Despite the Academy and Primary being co-located on one site, these two schools would be individual entities. Primary and secondary pupils will have separate buildings, entrances, outdoor play areas and pick-up/drop-off points and there will be a physical separation between the two schools.

Senior Management Teams of both the Academy and the new Primary will be responsible for developing shared policy and practice guidelines on promoting positive relationships, positive behaviour, respect and celebration of diversity including anti-bullying.

Many of the academy pupils are the older siblings of children who will be attending the primary school.

Bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. All children and young people have the right to learn in an environment that is free from bullying to enable them to fully develop the skills and confidence needed for life, work and for learning. Any bullying incidents will be dealt with in line with the establishment's anti-bullying policy. The Council aims to create comfortable and safe learning environments for all pupils and has a robust approach to prevent and respond to wrong behaviours and incidents of bullying.

Some secondary students were concerned about noise coming from the primary outdoor play areas which would disrupt learning.

This can be managed in a campus approach with both schools Leadership Teams.

8.7 Merger

Stakeholders were of the opinion that merging two distinct entities will ask for trouble. There were voices indicating that there is a requirement for the development of shared visions and values, together as one new team for pupils and staff, building relationships and creating a new school community rather than just relocating two different schools to a new building.

It is recognised that the proposal to merge both schools will present both opportunities and challenges. There is a commitment from both schools to collaborate to develop positive relationships and a sense of mutual respect and

responsibility within and across peer groups. The new school will develop shared values and ethos through an inclusive community. There is an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging, engagement and ownership for all pupils and staff across both schools before the move.

Some stakeholders were concerned about the schools losing their identities, sense of community around the school and homely environments.

There is a clear emotional attachment to the schools with many teachers working hard to create a homely atmosphere for their pupils over the years.

Aberdeenshire Council recognises and values the experience and expertise that both schools currently provide in meeting the needs of their pupils and believes that this role and contribution will be strengthened through relocation to a new purpose-built facility.

Some stakeholders commented that both schools should be treated equally as there is a perception within the community that one of the schools is better than the other.

The new school and the combined catchment area of the new school will equally serve all children within all the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles.

With the relocation to the new build primary school, there is an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging, engagement and ownership for all pupils and staff across both schools, Fraserburgh North and St Andrews.

Pupils of both schools will be able to work collaboratively to develop and personalise their identity as a newly formed school community. They will be supported to identify existing partnerships they wish to sustain and to identify key values and ways of working they want to embody in the life and work of the new primary school.

As the schools are merged, the name of none of these schools will be kept. The name of the new merged school and the uniform would be subject to further engagement prior to the new school opening. Pupils of both schools and the local community will be involved in deciding what the new school name and uniform will be.

There was a comment about three schools being merged at one site.

As outlined in the proposal document and during the consultation, the proposal refers to a merger of Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools at the Fraserburgh Academy site. The two establishments will be co-located at one site but with separate facilities and identities.

A suggestion was made that St Andrews School should be merged with Fraserburgh South Park School instead.

This proposal has emerged from identifying opportunities for school provision in the Fraserburgh area following a wider engagement process. Officers identified Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School as the most viable option for consideration. Other schools, such as Lochpots and Fraserburgh South Park, were discounted following the options appraisal process.

8.8 Class Sizes

Some stakeholders raised concerns about the class sizes.

If the schools merge there will be more classes at the new school and the class sizes will be configured in line with Aberdeenshire Council Policy, where the maximum class sizes are: P1 – 25 pupils, P2-P3 – 30 pupils, P4-P7 – 33 pupils, and composite classes – 25 pupils.

8.9 Schools Day Times

Some stakeholders asked if the schools' breaks and start/end times could be differentiated and others suggested that different times for primary and academy could alleviate congestion in the area during peak hours and worries regarding mixing younger and older children at the beginning and end of the school day.

The start and end times of the school day will be considered by the School Management Team as part of the Access Strategy for the building. Lunch and break times can also be at different times. Detailed engagement will take place with pupils, parents and staff as the project develops.

8.10 Safety and Security

A number of comments were made regarding pupils' safety and security at the establishment.

Indoor and outdoor spaces will be designed sensitively to ensure pupils' safety and security. The school entrance will be controlled and secured with restricted access to the building. No one will have access to the school facilities, internal and external, without authorisation. Secondary students will not have access to the primary grounds, and similarly, primary pupils will not access the academy grounds, without being accompanied by a staff member.

Any movement between the two schools will be established as part of the Access Strategy for the buildings.

Some stakeholders raised concerns about issues with litter, including needles being left by members of the public.

The Cluster Officers and School Management are aware of the situation. Police and Environmental Health are involved with this ongoing concern as well as

staff within the school who check the playground daily for discarded waste. This shall continue.

8.11 Staffing

There were some concerns raised by the stakeholders about staff continuity and whether they will keep their jobs.

On completion of the new school, all staff based at the existing Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School at that time will transfer to the new school, in line with their existing contract and HR policies and procedures. If the merger does go ahead there will be one Head Teacher.

A consultation will take place with individual members of staff and Trade Unions at a time closer to the opening of the new school.

The proposal made it clear, that the final school management structure has yet to be agreed upon, but there would be one Head Teacher if two primary schools merge. The Aberdeenshire Council recruitment and selection process will be undertaken prior to the new school opening.

The condition of the new building will be a significant improvement on the current school, making the environment more attractive which may encourage current staff's retention as well as inspire new teachers who may wish to take a teaching post at the new school, should such positions become available.

Some stakeholders raised comments about the need for staffing levels to be appropriate for the school roll and additional support that some pupils may require.

Staffing levels at the new school will remain similar to the levels at the current establishments. As the staff will be aggregated from two schools into one, there may be changes to staff numbers depending on the school roll and pupils' additional support needs. This will be in line with the approved Aberdeenshire Council methodology and the LNCT primary staffing formula.

The merger will result in an increased range of staff specialism. Knowledge, expertise, skills and talent as well as increased scope in the deployment of staff to meet the needs of responding to the differing interests and curricular choices of individuals. The proposal will provide an opportunity for different staff groups to collaborate and share their experience with one another.

There was a question of whether a redeployment to a different school in the cluster would be possible.

All staff and Trade Unions will be consulted in due course prior to the opening of the new school. Any transfers will take place in line with the existing contracts, HR policies and procedures, and the LNCT Excess Policy.

Some stakeholders commented that there would be a requirement to build good relations between the staff of both schools prior to the new school opening.

If the proposal to merge the two schools is approved, a programme of events will be held. The Head Teachers in post at the time will be working together bringing staff together and starting to develop a culture, an approach and ethos towards moving. The Service will be there to support this process.

It is recognised that the proposal to merge both schools and to co-locate mainstream and enhanced education will present both opportunities and challenges to both school's management and staff teams. However, there is a commitment to collaborate to develop positive relationships and a sense of mutual respect and responsibility.

Being part of a larger professional community, including mainstream and enhanced provision will promote opportunities for joint professional learning and increased opportunities for leadership development. There will be a broader range of staff expertise allowing better sharing of good practice, materials and resources. Staff will be able to work more collaboratively and effectively on improving professional reflective practice and self-evaluation.

8.12 Additional Support Needs Provision

Stakeholders made comments that the enhanced provision should be an improvement compared with the existing facility. Children also wished that the new school was fully accessible for children with additional support needs.

The new build will be an Enhanced Provision School, which means that it will be a mainstream primary school with an enhanced level of resources, such as access to low-stimulation spaces, sensory rooms, nurture hubs and life skills areas. There will be therapy spaces and changing places toilets for pupils who require them.

There will be a continuity of staff with an enhanced level of expertise to meet a range of pupils' needs.

All facilities across the school site will be fully accessible in line with the Aberdeenshire Accessibility Strategy, including access to the curriculum, access to the physical environment, and access to communication and information. It is a priority for Education and Children's Services to promote accessible, inclusive learning and to ensure there is a capacity to meet the needs of all children and young people.

8.13 Stakeholders Involvement

There were comments about the requirement for stakeholders' involvement in the project design process and the need for the community to be kept informed regarding the future planning and design stages of the proposal.

To allow the requirements for the new primary school to be fully considered as part of the project, Elected Members, staff, pupils and Parent Councils of both

schools already had an opportunity to review and discuss the emerging plans for the new primary school to consider opportunities and challenges.

The final design is still to be determined. As part of the design and construction process, the Council will continue to consult and communicate effectively with a wide range of Fraserburgh stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers, pupils and community members. This will be done through their involvement with Stakeholder Groups.

8.14 Existing Buildings Future

Few stakeholders questioned what will happen to the existing buildings.

The Council's position has been set out in Section 7 of this document and the statement is repeated here for reference:

Aberdeenshire Council has an Asset Disposal Policy which must be followed when assets become surplus to requirements. The St Andrews Infant Building may be used as a nursery after the merger, but this is still to be decided. The education service may declare the other school buildings surplus to requirement and these will first be offered to other council services. Any alternative uses of the buildings would have to be fully assessed through the asset disposal procedure. There are also opportunities for community groups to submit a Community Asset Transfer Application.

A few comments suggested upgrading the existing school buildings rather than building a new facility.

The nature of the current buildings for both Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School will not allow for Aberdeenshire Council Primary School Brief to be achieved, which includes landscaped outdoors, fully accessible buildings and pupils being taught on one site.

The ongoing repair and maintenance programme of the schools will continue, however, other investment is not available or prioritised at this time at Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools.

There was a request for the Fraserburgh North and St Andrews pupils to tour the old schools before they close.

Should this be requested pupils' visits can be arranged in due course.

8.15 Nursery Provision

There were comments about the need for an appropriate nursery provision and investments in a new state-of-art Nursery. There was also a question whether the nursery would be located within the new primary school.

If the proposal goes ahead, Fraserburgh North School and Nursery as well as St Andrews School and Nursery would close on completion of the new school. Primary 1-7 classes will merge and move into the new school building as a single school and the Nursery classes will also merge at this time.

A refurbishment plan for the existing St Andrew's School Infant Building is being appraised, which would seek to re-purpose the site as Early Learning & Childcare provision. The expectation would be that that work to the building would commence once the P1-P7 children have moved over to the new building. In any scenario, Nursery provision would be maintained and operated throughout the refurbishment process, minimising inconvenience and disruption for parents, staff and children. The details and specific timescales for this part of the project are being developed and further information will be shared with stakeholders when there are appropriate proposals and visuals available.

8.16 Design and Facilities

A comment was made that the new school should be designed around the needs of the children and community. Some stakeholders detailed what in their opinions should be in the new school, e.g. good P.E. facilities, all-weather pitches, appropriate outdoor spaces, play park, SEN or behaviour base/nurture facility and dining facilities to hold a large number of pupils.

The proposed school will be a Primary Enhanced Provision, fully accessible, designed in line with the Aberdeenshire Council New Build Primary Brief and Accessibility Design Brief.

Details of the final designs are being determined through the design process. It will be a two-storey building and will comprise purpose-built accommodation designed to meet the learning and care needs of mainstream pupils and those with additional support needs.

The current accommodations and facilities would be improved and increased, with the proposed purpose-built classroom bases and a range of break-out, general purpose, life-skills, therapy, outdoor and green spaces.

Questions and concerns were raised regarding shared spaces used between primary and secondary pupils and by the community.

The new build will be located within the grounds of Fraserburgh Academy, therefore providing for a shared campus approach. However, both primary and secondary schools will be separate facilities. There may be opportunities for primary classes to use some of the secondary spaces, such as drama, art or science, and some of the new outdoor spaces such as the allotment will be available for use by the academy students, subject to mutual agreement and carefully considered timetabling.

Some of the new facilities will be available for the wider community use after school hours through the letting system.

8.17 Travel Distance

Few stakeholders were concerned about the walking distance to the new school, as it would be too far for primary-age children to walk either with or without parents. A comment was made about a need for an improvement to transport arrangements for primary pupils, due to increased travel distances.

In line with the Aberdeenshire Transport Policy, school transport is provided for primary school pupils who live over two miles walking distance from their catchment primary school. Looking at the geographic spread of the catchment for both schools and the distance to the new site, all pupils currently zoned to Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools would be living within two miles of the new school.

The new school will be less than half a mile away from the sites of both existing schools. Therefore, this should not have a large impact on pupils being able to walk to school. Given that there will be various access points to the site, this will help shorten travel time to and from school for some pupils, depending on where they reside.

8.18 Transition

There were two stakeholders who thought that special care should be taken with respect to pupils' transition to the new school.

There will be a full transition planning process in place to minimise disruption for pupils and staff, involving all three schools. Some pupils may require an individual transition plan.

Staff, pupils, parents and the community will be able to visit the school prior to the opening allowing them to become comfortable and familiar with the new setting.

8.19 Academy Space Reduction

The academy pupils were worried that their outdoor spaces will get reduced. There was also a question if the existing football pitch will be taken away.

The proposed area for the new primary school currently has surface drainage issues and is therefore not regularly used by the academy. To compensate, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) will be provided specifically for use of the academy, which will benefit the academy pupils as well as the entire local community. Other facilities located at the academy site will remain.

As the new school will be built within the grounds of Fraserburgh Academy on the basis of a campus approach, there will be opportunities for secondary pupils to use some of the primary outdoor spaces, such as allotment, if the timetable allows.

8.20 Construction Site

Some secondary pupils raised their concerns about noise during the construction phase which may disrupt learning.

The construction company will liaise with the Management Team at the Academy to identify a safe working environment for all. They will be aware of exam periods and where possible will modify work so as not to cause disruption.

Some pupils were concerned about security at the construction site and that some people may be messing about the construction site.

Measures to ensure security and restrict unauthorised access will be developed to ensure safe building works on the academy site.

Clear wayfinding, parking, delivery and waiting zones for contractor vehicles will be identified. All traffic movement will be executed outwith times when there is significant pupil movement e.g. at the start and end of the school day. Council will work with the contractor to minimise risks and plan appropriately for the environment, particularly regarding vehicles movement. Separate construction access will be compound.

The contractors appointed to build the school will work closely with the academy management team to ensure that disruption is minimal for both the school and local residents, and to ensure site safety.

9 Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies

9.1 Section (10)(3) of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracies or omissions within the proposal document which has either been raised by the consultees or identified by the Council itself. The Council must also provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and explain why.

9.2 Officers are required to publish their response to representations made during the consultation period within their final Consultation Report.

9.3 There were no areas identified by consultees as being inaccurate or omitted from the proposal document during the consultation period.

10 Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

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

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

- (a) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,
 - (b) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,
 - (c) HMIE's report.
- 10.2 The feedback from the consultation was considered by officers and all the questions and comments raised were considered in detail. Data and factual information were checked where required and advice and input were sought from other Council Services where needed to consider the issues raised. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under Section 9(1) of the 2010 Act.
- 10.3 Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meeting and have considered equally and carefully the written representations.
- 10.4 The Education Authority's position is set out in Section 7 of this document.
- 10.5 The proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations led the Council to reconsider other options as being reasonable alternatives to the proposal to merge Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School. None of the representations led officers to conclude that any of these options should be reconsidered as reasonable alternatives.
- 10.6 Having reviewed the feedback from consultees, officers conclude that the basis of the original proposal remained the best solution to provide appropriate and effective education provision to serve Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School.
- 10.7 The educational benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made. There were no factors included in the Education Scotland report or representations made requiring any aspect of the educational benefits to be reconsidered.

11 Representations to Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 11.1 The proposal to merge Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School requires both schools to be closed and merged into one new school at the Fraserburgh Academy site.
- 11.2 If the Authority makes a final decision to implement the proposal, it will require to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision and provide them with a copy of the proposal document and consultation report. This must be done within six working days of that decision. The Scottish Ministers have an eight-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call in the proposal.
- 11.3 Within the first three weeks of that eight-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the eight-week call-in process is known, the Authority cannot

proceed to implement the proposal.

- 11.4 If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, they must refer the proposal to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels who may refuse to consent to the proposal or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally.
- 11.5 It should be noted that the legislation allows for any person to make representations to Scottish Ministers within three weeks of the Council taking their final decision to implement a closure proposal.
- 11.6 Aberdeenshire Council will take the decision on whether or not to implement this proposal at its meeting on 28 September 2023. If the decision is taken to implement the merger proposal, any representations to Scottish Ministers, therefore, in this context need to be with the Ministers within three weeks of this date. Therefore, any representations must be made to Scottish Ministers by 18 October 2023.
- 11.7 Anyone wishing to make representation to Scottish Ministers during the three-week period referred to above should do so by email to schoolclosure@gov.scot or in writing to:

The Scottish Government
School Infrastructure Unit
2A (South) Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

12 Conclusions

- 12.1 In a review of the oral and written submissions to the formal consultation and survey results, it is felt that there is stakeholder support for the proposal to merge Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School at the Fraserburgh Academy site.
- 12.2 Officers have carefully considered the opportunities, issues and challenges identified by stakeholders during both the informal engagement and formal consultation processes.
- 12.3 The Council now has 3 broad options, namely:
 - (a) Adopt the proposal; or
 - (b) Amend the proposal in a minor way and adopt; or
 - (c) Amend the proposal significantly and undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal; or
 - (d) Withdraw the proposal and maintain the status quo.
- 12.4 Each option is discussed below.
 - (a) Adopt the Proposal

If the Council adopts the proposal to merge Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School, it would be on the basis that the educational benefits set out in the proposal document would materialise. The new primary school will be a modern, fit-for-purpose Enhanced Provision facility, fully accessible and inclusive. All children will benefit from improved learning and play facilities indoors and outside, and resources.

More than half of pupils living within the Fraserburgh North and St Andrews Schools catchments are considered living in socio-economic deprived households. It is believed that the new primary school in the area will raise children's attainment and aspirations to finally improve their life chances. New improved facilities may encourage children to participate in more activities in a variety of new ways, leading to improved health and wellbeing amongst users. Improved accessibility would also contribute to positive health and wellbeing.

Education Scotland agreed that there are potential educational benefits to this proposal. The current accommodation in both St Andrews School and Fraserburgh North School presents challenges with inclusion and delivering aspects of the curriculum, especially outdoor learning. The proposed new school should have improved and more inclusive play and learning facilities indoors and outside.

The proposals have generally been supported by half of the stakeholders. The biggest concerns for the stakeholders are the site location and the proximity of the proposed primary school and the academy. The Council will ensure any future design seeks to alleviate these worries.

Should the proposal go ahead, the Council acknowledged that mitigating approaches will be required to address some of the issues and challenges identified by stakeholders. Officers recognise the need to continue to engage with stakeholders to address raised concerns as outlined in Section 7 of this document. Officers will continue to consult and communicate effectively with staff, children, parents and the wider community in engaging with them fully in the future planning and design stages of this proposal.

(b) Amend the proposal in a minor way and adopt

The proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations led the Council to reconsider any suggestions as being reasonable alternatives to the proposal to merge Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School at the Fraserburgh Academy site and none of the representations led officers to conclude that any of these options should be reconsidered as reasonable alternatives.

Selecting a different site is not an option, as the Council have completed an options appraisal of available sites in the town and the Fraserburgh Academy site has been approved by Banff & Buchan Area Committee as the preferred location for the new primary school.

Renovation of the current buildings and facilities will not be possible as there is

no funding available to invest in the existing building and it is unlikely that the schools would be prioritised for restoration out of the Council budget.

Furthermore, the Council's position has been outlined in Section 8 of this report.

- (c) Amend the proposal significantly and undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that changes to the school estate are subject to rigorous statutory consultation. Any significant amendments to the proposal would require a full consultation with pupils, parents/carers and the wider community of all schools affected by the proposal. Allowing for appropriate governance the process can take in the region of nine to twelve months to complete. This is considered to be unreasonable to go through another lengthy statutory consultation process.

Having reviewed the Education Scotland report and feedback from consultees, officers concluded that the basis of the original proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to the existing circumstances.

- (d) Withdraw the proposal and maintain the status quo.

In withdrawing the proposal, the Council would be failing to recognise or respond to the educational and social benefits that the new purpose-built building could establish for Fraserburgh North and St Andrews' current and future pupils. Children of both schools would continue to attend their existing sites and buildings, which as recognised by Education Scotland present challenges that have the potential to be addressed with a new school build. Education Scotland has recognised that the proposal would lead to clear educational benefits for pupils of both schools.

13 Recommendation

- 13.1 On the basis of the feedback received during the consultation period and taking account of the educational and social benefits of the proposal, it is concluded that the following proposal is the most reasonable, appropriate, sustainable and viable option for Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School:
- 13.2 **The recommendation of officers is that the Council should adopt the proposal *to close existing Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School on completion of the new school building and continue education provision as a merged primary school located at the Fraserburgh Academy site.***