

Appendix B

**Public Consultation Meeting
Merger of Fraserburgh North and St Andrews
Fraserburgh Academy, Assembly Hall
Wednesday 1 February 2023, 6.30 pm**

Aberdeenshire Council Officers: Laurence Findlay (Director of Education & Children's Services), Rachael Goldring (Learning Estates Team Leader), Paul Whalley (Early Years Estate Manager), Anna Zadka-Labus (Learning Estates Officer, minutes), Kelly Tennant (Learning Estates Officer, minutes), Roselynn Birnie (Head Teacher, St Andrews School), Irene Sharp (Head Teacher, Fraserburgh Academy), Jennifer Duthie (Cluster Business Manager)

Elected Members: Cllr Gillian Owen (Chair), Cllr Anne Simpson; Cllr Seamus Logan, Cllr Doreen Mair, Cllr Ann Bell, Cllr Louise Mcallister

HMI Inspectors: Alona Murray

One member of the public attended the meeting.

Apologise: Cllr James Adams

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Owen introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr Owen introduced the Aberdeenshire Council Officers and Elected Members present and laid out the format of the meeting. Cllr Owen remained that the meeting will be minuted and the minutes will be made public as part of the consultation.

2. Proposal Overview

L Findlay gave an overview of the consultation proposal.

The proposal for the merger of Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School into a New Primary School in Fraserburgh has emerged from an extensive engagement process with the wider public regarding options for primary school provision in Fraserburgh. Officers engaged with the community between 2014 and 2018 and 2022. Feedback received from the community was very important as it formed the proposal and showed broad support for the merger of Fraserburgh North School and St Andrews School in Fraserburgh.

The Council has investigated several sites for a new primary school. Sites that were considered include areas at Kessockbank and Memsie, the site of the JIC building and the existing school sites.

At the full meeting of Aberdeenshire Council on 18 November 2021, the new school provision project in Fraserburgh was agreed for the Aberdeenshire Council's Capital Plan and on 21 June 2022 Banff & Buchan Area Committee endorsed the

Fraserburgh Academy site as the preferred location to accommodate the New Primary School.

It is proposed that the existing Fraserburgh North and St Andrews will close upon completion of the new school building and education provision will begin as a merged primary school at the new site. All existing Fraserburgh North and St Andrews pupils enrolled at the point of closure would continue their education within the new Primary School once the building is completed.

Once the statutory consultation on the merger is concluded, officers will start an informal engagement with the public on possible new catchment areas. The new catchment areas in Fraserburgh would take effect on the completion of the new school, which is projected to be completed in October 2025, if all goes as planned.

All current pupils from P1 to P4 attending Fraserburgh North and St Andrews will be able to attend the new school even if their catchment area changes. This will also apply to all new P1 joining the school in the next three years.

The Council believes that the measures proposed in the proposal document will enhance the provision of primary education within the Fraserburgh area and safeguard high-quality education learning and teaching curriculum delivery for future years.

L Findlay encouraged the community to respond to the online survey and handed the presentation over to P Whalley.

3. New Builds Images

P Whalley welcomed everyone and talked the attendees through the slides with images. The first one presented the proposed site located at the front end of the Academy.

The next slides presented the concept plan and layout of what the primary school will require to accommodate the school coming together: parking access, pedestrian access, and links and relationships with the existing Academy on the site.

The following slides presented images of new Primary Schools across Aberdeenshire, built in line with the Aberdeenshire Primary School Design Brief. The brief provides a foundation for the design of new school builds across Aberdeenshire. The aim is to maximise access and links with outdoor spaces, which are very limited at the existing St Andrews School. The new school will provide the opportunity to increase and improve outdoor areas and experiences for pupils.

Classrooms will be modern and bright, with lots of natural light. All spaces will be modern learning environments, General Purpose spaces will be improved collaboration spaces for classes, year groups and team works.

The new school will be an enhancement for Fraserburgh North School as it will be designed as an Enhanced Provision with improved Additional Support Needs spaces to ensure that needs of pupils with additional needs can be met.

The facilities in the new building will not only meet the school brief but will be future-proofed to meet learning and teaching needs going forward.

4. Questions from the floor

Cllr Owen welcomed questions from the floor and asked participants to state their name and interest in the meeting to aid the minute-taking process.

Cllr Logan – In the paper, there is a contingency for rezoning to include Lochpots and South Park Schools and based on the estimates there is an overflow of around 13 pupils. Are you confident that your contingency will allow for those two schools to pick up those extra numbers in the rezoning?

R Goldring – Yes, we are. With the current school catchments, there is a lot of new build housing zoned to St Andrews, but South Park is the nearer school. Every year we get a very large number of placing requests from those areas wanting to go to the nearest school, not St Andrews. We have not got any firm plans yet for rezoning, but we are confident we can move catchments around the new housing out of the St Andrews catchment area so the final roll of the new school will be within the capacity.

Cllr Bell – Looking at the images and the fantastic garden spaces, are you going to have enough room on the site for those spaces?

P Whalley – We are not at that detailed design stage yet; however, landscape architects have been able to plot out the spaces for the building and the outdoor spaces on the site. There were also discussions with the schools on what they would like to have included in those spaces. We are confident that this can be achieved.

R Goldring – Some things that landscape architects are looking at to fit in are a wooden trail, a sensory garden, vegetable plots to learn about food journeys and lots of other things, including space to run about.

Cllr Mair – On behalf of Fraserburgh I want to ask, how are we going to manage the traffic?

P Whalley – This question did come up during the informal meetings we had so far. There have been intensive conversations with Planning and Roads colleagues to make sure that what we are proposing is going to help and make things better, not worse. The Roads Department know this area very well and a number of things have been considered and looked at which have already been started to be factored in. There are no designs just yet, but we can reassure everyone that this is at the forefront of people's minds.

Cllr McAllister – I have two questions. Will there be safe routes to school, sufficient crossings and pathways to encourage active travel to school? I am also wondering about the carbon footprint of the new building and whether there is a plan of reusing existing materials from the existing schools?

P Whalley – This is an exciting prospect for Aberdeenshire, as the new school will be designed in line with the passive house design standards, based on building buildings which are sustainable and have the lowest possible carbon footprint. We will be working closely with experts to achieve that. This is a way going forward not just across the Council, but nationally. Materials and running costs are already being looked at

and the experts are already looking at opportunities to make use of existing features of the surrounding areas. Existing furniture, equipment and resources if not used for this project, can be circulated to the cluster schools, depending on the requirements. In response to the safer routes to schools, these will be fully assessed. We are looking at safe routes, access points etc. We can reassure the public that we are working on this to be a success moving forward.

Cllr Bell – I have a question for the Head Teacher of St Andrews. How do you see this project as a Head Teacher?

R Birnie – This is a very exciting project. St Andrews is a split-site school. Because we have three buildings, kids don't think they are part of a big school. There is no grass, just a concrete playground, and our children always wanted grass so it is very exciting for them. We don't have a big hall to have a whole school in. St Andrews is a lovely building, but it is not fit for purpose, classrooms are not big enough and things like toilets or canteen are not great, kids need to go across the road for their lunch.

It is difficult for the children to go through the consultation. We are having discussions with them currently about the new school, they don't know what to imagine. Children have lots of questions and we are currently getting kids involved in the project.

Children from St Andrews and Fraserburgh North visited the new Turriff Primary years ago, and they were astonished, they loved the pitches, playground, outdoor facilities and even toilets. They were asking to move Turriff School to Fraserburgh. There were lots of questions about what will happen to their old school. Those children have moved to the Academy now. At that time children from St Andrews and Fraserburgh North worked together on a PowerPoint presentation to share with parents and the community. They enjoyed working together and making new friends. Unfortunately, the project was stopped but this now has to happen.

Cllr Simpson – I am aware that there is a considerable number of Lithuanian, Polish and other nationalities living in Fraserburgh. Do you have this document translated into those languages?

R Goldring – No, we haven't got it translated, but we can provide it for them.

Cllr Simpson – This is disappointing in terms of people's access. There are people in the area who could translate it for them, but it would be beneficial to just have it done for them.

L Findlay – We will pick this up.

5. Next Steps

Cllr Owen identified the next steps of the consultation process.

The proposal regarding the merger of Fraserburgh North and St Andrews into a new Primary School in Fraserburgh is subject to consultation between 12 December 2022

and 24 February 2023. This adequately covers the required period of 30 days of term time consultation.

Any comments you wish to make on the proposal need to be submitted by 4 pm on Friday 24 February 2023. Comments can be submitted by email to Learning Estate or in writing to Learning Estates, Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie AB51 3WA.

We would encourage you to take part in the consultation and give your opinions via the online survey. The link and QR code to the questionnaire is displayed on the projector screen and the board as well as on the Education Consultation page on the Aberdeenshire Council website.

Spare paper copies of the survey are also available for anyone who wish to complete it on their way out.

We are also involving pupils in our discussions, and head teachers have been asked to work with pupils to gain their views on the proposals.

Once the consultation period is over, all written submissions, minutes of this meeting and pupil discussions will be provided to Education Scotland for their consideration. Education Scotland will produce a report on the consultation. A final report on the consultation will be presented at Banff & Buchan Area Committee, Education & Children's Services Committee and Full Council for a decision.

Following the Full Council meeting, the Council will enter an eight-week call-in period when members of the public can ask Scottish Ministers to call in the decision. If the decision is not called in the Council will be able to proceed with the project. If the proposal is called in the School Closure Review Panel will consider the proposal. This may take up to 16 weeks. If the panel grants consent to the proposal, the Council will then commence the implementation process.

6. Close of meeting

Cllr Owen thanked everyone for attending the meeting and closed the meeting.