

Appendix A10

**Parent Council Meeting  
Relocation of Anna Ritchie School  
25 February 2021  
10.30am – Microsoft Teams**

**Aberdeenshire Council Officers present:**

Maxine Booth (Quality Improvement Manager), Rachael Goldring (Learning Estates Team Leader), Mark Mitchell (Estates Programme Manager), Anna Zadka-Labus (Learning Estates Officer), Sharon Ferguson (Head Teacher)

Six parents attended the meeting.

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

**Maxine Booth** welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced herself and present Officers and explained what their roles are.

Maxine explained that the reason for the meeting is to get more views and opinions, following an email received from the Parent Council detailing their concerns about the Proposal Document.

Maxine assured that Anna Ritchie School will be able to get almost everything that was requested in the original letter from the parent Council in November 2019. However, as the proposal document does not give a description of the design, not all elements were included in the document. The document itself is about the actual location and educational benefits.

The meeting is also to get a message across to Anna Ritchie parents and carers that all those requests can be achieved. Following the meeting everything will be put in writing and will be reflected in the final consultation report, to make sure that people have confidence that they will have those elements that they want.

Maxine indicated that all points on the letter will be discussed individually with different members of the team having their input if required, to which all agreed.

Maxine welcomed additional questions.

**II. Discussion**

- 1 Anna Ritchie school situated at one side of the campus and Peterhead Academy at the other, so they are located as far away from each other as possible.**
- 2 Swipe card to access Anna Ritchie school (no access to mainstream children without staff).**

***The proposal document does not provide any information about the separation of the Peterhead Academy and Anna Ritchie School and the use of the swipe cards.***

**Maxine Booth** emphasised that everybody must understand that a new Anna Ritchie School won't be a separate building, as it is a community campus. However, it will have its complete separate entrance for parents, pupils and staff. There won't be access between the two sides of the building unless staff have a swipe card to get through. Pupils will not be able to get through on their own, they will always have to be accompanied by a member of staff. Transition between the two sides of the campus will have to be organised and nobody will be able to get through without a swipe card.

### **3 A large separate outdoor area.**

*The proposal document does not state a 'large outdoor area'.*

**Maxine Booth** explained that the swimming pool will be very separate and very shaded, and the building design will ensure that children are not overlooked. This was picked up from the early meetings and that was one of the greatest concerns that Parent Council had. There are principles which are most worked on when designers and architects are in place. There will be a design group and parents will be involved in those designs and will be a part of that process. Each completed stage of the design will be consulted with parents to make sure everybody is comfortable with that.

Maxine emphasised the importance of identifying what a large outdoor space is, as the word 'large' can mean anything. She explained that there is a set of guidance about the outdoor space for primary and secondary schools which must be followed. However, the word 'large' needs to be defined. Maxine asked what the parents' thoughts are about the size of St Andrew's School outdoor space at Inverurie Community Campus.

**Parent** replied that it should be at least three times bigger than the outdoor space at St Andrew's School and that's a minimum.

**Maxine Booth** replied that three times bigger won't be achievable, so this element will have to be picked up and discussed again. It's about how it is designed and what is in it rather than the actual space itself.

**Mark Mitchell** explained that Inverurie Community Campus and St Andrew's School were built on the playing fields of the existing and former school, so the build was restricted by the area of land. Kinmundy is a bigger piece of land so there are opportunities to do things a bit different. However, everything needs to fit in together.

**Maxine Booth** suggested that parents should discuss what they feel is required in the outdoor area, so that we can make sure that it is properly designed to their expectations. The Service wants to make sure that outdoor areas for both Anna Ritchie and Peterhead Community Campus are designed properly. Maxine encouraged parents to do some work around that and bring it to the Learning Estates Team's attention. In terms of the size, it won't be the size of the St Andrew's one, because there is more land available on the Kinmundy site.

**Mark Mitchell** said that the extension at Hillside School has just been completed. Hillside parents worked hard and gave lots of thoughts to what they wanted on the playground space. The parents took ownership of that requirement as to what they wanted and Mark encouraged Anna Ritchie parents to think about what in their opinion Anna Ritchie School outdoor space needs, including elements like sensory gardens, tarmac and quiet spaces.

**Parent** raised concerns about uneven school grounds, as they are very difficult to cross for a person on a wheelchair, especially a child. There is a need to think about the actual equipment

itself, wheelchair accessible for kids. Leanne said that different elements have to be well thought out and considered, so there are no cars 'driving through a playground'.

**Mark Mitchell** commented that what was perceived as being 'a road running through a playground', that access gates are used by fire engines at a time of fire. It's only for fire and emergency vehicles to enter a playground.

**Maxine Booth** encouraged the parents to work together and think about what they want. There will be sufficient budget for the outdoor areas.

**Parent** emphasised that what Anna Ritchie needs is going to be completely different from what the primary school or Peterhead Academy need. All Anna Ritchie pupils have mixed abilities and therefore they will need more space in order to use some of the equipment. What currently is at Anna Ritchie is a mixture of a park, tarmac for sports days for people in wheelchairs or pupils learning to use bikes and other things. That's why a good size outdoor area is so very important.

#### **4 Separate, private dining room & kitchen.**

***The proposal document does not state 'separate & private dining room and kitchen'.***

**Maxine Booth** explained that it will be separate and private. The Service has already started to look at how these are going to work. There will be a separate dining room with different types of furniture and spaces for a private and shielded use, if required. Dining area will be very separate from the rest of the school. However, if there are pupils who would want to be in the main dining space of the main site of the academy or the primary, children will be able to join in if that was right for them.

**Sharon Ferguson** asked if it will be a multipurpose space or a dining room?

**Maxine Booth** replied that it hasn't been decided yet. The Service will be taking next stage of the space strategies next week and Sharon is involved in it.

**Sharon Ferguson** said that it was only one interview so far.

**Maxine Booth** clarified that it will be the next part of the process next week. The Service will be looking at functional rooms to get the best out of the space, so it can be a dining area or a multipurpose room. This is still for a debate.

**Parent** asked if the dining room is going to be like the one at St Andrew's School, with the home economics room in the same room.

**Maxine Booth** replied that it hasn't been designed yet.

**Mark Mitchell** said that in respect of multipurpose rooms, the Service doesn't want these spaces to be vacant most of the day. We want to be able to ensure that spaces can be used for other purposes but it's getting those practices right.

#### **5 Hydro pool (must be at least same size as our current one) & warm separate pool only for Anna Ritchie use.**

***The proposal document states one therapy pool only, instead of two pools and it does not specify sizes.***

**Mark Mitchell** said that Anna Ritchie will be provided with a replica of a warm water pool and a hydrotherapy pool as at St Andrew's School. Some parents have already seen those. Mark assured that the new school will have a hydrotherapy pool and a separate warm water pool. It had previously been agreed that an elementary school at Kinmundy will have a pool provision, regardless of where the community pool will be.

**6 Other facilities to be separate: therapy room, home economics room, gym hall, office, classrooms, rebound room & sensory room.**

*The proposal document does not state 'separate or dedicated' to Anna Ritchie School.*

**Sharon Ferguson** said that during the visit at St Andrew's School the parents' representatives spotted some design issues, such as improperly installed hoists, panel in dark rooms, windows in dark rooms and a too low ceiling in the rebound therapy room.

**Maxine Booth** said that those will be difficult to capture in the consultation document but can be detailed in the written response. Not all requests can be met as the Service is restricted by the budget. However, we can make sure that the principles are there. Those issues are normally picked up through the Post Occupancy Assessment, which is delayed due to Covid-19. However, the areas of concern can be put right. We cannot guarantee that the spaces will be bigger, because of a space standard.

**7 We want to view provisional architect plans for new school, and we want our objections heard.**

*The proposal document does not capture parents' involvement in the plans.*

**Maxine Booth** said that this has been already replied. Maxine reiterated that no architect has been appointed yet and reassured that parents will be involved in the plans across the project as it develops. This can be captured in the consultation document.

**8 We would also like some clarity on what the nursery provision will look like.**

**Maxine Booth** explained that Dales Park Nursery is under construction and is due to open in August. It is fully designed to include spaces for children with complex needs. However, Anna Ritchie School Nursery will stay with the school and will be designed as early years spaces like at St Andrews School Nursery. There will be places within the school for nursery pupils and there will be places offered through the enhanced provision at Dales Park Nursery. This will ensure adaptable nursery provision for children with different needs.

Maxine invited more questions.

**Parent** asked if parents will be able to see plans.

**Maxine Booth** replied yes and underlined the importance of the parental involvement. Maxine outlined the design process and assured that once an architect is appointed parents will be involved in the process going forward.

**Parent** asked if there will be a main hall or a gym hall or another facility that can be used for assemblies or Christmas activities.

**Mark Mitchell** recalled that what parents saw at St Andrew's was a general-purpose space, which is about classroom and a half size space. Anna Ritchie School will have a much bigger general-purpose space with a direct access. Anna Ritchie School will also have access to campus spaces such as a theatre, auditorium and other general-purpose spaces. It hasn't been decided yet if Anna Ritchie School will have a dedicated sports hall and a PE provision may have to be provided within the campus hall, but the concept is that the campus general spaces are much closer to Anna Ritchie School, to reduce a long walk. However, this has not been defined yet.

**Parent** said that parents were looking at having dedicated areas such as economics, gym halls, office, classrooms.

**Maxine Booth** confirmed that it was correct.

**Parent** asked how sharing the multifunctional rooms between mainstream schools and Anna Ritchie School would work?

**Maxine Booth** explained that there will be different halls across the campus, and the one appropriate for Anna Ritchie pupils to have activities in would have a two-door system that would take users from one to another space and would not let anyone in while the hall is in use. That would require appropriate timetabling.

**Parent** commented that as Anna Ritchie pupils use a hall a lot that would not leave much time for the mainstream schools.

**Maxine Booth** replied that it would be decided by the Campus Management Board at which Sharon will be sitting and the timetable would need to be determined. There will be three or four gym halls, and a dance studio and other general spaces to be used across the campus. In addition, there will be a large general-purpose space dedicated for Anna Ritchie School use only.

**Sharon Ferguson** said that in her opinion Anna Ritchie School would manage to do the majority of what they do in their own dedicated space. Additional spaces within the campus could be required for the biggest shows, but the day to day use of a hall would be within Anna Ritchie School part of the campus.

**Mark Mitchell** said that there will be more than just one hall in the campus. There will be several spaces across the campus that can facilitate PE and other activities.

**Maxine Booth** added that the school will be joined to the campus, so it is a building attached to another building but with the benefits for pupils being able to move between spaces.

**Parent** read Karen Stewart's statement: There has been a massive public campaign to keep the school separate with huge support, but it was not listened to. The benefit is that there will be a fantastic new facility but attached to the academy. This is the benchmark for education delivery to be safe and equitable across the Shire.

**Maxine Booth** requested the statement to be emailed to Learning Estates Team to be included in the final consultation report, if needed. It would allow all the key aspects to be captured.

**Parent** said that at the current site his daughter enjoys time with the school, walks in the area and other things pupils do for life skills. There is a park and grass area close to Anna Ritchie

School. He wanted to know what is around Kinmundy site, how the site is going to look like and if it is safe for kids to walk around out with the campus.

**Mark Mitchell** explained that the campus is to be build towards the North end of the site, next to Kinmundy Road, with Dales Park Nursery being built at the South end. However, the campus designs are not ready yet. In terms of roads safety, the Service works closely with roads colleagues to assess the town. To ensure pupils safety, safe walking routes have to be assessed as a part of this development. The Buchan Area Manager and her team are looking into an Active Travel initiative to ensure that this development is linked with what is already on the site. There will be bus drop-off, pupil drop-off, car park and other elements of the required infrastructure. Things will develop around the area.

**Sharon Ferguson** said that at the current school pupils are able to walk to shops and cafes for life skills, while Kinmundy is a residential area. There are few little shops in the area, but there will be community cafes on the campus site and perhaps more opportunities, such as work experience, for older Anna Ritchie pupils. It is likely that more businesses will open in the area in the future. The school will still have two minibuses to move around, but it will require more creativity.

**Parent** asked when the building will be ready for the use.

**Mark Mitchell** replied that if the statutory consultation goes to plan, we aim to be starting building in 2023. The campus would be ready for people to move into from August 2025.

**Maxine Booth** added that it doesn't mean that all will have to move in on that day. There will be a transition process to follow to make sure that children feel comfortable with their new environment.

**Mark Mitchell** confirmed that St Andrew's School was moving into their new building for over 12 weeks and there is no obligation to move to the new building within one day.

### III. Next steps

**Rachael Goldring** outlined the timelines for what happens next.

Rachael reminded that the consultation closes tomorrow. Following the closure all written feedback and comments gathered during the consultation period will be sent to Education Scotland. Everything what was said during the meeting will be put in writing to the parent body. This will also be put back to Education Scotland. Education Scotland have arranged some sessions next week to have conversations with the school management, parents, and pupils if it's right, to discuss the proposal. After that Education Scotland have three weeks to write a report on the consultation. This is to ensure that the Service has been complying with the legislation and any concerns will be reflected in their report. Their recommendation will certainly be ongoing involvement of the parent body, which is what the Service does anyway. A report from the consultation with an officer's recommendation will also be produced.

Rachael explained that at this stage of the consultation it's too late to amend the proposal document to reflect some of the things that weren't included in it. However, those will be included in the final consultation report. Details of all things that Parent Council have raised as not being addressed to their satisfaction in the proposal document, will be reflected in the consultation report and it will also be put in writing as a commitment that these elements will be provided for Anna Ritchie School. These will be detailed to a greater extent in the consultation report. This report will then be presented at the local area committee, probably in May, but the timescale depends on how much more information will be received from the

parent body in the remaining hours of the consultation period and if there are any further conversations required to address all concerns.

Following the recommendation from the area committee, the report will be taken to the Education and Children's Services Committee for approval. It is hoped that it will be in May, or August at the latest.

Rachael expressed commitment to put all concerns and final arrangements in writing.

**Maxine Booth** assured that today's statements will be put in writing and asked the parents to get the message across to the rest of the parent body. Further meetings can be arranged if parents have more concerns to be discussed.

**Parent** expressed her concern that the meeting was not more accessible as some people find Microsoft Teams tricky.

**Maxine Booth** replied that if parents wish to set up a zoom meeting, the Learning Estates Team will come along.

#### **IV. Close**

**Sharon Ferguson** thanked all the parents and the Learning Estates Team for attending the meeting. Sharon also restated that any concerns should be communicated as soon as possible, so that they can be worked on together.