



**EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**CONSULTATION REPORT REGARDING  
THE RELOCATION OF ANNA RITCHIE SCHOOL**

**JUNE 2021**

**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  
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report has been prepared following a consultation on the proposal of relocation of Anna Ritchie School to Peterhead Community Council from August 2025.
- 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;
  - 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 with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposals;
  - Provide officers conclusions and recommendation.

## **2. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 2.1 The requirement for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 3 December 2020, Aberdeenshire Council's Education & Children's Services Committee authorised the launch of a statutory consultation regarding the relocation of Anna Ritchie School to Peterhead Community Campus.
- 2.3 The proposal document made clear to consultees that the consultation period would run from Monday 7 December 2020 to Friday 26 February 2021. This covered the required minimum of 30 days term time consultation.
- 2.4 On 7 December 2020 copies of the proposal document were distributed to:
- all pupils and parents of pupils currently attending Anna Ritchie School and Peterhead Academy, Peterhead and Mintlaw clusters primary schools and nurseries,
  - Parent Councils and staff of Peterhead Academy and Mintlaw Academy and all schools and nurseries across Peterhead and Mintlaw clusters,
  - Boddam Community Council, Buchan East Community Council, Cruden Community Council, Longside and District Community Council, Peterhead

- Community Council,
- relevant users of Anna Ritchie School,
  - local Elected Members,
  - local Early Years Partner Providers in Peterhead,
  - Educational Psychology Team,
  - Trade Union representatives of the affected staff,
  - Education Scotland.
- 2.5 Wherever possible, the consultation proposal was emailed to consultees, in addition paper copies were posted to those consultees who either did not have an email address, or where the Council received a delivery failure notification from the email address provided.
- 2.6 Buchan House, Peterhead Library and Peterhead Leisure and Community Centre were provided with spare copies to be made readily available to any interested parties (subject to opening due to Covid-19 restrictions).
- 2.7 A copy of the document was also available on request from Learning Estates Team.
- 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 was published on the Council's Facebook and Twitter pages. The pages were updated regularly throughout the consultation period.
- 2.10 The consultation was also advertised in Buchan Observer and Evening Express.
- 2.11 An online survey was available throughout the consultation period.
- 2.12 The consultees were given an option to submit their comments to Learning Estates Team, Gordon House and to their nearest school, adhering to Covid-19 guidelines. Initially, comments box had been placed at Buchan House for submitting comments; however, due to coronavirus restrictions it had closed from 24 December 2020.
- 2.13 A virtual public meeting was held to discuss the proposal with consultees on 20 January 2021.
- 2.14 A virtual meeting with Anna Ritchie Parent Council was held on 25 February 2021.
- 2.15 Education Scotland's involvement consisted of: the proposal document and all written representations being sent to them, attendance at the public meeting

and online meetings with Anna Ritchie School and Peterhead Academy. Following their involvement, Education Scotland prepared a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. This aspect is covered in more details under Section 8 & 9 of this report.

- 2.16 Adhering to the statutory requirement this consultation report was published on the Aberdeenshire Council's website on 15 June 2021, exactly one week prior to the Buchan Area Committee and more than three weeks prior to the Council taking the decision on whether to implement the proposal.  
<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/education-consultations/>

### **3. THE PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The proposal document included as Appendix A1 to this report, was issued to relevant stakeholders as listed above.

- 3.2 The following schools are affected by the proposal:

- **Anna Ritchie School**

- 3.3 The proposal on which the consultation took place was that:

***Education provision at the existing Anna Ritchie School should be discontinued with effect from July 2025;***

***Existing and future pupils of Anna Ritchie School should continue their education at the new Peterhead Community Campus located at Kinmundy Road, Peterhead from August 2025.***

- 3.4 The proposal document stated that Anna Ritchie School as a Community Resource Hub serves Peterhead and Mintlaw clusters, and this would not change with the relocation to the new site. All current and future pupils receiving education at the school would continue to receive education at the school and would attend Anna Ritchie School at Peterhead Community Campus.
- 3.5 The proposal document stated that the new school will be fully accessible and specially designed and equipped with modern solutions to meet specific needs and ensure that the best learning opportunity is afforded to every Anna Ritchie School pupil.
- 3.6 It will be delivered using the accommodation schedule developed for St Andrew's School at Inverurie Community Campus and will comprise of purpose-built accommodation designed to meet the learning and care needs of pupils with complex additional support needs, such as:

- Separate ASN Entrance
- Dedicated parking
- Class bases and learning spaces
- Life skills areas
- Therapy rooms
- Nurture Spaces
- Quiet Area
- Sensory support: white and dark rooms
- Dining room
- Medical room
- Soft play space
- Changing places and accessible toilets
- Equipment and resource storage
- Laundry
- Hydro-therapy and warm water pools
- Dedicated outdoor learning space and sensory garden

3.7 Accommodation requirements have been developed by a campus steering group supported by an external space planning consultant. The process involved reviewing existing accommodation and interviewing officers, school management, staff and parents/carers to develop a brief for the design.

3.8 Parents and staff will be given an opportunity to review and discuss the proposed plans and to consider opportunities and challenges.

3.9 The proposed new Anna Ritchie School will be an all-through facility with the school nursery operating within the school setting. It will be a single storey distinct facility integrated within Peterhead Community Campus with a distinct management and staffing structure/organisation co-located on the same site as a mainstream primary and secondary education provision and community/leisure facilities.

3.10 Despite being co-located these schools would have individual identities, although develop shared values and ethos through an inclusive community. This community campus model will provide the full continuum of specialist education provision within an inclusive environment, from mainstream to complex needs, from universal to specialist support.

#### **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 following educational benefits have been identified for the pupil groups below:

- Pre-school, primary and secondary aged pupils at Anna Ritchie School
- Mainstream primary and secondary aged pupils attending Peterhead Community Campus

#### 4.2.1 Inclusion: inclusive education and inclusive community

The proposal presents an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging, engagement and ownership for all pupils and staff across an inclusive campus offering both a richer cultural and learning experience. Co-location of specialist and mainstream schools could promote wider staff awareness, understanding and celebration of diversity and raise expectations of professional behaviours and practice.

Opportunities for inclusive and collaborative learning (where appropriate) through access to flexible learning spaces can further promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference.

It is recognised that the proposal to co-locate specialist and mainstream education will present both opportunity and challenge alike to both school's management and staff teams, and for parent and pupil bodies. However, there is a commitment to collaborate to develop positive relationships and sense of mutual respect and responsibility within and across peer groups.

#### 4.2.2 Inclusion for pre-school / primary pupils

Some Anna Ritchie School parents identified concerns about the vulnerability of their children accessing a more mainstream environment, with particular reference to the attitudes and behaviours of academy pupils. However, other parents identified possible approaches to address such concerns by initiating early engagement with and between pupils from Anna Ritchie School and Peterhead Academy, to explore and develop a shared vision and strategy for inclusion and positive relationships.

There would also be benefits for pre-school, primary and secondary-aged pupils across the area (Peterhead and Mintlaw clusters) would benefit from accessing inreach and outreach services and programmes through Anna Ritchie School within an extended inclusive environment.

#### 4.2.3 Learning environment

Pupils at Anna Ritchie School will have access to a purpose built, fit-for-purpose and future-fit facilities for meeting complex additional support needs, with a range of appropriate accommodation and facilities including

both Anna Ritchie School-specific facilities and shared access to facilities within Peterhead Community Campus. The proposal would provide a structured, supported and specialist learning environment for those Anna Ritchie School pupils who require it, and on-site access to mainstream/inclusive learning opportunities which may be beneficial.

The current accommodation and facilities would be both improved and increased, with the proposed Anna Ritchie School offering purpose-built classroom bases and a range of break-out, general purpose, life-skills, individual and therapy spaces. Further the current and inadequate offer of sensory and soft-play facilities will be both increased and improved with the provision of state-of-the-art white rooms, sensory rooms and soft-play suites.

The proposal would provide an improved wireless-enabled learning environment to allow the use of mobile devices throughout the campus, and to promote digital literacy and independence in learning for all pupils. The increased use of mobile devices would promote the use of specialist and alternative technologies for pupils with speech, language and communication needs as they access the wider learning environment across the campus.

Pupils at Anna Ritchie School would also have on-site access to the full range of learning, community and sport facilities across Peterhead Community Campus. The current on-site offer of sport facilities is limited to a warm water pool and an inadequate gym hall with limited equipment.

The proposal will provide a dedicated and distinct outdoor learning space and sensory garden to ensure that pupils' outdoor learning experiences are maximised.

The proposal would both improve and increase on-site access to state-of-the-art leisure and sporting facilities, including: fitness suite; dance studios; sports hall; multi-use games area, playing fields, hydrotherapy pool and other pools that may possibly be located in the complex.

The proposal would also mean on-site access for Anna Ritchie School pupils to a range of community facilities and Community Learning and Development (CLD) services.

Pupils attending Peterhead Academy and the proposed primary schools would have scheduled access to the range of sensory, soft-play, life-skills and therapy facilities, albeit with a priority access to Anna Ritchie School pupils.

Pre-school, primary and secondary-aged pupils across the area (Peterhead and Mintlaw clusters) would continue to benefit from accessing inreach

services and programmes through Anna Ritchie School but within the proposed purpose-built range of teaching, sensory, therapeutic and community/leisure spaces.

#### 4.2.4 Curriculum

The proposal has the potential to enhance learning for all pupils by facilitating access to a more personalized and relevant curriculum. In being able to access state of the art learning spaces, including white rooms, sensory rooms, soft-play suites and a sensory garden, pupils are supported to add depth, breadth and challenge to learning.

Sensory suites, life-skills areas and community cafes will provide opportunities for intensive and extended interventions for pupils, facilitating experiences such as social and communication skill development, sensory learning, independent and life-skills development.

Facilities such as science labs, technology workshops, drama suites, dance studios and libraries will support and enhance learning as well as supporting transitions. These facilities will also benefit pupils who access mainstream/Enhanced Provision learning arrangements across the wider campus.

With carefully considered timetabling, pre-school and primary-aged Anna Ritchie School pupils would have access to these spaces and facilities across the campus.

Both pupils and staff at Anna Ritchie School would have more ready access to subject specialist staff providing increased opportunities for accredited courses and qualifications (pupils), and for professional consultation and collaboration (staff).

Staff at Peterhead Academy would have access to specialist experience and expertise to support Peterhead Academy pupils with additional support needs to access the curriculum.

The proposal would promote an emphasis on personalisation and choice, rather than 'specialist' standardisation through the provision of flexible and shared learning spaces and access to a wider range of curricular facilities. For example, pupils with complex needs can access state-of-the-art music facilities to enhance and intensify their learning experience.

There would also be benefits for pre-school, primary and secondary-aged pupils across the area (Peterhead and Mintlaw clusters) who would continue to benefit from accessing inreach and outreach services and programmes

through Anna Ritchie School by accessing an enhanced curricular offer across the community campus.

#### 4.2.5 Raising attainment and achievement

The proposal to co-locate a complex needs school and a secondary school on the community campus, alongside a potential primary school and community and leisure facilities, could improve levels of pupils' achievements and broaden the range of opportunities for young people to develop their skills for life, work and learning. This would be the case for pupils from both Anna Ritchie School and mainstream secondary and primary pupils.

There would be improved opportunities for flexible Senior Phase pathways for S4-S6 Anna Ritchie School pupils through improved opportunities to access:

- Appropriate qualifications/courses in a wider range of subject areas
- On-site supported work experience and volunteering opportunities
- On-site Community Learning and Development (CLD) programmes

There would be improved access to an extra-curricular programmes and wrap-around care to promote wider achievement. There would be increased potential for more flexible and responsive Senior Pathways to be delivered in more mainstream experiences and environments which could contribute to improved post-school destinations that promote independence and inclusion in the community.

The proposal has the potential to promote more seamless transitions for secondary-aged pupils between specialist and mainstream learning environments, based on responsiveness to pupil needs and interests rather than administrative and staffing arrangements.

It is acknowledged there may be a challenge for both school management teams to collaborate to ensure staffing and timetabling procedures facilitate full access for all to resources available. It is anticipated however, that with effective collaboration that effective operating procedures could be identified to support this aim.

There would also be benefits for pre-school, primary and secondary-aged pupils across the area (Peterhead and Mintlaw clusters) who would benefit from accessing inreach services and programmes through Anna Ritchie School with an increased range of opportunities to attain and achieve.

#### 4.2.6 Integrated services

*Mainstream / Enhanced Provision*

Co-location with mainstream/Enhanced Provision would ensure Anna Ritchie School pupils on the campus can access the right support, in the right place, at the right time through a universal, targeted and specialist support. The proposal would provide a structured, supported and specialist learning environment for those Anna Ritchie School pupils who require it and access to mainstream/inclusive learning environments for those who can benefit.

#### *Community Learning and Development (CLD)*

Co-location with the CLD team will allow for timely and responsive collaboration between school and CLD staff around the development of community learning programmes for individual and groups of children and young people.

#### 4.2.7 Professional development

The proposal to relocate Anna Ritchie School within Peterhead Community Campus has the potential to promote increased opportunities for professional development for Anna Ritchie School, academy, primary, community and partner staffing.

The proposal will provide an improved working environment and access to modern resources and facilities. Being part of a larger professional community, will promote opportunities for joint professional development 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 and 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.

The co-location of related professionals from different professional backgrounds and disciplines will promote more holistic understanding of child development and early intervention approaches.

#### 4.3 Likely educational effects and benefits on any other users of the school's facilities:

Children and young people with additional support needs across the wider community who access Wrap-Around Care services will have improved access to improved facilities through after-school, weekend and holiday respite/clubs hosted at the new campus, including specialist, community and leisure facilities.

Families of children and young people with additional support needs across the wider community will have improved access to improved specialist, community and leisure facilities after school, at weekends and during school holidays. The range of facilities will allow for whole family engagement in a range of activities within the community campus. For example, parents and

siblings could access community and leisure activities while children and young people with complex needs could access specialist facilities, such as the hydrotherapy pool.

Adults with complex needs living in the locality will benefit from the above proposed relocation through improved access to improved specialist facilities (i.e. hydrotherapy pool) through community letting, perhaps through Skills Development Scotland packages.

- 4.4 As the current Anna Ritchie building is nearly 60 years old, the condition of the new building will be a significant improvement on the current school, and as the suitability of the new school building is at the heart of the design process, the new school will be an attractive environment to learn that inspires pupils to engage with the curriculum.
- 4.5 In addition, the new Peterhead Community Campus will be built with community and sport facilities (subject to separate statutory consultations), which will significantly enhance opportunities for PE and other related activities.
- 4.6 Aberdeenshire Council is committed to delivering entitlements to learners in the 21st century according to Curriculum for Excellence.
- 4.7 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 Engagement with Public**

A virtual public meeting with consultees was held on 20 January 2021. The meeting was attended by 27 people, including parents, staff, elected members and members of the community. A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix A2.

The attendees at the public meeting and the questions and issues raised, indicate that there was no specific opposition to the proposal, although some concerns around the new Anna Ritchie School size, designs and accessibility, outdoor spaces and pupils' privacy were identified. It was also suggested that additional visits at St Andrew's School at Inverurie Community Campus would be valuable.

### **5.2 Parent Council Meeting**

An online meeting was held with Anna Ritchie School Parent Council on 25 February 2021 to fully discuss concerns raised by the parent body in respect to

the alleged omissions the council had made in the proposal document. This aspect is covered in the section 9 of this report.

### 5.3 Online Survey

An online survey was made available to identified stakeholders and community members. 47 people completed the survey and 73 open ended responses have been received. The survey questions and a summary of submitted feedback has been provided (Appendix A3). It is not appropriate to share the full transcript of responses, as some responses will provide sensitive personal data, and/or identify respondents. The responses have been redacted to prevent identification of any individuals and have also been appended to this report (Appendix A4).

### 5.4 Discussion with Pupils

As part of the consultation process, the Head Teacher of Anna Ritchie School was presented with a short set of questions to engage with Anna Ritchie pupils about the proposal of relocation. A summary note of responses is appended (Appendix A5).

A link to a short survey was also issued to S1 pupils and Pupil Council of Peterhead Academy. A summary of the survey comments has also been appended (Appendix A6).

### 5.5 Staff Engagement

Staff within the school have been given the opportunity to discuss the proposal. As the proposals for Anna Ritchie replacement have been discussed for a few years, staff involvement has been ongoing. No further staff feedback has been received during the consultation period.

## 6. **WRITTEN RESPONSES**

There was one comment to the consultation, submitted via an email, which is provided below:

“I am a parent of an Anna Ritchie child and think they are fine where they are, as they have their own space, pool and a great environment to work and play.”

## 7. **EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO WRITTEN AND ORAL REPRESENTATIONS**

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

## 7.1 Security and privacy issues regarding the indoor and outdoor areas being overlooked by other campus users

In this respect parents/carers concerns raised during the initial meeting and the consultation period have been acknowledged and will be taken on board by the Council. Internal and external spaces will be designed sensitively to address a range of issues, including overlooking and sensory sensitivities.

The new Anna Ritchie's indoor and outdoor spaces and green areas will be discrete to the school and not open to the mainstream pupils from the campus. Anna Ritchie pupils will be able to access other community campus spaces if required.

Anna Ritchie will be a single storey and the campus will be multi storey accommodation, but through early discussions with different design teams, consultations with parents/carers, staff and other stakeholders, the new school will be designed to avoid Anna Ritchie pupils being overlooked and their privacy respected.

The school entrance will be controlled and secured with restricted access to the building. No one will have access to the school facilities without authorisation. Transfer between the mainstream schools and the Anna Ritchie side will be operated through a swipe card access system. Mainstream students will not have access to Anna Ritchie School, and similarly Anna Ritchie pupils will not access mainstream schools, without being accompanied by a staff member equipped with a swipe card.

## 7.2 Facilities

Anna Ritchie School will be a distinct facility integrated within Peterhead Community Campus with a separate entrance and dedicated parking space and other essential facilities, in line with the Aberdeenshire Primary School Design Brief and Accessibility Strategy Brief.

The current accommodation and facilities would be improved and increased, with the proposed Anna Ritchie School offering purpose-built classroom bases and a range of break-out, general purpose, life-skills, individual and therapy spaces.

As outlined in section 3.6 of this report, the essential spaces allocated to the school will be as follows:

- Separate ASN Entrance
- Dedicated parking
- Class bases and learning spaces
- Life skills areas
- Therapy rooms
- Nurture Spaces

- Quiet Area
- Sensory support: white and dark rooms
- Dining room
- Medical room
- Soft play space
- Changing places and accessible toilets
- Equipment and resource storage
- Laundry
- Hydro-therapy and warm water pools
- Dedicated outdoor learning space and sensory garden

Detailed plans and designs, which will ensure environmental solutions to safeguard privacy and sensory sensitivity, will be developed as a part of the planning and design process, which then will be consulted with the school community and relevant stakeholders.

Specialist spaces such as Art, Music, HE, Drama, Dance, PE will be sited in the main body of the campus to which Anna Ritchie School pupils will have access through management agreement and appropriate timetabling. These facilities will be available for use by the mainstream and Anna Ritchie schools as well as the wider community, after school hours, to complement other sports and community provision within Peterhead.

### 7.3 Exclusive Anna Ritchie School facilities

All internal and external facilities within Anna Ritchie School will be protected and dedicated for Anna Ritchie use, although may have wider use out with school hours, although strictly regulated and likely to be only groups and organisations associated with Anna Ritchie School.

With regards to the comments in respect of a dedicated PE Hall, the Council's aspiration is to build establishments which promote flexible use of shared spaces. The overall campus provision makes more than adequate provision to ensure appropriate access to a range of general purpose and specialist spaces for all campus users. However, the authority recognised that there is stakeholder interest in securing a large general purpose space for a distinct Anna Ritchie School use.

### 7.4 Outdoor space and size

Adhering to the Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy Guiding Principle no 7 "outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environments should be maximised" and it is the Council's objective in terms of delivering new solutions for education provision. The outdoor area around the campus will be an important aspect within the project scope and there will be as many learning spaces as possible.

The school playground will be directly accessible from classrooms and will provide the scope for outdoor life-skills and sensory learning. Age-appropriate and inclusive play equipment/areas will be designed to reflect the full range of pupil needs, and the authority is committed to ensuring equivalent provision of play equipment. A sensory garden will also be one of the elements dedicated for Anna Ritchie pupils use.

Although, there may be a reduction to the dedicated Anna Ritchie School outdoor space compared to the current allocation, there will other shared outdoor spaces that can be accessed by the school such as sports and multi-use games areas. There will also be campus outdoor spaces, for those pupils who can benefit from accessing wider outdoor learning and play provisions.

#### 7.5 Access to shared facilities across the campus

In addition to access to facilities designated to Anna Ritchie School, the school will also have access to the wider campus facilities, such as PE halls, GP spaces, dance studio, specialist spaces and other, through developed management agreement and appropriate timetabling.

The campus will be accessed from the school when required. The aim is to have children with Additional Support Needs integrated into mainstream education where and when appropriate. Consideration would need to be given to how the movement of younger children around the campus could be facilitated through careful supervision and timetabling.

Mainstream children will be able to access the Anna Ritchie facilities should this be required. Mutual movement between schools across the campus will always take place with an appropriate staff supervision.

#### 7.6 Accessibility and suitable adaptations for pupils to be able to access all areas

It is a priority for Education and Children's Services to promote accessible, inclusive learning and to ensure there is capacity to meet the needs of all children and young people.

All facilities across the campus, including Anna Ritchie School facilities, will be fully accessible in line with the Aberdeenshire Accessibility Strategy, and it refers to access the curriculum, access to the physical environment, and access to communication and information.

#### 7.7 Plans and designs

In designing the new Anna Ritchie School, the Council will follow the current Aberdeenshire Council policy and practice and the School Estate Strategy which outlines 10 guiding principles, objectives and a set of aspirations for future planning and action. The aim is to raise the quality of learning estates ensuring no schools are in poor condition or otherwise unsuitable for 21<sup>st</sup> century education. The design and standards will be derived from our operational experience, best practice, post occupancy evaluation of other

Aberdeenshire builds and a review of comparable sites across Scotland and the UK.

All comments made and feedback received from stakeholders during the consultation period will be taken on board to ensure these are considered and pupils' needs, and parents and community's expectations are met. The Council will be working with the architects on the design of the new school and road infrastructure. Parents and staff will be given an opportunity to review and discuss the proposed plans and to consider opportunities and challenges. This will allow the requirements for the new primary school to be fully considered as part of this project.

#### 7.8 Location

A range of sites for Peterhead Community Campus were considered and the Kinmundy site was recognised as the only viable option. Following public engagement sessions, the community voted for the Kinmundy site as a preferred location which subsequently was approved by Full Council in June 2019. Community and Leisure facilities will also be developed on the existing academy site close to the town centre.

#### 7.9 Campus site

The Kinmundy site is 30 acres. It is large enough to accommodate the Academy, two Primary Schools, a Special School, a Nursery and outdoor pitches. Community facilities can also be fully accommodated if this is the agreed site for them. An indicative campus layout has been created which ensures that all facilities, pitches, road layouts and parking can be accommodated whilst ensuring that green space is maintained.

#### 7.10 Anna Ritchie School size

The proposed new school will be built with capacity for 70 pupils, which reflects the current roll, but also make accommodation for fluctuations in the roll over the past years. The innovative design will allow the capacity to be increased should the school roll increase in the future.

#### 7.11 Road safety

Planners and design teams in collaboration with the roads department will ensure that safe walking routes to schools are an integral part of the process. There will be a separate entrance and parking space to ensure pupils' safety during drop-offs and pick-ups, which will be fully controlled through an approved access strategy. There will be safe walking routes across the community campus for any families who wish to use them. The school community and relevant stakeholders will be involved in the roads and traffic assessment.

#### 7.12 Loss of its identity

The proposed new Anna Ritchie School will be an all-through facility with the school nursery operating within the school setting. It will be a distinct facility, with its own management and staffing structure so in effect a distinct school, co-located on the same site as a secondary school, possible primary school and community/leisure facilities.

Despite being co-located these schools would have individual identities, although develop shared values and ethos through an inclusive community. This community campus model will provide the full continuum of specialist education provision within an inclusive environment, from mainstream to complex needs, from universal to specialist support.

Aberdeenshire Council recognises and values the experience and expertise that Anna Ritchie School currently provides in meeting the needs of children and young people with complex needs across Peterhead and Mintlaw clusters and believes that this role and contribution will be strengthened through relocation to a new purpose-built facility and through co-location on a community campus.

#### 7.13 Pupils' safety and their health & wellbeing

It is the Council's responsibility to safeguard that every child or young person across Aberdeenshire is safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included. They have the right to be listened to and to have their views considered. It is the foundation for all Council's children's services and the aim is that children and young people will receive appropriate support and the right help at the right time from the right people.

All Anna Ritchie pupils' needs will be supported by responding to each child's individual needs in order to provide the best support.

#### 7.14 Upgrade existing school

If all elements of the campus are not delivered including relocation of Anna Ritchie School then there is likely to be a significant impact on the availability of government funding. In this scenario there would need to be further dialogue with Scottish Futures Trust and the Scottish Government.

All schools in the learning estate are subject to condition and suitability assessments, these together with school roll forecasts form the basis of the Council's own investment programme. The council must prioritise this budget across its entire estate and given other priorities in Aberdeenshire it would be unlikely there would be opportunity to invest in the existing building.

The ongoing repair and maintenance programme of the school estate will continue.

#### 7.15 Bullying

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.

The Council aims to create comfortable and safe learning environments for all pupils and has a robust approach in order to prevent and respond to any incidents of bullying behaviour. Any bullying incidents will be dealt with in line with the establishment anti-bullying policy.

The Campus Management Group will be responsible for developing shared policy and practice guidelines on promoting positive relationships, positive behaviour, respect and celebration of diversity including anti-bullying.

#### 7.16 Transport

Any transport arrangements for Anna Ritchie School pupils would be made in line with the current Aberdeenshire Council School Transport Policy. Under this policy, free home to school transport to pupils with additional support needs will be provided if this has been authorised by the appropriate Head of Service.

All nursery and primary pupils, and all secondary pupils, except for one, are transported to school by authority-provided transport.

Given that Peterhead Community Campus is 0.8 miles from the current site of Anna Ritchie School, it is not anticipated there will be significant implications for school transport arrangements.

#### 7.17 Transition to the new school

If the decision is taken to relocate Anna Ritchie School to the community campus, the school's management team will identify priorities for smooth transition and will initiate transition planning, for individual pupils and for the wider school community. Issues around transition for individual pupils will also be assessed and planned for through single/multi-agency processes to ensure appropriate strategies are implemented, including enhanced transition.

Staff, pupils and parents will be able to visit the new campus and school allowing them to become comfortable and familiar with new settings.

The timing of the move is carefully planned to minimise disruption for pupils and staff. The transition processes will, as far as possible, be at the pace of the child, and ensure that the needs of the children and young people are at the centre of the planning.

Careful transition planning will ensure a positive transition for pupils to the community campus. Individual plans will allow for enhanced transitions.

#### 7.18 Pupil integration

The authority considers it essential to develop an information, communication and education programme to raise awareness and promote attitudes of tolerance, inclusion and respect for diversity for all campus users, including pupils.

#### 7.19 Merging Anna Ritchie School with mainstream schools

As outlined in the proposal document and during the consultation, the proposal refers to a relocation not a merger. The new school will be a separate facility within the campus building, with a separate management and staffing structure. Schools located at the campus will have distinct identities, although shared values and ethos developed over the time.

The proposal will provide an opportunity for different staff groups to collaborate and to share experience with one another.

#### 7.20 Density of pupils' congregation in one building

The national and authority position is to build schools or campuses which promote the flexible use of shared spaces. Community campuses are designed to offer learners excellent opportunities, they can adapt to the changing needs of learners with an aim to inspire learning and teaching and provide centres of excellence for specialist provision. Campuses are fit-for-purpose, modern learning and teaching estates, world-leading in energy efficiency heading to carbon reduction and represent the best value for money.

Investments in new campuses support the learning needs of students, the economy and deliver on our ambitions for carbon reduction. This is an aspiration of the Scottish Government and the Council has an essential role in supporting the Scottish Government in meeting its aspiration.

The Council wants to deliver improvements for the estate that will impact the greatest number of buildings, aims to reduce the overall number of buildings which will result in a reduction of carbon footprint and energy consumption and it can be achieved by building community campuses.

#### 7.21 Classes set up and sizes

Class sizes will continue to follow the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers agreement, and the maximum class sizes for Additional Support Needs specialist education setting is as follows:

<u>Additional Support Needs arising from:</u>	<u>Number of pupils</u>
Moderate learning difficulties	10
Profound learning difficulties	10 **
Severe physical impairment	8
Severe learning difficulties	8
Significant hearing impairment	6
Significant visual impairment	6
Language and communication difficulties	6

(\*\* This figure applies where teachers are complemented by support staff and councils are recommended to apply an adult/pupil ratio of 1:2.5)

Anna Ritchie School class sizes may vary depending on a child(ren)'s individual needs and to allow flexible and responsive grouping of children across stages of learning and development.

#### 7.22 Access to clubs and other events across the wider campus

Anna Ritchie pupils, should this be appropriate for them, will be able to access after school, weekend and holiday respite and clubs, workshops, specialist experience and other extra-curricular programmes hosted at the campus.

This is the Council's aim to have children with additional support needs integrated into mainstream education where and when appropriate.

#### 7.23 Differentiated schools' breaks, and start and end times

Start and end times of the school day will be considered by the Campus 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.

#### 7.24 Autism accreditation

There are a number of trainings and programmes available for staff through a Career Long Professional Learning and Training strategy for Additional Support Needs. The strategy provides a framework of professional learning at universal, targeted and specialist across themes of learning, including: safety, health and wellbeing; language and communication; ICT; learning and teaching; and positive relationships. Autism Accreditation programme can be incorporated into the CLPLT strategy, should such a need be identified in this area.

#### 7.25 St Andrew's School visits

Should this be required, further staff, parents/carers and pupils' visits can be arranged once Covid restrictions have been lifted.

#### 7.26 Vacant building

Aberdeenshire Council has an Asset Disposal Policy which must be followed when assets become surplus to requirements. If Anna Ritchie School was to join the campus then there would be no requirement for the Anna Ritchie School building to continue as a school. It would be the intention of Education and Children's Services to declare the building surplus to requirement, other council services will be approached to express an interest in the site. There will be opportunities for the site to be developed as green space and/or playing space.

This would have to be fully assessed through the asset disposal procedure. Thereafter any surplus council sites can be subject to a Community Asset Transfer Application.

#### 7.27 Reducing number of playing fields in Peterhead

There would continue to be a number of pitches at Kinmundy which will be available for community use. Aberdeenshire Council's pitch strategy will also determine whether additional pitches are required at different locations across Peterhead. The campus building will not cover the whole of the Kinmundy site, and therefore will still allow sport activities.

### **8. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT**

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

8.2 Education Scotland attended the online public meeting held on 20 January 2021 regarding the Council's proposal.

8.3 Education Scotland virtually met with relevant consultees of Anna Ritchie School and Peterhead Academy on 3 March 2021.

8.4 The Education Scotland report is reproduced in full (Appendix A7).

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

- Education Scotland believe that the proposal has the potential to bring significant educational benefits for all children and young people across the new campus including opportunities to develop inclusive practices and partnership working between establishments on the Kinmundy site, opportunity to develop a comprehensive plan for inclusion across the campus, opportunities to align services and supporting collegiate working and professional learning, opportunity to promote equality and diversity in 21st century Scotland.
- Education Scotland believe that the purpose-built building has considerable potential to enhance the learning environment for Anna Ritchie School learners, including access to improved specialist, community and leisure facilities, wireless enabled facilities, hoists, medical facilities, sensory rooms and outdoor learning spaces.
- Education Scotland recognise that Anna Ritchie pupils welcome the improved facilities and resources the new school could offer and the enhanced leisure and sports facilities within the campus.
- Education Scotland recognised opportunities to enhance the curriculum and enrich pupils' learning experiences including access to a range of curricular subjects at Peterhead Academy. This will increase opportunities to raise

attainment and achievement and opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work.

- Education Scotland acknowledged concerns about Anna Ritchie School losing its unique identity and place within the local community. However, senior staff are committed to fostering and building on their well-established links within the local community.
- Education Scotland recognised the need for significant planning to support the transition to a new, larger and busier campus for children and young people with complex additional support needs.
- Education Scotland noted that the Parent Council notified the Council of alleged omissions in the proposal. The council took steps to investigate the matter and responded to the Parent Council in writing.

8.6 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:

- Should the proposal go ahead, the Council has acknowledged the need for robust planning arrangements to support the transition to alleviate the concerns raised about the dignity and safety of Anna Ritchie pupils and relationships across the campus. It is important the children and young people feel safe and listened.
- A plan will be developed to ensure that the school community are kept informed at each key stage of the design and implementation process. 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 detailed implementation of the proposal. In addition to the usual communication channels, there will also be an opportunity for parents, staff and pupils to attend a drop-in session which will allow the Council to share information directly.
- A communication plan will be developed with the Campus Project Board to ensure that parents/carers are kept informed at each key stage throughout the project. The Council will work with the Head Teacher to ensure parents/carers are kept aware of how their concerns are being addressed.
- In respect to alleged omissions, the council has provided its statement in this report in the section 9 below.

## **9. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES**

9.1 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 In November 2019 the Parent Council submitted a letter to the Council detailing their requirements for the new school (Appendix A8). Aberdeenshire Council responded with confirmation that the school would be a distinct school and that engagement would continue regarding the design (Appendix A9).
- 9.3 In the course of the consultation exercise, an omission within the proposal document was raised by Anna Ritchie Parent Council as they had expected the proposal document to include their list of requirements.
- 9.4 Officers arranged an online meeting on 25 February 2021 to fully discuss the concerns. A full note of the meeting has been appended (Appendix A10). The Council submitted another response dated 3 March 2021 to the school and parent body (Appendix A11).
- 9.5 The Council continues to be committed to adhere to the arrangements detailed in the response, which will involve parental involvement in the detailed design.
- 9.6 No further representations have been received from the Parent Council.

## **10. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 AND CONCLUSIONS**

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

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

- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,*
  - (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,*
  - (iii) HMle's report.*
- 10.2 Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meeting and have considered equally carefully the written representations. The Education Authority's position is set out in this document.

## **11. CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 In review of the oral and written submissions to the formal consultation and survey results, it is clear that there is mixed stakeholder support for the proposal to relocate Anna Ritchie School within the Peterhead Community Campus.

- 11.2 Stakeholders identified a range of opportunities, challenges and issues for consideration during decision making and development/planning process. Many of these issues have been responded to through the ongoing engagement and this has also been covered in this report.
- 11.3 Officers have carefully considered the opportunities, issues and challenges identified by stakeholders during both the informal engagement and formal consultation processes.
- 11.4 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) Abandon the proposal and maintain the status quo.
- 11.5 If the Council adopts the proposal, it would be on the basis that the educational benefits set out in the proposal document would materialise. The Council acknowledged that mitigating approaches will be required to address some of the issues and challenges identified by stakeholders. These will be developed through ongoing engagement and collaboration with stakeholders, including parents/carers, staff and pupils and a wider school community. A careful strategic planning will be required to progress some of the opportunities identified by stakeholders.
- 11.6 There are no obvious ways of amending the proposal. Selecting a different site is not recommended, as the Council have completed an option appraisal of available sites in the town and the Kinmundy site has been approved by Full Council as the preferred location for the new Peterhead Community Campus. Renovation of the current building and facilities will not be possible as there is no government funding available to invest in the existing building and it is unlikely that the school would be prioritised for restoration out of the Council budget.
- 11.7 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 children and young people with complex additional support needs. Education Scotland has recognised that the proposal would lead to clear educational benefits for Anna Ritchie pupils. The new school could provide an improved learning environment, including wireless-enabled facilities, and access to sensory suites and community sports facilities. There will be opportunities to enhance learning pathways, and to rise attainment and achievement through access to specialist staff and community partners. There will also be opportunities to develop inclusive practices and integrated services for the benefit of all children, young people and staff across the campus.

## **12. RECOMMENDATION**

- 12.1 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 suitable option for Anna Richie School. The recognised benefits will outweigh any identified challenges or concerns, which can be addressed through partnership working between the authority and all stakeholders to generate shared solutions and strategies to ensure the relocation represents and realises all stakeholders' best interests.
- 12.2 The recommendation of officers is that the Council should adopt the proposal for a replacement of Anna Ritchie School and that Additional Support Needs specialist education at the school should be discontinued from August 2025, on completion of the new Peterhead Community Campus located at Kinmundy.**