



# **Moray Council**

## **Rezoning Moray Secondary Schools**

### **Comments / Enquiries Received**

**09 February 2016  
24 March 2016**

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***Please note that content within is unedited (except for the removal of personal data)***

## Rezoning Moray Secondary Schools

### Correspondence

Sent: 11 February 2016 13:13

Subject: Rezoning

We currently have children at West End Primary (P3 & P6) but live in the New Elgin Primary School catchment area. We live in Thomshill, Birnie.

We would obviously want our children to go to the Academy with their peers however are a bit confused about what will happen with the Rezoning.

Can you tell me what the current procedure is and how the changes will effect them under the new Rezoning proposal?

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## Rezoning Moray Secondary Schools



1<sup>st</sup> March 2016

**RE: Statutory consultation for rezoning Moray secondary school**

Dear Sir/Madam

I note that Moray Council is proposing to vary the zones based on geographical areas which are delineated on plans.

My eldest son is currently zoned for Elgin Academy and under this proposal we would now be zoned for Milne's High school.

I am opposed this for the following reasons;

1. The geographical areas delineated on plans do not reflect the actual journey required to get to school, nor do they take into account the links that rural communities have to their nearest centre. Elgin Academy is closer to Troves than Milne's High School but it is also the natural hub for residents. Football training, swimming clubs, various children's activities bring them into contact with other young people who will go to either of the 2 very good secondary schools in Elgin. I can't relate to a proposal which does not take into account the emotional health of our young people and ignores the very obvious links to Elgin. I myself work in Elgin and having the children schooled in a different community makes no sense to me and would be very difficult to manage.
2. None of the children living in Troves attend the primary school the area is zoned for. There are many different reasons for this but one of the reasons is that Lhanbryde PS is not the nearest school due to the fact that there is no through road. On a map it may seem feasible; in reality New Elgin Primary is closer by road and more convenient.
3. Due to the fact that my children do not attend Lhanbryde PS and attend schools in Elgin I would wish my children to benefit from the continuity and peer support of primary into secondary education at Elgin Academy.

For these reasons I would argue that continued dual zoning of the primary school to two secondary schools is the best outcome for our small rural community. It allows parents to make a choice based on what is best for our children based on real life circumstances and not determined by a line on a map.

Yours Faithfully

## Rezoning Moray Secondary Schools

**Sent:** 23 March 2016 22:26

**Subject:** Secondary School Rezoning Proposal

Dear Sir or Madam

I have read through both the Moray Council Education and Social Care Secondary School Rezoning Proposal and the Admissions to Schools Policy Proposal and would wish to briefly offer my view in relation to denominational school zoning. Both my daughters attend St Sylvester's Primary School in Elgin where they receive an excellent education in a denominational setting as we are a Catholic family. When my elder daughter started at St Sylvester's in 2010 we lived in Elgin where I work as a GP. Subsequently we moved house to Lossiemouth but this of course did not affect our children continuing their education at St Sylvester's school. At that time we were led to believe (from talking to friends and teaching staff) there would not be any future difficulties in moving to Secondary Schooling at Elgin Academy where I understand historically the majority of children at St Sylvester's have moved to at Secondary school stage.

At Clause 2.3 of the Rezoning Proposal paper it is stated that "on educational grounds there will be significant benefits for pupils, in terms of continuity and progression in their learning, in the zone of a secondary school being co-terminus with the zones of the primary schools in its Associated Schools Group (ASG)".

Moving to Clause 2.7 concerning Elgin Academy it states: "Geographically, St Sylvester's Roman Catholic Primary School is in the Elgin Academy ASG (i.e. the group of primary schools from which pupils would normally progress to Elgin Academy); however, as there are no Roman Catholic secondary schools in Moray, pupils attending one of the Roman Catholic schools transfer to the secondary school in the zone in which they live."

In the case of my daughter who is due to move to Secondary school in 2017 this would mean her zoned Secondary school would be Lossiemouth High School where she would have no acquaintances in her year, being the only child in her class at St Sylvester's who lives in the Lossiemouth catchment area. This surely goes against the clause 2.3 ethos? I use my daughter simply as an example but the same could apply to many St Sylvester's pupils who live outwith the Elgin Academy zone.

**I acknowledge that the ability to make a Placing Request is preserved in terms of the Admissions to Schools Policy Proposal but am not certain how much reassurance that actually affords. I would be happier if the Rezoning Proposal could carry some sort of proviso at clause 2.7 to reassure those of us with children at St Sylvester's that a request to move to Elgin Academy (regardless of zone of residence) would carry equal status with a move to the child's zoned Secondary school. The fact that St Sylvester's is within the Elgin Academy ASG must surely carry some weight?**

If there was a Roman Catholic Secondary School locally the concern I have raised would not apply, but this not being the case I am of the opinion that continuity of education would be best served as I have outlined. St Sylvester's differs to the other Primary schools considered in the Consultation due to the extreme residential coverage of its catchment area and this, I believe, justifies some special consideration.

Yours faithfully

# **Rezoning Moray Secondary Schools**

## **Secondary School Rezoning Proposal**

### **Response from the City and Royal Burgh of Elgin Community Council**

#### Background

The Moray Council has conducted a statutory consultation exercise on its proposals to vary the zones (catchment areas) of Forres Academy, Lossiemouth High School, Elgin Academy, Elgin High School, Milne's High School with effect from 24<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

Various public meetings were held by the Council to explain its proposals. The Community Council was represented at the meeting in Elgin Library on the afternoon of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

The Community Council has tried to look at the overall picture as it affects Elgin, and to look at the greatest overall benefit, while recognising that some parents and their children may well be adversely affected by the proposals.

#### The Consultation Process

The Community Council recognises that the consultation process, its timing and content, is driven by statute. The Community Council was disappointed at the low numbers of people who attended the various meetings, and concludes that parents are in general content with the proposals.

#### Merits of the Proposals

The Community Council recognises that the zones have not been altered for many years and this tidying up exercise is necessary. The Community Council believes that one of the drivers of any such rezoning must be to create additional space wherever possible within the Elgin Academy and Elgin High School, to allow for the anticipated growth in pupil numbers in Elgin over the next few years. We understand that the proposals would free up around 80 to 100 spaces mainly in Elgin Academy, before placing requests from out of zone pupils are taken into account. Also, as the decision has been made to retain Milne's High School, then the rezoning should assist in building up the school roll for Milne's.

- (a) Forres Academy: the whole of the catchment area of Alves Primary to be zoned to Forres Academy. This would mean that small areas zoned to Alves Primary School which are currently zoned to Elgin Academy and Elgin High School would be zoned to Forres Academy.

The Community Council supports this proposal.

- (b) Elgin High School: the catchment area of Elgin High School should include the whole of the new catchment areas of Mosstowie, Greenwards, New Elgin Primaries and the new zone for the south-east Elgin Primary School. A very small part of the Lhanbryde catchment area would no longer be zoned to Elgin High School.

The Community Council supports this proposal in principle.

However, the Community Council believes that those children who live within Elgin (we believe in the area around Hallowood Road) currently zoned to Lhanbryde Primary and who attend Elgin Academy should be allowed to

## Rezoning Moray Secondary Schools

complete their schooling at Elgin Academy, and priority in placing requests should be given to any siblings of any such children. We support the principle that if you live in Elgin you should go be able to go to an Elgin school. The area in question has no direct transport links to Fochabers or Lhanbryde.

Once the new primary school has been built for south east Elgin, then it would be appropriate to revisit the zoning for this small area, as it may then be appropriate for the area to be zoned to the new primary school and then to Elgin High School.

- (c) Lossiemouth High School: the catchment area for Lossiemouth High School to include the whole of the catchment areas of St Gerardine, Hythehill, Hopeman and Burghead Primary Schools. This would mean the ending of the dual zoning of Burghead to Lossiemouth High School and Elgin Academy. A small part of the Hopeman catchment area would no longer be zoned to Elgin Academy.

The Community Council supports this proposal. This should assist in freeing up places in Elgin Academy.

- (d) Elgin Academy: the catchment area to include only the new catchment areas of West End, East End, Bishopmill and Seafeld Primary Schools. Areas of the Alves, Hopeman, Mosstowie and Lhanbryde catchment areas and the Burghead catchment area would no longer be zoned to Elgin Academy.

The Community Council supports this proposal.

**City and Royal Burgh of Elgin Community Council**  
**24<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

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## Rezoning Moray Secondary Schools

**Sent:** 24 March 2016 11:52

**Subject:** Elgin Schools Secondary School re-zoning consultation - proforma copy attached.

I am concerned about the re-zoning proposals for Elgin Academy and specifically relating to the proposal not to split the Lhanbryde catchment.

The current situation means that families living close to Elgin, send their children to Elgin Academy. The dividing line from the A96 North is the River Lossie. In the case of my family, that would mean a 2.7 mile journey, which from experience as a pupil I know can be done on bike in 15 minutes. It is also possible to walk. A travel time of 15 minutes allows for children to take part in after school activities, and mix with their peers at school in Elgin. Journeys are also possible by car which takes about 7 minutes. This is significant, because Elgin is the main place of work for most parents.

Compare this to Milnes High School which is a 10.3 mile direct journey by car, partly on the A96 which is unsuitable for cycling. In reality, the Council will provide transport to all those affected by the change. So if the school bus was not used, parents would make two journeys to and from school, which equates to 41.2 miles a day. In reality, our children would be at the start of any school bus journey, so travel time there and back is likely to be at least 2 hours in total. This would preclude participation in after school activities, significantly affecting their enjoyment of the school, and would also eat into the time available at home for homework. In reality, after school activities if they took place would be in Elgin, so that the children would only interact with their peer group at Milnes during the school day. This is neither sustainable, nor desirable.

Finally, restricting the Elgin Academy catchment will make it urban, and removing the rural components limits diversity.

As alternative, I would propose that the Elgin Academy catchment boundary North of the A96 remains the River Lossie, and the catchment for Lossie High is extended to the East over some of the Milnes catchment for similar sustainability reasons.

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### **Suggestion for secondary school catchment areas**

We wish that our children, who currently attend West End Primary School in Elgin (which is barely 15 minutes drive or a 20 minute cycle), remain in the catchment for Elgin Academy because we strongly feel the boundary changes will have the following detrimental impact/s

#### *a) Negative impact on transport, sustainability and health*

From where we are located, which is less than 3 miles from the centre of Elgin, a 25 mile daily round trip to Fochabers, using publically funded transport, would not only be detrimental to children's wellbeing (for reasons outlined below) but is surely not a sensible option given that there is a perfectly good secondary school, namely Elgin Academy, which the children could cycle with ease in 15 minutes. From a public transport, sustainability and health perspective, if a school is local and can be cycled to, surely this is preferable and would no doubt be in line with the Council's well documented transport sustainability aims. Clearly the A96 to Fochabers is not a safe road for any child or adult to cycle along.

#### *b) Detrimental to children's wellbeing and educational outcomes*

Given the Council's current proposed boundaries, children living at our location on the map (cross roads Lesmurdie/Pitgaveny) are likely to be the first to be picked up by publically funded transport in the morning, and the last to be dropped off in the evening, since we are less

than 3 miles from the centre of Elgin and more than 12 miles from Fochabers. This would take in all probability an hour and a half to two hours, using public transport to get to Fochabers, compared to a less than 10 minute drive to Elgin Academy from where we are located. This would mean that the children would not be able to fully participate in extracurricular activities with their peers in secondary school because of the scheduling of the public transport provided and more importantly the length of time spent on the road eating into time after school. This is not in accordance with section 6.3.1 of Moray Council's own proposal which says that children should be going to a secondary school with their peers. Our children's social links and engagement with their local community would suffer as they go to West End Primary, have friends in Elgin, and participate in extracurricular activities in Elgin because Elgin is our home town not Fochabers.

Very importantly home work would undoubtedly suffer because there would be less time to do it and because the children will be very tired when they get back given the time it would take to get back home. This would also impact family life.

### **Suggested change to the proposals**

In summary we ask that we remain in the catchment for Elgin Academy (Please note there are children who currently go to Elgin Academy living next door to us with same postcode.) Indeed the proposed boundary changes would have a detrimental impact not only on well

documented sustainability ambitions but more importantly on children's educational and social outcomes. On a matter of social cohesion there are farming families who live on the edge of Elgin who will be negatively affected by this proposal and who consider Elgin their home town. It may well be an unintended consequence of these proposals that Elgin Academy becomes an urban preserve with no mixing of children from rural communities. This is not surely desirable.

**We therefore propose in all fairness that Elgin Academy boundary to the east stops at the river Lossie and Inchbroom for the reasons stated above.**

## **Rezoning Moray Secondary Schools**

### **Social Media**

No questions / comments were received.

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### Survey Monkey Comments

1.	We propose in summary that to the east boundary stops at the river Lossie and Inchbroom.
2.	I support keeping the current split catchment for Lhanbryde. Currently we are 2.7miles from Elgin Academy and it is possible to cycle to the school. Direct travel to Milne's High School is 12.5miles, and is likely to be considerably longer if provided by a school bus. I would propose that the Elgin Academy boundary on the East stop at the River Lossie.
3.	Pupils currently in 'feeder' schools should be able to follow to equivalent secondary.
4.	We note that this consultation is predicated on the proposed new primary school in the south-east of Elgin going ahead. Its catchment feeds into the High School, but it involves the transfer of some 400 houses from East End's catchment (which feeds in to the Academy) into the new school's catchment. It is not clear from the Consultation if these 400 households have been specifically made aware of the changes to both their primary and secondary nominated schools, as it is a significant change to their residential environment. The changes proposed for Elgin Academy involve the intended transfer of some 500 existing households out of its catchment. While most of these are logical reorganisations of rural catchments to the west, south-west, east and south-east (and a marginal area to the north), involving about 100 rural properties, the major transfer is of the aforementioned 400 households, formerly in East End's catchment, at the Barlink Road/Reynolds Crescent area. We have previously expressed concern, as you know, at the negative impact this will have on East End's roll, particularly as it is our contention that East End school was best placed to undertake improvements and thereby relieve the pressure on New Elgin Primary School, which has caused the urgency for a new school in the south.
5.	Hallowood road should be zoned to an Elgin secondary school due to distance and subject variety. The latter being more varied and more choices available in Elgin therefore being an educational benefit to my children. All children living in Hallowood road attend an Elgin primary school therefore keeping continuity with the children's learning and peers which is vital to the children having an uninterrupted education.
6.	Move catchment area of High School West along Mosstowie Valley to include Hardhillock Farm and houses.
7.	None - think it's a sensible option that is tabled.

### Pupil Responses

Burghead Primary School (response received via Tristan Walker, Head Teacher):

We did complete for Pupil Council and we have had an open debate with all of P5-7.

Most children agreed with the proposal. Points raised were;

- They felt that they should have the choice to go to Elgin – which they would.
- They felt it was reasonable that their parents would pay for the bus fares to enact this choice except for one child who felt that the council should pay because his parents pay taxes.
- They felt there were lots of schools in Elgin and there would not be enough room for Burghead.
- They are in the middle between Elgin and Lossiemouth
- They were pleased that siblings would be allowed to go to EA if required.

Out of 45 children 42 agreed in its entirety.