



---

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
4 FEBRUARY 2015**

**SUBJECT: ELGIN PRIMARY SCHOOL ZONING**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval to bring forward draft proposals for a formal consultation on primary school zoning in Elgin under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III D (25) of the Council's Administrative Scheme to consider and monitor problems relating to school capacities and available accommodation and to review school zoning.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:**

- (a) agree on the key principles for rezoning Elgin primary schools as detailed in 3.3;**
- (b) discuss, agree and/or amend the draft proposals for Elgin primary school zones; and**
- (c) instruct the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) to undertake the next steps in preparing for the consultation and report back to Committee in order that Committee may agree the consultation proposals.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 19 November 2014, Children and Young People's Services Committee agreed to task the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) with presenting a paper to the next meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Committee seeking approval to consult on rezoning Elgin Primary Schools (paragraph 7 of the minute refers).

- 3.2 The issue of school revised zoning comes under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. In order to make changes to school zones the Education Authority must publish proposals and undertake a consultation with various prescribed groups as well as hold public meetings.
- 3.3 Before publishing any proposals for altering the catchment areas of the Elgin primary schools, it is recommended that the Committee agree a number of key principles for rezoning. The following are proposed:
- rezoning should ensure that, first and foremost, children who are living within an area zoned for a particular school are able to attend that school;
  - rezoning should reflect consistent historical trends for placing requests;
  - revised school zones should be based on geographical areas as delineated on plans, which are based on post codes areas within Elgin; and
  - rezoning should ensure that primary schools are zoned to a single secondary school and all areas in Elgin are only zoned to a single school.
- 3.4 Based on the approximately 50% of placing request applicants who stated a reason; analysis of placing requests across Moray, over the last six years, has identified the following as the main reasons behind the requests:
1. Change of address (moving house and wishing to remain at current school).
  2. Siblings already attending the school.
  3. Child attended playgroup or nursery at that school.
  4. Childminder lives close by the school.
- 3.5 If primary zones remain unaltered the following table provides roll projections.

School	Functional Capacity**	Current Roll*	Projected Rolls							
			2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bishopmill	390	359	363	376	398	407	423	431	450	471
East End	233	203	196	223	263	302	340	353	382	409
Greenwards	390	331	333	323	322	315	328	315	329	341
Mosstowie	75	49	53	55	53	55	54	54	58	50
New Elgin	531	511	504	552	594	625	665	689	721	750
Seafield	353	278	263	278	306	336	364	395	439	467
St Sylvesters	232	205	207	208	202	201	206	203	202	204
West End	249	234	236	239	231	226	234	230	222	223

\*Census Data September 2014 – based on current national guidelines and current Moray Council practice.

\*\* Functional Capacity 2014/15

- 3.6 Options and recommendations for all of the primary schools in the Elgin Associated Schools Groups are given below. Maps showing the current Elgin

primary school zones are shown in **Appendix 1** and the recommended revisions are shown in **Appendix 2**. It should be noted that certain recommendations, if accepted, will have knock-on effects for secondary school zones in Moray. This would have to be the subject of a future report to this Committee.

- 3.6.1 Greenwards Primary. The roll is forecast to be around 87% of current capacity by 2021. There has traditionally been a high level of inward placing requests from the areas of New Elgin within the Edgar Road, Glen Moray Drive, Springfield Road and New Elgin Road area and the area south of Birnie Road and west of the A941. Reasons for this vary but proximity/ease of access to Greenwards Primary has been given. There is therefore scope to realign much of the current New Elgin Primary catchment area to Greenwards Primary. It is recommended that all of the area to the west of the A941 in New Elgin is zoned to Greenwards Primary except post codes 6BQ, 6BH and 6BG which are to be zoned to New Elgin Primary. This would ensure that all houses on New Elgin Road and Main Street are zoned to New Elgin Primary.
- 3.6.2 New Elgin Primary. The roll is forecast to rise to approximately 140% of current capacity by 2021 should current catchment areas remain in place. The impact of childcare provision in south Elgin, and its proximity to New Elgin Primary, has increased the number of placing requests to New Elgin Primary. Extending New Elgin Primary is not considered a realistic option for a number of reasons including loss of recreational space for pupils and increased traffic problems around the school. Realigning the Greenwards Primary catchment area (as described in 3.6.1) will not in itself resolve the problems for New Elgin Primary. It is therefore recommended that a new school will be required to serve south east Elgin. This would include the Linkwood area to the east of Reiket Lane and any new developments to the south east of the current developments in the Thornhill area, and to the east of the A941. Thornhill would remain within the New Elgin Primary zone. Fogwatt and surrounding area is currently shown in the zone for the new school. This area could be zoned to Greenwards Primary. It is anticipated that the recent decision to roll cap Elgin primary schools and to reserve places for in-zone pupils will prevent potential over-capacity at New Elgin Primary in August 2015.
- 3.6.3 East End Primary. The roll is forecast to rise to 175% of current capacity by 2021. The impact of new nursery provision in East End Primary has contributed to an increased roll in early years. There were initially 20 nursery places but this has increased to 40 in the first year. The Pinefield area of Elgin is zoned to East End Primary but traditionally has attracted a number of placing requests into New Elgin Primary as a result of parents' safety concerns over pupils walking along the side of the A96. There is not a reasonable alternative route. It is therefore recommended that the Pinefield area of Elgin is also zoned to a new school serving the south east of Elgin. If this were to happen this area would have to be considered for rezoning to Elgin High School. It is further recommended that post codes 1BS; 1LU and 1LT are included in the East End Primary zone. This would ensure all the houses in Moss Street are zoned to East End Primary.

- 3.6.4 Seafield Primary. There are currently a number of placing requests out of Seafield from the Chandlers' Rise and Myreside areas. The roll is forecast to rise to 132% of current capacity by 2021. The planned construction of approximately 1500 houses in the Findrassie area means that Seafield Primary will result in a projected increased roll. The planned refurbishment and extension to Seafield Primary means that more pupils should be able to be accommodated within the school and, in addition, it is anticipated that the refurbished building is likely to be more attractive to in-zone families. Currently the Kingsmills area is zoned to Seafield Primary. There is no obvious advantage for this, in terms of routes to school, and it is recommended that this area be zoned to East End Primary.
- 3.6.5 Bishopmill Primary. The roll is projected to rise to 120% of current capacity by 2021. It is anticipated that the impact of roll capping and a refurbished Seafield Primary will alleviate immediate pressures on the roll. Nevertheless the planned construction of approximately 1500 houses in the Findrassie area means that Bishopmill Primary will face further pressures on the roll in the longer term. It is recommended that the Bishopmill Primary zone be divided in order to identify a zone for a new school in the north of Elgin to be constructed at a later date (as shown on the map in **Appendix 2**). Part of this new zone should include a section of the current Seafield catchment area.
- 3.6.6 St Sylvester's Primary. The roll is projected to remain stable and at approximately 88% of capacity by 2021. It is not recommended making any changes at this time.
- 3.6.7 West End Primary. The roll is projected to remain stable at approximately 78% of capacity by 2021. Currently the school attracts a number of out of area placements from the Bilbohall area (Greenwards Primary zone - post codes 6BB and 6DL). This is understandable as it potentially represents a shorter route to school and this area, along with the Palmers Cross area could be considered for zoning to West End. If this were to happen these areas would have to be considered for rezoning to Elgin Academy. There is currently an area of the West End Primary zone which lies to the west of Palmer's Cross and south of the railway line which would sit, more logically, within the Elgin High School zone. If this were to be the case this area should be zoned to Greenwards Primary. There is scope to extend the West End Primary zone to include the Mosstowie Primary catchment area. This would entail a new build, or an extension to the existing building. Such a plan would have to be the subject of a future report.
- 3.6.8 Mosstowie Primary. The roll is projected to remain stable and at approximately 67% of capacity by 2021. Rezoning part of the current New Elgin catchment area to Mosstowie (Birnie and Thomshill) was looked at but it is considered that the proposed split catchment area between Greenwards Primary and a suggested new school, to serve south east Elgin, would represent a more viable and cost effective option. In addition Mosstowie could only accommodate a maximum of 25 additional pupils, based on

projections. It is not recommended making any immediate changes to the Mosstowie Primary zone.

- 3.7 Based on these recommended changes to school zones the roll forecasts are as follows:

School	Functional Capacity**	Current Roll*	Projected Rolls						
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bishopmill	390	359	374	393	405	418	390	390	390
New Zone (North)							103	191	278
East End	233	203	169	214	257	300	264	264	264
Greenwards	390	331	348	348	338	350	338	353	360
Mosstowie	75	49	55	53	55	54	54	58	50
New Elgin	531	511	297	320	339	370	396	425	460
New Zone (South East)			303	328	333	348	338	345	334
Seafield	353	278	267	290	318	335	353	353	353
St Sylvesters	232	205	208	202	201	206	203	202	204
West End	249	234	231	222	222	232	232	222	223

\*Census Data September 2014

\*\* Functional Capacity 2014/15

- 3.8 In arriving at the above projections the following assumptions have been made:

- A new south east school would be available from August 2015 (this date was picked, for illustrative purposes, to make best use of roll projection methodologies which predict 7 years in advance)
- All pupils in the area identified as being in the new south east zone would attend a new school in that zone
- Pupils re-zoned from New Elgin Primary to Greenwards Primary would move to Greenwards Primary
- Pupils attending Bishopmill, East End, Seafield and West End Primaries, through placing requests, would remain at their current school.

It is very difficult to accurately forecast the roll for a proposed new school in the north of Elgin until timescales and anticipated numbers of new houses are known.

- 3.9 There is scope to expand current accommodation to provide additional classrooms at Bishopmill, Greenwards and Seafield primaries, however in each case it would take the schools beyond an ideal number of 14 classes and would place significantly increased pressures on school management.
- 3.10 Once revised school zones are approved, there will need to be a further public consultation to establish new schools within these zones. At that stage details of school locations, school designs and capacities, travel plans and relevant safety issues will need to be clear.

- 3.11 After new zones for north and south-east Elgin are agreed, and until new schools are constructed to serve these zones, children will continue to attend their existing schools.

#### 4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Moray 2023: A Plan for the Future/Service Plan**

The contents of this report relate to Moray 2023 Priority 2 – ‘Ambitious and confident children and young people’.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

This report relates to the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended and the Moray Council Policy and Procedures for Admission to Schools.

**(c) Financial implications**

Establishing revised school zones does not create, in isolation, any financial implications. The creation of additional school zones, however, would lead to formal consultation to establish new schools to serve those zones and there would be both capital and revenue costs associated with this which would require to be progressed through the capital plan process. There may also be cost implications for existing schools if the zone associated with them is changed.

**(d) Risk implications**

Failure to address primary school capacity and zoning issues will increase the risk of local children not being able to attend their local school.

**(e) Staffing implications**

There will be a substantial amount of staff time required in the statutory consultation process including, preparing consultation documents; presenting to, and recording, public and other meetings; and preparing a consultation report.

**(f) Property**

As detailed within this report proposals will include establishing new schools and this will be the subject of future reports to this Committee.

**(g) Equalities**

An equality impact assessment will be carried out on any proposal to rezone school catchment areas under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, to ensure the proposal would not have a negative effect on any of the categories considered. All schools are required to adhere to all relevant equality legislation, as well as authority equality policies and practices; therefore implementing these recommendations should not have an adverse impact on any groups or individuals.

#### **(h) Consultations**

1. Laurence Findlay, Corporate Director (Education and Social Care); Graham Jarvis, Head of Lifelong Learning Culture and Sport; Lindsey Stanley, Business Support Team Manager; Vivienne Cross, Acting Head of Schools and Curriculum Development; Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant; Margaret Forrest, Legal Services Manager (Litigation and Licensing); Katrina McGillivray, Senior Human Resources Adviser; Don Toonen, Equal Opportunities Officer and Caroline Howie, Committee Services Officer have been consulted on this report and agree with the sections of the report relating to their areas of responsibility.
2. Informal discussions have been held with Head Teachers of Elgin Primary Schools; Parent Councils or Parent Council Chairs of New Elgin, Greenwards, East End, Seafield, Bishopmill and West End Primaries to discuss the projected problems over zoning and to seek their views on possible solutions.
3. Informal discussions have been held with the Elected Members for Elgin to seek their views on options for rezoning.
4. Informal discussions have been held with officers in the Planning and Development section regarding future house building developments; Lindsey Stanley, Business Support Manager (Education and Social Care) in relation to school enrolments and capacity issues and Donald Macrae (Public Transport Manager) in relation to transport issues.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 **The report describes actions which can be taken to address the anticipated school capacity problems in Elgin and seeks approval to agree on the key principles for rezoning and to move to the next steps in progressing draft proposals.**

ITEM: 7

PAGE: 8

Author of Report: Paul Watson, Senior Education Adviser  
Background Papers:  
Ref:

Signature:

Date: 12 January 2015

Designation: Head of Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport Name: Graham Jarvis