



ITEM: 7

PAGE: 1

---

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
27 MAY 2015**

**SUBJECT: SECONDARY 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 review secondary school zoning in Moray and to bring forward draft proposals for a formal consultation on varying the catchment areas of secondary schools under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III C (25) of the Council's Scheme of Administration to review school zoning.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

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

- (i) **agree on the key principles for zoning Moray secondary schools, as set out in paragraph 3.13; and**
- (ii) **instruct the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) to review current secondary school zoning arrangements and report back to a future meeting of this Committee with draft rezoning plans in order that Committee may agree consultation proposals.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The proposals put forward in the current consultation on rezoning Elgin primary schools recommend establishing new zones (catchment areas) for primary schools which do not align with the present secondary school zones.
- 3.2 The existing secondary school zones mainly pre-date The Moray Council. It appears from minutes of Banffshire County Council's Education Committee that the main consideration as to which school a child or young person would attend was the proximity of his/her home to a school. In January 1971, Banffshire County Council's Education Committee noted that 98% of children currently were in attendance at their nearest school and concluded to take no action on formalising zones as it would not have an appreciable impact. It has

not been possible to verify if the same arrangement applied in Moray and Nairn at this time, although it is probably reasonable to assume that it did.

- 3.3 On 11 June 1975, Grampian Regional Council confirmed that, where zones had been designated for existing schools, they should be confirmed as appropriate for these schools and in all other cases children would attend their nearest school (Paragraph III of the minute of the Education Committee of Grampian Regional Council refers).
- 3.4 In February 1996, a few months prior to the disaggregation of the regional councils, Grampian Regional Council prepared maps which show clear delineated zones for all primary and secondary schools. Although there was no formal decision taken by The Moray Council to confirm these zones, the Council continues to operate within the zones shown on these maps unless specific decisions have been made by The Moray Council to alter the zones, for example following school closures.
- 3.5 The current catchment areas for secondary schools are shown on **Map1** in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.6 A few primary schools currently have a split secondary zone. Pupils who live in one part of the primary school zone are zoned for one secondary school whilst pupils from another part of the catchment area are zoned for a different secondary school. Split zoning currently affects the schools described below.
  - 3.6.1 Alves Primary is mainly zoned to Forres Academy but a small part in the east of the zone (35 properties in the Newton area) falls within the Elgin Academy catchment area. (See **Map 2** in **Appendix 1**.) There are also 13 properties in the Alves catchment area zoned to Elgin High School. (See **Map 3** in **Appendix 1**.)
  - 3.6.2 Lhanbryde Primary is mainly zoned to Milne's High School but a small number of pupils (approximately 15% of the roll) are currently resident within the part of the catchment area zoned to Elgin Academy. There is also a small part of the Lhanbryde catchment area zoned to Elgin High School. (See **Map 4** in **Appendix 1**.)
  - 3.6.3 Mosstowie Primary is mainly zoned to Elgin High School but there is a small part of the catchment area (17 properties) zoned to Elgin Academy (see **Map 5** in **Appendix 1**.)
  - 3.6.4 Hopeman Primary is mainly zoned to Lossiemouth High School but a small part of this catchment area (18 properties) is zoned to Elgin Academy (see **Map 6** in **Appendix 1**.)
  - 3.6.5 Cullen Primary is mainly zoned to Buckie High School but a small number of pupils (approximately 15% of the roll) are currently resident within the part of the rural catchment area zoned to Keith Grammar School. A small part of the Cullen zone in the coastal east lies outwith the Moray boundary. (See **Map 7** in **Appendix 1**.)

- 3.6.6 Rothiemay has a split zone between Keith Grammar School and the Gordon Schools Huntly (Aberdeenshire). On average there is an approximately 60%:40% split between pupils resident in the Keith Grammar School zone and the Gordon Schools zone. (See **Map 8** in **Appendix 1**).
- 3.7 There is an area of Moray, containing 10 properties, between Dufftown and Huntly which is zoned to Glass Primary School in Aberdeenshire. There are no Moray pupils attending this school.
- 3.8 Burghead Primary has a dual zone for both Lossiemouth High School and Elgin Academy. This means that children who live in the zone for the primary school are entitled to seek places at either of the secondary schools as in-zone pupils. This arrangement necessitates the Council providing transport to both secondary schools. Dual zoning for Burghead Primary School was agreed by the Education Committee of Grampian Regional Council on 14 July 1981 (paragraph 6 of the minute refers). This was in response to accommodation pressures at Lossiemouth High School at the time. There is generally an approximately 50%:50% split between Burghead pupils enrolling at Lossiemouth High School and at Elgin Academy.
- 3.9 The head teachers of the primary schools which have dual or split zones have reported that transition arrangements tend to be much stronger with one of the secondary schools than with the other. Understandably this tends to be with the one which draws the greater number of pupils or the one which is in the Associated Schools Group (ASG). Strong transition arrangements help provide for good continuity and progression in learning for pupils when moving between primary and secondary school.
- 3.10 The current catchment areas for secondary schools include the catchment areas of the primary schools described below:
- 3.10.1 Forres Academy: The zone for Forres Academy dates back to the time of Moray and Nairn County Council and has evolved as junior secondary schools in the area were closed. The zone currently includes the catchment areas of Dyke, Pilmuir, Applegrove, Anderson's, Logie, Dallas, Kinloss and Alves primary schools.
- 3.10.2 Elgin High School: The zone for Elgin High School was established on 7 June 1977 by the Grampian Regional Council Education Committee (paragraph 3 (b) of the minute refers). The zone includes what was then part of the catchment area of Elgin Academy lying to the south of the Aberdeen/Inverness railway line and including the whole of the catchment areas of Greenwards, New Elgin and Mosstowie primary schools. Pupils who lived to the south of the railway line and west of Palmers Cross Bridge at Pittendreich Mill were excluded from the Elgin High zone.
- 3.10.3 Elgin Academy: The zone for Elgin Academy dates back to the time of Moray and Nairn County Council when it was the only senior secondary school serving large parts of Moray. The zone was amended in June 1977 as stated

in paragraph 3.10.2, and was further amended in June 1981 as stated in paragraph 3.8. The catchment area currently includes the whole of the catchment areas of Seafield, Bishopmill, West End, and East End primary schools. St Sylvester's primary school is in the Elgin Academy ASG; however pupils transfer to the secondary in the zone in which they live. As stated above, Mosstowie, Hopeman, Alves and Lhanbryde catchment areas are split zoned and Burghead primary is dual zoned. (See **Map 9** in **Appendix 1.**)

- 3.10.4 Lossiemouth High School: The zone for Lossiemouth High School was established at the start of session 1972/73 when Lossiemouth High School became a senior secondary school. The catchment area drew pupils from Burghead, Hopeman and the Lossiemouth primary schools. The zone was amended in July 1981 as stated in paragraph 3.8. The catchment area includes the catchment areas of Burghead, Hopeman, Hythehill and St Gerardine primary schools.
- 3.10.5 Milne's High School: The zone for Milne's High School dates back to the time of Moray and Nairn County Council. The catchment area includes the catchment areas of Lhanbryde, Mosstodloch and Milne's primary schools.
- 3.10.6 Speyside High School: The zone for Speyside High School was established for the school opening as a senior secondary school in August 1976. The catchment area included the zone for Speyside Junior High School (established by Banffshire County Council in August 1970 following the amalgamation of Aberlour and Mortlach Junior secondary schools) and also drew pupils from the Rothes, Knockando and Archiestown areas. The zone was amended on 15 December 1999 to incorporate all of the catchment area of Tomintoul Secondary School (paragraph 5 of the minute of the Moray Council refers). The catchment area currently includes the catchment areas of Rothes, Craigellachie, Aberlour, Mortlach, Inveravon, Knockando, Glenlivet and Tomintoul primary schools.
- 3.10.7 Buckie High School: The zone for Buckie High School dates back to the time of Banffshire County Council and has evolved as junior secondary schools in the area were closed. The catchment area includes the catchment areas of Portgordon, Millbank, Cluny, St Peter's, Portessie, Findochty, Portknockie and Cullen primary schools. As stated in paragraph 3.6.5, Cullen Primary zone is split between Buckie High and Keith Grammar Schools.
- 3.10.8 Keith Grammar School: The zone for Keith Grammar School dates back to the time of Banffshire County Council and evolved as junior secondary schools in the area were closed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The catchment area includes all of the catchment areas of Botriphnie, Newmill, Crossroads, Keith, and St Thomas primary schools. As stated in paragraph 3.6.6 Rothiemay Primary is split zoned. The Keith Grammar school zone also includes parts of two Aberdeenshire Primary School catchment areas: Ordiquhill and Cairney. Approximately 20% of the Ordiquhill roll is zoned to Keith Grammar. This equates to 2-3 pupils per year. There are no pupils from the Cairney area currently attending Keith Grammar school. (See **Map 10** in **Appendix 1.**)

- 3.11 A summary of the schools with split catchment areas is shown on **Map 10** in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.12 In December 2003, Aberdeenshire Council agreed to minor amendments to school zones, as a check had revealed that the information held by the Council on its Geographic Information System(GIS) had not previously been confirmed by Grampian Regional Council and there were some anomalies, as zones for some schools were discontinuous with those of their neighbouring schools.
- 3.13 In view of the above, it is suggested that this is an appropriate time to consider secondary school zones. Before reviewing the catchment areas for Moray secondary schools, it is recommended that the Committee agrees a number of key principles for guiding any rezoning exercise. The following are proposed:
- A zone change should be made where it has the potential to result in educational benefits for children and young people.
  - 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 coterminous with the zones of the primary schools in its ASG.
  - The whole of the zone of a primary school should form part of the zone of one secondary school only, except where there is an exceptional case for a different arrangement.
  - Existing arrangements under which a primary school is dual zoned or has a zone which is split between two secondary schools should be reassessed with a view to altering zoning arrangements.
  - Any proposed zone changes should have the potential to bring financial benefits, enabling the Council to discharge its duty to secure best value, as required in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.
- 3.14 Any revised zoning of secondary schools must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In order to make changes to school zones the Education Authority must publish proposals and undertake a consultation with all those who are likely to be affected by any change. It is therefore recommended that the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) be tasked with reviewing current secondary school zoning arrangements and reporting back to Committee with draft rezoning plans in order that Committee may agree consultation proposals.

#### **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 Moray Council Policy and Procedures for Admission to Schools.

**(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any future proposals to rezone secondary schools may have financial implications.

**(d) Risk implications**

Failure to regularly review zoning issues could increase the risk of over capacity in some secondary schools and under capacity in others. Failure to review zoning could also impact negatively on continuity and progression in young people's learning.

**(e) Staffing implications**

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

**(f) Property**

There are no property issues arising directly from this report.

**(g) Equalities**

An equality impact assessment will be carried out on any proposals to rezone school catchment areas to ensure the proposals 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.

**(h) Consultations**

The Corporate Director (Education and Social Care); Senior Officers in Education and Social Care; Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant; Margaret Forrest, Legal Services Manager (Litigation and Licensing); Katrina McGillivray, Senior Human Resources Adviser; Equal Opportunities Officer; Donald Macrae, Public Transport Manager; Kevin Belton, GIS/CAG 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.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 The report describes current secondary school zoning arrangements in Moray and seeks approval to agree on the key principles for rezoning and to move to the next steps in progressing draft proposals.**

Author of Report: Paul Watson, Senior Education Adviser (Schools Consultations)

Background Papers: