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**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
7 OCTOBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: SECONDARY SCHOOL REZONING**

**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 formal consultations on secondary school zoning and some primary school zones 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 in relation to review of school zoning.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

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

- (a) discuss, agree and/or amend the draft proposals for secondary school zones, and some primary zones, as set out in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.8 of the report; and**
- (b) instruct the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) to undertake the next steps in preparing for consultations and report back to this Committee in order that Committee may consider the consultation proposals.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 27 May 2015, this Committee agreed to task the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) with presenting a paper to a future meeting of the Committee with draft rezoning plans in order that Committee could agree consultation proposals (paragraph 9 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 At its meeting on 27 May 2015 Committee also agreed (paragraph 9 of the minute refers) that the key principles for rezoning secondary schools will be:
- 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, and
  - 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.
- 3.4 Some of the Moray secondary school zones include areas that lie within Aberdeenshire Council's local authority area and some primary schools, both in Moray and Aberdeenshire, have zoning across the two authorities. Officers from Moray and Aberdeenshire have met to discuss cross-boundary school zone issues. It was agreed in principle that, subject to agreement of Service Committees in Moray and Aberdeenshire, both authorities would work towards having, and consult upon, the Moray/Aberdeenshire border as the boundary for all school catchment areas for schools in each authority. Legally, each authority will have to consult with their prescribed consultees on their own proposals, regarding their own school zones, as well as each other as affected parties. It will be necessary to agree a future strategy with Aberdeenshire for co-ordination and co-operation, with assistance given to each other for the respective consultations, according to the different priorities and timetables.

#### **Forres/Elgin/Lossmouth and Fochabers Areas**

- 3.5 In relation to rezoning which will only affect Moray schools, it is recommended that the following proposals are considered for the catchment areas of Forres Academy, Lossmouth High School, Elgin Academy, Milne's High School and Elgin High School.
- 3.5.1 Forres Academy – The whole of the catchment area of Alves Primary should be zoned to Forres Academy. This would mean that small areas currently zoned to Elgin Academy and Elgin High School would be zoned to Forres Academy.
- 3.5.2 Elgin High School – the catchment area of Elgin High School should include the whole of the proposed new catchment areas of Mosstowie, Greenwards, New Elgin and any new zone for south-east Elgin.

- 3.5.3 Lossiemouth High School – the catchment area for Lossiemouth High School should 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.
- 3.5.4 Milne's High School – the catchment area for Milne's High School should include the whole of the catchment areas of Milne's Primary, Mosstodloch and Lhanbryde Primary Schools. This would mean the removal of the split zoning of Lhanbryde Primary between Milne's High School and Elgin Academy.
- 3.5.5 Elgin Academy – the catchment area should be amended to include only the proposed new catchment areas of West End, East End, Bishopmill and Seafield Primary Schools. It should be noted that while St Sylvester's Primary is part of the Elgin Academy ASG, pupils are zoned to the secondary school according to their place of residence.
- 3.6 Maps showing the current and proposed catchment areas of each of the above schools are shown in **Appendix 1**.

### **Transport Issues**

- 3.7 The removal of the dual zoning of Burghead Primary between Lossiemouth High School and Elgin Academy and the split zoning of Alves Primary (Forres Academy, Elgin Academy and Elgin High School); Hopeman Primary (Lossiemouth High School and Elgin Academy) and Lhanbryde Primary School (Milne's High School and Elgin Academy) would mean that, in the longer term, the Moray Council would only provide transport, for eligible pupils, to one zoned secondary school. Transport would continue to be provided for pupils currently attending any of these five secondary schools for the remainder of pupils' time at that school.

### **Keith, Buckie and Speyside Areas (Moray/Aberdeenshire Border)**

- 3.8 In relation to rezoning which will affect Moray and Aberdeenshire schools, it is recommended that the following suggestions are considered for amending the catchment areas of Cullen Primary, Buckie High School, Keith Grammar School, Rothiemay Primary School and Mortlach Primary School
- 3.8.1 Cullen Primary and Buckie High School There are two issues affecting Cullen Primary:
- (i) the zone is split between the catchment areas of Buckie High School and Keith Grammar School, and
  - (ii) there is a small part of the Cullen (and Buckie High) catchment area in Aberdeenshire.

It is recommended that officers consult informally with the Cullen, Buckie High and Keith Grammar School Parent Councils to seek views on the split zone, with the following options being considered:

- zone all of the Cullen Primary catchment area to Buckie High School;
- zone all of the Cullen Primary catchment area to Keith Grammar School;

- continue with the present split zoning arrangements;
- continue with a split zone but with the Keith Grammar/Buckie High boundary line moved.
- realign the catchment area of Cullen Primary to exclude the part of the Cullen catchment area which lies in Aberdeenshire.

At a future date (likely to be October 2016 at the earliest) Aberdeenshire Council will consult on a proposal to rezone the part of the Cullen/Buckie High catchment area which lies in Aberdeenshire to Portsoy Primary and Banff Academy.

- 3.8.2 Ordiquhill Primary (Aberdeenshire) Officers in Moray and Aberdeenshire are of the view that the part of the Ordiquhill catchment area which lies in Moray should be rezoned to Moray, with Rothiemay Primary School being the recommended option.
- 3.8.3 Aberchirder Primary (Aberdeenshire) There is a small area of Moray zoned to Aberchirder Primary. Any change to this zone is only likely to affect a small number of children, if any. Officers in Moray and Aberdeenshire are of the view that the part of the Aberchirder catchment area which lies in Moray should be zoned to Moray, with Rothiemay Primary School being the recommended option.
- 3.8.4 Rothiemay Primary The secondary zone is split between the catchment areas of Gordon Schools, Huntly and Keith Grammar School. It is recommended that the department consults informally with the Rothiemay and Keith Grammar Parent Councils, to seek views on the split zone, with the following options considered:
- realign the catchment area of Rothiemay Primary to include the part of the Ordiquhill catchment area which lies in Moray;
  - realign the catchment area of Rothiemay Primary to include the part of the Aberchirder catchment area which lies in Moray;
  - zone all of the Rothiemay Primary catchment area to Keith Grammar School;
  - continue with the present split zoning arrangements;
  - continue with a split zone but with the Keith Grammar/Gordon Schools boundary line moved.
- 3.8.5 Keith Grammar School There are parts of the Keith Grammar catchment area which lie in Aberdeenshire. Officers recommend that the part of the Keith Grammar catchment area which takes in the Ordiquhill Primary School (Aberdeenshire) catchment area should move to Banff Academy and the part of the Cairnie Primary School (Aberdeenshire) catchment area which is zoned to Keith Grammar should move to the Gordon Schools.
- 3.8.6 Mortlach Primary There is a part of the Glass Primary (Aberdeenshire) catchment area lying in Moray. Officers recommend that the part of Moray zoned to Glass should be zoned to Mortlach Primary, Dufftown. This is only likely to affect a small number of children.

#### **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**

1. Establishing revised school zones, with the removal of dual and split zones may provide opportunities to make savings on school transport costs in the longer term, when school transport contracts are renegotiated.
2. It is anticipated that the cost of each formal consultation exercise will be in the region of £2,000, allowing for postage, printing, the cost of placing a public notice in the local press and the hire of meeting venues. This will be met from existing budgets.

##### **(d) Risk implications**

1. Dual and split zoning increases the risk of children experiencing a discontinuity in their learning as a result of transition from primary school to a non-ASG secondary school.
2. There is a risk related to the current consultation on Elgin Primary Schools if new primary school zones are not approved then the proposals for secondary zones will have to be reconsidered.
3. There is a further risk that if co-ordination and co-operation on consultation and proposals between Moray and Aberdeenshire is not properly planned and executed then the effective dates for changes cannot be synchronised.

##### **(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**

There are no property issues arising directly from this report.

**(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. The Corporate Director (Education and Social Care); Senior Officers in Education and Social Care; Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant; the Legal Services Manager (Litigation and Licensing); Katrina McGillivray, Senior Human Resources Adviser; the Equal Opportunities Officer; Donald Macrae (Public Transport Manager) 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. These recommendations have been discussed with the Head Teachers of the Moray schools potentially affected.
3. The Aberdeenshire Learning Estates Team has been consulted and agrees with the recommendations which relate to the catchment areas which currently cross the Moray/Aberdeenshire border.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Undertaking a formal consultation on varying the catchment areas of secondary schools, and some further primary schools, in Moray will be next step in the Council addressing its future schools provision.**

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