

Dyce / Bucksburn Secondary School Provision Feasibility Study

Spring/Summer 2024

Initial Information for Stakeholders

Introduction

The Council is carrying out a feasibility study, to assess the requirements and potential options for the long term provision of secondary education to serve the communities of Dyce and Bucksburn. We are inviting comments and feedback from pupils, parents, staff, community groups and all other stakeholders, on the options available, and the potential impact of these options on individual schools and communities. This valuable feedback will be used to help inform the outcomes of the feasibility study and potential next steps.

This paper provides information for stakeholders on why the feasibility study is being carried out, and what the study will focus on. Stakeholders are invited to submit their comments and feedback about the feasibility study, using our online consultation hub, which can be found here:

<https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk/education-and-childrens-services/dyce-bucksburn-secondary-school-feasibil>

Background

With relatively low pupil numbers at Dyce Academy (the current pupil roll is approximately 690) there are challenges in ensuring Dyce Academy can operate efficiently, and as staff numbers are also lower than in larger secondary schools, the curriculum choice that can be offered to pupils can be more limited. Meanwhile, Bucksburn Academy is under pressure with rising pupil numbers, due to planned housing within the Newhills Expansion area. A planned permanent extension of the school will provide 300 additional pupil places, which will ensure there is sufficient space at the school in the short to medium term, although demand for places at the school is expected to continue rising over the next ten years and beyond.

In the Council's approved [School Estate Plan](#), the need to review the requirements for future secondary education provision at Dyce and Bucksburn has been highlighted, and this led to officers being instructed by Councillors to carry out a feasibility study, to identify options for ensuring appropriate long term secondary school provision for Bucksburn and Dyce.

The Council's School Roll Forecast, which shows the numbers of pupils expected to be attending each school in the city over the next six years, is available to download from the Council's website, here:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-and-childcare/schools-and-education/schools-pupil-roll-forecasts>

Feasibility Study

The feasibility study will be used to identify what options are available to the Council, and it will set out the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Details of what will be covered by the feasibility study are provided in Appendix 1, below. Officers will use the findings of the feasibility study to identify a "preferred option", which will be presented to Councillors for consideration.

As the feasibility study is carried out, we are inviting pupils, parents, school staff, community groups and other stakeholders to comment on the likely requirements and options for long term provision at Dyce and Bucksburn, and how these options might impact on them if they were taken forwards. Feedback received from stakeholders will be included in the feasibility study and will be considered when identifying a preferred option.

Comments and feedback on the options listed in Appendix 1, and suggestions for any additional options which could be included in the feasibility study, can be submitted via our online consultation hub, which can be found

here: <https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk/education-and-childrens-services/dyce-bucksburn-secondary-school-feasibil>

The findings of the feasibility study, along with summaries of the feedback received from stakeholders, will be included within an Outline Business Case, which will be presented to the Council's Education and Children's Services Committee in Autumn/Winter 2024. The Committee will then make a decision on whether to accept the preferred option, and what action, if any, should be taken next.

Key Dates for Stakeholder Engagement

Monday 27 th May:	Stakeholder Engagement Launched
Friday 5 th July:	Stakeholder Engagement and Feasibility Study Close
Monday 5 th August:	Feasibility Study Report shared on Consultation Hub
Tuesday 5 th November:	Outline Business Case presented to Finance & Resources Committee
Tuesday 26 th November:	Outline Business Case presented to Education & Children's Services Committee

Initial Questions for Stakeholders

We would like to know your initial thoughts on the information presented in this paper, and on the options identified to date, as listed in Appendix 1 below.

Stakeholders may wish to consider the following questions:

- *What are the likely advantages and disadvantages of the options which have been identified?*
- *Are there any other options which should be included in the feasibility study?*
- *What additional information should the Council consider as part of the feasibility study?*
- *What questions about the feasibility study do you have at this stage?*

Feedback on the above questions, and any other relevant comments, can be submitted via our online consultation hub, which can be found here:

<https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk/education-and-childrens-services/dyce-bucksburn-secondary-school-feasibil>

Appendix 1 – Feasibility Study Brief

Below is a summary of the Feasibility Study Brief. This outlines the objectives of the project, the options to be considered, and what information the final Feasibility Study Report needs to provide:

Project Objectives

The options identified through this feasibility study must be aimed at achieving the following:

- Provide an opportunity to re-balance pupil numbers between Bucksburn Academy and Dyce Academy, for example by proposing changes to the catchment areas for the two schools
- Provide opportunities to improve the suitability of the Dyce Academy building
- Reduce the expected number of pupils requiring a place at Bucksburn Academy in the long term (10 years and beyond)

Options to be included in the Feasibility Study (not exhaustive)

To achieve the objectives outlined above, the feasibility study will focus on the available options for providing suitable pupil capacity on the Dyce Academy site, to support potential proposals to change the catchment areas for Dyce Academy and Bucksburn Academy (also known as rezoning). This could be achieved through extending the Dyce Academy building to create additional capacity, to allow part of the existing Bucksburn Academy catchment area to be moved to the Dyce Academy catchment area.

Options to extend the Dyce Academy school building will also incorporate opportunities to improve the suitability of the school, through refurbishing existing facilities. Required areas for improvement highlighted within the most recent suitability survey of the school include:

- General accessibility for those with mobility difficulties (internal and external spaces)
- Lack of pupil social spaces (internally and externally)
- Heating and ventilation in practical teaching areas
- Requirement for separate assembly and sports halls

Additional options may be identified and added to this list as the feasibility study progresses.

Scope of Feasibility Study Report

The feasibility study will result in a written report which addresses the following:

- A description of each identified option, including sketch drawings where applicable
- The costs associated with each option;
- The benefits and limitations of each option;
- The challenges each option presents;
- Timescales for each option being delivered;
- Temporary arrangements for accommodating pupils during construction work, if required;
- Planning and Building Warrant constraints