



# **Proposal Paper**

## **School Catchment Zones for Gaelic Medium Education Provision in Aberdeen City**

Statutory Consultation Period

**Monday 16 January 2023 to Friday 3 March 2023 (inclusive)**

The schools affected by these proposals are:

**Hazlehead Academy**  
**Gilcomstoun School**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

## *What is this document about?*

- 1.1 This document explains some changes which are being proposed by Aberdeen City Council, which would affect the provision of Gaelic Medium Education at Hazlehead Academy and Gilcomstoun School. The Council is proposing to create new school catchment areas for these provisions, which cover the city as a whole. This change would take effect from August 2023.
- 1.2 Before a decision is taken on whether to make any changes, the Council wishes to hear the views of pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders who may be affected by the changes.
- 1.3 A public consultation has therefore been launched, so that members of the public can give their views about the proposed changes, before a decision is taken on whether the changes should go ahead.
- 1.4 The public consultation will be open from Monday 16 January 2023 until Friday 3 March 2023, and views and comments about the proposals can be submitted at any time during this period.
- 1.5 You can submit your views online, using the Council's consultation hub, which can be accessed from <https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk>. You can also send your comments by email, to: [schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk)
- 1.6 A public consultation meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 February 2023, from 7.00pm to 8.00pm at Aberdeen Grammar School. The meeting is open to anyone who wishes to ask questions of Council officers and/or express their views about the proposals.
- 1.7 All of the comments and views received during the consultation period will be summarised and included in a final consultation report, which will be submitted to the Council's Education and Children's Services Committee at its meeting on 23 May 2023. Members of the Committee will consider all of the comments submitted before making a decision on whether the proposed changes should go ahead.
- 1.8 The full details of the proposals, including maps to show the proposed school catchment areas, are provided in the sections below.

## 2. LIST OF CONSULTEES

### *Who has been asked to comment on these proposals?*

Notice of the issuing of this Proposal Document will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- Comann nam Pàrant
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools
- The parents of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and support staff at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- The Community Councils for the areas affected
- The constituency MSPs
- Regional MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MPs
- Community Planning Partnership Board
- Chief Operating Officer, Aberdeen City Council
- Chief Education Officer, Aberdeen City Council
- Director of Education, Aberdeenshire Council

A copy of this Proposal Document is available on the Aberdeen City Council website at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations)

The document is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to Corporate Landlord, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1AB, by telephone on 07920 295364; or by e-mail:

[schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

## 3. BACKGROUND

### *Why are these changes being proposed?*

- 3.1 Aberdeen City Council has created a School Estate Plan, which was approved by the Council's Education Operational Delivery Committee in September 2022. This sets out the actions that the Council wishes to take to develop the school estate over the next ten years and beyond.
- 3.2 Aberdeen City Council's vision is for our buildings and grounds to be used to deliver highly effective learning experiences and to support pupil, staff and community wellbeing. Across Aberdeen City, we will make the best use of our facilities to support the learning needs of all. As a result, our facilities will help to ensure each and every learner has the opportunity to attain and achieve a wide range of qualifications and develop the skills for life, learning and work.
- 3.3 We want to make sure that the school estate can provide:

- sufficient capacity to meet current and future demand for school places;
- safe, nurturing and inclusive environments for all;
- stimulating and inspiring learning environments which encourage curiosity and a commitment to lifelong learning;
- flexible and adaptable spaces which can respond to the changing needs of pupils and communities;
- buildings which are environmentally and economically sustainable;
- appropriate multi-agency spaces to support close partnership working.

3.4 To achieve this vision we need to make some changes to parts of our school estate, and when proposing changes to the way our schools are organised, it is important that we gather the views of the pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders who may be affected, before a decision is taken on whether to make any changes.

3.5 This document sets out some proposed changes which would affect the provision of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) at Hazlehead Academy and Gilcomstoun School.

### **Gaelic Medium Education in Aberdeen City**

3.6 GME provision has existed in Aberdeen City since 1991 and is well established in the schools it operates from. Aberdeen City is committed to providing GME within Aberdeen and this commitment extends to providing GME places for learners from Aberdeenshire.

3.7 Secondary GME provision in Aberdeen is based at Hazlehead Academy, where Gaidhlig is offered as a subject at all stages. In S1 to S3, learners continue to study Gaidhlig through literature and creative projects. SQA courses are available for S4 to S6 learners.

3.8 GME Nursery and Primary provision is based at Gilcomstoun School, and currently consists of a Nursery class, a P1–P3 class, and a P4–P7 class. Pupils within the provision are taught entirely in Gaelic from Nursery to P3. This total immersion allows learners to develop their language skills from a young age. After P3, English is gradually introduced, through the medium of Gaelic.

## **4. THE PROPOSALS**

### *What are the proposed changes?*

Aberdeen City Council is proposing:

**To establish a catchment area for the existing Gaelic Medium Education provision at Hazlehead Academy, which is bounded by Aberdeen City’s local authority boundary;**

And:

**To establish a catchment area for the existing Gaelic Medium Education provision at Gilcomstoun School, which is bounded by Aberdeen City’s local authority boundary;**

And:

**That the new catchment areas should take effect from 1 August 2023.**

- 4.1 The Council is proposing to create new catchment areas for GME provision in Aberdeen City. GME provision in Aberdeen was established by the former Grampian Regional Council, and at the time no catchment areas were established for this provision.
- 4.2 Bòrd na Gàidhlig issued statutory guidance in 2017, specifying that local authorities should create catchment areas for GME.
- 4.3 GME within Aberdeen City Council is currently provided at Hazlehead Academy and Gilcomstoun School. To comply with the statutory guidance, it is proposed that catchment areas for these provisions are established, which overlay the city as a whole.
- 4.4 The proposed catchment areas are shown within the maps shown at Appendix 1 of this paper. The expected effects of the proposed changes on the schools involved are explained below.

## **5. THE AFFECTED SCHOOLS**

### *How would the changes affect each of the schools involved?*

#### **Hazlehead Academy**

- 5.1 If the rezoning proposals are accepted, any secondary aged children who live inside the boundaries of the city (as shown in Map A in Appendix 1) in the future would be entitled to a place within the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy.
- 5.2 Any secondary aged children who live in Aberdeenshire in the future, and who wish to obtain a place within the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy, would have the opportunity to do so by submitting a placing request.
- 5.3 Any children who live outwith the city boundaries who are already attending the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy when the changes are implemented, would be entitled to stay there, until they leave secondary school.
- 5.4 Similarly, any child living outwith the city, who reaches secondary school age after the proposed changes have been introduced, and who at that time has an older sibling already attending the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy, would also have the option of attending the GME provision at the school, so that family groups can remain together.
- 5.5 English medium education at Hazlehead Academy will not be affected by these proposals.

#### **Gilcomstoun School**

- 5.6 Should the rezoning proposals be accepted, any primary aged children who live inside the boundaries of the city (as shown in Map B in Appendix 1) in the future would be entitled to a place within the GME provision at Gilcomstoun School.
- 5.7 Any primary aged children who live in Aberdeenshire in the future and who wish to obtain a place within the GME provision at Gilcomstoun School, would have the opportunity to do so by submitting a placing request.

- 5.8 Any children who live outwith the city boundaries who are already attending the GME provision at Gilcomstoun School when the changes are implemented, would be entitled to stay there, until they leave primary school.
- 5.9 Similarly, any child living outwith the city, who reaches primary school age after the proposed changes have been introduced and who at that time has an older sibling already attending the GME provision at Gilcomstoun School, would also have the option of attending the GME provision at the school, so that family groups can remain together.
- 5.10 English medium education at Gilcomstoun School will not be affected by these proposals.

## **6. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS**

### *How would the proposed changes benefit pupils?*

- 6.1 The proposals described in this document form part of Aberdeen City Council's overall approach to the promotion of Gaelic medium education, and should be considered alongside other measures being undertaken to promote Gaelic through the Gaelic Language plan.
- 6.2 The educational benefits of bilingualism and the promotion of Gaelic include providing young people with a better sense of the structure of language, and children with access to Gaelic medium education are also likely to find it easier to learn other additional languages.
- 6.3 The creation and confirmation of the proposed new catchment areas will help to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the long-term future of Gaelic Medium education in Aberdeen. This will enable young people in the city to continue to develop these skills for life, and may also help to reduce 'drop-out' rates from GME on the transition from primary school to secondary school.
- 6.4 The establishment of city-wide catchment areas means that pupils within Aberdeen City who are enrolled at the GME provision at Gilcomstoun School and who live further from two miles' walking distance from the school, and pupils within Aberdeen City who are enrolled at the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy and who live further than three miles' walking distance from the school, will be eligible for free transport to school to be provided by the Council. This is an educational benefit for pupils because the cost of transport may otherwise be seen as a barrier to families who wish to access GME.

## **7. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**

### *How will the consultation work and how can I submit my views?*

#### **The Proposal Paper**

- 7.1 A copy of this proposal paper and other information about this consultation can be accessed from: [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations)
- 7.2 A copy of this document will also be available for public viewing during the period of consultation in the following buildings:

Marischal College

Central Library  
Hazlehead Academy  
Gilcomstoun School

### **Public Meeting**

7.3 A public meeting to discuss the proposals will take place on:

Wednesday 8 February 2023, from 7.00pm to 8.00pm at Aberdeen Grammar School.

### **Submitting Your Views**

7.4 Any members of the public can respond to the consultation online, using the Council's Consultation Hub: <https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk/>

Alternatively, comments can be submitted by sending an email to:

[schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Or by writing to:

GME Consultation 2023, Resources, Corporate Landlord, Aberdeen City Council, Business Hub 10, Second Floor South, Marischal College, Broad Street, ABERDEEN AB10 1AB

All responses must be submitted by Friday 3 March 2023.

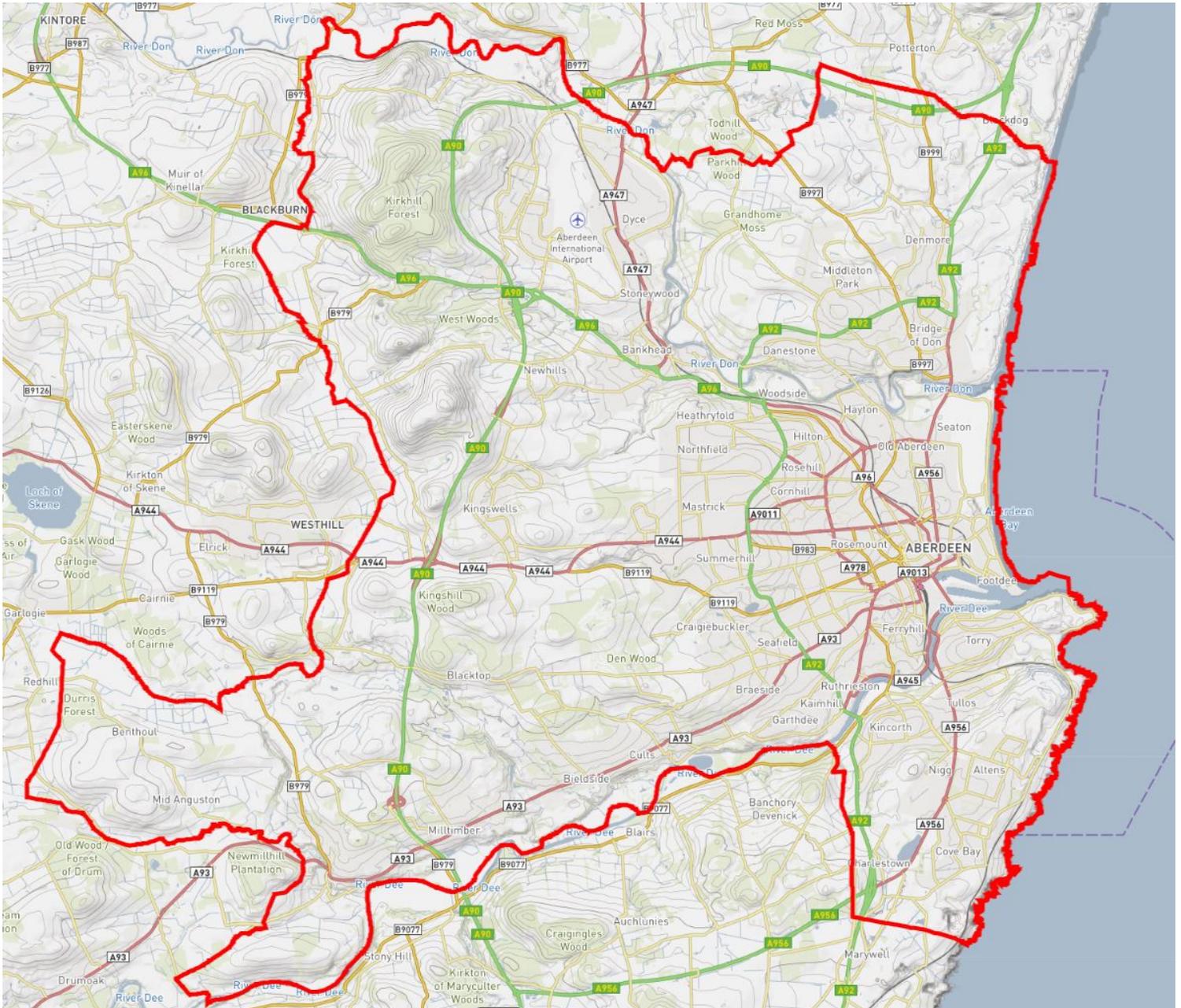
### **Reporting the Outcome of the Consultation**

7.5 A summary of all comments received during the consultation will be published on the council website at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations)

7.6 A report on the consultation will be delivered to the Education and Children's Services Committee at its meeting on 23 May 2023. This will provide information to enable Members to make a final decision on the proposals.

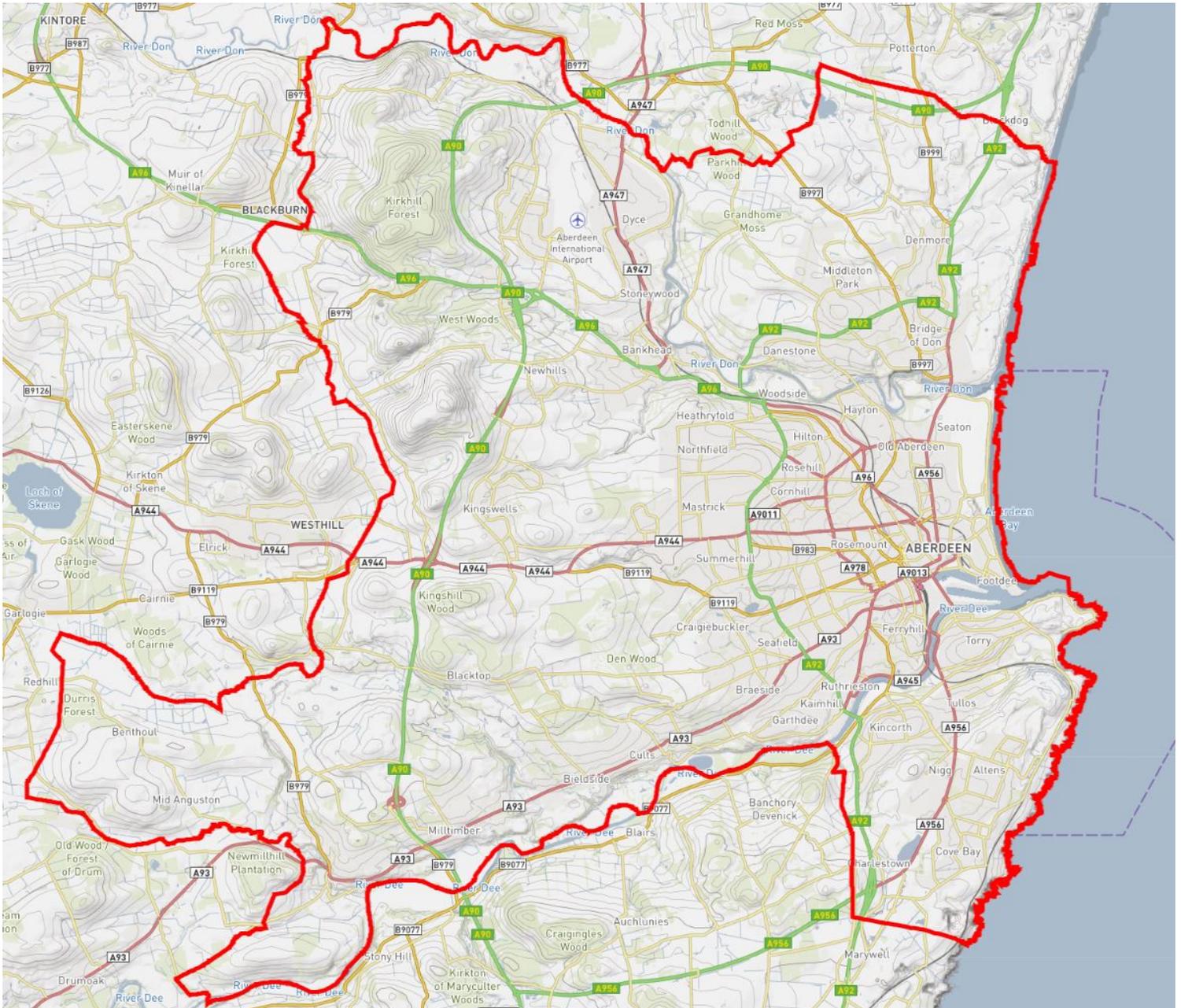
## Appendix 1 : Proposed catchment areas for GME provision

### Map A: Proposed catchment area for secondary GME provision



*The boundary of the proposed catchment area aligns with Aberdeen City's local authority boundary, and is indicated by the red line on the map above. The proposed catchment area for secondary GME provision at Hazlehead Academy covers the area of land within this red line.*

## Map B: Proposed catchment area for primary GME provision



*The boundary of the proposed catchment area aligns with Aberdeen City's local authority boundary, and is indicated by the red line on the map above. The proposed catchment area for primary GME provision at Gilcomstoun School covers the area of land within this red line.*