



# Proposal Document

## Proposals:

**To establish a catchment area for the existing Gaelic Medium Education provision at Hazlehead Academy, to overlay the existing English medium catchment areas for Hazlehead Academy, Northfield Academy and Aberdeen Grammar School;**

And:

**To establish a catchment area for the existing Gaelic Medium Education provision at Gilcomstoun School, to overlay the existing English medium catchment areas for Gilcomstoun School, Ashley Road School, Mile End School and Skene Square School;**

And:

**That the new catchment areas should take effect from 1 August 2022.**

The schools affected by these proposals are:

**Hazlehead Academy  
Gilcomstoun School**

## Statutory Consultation Period

**Monday 23 August 2021 to Friday 8 October 2021 (inclusive)**

All submissions expressing views on the proposals detailed in this document should be made online, in writing or via email by Friday 8 October 2021.

It is intended to respond to issues raised during this consultation within a report to be presented to the Education Operational Delivery Committee at its meeting in January 2022.

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## 1. LIST OF CONSULTEES

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:

[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)

## STATUTORY CONSULTATION

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Aberdeen City Council has reshaped its service delivery model, aiming to deliver its services in a more collaborative, joined-up way. The model is underpinned by the principles of strengthening transparency, accountability, engagement, inclusiveness, shared vision and values, and a commitment to joint learning. This will allow us to ensure that decisions are taken holistically, taking into account the impact on the direct delivery of services and the wider potential benefits to the citizens of Aberdeen.
- 2.2 Under this model, the Council is reviewing and forward planning for its entire estate holistically, rather than considering the education estate in isolation. This approach will ensure that our financial responsibilities and educational responsibilities are fully met whilst providing opportunities for the delivery of public statutory services in the future. It will also maximise the use of available resource in delivering statutory services, and the priorities outlined within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
- 2.3 The Local Outcome Improvement Plan sets out a vision for Aberdeen City where all people can prosper. This reflects our desire to help all people, families, businesses and communities to do well, succeed and flourish in every aspect.
- 2.4 This proposal contributes to the key priorities and themes for Aberdeen, as they are set out in the Local Improvement Plan:
- **Prosperous People:** Through ensuring children have access to high quality learning and teaching through managing sustainable school rolls, we can assist in ensuring they have the **best start in life**, that they are **safe and responsible**, and **respected, included, and achieving**.
  - **Prosperous Place:** Through engaging and consulting with communities on the future of the school estate within their localities, we can help to develop **empowered, resilient and sustainable communities**.

#### Gaelic Medium Education in Aberdeen City

- 2.5 Gaelic Medium Education (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.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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.

### **Our Vision for the School Estate**

- 2.8 Aberdeen City Council's vision is for the school estate to enable the efficient delivery of the above priorities, by providing the highest standards of facilities which allow staff and partners to deliver high quality learning experiences to all children and young people, families and communities in their local school.
- 2.9 To achieve this vision the school estate will be utilised to provide:
- sustainable school rolls
  - 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. THE PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 In common with other Scottish local authorities, school enrolment in Aberdeen City is based on the principle of catchment areas, commonly referred to as 'zones'. GME provision in Aberdeen City was established by the former Grampian Regional Council, and at the time no catchment areas were established for this provision.
- 3.2 Bòrd na Gàidhlig issued statutory guidance in 2017, specifying that local authorities should create catchment areas for GME. The guidance states that a catchment area for GME provision should normally cover an area in which the local authority thinks it is reasonable for pupils wishing to receive GME to travel to school, and that this will normally overlay a number of school catchment areas.
- 3.3 To comply with the statutory guidance, it is proposed that new GME zones are established and that these will overlay existing English Medium school zones in the city (and in the case of the primary provision, the zones within an existing associated schools group).
- 3.4 GME within Aberdeen City Council is currently provided at Hazlehead Academy and Gilcomstoun School. It is proposed that catchment areas for these provisions are established, as defined within the maps shown within Appendix 1 of this document.
- 3.5 The proposed catchment area for GME provision at Hazlehead Academy will overlay the existing English Medium catchment zones for Hazlehead Academy, Northfield Academy and Aberdeen Grammar School, whilst the proposed catchment area for GME provision at Gilcomstoun School will overlay the existing English Medium catchment zones for Gilcomstoun School, Ashley Road School, Mile End School and Skene Square School (i.e the primary schools which make up the Aberdeen Grammar Associated Schools Group (ASG)).
- 3.6 Aligning the proposed new GME catchment areas with existing English medium catchment areas will help to ensure that we maintain a standardised approach to school zoning

arrangements, and in turn will help to make it easier for parents to understand the zoning arrangements for GME provision.

- 3.7 The anticipated effects of the proposed changes on the schools concerned are described below.

## **4. THE AFFECTED SCHOOLS**

### **Hazlehead Academy**

- 4.1 Should the rezoning proposals be accepted, any secondary aged children living within the proposed catchment area (as shown in Map A in Appendix 1) in the future would be entitled to a place within the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy.
- 4.2 Any secondary aged children who live outwith the proposed catchment area 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.
- 4.3 The Council receives a grant from Scottish Government to support the provision of GME. Currently, numbers of children accessing secondary GME are below the available staffing capacity and have remained stable in recent years. This pattern is likely to continue and would mean that the Council is likely to have the capacity to accept placing requests submitted. Any children residing in the proposed primary catchment area will automatically be entitled to a place in the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy on transfer to Secondary Education.
- 4.4 Any children who live outwith the proposed catchment area who are already attending the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy when the changes are implemented, would be entitled to continue doing so, until they leave secondary school.
- 4.5 Similarly, any child living outwith the proposed catchment area, 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.
- 4.6 English medium education at Hazlehead Academy will remain unaffected by these proposals.

### **Gilcomstoun School**

- 4.7 Should the rezoning proposals be accepted, any primary aged children living within the proposed catchment area (as shown in Map B in Appendix 1) in the future would be entitled to a place within the GME provision at Gilcomstoun School.
- 4.8 Any primary aged children who live outwith the proposed catchment area 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.
- 4.9 The Council receives a grant from Scottish Government to support the provision of GME. Currently numbers of children accessing primary GME are below the available staffing capacity and have remained stable in recent years. This pattern is likely to continue and

would mean that the Council is likely to have the capacity to accept placing requests submitted. Any children residing in the proposed primary catchment area will automatically be entitled to a place in the GME provision at Hazlehead Academy on transfer to Secondary Education.

- 4.10 Any children who live outwith the proposed catchment area who are already attending the GME provision at Gilcomstoun School when the changes are implemented, would be entitled to continue doing so, until they leave primary school.
- 4.11 Similarly, any child living outwith the proposed catchment area, 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.
- 4.12 English medium education at Gilcomstoun School will remain unaffected by these proposals.

## **5. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Relevant information relating to this consultation can be accessed at:

[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations)

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Ma tha thu ag iarraidh eadar-theangachadh den sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan neo cruth eile (clò mòr neo clàr clàistinneach) feuch an cuir thu fios gu

**If you are deaf or have a hearing impairment, you can still communicate with the Council via Text Relay by dialling 18001 + telephone number:**

**07920 295364**



- 6.2 A copy of this statutory consultation document will be available for public viewing during the period of consultation at the following venues:

Central Library  
Hazlehead Academy  
Gilcomstoun School  
Airyhall School  
Countesswells School  
Fernielea School  
Hazlehead School  
Kingsford School  
Ashley Road School  
Mile End School  
Skene Square School

## **7. PUBLIC MEETING**

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

**Tuesday 14 September 2021, from 7.00pm to 8.00pm at Mile End School.**

## **8. SUBMISSION OF VIEWS**

- 8.1 Any interested stakeholders may respond to the consultation online, via the Council's Consultation Hub: <https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk/>

Alternatively comments can be submitted in writing to the address above, or by sending an email to:

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

**All responses should be submitted by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021.**

## **9. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION**

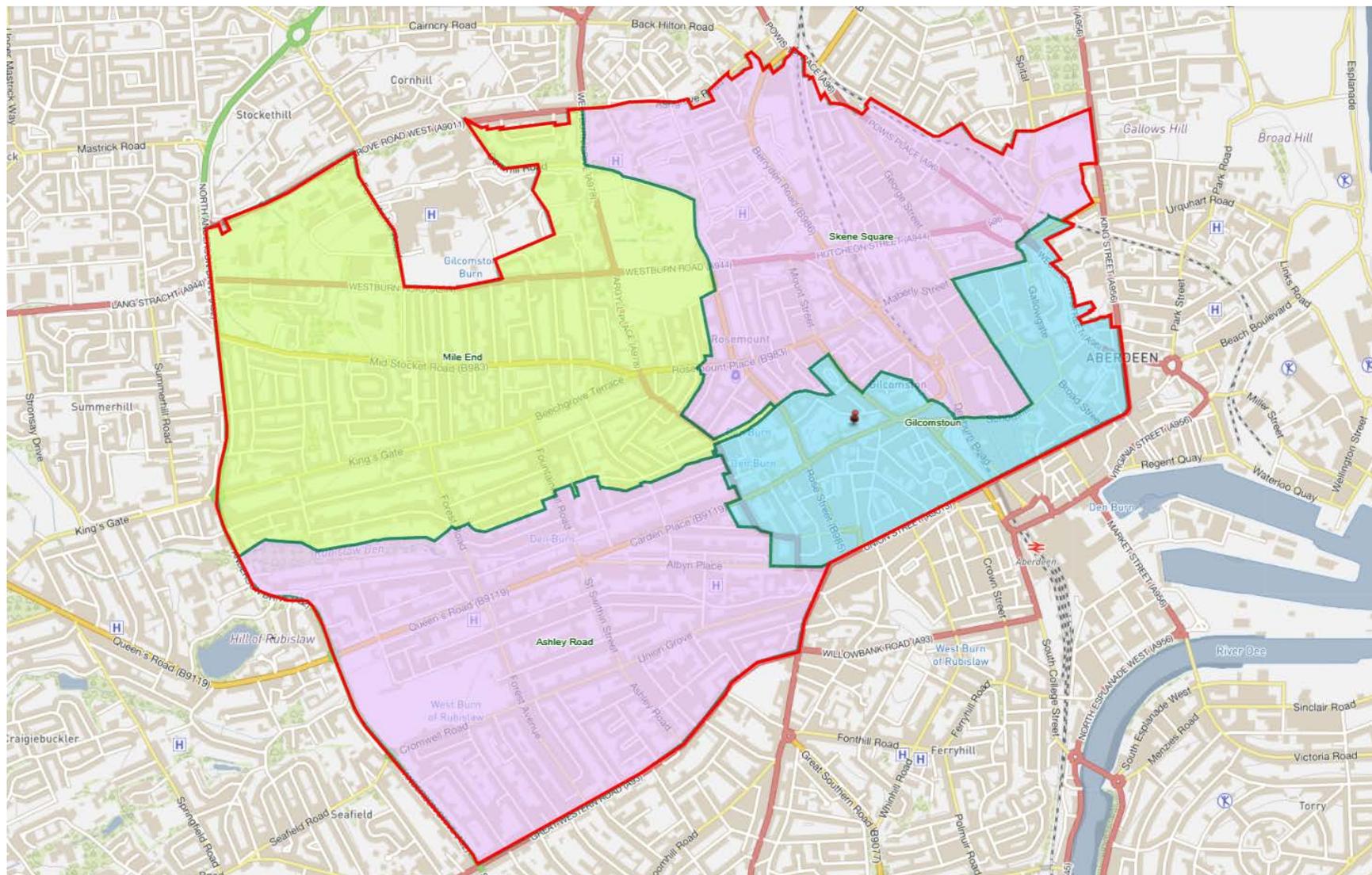
9.1 A summary of submissions will be published on the council website at

[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations)

9.2 A report on the consultation will be delivered to the Education Operational Delivery Committee at its meeting in January 2022. This will provide information to enable Elected Members to make a final decision on the proposal.



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



The proposed catchment area is indicated by the red line, and overlays the existing English Medium school catchment zones for Gilcomstoun School, Ashley Road School, Mile End School and Skene Square School. The pin symbol indicates the location of Gilcomstoun School.