

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

October 2016

Proposal Document

**Review of Mintlaw
Network Primary
Schools Zones**

Proposal for changes to primary school catchment areas in the Mintlaw network

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

The catchment areas for Mintlaw Primary School, Pitfour School and Stuartfield School are amended with effect from August 2017. The catchment areas for Maud School, Fetterangus School and Longside School may be altered with effect from August 2017 in line with the changes to Mintlaw, Pitfour and Stuartfield Schools.

New pupils joining schools living within these catchment areas should be educated at their newly zoned school with effect from August 2017;

Pupils already attending these primary schools who were previously zoned to the school will not be required to change school and their siblings would also be able to join them at that school.

This document has been issued by Aberdeenshire Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

The schools affected by this proposal are:

Mintlaw Primary School
Pitfour School
Stuartfield School

Fetterangus School
Longside School
Maud School

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Aberdeenshire Council website: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/education/EducationConsultations.asp or by e-

mailing learningstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

This document will be provided to:

- Parent Council(s) of the schools listed above
- Parents of the pupils at the schools listed above
- Pupils at the schools listed above
- Parents of pre-school age children living within the Mintlaw Network
- Staff at the schools listed above
- Trade union representatives of the above staff
- Deer Community Council
- Longside and District Community Council
- Mintlaw and District Community Council
- Relevant users of Mintlaw Network primary schools
- Education Scotland

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Mintlaw Library
- The schools affected by the proposal
- Mintlaw Academy
- Central Buchan Community Learning & Development Office

- MACBI Community Hub

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Aberdeenshire Council strives to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all of its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all of the pupils in its schools.
- 1.2 The Council's aims for Education and Children's Services are:
 - the building of capacity
 - the realisation of potential
 - the achievement of excellence
- 1.3 In order to fulfil the above vision it is necessary to adapt to changing circumstances. It is essential that the Council regularly reviews the pattern of educational provision across all establishments, with a particular focus on school rolls, accommodation and quality of education.
- 1.4 This proposal document is focused upon the Mintlaw network of primary schools. Located within the Buchan area of Aberdeenshire the Mintlaw network comprises eleven primary schools and one secondary school. All of these schools are defined as Accessible Rural by the Scottish Government.
- 1.5 The catchment areas of Fetterangus School, Longside School, Maud School, Mintlaw Primary School, Pitfour School and Stuartfield School are being reviewed in this proposal.
- 1.6 This proposal does not impact on the remaining five primary schools in the network, these schools are Auchnagatt, Kininmonth, New Deer, New Pitsligo and St Johns and Strichen.
- 1.7 This proposal does not impact upon secondary provision at Mintlaw Academy.

2 Reason for Proposal

- 2.1 For a number of years concern has been building that the capacities of some schools within the Mintlaw network would be exceeded due to the expansion of Stuartfield village and Mintlaw village.
- 2.2 Developments within Stuartfield and to the north and south of Mintlaw will continue to put pressure upon school rolls for the coming years. Currently within the network there are sufficient pupil places across all schools for the next few years, as new houses are built and sold and families move into them.
- 2.3 Whilst there is currently capacity across the whole network. The purpose of the rezoning exercise is to change the catchment areas of up to six primary schools in the network so that current and future pupils can be educated in suitable school buildings with sufficient space.
- 2.4 The majority of recent and planned housing in Mintlaw is to the north and south of the village in the Mintlaw Primary School catchment zone. Mintlaw Primary School has a capacity of 171 pupils. Without changes to the catchment area the roll at the school is estimated to increase to 205 pupils by 2020 or sooner.

- 2.5 Due to rising rolls at Stuartfield School a one year cap was introduced for the 2016/17 session to manage capacity at the school. Stuartfield has a core capacity of 93 with a working capacity of 125 using the existing temporary unit on site. The decision to cap Stuartfield School has restricted the number of placing requests to the school, and will allow the roll to stabilise following an increase pupils from families moving into new houses.
- 2.6 In August 2016, the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee agreed that the school zones in the Mintlaw Network should be reviewed.
- 2.7 In September 2016 following discussions with head teachers, a series of informal engagement sessions were held to give parents and any other interested stakeholders the opportunity to see some draft suggestions for primary school zone changes in the Mintlaw Network. An online survey was also issued to parents to seek views on current catchment areas.
- 2.8 These meetings proved very useful and a number of suggestions were made over the course of the sessions. The suggestions from the engagement events and those received from the online survey have been taken into consideration for the proposal documents.
- 2.9 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that when a change is to be made to a school boundary or catchment area then a formal consultation must be undertaken with all relevant stakeholders.

3. Online Survey Responses

- 3.1 Parents of pupils attending schools and of pre-school age children in the six schools covered by this proposal were invited to take part in an online survey. Respondents were asked whether they attended their zoned school and which school they believed their postcode should be zoned to. 107 people responded to the survey. One question asked for views about whether catchment areas should change. There were 55 responses to this question. Several respondents were supportive of the need to rezone provided zones are workable. Some parents expressed concerns about their children being moved away from the school they are currently attending or made to go to a different school from siblings.

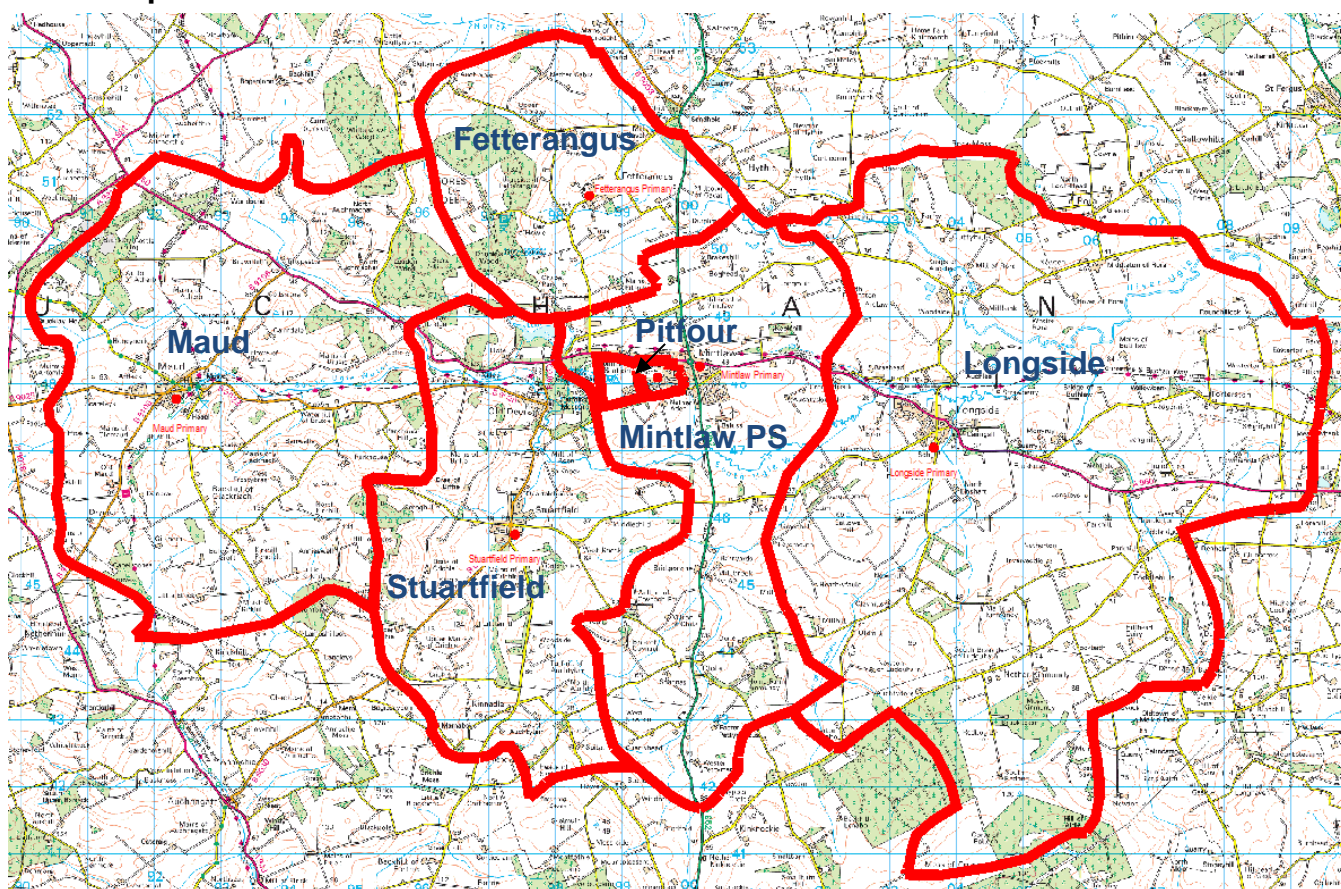
4. Details of the Proposal

- 4.1 The council proposes that the existing primary school catchment areas of the schools listed in Paragraph 1.5 above, the Mintlaw network should be amended with effect from August 2017; and that from this date all new pupils attending primary schools within the Mintlaw network should attend their newly zoned school. The council also proposes that all existing primary pupils should continue their education at their current school. If the proposals are implemented any siblings of current pupils would be able to join their brother/sister(s) at the same school.
- 4.2 It is important that these proposals do not have a negative impact upon any children currently attending schools within the Mintlaw network and that they have continuity in their education. There are no plans to move existing pupils to a different school if these proposals are adopted. They would only come into effect

either for new children moving into the area, or for the new cohort of P1 pupils in August 2017.

- 4.3 Currently the school nurseries in Mintlaw (and across Aberdeenshire) do not have catchment areas and this is unlikely to change for the foreseeable future.
- 4.4 Officers have developed a number of options based upon public engagement and desktop analysis using current pupil numbers; children under the age of 5 in the area and expected house building rates. There are also some alternative changes that could be made if the preferred option is not welcomed by the wider community.
- 4.5 This proposal document contains a number of maps with possible changes for each of the affected primary schools in the proposal. The Council wants to know which of these changes would be preferred for that school.
- 4.6 Printed copies of the maps will be on display in each of the schools affected by the consultation and available on request at Gordon House in Inverurie. Pdf copies of the maps will be available on the Aberdeenshire Council website: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/education/EducationConsultations.asp
- 4.7 Pupils living 2 miles or more from their zoned primary school would have an entitlement to free school transport. Due to the rural nature of the Mintlaw network, there is a requirement to provide transport to school for some pupils.

Map 1: Current Catchment Areas

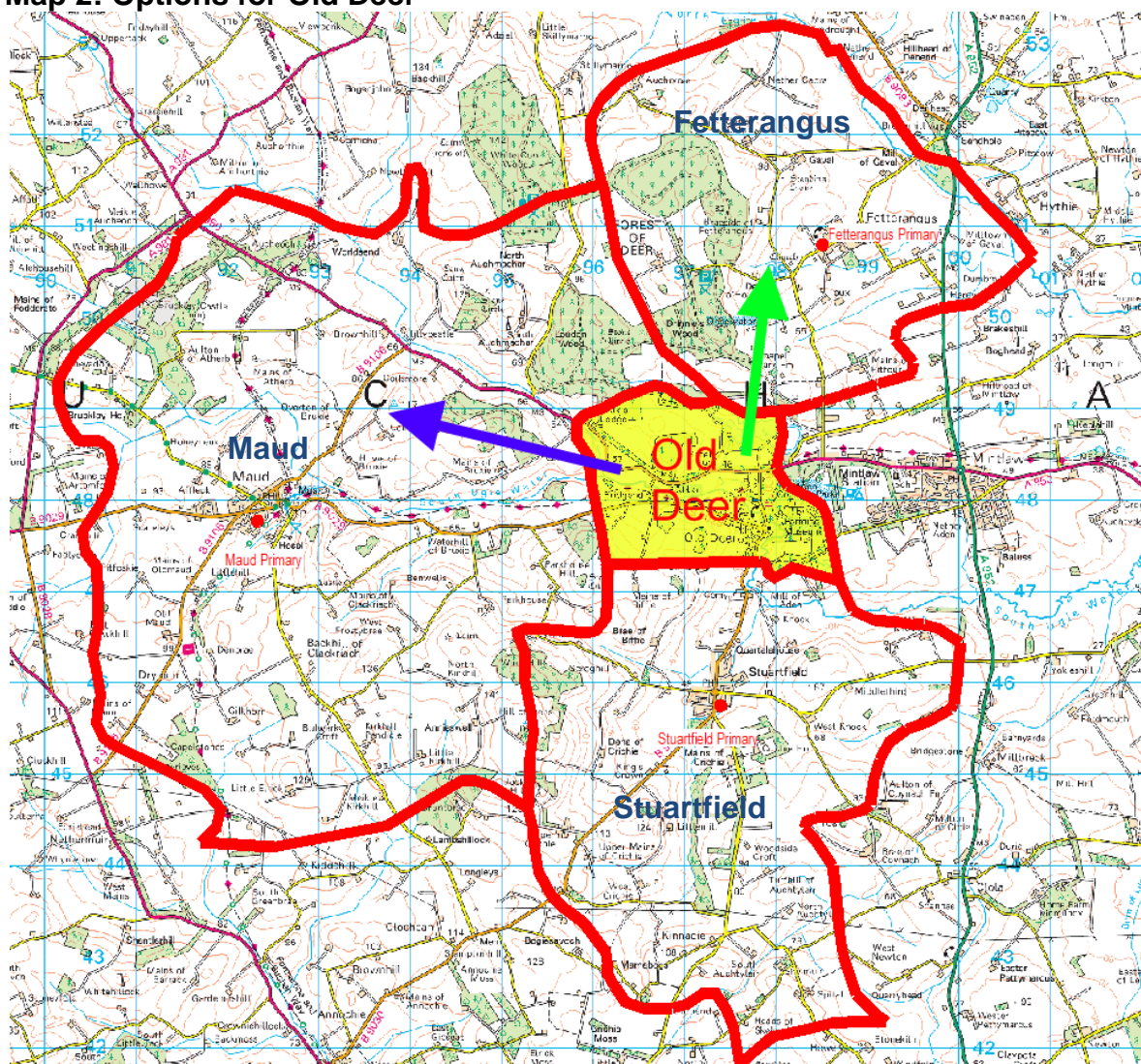


Options Stuartfield and Old Deer

	Working Capacity	Current Roll (Sept 2016)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Stuartfield current	125	117	123	126	125	125	131
Stuartfield without Old Deer	125	117	116	115	112	109	112

Due to continued house building in the village, Stuartfield School is forecast to go over capacity if the catchment area does not change. The options below, to address capacity pressures at Stuartfield School, focus on removing the area around Old Deer from the catchment and realigning it with either Maud School or Fetterangus School. There are 17 houses in Old Deer currently scheduled to be built. The table above shows the expected impact of rezoning Old Deer away from Stuartfield, and would affect 10 children over the next three years. However this number could change if there are siblings already at the school.

Map 2: Options for Old Deer

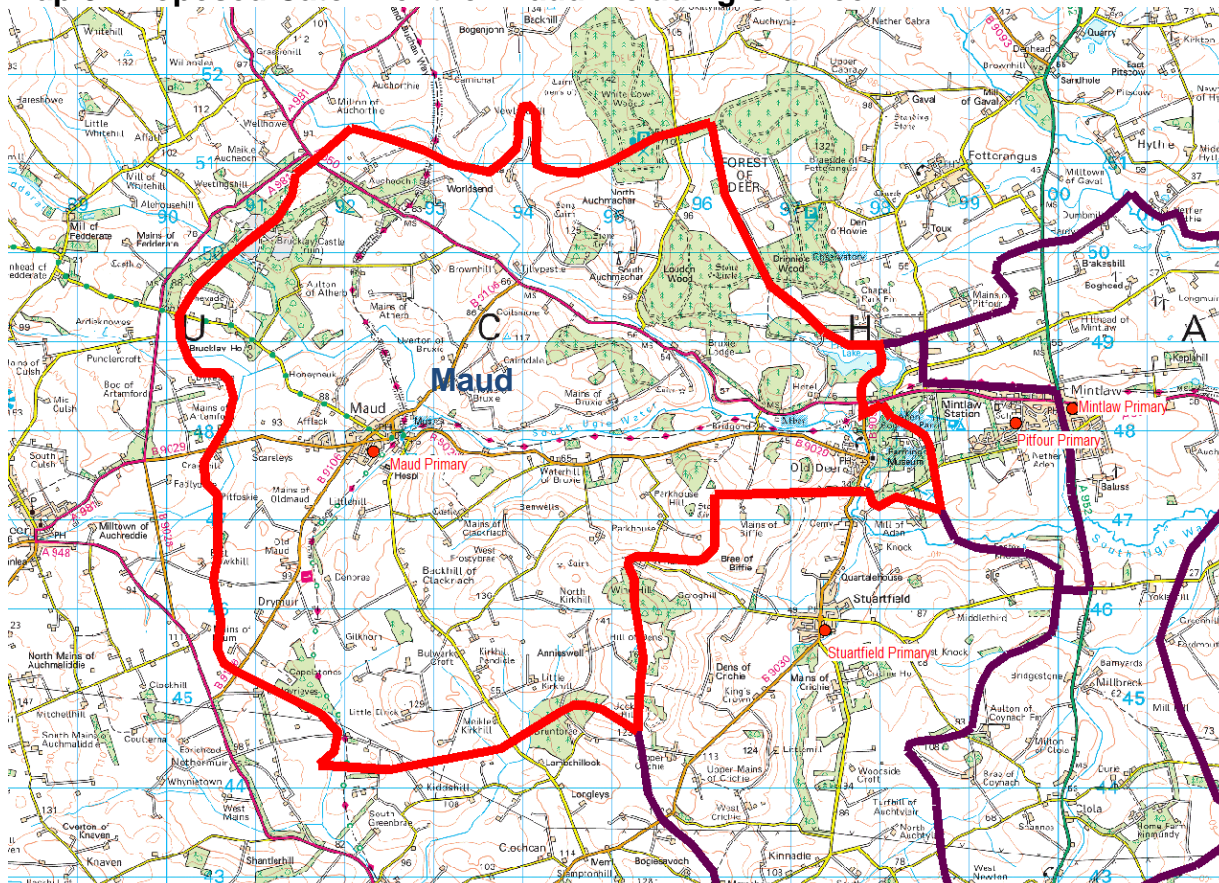


Option1 – Rezone Old Deer to Maud School

Option one proposes that the area around the village of Old Deer is rezoned to Maud School. The distance from Old Deer to Maud is 3.7 miles. There are 29 houses expected to be built in Maud over the next five years. There are a further 77 houses that appear in the LDP (Local Development Plan) but do not have a date for construction. The school in Maud is set within a residential area with concrete playground and surrounded by houses. The road to Maud is a B road and therefore may be affected by adverse weather.

	Capacity	Current Roll (Sept 2016)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Maud current	120	110	111	102	98	97	102
Maud with Old Deer	120	110	118	113	112	110	115

Map 3: Proposed Catchment for Maud Including Old Deer



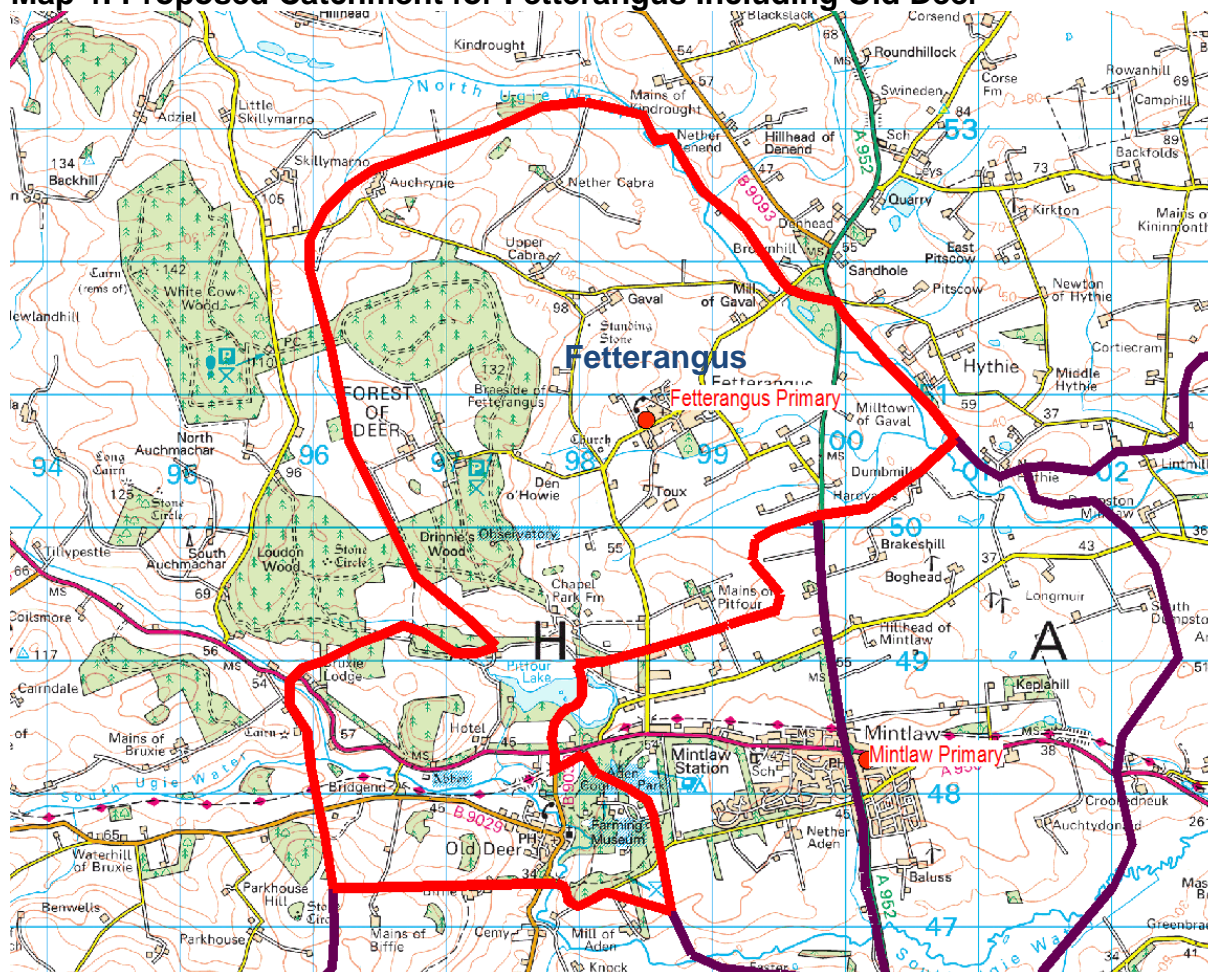
Option 2 – Rezone Old Deer to Fetterangus

This option would see the area around the village of Old Deer rezoned to Fetterangus School. Old Deer to Fetterangus is 2.4 miles on a B road but there is an option of 4.1 miles on the main trunk road, allowing an alternative during adverse weather conditions. Although Fetterangus has 44 houses being built or planned to be built there is more capacity available within the school itself. Fetterangus School is a small rural school with a concrete playground situated at the end of the village. Although the school sits on the main road concerns over pupil safety were addressed

last year with the installation of a secondary gate.

	Capacity	Current Roll (Sept 2016)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Fetterangus current	71	39	42	45	53	58	63
Fetterangus with Old Deer	71	39	49	56	66	74	81

Map 4: Proposed Catchment for Fetterangus Including Old Deer



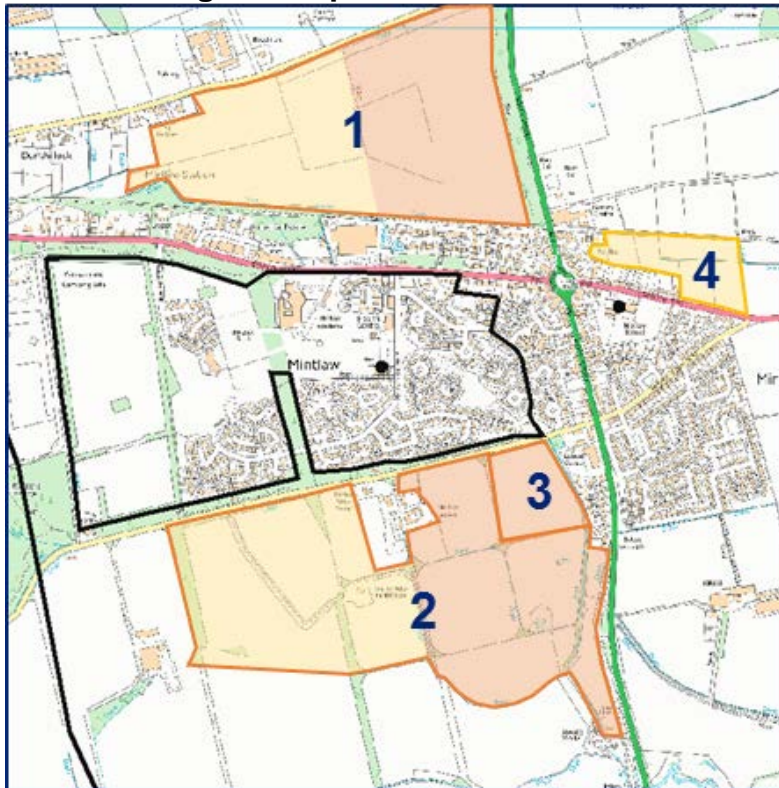
Mintlaw and Pitfour Schools

Mintlaw Primary School is forecast to go over capacity in 2017. The options to address this focus on expanding the Pitfour catchment area to include more streets within Mintlaw, and additionally some or all of the new housing developments planned for the village. Pitfour School has a non-linked unit on site giving a working capacity of 171 pupils. It is expected that as the housing in Mintlaw continues to progress, that the current level of primary school provision in the village will need to be increased. Both Mintlaw Primary School and Pitfour School have space within the grounds for an extension, and further work will be done to determine which school would be most appropriate for additional classrooms.

	Working Capacity	Current Roll (Sept 2016)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Pitfour School current	171	135	135	140	134	130	122
Pitfour School with Nether Aden	171	135	139	155	161	169	176
Pitfour School with Nether Aden and Northwoods	171	135	148	172	183	199	213

	Capacity	Current Roll (Sept 2016)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Mintlaw Primary current	171	168	175	178	187	205	221
Mintlaw Primary with Northwoods	171	168	171	163	160	166	167
Mintlaw Primary without Nether Aden or Northwoods	171	168	161	146	137	136	130
Mintlaw Primary without Nether Aden, Northwoods or Clola	171	168	160	144	135	133	127

Main Housing Developments within Mintlaw Catchment Zone



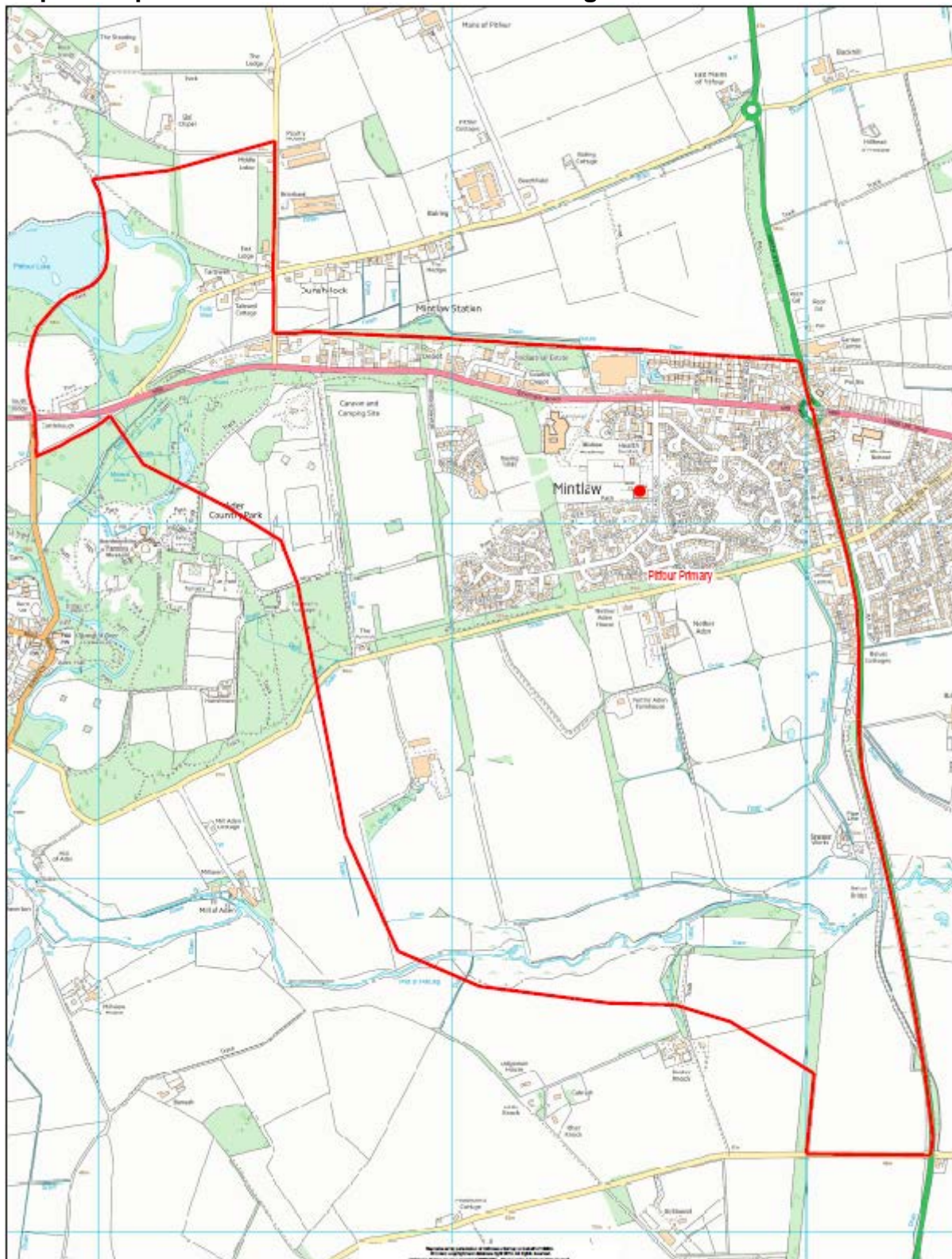
1. **North Woods**
300 effective (2014-2026) &
300 constrained homes
- 2&3. **Nether Aden**
250 effective (2017-2025) &
250 constrained homes, with
land for School
4. **North of Longside Road**
50 constrained homes

Effective
 Constrained

Option 1 Nether Aden to Pitfour

This option proposes the new housing development at Nether Aden is zoned to Pitfour School leaving the Northwoods development Mintlaw Primary School. The eastern boundary of the catchment area would be the A952 through the centre of Mintlaw. Information from developers currently has the construction at Nether Aden scheduled to start in 2017.

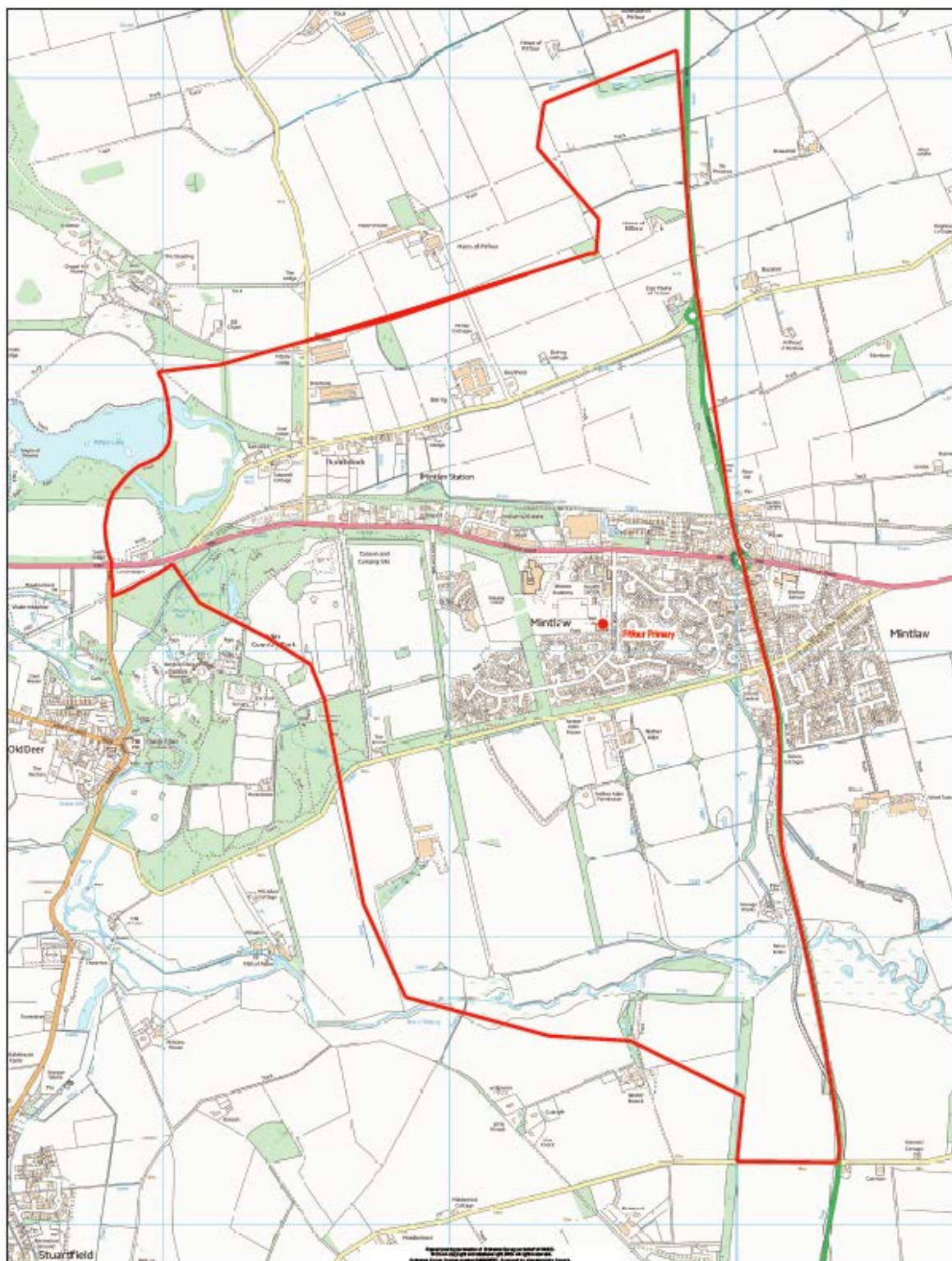
Map 5: Proposed Catchment for Pitfour Including Nether Aden



Option 2 – Nether Aden and Northwoods zoned to Pitfour School

The new development at Northwoods is already under construction with around 80 houses already built. This option moves both Northwoods and Nether Aden houses to Pitfour School, removing virtually all new housing in the village away from Mintlaw Primary School. As there are families already living in Northwoods, this option could result in friendship groups among the new houses being separated.

Map 6: Proposed Catchment for Pitfour School Including Nether Aden and Northwoods



Mintlaw, Longside and Clola

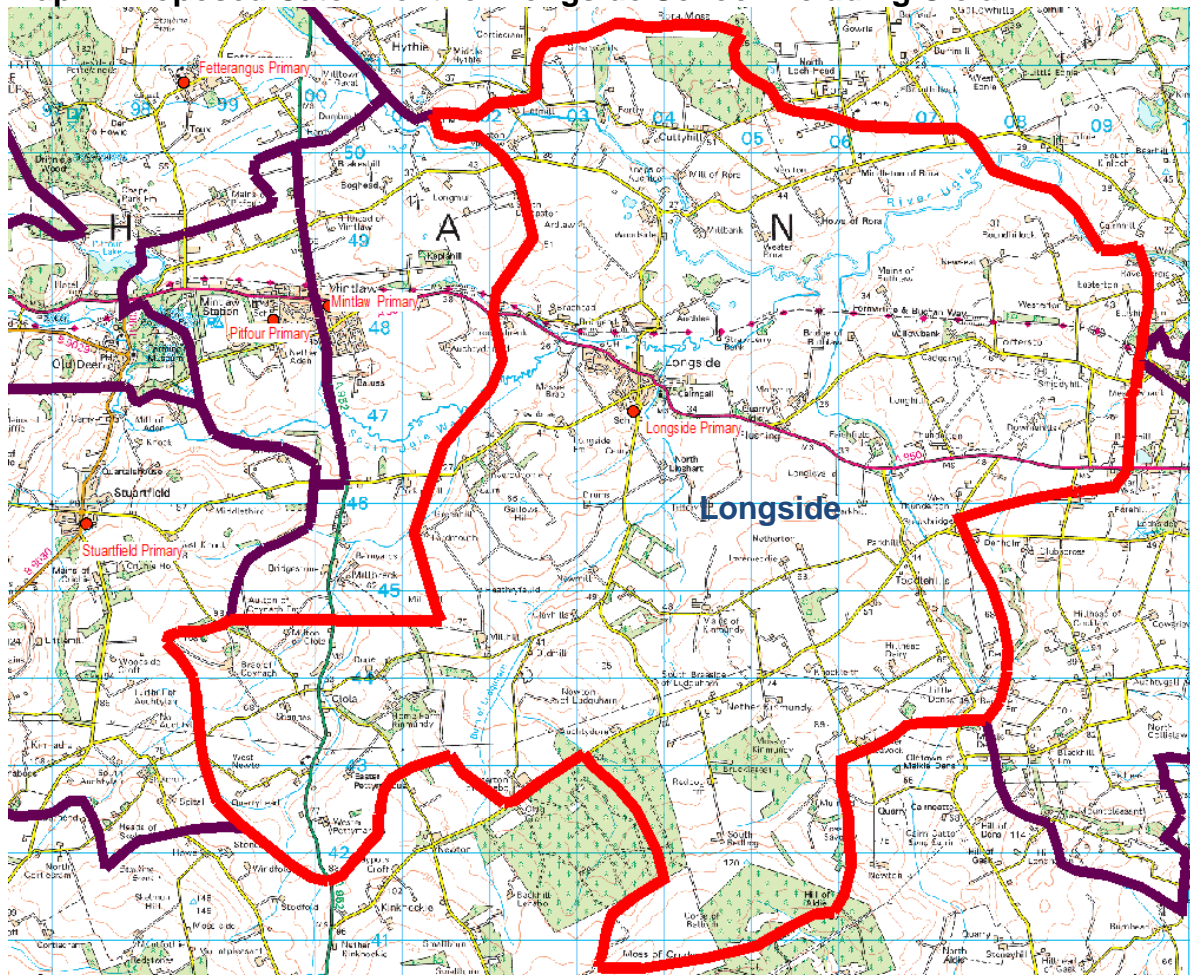
Option 3 – Clola and surrounding area is rezoned to Longside

An additional option that is being considered to help relieve the capacity pressures on Mintlaw Primary School is to move the area of Clola to the Longside School catchment area. Pupils in this area are currently transported to and from Mintlaw Primary School by Aberdeenshire Council. The distance from Clola to Longside is 3.6 miles on a B road, currently the travelling distance for residents of Clola is 3.2 miles along the A952. Longside School is a modern school that is fully accessible with modern facilities and able to accommodate all children. It has a large play area including a playing field and is away from the main road through Longside. This option could affect 3 children due

	Capacity	Current Roll (Sept 2016)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Longside current	198	153	151	142	127	122	110
Longside with Clola	198	153	152	144	129	125	113

to start school in the next 4 years.

Map 7: Proposed Catchment for Longside School Including Clola



Option 4 – Retain the Status Quo

The option to retain the status quo across the Mintlaw network does not address any of the capacity issues within the area. If no changes are made a larger extension would be required at Mintlaw Primary within two years and the cap at Stuartfield School would

need to be extended for further years. (For Map of Status Quo see Map 1)

5 Educational Benefit Statement

- 5.1 Both Mintlaw Primary School and Stuartfield School are operating close to maximum capacity. This results in less space being available for pupils, and imposes restrictions in delivering the curriculum. The proposed rezoning will accommodate pupils from new housing developments and provide a sustainable solution for future developments.
- 5.2 The other four schools covered in this proposal have spare capacity and would be able to accommodate additional pupils, giving new opportunities for friendships to develop.
- 5.3 The proposed changes address the capacity issues to a large extent and over time will provide the additional learning space for pupils in schools that are currently full.
- 5.4 Aberdeenshire Council is committed to delivering entitlements to learners in the 21st century according to a Curriculum for Excellence.
- 5.5 Much of the feedback received from the informal sessions and the parental survey have confirmed that parents at Stuartfield School want the school to keep its rural qualities and stay at a similar size as at present.
- 5.6 The proposed changes to Pitfour School aim to support safe routes to school. Currently there are a number of streets to the west of the A952 which are zoned to Mintlaw Primary School. This requires pupils to cross the busy trunk road from Aberdeen to Fraserburgh twice daily. Whilst there are traffic calming measures in place and a crossing patroller in post, pupils could attend Pitfour School and no longer have this added traffic risk.
- 5.7 The location of the Northwoods development currently requires pupils to cross both the A952 and Station Road in order to reach Mintlaw Primary School. As in 5.6 above moving this development to Pitfour School would improve road safety with only one crossing required, at a point further within the 30 mph zone.

There are a number of housing sites allocated in the local development plan over the next few years. These are detailed in the following table:

Housing Forecast

Location	Total Units	Status	Zoned School	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Pitfour Estate	9	Planning Permission in Principle	Fetterangus	2	2	2	3	0
Site To North Of Ferguson Street	26	Under Construction	Fetterangus	3	3	3	0	0
Fetterangus West (Phase 2 only)	27	Allocated	Fetterangus	0	0	0	6	6
Land South of Skinner Road (Mixed Use Site)	90	Allocated	Longside	6	7	0	0	0
Former Cairnhall Garage	5	Planning Permission in Principle	Longside	0	5	0	0	0
Castle Road East	32	Allocated	Maud	0	0	0	0	0
Deer Road West	48	Under Construction	Maud	0	5	5	5	5
Bank Road East	10	Under Construction	Maud	1	1	1	1	0
Castle Road	30	Allocated	Maud	0	0	0	0	5
Castle Road (Phase 2)	45	Allocated	Maud	0	0	0	0	0
Land To North Of Longside Road	50	Allocated	Mintlaw	0	0	0	0	0
Land To South Of Nether Aden Road	50	Allocated	Mintlaw	0	0	10	10	10
Pitfour Arms Hotel	8	Full Planning Permission	Mintlaw	8	0	0	0	0
Land at Artlaw Cres / Nether Aden Rd	20	Allocated	Mintlaw	0	5	5	5	5
North Woods	300	Full Planning Permission	Mintlaw	25	25	25	25	25
North Woods (Phase 2)	300	Allocated	Mintlaw	0	0	0	0	0
Former Council Depot	15	Allocated	Mintlaw	0	0	0	0	0
Land at Nether Aden	250	Allocated	Mintlaw	0	10	20	20	25
Land at Nether Aden (Phase 2)	250	Allocated	Mintlaw	0	0	0	0	0
Land To South Of Playing Fields	57	Allocated	Pitfour	0	17	17	0	0
Abbey Street	10	Allocated	Stuartfield	0	0	0	0	0
St Drostan's Eventide Home	17	Under Construction	Stuartfield	6	6	5	0	0
Crichie Meadows Ph1 (EH1)	39	Under Construction	Stuartfield	6	6	0	0	0
North Of Windhill Street	5	Allocated	Stuartfield	0	0	0	0	0
Crichie Meadows Ph2 & 3 (H1)	75	Allocated	Stuartfield	10	10	10	10	10

6. Alternatives to the proposal

6.1 A range of alternative possibilities have been considered as noted below.

- Continuing the status quo – this does not address the concerns regarding the capacity of some schools as new housing developments are built. This is however being consulted on as an option to make no changes.
- An option to zone Old Deer to Pitfour School has been discounted by officers. The option would address the capacity issues at Stuartfield School but would put pressure on Pitfour School as it would be a third proposal for the school and increase the roll removing the potential for the school to accommodate the housing developments in Mintlaw Village. This option did not appear popular during the informal sessions and so will not be taken forward.

7. Effect on the local community

- 7.1 There are significant developments planned, and underway across the Mintlaw network. These will generate new communities and extend existing ones. These proposals will help ensure that adequate educational facilities are available to the communities as the developments progress.
- 7.2 The proposals for the schools within Mintlaw will hopefully strengthen the existing relationship with Mintlaw Academy and continue to develop community links around the schools.

8. School Transport

- 8.1 As the change in school zones would only apply to new children entering education in the Mintlaw network, there will not be any change to transport provision for current pupils.
- 8.2 There are currently 78 primary pupils across the six schools covered by this proposal that are transported to school by Aberdeenshire Council. The proposed changes would not reduce the number of children transported, as existing pupils would continue to be transported to their current school.
- 8.3 There could be a change in school transport provision for some families with children starting school living around Old Deer and Clola, although this would be that their children would be transported to a different school, rather than a change to entitlement.
- 8.4 The potential changes affecting the Clola area would result in additional transport costs, as existing pupils would continue to be transported to Mintlaw Primary, and new pupils would be transported to Longside School.
- 8.5 The proposed changes to Stuartfield and Maud or Fetterangus would have a similar impact upon transport with existing pupils from Old Deer still travelling to Stuartfield and new pupils being transported to one of the two alternative schools.

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The rising roll across the network may result in an increase in staffing numbers in due course. This rezoning exercise may result in the additional staff being located

at a different establishment than if the catchment areas remained the same. Any changes would be gradual and would be managed through existing HR recruitment policies.

- 9.2 The proposed changes for Mintlaw Primary and Pitfour Schools do not fully mitigate the impact of the Northwoods and Nether Aden housing developments, and the predicted speed of building completions advised by the developers. Options are currently being considered regarding a potential extension to one of the schools using Developer Obligations.
- 9.3 The proposed changes for Stuartfield School do not fully mitigate the impact of the housing developments within the village, and the predicted speed of building completions advised by the developer. Options are being explored regarding capital expenditure to improve the current accommodation.
- 9.4 The existing school transport contracts for the six schools covered by this proposal currently sit at a value of just under £149,000 per year.

10 Equalities

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact on the education service. In addition an EIA can provide more information to develop and deliver services that meet the needs, in this case, of children and parents.
- 10.2 An EIA has been completed for this proposal and has not identified any negative impact on any of the groups with protected characteristics.
- 10.3 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers and young people, and will address comments about equality during this consultation.
- 10.4 Under The Equality Act 2010 education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. Existing arrangements in place for pupils within the Mintlaw network with additional support needs will continue.

11 Implications for staff

- 11.1 Initially there should be minimal implications for staff. As the overall roll of the Mintlaw network continues to rise there will be a requirement for additional teaching staff.

12 Consultation Arrangements

- 12.1 At its meeting on 25 August 2016, Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning and Leisure Committee agreed that a proposal document should be issued as a basis for consultation. No decision will be taken by the Council on the proposal contained in the paper until after the end of the consultation period. The Council will then receive a report on the consultation and will reach a view on the proposal.
- 12.2 A copy of this document will be issued free of charge to all of the consultees listed on the first page of this document and it will also be published on the Council's

website: <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/education-consultations/>

- 12.3 The period for consultation will extend from **5 October 2016** until **2 December 2016** which covers a minimum period of 30 school days.
- 12.4 A public meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd November at Mintlaw Academy (Social Area) at 7pm. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comment. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 12.5 Opportunities will be provided for staff to discuss the proposals during the November INSET days. There will also be opportunities for pupils to participate in the consultation during October and November 2016.
- 12.6 An online survey will be available as part of the consultation. This can be completed at the following address: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MintlawRezone>
- 12.7 The Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Mrs Maxine Booth, Quality Improvement Manager, to be received no later than **5pm on Friday 2nd December 2016**. They should be posted to Aberdeenshire Council, Education & Children's Services, Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie, AB51 3WA or emailed to learningstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
- 12.8 A copy of this document will be sent to Education Scotland (ES). ES will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period. ES will further receive a copy of any oral representations made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. ES will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, ES may visit the school and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

13. Consideration of Consultation Responses

- 13.1 The Council will review the proposals having regard to the ES Report, survey results, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available on the Council website and from Council Headquarters, as well as at the schools, libraries and offices listed on pages 2 and 3 of this document, free of charge. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report.
- 13.2 The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written responses and a summary of the comments made at the public meeting. The report will also include the Authority's response to the ES Report; a response to issues raised through any comments it has received; together with a copy of the ES Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the ES Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received.

- 13.3 The last section of the report will include an officer recommendation as to which proposals should be adopted and implemented. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to the Council making a decision.
- 13.4 As it is proposed to implement the changes from August 2017, a copy of the Consultation Report will be in the public domain from the middle of January 2017 to support parents making Primary 1 applications for their children at that time. A final decision is likely to be made by the council in February 2017.

Decision Making

- 13.5 The consultation report will be considered firstly by the Buchan Area Committee who will be asked to make a recommendation as to whether the proposed changes are implemented. This is expected to be in January 2017.
- 13.6 Following discussion and recommendation at the Buchan Area Committee, the Education & Children's Services Committee will consider the report and be asked to approve the officer recommendation in the report. This is expected to be in February 2017.

14 Conclusion

- 14.1 There are strong educational and financial arguments in favour of this proposal.
- 14.2 The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will enhance the provision of primary education in this area.