



EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**JANUARY 2020**

**PROPOSAL DOCUMENT**

**REZONE OF HILLSIDE SCHOOL**

**10/02/2020 – 27/03/2020**

**REVISED**

## Proposal for the redistribution of primary school catchment areas in the Portlethen Network

### SUMMARY PROPOSAL

It is proposed that:

**The Hillside School Catchment area be amended to remove the Leathan Fields, Portlethen, with this new housing being zoned to either Portlethen Primary School or Fishermoss School from the completion of the consultation process.**

**The proposals will only affect new pupils in the network, moving into the new houses in the Leathan Fields development.**

This document has been issued by Aberdeenshire Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. The Act requires that changes to the school estate are subject to rigorous statutory consultation.

The schools affected by this proposal are:

**Hillside School  
Portlethen Primary School  
Fishermoss School**

### DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Aberdeenshire Council web-site: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/education-consultations/> or by emailing [LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

This document will be provided to:

- Parent Council 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 who would be zoned to attend schools in Portlethen
- Staff at the schools listed above
- Trade union representatives of the above staff
- Portlethen Community Council
- Relevant users of Hillside School
- Relevant community groups within Portlethen
- Education Scotland

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Aberdeenshire Council Headquarters, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB
- Portlethen Library (at Portlethen Academy)
- The schools affected by the proposal

## **1. Legislative Background**

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (S.3 of The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 This proposal document is focussed on Hillside School, Portlethen Primary School and Fishermoss School. Located within the Portlethen area of Aberdeenshire. The Primary schools in the town of Portlethen are classed as "Accessible Small Town" by the Scottish Government.
- 2.3 This rezoning proposal does not impact upon secondary provision at Portlethen Academy.
- 2.4 This proposal document contains several maps. Pdf copies of all maps will be available on the Aberdeenshire Council website at the address given on page 2 of this document. Printed copies of the maps will also be available on request in each of the schools affected by the consultation, at Portlethen Library and at Aberdeenshire Council Headquarters, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen.
- 2.5 The consultation will run from Monday 10 February 2020 until Friday 27 March 2020. A public meeting will be held to discuss the proposal on 5 March 2020 in Hillside School at 7pm
- 2.6 The consultation process for this proposal is set out in detail in Section 12.

## **3. Reason for Proposal**

- 3.1 In 2014, a planning application was submitted for 176 homes (APP/2013/2841) at Leathan Fields, Portlethen, it was refused on grounds of Education capacity. The developer appealed to the Reporter and the Court of Session, however, Aberdeenshire Council's decision was upheld. Subsequently, a second planning application for 175 homes was submitted in 2016 (APP/2016/0934). On 10 December 2019, this planning application was considered by Kincardine & Mearns Area Committee who agreed that authority to grant planning permission be delegated to the Head of Planning and Environment Service subject to a number of conditions. One of these conditions being a rezoning exercise and successful implementation of rezoning the houses in this application to Portlethen Primary School or Fishermoss School.

- 3.2 Primary education in Portlethen is currently provided at Hillside School which is situated to the north of the town on Newlands Drive. Portlethen Primary School which sits in the north east of the town on Cookston Road, and Fishermoss School, which sits in the south east of the town on Berrymuir Road, Portlethen.
- 3.3 Hillside School has a capacity of 372 pupils and is currently sitting with a roll of 421 pupils (December 2019), this is predicted to rise significantly in future years due to completed housing developments within the school catchment area.
- 3.4 Portlethen Primary School has a capacity of 342 pupils, the school is currently sitting with a roll of 263 pupils (December 2019) which is projected to fall in future years.
- 3.5 Fishermoss School currently has a capacity of 358 pupils, the school is currently sitting with a roll of 260 pupils (December 2019), the roll is projected to increase to 280 pupils in 2026.
- 3.6 It was agreed at the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee on 20 November 2018 that a four classroom extension would be built on to Hillside School to accommodate the rising roll of the school. It was also agreed that this extension would be completed by August 2020 and it will increase the school capacity to 509 pupils. This extension will only accommodate pupils from housing already built or approved in the Local Development Plan.

#### **4. Details of the Proposal**

- 4.1 The council proposes that the existing primary school catchment areas within Portlethen should be amended with effect from the completion of the consultation process. From this date all new pupils should attend their newly zoned school, and that all existing primary pupils would continue their education at their current school. These changes will only affect pupils moving into the 175 new houses at Leathan Fields, Portlethen once the houses are built.
- 4.2 It is important that these proposals do not have a negative impact upon any children currently attending Hillside School, Portlethen Primary or Fishermoss School and that they have continuity in their education, no existing pupils will be required to move to a different school. The proposals will only impact on children moving into new houses at Leathan Fields, Portlethen once the houses are built.
- 4.3 The Leathan Fields site is 1 mile from Portlethen Primary and 1.8 miles from Fishermoss School.
- 4.4 Pupils living out with two miles of their zoned primary school would continue to be entitled to school transport. However, the change to the zone would be within the two mile area for both schools and so would not impact upon current transport entitlement.
- 4.5 This proposal document contains maps showing the proposed change for Hillside School, Portlethen Primary and Fishermoss School. There is only one preferred option, as the main reason for the proposed change to the catchment areas is to

accommodate the extra pupils expected to be generated from the Leathan Fields site.

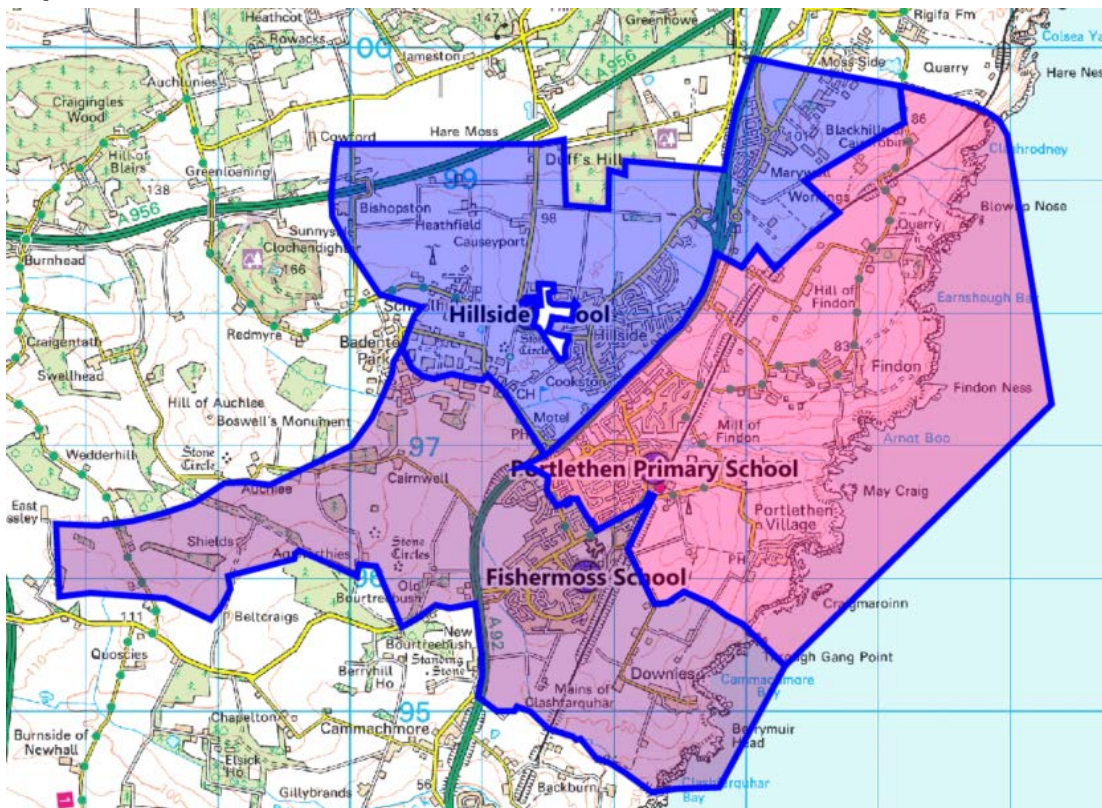
- 4.6 The proposed changes for each school are outlined in the maps below. There are details of the impact that the proposed changes would have on the school rolls.

## 5 Proposal Options

### 5.1 Portlethen Schools Catchment areas

Map 1 shows the catchment areas for Fishermoss School, Hillside School and Portlethen Primary School, with the Leathan Fields site highlighted.

**Map 1**



### 5.2 Leathan Fields site

Map 2 shows the Leathan Fields site at Portlethen which is currently within the Hillside School catchment area.

Map 2

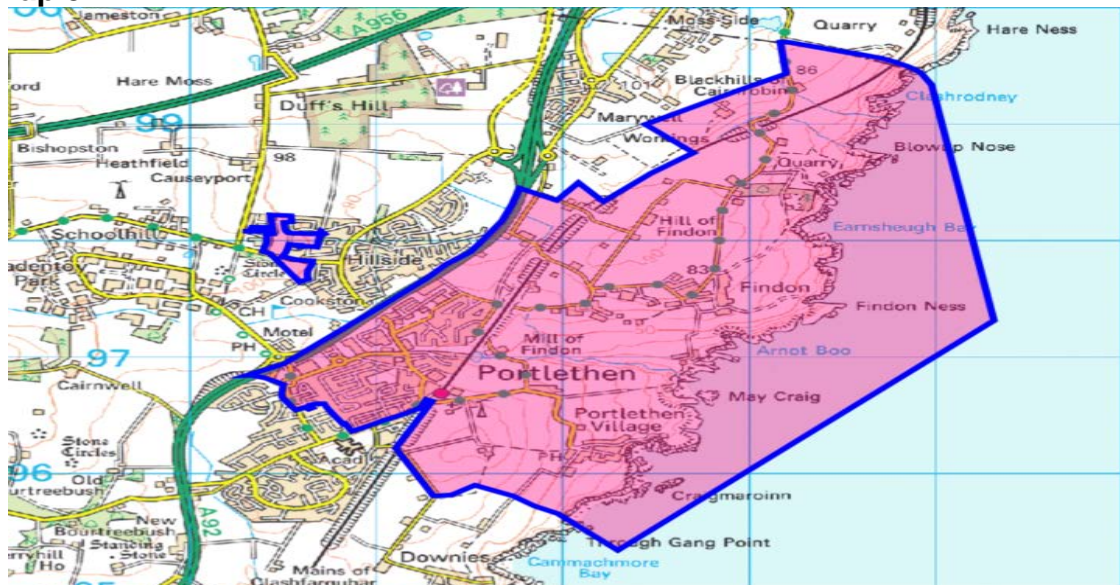


### 5.3 Option 1 Rezone the Leathan Fields site to Portlethen Primary School

The preferred option would be to change the catchment area of Portlethen School, which would include the Leathan Fields site. This option would only change the catchment area for the land currently subject to the planning application. This would result in an isolated area adjacent to Hillside School being rezoned to Portlethen School.

5.4 Map 3 shows Portlethen School Catchment area with the Leathan Fields site.

Map 3



5.5 Portlethen Primary School offers Primary Education from P1-7, and pre-school education. The School is also the Enhanced Provision Centre for the Portlethen network, with adapted facilities for pupils with additional needs. The school

currently consists of 12 classrooms, for school age children and 4 for nursery, a school hall used for both PE and school lunches, kitchen, multiple general purpose spaces, library, Multi-sensory Room, Nurture Space, Life Skills area, staffroom, Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher offices and school office.

- 5.6 The outside areas consist of a large tarmac playground, a multi use games area (MUGA) and lockable bicycle storage.
- 5.7 The Scottish Government has committed to expanding the Education, Learning and Childcare (ELC) entitlement from 600 to 1140 hours by 2020. To accommodate the delivery of the additional hours the nursery at Portlethen Primary School has been significantly expanded which has reduced the overall capacity of the school to 342 pupils.
- 5.8 Portlethen Primary School has a current roll of 263 pupils (December 2019). These are distributed between 11 classes. The school roll forecast to 2027 suggests pupil numbers will decline to 195 pupils. This represents a 57% use of capacity.
- 5.9 Portlethen Primary School is currently assessed as “B” for suitability, 78.6% and a “B” for condition.
- 5.10 Capacity Data

Table 1 below shows the current School Roll Forecast for Portlethen Primary School.

**Table 1**

Portlethen School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capacity	342	342	342	342	342	342	342	342
School Roll Forecast	256	241	222	219	219	211	206	195

- 5.11 Table 2 below shows the School Roll Forecast, including the additional housing from 2020 from the Leathan Fields site at Hillside. Build Out Rate 1 includes an additional 30 units per annum and Build Out Rate 2 includes an additional 60 units per annum.

**Table 2**

Portlethen School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capacity	342	342	342	342	342	342	342	342
Build Out Rate 1	262	258	249	254	261	260	255	240
Build Out Rate 2	268	275	274	275	267	250	236	216

These figures (and those in subsequent tables) are based on the published 2019 based school roll forecasts which can be viewed on the Aberdeenshire Council website at <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/parents-carers/school-info/school-roll-forecasts/>

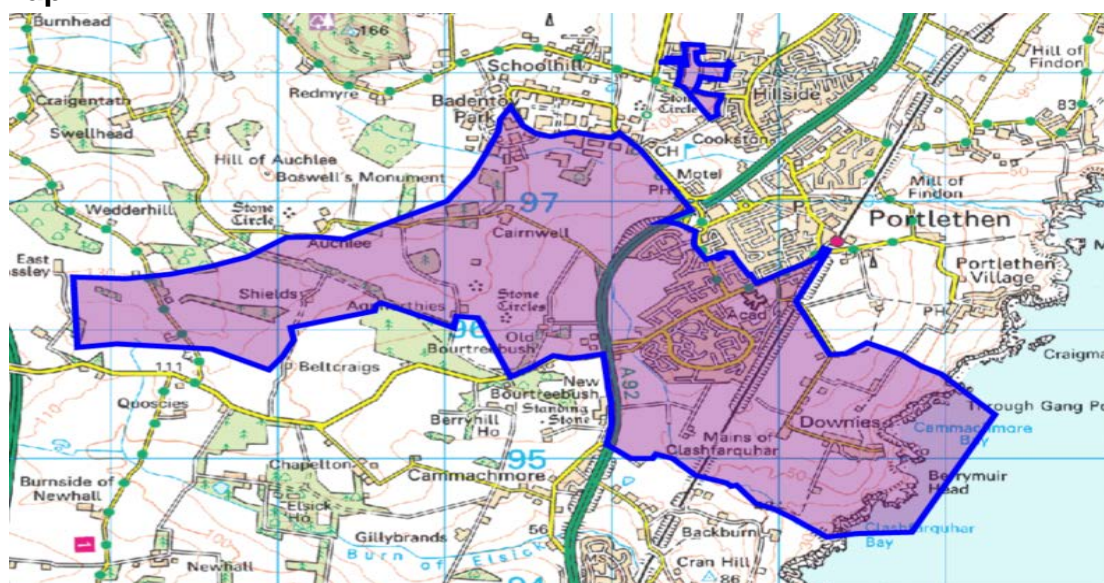
#### 5.12 Option 2 Rezone the Leathan Fields site to Fishermoss School

This option would be to change the catchment area of Fishermoss School to include the Leathan Fields site. This would only change the catchment area for

the land currently subject to the planning application. This would result in an isolated area adjacent to Hillside School being within the catchment area of Fishermoss School.

- 5.13 Map 4 shows the Fishermoss School Catchment area with Leathan Fields site.

**Map 4**



- 5.14 Fishermoss School offers Primary Education from P1-7, and pre school education. The school currently consists of 13 classrooms, school hall which is used for both PE and school lunches, general purpose areas, kitchen, staff room, school office, and Head Teacher Office.
- 5.15 Fishermoss School currently has a capacity of 358 pupils, it has a current roll of 260 pupils (December 2019). These are distributed between 10 classes. The school roll forecast to 2027 suggests pupil numbers will rise to 274 in 2024. This represents 77% use of capacity.
- 5.16 Fishermoss School currently finds it challenging to deliver two hours of PE per week for each class, as the gym hall is also used as the dining hall during the lunch period.
- 5.17 The outside areas consist of a large well equipped play ground divided between tarmac and grass, a good sized playing field and lockage bicycle storage.
- 5.18 Fishermoss School is currently assessed as a “B” (80.43%) for Suitability and a “B” for condition.
- 5.19 Capacity Data

Table 3 below shows the current School Roll Forecast for Fishermoss School.

**Table 3**

Fishermoss School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capacity	358	358	358	358	358	358	358	358
School Roll Forecast	253	261	261	265	274	273	280	270



- 5.20 Table 4 below shows the School Roll Forecast, including the additional housing from 2020 from the Leathan Fields site at Hillside. Build Out Rate 1 includes an additional 30 units per annum and Build Out Rate 2 includes an additional 60 units per annum.

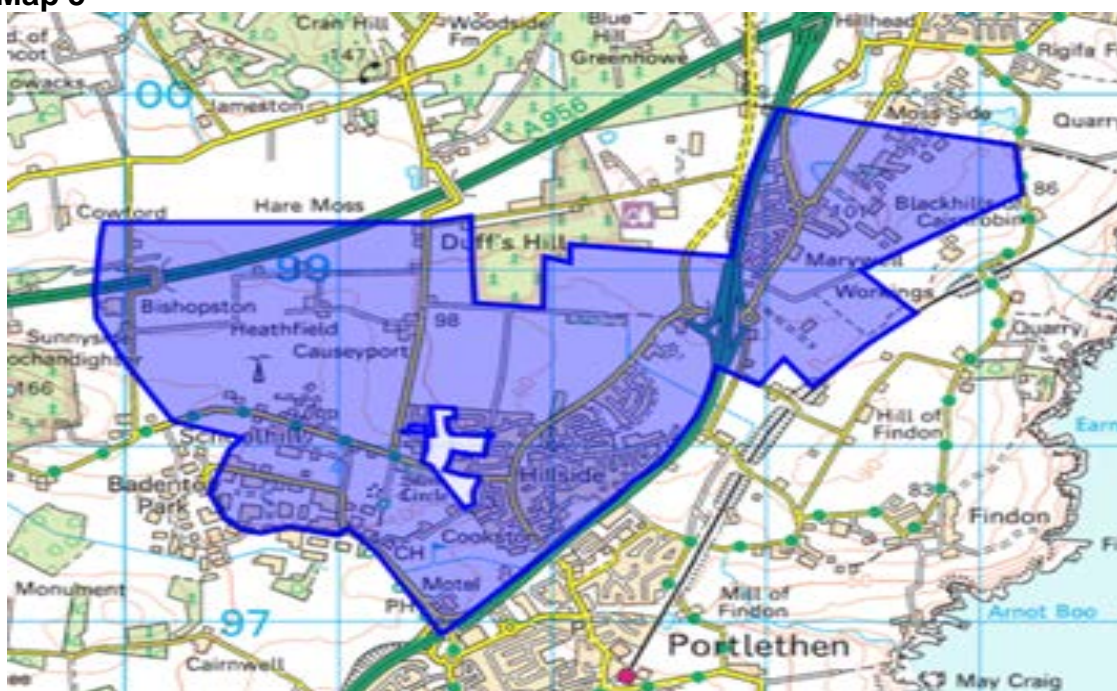
**Table 4**

Fishermoss School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capacity	358	358	358	358	358	358	358	358
Build Out Rate 1	257	274	280	291	305	310	317	304
Build Out Rate 2	262	287	300	307	310	302	302	286

- 5.21 Option 3 Keep the current catchment area for Hillside School with no changes (The Status Quo)**

Map 5 shows Hillside School catchment area with Leathan Fields site highlighted.

**Map 5**



- 5.22 This option would see Hillside School zone area remain the same and no changes made to the boundary lines. This would mean that the extra pupils generated by the Leathan Fields site in future years would continue to be zoned for Hillside School. The core capacity and school roll would be under significant pressure if all the pupils from the Leathan Fields site attend Hillside School.
- 5.23 Hillside school offers Primary Education from P1-P7, and pre school education. The school currently consists of 13 classrooms, which will increase to 17 classrooms in August 2020 for school aged pupils, and one for nursery, gym hall, lunch hall, kitchen, limited general purpose spaces, Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher offices, staff room and school office

- 5.24 The outside areas consist of a large, well equipped playground, and playing field, and lockable bicycle storage.
- 5.25 Hillside School currently has a capacity of 372 and a four class extension will be completed and ready for occupancy by August 2020 which will increase the capacity to 509 pupils. The general purpose spaces within the school will be required to be used as classrooms until the school roll starts to decline in 2025.
- 5.26 Hillside School currently has a roll of 421 pupils (December 2019), these are distributed between 16 classes. The school roll forecast to 2027 suggests pupil numbers will peak to 545 pupils in 2024, this represents a capacity of 107%.
- 5.27 Hillside School is currently assessed as “A” for Suitability, (99.85%) and an “A” for Condition.
- 5.28 Capacity Data

Table 5 below shows the current School Roll Forecast for Hillside School. This includes the extra capacity from the four class extension.

**Table 5**

Hillside School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capacity	509	509	509	509	509	509	509	509
School Roll Forecast	480	503	528	541	545	544	521	484

\*Figures in red indicate school over capacity

- 5.29 Table 6 below shows the School Roll Forecast for Hillside School, including the additional housing from 2020 from the Leathan Fields site at Hillside. Build Out Rate 1 includes an additional 30 units per annum and Build Out Rate 2 includes an additional 60 units per annum.

**Table 6**

Hillside School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capacity	509	509	509	509	509	509	509	509
Build Out Rate 1	486	520	554	575	588	593	571	528
Build Out Rate 2	492	537	580	596	593	583	551	505

\*Figures in red indicate school over capacity

## 6. Educational Benefit Statement

- 6.1 Hillside School will continue to operate above capacity for the next four to five years in spite of a four class extension being delivered in 2020. The school will continue utilising general purpose spaces as classrooms until the roll naturally declines in 2025.
- 6.2 The introduction of additional houses into the Hillside School catchment area and the subsequent increase in pupil numbers that will be expected from those houses will put further pressure on school accommodation. This will further restrict the delivery of the curriculum.

- 6.3 By rezoning the houses to an alternative school within Portlethen the pupils generated from this housing development will be able to access education provision in an appropriate setting without over-crowding. This benefit will also be experienced by existing pupils at Hillside School who would face overcrowding if the catchment area is not altered.
- 6.4 Both Portlethen Primary School and Fishermoss School have sufficient capacity to accommodate the pupils generated from this development and still deliver all elements of the curriculum.
- 6.5 There may be a disadvantage for pupils living within the new housing development being at a different school to peers living in neighbouring established developments. However, there are sufficient houses within the new development that they should not be isolated in this respect, and there would be expected to be a number of children of similar ages moving into the new houses.
- 6.6 The substantial nursery refurbishments at both Portlethen Primary and Fishermoss School bring equity to early years provision across the town of Portlethen, ensuring that strong transition can take place for children progressing from nursery to P1.
- 6.7 The roll at Portlethen Primary School is currently expected to decline, as there is limited opportunity for new housing within the catchment to generate additional pupils. Pupils from the new Leathan Fields houses would support the longer term sustainability of Portlethen Primary School and enable the staffing complement to remain at a similar level to at present.

## **7 Alternatives to the proposal**

- 7.1 The following alternative possibilities have been considered and discounted as noted below.
- Educate Hillside P7 pupils at Portlethen Academy from 2020. This would require three classrooms to be available at Portlethen Academy on a long term basis. This would require substantial consultation and engagement with parents and staff at both Hillside School and Portlethen Academy. There would be additional management implications for both Hillside School and Portlethen Academy. Furthermore, Portlethen Academy faces capacity measures in future sessions from approved housing and may not be able to offer spare classrooms for the P7 cohort.
  - Refuse all further planning applications within the Hillside School catchment area. The proposed housing development located at Leathan Fields Site is located within the defined settlement boundary of Portlethen. As such, Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan support the principle of this development which is located within an identified 'Strategic Growth Corridor'. The Planning Service therefore has inadequate justification to not support the principle of housing on this site and must be seen where possible, to facilitate development proposals in line with the wider policies contained within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017. The application could only be recommended

for refusal on grounds of lack of education provision if there were no potential solutions identified/available to accommodate children generated by development on the site.

## **8. Effect on the local community**

- 8.1 This rezoning has no effect on pupils currently attending Hillside School.
- 8.2 Any siblings of existing pupils at Hillside School would still be able to attend Hillside School.
- 8.3 Increased pupil roll at Hillside is already impacting upon community use of the facility. Additional housing within the catchment area will extend the period that community spaces are used as classrooms.

## **9. Financial Implications**

### **9.1 School Transport**

As the change in school zones would only apply to new children entering education provision in Portlethen, there will not be any change to transport provision for current pupils. Therefore, there will be no financial implications relating to transport from this proposed change.

- 9.2 The Leathan Fields site 1 mile from Portlethen Primary School and 1.8 miles from Fishermoss School and therefore under the 2 mile entitlement for free school transport.

## **10. Staffing Implications**

- 10.1 Initially there should be minimal implications for staff. As the overall roll of the Portlethen Cluster continues to rise there will be a requirement for additional teaching staff.

## **11. Equal Opportunities**

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 The aim of an EIA is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effects on groups with protected characteristics are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.

- 11.3 With regards to the rezoning of the Portlethen Primary School network, it is not believed that this will have a negative impact on any of the groups with protected characteristics.
- 11.4 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 Portlethen network with additional support needs will continue.
- 11.5 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.

## **12. Consultation Arrangements**

- 12.1 At it's meeting on 30 January 2020, Education & Children's Services Committee were asked to agree to the launch of the statutory consultation for the rezoning of the primary schools within Portlethen.
- 12.2 The period of consultation will extend from 10 February 2020 until 27 March 2020. This covers the required consultation period of 30 school days.
- 12.3 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 Aberdeenshire Council's website: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/education-consultations/>
- 12.4 A public meeting will be held during March at Hillside School. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is free to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council. There will be an opportunity for questions and feedback. A minute of the meeting will be taken so that the comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 12.5 Meetings will be organised for the staff working in each of the Portlethen Primary Schools during March 2020 to discuss the proposals, and a number of opportunities will be arranged for all primary pupils at the schools to engage in the consultation during these months.
- 12.6 An online survey will be available as part of this consultation from 10 February 2020. This can be completed at the following address: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HillsideRezone>
- 12.7 Aberdeenshire Council will also take into account written comments which should be sent to Maxine Booth, Quality Improvement Manager, to be received no later than 5pm on Friday 27 March 2020. They should be posted to Aberdeenshire Council, Learning Estates Team, Education & Children's Services, Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie, AB51 3WA or emailed to [LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk).
- 12.8 A copy of this document will also be sent to Education Scotland. They will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period. Education Scotland will also receive a

copy of any oral representations made at the public meeting, and a copy of any other relevant documentation. They will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the schools and make any reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

### **13. Consideration of Consultation Responses**

- 13.1 Aberdeenshire Council will review the proposals in light of the Education Scotland report, survey results, written representations received and oral representations made by any person at the public meeting. A final report will then be prepared on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available on Aberdeenshire Council's website and from Council Headquarters, as well as the schools, libraries and offices listed on page 2 of this document, free of charge.
- 13.2 The council's final report will include the total number of written representations received during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations and a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting. The report will also include the Local Authority's response to the Education Scotland report, a response to issues raised through any written or oral representations it has received, a copy of the Education Scotland 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 Education Scotland report and representations (both written and oral) that were received.
- 13.3 The last section of the report will include an officer recommendation as to whether the proposals should be adopted and implemented. The final consultation report will be published at least three weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

### **14. Decision Making**

- 14.1 No decision will be taken by the Council on the proposals contained in this paper until after the end of the consultation period. The Council will then receive a report on the consultation and will make a recommendation in the final consultation report outlined above.
- 14.2 The final consultation report will be considered firstly by the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee who will be asked to make a recommendation as to whether the proposed changes are implemented.
- 14.3 Following discussion and recommendation at the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee, the Education & Children's Services Committee will consider the report and be asked to approve the officer recommendation in the report.

### **15 Conclusion**

- 15.1 The proposed changes to the catchment areas will enable planning permission to be granted for the 175 houses, without putting undue pressure onto the capacity of Hillside School.