



CONSULTATION REPORT THE RELOCATION OF FORRES ACADEMY

4th February 2026

This Consultation Report has been issued by the Moray Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended)

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1. Introduction

1.1. This report has been prepared following a consultation on the proposal to:

- discontinue education provision at the existing Forres Academy school buildings on Burdsyard Rd, Forres IV36 1FG with effect from October 2028.
- and to transfer education provision to the new Future Forres Academy buildings near to the existing school at a site on Orchard Road, Forres IV36 1PJ from October 2028.

1.2. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the above proposal. The objective of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number and a summary of written and oral responses received during the statutory consultation period.
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations.
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report.
- Provide a statement on how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the statutory consultation period.
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the proposal document and state how the Council acted on it.
- Provide officer conclusions and recommendation to Elected Councillors

1.3. Moray Council strives to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all pupils in its schools.

1.4. The Council's vision for developing its learning estates can be summarised as delivery of a:

“Learning Estate that is flexible and inspirational, that supports excellence and equity for all in Moray, building a better future for our children and young people, providing life-long learning opportunities and providing the foundations for a growing and diverse sustainable economy.”

1.5. In order to fulfil the vision, it is necessary to consider the changing nature of teaching, drivers for digitally enabled education, low carbon schools, additional support needs and early learning & childcare when considering the future of the

learning estate. The [Learning Estate Strategy](#)¹ requires the provision of the best learning environments for our learners and ensure that there is sufficient capacity as Moray grows as an economy.

1.6. A Special Meeting of Moray Council on 7 November 2022 approved Future Forres Academy as the priority project for Scottish Government Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) Phase 3 funding.

1.7. At the [Moray Council Meeting](#)² on 22 May 2024, the site at Applegrove/ Roysvale was approved as the preferred location for a new Forres Academy school subject to further statutory consultation.

2. The Consultation Process

2.1. The requirement for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools is set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2. At its meeting on 16th September 2025, the [Education, Children's and Leisure Service Committee](#)³ authorised a statutory consultation on a proposal for relocation of the new Forres Academy from the existing site to an adjacent site.

2.3. The proposal document was focussed upon Forres Academy located within Forres, Moray, and part of the Forres Associated School Group (ASG) and classified as Non-Rural by the Scottish Government.

2.4. This consultation focused solely upon the relocation of the school.

2.5. As this relocation consultation forms part of a major capital investment project, with requirements to consult on other aspects of project delivery, parallel activity has continued in terms of the planning application process and presentation of the Moray Council's petition to court regarding the Common Good land of Roysvale Park that forms part of the proposed development which will be heard on 5 May 2026. This has been to ensure that if the proposal was accepted, the building programme would be able to finish within the timescales set for securing the funding from the Scottish Government. The relocation consultation followed the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

2.6. A copy of the proposal document, included as **Appendix A**, was issued and made available to statutory consultees and the wider public via the [link](#)⁴ on the Moray Council's website.

2.7. Full copies of the proposal were made available at Moray Council, Elgin Central Library, Forres Library, Forres Academy, Alves Primary School, Anderson's Primary

¹ <http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file149062.pdf>

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<https://moray.cmis.uk.com/moray/CouncilandGovernance/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2047/Committee/2/Default.aspx>

³

<https://moray.cmis.uk.com/moray/CouncilandGovernance/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2092/Committee/44/Default.aspx>

⁴ <https://engage.moray.gov.uk/new-forres-academy-relocation-consultation>

School, Applegrove Primary School, Dallas Primary School, Dyke Primary School, Kinloss Primary School, Logie Primary School and Pilmuir Primary School.

- 2.8. A copy of the document was also available on request by letter or email from Moray Council Learning Estates Team.
- 2.9. The Moray Council issued a [press release](#)⁵ on 16 September 2025 along with a social media post on 18 September to launch and announce the consultation. This was followed by the publication of statutory notices in three newspapers: Forres Gazette (Wednesday, 24 September 2025), the Northern Scot (Friday, 26 September 2025), and the Press and Journal (Friday, 26 September 2025)
- 2.10. The period of public consultation ran from 18 September 2025 until 13 November 2025 which adequately covered the statutory 6-week period inclusive of at least 30 school days.
- 2.11. Two in person public meetings were held at Forres Academy. The first for parents and carers of pupils on Wednesday 29 October 2025 and the second on Tuesday 4 November 2025 for the wider public. In addition, an online Teams meeting was also held on Thursday 6 November 2025; principally for anyone that had not been able to attend either of the two in-person sessions.
- 2.12. The public meetings were convened by the Council and they provided a background presentation on the proposal and provided significant opportunity for questions and comments. A meeting record for each public session was taken which summarises questions and queries raised and immediate responses to these.
- 2.13. An online survey to capture peoples' views on the relocation proposal was available from 18 September 2025 to 13 November 2025 as part of the consultation. The survey was made available on [Moray Engage](#)⁶ along with consultation information and the relocation proposal.
- 2.14. Primary schools across the Forres Associated School Group (ASG) were provided with a paper survey to capture the views of pupils on relocating the secondary school. The completion of the survey was facilitated by the primary school staff and included a sample of pupils across a range of year groups.
- 2.15. The public consultation survey link was publicised and made available to pupils at Forres Academy through the pupil bulletin on school Microsoft Teams site. A representative group of students from across S1-S6 year groups in the Forres Academy Student Network completed the survey at their meeting on 8 October 2025.
- 2.16. The Council also considered any written comments which were emailed to learningestate@moray.gov.uk. It was also possible for comments to be sent to

⁵ <https://newsroom.moray.gov.uk/news/moray-council-launches-consultation-on-relocation-of-forres-academy>

⁶ <https://engage.moray.gov.uk/new-forres-academy-relocation-consultation>

Education Estates, HQ Room 231, Elgin Council Offices, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX before 4pm on 13 November 2025.

- 2.17. Education Scotland received a copy of the proposal document and attended both in person public meetings.
- 2.18. At the end of the consultation period, Education Scotland were provided with all documentation relating to the consultation, including a copy of the full survey information. They visited Forres Academy and Alves, Applegrove, Kinloss, Pilmuir and Anderson's primary schools to hear the views of pupils, parents and staff across the Forres Associated School Group. Following their visits and review of the shared consultation documentation, Education Scotland issued a report on the proposal. This report is covered in detail in **Section 8** to this report.
- 2.19. Adhering to the statutory requirement, this consultation report was published on the Moray Council's website on 4 February 2026, in preparation for consideration by the Education, Children and Leisure Services Committee on 11 February 2026, and more than the three weeks minimum time required, prior to the Council meeting on 28 February 2026 where it is expected a decision on whether to implement the recommendation will be made.
- 2.20. This report includes a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations and a summary of the oral representations made at the public meetings. The report also includes the Authority's response to the Education Scotland Report, a response to issues raised through any written or oral representations it has received, together with 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 also contains 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 it received.
- 2.21. The report concludes with an officer recommendation as to whether the proposals should be adopted and implemented.
- 2.22. The Consultation Report has been published at least three weeks prior to the Council making a final decision.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The Proposal document, included as **Appendix A** to this report, was issued to those individuals and bodies listed under 'Distribution' within the Proposal document. The Proposal document was also published on the Council website at <https://engage.moray.gov.uk/new-forres-academy-relocation-consultation>
- 3.2. The proposal on which the consultation took place was:

That education provision at the current Forres Academy at Burdsyard Road in Forres be discontinued with effect from October 2028 and that from that date pupils will continue their education at the new Forres Academy which will be

located at a nearby site within the Applegrove Primary School boundary on Orchard Road in Forres

- 3.3. Secondary education for the Forres area is currently provided at Forres Academy. The original building was built in 1969 and has been expanded and updated several times to accommodate the requirements of modern education.
- 3.4. The physical capacity of the Academy is 1121 with a September 2025 census roll of 860. The existing Forres Academy building was assessed in 2021 as overall condition D – life-expired and/or at serious risk of imminent failure. In August 2023, Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) was discovered in many areas of the 1969 building. Although mitigation works had recovered many areas for learning, several areas remain unusable, and any planned future use of these areas would require significant investment to complete mitigation works to safely return these areas for school use.
- 3.5. Several options for the future Forres Academy have been explored together with several possible locations for new build options. A feasibility study was undertaken and in addition to new build proposals, consideration was also given to the refurbishment of the current building on the existing site. A bid proposal in November 2022 for Scottish Government Learning Estate Investment Programme Phase 3 (LEIP 3) investment to support a new build Forres Academy was successful.
- 3.6. To address the RAAC issue throughout the school as part of a refurbishment would require the whole school to be taken down to basic steel infrastructure. The timescale to conduct a phased refurbishment build on the current school site would put Scottish Government funding at risk as it would not be able to complete within the specified timescale. Pupils would also face serious disruption to their education due to the requirement for phased build and decant accommodation.
- 3.7. The study concluded that a refurbishment option would not offer value for money and be unlikely to meet the aspirations of the local community, therefore a new build solution was proposed.
- 3.8. Public engagement was undertaken between 28 March to 25 April 2024 in the form of an online and paper survey, with a community drop-in session also held, with a community drop-in session also held. Officers within Education, Children's and Leisure Services, as well as the wider Moray Council, have carefully considered the feasibility study and all the responses to the public engagement study and have supported recommendations on the preferred site. A recommendation that the preferred site for the new school should be Applegrove playing fields was approved by at the [Moray Council Meeting](https://moray.cmis.uk.com/moray/CouncilandGovernance/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2047/Committee/2/Default.aspx)⁷ on 22 May 2024.
- 3.9. The new Forres Academy will be built with sufficient pupil capacity based upon future school roll forecasts which take account of impact factors such as birth

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<https://moray.cmis.uk.com/moray/CouncilandGovernance/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2047/Committee/2/Default.aspx>

rate trends and planned new residential housing, including a factor for any significant new development to the east of the town.

- 3.10. The catchment area for Forres Academy will not change with the new location. All pupils currently zoned to the school would continue to attend the new Forres Academy.
- 3.11. At the time the relocation proposal was drafted, pupils living out with 2 miles of their zoned secondary school had an entitlement to school transport. At the [Moray Council Meeting](#)⁸ on 24 September 2025, changes to the Home to School Transport Policy were agreed which will see the distance increase to 3 miles from April 2026.
- 3.12. The current capacity and predicted rolls for Forres Academy, based on the September 2024 census data, are shown in Table 1 below. These figures are the published 2024 School Roll Forecast figures which can be found on the Moray Council website at the following [link](#)⁹:

Table 1 – Forres Academy December 2024 School Roll Forecast										
School	Capacity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Forres Academy	1121	873	845	836	874	878	870	881	881	888

- 3.13. Although yet to be formally released, the updated school roll forecast taking account of the September 2025 census data, shown in table 2 below, confirms that there is no significant change from previous years forecast.

Table 2 – Forres Academy September 2025 School Roll Forecast											
School	Capacity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Forres Academy	1121	873	860	828	871	878	872	888	891	894	880

- 3.14. The locations of the existing Forres Academy and the proposed Forres Academy are shown below:

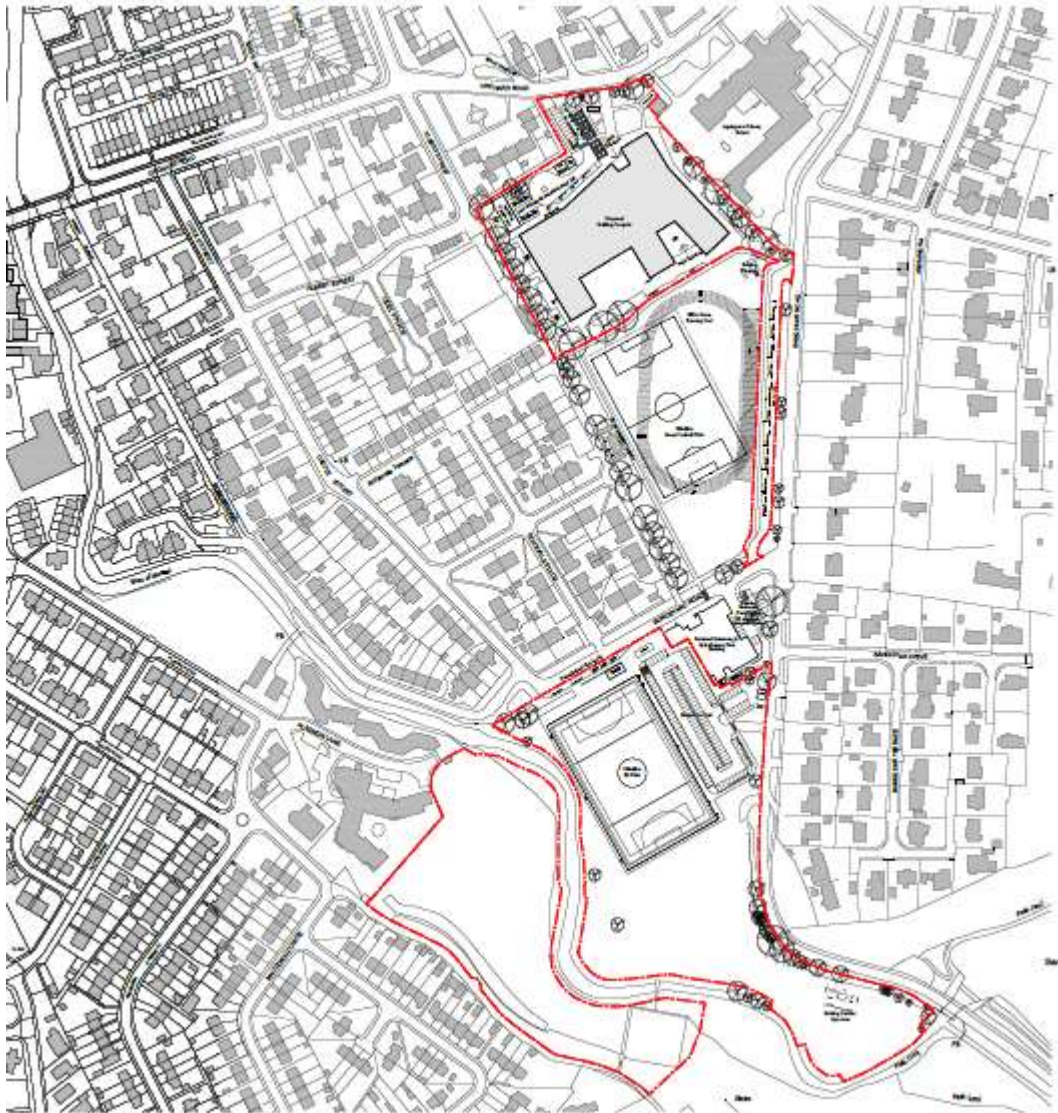
⁸

<https://moray.cmis.uk.com/moray/CouncilandGovernance/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2056/Committee/2/Default.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file159781.pdf>



Current Site



Proposed Site and indicative site plan

4. Educational Benefits Statement

4.1. In September 2019 the Scottish Government updated its vision for the future school estate in Scotland with Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy 'Connecting People, Places and Learning' which was developed by Scottish Government and COSLA. This contains ten guiding principles which local authorities are required to take account of in planning changes to their school estate, namely:

- Learning environments should support and facilitate excellence joined up learning and teaching to meet the needs of all learners.
- Learning environments should support the welfare of all learners, meet varying needs to support inclusion and support transition for all learners.
- The learning estate should be well managed and maintained, making the best of existing resources, maximising occupancy and representing and delivering best value.
- The condition and suitability of learning environments should support and enhance their function.
- Learning environments should serve the wider community and where appropriate be integrated with the delivery of other public services in line with the place principle.
- Learning environments should be greener, more sustainable, allow safe access and accessible walking routes for walking, cycling and wheeling and be digitally enabled.
- Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environment should be maximised.
- Good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all.
- Collaboration across the learning estate, and collaboration with partners in localities, should support maximising its full potential.
- Investment in Scotland learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

4.2. The Moray Council's Learning Estate Strategy was approved by Council in December 2020 as a strategic approach, and updated in 2022, sets out the Council's vision of providing a sustainable education service aiming for excellence. It sets out how the Council will meet the needs of 21st century learning and teaching and aligns with the local priorities set out within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the Moray Council Corporate Plan.

4.3. Within Moray the strategic aspirations and key drivers are:

Excellence

- All learners to be educated in high quality buildings (minimum level B for condition and suitability).
- All learners to have access to high quality outdoor learning environments.

Inclusion

- The learning estate must be accessible to all.
- The learning estate must support achievement for all, including non-traditional learner pathways.
- The learning estate should support the health and wellbeing of all users.

Place

- Our learning estate should be for the local community, with flexible and extended use outside of normal school operating hours.
- Shared use of the buildings to be explored with partners to enhance and enable effective delivery of services within our communities.

Sustainability

- We will aim for school occupancy levels of at least 80% of functional capacity.
- The learning estate must meet national and local net zero carbon targets.
- The learning estate must be able to support high quality digitally enabled learning and community access to digital.
- We must achieve and evidence best value from our investments.

4.4. A new modern Forres Academy will enhance learning for all pupils by providing an inspiring and innovative learning environment that supports the delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence throughout the Broad General Education and into Senior Phase, broadening potential for additional work-based qualifications through flexible learning spaces provided. The modern design proposed will allow flexibility to use the learning environment creatively and linking different subject areas as we look to the future and as highlighted through ongoing work being undertaken by Education Scotland on the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, learning within discrete curriculum areas and wider project-based learning (inter-disciplinary learning) will be enhanced.

4.5. The new design will facilitate high levels of collaborative and collegiate working among educational professionals, further strengthening levels of achievement through curriculum offered and providing a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential as successful learners, confident

individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The greater potential for natural and collaborative, collegiate working will enhance opportunities for staff to share practice and engagement in professional dialogue, evaluation and moderation.

- 4.6. The new building will be designed to promote accessible and inclusive learning, meeting the needs of all learning including those with enhanced Additional Support Needs who will be accommodated in well considered accessible facilities that will support them from their arrival on site, throughout the day, through formal learning and informal social times. Internal spaces will be further complemented by accessible outdoor spaces, enriching the learning environment and skills development for young people further.
- 4.7. The new building will also provide an improved wireless-enabled learning environment to maximise the effective use of digital devices and promote digital literacy and independent learning. Further potential to extend the qualification offer through e-learning courses for pupils due to flexible and digitally enabled spaces will be provided. The design takes account of the latest technology available, while ensuring the infrastructure supports the aspiration to move to one-to-one devices for all young people in secondary schools. This strategy will work alongside other devices that are an integral part of the delivery of the curriculum in some subject areas, supporting to prepare young people for future life and work and progression to positive post-school destinations.
- 4.8. An assembly hall which can accommodate 400 pupils is part of the design brief, which will include retractable, tiered seating that can be moved away to allow the space to be used for a variety of purposes. The assembly hall also serves as an excellent venue for examinations, school productions, music and drama performances, information evenings for parents and community events. In addition to this large gathering space, there will be other spaces throughout the new school that will provide additional gathering space for presentations as well as providing social space for young people at break and lunch. Additional, large collaboration spaces can be created by opening the flexible partitions between some classroom areas. These double classroom spaces will also allow additional examination spaces for larger numbers.
- 4.9. Providing a new building with shared and flexible learning spaces will encourage staff to work collaboratively and provide more opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively, supporting depth, pace and challenge in learning within a modern learning environment. Further opportunities using flexible learning spaces may also widen opportunities for inter-generational working with Early Years' settings, Primary Schools and the wider community.
- 4.10. Spaces for learning will be designed to allow a range of learning and teaching approaches including active, interdisciplinary and outdoor learning. New and flexible learning environments will inspire pupils and have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. They will further strengthen pride in Forres Academy and promote the school's main three values of *Inclusive, Kind and Determined*.

4.11. The new Forres Academy building will be fully responsive to future learning requirements, and the design process will ensure that all spaces support learning and teaching relevant to the society pupils will enter as adults. It will be designed to be an inspiring learning environment, fully able to support new and innovative digital learning and engage pupils with the curriculum. Provision of wider break-out spaces and pupil support areas will support all young people in relation to wellbeing and equity, ensuring that we get it right for every child by supporting them in inclusive workspaces where they are supported to reach their full potential.

4.12. The direct adjacency of Applegrove Primary School in addition to Anderson's Primary School and Pilmuir Primary School nearby to the new Forres Academy is a strategic decision that aligns with national policy drivers such as Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy which promote collaboration, inclusion and equity across education. This adjacency will provide enhanced learning and teaching opportunities for primary school staff and pupils with:

- Ease of access to specialist facilities such as practical science classrooms, digital suites, technical workshops, performance and art studios and modern sports facilities and dedicated outdoor learning spaces.
- Opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and shared thematic projects (project-based learning) with secondary departments will enhance depth, progression, and challenge for senior primary pupils, especially in P6 and P7; and,
- All staff benefiting from professional learning partnerships between primary and secondary colleagues, encouraging innovation and consistency in pedagogy and assessment practices across the BGE (Broad General Education) phase.

4.13. It will further support improved transitions and continuity of learning where:

- Physical proximity to a larger local primary school and nearness to the two other local primary schools of Anderson's and Pilmuir fosters a seamless transition from primary to secondary for the majority of pupils in the Forres ASG, reducing anxiety and promoting familiarity with staff, spaces, routines, and expectations;
- Joint curriculum planning across P7-S1 may be supported for continuity and progression in key curricular areas such as literacy, numeracy, STEM, and expressive arts; and,
- Earlier planned engagement with guidance staff and pastoral support systems would enhance pastoral continuity, ensuring that children are known well and supported effectively before and after transition.

4.14. It will also provide broader opportunities for inclusion and personal development:

- Access to wider extra-curricular activities and accommodation, which may include sports teams, music ensembles, clubs, and leadership programmes, will support the personal and social development of primary pupils.
 - Children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) would benefit from early access to enhanced support services and inclusion strategies developed at secondary level, ensuring consistency and strengthened transition planning; and,
 - Senior secondary pupils can be available to serve as mentors, role models, or reading buddies, fostering a culture of leadership, inclusion, and cross-age collaboration as well as potential to achieve additional qualifications or awards.
- 4.15. The 'shared' campus model that the adjacency allows to develop will support efficient use of shared resources and promote a community identity by:
- Promoting a coherent educational campus identity, supporting equity of access and community cohesion across all age groups.
 - Enhancing the efficient and sustainable use of public resources, including staff expertise, facilities, catering, and transport logistics; and,
 - Acting as a community hub, bringing together children, families, and wider partners in learning, wellbeing, and support.
- 4.16. The new design places real emphasis on outdoor learning which can be accessible by secondary school staff and pupils, primary school staff and pupils and the wider community. In addition to the space around the immediate new school build, such as the ecology garden, amphitheatre, enhanced outside PE and technical workshop, enhance ASN provision garden and kitchen garden, there will be ground improvements to the adjacent Roysvale Park grass football-sized pitch and athletics running track. The existing school area will be redeveloped to create a 3G sports pitch and additional space that will be landscaped to improve biodiversity and create an area supportive of health and wellbeing while the new school will maintain walking distance access to the retained swimming, fitness suite and hydrotherapy pool facilities.
- 4.17. The Tier 1 contractor will work with Developing Young Workforce (DYW), Forres Academy and wider education establishments to provide young people with the opportunity for meaningful work placements including students completing Foundation Apprenticeships. The contractor will also create new apprenticeship positions for local young people within the Moray region who will be employed by Balfour Beatty or their supply chain partners. Young people will benefit from these valuable and high-quality opportunities for them to experience the world of work and develop important employability skills and gain qualifications.
- 4.18. All the above elements of the new build will support pupil and staff wellbeing, staff recruitment and retention, pupil achievements and parental/community engagement as well as increased employability partnership approaches through flexible learning spaces provided.

5. Local Community Benefit

- 5.1. The new building shall be a comprehensive, purpose-built facility for the whole community, located to be as accessible and welcoming as possible. It will look to create links with existing community facilities within the area and, as well as creating new links, it will retain facilities from the existing school such as the swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool, parking area, outdoor gym and playing fields.
- 5.2. It is anticipated that the groups and individuals making use of the existing facilities will transfer to the new Academy facilities on completion. There will also be a new 3G pitch which will be of benefit to both the local community, Forres Academy and Applegrove Primary school.
- 5.3. By maintaining a central location, the new building should link with existing public transport and road infrastructure and minimise pedestrian travel distance and time from the existing town. It will promote active and sustainable travel as well as ensuring 'safer routes' to school.
- 5.4. The new Academy design is optimised with community and sport facilities which will significantly enhance opportunities for physical education and related activities and will improve pupils' health and wellbeing. It will provide excellent facilities for children, families and other community users out with core school hours.
- 5.5. Opportunities for community groups to have greater access to open spaces will be created. The relocation of the school may enable areas such as Plasmon and Mannachie playing fields to be utilised by the community as they may not be required by the school. This will benefit the community through the increase in green space available for outdoor activities and recreation supporting health and wellbeing.
- 5.6. The new build project will bring employment and financial opportunities and benefits to the community. The Tier 1 contractor will focus on local procurement and be able to evidence the number of local people who have been supported with continued employment with the project required, as a condition of LEIP 3 funding, to create a minimum of 16 new jobs, apprenticeships and graduate placements.

6. Public Engagement

Public Meetings

- 6.1. Parents/carers and the wider community and stakeholder groups were invited to discuss the proposal at one of the two public meetings planned, or at a planned third online meeting which were scheduled to be held during the consultation period. The public meetings were advertised in a council press release, social media and notices in the Forres Gazette, Northern Scott and Press and Journal.
- 6.2. The Moray Council presented information on the consultation process and details of the relocation proposal and new build project which was supported by a generic

presentation used at all 3 events – a copy of this presentation is at **Appendix B1**. Meeting attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and express their views at all the public meetings.

- 6.3. Attendees at the meetings were informed that the focus of the public consultation was the education impact and benefits of the proposed relocation of Forres Academy and that there were separate statutory processes underway with respect to other aspects of the Forres Academy project. Specifically, issues related to the planning application and proposed use of common good land, would be noted during this consultation, issues raised would be directly addressed as part of those other statutory processes.
- 6.4. The first meeting, open to parents/carers within the Forres ASG, took place at Forres Academy, Burdsyard Rd, Forres IV36 1FG at 6:30pm on Wednesday, 29 October 2025. A record of this meeting is at **Appendix B2**. It was attended by 47 members of the community, 3 local councillors and a representative of Education Scotland.
- 6.5. The second meeting, open to the wider public, took place at Forres Academy, Burdsyard Rd, Forres IV36 1FG at 6:30pm on Tuesday, 4 November 2024. A record of this meeting is at **Appendix B3**. It was attended by 23 members of the community, 2 local councillors and a representative of Education Scotland.
- 6.6. A further online Microsoft Teams meeting was held at 6:30pm on Thursday 6 November, principally for anyone that had not been able to attend either of the two in-person sessions. A record of this meeting is at **Appendix B4**. It was attended by 4 community members – 2 of whom had also attended the public session on 29 October 2025.

Discussions with Primary School Pupils

- 6.7. As part of the consultation process, survey questions were shared with Head Teachers at all Forres ASG primary schools to allow them to discuss the proposal with their respective pupils and feedback responses. Surveys were completed by groups of primary pupils at Alves, Andersons, Applegrove, Dallas, Dyke, Kinloss, Logie and Pilmuir primary schools. Responses were collected and collated from pupils across the P1 to P7 year groups.
- 6.8. A full breakdown of the pupil responses is provided at **Appendix C** with a list of views expressed highlighted, together with an officer response where appropriate, in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 6.9. Many pupils expressed general enthusiasm for new opportunities: new spaces, more subjects, clubs, equipment, friends, learning options and a chance to start fresh in a better-quality school building. They describe the new building as exciting, modern and something to look forward to as they progress into secondary school.
- 6.10. Primary pupils repeatedly highlighted that the current school is old, damaged and unsafe in places. They are pleased that the new building will be clean, safer, and

built to modern standards. They expect improved layouts, better classrooms, and a more welcoming environment. Many pupils are excited about upgraded facilities such as new science labs, technology rooms, kitchen facilities, better toilets, new computers and equipment. Sports facilities including a 3G pitch, running track and continued access to the swimming pool are noted as major benefits. Some feel the proposed location makes the school more central and easier to reach for certain year groups.

- 6.11. Some primary pupils were concerned over the loss of the Applegrove Primary School playing field for football, running, sports day and PE and outdoor learning. They feel this removes a key space for exercise and play, leaving primary pupils with less room to move. To offset the loss of the existing school playing field, Applegrove Primary School will be able to use both Roysvale Park and the new 3G pitch for supervised activities. There are ongoing discussions with Applegrove Primary School to consider how their outdoor space could be further enhanced to support outdoor learning, breaks and lunchtime activities.
- 6.12. Some pupils worried they would face disruption to learning due to building noise and construction activity with comments raised about noise, dust, building machinery and disruption during construction. Construction will be bound by planning conditions 25 and 26 and health and safety regulations (that include the management of noise). The preferred contractor Balfour Beatty have mandated Considerate Contractor scheme compliance for all sites and will have regular meetings with both school management teams to ensure that any disruption to delivery of education at Applegrove Primary School during construction is minimised.
- 6.13. Pupils raised concerns about older secondary pupils being physically close to younger primary pupils, especially during breaks or lunchtimes. The existing and new schools will be adjacent to each other, but secondary and primary pupils will not mix during break or lunchtimes and have separate outdoor spaces separated by a secure fence delineating the two schools. However, as discussed in Section 4 of this report, there will be educational and social benefits that result from the opportunity for more formal and planned interactions and collaboration between pupils from the different schools.
- 6.14. Pupils expect more cars and buses around the two schools, especially at pick-up times. Given that new Forres Academy is adjacent to the existing school and the proposed bus drop off and pupil entrance are away from Orchard Road entrance to Applegrove there is no expectation of any significant increase in traffic. A requirement of the planning application was to undertake a survey of current traffic around the site which was completed during term time in 2025. The survey data did not indicate any significant traffic issues. Additional traffic management requirements have been identified through the planning application process relating to conditions 3,4,5,6,7 and 25.
- 6.15. The new school is seen as large and complex, with concerns from pupils about getting lost, struggling to learn a new layout and navigating multiple floors. Some pupils worry about crowded corridors and larger pupil numbers. Older pupils expressed uncertainty about moving during term time and adjusting to new

routines. Concerns also related to adapting to new teachers, new rules, and differences in layout compared to the old academy. These are understandable and anticipated normal concerns of pupils transitioning to a secondary school. Staff at Forres Academy are very experienced in reducing and providing a transition experience that supports pupils' wellbeing.

Secondary School Pupils

6.16. The public consultation survey link was publicised and made available to all pupils at Forres Academy through the pupil bulletin on the school Microsoft Teams site. A representation of students from across S1-S6 year groups in the Forres Academy Student Network completed the survey at their meeting on 8 October 2025.

Consultation Proposal Online Survey

6.17. During the consultation period parents/carers, stakeholders and community members were invited to take part in an online survey to express their opinion on the proposal. The survey provided a summary of the relocation proposal. Participants were also given the opportunity to leave free text comments regarding the proposal. It was the first use of the Moray Engage to support the sharing of proposal information and host the survey. An option to restrict comments from only those that had registered for a personal login using personal details was considered; however, it was agreed that to avoid criticism of not making the survey accessible for those who wished to contribute anonymously that registration would not be required. This did leave open a risk that multiple submissions from one account was allowed.

6.18. The consultation survey received 687 responses, the results of which are in **Appendix D** with a survey summary report in **Appendix E**. Responders made and indicated their submissions based on their demographic group. They were able to identify as more than one demographic if they were eligible to do so e.g. as a parent and a staff member.

6.19. A simple breakdown of the 687 online survey responses is 43.1% in favour of the relocation and 56.9% against. The same survey format was used during public engagement on the site selection in 2024 and had a similar breakdown of 46.4% in favour of the Roysvale/Applegrove site and 53.6%.

6.20. The majority of survey responses were from parent/carers with 332 responses identifying in this group. 250 responses were associated with Forres Academy, followed by 109 with Applegrove Primary School. (The difference between the total number of the responses and the split is that some parents/carers response reported children at both schools). Parents/carers from all eight ASG primary schools were represented in the survey responses. Overall, 55.3% of all parents/carer responses indicated support for the relocation of Forres Academy to the proposed site.

6.21. The second largest group submitting responses, 223 in total, indicated they were community members. Within that group, 50.7% identified as living within the

Forres Academy catchment and 25.7% within the Applegrove Primary School catchment area, where the new build is planned. All ASG catchment areas were represented in the responses from community members. Overall, only 19.2% of community members supported the relocation of Forres Academy to the proposed site which has clearly biased the overall results reported at para 6.19.

- 6.22. With the exception of Logie Primary School, there were a total of 75 responses to the survey from pupils across the Forres Academy ASG schools. By far the largest pupil group was Forres Academy, with 59 pupil responses, followed by Applegrove Primary School with 5 of the respondees (noting that Primary School pupils were able to engage separately via the paper survey. Within the online survey nearly 61.6% of pupils responding indicated that they agreed with the proposed relocation site for the new Forres Academy school.
- 6.23. A total of 45 school staff responses were received from 7 out of the 9 Forres Academy ASG schools. The largest proportion was from Forres Academy with 57.9% of staff submissions followed by Andersons Primary School with 15.8% of responses and Applegrove Primary School staff accounting for 7.9% of submissions within this group. Overall, over 53.3% of school staff supported the consultation proposal to relocate Forres Academy should relocate to the preferred Applegrove/Roysvale site.
- 6.24. The analysis above has assumed that each survey submission correlates to single responder. It was highlighted in para 6.17 that the use and configuration of Moray Engage to best facilitate widest community engagement did allow for multiple responses to be permitted from single user access. The survey results summary at **Appendix D** provides detail on multiple submission 'duplicates' that were identified. It is not possible to determine whether all these duplicates were from a single responder however if all the 'duplicates' are only allocated as one response then the overall breakdown was 32.3% in favour and 67.7% not in favour of the proposal (a 10% variance if duplicates are accepted).

7. Written Responses

- 7.1. During the consultation period between 18th September until 13th November 2025 representations were invited from statutory consultees and interested parties.
- 7.2. A total of 6 written responses to the consultation proposal were received – by email. Full copies of emails received (with sender details redacted) are included in **Appendix F**
- 7.3. Themes and specific points raised through written responses covered:
- Loss of green space
 - Loss of common good ground/community space
 - Reduction in school pitches and playing fields.
 - Proposed site being too small.
 - Disruption and safety issues for pupils
 - Traffic concerns
 - Drainage and flooding issues

- Non-Compliance with The School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) 1967 Regulations (as amended)

8. Moray Council response to written and oral representations

- 8.1. The comments received during the consultation period fall into several themes. These have been carefully considered and the Council responses to these are provided below. The majority of the comments received have referenced issues formally covered within the statutory planning approval process. It should be noted that the Planning and Regulatory Approval Committee approved the new Academy planning application on 14 January 2026. Details of that decision can be found on the Moray Council Planning Portal ([Decision Notice¹⁰](#))

Green space and environmental concerns

- 8.2. A significant number of survey and written responses raised concerns about the loss of access to green space, particularly the Applegrove playing field and surrounding open areas. Many felt this space is vital for outdoor learning, daily play, sports activities, ASN support and general wellbeing. Respondents stressed that once this field is removed, it cannot be replaced, and that its loss would significantly affect the character of the local environment and the opportunities available to children.
- 8.3. A number of responses acknowledged that other recreational spaces exist elsewhere in Forres, and suggested that if the project proceeds, new landscaped areas or upgraded sports facilities would reduce the overall impact.
- 8.4. Moray Council always strives to provide outdoor/green space for all our children and young people. Options will be explored to ensure minimum impact on Applegrove pupils. Access to outdoor space will be maintained throughout construction, with plans in place to ensure that pupils continue to have safe, usable areas for play and learning. The project is being designed with careful consideration to ensure Applegrove pupils continue to benefit from high-quality outdoor environments both during and after the build, with all pupils having access to the new 3G pitch. In addition, the project includes improvements to the drainage of Roysvale Park and the surrounding land, which will enhance the quality and year-round usability of green space in the long term, which both Applegrove Primary and the new Forres Academy will have access to. There are also ongoing discussions with Applegrove Primary School to determine how the outdoor space around the existing school could be enhanced.
- 8.5. The School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) 1967 Regulations (as amended) recommends a site area based on school size. In the case of Applegrove the school site will reduce to a compliant 13,465m². In addition, further outdoor playing field provision is to be available and in close proximity to the school. For the purposes of Applegrove Primary School, the

¹⁰

<https://publicaccess.moray.gov.uk/eplanning/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=T3122WBGK0C00>

playing field requirements will be met through the use of Roysvale Park. In addition, the project is working with the Applegrove Primary school community to identify opportunities to further enhance the retained outdoor learning and play spaces around the school.

- 8.6. The current landscape plans include creating green spaces and community facilities that will benefit both the schools and the local community. This redevelopment aims to enhance the environment and provide valuable outdoor spaces for various activities and events. The goal is to ensure that the area is used efficiently and effectively, contributing to the overall improvement of the quality of life for pupils and the local community.

Traffic, parking and road safety

- 8.7. A number of responses highlighted concerns about traffic congestion and road safety. Many described Orchard Road and nearby streets as already heavily congested during school drop-off and pick-up times. They feared that adding a large secondary school would worsen gridlock, increase risks for children walking or cycling and put further pressure on limited parking.
- 8.8. A number of respondents noted that the central location would continue to support walking and cycling for many pupils.
- 8.9. Moray Council understands that the concerns about traffic. The existing road network around the current and proposed sites has been surveyed during school term using fixed traffic cameras. While there is a peak in traffic flow at school drop off and pick up as would be expected, the data does not show concerning traffic issues immediately adjacent to the site. A new, dedicated coach drop-off layby is being provided to take coaches off the main road network and therefore reduce conflict of road users. Drop off to the new school by car is discouraged and survey data together with hands up travel data from the school notes this to be low. The main pupil entrance to the facility is to the south and as such should any drop-offs happen, these are anticipated to be to the south of the building not on Orchard Road. Additional traffic management requirements have been identified through the planning application process relating to conditions 3,4,5,6,7 and 25.
- 8.10. The Forres Academy School car park is being located on a brownfield site on the footprint of the existing building to utilise this development area and offer up additional area back as green space. The car park will be located on the site of the existing Forres Academy and will be accessed off Sanquhar Road. There is also an area of the existing school car park which will be returned to green community space. Therefore, planned school parking will not add pressure to other areas around the new school location.

Flooding, drainage and ground conditions

- 8.11. A number of responses raised issues relating to flooding and drainage on and around the proposed new school site. Many described the site as a natural soakaway and questioned whether existing infrastructure could handle additional

run-off created by new buildings and hardstanding. Some feared this could increase flood risk for surrounding homes.

- 8.12. A smaller group expressed confidence that modern engineering techniques and sustainable drainage systems could effectively manage these challenges.
- 8.13. Moray Council see a core requirement of the design being to improve both surface water run-off and the wider drainage issue on the site – which by design will also benefit the wider community in this area. The final site drainage design solutions will need to comply with legislation on management of surface water and be approved by SEPA and Scottish Water. SEPA confirmed that the additional information provided indicates that with the mitigation proposals there is unlikely to be any significant increase in flood risk to third party receptors as a result of the proposals and they removed their objection to the application provided that the proposed flood storage area and flood bund are constructed and operational prior to commencement of demolition works at the existing Forres Academy Site.
- 8.14. To service the full site, a new surface water drainage system will be implemented, offering surface water storage and attenuation to restrict discharge from the site in all rainfall events. This surface water will be conveyed through a new surface water sewer that will discharge into the Burn of Mosset. This new sewer will not only service the new development, but discussions are underway with Scottish Water regarding the adoption of this proposed sewer for use by adjacent properties and development in the area. Hence this will reduce the pressures on the combined sewer network and further reduce flood risk. Scottish Water have no objections to the planning application. The foul water connection will be permitted on the condition that the proposed surface water removal from the combined sewer on Orchard Road offsets the increase in foul flows at this location when changing the foul connection point.

Site Size, Suitability and Future Expansion

- 8.15. Some response stated that the proposed site was too small for a modern secondary school. Some responses stated that the proposed site was too small for a modern secondary school. They felt the design appeared cramped, with limited outdoor space and no room for future growth. Concerns were also raised about the height and scale of the building in comparison to surrounding homes.
- 8.16. A number of comments recognised the benefits of a central location.
- 8.17. The design is compliant with the School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) Regulations 1967. The Council is aware the Scottish Government intends to refresh and modernise the School Premises Regulations and have initiated a formal consultation on proposed changes to the current legislation. The outcome of this consultation is not expected to adversely impact the current design.
- 8.18. Any future school capacity requirements have been taken into account within the new school design. Existing annual school roll forecasting for the Forres Associated School Group (ASG) (the data is provided in Table 1 and 2 earlier in this

report) and wider Moray area takes account of future capacity requirements over the next 8 years. Birth rate and residential development, which are the key contributors to school capacity need, have been considered in terms of the design requirement for the future school, with the proposed 1120 capacity of the new school meeting any future need.

- 8.19. In relation to the height and scale of the new school, the western elevation of the proposed building is no higher than many of the existing trees which run along the boundary between the playing fields and Forres Tennis club. The proposed building is also sited approximately 42m from the properties to the north to minimise overlooking. A vertical sky component 25° method assessment was undertaken during the design development process, with no adverse outcome, and included in the planning application which was approved on 14 January 2026.

Impact on Applegrove Primary School during construction

- 8.20. A number of survey comments expressed concern on the impact of construction on Applegrove Primary pupils. Comments focused on noise, vibrations, dust and reduced outdoor play space over a prolonged period. Many felt this would be particularly challenging for younger children and those with additional support needs.
- 8.21. There is no evidence to suggest that school building projects have a negative impact on pupil learning or attainment. For example, Applegrove Primary School underwent a significant refurbishment between July 2015 and June 2017 while pupils remained in the building. There was no impact on pupil attainment during this period. It is common for projects of this nature to be undertaken while schools remained operational, with careful planning in place to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment.
- 8.22. In terms of careful planning, Balfour Beatty (the Tier 1 contractor) have mandated Considerate Contractor scheme compliance for all sites and will have regular meetings with both school management teams. There will be a robust construction and traffic management plan in place, and this forms part of the planning application; these include restricted and allocated delivery and access / egress times to the site.
- 8.23. Noise, dust and vibration surveys will be carried out in the appropriate surrounding areas of the site. The current design has identified that localised ground improvement techniques, rather than piling, will be required and will only be local to the footprint of the pad foundations to offer an enhanced bearing pressure. All aspects would be addressed during detailed design stage and through the planning application and mitigations implemented during construction. Planning condition 25 applies.

Use and loss of Roysvale Common Good Land

- 8.24. A number of survey comments raised concerns about the proposed use of Roysvale Common Good land for parking or bus access. Many felt it was inappropriate to repurpose an established community space and emphasised its

legal and historical importance. Some respondents suggested using Roysvale for improved community recreation instead of reducing it.

- 8.25. Only a small area of the (circa 12%) Common Good land is planned to be used for the bus drop-off lane. There will be no permanent parking on the common good land. The majority of the green space will be kept for school and community use.
- 8.26. It is proposed to use an area of Common Good during the construction phase and this will be returned to current use after the school is operational and area re-grassed. During this period the football pitch will remain although the running track will be temporarily reduced to 200m.
- 8.27. Formal access and use of Roysvale Park will be managed by a booking system. Currently the Roysvale Park football pitch can be hired/ booked by the public, and these arrangements will remain in place during and after construction. Moray Council are also aware that the general public access this space for informal recreation purposes, which will also continue as is the current status. Roysvale Park is also used by Forres Academy for physical education lessons although not currently formally booked out for use – this will change prior to construction to ensure the school adhere to the same booking system as the public.
- 8.28. Table 3 provides detail on the community group bookings for use of the Roysvale playing fields over the last 3 years.

Table 3	Q1 (Apr-Jun)	Q2 (Jul-Sep)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 (Jan-Mar)
2023/24	71	58	0	0
2024/25	11	9	0	3
2025/26	24	36	28	

All this usage has been outside of normal school hours, and the max use seen (2023/24) would still be supported and not compromised by the future Forres Academy and Applegrove use of the playing fields for supervised activities. The Council view is that the pupils of the school are part of the community and their use of the Roysvale playing fields is in keeping with the spirit of ‘common good’.

As referenced earlier in the report the proposed use of the Roysvale Common land to support the proposed relocation of Forres Academy was subject to an independent public consultation that took place between 18 September 2024 – 12 November 2024. At the [Council Meeting](#)¹¹ on 21 January 2025 the outcome of the

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<https://moray.cmis.uk.com/Moray/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=%2fXUbHDU5jpd4OtcuZ8Ferm1DDauh1CI%2bJ9%2fFfinMKlortmZqE8QPUA%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7lkn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNlh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9lXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100>

consultation was considered and officers duly authorised to submit petition to the Court of Session for permission to appropriate a 12 metre strip of the Roysvale Common Good adjacent to Sanquhar Road to provide a bus drop off area the new school and to proceed with the short term disposal of an area of the same Common Good to provide a construction support area. The petition was duly submitted under Section 75 (2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to the Court of Session on 13 November 2025 and any person having an interest was able to lodge Answers to the petition by 19 December 2025. The dates for the Court of Session hearings to consider the petition have now been set for 12 February 2026 (Procedural) and 5 March 2026 (Substantive).

Visual Impact, Building Height and Effects on Residents

- 8.29. Some respondents commented on the visual impact of the proposed multi-storey building. Concerns included overshadowing of nearby homes, loss of privacy, reduced natural light and a building scale that was out of character with the surrounding residential area.
- 8.30. The proposed site is out with the Forres Conservation Area; however, the project team have selected a material palette for the new building which will complement the vernacular, blonde sandstone buildings which exist in the town, and Planning Condition 24 applies to ensure an acceptable form of development in the interests of the appearance and amenity of the development and the surrounding area. There are other education buildings in the area; the proposed site is approximately 350m from the existing secondary school and adjacent to the existing Applegrove Primary School.
- 8.31. While many residential properties in the area are one or two storeys high, there are also existing three- and five-storey buildings nearby on Cumming Street. The proposed building is primarily three storeys, which is comparable in height to some of the existing trees along the boundary with Forres Tennis Club. The eastern and southern wings of the building are designed to decrease to one and two storeys. Clerestory glazing has been incorporated at roof level to allow natural light into the centre of the plan. This feature, along with the plant enclosure, is set back from the building's perimeter to reduce the visual impact of the building's height.
- 8.32. The Planning and Regulatory Service Committee, in their review of the new Forres Academy planning application on 14 January 2026, considered these and similar issues raised in public objections to the application. Based on the recommendations and responses to queries provided by Council planning officers they unanimously approved the planning application.

Positive Views Supporting the Proposed Site

8.33. Those responses in support of the proposed new school location commented on the benefits of maintaining a central location including active travel options, maintaining familiar travel patterns. Some emphasised that delays could risk funding and extend the use of outdated facilities, arguing that the site offers a practical way to deliver a new school quickly.

Direct responses to written (email) submissions.

8.34. Moray Council received six written responses during the consultation period. The majority of the comments and questions have been covered and answered in the council's response above and on the online [Forres Academy New School Build FAQs](#)¹².

8.35. There was a comment related to the future site area for Applegrove Primary School and that it does not comply in the School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) 1967 Regulations (as amended) that recommends a site area based on the school size and to have available and in close proximity playing fields sized accordingly. Moray Council are satisfied that for the purposes of Applegrove Primary School the school site is compliant and the playing field provision, required to be available and in close proximity to the school, is met through the use of Roysvale Park. Similarly, for Forres Academy, the combined use of Roysvale Park, Mannachie Pitches and Plasmon Playing Fields also satisfy the requirements. In addition to those areas, both schools will have access to the all-weather surface pitch located on the old Forres Academy site which will further enhance the sport facilities available to pupils across both schools

8.36. The theme of community use was also included in written responses. The new Forres Academy, both internally and externally, will be a state-of-the-art community hub that will deliver significant and long-term future benefit to the Forres and wider Moray community. There was early engagement with other partner services on the concept design for the school however, there are no existing plans to relocate other services such as the police station or social services within the school during the school day.

8.37. Concerns were expressed as to the safety of primary school pupils when using Roysvale Park. Management and operational plans will be reviewed and revised to ensure the safety of pupils at Applegrove Primary school when using the Roysvale park for outdoor supervised activities. Existing risk management strategies employed by Andersons Primary Schools for their similar use of public space in Grant Park will support and inform the development of future plans for Applegrove.

8.38. The statement that the proposed “unnecessary” use of Common Good land as a school bus drop off area raised both lack of transparency and stewardship of public assets by Council is not accepted by the Council. The early public engagement on the proposed site for a new school (October 2023), the formal consultation on Common Good land (18 September –12 November 2024) and the Petition to the Court of Session on 13 Nov 2025 seeking an order to permit the disposal and appropriation of areas of the Roysvale Common Good together with

¹² http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_151261.html

constantly available and regularly updated online FAQs demonstrates that the Council have been open and transparent that the preferred central location would seek to use Common Good within the design of and during construction of the new school. The siting of the bus drop off area is one of safety for pupils arriving and departing and will ensure minimal disruption along the Sanquhar Road at the start and end of the school day.

9. Education Scotland report

9.1. In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal. The full report is attached as **Appendix G**.

9.2. The report from Education Scotland was prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010. The purpose of the Education Scotland report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration on Moray Council's proposal to relocate Forres Academy.

9.3. HMIs considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area.
- any other likely effects of the proposal.
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

9.4. In preparing their report, HMIs undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meetings held on 29th October and 4th November 2025 in connection with the council's proposals.
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the sites of Forres Academy and Alves, Applegrove, Kinloss, Pilmuir and Anderson's Primary Schools.

9.5. The Council welcomes the Education Scotland report and accepts its findings. In response to the findings within the report, Moray Council's response is as follows:

- The Council welcomed that Education Scotland were in broad agreement with the educational benefits that the new school will provide a modern, high quality learning environment that will promote wellbeing and inclusion. The council welcomed the inspectors view that the proposed location has the potential to make the secondary school campus more accessible to primary school staff and pupils. This will allow them to take advantage of the specialist facilities, including those in science, home economics and physical education, such as the sports pitches and running track.
- The Council considered the views of Education Scotland that the consultation report needs to clarify the reasons for selecting the proposed central site. Significant information has been shared with the community during previous engagement and consultations (and remains accessible via project FAQs on the Moray Council website) on the preferred location for the new Forres Academy. The preferred site meets the local living and 20 minute neighbourhood intent to encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the place principle as set out in the National Planning Framework 4, creating connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling or cycling or using sustainable transport. The site is also council-owned which avoids the costly land acquisition and lengthy delays that would be associated with an alternative Lochyhill site, issues exacerbated by the lack of core services to the site and lack of adequate access infrastructure.
- The Council acknowledge that other statutory processes are required to be completed before the construction can commence and this has been clarified, in terms of which aspects of the proposal still need legislative agreement, in section 2.5 of this report.
- Education Scotland indicated that the council should detail how it is going to mitigate concerns about drainage and the impact on local residents. This information has been shared within online FAQs, the detailed planning application and commented upon within this report. The design proposals have come under close scrutiny of external agencies such as Scottish Water and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency as part of the planning application process who have approved the design approach which will improve the current Roysvale site. The planning application was approved on 14 January 2026, and the project will adhere to all planning regulations, obligations and conditions during construction and new building operation.
- In its report summary Education Scotland stated that the Council should “continue consultation with stakeholders as the project progresses”. In responding to this requirement the Council would contrast consultation - which it would define as a specific, time-bound activity where the Council would formally ask for opinions on a particular decision or proposal to inform its final choice and is likely to be a statutory requirement - with engagement, which it would define as a continuous, proactive, relationship-focused activity that aims to build mutual understanding and trust over time and involve informal meetings, community forums and wider stakeholder communications.

- To date the Council have, in addition to this consultation, undertaken statutory consultations on the planning submission and the temporary and permanent use of Common Good land and plan, if the Common Good petition to the Court of Session is successful, the council will be required to undertake a further consultation with respect to the disposal of open space in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1959.
- The Council has and will continue to engage with various stakeholders, including staff, pupils and community groups, on the detailed design and future use of the new Academy, the joint 5-18 'shared campus' opportunities and any enhancements to Applegrove retained outdoor space. In terms of the construction programme, the preferred contractor Balfour Beatty, supported by the Council, will provide frequent updates on planned site activity and progress and will respond to any school or wider community concerns related to construction and site management.

10. Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies and Additional Information

10.1. Section (10)(3) of the 2010 Act also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracies or omission within the proposal document which has either been raised by the consultees or identified by the Council itself.

10.2. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.

10.3. Officers are required to publish its response to representations made during the consultation period within its final Consultation Report.

10.4. The following inaccuracies were noted by officers during the consultation:

- Since the relocation proposal document was created, Moray Council changed its Home to School Transport policy, increasing the distance for free transport for secondary school pupils from 2 miles to 3 miles. This aligns with other Moray ASG area and national policies. This change was approved in September 2025, following a consultation to review policies as the school transport contract nears the end of its tenure. The new distance will apply from 13 April 2026.
- The Special Meeting of Moray Council was held on 7 November 2022 which approved the Future Forres Academy as the priority project for Scottish Government Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) Phase 3 funding. In the original proposal document the date of this meeting was inaccurate.
- The site boundary of the new school site plan contained in the original proposal document had omitted an area of land to the south of the current school. The accurate map has now been added at Para 3.14 to this report.

10.5. Several alleged inaccuracies were reported as presented in the proposal document or during the consultation process. These were:

- **School Premises Regulations** It has been stated in a number of responses that the project was non-compliant with School Premises Regulations which sets out minimum standard for school sites and playing field provision.
- The Council are satisfied that for the purposes of Applegrove Primary School the school site is compliant and the playing field provision, required to be available and in close proximity to the school, is met through the use of Roysvale Park. Similarly, for Forres Academy, the combined use of Roysvale Park, Mannachie Pitches and Plasmon Playing Fields also satisfy the requirements. In addition, the proposed new 3G pitch will provide a further 7,000m² of adjacent all weather sports pitch area for shared use by Applegrove PS and the new Forres Academy.
- **Misrepresentation of Visual Impacts of Design.** Several consultation responses opined that the visual material presented in the consultation and planning documents did not accurately reflect the scale and prominence of the proposed development. It continued that the use of stylised renderings and selective viewpoints appears to understate the building's mass and dominance within the surrounding landscape with the absence of accurate visual modelling from key viewpoints—particularly from the Sanquhar Road corridor and residential properties - misleading the public and decision-makers regarding the true visual and environmental impact of the proposal.

The Council do not accept there was any misrepresentation of design or misleading of the public over the design. Detailed design information formed part of a comprehensive planning proposal that was consulted upon as part of the Proposal of Application Notice process and was submitted to and approved by the Planning and Regulatory Service Committee on 14 January 2026 with the following planning condition applied that will ensure that the design is in keeping with the existing buildings and its central location:

Condition: No development shall commence until details have been submitted to and approved by the Council, as Planning Authority regarding samples and/or specifications and colouration of all external material finishes for all buildings/structures within the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council, as Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable form of development in the interests of the appearance and amenity of the development and the surrounding area.

11. Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

11.1. Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that:

After the Education Authority has received HMIE's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

- written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,
- oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,
- HMIs report.

11.2. The feedback from the consultation, and all the questions and comments raised has been considered in detail by officers. Data and information were checked where required and advice and input sought from other Council Services where needed to support responses to issues raised. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under section 9(1) of the 2010 Act.

11.3. Officers of the Education Service and Education Resources and Community Service have listened to the points made at the public meeting and have considered equally carefully the email representations received.

11.4. The Education Service's position (as the Education Authority) is set out in Section 4 of this report.

11.5. The educational benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made. Factors included in the Education Scotland report or representations made requiring any aspect of the educational benefits were considered.

12. Compliance with Sections 11A to 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

12.1. Section 11A to 13 of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 reference statutory requirements when considering the closure of rural schools. These requirements do not apply as Forres Academy is not a rural school.

13. Conclusion

13.1. In reviewing all the oral and written submissions to the formal consultation and survey results, there is agreement from most stakeholders of the need for a new, modern and high quality Forres Academy school building. There are a range of opinions across stakeholders as to the suitability of the proposed site to locate the new build on. Most community members who engaged with the consultation disagree with this location. However, more than half the parent/carers, pupils and school staff who engaged in the consultation support the move of Forres Academy to the Applegrove playing field.

13.2. Officers have carefully considered the opportunities, issues and challenges identified by stakeholders during both the informal engagement and formal consultation processes.

13.3. The Council now has the following options:

- Adopt the proposal to discontinue education at the existing site and relocate Forres Academy to the site on Orchard Road.
- Amend the proposal in a minor way.
- Amend the proposal significantly and undertake a further consultation on a new proposal; or
- Withdraw the proposal and maintain the status quo.

Each option is discussed below.

Adopt the proposal.

13.4. If the council chooses to adopt the proposal, it will align with the wishes of the majority of the parent/carers, pupils and school staff across the Forres ASG. Further, the educational benefits set out in the proposal document would materialise from the new school building location.

13.5. The existing Forres Academy building was assessed in 2021 as overall condition D (considered life-ex and in need of replacement or major refurbishment) and the existence of RAAC further added to the requirement for significant intervention – with the elected approach, for a number of reasons, a new build. Adopting the proposal will support the council’s ambition for the timely delivery of a new school supporting the delivery of a 21st century curriculum and enhancing a learning estate that supports excellence and a better future for our young people in the Forres ASG and meets NPF4 planning considerations.

13.6. Pupils currently at Forres Academy and primary pupils transitioning to the school will benefit from a high-quality learning environment which will support improvements in their attainment, achievement, and well-being. The central location and modern and expanded facilities such as the 3G pitch would greatly benefit the community. The community would still have access to the swimming pool and Roysvale Park for recreation and open space.

Amend the proposal in a minor way and adopt.

13.7. During the consultation period no suggestions were received from stakeholders that would require a minor amendment to the proposal.

Amend the proposal significantly and undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal.

13.8. The only significant amendment that would be viable for consideration is a change of preferred location.

13.9. A proposed suggestion during the consultation, to rebuild within the existing site, was discounted early in the site selection process due to challenging issues of planning and construction in a designated significant flood risk area. To mitigate

the factors associated with this site would incur additional cost to design, which was deemed would not meet LEIP3 embodied carbon requirements and risk access to maximum external project funding. The site was also considered too small without using some of the existing school footprint which would have necessitate a phased build and demolition approach and temporary school decants adding further cost to the project and disruption to existing school operations over a significant period.

- 13.10. The only alternate site for consideration would be Lochyhill which has challenging site issues related to ownership, access and utility services. It would be more expensive to purchase and develop the site and the delay in changing the site would add costs to the new design and construction programme. The delay in delivery could also compromise access to Scottish Government funding already committed to the central Applegrove/Roysvale site.
- 13.11. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that changes to the school estate are subject to rigorous statutory consultation. Any significant amendments to the proposal would require a full consultation with pupils, parent/carers and the wider community of all affected by the proposed schools.
- 13.12. Allowing for appropriate governance that process can take in the region of a further nine months to complete.
- 13.13. It is considered that this option has too much time and cost risk. It would also be unreasonable to go through another lengthy statutory process and delay the delivery of a new school. The disruption to the school resulting from the effects of RAAC has already and continues to impact pupils and staff and it is hoped that a decision to relocate the new school building will give clarity to the community and a sense of certainty regarding their children's future education.

Withdraw the proposal and maintain the status quo.

- 13.14. This option is not considered viable as the existing school is considered at "life expired" and in need of replacement.

14. Recommendation

The recommendation of the officers is that the council should adopt the proposal to discontinue education provision at the existing Forres Academy school buildings on Burdsyard Rd and to transfer education provision to the new Future Forres Academy buildings near to the existing school at a site on Orchard Road from October 2028.

FINAL