

Peterhead Town Centre and Socio-Economic Impact



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Executive summary

Town Centre First Principle

It is important to balance the vision for the new community campus with the impacts on the town centre. Some options may deliver the most economic benefit to smaller town centre business, at least in the short-term. But this must be balanced against the costs of Peterhead's children continuing to attend a school in poor condition that does not support the activities that they need.

Ranking the development options rebuilding on the existing site, an alternative town centre site and relocation to Kinmundy were all equally scored without mitigating actions. If mitigation actions are successful, the option to relocate to Kinmundy and retention of some community facilities was the highest scoring (top ranked) option.

If credible mitigation actions can be set out then this suggests the preferred option would represent the best option to deliver the community campus vision and take into account the Town Centre First Principle.

Economic and social impacts

Economic impacts

It is likely the potential loss of town centre spending from pupils and parents is closer to £400,000 per annum, a significant share of this will be spent at Morrisons. However, it is worth noting that over time these losses could be recovered by catering for different customers.

The spending from employees based at Peterhead Academy is not insignificant. This spending will be similar in size to the pupil and parent spending but will fall across the whole of Peterhead, not just the town centre.

The significant number of pupils in the town centre during lunchtimes may deter some visitors. The relocation of Peterhead Academy may encourage some residents to come into the town centre during lunchtimes, although this is unlikely to offset the losses from pupils and parents.

Social impacts from relocating to Kinmundy

There is a clear prevalence of deprivation in and around Peterhead's town centre while deprivation is less marked in areas outside of the town centre. Pupils living in deprived areas are marginally more likely to need to travel further to Kinmundy compared to Peterhead Academy's current site. However, the distances involved suggest this may not be a significant impact.

Attainment and attendance

It is reasonable to assume that the improved learning environment provided by the proposed community campus will contribute towards improved learning outcomes as set out in Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy. However, success will be difficult to measure directly and impacts may be attributed to resolving problems with old estates rather than the design and environment of new estates.

The weight of evidence appears to support the expectations of some improvements in learning outcomes due to the current poor condition and suitability of Peterhead Academy's current campus. Recently a similar campus development, supported by The Scottish Futures Trust, benefited from improved attendance and has seen a cultural change for both staff and students.

The impacts from improved attendance and attainment are likely to be significant given the structure of Peterhead's economy and relatively remote location. Of those who attended Peterhead Academy the most common industries of employment were oil and energy, construction and the maritime industry.

Around 70% of those who attended Peterhead Academy were working in the Greater Aberdeen area with nearly half stating they were still based in or around Peterhead. Peterhead's relatively strong local labour market means the local community will be the main beneficiary of the new community campus supporting economic growth.

An improvement in the availability of skilled workers is more likely to result in improved economic outcomes when accompanied by investment into the town. It will therefore be important to ensure the redevelopment of the current school site supports Peterhead's regeneration action plan to help secure further investment.

Even if only a marginal change in the labour market outcomes were realised from the new community campus' impact on attendance and attainment then this could have a significant impact across Peterhead.

A long-term fall in the rate of unemployment in Peterhead of half a percentage point would raise Gross Value Added (GVA) by £25 million or wages by £14 million.

Mitigating actions

Planning long-term today

A number of proposed alternative uses have already been considered including the potential to relocate Peterhead Central School to the Prince Street site. A relocation of this scale, alongside the retention of some community facilities, would retain some of the footfall that would otherwise be lost from the town centre.

Businesses were concerned that if the Kinmundy relocation happens then the town centre could be left nursing a large vacant space for some time. Following the Peterhead office move more than three years ago, Aberdeenshire Council is still trying to dispose of town centre buildings that are now seen as a burden. Longer-term planning for the current site needs to be done in concert with the development of the new community campus.

Even if funding is not yet in place, proactively and ambitiously setting out development options and pursuing financial backing at the earliest opportunity would help the town centre businesses plan ahead. The Business Improvement District (BID) could play an important role in helping to shape future development options.

Reshape the town centre, rethinking opportunities

A number of consultees commented that Peterhead has a less well-defined town centre compared to neighbouring towns. Considerable efforts are already being made to secure funding to develop Peterhead's historic spine running from the Muckle Kirk at Errol Street through to Broad Street.

Consideration should be given as to the balance of community uses and development opportunities across the town centre, including the Prince Street site. A number of consultees raised the prospect of leisure and sports facilities at the site, if these could be secured then some community activities might be better suited along the town's heritage spine.

Several consultees recognised the issue of deprivation in the town centre and the prevalence of rented accommodation. The regeneration plan recognises the need to encourage the development of good quality flats, loft apartments and town houses in the town centre to promote mixed tenure communities.

Consultations with the business community raised concerns that significant commercial value from the site may be realised through residential units or a large retail development.

These concerns were raised in the context of the town still evolving its heritage and leisure offer. It is possible that the Prince Street site may develop to compete with rather than complement the rest of the town centre.

Communities will need additional support to adapt

Pupils living in deprived areas are marginally more likely to need to travel further to Kinmundy compared to Peterhead Academy's current site. While this impact is unlikely to be significant it is also the case that some communities will be less well equipped to adapt to the new routes to school.

Some consultees suggested the promotion of active travel and cost-effective schemes to promote cycling, particularly among pupils from Peterhead Central and Buchanhaven Primary schools. These initiatives would be worth pursuing early so that some momentum around active travel will already have been building before the relocation.

Recapturing town centre spending

Retailers cited the loss of spending from parents coming into town to collect children. This spending is treated a 'loss' in terms of the Town Centre First Principle.

However, some spending will shift to different town centre businesses at different times of the day as the reasons for visiting the town centre shift and as suggested by some businesses, some new visitor cohorts partly replace pupils during lunchtimes.

Household spending across the town will remain unchanged, indeed spending is likely to grow given the current and planned expansion of the town's population. It would be worthwhile considering how the BID, Aberdeenshire Council and other stakeholders can work together to ensure all town centre businesses have good market information and can retune the business' collective offer where needed to address the significant and rapid change in the way Peterhead's town centre will be used.

Conclusions

The preferred option, relocation to Kinmundy, represents the best option to deliver the community campus vision and take into account the Town Centre First Principle.

This is contingent in taking forward the mitigation actions set out in this report. In particular relocating or retaining some community facilities on the current site. Additionally, ensuring further development of the current site complements rather than competes with the range of regeneration and development initiatives already underway across Peterhead.

1 Introduction

Background

1.1 Peterhead is the largest town in Aberdeenshire with nearly 19,300 residents (National Records of Scotland, 2018). Aberdeenshire Council's regeneration strategy has identified £1.5 million of investment across Peterhead (available [online](#)). The investment projects support the themes of ensuring Peterhead's economy is open to the world, integrating communities and rediscovering Peterhead's town centre.

1.2 The Business Improvement District (BID) Rediscover Peterhead was established in 2017 and represents 220 BID levy payers. The BID is on track to generate one million pounds investment into the town centre within its five-year business plan (available [online](#)).

1.3 Peterhead is the northern hub of Energetica, Scotland's Energy Corridor. The corridor is a long-term economic development programme (details available [online](#)) focusing on one of Aberdeen City and Shire's strategic growth areas. The corridor is cited in the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework emphasising the national significance of the project (Scottish Government, 2014)

1.4 Peterhead is also an important centre, identified in the National Planning Framework, for developing facilities to allow for the transfer of electricity from overseas and offshore sources to and from the National Grid. Peterhead Port Authority recently completed a major investment project (over £50 million) to cater for the growing fishing market and opportunities arising from renewable energy and decommissioning projects.

1.5 Peterhead's town centre does not reflect the significant investment and economic opportunities set out above. The town centre has seen a decline in retail activities and the relative affluence found in the outskirts of Peterhead is not replicated within the town centre.

1.6 The Invest in Peterhead campaign (available [online](#)) has seen the number of vacant town centre properties fall alongside significant investment from Aldi, Travel Lodge, Brew dog, Brew toon, independent retailers and a five-screen cinema is being developed.

Town Centre First Principle

1.7 Aberdeenshire Council embeds the ‘Town Centre First Principle’ throughout its decision-making. The principle adopted by Aberdeenshire Council (available [online](#)) states that:

“Town centres are a key element of the economic, social and environmental fabric of Scotland’s towns; often at the core of community and economic life, offering spaces in which to live, meet and interact, do business, and access facilities and services. We must take collective responsibility to help town centres thrive sustainably, reinvent their function, and meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors for the 21st century.

1.8 It is important that Aberdeenshire Council considers all impacts on key town centres and mitigate negative impacts. Where decisions are made that will cause a negative impact, mitigating actions should be in place to lessen the impact.

Peterhead Academy

1.9 Aberdeenshire Council is considering the relocation of Peterhead Academy from its current town centre location, to a new campus development on the Kinmundy site. The aspiration is to see the new campus development delivered over dual sites, which will offer new school buildings, the opportunity to develop new facilities and leisure space and a broad range of sports-related facilities for both curricular and extra-curricular use (including links with local community groups).

1.10 Final decisions have yet to be made on both site location and services offered. The council needs to consider economic and social impacts from the new campus development balanced against the Town Centre First Principle.

Objectives of this report

1.11 This report sets out the economic and social impacts of the new campus development and considers mitigating actions. The report identifies the likely impacts on town centre businesses of relocating the academy and identifies mitigating actions and options for the current academy site to support the town centre economy.

1.12 An options appraisal considers the wider impacts of different options for developing the new community campus. This includes the current site and alternative options whilst considering aspirations for Peterhead Academy as well as a range of realistic development options for the current site.

1.13 The report presents some results from Aberdeenshire Council's statutory consultation, including a survey of Peterhead Academy pupils. The outbreak of Covid-19 limited our consultations with stakeholders due to travel restrictions and the significant operating challenges facing businesses.

1.14 While additional consultations would have been undertaken under normal circumstances, it is unlikely these would change the conclusions reached in this report.

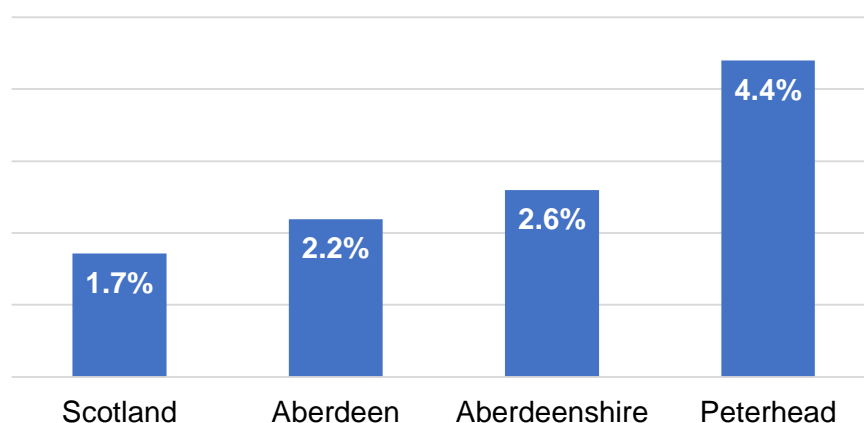
2 Peterhead Academy and the town centre

Economy of Peterhead

2.1 The most recent Buchan area review (Aberdeenshire Council, 2017) highlighted that Aberdeenshire is projected to experience one of the highest increases in population over the next twenty years. The review emphasises the implications for health partnerships, education services, and childcare provision.

2.2 The latest National Records of Scotland (NRS) statistics show the population of Peterhead is growing around two and half times more quickly than Scotland. Peterhead's population is also growing more quickly than Aberdeen and the rest of Aberdeenshire. The data also showed Peterhead had a slightly higher share of people aged under 16 (17.5%) compared to Scotland (16.9%) in 2016.

Figure 2.1: Population growth (2012-16)



Source: National Records of Scotland

2.3 The regeneration action plan states that “Peterhead packs an economic punch” (Aberdeenshire Council, 2016) highlighting industry connections across the globe. Figure 2.2 sets out some key statistics for Peterhead's economy including employment and the collective turnover of businesses based in the town. Tourism activities are separately identified with most of Peterhead's tourism activities focused on the town centre.

2.4 Based on data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) an estimate was made of the size of Peterhead's economyⁱ. Peterhead was defined by the 25 data zonesⁱⁱ covering the town.

Figure 2.2: Peterhead's economy

Indicator	Whole Peterhead economy	Peterhead Tourism
Turnover	£1.26 billion	£46.1 million (3.7%)
Employment	9,950	650 (6.5%)
Productivity	£127,000	£71,000

Source: 4-consulting

2.5 Sustainable tourismⁱⁱⁱ in Peterhead accounts for £46.1 million of turnover (3.7% of turnover across Peterhead's economy) and around 650 jobs (6.5% of jobs in the town). The latest indicators published by VisitScotland show that tourism accounts for 8% of all jobs across Scotland, 6% in Aberdeenshire and 8% in Aberdeen (VisitScotland, 2018).

2.6 Tourism in Peterhead likely reflects its position as the largest town in Aberdeenshire with food, drink and accommodation focused on supporting business tourism and major investment projects in the region. The highest concentration of tourism jobs in Aberdeenshire can be found in East Cairngorms and Banchory^{iv}.

2.7 Aberdeenshire Council's regeneration strategy has identified £1.5 million of investment across Peterhead (available [online](#)). The investment projects support the themes of ensuring Peterhead's economy is open to the world, integrating communities and rediscovering Peterhead's town centre.

2.8 Figure 2.3 shows the turnover for businesses in Peterhead is higher than some of Scotland's biggest companies. The Business Insider magazine publishes a list of Scotland's top 500 companies based on profits and turnover (Business Insider, January 2019).

2.9 The 2019 edition suggests the collective turnover and employment in Peterhead would feature among the top ten largest companies in Scotland. The collective turnover of businesses in Peterhead was higher than Scotland's largest food and drink company (William Grant & Sons).

Figure 2.3: Benchmarking Peterhead's economy

Rank	Company	Turnover (£billion)
7 th	Aegon	£8.41
-	Peterhead	£1.26
8 th	William Grant & Sons	£1.19
9 th	Chivas Brothers	£1.07

Source: Scottish Business Insider Top500 Index 2019

Peterhead Academy's economic and social impact

2.10 The original building at Peterhead Academy's town centre site (shown in Figure 2.4) was built in 1891 with the second block built in the 1980s. The capacity of Peterhead Academy is 1,700 with 1,144 pupils currently enrolled at the school. The Prince Street site hosts a community theatre, swimming pool and other sports and leisure facilities.

2.11 The latest Scottish Government (2019 Pupil and Teacher Census).data shows that there are 91.6 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE^v) teaching posts at Peterhead Academy (data available [online](#)). The latest Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) data suggests there are nearly 150 FTE^{vi} jobs associated with the operation of Peterhead Academy (including on-site support staff).

2.12 The latest Scottish Government figures show that for every 1,000 FTE education jobs a further 149 FTE jobs across local communities are supported by the spending of those employees working in education (Figure A.1 appended). The number of jobs supported by employee spending was adjusted to account for the total number of jobs based at Peterhead Academy and spending likely to leak outside of the Peterhead area^{vii}.

Figure 2.4: Peterhead Academy, Kinmundy site and other school sites



Source: Aberdeenshire Council consultation document (available [online](#))

2.13 The adjusted impact suggests 14 FTE jobs are supported in Peterhead through the spending of employees based at Peterhead Academy. Just over half of these jobs were in retail, hospitality (including cafes, restaurants and hotels), personal services (including hairdressing, beauticians and fitness activities) and transport services.

2.14 The above estimates exclude the economic impact arising from the day-to-day operation of the school. For example, these impacts will arise from the school's purchase of printed materials, computers, energy and other utilities. These impacts are likely to be spread more thinly across the North East of Scotland and less likely to be retained within Peterhead. The impacts also exclude spending from pupils and parents, these impacts are set out later in this report.

3 Options appraisal

The appraisal framework

3.1 The development of a new campus, and the associated economic and social impacts, needs to be considered in the light of the Town Centre First Principle. Guidance set out in HM Treasury's Green Book suggests that a long list of possible options should be set out that can achieve the above objectives (Treasury, 2018).

3.2 The appraisal framework considers the following objectives:

- The extent to which each option enables the envisaged community campus development
- Whether each option supports the Town Centre First Principle
- Negative social and economic impacts on Peterhead's town centre
- Whether reasonable mitigation actions could address negative impacts

3.3 A "new Peterhead Community Campus" has been included in the first phase of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (available [online](#)). The programme references the replacement of Peterhead Academy, two primary schools (Dales Park and Meethill) and the Anna Ritchie School.

3.4 The consultation document published by Aberdeenshire Council last year (available [online](#)) states that the new campus will provide more space per pupil, improve access to communal social spaces and will include community and modern sports facilities. The extent to which each option supports the community campus was assessed based on the above outcomes envisaged by Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Government.

3.5 As set out earlier in this report, Aberdeenshire Council has adopted the Town Centre First Principle. The options are considered in terms of the impact of each on the town centre economy and the offering of spaces to live, meet and interact, do business and access facilities and services.

3.6 The broad social and economic impacts on Peterhead's town centre are identified in terms of likely scale and direction (positive or negative). The social and economic impacts for selected options are considered in more detail in the subsequent section.

3.7 The overall rank considers the scores across each of the three criteria (delivers campus vision, meets town centre first principle and social and economic impacts). The criteria for each option were scored from highly likely (or positive) to highly unlikely (or negative).

3.8 An overall initial score was calculated for each option with the criteria given an equal weighting. The scores for each option were adjusted if actions to mitigate negative economic and social impacts were possible and the ordered rank of the options is shown in Figure 3.1 for both the initial ranking and the ranking after mitigation was considered.

3.9 Costs, funding and specific designs are not considered within the options. Aberdeenshire Council has earmarked £71 million in the capital plan (details available [online](#)) with the Scottish Government committing further support through the Learning Estate Investment Programme.

3.10 Concerns regarding the Town Centre First Principle are primarily focused on the location of the community campus site relative to Peterhead's town centre. Consultations to date raised concerns around the distance to Kinmundy for those living in the town centre and taking "business, facilities and life away from the town" (Aberdeenshire Council, 2019a).

3.11 As the Town Centre First Principle is primarily tested on the grounds of geography, the options are based around different locations for the community campus. This is not an exhaustive list but rather serves to frame the potential social and economic impacts and potential mitigation actions.

3.12 For each option key evidence is set out, where available, representing wider views, data and literature. The five options consider the location of the community campus as follows:

Option one: status quo

3.13 The status quo option considers whether Peterhead Academy could remain at the current Prince Street site. Peterhead Academy is one of only two secondary schools in Aberdeenshire in poor condition and has also been categorised as poor in terms of suitability (Scottish Government, 2019c).

3.14 The condition and suitability assessments are based on the Scottish Government's school estates core facts survey (available [online](#)). The survey provides a national and local picture of school estates that is as objective, consistent and comparable as possible.

3.15 This categorisation of the condition of Peterhead Academy states is "*showing major defects and/or not operating adequately*". The poor condition category also states schools cannot function without continuous repair and show signs of age.

3.16 Schools with poor suitability are categorised as showing major problems and "*the school buildings and grounds impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school*". The suitability and condition of Peterhead Academy's estate mean that maintaining the status quo is not a viable option.

3.17 The status quo option is likely to meet the Town Centre First Principle in helping to maintain the economic and social fabric of the town. However, this needs to be considered alongside the other aspects of the Town Centre Principle including the ability to access facilities and services. The status quo option is unlikely to adequately meet the needs of the pupils attending Peterhead Academy.

Option two: build the new community campus on the current Prince Street site

3.18 A number of consultees raised the prospect of redeveloping Peterhead Academy's current Prince Street campus. The current site is likely to constrain the potential for a wider community campus development as envisaged in the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (available [online](#)).

3.19 Additionally, the Prince Street campus currently has limited green space and sports facilities. Peterhead Academy currently uses off-campus sports facilities including Catto Park. This has placed pressure on school timetables and scheduling of double PE classes to allow pupils time to travel.

3.20 Building a new school on the current Prince Street site may take several years longer than developing a new campus elsewhere. Some pupils may need to be diverted to other schools to allow construction on the current site. Construction work would need to accommodate pupils remaining on-site and develop the new campus in carefully managed phases.

3.21 This approach risks the delivery of a new campus conducive to twenty-first-century learning. Construction of the new campus would involve compromises and accommodation of Peterhead Academy's day-to-day operations. Furthermore, some pupils may face building work at Peterhead Academy throughout their time at the school.

Option three: build the new community campus on an alternative town centre site

3.22 A review of Peterhead's town centre and stakeholder consultations did not identify a viable alternative town centre site. It is possible that an alternative site could be assembled, but it is likely to place constraints on the scale and design of the community campus envisaged for Peterhead.

3.23 Some consultees suggested ownership of assets across Peterhead's town centre was often fragmented. Assembling an alternative town centre site would be considerably challenging and delay building the new school.

Option four: relocation to Kinmundy, retaining some community facilities on the current site

3.24 The spirit of this approach appears to be embodied in the current aspirations of Aberdeenshire Council in delivering the new campus development over dual sites. This approach would allow the council to partly address the Town Centre First Principle by retaining some community assets at the Prince Street site to support the economic, social and environmental fabric of Peterhead's town centre.

3.25 If some community assets are retained, for example the community theatre, the relocation of Peterhead Academy would still represent a significant loss to town-centre businesses. This will need to be addressed by exploring additional mitigating actions.

Option five: relocation, including all community facilities, to Kinmundy

3.26 Green Book guidance (Treasury, 2018) suggests a status quo or 'do-minimum' option should be considered (option one). Good practice also invites consideration of a 'do-maximum' viable option to allow a wide range of options to be considered in the light of more extreme (but still viable options).

3.27 This option includes the cessation of all community facilities, including Peterhead Leisure and Community Centre. The centre includes the community theatre, swimming pool and other sports and leisure facilities.

3.28 This option would avoid the costs involved in operating some sports and leisure facilities at both the Kinmundy and town centre sites. However, this option is unlikely to meet the Town Centre First Principle adopted by Aberdeenshire Council. All of the above options are set out in Figure 3.1.

Figure 2.3: Assessment of options

Option	Delivers campus vision	Meets town centre first principle	Social and economic impacts	Mitigation possible	Option rank	
					Initial	Mitigated
1 Status quo	Highly unlikely	Likely	Positive	Not applicable	4 th	4 th
2 Rebuild current site	Highly unlikely	Highly likely	Positive	Not applicable	=1 st	=2 nd
3 Alternative town centre site	Unlikely	Likely	Positive	Not applicable	=1 st	=2 nd
4 Relocation to Kinmundy and retention of some community facilities	Highly likely	Possibly	Negative	Likely	=1 st	1 st
5 Relocation of Peterhead Academy and all community facilities	Possibly	Highly unlikely	Highly negative	Possibly	5 th	5 th

3.29 Figure 2.3 shows the importance of balancing project objectives and impacts on key town centres. The first option may fulfil the Town Centre First Principle and is likely to have relatively positive economic and social impacts on Peterhead's town centre compared to most of the other options.

3.30 The first option (status quo) is most likely to deliver the most economic benefit to smaller town centre business, at least in the short-term. But this must be balanced against the costs of Peterhead's children continuing to attend a school in poor condition that does not support the activities that they need.

3.31 The fifth option, relocating all facilities, may not fully meet the requirements for a community campus. Aberdeenshire Council noted that the development of the campus model is "applicable to Peterhead as a whole, rather than site-specific, therefore there are opportunities to have facilities on separate sites." (Aberdeenshire Council, 2019a).

3.32 Ranking the options, the lowest score was allocated to the fifth option followed by the status quo. The remaining options (rebuild, an alternative town centre site and relocation) were all equally scored without mitigation action.

3.33 Relocation to Kinmundy presents a clear opportunity for mitigating actions through the retention of some community facilities. Indeed, a degree of mitigation has already been considered through the potential replacement of Peterhead Central on the current Peterhead Academy site (Aberdeenshire Council, 2019a).

3.34 If mitigation actions are successful (considered in Section 5), the option to relocate to Kinmundy and retention of some community facilities was the highest scoring (top ranked) option. This option was the joint highest scored option before mitigation actions were considered.

3.35 It is therefore important to establish the likely nature and scale of economic and social impacts on Peterhead's town centre from the Kinmundy relocation. If credible mitigation actions can be set out then this suggests the preferred option would represent the best option to deliver the community campus vision and take into account the Town Centre First Principle.

4 Economic and social impacts

Economic and social impacts from the Kinmundy relocation

4.1 It is important to identify and quantify, as far as possible, the full range of benefits following Green Book guidance (HM Treasury, 2018). Consultations were undertaken with a small number of businesses and stakeholders from Peterhead to help inform the likely impacts.

Economic impacts

4.2 The consultation undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council has included a survey of town centre businesses (available [online](#)). The businesses highlighted that Peterhead Academy pupils often use outlets close to the school due to time constraints.

4.3 The businesses also cited parents coming into town to collect children as significant customers. A conservative estimate of just over £300,000 per annum was made due to the lunchtime economy and parents in town to collect their children from Peterhead Academy.

4.4 The consultations undertaken as part of this report also identified several town-centre businesses where school pupils generate significant income during lunchtimes. Both small independent businesses and larger chains, such as Morrisons, were identified as benefitting from pupils spending during lunchtimes.

4.5 The consultations identified that, for some businesses, pupils may account for around half their lunch-time trade and may result in a loss of several hundred pounds each day. For some businesses this would result in the loss of several thousand pounds of income throughout the year.

4.6 This appears to support the earlier estimate (£300,000 per annum) from Aberdeenshire Council. It is likely the potential loss of town centre spending from pupils and parents is closer to £400,000 per annum, a significant share of this will be spent at Morrisons.

4.7 As set out earlier in this report the spending from employees (including teaching staff) based at Peterhead Academy is not insignificant. This spending will be similar in size to the pupil and parent spending but will fall across the whole of Peterhead, not just the town centre.

4.8 Some small businesses suggested it would not be straightforward to adjust their operations and some already face significant challenges. Independent town centre businesses face significant fixed costs in operating during the day with several staff needed on-site.

4.9 It will be difficult to scale back operations (and operate profitably) following the potential loss of trade from school pupils. One business suggested that the relocation of the school may result in result opening hours being reduced with the business closed during weekday lunchtimes and only opening later in the afternoon.

4.10 Some businesses highlighted that they have already attempted to diversify their businesses in anticipation of losing income from pupils (including use of technology and tailoring offers to a wider market) but with limited success so far. One business suggested that future investment may need to focus on alternative projects outside of Peterhead (elsewhere in Aberdeenshire).

4.11 Most businesses suggested that the impact on smaller independent town centre businesses is likely to vary considerably. One business stated that although there was a perception that their business had benefited from pupil and parent spending, this spending was now more concentrated within a smaller number of shops in the town centre.

4.12 Several consultees suggested that the significant number of pupils in the town centre during lunchtimes may deter some visitors. The relocation of the school may encourage some residents to come into the town centre during lunchtimes, although most businesses suggested any anticipated additional spending from other members of the community is unlikely to offset the losses from pupils and parents.

Social impacts: distance

4.13 A series of public engagement events have helped to identify the key issues concerning the Peterhead community (Aberdeenshire Council, 2019a). Of the responses received a clear majority favoured the community campus being developed at the Kinmundy site rather than rebuilt on the current town centre site.

4.14 Concerns were raised about the distance to Kinmundy for those living in Peterhead's town centre. The public engagement events also revealed a strong preference for some community facilities (theatre, exhibition and swimming pool) to be retained in the town centre.

4.15 The consultation document (available [online](#)) includes a map of the proposed Kinmundy site, the current site of Peterhead Academy and other schools (some of which may also be relocated). The proposed site is further away from some primary schools feeding into Peterhead Academy (Buchanhaven Primary School and Peterhead Central School) and closer to others (Dales Park School).

4.16 The latest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data (available [online](#)) shows between 60-70% of pupils attending Peterhead Central School and 20-30% attending Buchanhaven Primary School live in some of Scotland's most deprived areas^{viii}.

4.17 This compares to 0-10% of pupils attending both Dales Park School and Meethill Primary School living in some of Scotland's most deprived areas. There is a clear prevalence of deprivation in and around Peterhead's town centre while deprivation is less marked in areas outside of the town centre.

4.18 The consultation document suggests there may be a slight increase in distance for some individuals attending the new community and leisure facilities. The new campus is approximately 1.3 miles from the current site and Aberdeenshire Council expects limited impact upon entitlement to school transport.

4.19 The above data suggests pupils living in deprived areas are marginally more likely to need to travel further to Kinmundy compared to Peterhead Academy's current site. However, the distances involved suggests this may not be a significant impact.

Social impacts: attainment and attendance

4.20 Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy (available [online](#)) states that *"Investment in Scotland's learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth."* It is reasonable to assume that the improved learning environment provided by the proposed community campus will contribute towards improved learning outcomes as set out in Scotland's Learning Estate strategy.

4.21 However, the previous strategy (COSLA and The Scottish Government, 2009) stated that success will be *"hard to measure directly because the causal effect of good school buildings and facilities for instance on attainment and achievement are difficult, if not impossible, to separate out from all the other input factors such as quality of teaching, parental support and so on."*

4.22 The Scottish Futures Trust published a series of case studies (available [online](#)) on brand new learning environments. The case studies include West Calder High School moving to a new 1,100-capacity building in 2018. The school includes facilities for shared community use, swimming pool and sports pitches. Since relocating to the new building, the school has benefited from improved attendance and has seen a cultural change for both staff and students.

4.23 An extensive literature review looking at the evidence of the impact of environments on learning in schools was undertaken in the light of the Building Schools for the Future programme (Woolner et al, 2007). The review highlighted evidence of impacts on both student behaviour and attainment but cautioned that many impacts appeared to be due to the resolving problems with old estates rather than the design and environment of new estates.

4.24 The review also showed small improvements are associated with improvements in attainment but once provision reaches a reasonable standard, wider factors are likely to influence attainment. The weight of evidence appears to support the expectations of some improvements in learning outcomes due to the current poor condition and suitability of Peterhead Academy's current campus.

4.25 The poor condition of Peterhead Academy's current campus needs to be balanced with the condition of Peterhead's town centre, where most pupils experiencing poorer outcomes live. If the school environment is improved, but this is at the expense of deteriorating living conditions in the town centre, then improved outcomes for pupils may be limited.

4.26 The impacts from improved attendance and attainment are likely to be significant for Peterhead and its town centre. As set out earlier in this report the collective turnover of Peterhead's economy is nearly £1.3 billion. Drawing on business demography data for Aberdeenshire this translates into estimates of nearly £700 million in Gross Value Added (GVA), which is mainly comprised of wages and gross operating profits. Wages across the Peterhead economy stand at nearly £400 million.

Figure 4.1: Peterhead economy key indicators

Indicator	Whole Peterhead economy
Turnover	£1.26 billion
Gross Value Added (GVA)	£0.69 billion
Wages	£0.39 billion

Source: 4-consulting

4.27 The Scottish Government's latest labour market monthly briefing ([available online](#)) shows labour market outcomes by the level of highest qualification held. The employment rate for those with no qualifications is 50.7% but rises to 68.2% for those whose highest qualification is equivalent to National 5 (SVQ 2) and 72.9% for qualifications equivalent to Highers (SVQ3), appended (Figure A.2).

4.28 Marginal improvements in attainment can result in significant impacts with the employment rate rising by 18 points for those with National 5 qualifications compared to those holding no qualifications. The potential impacts are significant given the structure of Peterhead's economy and relatively remote location.

4.29 There is limited data available for small areas aside from the now rather dated 2011 census of population. The professional networking website [LinkedIn](#) provides an alternative source of information on Peterhead Academy leavers and indicative information on the local labour market. An important caveat is that information drawn from LinkedIn is more likely to reflect the profiles of more recent labour market entrants.

4.30 Of those who attended Peterhead Academy the most common industries of employment were oil and energy, construction and the maritime industry. These three industries accounted for around half of those who attended Peterhead Academy. The most popular companies among those who attended Peterhead Academy were Wood, ASCO Group and Score Group.

4.31 Around 70% of those who attended Peterhead Academy were working in the Greater Aberdeen area with nearly half stating they were still based in or around Peterhead. Peterhead's relatively strong local labour market means the local economy will be the main beneficiary of the new community campus supporting sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

4.32 An improvement in the availability of skilled workers is more likely to result in improved economic outcomes when accompanied by investment into the town. Raising the skills of the workforce will itself help make Peterhead a more attractive place to do business and invest. It will therefore be important to ensure the redevelopment of the current school site supports Peterhead's regeneration action plan to help secure further investment.

4.33 Figure A.3 (appended) shows the latest labour market indicators for the Peterhead travel to work area covering the year up to March 2020. Even if only a marginal change in the labour market outcomes were realised from the new community campus' impact on attendance and attainment then this could have a significant impact across Peterhead.

4.34 For example, if the unemployment rate were to fall by 0.5% (from 5.7% to 5.2%) this may result in an additional 230 people finding work in the Peterhead area. This would raise Gross Value Added (GVA) by £25 million or wages by £14 million across the Peterhead travel to work area^{ix}.

4.35 Some of the additional wages and GVA will be generated through employment within Peterhead's town centre or will be partly spent within the area. The above figures demonstrate the likely scale of the long-term impact arising from a marginal improvement of the kind envisaged in the community campus vision.

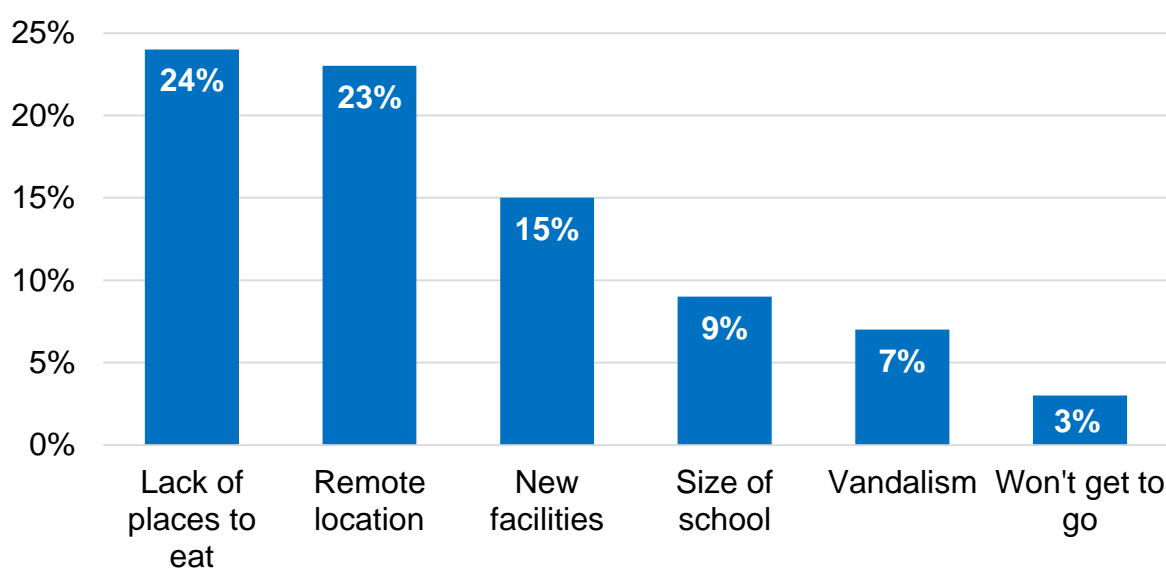
Social impacts: the pupils' views

4.36 A survey of pupils at the end of 2019 collected the 622 responses from pupils currently enrolled at Peterhead Academy. The survey asked five questions (appended) including *"What do you think might be some of the good things about a new secondary school?"*.

4.37 An overwhelming majority of pupils responded that the new school would be cleaner, offer better resources and provide new facilities. Pupils expressed concerns about the condition of the current Peterhead Academy buildings and out-of-date facilities. Most pupils appear to be convinced of the need for a new school.

4.38 Figure 4.2 (below) sets out the responses to the question *"What do you think might be some of the bad/not so good things about the new secondary school?"*. The pupils raised a range of concerns with no single issue dominating the responses.

Figure 4.2: What might be some of the bad things about the new school?



Source: Aberdeenshire Council (2019)

4.39 Nearly one in four pupils (24%) expressed concerns over the lack of shops in the Kinmundy area and limited lunch options outside of school. A further 23% of pupils expressed concerns about the remote location (of Kinmundy).

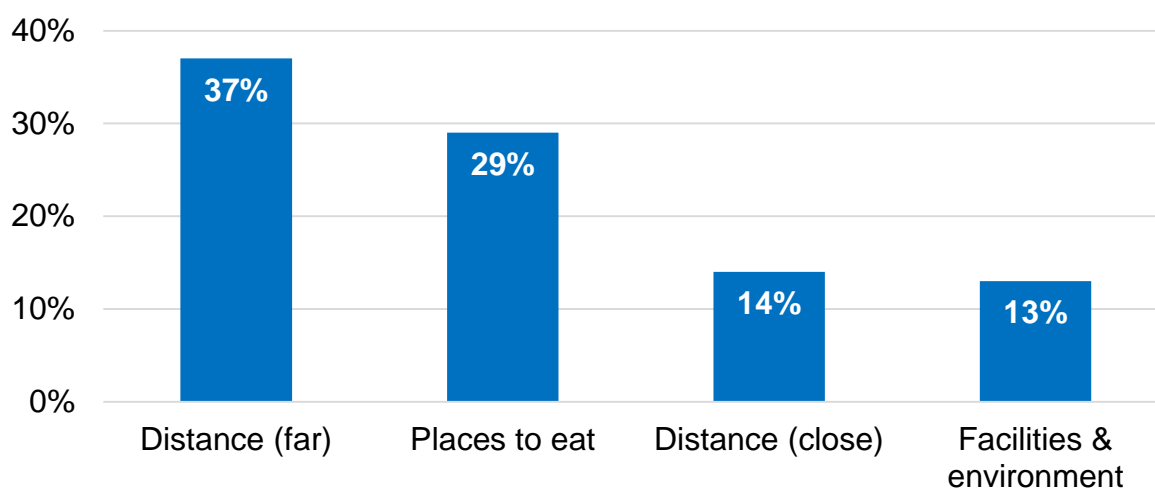
4.40 The proportion of pupils that are registered for free school meals at Peterhead Academy is higher than the average for secondary schools across Aberdeenshire^x. However, many pupils are buying meals off-campus and the development of the community campus should recognise the opportunity to focus on the catering offered on-campus. The relocation of Ellon Academy outside of the town centre provides a useful example of improving the on-campus offer to pupils.

4.41 Some pupils (15%) expressed concerns about new facilities and that it would take time to learn the layout of the new school. Some pupils raised concerns that if the new secondary school is co-located with primary school pupils, younger pupils may find the larger campus challenging.

4.42 Nearly one in ten (9%) of pupils expressed concerns that the new school would not be big enough to accommodate Peterhead Academy's current facilities. Some pupils (7%) were worried that a new school is likely to attract vandalism. A further 3% of pupils currently enrolled at Peterhead Academy said they are likely to have left high school and will not get to go to the new school^{xi}.

4.43 Pupils were asked "*What might the advantages and disadvantages be of the new location at Kinmundy?*". The responses to this question are summarised in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Advantages & disadvantages located in Kinmundy?



Source: Aberdeenshire Council (2019)

4.44 More than one third (37%) of pupils expressed concerns that the proposed new location in Kinmundy will involve longer journeys or the need to change their current mode of transport. Some pupils (29%) expressed concerns over the lack of places to eat (outside of school).

4.45 A further 14% of pupils responded that the Kinmundy location would be closer to their homes. A similar proportion of pupils (13%) suggested the Kinmundy location would allow the development of improved facilities and provide a cleaner and quieter environment for the new school.

4.46 Some pupils identified town centre businesses which they use for lunch or meals after school. Of these pupils, 91% cited Morrisons with 17% of pupils citing other town centre business (some pupils cited more than one business).

5 Mitigating actions

Planning long-term today

5.1 Many town centre businesses were concerned at the loss of footfall from the Kinmundy relocation. A number of proposed alternative uses have already been considered including the potential to relocate Peterhead Central School to the Prince Street site. A relocation of this scale, alongside the retention of some community facilities, would retain some of the footfall that would otherwise be lost from the town centre.

5.2 Businesses were concerned that if the Kinmundy relocation happens then the town centre could be left nursing a large vacant space for some time. Following the Peterhead office move more than three years ago, Aberdeenshire Council is still trying to dispose of town centre buildings that are now seen as a burden.

5.3 The social and economic impacts on the town centre will be driven by the mitigating actions and the proposals for the current site. Longer-term planning for the current site needs to be done in concert with the development of the new community campus.

5.4 Even if funding is not yet in place, proactively and ambitiously setting out development options and pursuing financial backing at the earliest opportunity would help the town centre businesses plan ahead. The Business Improvement District (BID) could play an important role in helping to shape future development options.

Reshape the town centre, rethinking opportunities

5.5 A number of consultees commented that Peterhead has a less well-defined town centre compared to neighbouring towns. Considerable efforts are already being made to secure funding to develop Peterhead's historic spine running from the Muckle Kirk at Errol Street through to Broad Street. It will be important to pursue these improvements to the town centre environment to help secure the stated benefits of improved outcomes for pupils at Peterhead Academy.

5.6 The funding environment is highly competitive and community uses are being considered to help bring back a range of heritage assets into use. Although the Prince Street site is a relatively large development opportunity, it should not be considered in isolation from the wider regeneration plan.

5.7 Several initiatives are already in place to encourage investment including the property investment fund, the waiving of developer contributions, discussions on a simplified planning zone, proactive planning on void private sector properties and the Invest in Peterhead marketing campaign.

5.8 Consideration should be given as to the balance of community uses and development opportunities across the town centre, including the Prince Street site. A number of consultees raised the prospect of leisure and sports facilities at the site, if these could be secured then some community activities might be better suited along the town's heritage spine.

5.9 Several consultees recognised the issue of deprivation in the town centre and the prevalence of rented accommodation. The regeneration plan recognises the need to encourage the development of good quality flats, loft apartments and town houses in the town centre to promote mixed tenure communities.

5.10 Consultations with the business community raised concerns that significant commercial value from the site may be realised through residential units or a large retail development.

5.11 These concerns were raised in the context of the town still evolving its heritage and leisure offer. It is possible that the Prince Street site may develop to compete with rather than complement the rest of the town centre.

Communities will need additional support to adapt

5.12 Pupils living in deprived areas are marginally more likely to need to travel further to Kinmundy compared to Peterhead Academy's current site. While this impact is unlikely to be significant it is also the case that some communities will be less well equipped to adapt to the new routes to school.

5.13 Some consultees suggested the promotion of active travel and cost-effective schemes to promote cycling, particularly among pupils from Peterhead Central and Buchanhaven Primary schools. These initiatives would be worth pursuing early so that some momentum around active travel will already have been building before the relocation.

Recapturing town centre spending

5.14 Retailers cited the loss of spending from parents coming into town to collect children. This spending is treated a 'loss' in terms of the Town Centre First Principle. However, some spending will shift to different town centre businesses at different times of the day as the reasons for visiting the town centre shift and as suggested by some businesses, some new visitor cohorts partly replace pupils during lunchtimes.

5.15 Household spending across the town will remain unchanged, indeed spending is likely to grow given the current and planned expansion of the town's population. It would be worthwhile considering how the BID, Aberdeenshire Council and other stakeholders can work together to ensure all town centre businesses have good market information and can retune the business' collective offer where needed to address the significant and rapid change in the way Peterhead's town centre will be used.

6 Conclusions

Town Centre First Principle

6.1 Ranking the development options rebuilding on the existing site, an alternative town centre site and relocation to Kinmundy were all equally scored without mitigating actions. If mitigation actions are successful (set out in the previous section), the option to relocate to Kinmundy and retention of some community facilities was the highest scoring (top ranked) option.

6.2 If credible mitigation actions can be set out then this suggests the preferred option would represent the best option to deliver the community campus vision and take into account the Town Centre First Principle.

Economic impacts

6.3 It is likely the potential loss of town centre spending from pupils and parents is closer to £400,000 per annum, a significant share of this will be spent at Morrisons. The spending from employees based at Peterhead Academy is not insignificant. This spending will be similar in size to the pupil and parent spending but will fall across the whole of Peterhead, not just the town centre.

6.4 The significant number of pupils in the town centre during lunchtimes may deter some visitors. The relocation of the school may encourage some residents to come into the town centre during lunchtimes, although this is unlikely to offset the losses from pupils and parents.

Social impacts from relocating to Kinmundy

6.5 There is a clear prevalence of deprivation in and around Peterhead's town centre while deprivation is less marked in areas outside of the town centre. Pupils living in deprived areas are marginally more likely to need to travel further to Kinmundy compared to Peterhead Academy's current site. However, the distances involved suggest this may not be a significant impact. As set out earlier in this report, the future redevelopment of the current site will play an important role in tackling inequalities.

Attainment and attendance

6.6 It is reasonable to assume that the improved learning environment provided by the proposed community campus will contribute towards improved learning outcomes as set out in Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy. However, success will be difficult to measure directly and impacts may be attributed to resolving problems with old estates rather than the design and environment of new estates.

6.7 The weight of evidence appears to support the expectations of some improvements in learning outcomes due to the current poor condition and suitability of Peterhead Academy's current campus. Recently a similar campus development, supported by The Scottish Futures Trust, benefited from improved attendance and has seen a cultural change for both staff and students.

6.8 The impacts from improved attendance and attainment are likely to be significant given the structure of Peterhead's economy and relatively remote location. Of those who attended Peterhead Academy the most common industries of employment were oil and energy, construction and the maritime industry.

6.9 Around 70% of those who attended Peterhead Academy were working in the Greater Aberdeen area with nearly half stating they were still based in or around Peterhead. Peterhead's relatively strong local labour market means the local community will be the main beneficiary of the new community campus supporting sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

6.10 Even if only a marginal change in the labour market outcomes were realised from the new community campus' impact on attendance and attainment then this could have a significant impact across Peterhead.

6.11 A long-term fall in the rate of unemployment in Peterhead of half a percentage point would raise Gross Value Added (GVA) by £25 million or wages by £14 million.

Mitigation actions

6.12 The following mitigation actions set out how negative economic and social impacts on the town centre could be minimised and potential opportunities maximised:

- Planning long-term today

Businesses were concerned that if the Kinmundy relocation happens then the town centre could be left nursing a large vacant space for some time. Longer-term planning for the current site needs to be done in concert with the development of the new community campus.

- Reshape the town centre, rethinking opportunities

The funding environment is highly competitive and community uses are being considered to help bring back a range of heritage assets into use. Although the Prince Street site is a relatively large development opportunity, it should not be considered in isolation from the wider regeneration plan.

A number of consultees raised the prospect of leisure and sports facilities at the site, if these could be secured then some community activities might be better suited along the town's heritage spine. It is likely that developing the quality of the environment both at Prince Street and along the heritage spine will help better position communities within the town centre to take advantage of future opportunities.

Consultations with the business community raised concerns that significant commercial value from the site may be realised through residential units or a large retail development.

These concerns were raised in the context of the town still evolving its heritage and leisure offer. It is possible that the Prince Street site may develop to compete with rather than complement the rest of the town centre.

- Communities will need additional support to adapt

Pupils living in deprived areas are marginally more likely to need to travel further to Kinmundy compared to Peterhead Academy's current site. While this impact is unlikely to be significant it is also the case that some communities will be less well equipped to adapt to the new routes to school.

Some consultees suggested the promotion of active travel and cost-effective schemes to promote cycling, particularly among pupils from Peterhead Central and Buchanhaven Primary schools. These initiatives would be worth pursuing early so that some momentum around active travel will already have been building before the relocation.

- Recapturing town centre spending

Some spending will shift to different town centre businesses at different times of the day as the reasons for visiting the town centre shift and some new visitor cohorts partly replace pupils during lunchtimes.

Household spending across the town will remain unchanged, indeed spending is likely to grow given the current and planned expansion of the town's population.

It would be worthwhile considering how the BID, Aberdeenshire Council and other stakeholders can work together to ensure all town centre businesses have good market information and can retune the business' collective offer where needed to address the significant and rapid change in the way Peterhead's town centre will be used.

Appendix

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Data

Figure A.1: Jobs supported by education employees spending

Industry	Jobs (per 1,000 school jobs)
Retail (& wholesale)	43
Cafes, restaurants & hotels	23
Personal services	7
Building services and gardening	7
Transport	6
Education (including nursery & childcare)	6
Vehicle services	5
Sports and leisure services	5
Financial services	5
Real estate and property services	4
Other	39
Total	149

Source: Scottish Government (2019b)

Figure A.2: Employment rate by highest qualification held (Scotland Apr 2019 - Mar 2020)

Qualification level	Employment rate
SVQ 3	72.9%
SVQ 2	68.2%
SVQ 1	53.9%
No qualifications	50.7%

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS)

Figure A.3: Labour market indicators Peterhead travel to work area, working age population (aged 16-64) (Apr 2019 - Mar 2020)

Indicator	Numerator	Denominator	Rate
Employment rate	23,500	30,300	77.6%
Unemployment rate	1,400	24,900	5.7%

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS)

ⁱ The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) and Scottish Annual Business Statistics (Scottish Government 2019a) and Input-Output tables (Scottish Government 2019b) were used to measure the turnover or total sales generated by business units engaged in the production of goods and services.

ⁱⁱ A data zone is the key small-area statistical geography in Scotland with, on average, populations of between 500 and 1,000 household residents. The measure of Peterhead's economy covers 25 data zones including S01007097-98 Longside and Rattray 03 and 04, S01007078-80 Peterhead Bay 01-03, S01007081-88 Peterhead Harbour 01-08, S01007072-77 Peterhead Links 01-06 and S01007089-94 Peterhead Ugieside 01-06.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sustainable tourism is cited in Scotland's Economic strategy (available [online](#)). Sustainable Tourism includes hotels, restaurants, museums and various other aspects. A full list of Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes used are detailed in full at the Scottish Government's Growth Sectors Database (available [online](#)).

^{iv} Tourism jobs as a share of all jobs were mapped for intermediate zones across Aberdeenshire, intermediate zones are a statistical geography that sit above data zones. The areas of East Cairngorms (S02001285) and Banchory West (S02001298) both recorded the highest share of employment in the tourism industry, accounting for nearly one quarter (24%) of employees.

^v The total number of hours worked by all teachers divided by the number of hours in a standard full-time working week.

^{vi} Where two part-time jobs are counted as equivalent to one full-time job.

^{vii} A total of 150 FTE jobs based at Peterhead Academy suggests an additional 22 jobs supported by employee spending. This was adjusted further to allow leakage (Treasury, 2018) with nearly two thirds (64%) of spending falling within the Peterhead area and supporting 14 FTE jobs.

^{viii} The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas. The most deprived quintile covers the 20% most deprived areas across Scotland (more information is available [online](#)).

^{ix} Based on the turnover per employee figures earlier in this report (Figure 2.2) this would generate an additional £29 million of turnover within the Peterhead travel to work area or around £25 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) and £14 million in wages.

^x The proportion of pupils registered for free school meals is available from the School Information Dashboard (available [online](#)).

^{xi} The above responses accounted for 81% of all responses to this question, a further 9% of respondents said they were unsure (covering 90% of all respondents). Other less frequently cited issues included concerns over mixing primary school and high school pupils on the same campus and possible issues around bullying.