

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Lifelong Learning Committee****21 March 2018****Options Appraisal****Logiealmond Primary School and Methven Primary School****Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report seeks approval of the recommendation of the Options Appraisal (Appendix A) which has been undertaken in respect of Logiealmond Primary School and Methven Primary School.

Lifelong Learning Committee is asked to agree that the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) commence statutory consultation on a proposal to close Logiealmond Primary School. The report also seeks approval to reduce the capacity of Methven Primary School and build new gym/dining hall.

1. BACKGROUND**School Estate Transformation**

- 1.1 The school estate is a significant and valuable asset to the communities of Perth and Kinross. Between 2017 and 2023, the Council will invest £141m in the school estate, including a number of new or replacement primary schools and a substantial upgrade programme for secondary schools. In addition a new £32.5m secondary school at Bertha Park will come into operation in August 2019.
- 1.2 The School Estate Strategy ([Report No. 12/370 refers](#)) sets out the Council's aspirations for our schools, and in particular the high value we place on learning, through our vision for well designed, maintained and managed schools.
- 1.3 It is important, in light of the significant investment and cost associated with the school estate, that it is managed in an efficient and effective manner, and that the priorities which are addressed meet the wider strategic objectives of the Council and the needs of our communities.
- 1.4 There are significant challenges for managing the school estate over the coming years. These include changing demographics including population growth and movement, house building in certain locations, ongoing deterioration in building infrastructure, pressure on planned maintenance

budgets, increasing revenue costs and the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare from 600 to 1140 hours.

- 1.5 The Council's Transformation Strategy 2015-2020 'Building Ambition' and Organisational Development Framework were approved by Council on 1 July 2015 ([Report No. 15/292 refers](#)). Together they detail how Perth and Kinross Council will deliver transformation over the next five years. Accompanying the strategy is a programme of major reviews which are considered to be key drivers and enablers of transformation across the organisation.
- 1.6 On 24 August 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No. 16/347 refers](#)) approved principles to be used as a basis for the transformation review, 'Securing the Future of the School Estate'. The principles approved by Lifelong Learning Committee as a basis for the transformation review were as follows:
 - (i) schools should have an occupancy rate where possible greater than 60% of the capacity and ideally should be operating at over 80% capacity;
 - (ii) every school should be rated as A or B ie at least satisfactory for condition and suitability; and
 - (iii) life expired buildings¹ within the school estate should be prioritised for replacement.
- 1.7 On 2 November 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report 16/485 refers](#)) approved the development of a number of options appraisals to consider in detail schools which were identified as requiring further consideration.
- 1.8 Logiealmond Primary School was included in the schools to be considered by an options appraisal as a result of being under-occupied at Census² 2015. The school had 12 pupils and an occupancy level of 25% at this time.
- 1.9 It should be noted that previous reports have been submitted to Lifelong Learning Committee with recommendations regarding Logiealmond Primary School.

The first report ([Report 10/428 Refers](#)) sought approval from Lifelong Learning Committee to proceed with undertaking an Options Appraisal and, if appropriate, produce a Proposal Paper containing an Educational Benefits Statement in respect of Logiealmond Primary School. The options to be considered included the possible closure of the school.

The following report ([Report 11/428 Refers](#)) advised Lifelong Learning Committee of the outcome of the Options Appraisal undertaken in respect of Logiealmond Primary School and recommended that the school remained open with a limited review of the catchment area.

¹ Life expired buildings are defined as buildings which are uneconomic to maintain.

² An annual pupil census in publicly funded schools in Scotland is carried out every year for publication by the Scottish Government. This usually takes place in September.

A further report ([Report 12/316 refers](#)) to a meeting of Lifelong Learning Committee on 15 August 2012, recommended not to proceed with the following proposal, following a statutory consultation.

“the catchment area of Logiealmond Primary School be extended to subsume the delineated area of Glenalmond College site with a corresponding reduction in the catchment area of Methven Primary School from Monday 7 January 2013”.

The recommendation was approved and no changes were made to the catchment area.

- 1.10 Methven Primary School was included in the schools to be considered by an options appraisal due to the condition rating of the school. The school was also under-occupied at Census 2015. The school had 120 pupils and an occupancy level of 52% at this time.

Key Legislation

- 1.11 Councils, as Education Authorities, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand.
- 1.12 Councils also have a statutory responsibility in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to achieve best value.
- 1.13 The Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 provides a strong, accountable statutory consultation process that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools. These consultation processes are expected to be robust, open, transparent and fair, and seen to be so. They are also expected to be consistent across Scotland.
- 1.14 The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in relation to rural schools, establishing a presumption against closure of rural schools. The result of this is that education authorities must have special regard to a number of factors before formulating a proposal to close a rural school and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal. These factors are:
- Effect on the Community
 - Effect on Travel Arrangements
 - Educational Benefits

2. OPTIONS PROPOSALS

- 2.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken to consider the future of Logiealmond Primary School and Methven Primary School. The options appraisal is attached as Appendix A.

- 2.2 The options appraisals for Logiealmond Primary School and Methven Primary School have been combined as the schools share a boundary and some of the options relate to both schools.

The options appraisal considers the low occupancy and condition of Methven Primary School. The school had 120 pupils and an occupancy level of 52% at Census³ 2015. It also takes into account the condition of Methven Primary School which is rated 'C' (Poor – showing major defects and/or not operating adequately).

The options appraisal considers the under occupancy at Logiealmond Primary School, which had 12 pupils and an occupancy level of 25% at Census 2015.

A condition survey was carried out on the school on 19 January 2017 and the condition rating changed from a "B" to a "C" rating (Poor – showing major defects and/or not operating adequately).

- 2.3 The Scottish Government's Rural School List 2017 classifies Logiealmond Primary School and Methven Primary School as "accessible rural" schools under Section 14 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Therefore in considering the options the rural school factors detailed in paragraph 1.14 were explored fully in the options appraisal.

- 2.4 The findings contained within the options appraisal conclude that the only reasonable option in response to the low roll at Logiealmond Primary School is to close the school with pupils moving to Methven Primary School. The delineated area of Methven Primary School would be extended to subsume the whole catchment of Logiealmond Primary School. The conclusion is due to the inability to create a sustainable school roll at Logiealmond Primary School.

In addition it is proposed that the capacity of Methven Primary School will be reduced to 176 pupils, through demolition of a life expired building. There will also be a new gym/dining hall at Methven Primary School.

The reduction in capacity is positive for both sets of pupils as this will see the removal of life expired buildings with resulting improvements to the condition of the school and learning and teaching environments. There is still sufficient capacity at the school to accommodate pupils from both schools and any placing requests received.

None of the other options looked at were considered to be reasonable alternatives to closure, for the reasons set out in the options appraisal. The table below gives an overview of each of the options:

³ An annual pupil census in publicly funded schools in Scotland is carried out every year for publication by the Scottish Government. This usually takes place in September.

Option	Option Description	Outcome
1	Catchment areas of the schools are reviewed to determine whether this would increase the occupancy at both schools and ensure their future sustainability. If sustainable, refurbish Logiealmond Primary School and Methven Primary School to improve condition at both schools	Rejected. Not a reasonable option due to not being able to create a catchment which will sustain the roll at Logiealmond Primary School without impacting on other schools and the travel arrangements of pupils from those schools. It has not been possible to expand the catchment of Methven Primary School to increase the school roll significantly.
2	Logiealmond Primary School remains open - refurbish the school to improve condition. Reduce capacity of Methven Primary School through a review of accommodation – including refurbishment of the school to improve condition.	Rejected. Not a reasonable option. No prospect of a sustainable roll in the school due to small numbers of pre-school children and primary aged children living in the catchment area. Also not all potential pupils in the area attend the school.
3	Mothball Logiealmond Primary School and move pupils to Methven Primary School. Refurbish Methven Primary School to improve condition.	Rejected. Not a reasonable option. No prospect of a sustainable roll in Logiealmond Primary School in the next 2-3 years due to small numbers of pre-school children and primary aged children living in the catchment area. Also not all potential pupils in the catchment attend the school.
4	Consider closing Logiealmond Primary School and move pupils to Methven Primary School. Refurbish Methven Primary School to improve condition. Capacity at Methven Primary School reduced following refurbishment.	Accepted as a reasonable option for the following reasons; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational benefits for pupils at Methven Primary School and Logiealmond Primary School including early years provision and seamless transition to Primary 1 for both sets of pupils. • There is no indication there will be a significant increase in the roll at Logiealmond Primary School. • Condition rating improved and the removal of life expired buildings at Methven Primary School.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 It is therefore proposed to formally embark upon statutory consultation in relation to the closure of Logiealmond Primary School.
- 3.2 This would be undertaken in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.3 A formal Proposal Paper, based on the options appraisal will be prepared for publication.
- 3.4 A public meeting will be undertaken by the Convener of the Lifelong Learning Committee and the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services), supported by officers from Education and Children's Services.
- 3.5 Following this, a report will be submitted to a future Lifelong Learning Committee detailing the outcome of the statutory consultation.
- 3.6 It is also proposed to reduce the capacity of Methven Primary School from 229 pupils to 176 pupils and to replace the dining/PE accommodation.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Following the preparation of a comprehensive options appraisal, it is proposed that a formal consultation in relation to the closure of Logiealmond Primary School should take place.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - (i) Approves the recommendation of the options appraisal that a statutory consultation in relation to the closure of Logiealmond Primary School should take place;
 - (ii) Instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to prepare and publish a proposal paper to close Logiealmond Primary School, transfer pupils to Methven Primary School and extend the delineated area of Methven Primary School to subsume the whole catchment area of Logiealmond Primary School;
 - (iii) Instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to formally consult the appropriate bodies and persons on the terms of the proposal paper, all in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010;
 - (iv) Delegates authority to the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to investigate and manage any alleged omissions or inaccuracies during the consultation process and to take appropriate action in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010; and
 - (v) Instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to prepare a report on the results of the consultation and report back to the Committee on the outcome of the consultation at a future meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee.

4.3 It is also recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approves the recommendation of the options appraisal that the capacity at Methven Primary School is reduced to 176 pupils after demolition of a life expired building;
- (ii) Approves the recommendation of the Options Appraisal to replace the gym/PE facilities to improve the condition of Methven Primary School. Funding will be through the Modernising Primaries Programme which forms part of the composite capital programme 2017-2023.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to all of these objectives.

Corporate Plan

1.2 The Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013-2023 and Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2013/2018 set out five strategic objectives:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to all of these Objectives.

1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Maximising Resources

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 There are no other direct financial implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

Workforce

2.2 As a result of this report there will be workforce implications for several teams across Council Services which include ECS Resource Management, ECS Business Services, ECS Finance, Human Resources and Legal and Governance Services.

As part of the statutory consultation there is a requirement to consult with staff affected by the proposal.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 There are no direct asset management implications arising from this report at this point. Asset management implications will not be known until the statutory consultation is complete.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

3.1.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the statutory consultation.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

3.2.1 The environmental impact of each option is considered in the options appraisal; however there are no implications at this stage of the process. The

environmental impact will be considered further through the statutory consultation.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.3.1 There is no direct impact on sustainability as a result of this report, and sustainability will be considered further as part of the statutory consultation process.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report. Any consultation would require to be carried out in accordance with the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010

Risk

- 3.5 A risk log is being maintained for the School Estate Transformation Programme. A further risk log will be created as part of the statutory consultation process.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Head of Legal, Head of Property Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

External

- 4.2 The Options Appraisal details the consultation which has been carried out in the development of this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 A communication plan has been prepared which will support effective communication and engagement with stakeholders, and to promote the anticipated efficiencies and benefits of this Transformation Project as well as the links to the wider Transformation Programme. A range of methods will be used to consult with internal and external stakeholders as identified in the draft communication plan, such as meetings, briefings, community consultation and focus groups. A separate communications plan will be developed for the Statutory Consultation process.

2. Background Papers

- 2.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

3. Appendices

- 3.1 Appendix A - Options Appraisal Report – Logiealmond Primary School and Methven Primary School