



PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CONSULTATION REPORT

**REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION RELATING
TO THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ABERNYTE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

18 April 2019

This Consultation Report has been issued by Perth and Kinross Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Contents

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. BACKGROUND	7
3. CONSIDERATIONS	8
4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED	10
5. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS	11
6. THE PUBLIC MEETINGS	13
7. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE	14
8. EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO WRITTEN AND ORAL REPRESENTATIONS	15
9. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT	43
10. RURAL SCHOOL – COMPLIANCE WITH SECTIONS 11A TO 13 OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) Act 2010 Effect on the Local Community Travel Arrangements	49
11. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES	51
12. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010	52
13. OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO SCOTTISH MINISTERS IN TERMS OF SECTION 15(4) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010	53
14. LEGAL ISSUES	54
15. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS	55
16. CONCLUSION	55
17. RECOMMENDATIONS	56

Appendices

	Page
Appendix 1 Minute of Public Meeting of 12 November 2018	57
Appendix 2 Minute of Public Meeting of 14 November 2018	68
Appendix 3 Summary of Consultation Responses	78
Appendix 4 Pupil and Staff Consultation	82
Appendix 5 Education Scotland Report	97
Appendix 6 Alleged Omissions and Inaccuracies Notice	102
Appendix 7 Abernyte Parent Council Representation	112

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

This report has been prepared following consultation on the Council's proposal that:

- provision of a school at Abernyte Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 1 July 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- the pupils of Abernyte Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Inchtute Primary School, from 2 July 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- the delineated catchment area of Inchtute Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School from 2 July 2020.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- (a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period;
- (b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meetings held on 12 and 14 November 2018; and
- (c) Education Scotland's report on the proposal.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Council's consultation on the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School with effect from 1 July 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter, was conducted under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Act determines a number of key considerations for Councils in proposing to close a school which includes the overall educational benefit of a proposal for children directly affected by the proposal and the rural school factors. As part of the assessment of educational benefit, the Council also has to consider how implementation of the proposal will affect other children and young people in the Council area. The Council also has to have regard to its legal duty to secure best value in the delivery of its services.

The Act sets out clearly the statutory duties that a Council must comply with when considering closure of a rural school. As Abernyte Primary School is a rural school, these statutory duties applied to this consultation. In undertaking the consultation, the Council complied with the Act's requirements and ensured that it took proper account of all material considerations relevant to the proposal in coming to its decision.

This final consultation report, in conjunction with the [options appraisal](#) and [proposal paper](#), sets out how the Council did this. To comply with the requirements of the Act this report has been published more than three weeks before the Council takes its final decision on the proposal.

As Abernyte Primary School is a rural school, the Council must comply with the requirements in relation to rural schools. These require the Council to have special regard to the rural school factors. The Act stipulates that, before consulting on a proposal to close the school, the Council is obliged to identify its reasons for making such a proposal and to consider if there were any reasonable alternatives to the closure of the school. The Council also has to assess the overall educational benefits of any option which is identified as a reasonable alternative to closure. The Council could not consult on a closure proposal unless it was satisfied that this was the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.

The Council complied with these duties by undertaking an options appraisal which considered and assessed alternatives to closure of the school and considered the rural school factors under the Act. The details of this are set out in section 4 on pages 10-11 of this report and within the [options appraisal](#) report. As a result of this options appraisal, the Council determined that there were no other reasonable alternatives to closure of the school. The Council determined that closure is the most appropriate response to address the unsustainable school roll and, therefore, decided to consult on the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School.

As required by the Act, before commencing the consultation on the closure of the school, the Council prepared a proposal paper. The proposal paper included an assessment of the overall educational benefits of the proposal. As it was proposing to close a rural school, the proposal paper also considered the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements if the proposal to close the school was implemented. Section 10 of this report on pages 49-51 sets out how the Council complied with these legislative duties. The proposal paper also set out the financial implications of the proposal.

The Council published the proposal paper on 29 October 2018, advertised the fact and notified Education Scotland and all statutory consultees. The consultation ran for at least 30 school days from 29 October 2018 to 14 December 2018. Copies of the proposal were made available electronically on the Council website with a link to an online response form. Letters were issued to statutory consultees with a link to the proposal paper and details of where and how to obtain a paper copy. Public notice adverts were placed in the local press on 29 October 2018. Public meetings were held at Abernyte Primary School on 12 November 2018 and at Inchtute Primary School on 14 November 2018. Once the consultation period was complete the Council notified Education Scotland. The Council then received a report on the proposal from Education Scotland on 23 January 2019. The Council reviewed the proposal in the light of the report by Education Scotland.

The Council's consideration of the report prepared by Education Scotland is set out in section 9 on pages 43-49 of this report.

During the consultation period, a number of consultees alleged that there were some inaccuracies and omissions in the proposal paper.

On 14 March 2019, the Council issued a letter to the statutory consultees and those who made representations during the consultation, setting out the Council's consideration of the alleged inaccuracies or omissions. Consultees were asked to submit comments on the letter by 27 March 2019. The letter is attached in appendix 6 on pages 102-111 of this report. Consultees made representations to the Council through their responses to the consultation. The Council has reviewed the proposal in light of the representations received and the Council's response to all the points made by consultees during the consultation which is set out in section 8 on pages 15-43 of this report.

Consultees had concerns in four main areas. These related to:

- the educational benefits of the proposal
- the accuracy and transparency of the financial information contained within the proposal
- the methodology used and accuracy of the projected school roll at Abernyte Primary School in future years, and
- the impact on the local community of closure of the school.

The Council has considered these concerns fully. The Council's view of the educational benefits of the proposal is explored in section 9.6.2 on pages 47-48 of this report. The Council has set out in depth the financial implications of implementation of the proposal in section 8.1 on pages 15-17 of this report. Sections 8.6 and 8.7 on pages 23-25 of this report, explain the methodology behind the calculation of the projected school roll at Abernyte Primary School set out in this report. The Council has also given full consideration of the likely impact on the local community of the closure of the school. This consideration is set out in section 10 on pages 49-51 of this report.

This report sets out the overall educational benefits of the proposal and other relevant information for consideration. It demonstrates how the Council has complied with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and has taken all material considerations into account. This report concludes that the closure of Abernyte Primary School is the most appropriate response to address the unsustainable school roll and that education provision should therefore be discontinued permanently with effect from 1 July 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter and that:

- the pupils of Abernyte Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Inchtute Primary School, from 2 July 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter, and
- the delineated catchment area of Inchtute Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School from 2 July 2020.

If the Council decides to implement the proposal, the Council must notify Scottish Ministers within six working days of taking its final decision. As Abernyte Primary School is a rural school, the Council must give notice of the reasons why the Council is satisfied that the closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. These reasons are set out in this report.

1.2 This is a consultation report prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
- provide a summary of the written responses;
- provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meetings held on 12 and 14 November 2018;
- 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;
- state how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the [Proposal Paper](#) and state how the Council acted upon it; and
- state how the Council has complied with Sections 11A to 13 of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* when reviewing the above proposals.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting on 2 November 2016, the Lifelong Learning Committee of Perth and Kinross Council approved [Report No 16/485](#) by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services). It approved the development of an options appraisal in relation to the future of Abernyte Primary School.

2.2 On 22 August 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee considered the [options appraisal](#) and agreed to commence formal consultation on a proposal to close Abernyte Primary School ([Report No 18/243 refers](#)) in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.3 The 2010 Act's principal purpose is to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures 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.

- 2.4 These duties are outlined in the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010 and the accompanying Statutory Guidance](#).
- 2.5 Lifelong Learning Committee reports and the Proposal Paper referred to above are also available on the Council's website www.pkc.gov.uk.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The main considerations relating to the proposal are fully explained in the [Proposal Paper](#) and the main points are highlighted below:
- 3.2 Perth and Kinross Council works to enhance quality of life, make best use of public resources and ensure continuously improving services. Perth and Kinross Council's Corporate Plan "Securing the Future" aims to ensure that individuals, families and communities experience the best possible outcomes from a range of services.
- 3.3 Perth and Kinross Council has a strong identity and clear priorities which everyone works together to achieve, creating areas which are vibrant and successful; safe, secure, healthy and sustainable environments; educated, responsible and informed citizens; confident and active communities; and places where people are nurtured and supported, giving every child the best start in life.
- 3.4 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](#)). They detail how Perth and Kinross Council will deliver transformation over the five-year period. Accompanying the strategy is a programme of major reviews which are considered to be key drivers and enablers of transformation across the organisation.
- 3.5 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'.
- 3.6 This approach reflects the Single Outcome Agreement National Outcome 15 that "Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs", and the Local Outcome that "Our services will be responsive, of high quality and continually improving". This report also links with the School Estate Management Plan, Education and Children's Services Policy Framework Maximising Resources and with the Education and Children's Services objective to develop the range and quality learning experiences for all.
- 3.7 Abernyte Primary School is a single teacher primary school serving the village of Abernyte and the surrounding area and is a feeder primary school for Perth High School. Abernyte Primary School is situated approximately 3.4 miles from Inchturre Primary School and approximately 4.4 miles from Longforgan Primary School.

- 3.8 The capacity of Abernyte Primary School is 44 pupils. The Abernyte Primary School roll at Census 2010 was 21 pupils giving an occupancy of 48%. At Census 2018 the school roll was 6 pupils (14%) and the current school roll as at 18 April 2019 is 8 pupils giving an occupancy of 18%.

Data from the NHS on pre-school children registered with GP practices living in the Abernyte Primary School catchment shows that although potential P1 intake numbers have remained relatively low over the last few years, they are higher than the number of pupils who are attending the school. The low school roll is, therefore, primarily due to parents exercising choice and placing their children in alternative schools.

At the time of the options appraisal being undertaken, there were 11 pupils living within the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School attending Perth and Kinross Schools. However, 6 of these pupils attended other schools in Perth and Kinross as a result of successful placing requests made by their parents.

- 3.9 The Council uses four data sources in its projections for school rolls. Information is collated using current school roll, anonymised GP data for future P1 intakes, information on proposed house building from the Housing Land Audit (HLA) and past trends in relation to pupil intakes.

Each school is considered on an individual basis. The model for pupil projections is used as a starting point for asset management officers to undertake more detailed work. This detailed work will depend on the individual school but can include discussions with planning officers on the HLA or reviewing historic information and placing requests.

These projections indicate that Abernyte Primary School pupil numbers are projected to remain relatively static over the next 4 years. There are low numbers of children under 5 years old living within the catchment area projected to attend Abernyte Primary School over the next 4 years. The data for Abernyte Primary School shows that the number of children eligible to start school over the period 2019 – 2022 is 7 pupils. Sections 8.6 and 8.7 on pages 23-25 of this report, clarify further the methodology behind the calculation of the projected school roll at Abernyte Primary School set out in the Proposal Paper and this report.

- 3.10 The highest projected occupancy rate for Abernyte Primary School is 23% in 2022/23 (10 pupils). This assumes that one P1 catchment pupil and the 3 placing requests which have been made for pupils to attend the school from August 2019 go ahead and that from August 2020, all Abernyte catchment pupils attend the school. This is an optimistic view of the future school roll because at Census 2018, only 4 pupils out of a possible 12 catchment pupils attend the school.
- 3.11 At Inchturre Primary School, the highest projected occupancy including pupils from projected house building is 94% (247 pupils) in 2021/22 based on the currently capacity of the school (264 pupils).

It is possible that projected house building in Inchtute Primary School catchment area may increase following a planning appeal for Moncur Farm from 30 houses to 66 houses. The highest projected occupancy including pupils from this increased house building would then be 96% (253 pupils) in 2022/23.

It should be noted that the projected occupancy for Inchtute Primary School set out above is based on the current approved capacity of 264. The approved capacity is based on 9 teaching spaces. However, there are currently 10 spaces which can be used for teaching. If the 10th space was used for teaching, this would increase capacity of the school to 289.

In addition, a planned expansion of the nursery provision comes into operation in summer 2020 and this will also free up additional space within the primary school. This could result in the capacity increasing to 314, if required.

There is therefore sufficient capacity at Inchtute Primary School, even with house building, for the small numbers of pupils who may attend from Abernyte Primary School.

- 3.12 The Council has engaged with stakeholders and has considered other options prior to formulating its proposal. The details of the other options are set out in the Options Appraisal and Proposal Paper.
- 3.13 Parents still retain the right to make a placing request for another school of their choice as outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 A number of options were considered for the future of Abernyte Primary School as part of the [Options Appraisal](#).

As part of the options appraisal, information was collated on pupil numbers, housebuilding, the school, travel arrangements, environmental impact, the local area and community and finances to inform the options. As part of the review, a pre-consultation exercise was also carried out with the local community to inform the options appraisal for Abernyte Primary School. This allowed the community to consider options for the future of Abernyte Primary School and was an opportunity for the community to provide views on these options and identify any additional options which the Council should consider.

The options considered in the options appraisal were as follows:

- Abernyte Primary School remains open with existing catchment area;
- consider mothballing Abernyte Primary School and move pupils to Inchtute Primary School;

- catchment area is reviewed to determine whether this would increase the school roll sufficiently at Abernyte Primary School to ensure the future sustainability of the school; and
 - consider closing Abernyte Primary School and move pupils to a neighbouring catchment school.
- 4.2 On 21 March 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee approved that officers carry out an assessment to consider whether a change to the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School, to include the area north of the A90 within the existing Inchtute Primary School catchment area, would provide an increased and sustainable roll for the school ([Report No.18/86 refers](#)). All other potential catchment area options were discounted in Report No 18/86.
- 4.3 On 22 August 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee fully considered the options appraisal and agreed to commence formal consultation on a proposal to close Abernyte Primary School ([Report No 18/243 refers](#)). None of the alternatives were considered to be reasonable alternatives to closure as none would have adequately addressed the unsustainable school roll. The conclusion of the Options Appraisal was that closure of the school was the most appropriate response to address the unsustainable school roll.

A [proposal paper](#) was prepared which published an Educational Benefits Statement for the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School and move pupils to a neighbouring catchment school.

4.4 **Alternative Options**

In developing the Options Appraisal for Abernyte Primary School, Perth and Kinross Council undertook a robust process of consultation consisting of face-to-face consultation with key stakeholders. This approach allowed opportunities for parents, staff, pupils and the wider communities to consider and discuss the options with the Council and provide valuable feedback to the Council on the aspects of the options which were reasonable and not reasonable as well as the opportunity to explore other alternatives.

The current statutory consultation process has also provided an opportunity for consultees to suggest other alternatives to the proposal. Although no other alternative options were notified to the Council during this process which had not already been considered as part of the [Options Appraisal](#) considered by Lifelong Learning Committee on 22 August 2018, some suggestions were made about other education services which could be delivered at the school and these are considered in section 8.

5. **THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 5.1 On 22 August 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee considered the [options appraisal](#) for Abernyte Primary School and agreed to commence formal consultation on a proposal to close Abernyte Primary School ([Report No 18/243 refers](#)) in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- 5.2 An electronic link to the [Proposal Paper](#) was issued by letter on 25 October 2018 to those individuals and bodies listed under Distribution within the document. The Proposal Paper was also published on the Council's website: www.pkc.gov.uk
- 5.3 The Proposal Paper made clear to consultees that the consultation period would run from Monday 29 October 2018 until Friday 14 December 2018 – which includes a period of 33 school days.
- 5.4 The proposal on which consultation took place was that:
- provision of a school at Abernyte Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 1 July 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - the pupils of Abernyte Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Inchtute Primary School, from 2 July 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
 - the delineated catchment area of Inchtute Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School from 2 July 2020.
- 5.5 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- A Proposal Paper was published on Monday 29 October 2018. All statutory consultees were written to providing a link to the proposal paper and details of where and how to obtain a paper copy. A copy of this document was available free of charge to the consultees listed within the document.
 - The Proposal Paper was published on the Perth and Kinross Council website www.pkc.gov.uk and was available in paper copy upon request.
 - An advertisement ran in the Courier and Advertiser and the Perthshire Advertiser on 29 and 30 October 2018.
 - Two public meetings were held to discuss the proposal on Monday 12 November 2018 and Wednesday 14 November 2018.
 - The Consultation period ended on Friday 14 December 2018.
 - Education Scotland's involvement consisted of: the options appraisal and proposal paper documents being sent to them, and visits to the sites of both Inchtute and Abernyte Primary Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees. They also received a copy of all written representations and the minutes of the public meetings. They then prepared a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. This is attached as Appendix 5.
- 5.6 The following schools are affected by the proposal:
- Abernyte Primary School
 - Inchtute Primary School

5.7 In accordance with statutory requirements and good practice, the following persons were consulted:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils and children at the affected schools
- The parents of children expected to attend the affected schools within 2 years of the date of publication of this proposal document
- The pupils at the affected schools
- The teaching and ancillary staff at the affected schools
- The trade union and professional association representatives of the above staff
- The Community Council
- Relevant users of the affected schools
- Elected Members of Perth and Kinross Council
- Lay Members of Lifelong Learning Committee
- The Constituency MSPs and List MSPs covering the Constituency
- The Constituency MP
- The Executive Director, Housing & Environment, Perth and Kinross Council
- Tayside Contracts
- LiveActive Leisure
- Education Scotland

5.8 The number of letters issued with details of the Proposal Paper was 356.

5.9 During the consultation period, representations were sought from interested parties, either in oral or written form or electronically. A generic email account was set up by the Council to receive representations and enquiries on the proposal.

5.10 This Consultation Report is the Council's response to the issues raised during the consultation period on the Proposal Paper.

5.11 This Consultation Report was published on the Council's website for a period of no less than 3 weeks prior to final consideration by Lifelong Learning Committee on 22 May 2019.

6. THE PUBLIC MEETINGS

6.1 A public meeting was held in Abernyste Primary School on Monday 12 November 2018. This meeting was attended by 29 members of the public. A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 1 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting.

6.2 A public meeting was held in Inchtute Primary School on Wednesday 14 November 2018. This meeting was attended by 5 members of the public. A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 2 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting.

7. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 7.1 356 letters were issued inviting comments and participation in the consultation.

In all, 26 online response forms were received. One response agreed with the Council's proposal and 24 responses disagreed with the Council's proposal. One response neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal.

During the consultation period, 27 written representations were also received. All of the written representations stated they did not agree with the Council's proposal.

The details of the respondents are contained within the Summary of Consultation Responses, attached as Appendix 3.

- 7.2 In summary, the oral and written responses and questions can be grouped broadly as follows:

- education provision in Abernyte is excellent and there are no educational reasons for closure and disagreement with the content of the Educational Benefits Statement
- the savings associated with closing Abernyte are overstated
- the pre-consultation process for the options appraisal was insufficient
- concerns about the capacity of neighbouring schools in the Carse and population growth
- projected pupil numbers for Abernyte
- the assessment to review of the catchment area was unsatisfactory
- the costs associated with upgrading Abernyte Primary School
- the accessibility of Inchturre for people from Abernyte
- potential for nursery provision at Abernyte
- the role of Education Scotland and Scottish Ministers
- loss of the school building for community/social events
- the Church building being an unsuitable venue for community/social events
- the loss of the school would be detrimental to the future of the community and wider economy
- the cost to community groups using education facilities and the building not being promoted for use.

- 7.3 Specific consultation meetings took place with pupils and staff at both Abernyte Primary School and Inchturre Primary School and full details of these are attached as Appendix 4.

8. EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO WRITTEN AND ORAL REPRESENTATIONS

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires the authority to provide a summary of the written and oral representations made during the consultation period and the authority's response to those representations. The representations and the authority's responses are set out below:

- 8.1 The financial savings stated are materially overstated.
The revenue savings do not take into account the reduction in GAE.
The savings arising from the proposal have not been clearly set out.
The Council's financial argument is weak.
We have been advised that schools would not be closed on monetary grounds.
Rural schools get extra money from the Scottish Government.**

The financial savings are not a material factor in the Council's proposal to close Abernyte Primary School. The proposal was formulated as a result of the very low occupancy of the school.

On 14 March 2019, the Council issued a Notice by letter to the statutory consultees and those who made representations during the consultation. This Notice set out the Council's consideration of the alleged inaccuracies or omissions in the proposal paper. The Council determined that there is no inaccuracy in the Council's projected cost savings for Abernyte Primary School, as set out in the proposal paper.

The Council did however accept that more detailed information regarding how the cost savings were calculated could have been helpful for those reading the proposal paper and, for this reason, the Council did issue additional information in terms of section 5 of the 2010 Act and allowed further opportunity for comments and representations on this point. In providing financial information within the proposal paper, the Council made use of the financial template developed by COSLA which is also supported by the Scottish Government.

For ease, the Council's response to the issues raised, which incorporates the additional information provided to consultees and those who raised the issue, is set out in this section. The letter is attached at Appendix 6. The Council has further reviewed the financial information in light of comments received following issue of that letter, and this section now provides a comprehensive response to the representations made in relation to financial information.

Grant Aided Expenditure

The financial template published in the Council's proposal paper uses a format agreed at a national level, this having been developed by COSLA and supported by the Scottish Government.

The financial template within the Council's proposal paper shows that, if the proposal were to be implemented, the Council's Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocation may reduce by up to £18,840. However, this potential adjustment does not directly affect the Education & Children's Services (ECS) Revenue Budget or the school running costs for the following reasons:

All councils receive a GAE allocation. This allocation includes £3,140 for each pupil in attendance at a school where the school roll is fewer than 70 pupils.

Across Scotland, this allocation is for all schools with a roll of fewer than 70 pupils whether they be rural or urban schools. It is for individual local authorities to determine how they allocate the resources they receive as part of the Scottish Government Financial Settlement. These resources are not considered to be "ring fenced" for schools with fewer than 70 pupils. It is for each Council to decide the budget for the provision of education within its area.

Since the 2008-11 settlement, the total amount available at a national level for distribution has remained unchanged. The GAE methodology uses a number of primary and secondary indicators to distribute the total amount of funding between Councils. There can be variations between Councils from year to year. For example, population indicators such as the overall school population in Scotland can lead to changes. As a result, where some areas of GAE funding may decrease, other areas of GAE funding may increase and the overall allocation of GAE to the Council may remain unchanged.

The overall Perth and Kinross Council proportion of funding allocation within the 2008-11 settlement total amounts may be reduced by up to £18,840. The overall GAE allocation for Perth and Kinross Council for 2019/2020 is £186.275 million.

School running budgets are determined by the Council as part of the annual budget setting process. As stated above, the budget allocated to each school is a matter for each Council to decide, and is not the same as the GAE funding received from Scottish Government. Budgets are allocated to schools using the Perth & Kinross Devolved School Management scheme (DSM). It was the DSM scheme which was used to complete the financial template provided by the Scottish Government.

Therefore, any reduction in GAE does not reduce the actual running costs of the school as the Council does not allocate an extra £18,840 to Abernyte Primary School because it is a school of fewer than 70 pupils.

Revenue Savings

The revenue savings to Education and Children's Services from closing Abernyte Primary School are £108,213 after allowing for mothballing costs of £750 per year.

The budget allocation to Inchturre Primary School is based on the Perth and Kinross Council Devolved School Management Scheme (DSM) which allocates budgets based on various formulas and school roll bandings. The relevant allocation which would affect the amounts shown within the financial template is detailed in Appendix 6.

If the school roll at Inchturre Primary School was to increase above 241 pupils, and the roll was projected to remain above 241 pupils, then an additional teacher would be allocated to Inchturre Primary School.

The current pupil projections, detailed in the table below, show that this may happen in financial year 2021/22. This assumes that that house building takes place including 30 houses at Moncur Farm. Additional pupils from this house building may increase the roll at Inchturre Primary School above 241 pupils regardless of whether pupils from Abernyte attend Inchturre Primary School.

Inchturre Primary School – Projected School Roll

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Projected School Roll (no house building)	233	238	232
Projected School Roll – with house building (assumes 30 houses at Moncur Farm)	239	247	244
Projected School Roll – with house building (assumes 66 houses at Moncur Farm)	239	252	253

*Does not include Abernyte Primary School pupils

As part of the annual staffing exercise which takes place each year to determine the staffing levels for all schools, fluctuations in pupil rolls, both up and down, across all schools are considered and adjustments are made to the staffing levels for each school for the new school session.

- 8.2 **The cost to upgrade the Abernyte Primary School is disputed. No description or methodology to calculate the costs is given. What is the basis of the property upgrade costs. Why is Abernyte Primary School only rated “B” for condition as the building is in very good condition and we are not aware of any deterioration.**

The condition or suitability of the building is not a material factor in the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School. The options appraisal was carried out due to the very low occupancy of the school.

The condition survey has been carried out in accordance with the Scottish Government Core Facts [Guidance](#) by a qualified Building Surveyor with input from other qualified professional staff within the Council's Property Services including Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. All Scottish Councils are expected to assess the condition of school buildings using this guidance. The scope of works identified for consideration over the next 5-year period was then costed by a qualified Quantity Surveyor.

For clarity, the elements of the building which received a lower grading include:

- Heating Pipework and Radiators
- Electrical Switchgear
- Lighting
- Electrical Wiring System
- Ventilation System
- Hot Water Services Pipework
- External Building Fabric

Whilst it is appreciated that the building may appear to be in 'very good' condition based on its general appearance, it has been identified that a number of elements within the building have received a lower grading due to their age, condition and remaining life expectancy. The true condition of these elements may not be obvious to non-technical building users. It should also be noted that mechanical and electrical infrastructure will be partially contained within ceiling and floor voids and behind walls and therefore not visible to building users.

All staff involved in condition survey work have an in-depth knowledge of the building from many years of experience in their respective job roles within Perth and Kinross Council, where servicing, inspections and maintenance have been carried out as appropriate.

The building condition is graded as Condition 'B' which is 'Satisfactory – Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration'. The Council believes this is a true reflection of the actual building condition. The detail of the costs for the identified works is provided at Appendix 6.

Suitability surveys for all schools in Perth and Kinross are in the process of being revised, as part of the 3-year cycle. Inchtute Primary School has been rated as suitability 'A' by the Headteacher as at March 2019. This is an improvement from the last suitability survey which was carried out in 2016 and is primarily due to investment in the school which has taken place since then which included reconfiguration of classrooms, nursery works, external space improvements and new door entry system. It should also be noted that the suitability template which is used to collate and determine the rating has also changed since 2016. This is a Scottish Government template which is being introduced by all local authorities.

8.3 There are no educational benefits in closing Abernyte Primary School. Education provision in Abernyte is excellent and there are no educational reasons for closure. Schools can be different and still provide an excellent education.

The Council published an Educational Benefits Statement (EBS) in which it considered the benefits which would accrue should the proposal be implemented. In reviewing the proposal and the EBS contained therein, the Council acknowledges that children currently have a positive experience at Abernyte Primary School. The following information reflects the Council's position having reviewed the educational benefits statement.

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act sets out the legal requirements in relation to the preparation of Educational Benefits Statements. This is supplemented by Statutory Guidance. In addition, Education Scotland gives non-statutory [guidance](#) to local authorities to assist them in meeting the requirements of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Council was required to set out an assessment of the likely educational benefits resulting from implementation of the proposal. The Council believes that it has done so.

The EBS, following the same format used by the Council for all statutory consultations relating to school closures, set out the benefits that would accrue for Abernyte Primary School children attending Inchtute Primary School, which would be the outcome of the proposal, if implemented.

However, the Council does not believe that this means that there are no educational benefits of the proposal, if implemented. In producing the EBS, the Council has focussed on the benefits for all pupils which would accrue if the proposal is implemented. There has been no indication in the EBS or elsewhere in the Proposal Paper that there are no educational benefits at Abernyte Primary School for the pupils currently educated there. Many of the examples of what is provided at Inchtute Primary School could equally be identified for Abernyte Primary School, and this would not be unexpected.

In relation to the Environment for Learning section of the EBS, parents from Abernyte Primary School had made reference to the inclusive/supportive atmosphere in Abernyte Primary School, the space available and the quality of educational experience and individual attention enjoyed. At present, the pupils at Abernyte Primary School enjoy space and an element of individual attention afforded by a very low school roll. While the roll at Inchtute Primary School is higher, so too is the number of staff available to support the children.

The larger class sizes at Inchtute Primary School enable access to wider experiences for the pupils and increases the opportunities for socialisation through being part of a larger school. At Abernyte Primary School, all pupils, of all ages are in the same class, and socialise with each other in and out of class.

The provision of a larger peer group with which to socialise allows pupils to work and play with different pupils and to forge different friendships based on mutual interests or age. They can seek out friendship groups that are not limited to a small group of classmates. The option to take part in team sports presents a healthy benefit, encouraging team work, team spirit and enhancing socialisation.

Work is differentiated in both schools, which means it is always adapted to pupils' needs, and the opportunity to work in ability as well as cooperative groups is of benefit to the pupils. With a larger number of pupils, this would allow the pupils currently at Abernyte Primary School to experience the benefits that come with working with different children, and also allowing them to share their learning with peers who are working at the same level as they are. The opportunities to work together, to negotiate with others at a similar level, and to develop confidence in working with larger groups are an additional benefit.

The environment for learning at Abernyte Primary School is good, but so too is that at Inchtute Primary School. Pupils at Inchtute Primary School have a variety of spaces in which to learn and work. If the proposal is implemented, the pupils at Abernyte Primary School will benefit from outdoor learning spaces that can be used in all weathers. Furthermore, the playing field adjacent to Abernyte Primary School, and which was referred to by parents, is not in the ownership of the Council, therefore its continued use cannot be guaranteed. Abernyte Primary School has an attractive, well-designed classroom, and the offer at Inchtute Primary School will benefit the pupils moving there, as they will continue to enjoy pleasant, comfortable and suitable learning spaces, with the added benefit of flexibility of learning spaces providing break out spaces and space for small group work.

Abernyte parents made Education Scotland aware that Abernyte Primary School also had an Eco Group, twinning arrangements and a Parent Council, so the provision of these at Inchtute Primary School would not be a benefit.

Abernyte Primary School's Eco school work would be continued at Inchtute Primary School. Transitioning pupils would find familiarity in the Eco school ethos, as well as outdoor learning. However, the larger peer group in which to do this and the chance to work with different groups of pupils would encourage confidence and participation and promote diversity and inclusion amongst all pupils. To that extent, the Council considers that there is a benefit to pupils who have access to Eco school through attending Inchtute Primary School.

In addition to the Eco Council, Inchtute Primary School offers a number of pupil led groups, including School Improvement, Health and Citizenship, Friendship and Community Councils. This variety enhances the opportunities for participation and extending leadership skills.

The twinning opportunities at both schools remain. These existing opportunities and links will help to encourage pupils transitioning to Inchtute primary school to share their wider experiences, to the benefit of all pupils. This would enhance further projects and activities, as ideas are shared, considered and negotiated by a larger, more diverse group of pupils.

The involvement of the Parent Council body at Abernyte Primary School would be welcomed at Inchtute Primary School, with the opportunity for parents to continue to share ideas and support for the school.

It is acknowledged that there is a good standard of education provided at Abernyte Primary School and that children have a positive educational experience there. However, the very low roll, while providing space and individual attention, presents a number of challenges. It does not afford the opportunities that the pupils have at Inchtute Primary School to experience the breadth, depth and challenge that the curriculum offers, through a larger school with a more diverse peer group in a way that fully meets children's educational, social and emotional needs.

It is also very difficult to create meaningful and challenging opportunities for children of a similar age and stage to work together in pairs, groups and teams where the school roll is so low. Inchtute Primary School offers high quality learning experiences across the four contexts of learning that encourage high levels of achievement and provides a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The Council believes that there are clear educational benefits available at Inchtute Primary School providing the children with the learning experiences and environment which delivers on the entitlements of a coherent, broad and balanced curriculum, available in a bright, modern learning environment. If implemented the proposal also has the potential to increase pupils' resilience through being part of a larger school community and will also help promote their social and emotional development by providing greater challenge as well as the opportunity to be part of a wider, age-appropriate peer group.

The Council believes that, if implemented, the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School and for children from Abernyte to attend Inchtute Primary School will be of overall educational benefit for children from the Abernyte catchment area.

The above, along with the information provided in section 9.6.2 clearly sets out the educational reasons for this proposal.

8.4 Limited information has been provided about the pupil consultation. This has not been undertaken in line with "Participants, not Pawns" Guidance.

The document "[Participants, Not Pawns](#)", provides guidance from Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) to local authorities on the principles within which to consult with children and young people on proposed school closures under the Schools (Consultation) Scotland) Act 2010.

It reflects the obligation to act upon certain provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) specifically Articles 3 and 12. Article 3 imposes an obligation to ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions directly affecting children. Article 12 covers the right of any child or young person to express a view on matters that have a significant effect on their lives, and to have that view taken into account by the decision makers.

Although it is not Statutory Guidance, the Council has followed the principles of the guidance in carrying out the consultation process for the children at Abernyte Primary School.

As one of the overriding principles is that children's voices are heard, it was important that the children were able to discuss their thoughts, independently of their parents and their teachers.

The pupil consultation took place on Friday 23 November 2018. Letters advising the parents of the consultation, and the date, were sent by email on the afternoon of Friday 9 November 2018, giving suitable, adequate notice to parents.

Taking into account the guidance from the SCCYP, staff at Abernyte Primary School were not involved in the pupil consultation. The consultation was useful and all children participated fully.

Two weeks after the consultation had taken place, the Headteacher fed back details of what was discussed with the pupils. All agreed that their views had been captured. Pupils were given the opportunity to add further comments, but no pupil had anything to add to the comments and views that had been noted.

Details of the consultation were produced in full as part of the Council's final Consultation Report.

A Quality Improvement Officer carried out the consultation exercise with the children, providing a skilled facilitator who was able to talk to the children and consult them on their views in a way that was age appropriate. The Quality Improvement Officer who carried out the consultation had no other involvement in the school estate review process for Abernyte Primary School. A Project Officer was in attendance to take notes.

In terms of personnel involved, Perth and Kinross Council has undertaken the review in a similar manner to three other local authorities who have recently completed statutory consultation processes on school proposals, where they have used council staff from an education background to undertake the sessions.

- 8.5 **We do not consider Perth and Kinross Council appropriately advertised the proposal in such a way that it would reach the full range of consultees.
We do not consider advertising the consultation in the local newspapers to be effective.**

Perth and Kinross Council has fully complied with its legislative requirements and good practice in notifying statutory consultees of the proposal and consultation. All statutory consultees were written to individually informing them of the proposal and consultation.

Public notice adverts were placed in the local newspapers to provide information to those persons who are not statutory consultees. In addition, the consultation was published on the Council's website and also on social media channels advising of the consultation and public meetings.

Abernyte News also published details of the consultation and public meetings on their local community Facebook page. The Council believes that the steps taken were sufficient to meet the statutory requirements and beyond. The Council received representations from a range of people, many of whom were not statutory consultees, which would suggest that the wider community was aware of the proposal.

- 8.6 **The source and reliability of data for the number of pupils living within the catchment area is inaccurate.
The Council should provide actual figures rather than biased statements.**

Pupil data information came from SEEMIS, Education and Children's Services management information system, which contains information on current pupils attending local authority schools within Perth and Kinross. The information in the system changes on a daily basis. However, the information in the options appraisal is from Census Day 2017. It is possible that there were 3 children living in the catchment area that did not attend Perth and Kinross schools. These children would not be known to the Council as the Council does not hold any data in relation to pupils who do not attend Perth and Kinross schools.

The Council has provided actual figures to evidence its statements. In the detailed information contained in the August 2018 options appraisal (section 4.2) it was made clear that the 11 primary school aged children referred to were those who attended Perth and Kinross Council schools.

The actual figures are detailed within the options appraisal of August 2018 (table 1 and table 5). As at Census 2018, there were 12 primary school aged children living in the catchment area attending Perth and Kinross primary schools, 4 of whom attend Abernyte Primary School.

8.7 The pupil projections carried out are not appropriate for use in a rural area.

Four years is a very short time period to project pupil rolls where a small change can result in large relative changes in the school age population. Perth and Kinross Council has only used one source of data.

The projected rolls for Abernyte Primary School are inaccurate.

The future school roll figures used were just for the catchment area and are not accurate.

It is considered that adjusting data to take into consideration the movement of pupils is inappropriate.

The Council uses four data sources in its projections for school rolls. Information is collated using current school roll, anonymised GP data for future P1 intakes, information on proposed house building from the Housing Land Audit (HLA) and past trends in relation to pupil intakes.

Each school is considered on an individual basis. The model for pupil projections is used as a starting point for asset management officers to do more detailed work.

This detailed work will depend on the individual school but can include discussions with planning officers on the HLA, reviewing historic information, reviewing placing requests and developing an understanding of local situations which may impact on pupil rolls. The Council has considered the comments made by the Parent Council but remains of the view that the projections and the methodology are appropriate for use for a rural school.

Section 4.2 of the August 2018 options appraisal details future pupil projections (table 4). It states that ‘this information **has not been adjusted** to take into account pupil movements in previous years’.

If the data was adjusted, the projected roll would, in the Council’s view, be lower to reflect the fact that there is a pattern of catchment pupils attending other Perth and Kinross Council schools through placing requests.

Therefore, the pupil projections set out by the Council represent an optimistic position.

As the Council has not adjusted the projections to take account of outward placing requests, it would not be appropriate to adjust the projections to reflect potential inward placing requests.

The data for Abernyte Primary School is 100% accurate based on forward projections from 2015 when the model was introduced in its current format. It is likely that the roll will be higher than projected in 2019/20 and that this will reduce the accuracy of the model to 90% over the 4 years.

Nevertheless, it is the Council's view that the methodology used for projecting pupil numbers is one which produces results which are substantially accurate and which can, therefore, be relied upon for the purposes of the proposal. The roll is higher than projected for 2019/20 as a result of inward placing requests made for Abernyte Primary School for August 2019. Where the fluctuations are coming from placing requests, then this does not assist in providing assurance about a stable, sustainable pupil roll as these cannot be predicted with any certainty as these are dependent on parental choice and not from an evidenced core baseline of pupils living within the catchment area.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
2015 Projection	7	5	6
Actual Pupils at Census	7	5	6

In relation to the availability of data over a 4 year period only, it is important to note that the basis of P1 projections is children registered at an address in the catchment area through a General Practitioner (GP). This data is available to the NHS as soon as a child is registered with a GP after being born. There is only ever 4 years of data because the data captures children aged from birth to 4 years old. Although future projections only extend to 2022/23, the basis of the options appraisal is that this is a long-term decline, which has been gradually taking place since 2011/12. Therefore, overall the Council has considered 12 years of data in coming to a conclusion about the sustainability of the school roll.

8.8 It is disputed that there is no foreseeable prospect of an increased and stable pupil population.

The school roll at Abernyte Primary School is 8 pupils as at 18 April 2019. There were 2 pupils who joined the school having moved into the catchment area in January 2019.

As at 18 April 2019, there is currently 1 catchment pupil registered to start in P1 in August 2019 and 3 placing requests from outwith the catchment area have been made for August 2019. There are 2 P7 pupils leaving Abernyte Primary School on 28 June 2019 to attend secondary school.

Assuming that all Abernyte catchment pupils attend the school from 2020 onwards, and including the 3 placing requests who may attend from August 2019, the projected roll for the school will be:

Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Projected Pupil Roll	10	7	9	10

This is an optimistic view of the school roll however and, if the model considers placing requests out as well as actual placing requests which have been submitted for August 2019, the future roll would be projected as follows:

Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Projected Pupil Roll	10	7	7	7

In summary, the options appraisal detailed that the school roll was not sustainable in the short to medium term for two key reasons:

- There is only a small number of children living in the catchment area, and the majority of them (8 out of 12 as at Census 2018) attend other Perth and Kinross schools, leaving a small number attending Abernyte Primary School.
- There are limited opportunities to increase pupil numbers due to the lack of available housing.

Few children living in the catchment area and attending the school

The school roll is low at 8 pupils. This is a result of fewer children living in the catchment area and a number of those who do live in the catchment area attending other schools.

In relation to the numbers of children living in the catchment area, the figures for school age children were set out in the Proposal Paper. Population statistics provided by National Records for Scotland, show the number of children living in the data zone associated with the catchment area aged between 0 and 4 and 5 and 9 years old has declined since 2007. This data zone covers more than the Abernyte catchment area but does provide some indication of the general population trend in the locality. It should also be noted that a number of children living in the catchment area attend other Perth and Kinross schools (at Census 2018, 8 out of 12 children known to the Council).

Limited opportunities to increase pupil numbers

A combination of a low turnover in housing and a lack of new housing in the area means that the number of children living in the catchment area is likely to remain low.

Feedback received from the local community during the informal pre-consultation exercise explains why there are low numbers of children living in the catchment area;

- “Very few new houses in the area which mean not a lot of young families equals no children. Low school roll”
- “Population of the village has aged and everybody moves here for life as it’s a wonderful place to live”

As detailed in the options appraisal, opportunities for housebuilding are limited in Abernyte. There are 8 full applications in the planning system between 2016 and 2018. One is for 2 holiday homes and one is a replacement for a current house. Of the six applications which remain, there is planning consent for 6 single dwellings.

From housebuilding of this scale, the Council projects that if all of these houses are built, the numbers of primary school aged children living within the catchment area could be two (based on 0.27¹ children per house). There are 3 placing requests for Abernyte Primary School in August 2019. It is not possible to sustain a school roll through placing requests, when there are insufficient catchment children living in the area. In particular, it should be noted that this number of placing requests is highly unusual for this catchment area as there have only been 4 placing requests overall in the last 8 years. The last time there was a significant number of placing requests was in 2006/7 when there were 5.

The Council has reviewed the representations that disputed that there is no foreseeable prospect of an increased and sustainable pupil roll at Abernyte Primary School by considering up-to-date pupil numbers, pupil projections and house building and it remains the Council's view that there is no prospect of a significantly increased and sustainable pupil roll at Abernyte Primary School.

The roll of the school has been decreasing over a long period of time due to the lower number of children in the catchment area, compounded by children in the catchment area attending other schools. In addition, the number of children from house building will not increase the pupil roll of the school to any great degree in future years. Lastly, it is not possible to sustain the school roll through a reliance on a small number of inward placing requests as this is unpredictable as it is wholly dependent on parents exercising choice.

8.9 The pre-consultation exercise did not reach out sufficiently widely.

Council Officers engaged twice with the families of primary aged children and under 5's from within Abernyte Primary School's current catchment. This was done firstly through a drop-in session for the wider community carried out in October 2017 to ascertain the community impact of the options being proposed. Individual meetings then took place during May 2018 to seek feedback on the catchment review.

¹ In order to determine the likely impact of new housing developments on school rolls, it is necessary to know what the pupil per household ratio or 'pupil product' will be in these areas. This is calculated using the analysis of information relating to national datasets of the numbers of households in Perth and Kinross, Education and Children's Services pupil database and The Environment Services database of planning applications. An assumption is made that 0.27 primary school age children are the "product" for each new house built. This figure is increased when considering social housing. This information is benchmarked against other local authorities for comparison and is broadly in line with the pupil product used elsewhere.

During the pre-consultation exercise, 23 questionnaires were submitted and 49 people attended the drop-in session. This was considered a reasonably good response.

Council Officers also engaged twice with families of primary aged children and under 5's who live in area to the north of the A90 in the Inchtute Primary School catchment area, which was identified as a potential extension to the Abernyte Primary School catchment area. This was carried out firstly through an on-line survey and secondly through individual meetings with families held in May 2018.

- 8.10 **The option to review the catchment area was not fully assessed. The catchment review facts are inaccurate. Only parents known to the Council were contacted. The assessment did not target families with pre-school children. The Council told parents that where siblings would be affected by the change, they could not guarantee younger siblings a place in the school attended by older siblings. We do not agree that it is unlikely that an extended catchment area would increase pupil numbers or create a sustainable roll. Could the catchment area be extended or could a different catchment area be looked at? Can a dual catchment area be provided?**

On 21 March 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee approved that officers carry out an assessment to consider whether a change to the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School, to include the area north of the A90 within the existing Inchtute Primary School catchment area, would provide an increased and sustainable roll for the school ([Report No.18/86 refers](#)). All other potential catchment area options were discounted in Report No 18/86.

Extending the catchment area had been considered following the pre consultation work to inform the options appraisal. The initial work to determine if there was support for the catchment area to be extended was not conclusive. This was reported to Lifelong Learning Committee in March 2018 and it was agreed that further work on the potential to review and extend the catchment area was to be undertaken.

This work was undertaken between Easter and the Summer and the outcome of this was reported to Lifelong Learning Committee in August 2018 where it was determined that the option of extending the catchment area to include the part of Inchtute catchment area which is north of the A90 would not create an increased and sustainable pupil roll for Abernyte Primary School.

The assessment was primarily to ascertain whether parents in the area north of the A90 within the Inchtute Primary School catchment area would wish their children to attend Abernyte Primary School. This would assist the Council in determining whether a review of the catchment would create a sustainable school roll at Abernyte Primary School. The assessment was taken forward through an information consultation process, where Council Officers spoke to individual families.

Prior to the informal consultation in relation to a possible catchment review being carried out, a meeting was held with the Chairs of both Abernyte Parent Council and Inchtore Parent Council. The process was discussed, the questions for parents were shared and the dates for sessions were also discussed. This was an opportunity for the Parent Councils to make comment in relation to this process. The Chair of Abernyte Parent Council was not in favour of the Council contacting parents with primary school children. The Council was of the view that no-one should be excluded and the more people who were contacted, the more likely it was that the Council would have a better understanding of whether a sustainable roll could be created.

One of the reasons the Council involved both Inchtore and Abernyte Parent Councils in the planning of the catchment area review was to ensure their local knowledge, including knowledge of families living locally, was included to ensure all reasonable steps were taken by the Council to engage with relevant families.

It is incorrect that families with pre-school children did not attend meetings with Council officers (Appendix A table 8 August 2018 options appraisal). It is correct that based on aggregated GP registration data, there were potentially 7 children under 5 whose families Council Officers were unable to contact. For data protection reasons, the aggregated data contains no information on individuals. There is no name or address information and, therefore, it is not possible for the Council to use the information to contact families.

Council officers took all reasonable steps and made considerable efforts through the schools and Parent Councils to engage with parents/carers.

In addition, Abernyte Parent Council made strenuous efforts to encourage parents/carers to engage including leaflet drops and a BBQ to promote the school. The Council also contacted local private nurseries as a potential means of promoting engagement with the Council.

The Council considers that it made all reasonable efforts to contact these families and it is possible that those families were aware of the assessment but chose not to engage with the Council. Indeed, some families, when contacted, informed the Council that they did not wish to continue to be contacted regarding this matter.

It has been stated that, at the meetings with individual families, Council Officers advised them that siblings from the catchment area which could form part of the Abernyte Primary School catchment area would not be guaranteed a successful placing request. As is the case with all placing requests, the Council cannot guarantee that placing requests will be successful. As per the options appraisal (FAQs Appendix 7) families were advised that siblings would be a category 2 placing request in their existing school if the option to change the catchment had been pursued. It would not have been appropriate to withhold that information from parents.

It is very likely that parents with children at Inchtute Primary School would not wish siblings to potentially be separated. However, comments from parents which are included in the options appraisal (Appendix 7), show that some parents are also discouraged by the social environment in small schools such as Abernyte Primary School.

The options appraisal presented to Lifelong Learning Committee in August 2018 (Report No. [18/243](#) refers) provides detailed information on the potential to create a sustainable roll through revising the catchment of Abernyte Primary School to include the catchment area of Inchtute Primary School which lies to the north of the A90.

The conclusion of the assessment, contained within the August options appraisal is that there would continue to be insufficient pupil numbers to increase the school roll at Abernyte Primary School or make it sustainable in future years if the catchment was extended.

This is based on the following:

- None of the 7 families with children living in the Inchtute Primary School catchment area to the north of the A90, who engaged with Council officers, expressed an interest in moving their children to the school.
- Parents/carers living within the existing Abernyte Primary School catchment area whose children currently attend other Perth and Kinross Council schools, and who engaged with the Council, advised that they would still choose to send their children to other schools if the catchment changed.
- The majority of children living in the Inchtute Primary School catchment area to the north of the A90, whose families did not engage with Council officers, will attend secondary school within the next 4 years and therefore would not affect future potential P1 pupil intake numbers.
- It was not possible to contact the parents of 7 under 5's who the NHS have advised lived in the area to the north of the A90 in the Inchtute Primary School catchment area in March 2018. The views of these parents are not known. However, given the small numbers it is unlikely that the roll will be significantly increased even if all of those pupils attended the school from 2019/20 onwards.

It should be noted that the position as stated above has not changed since the options appraisal which was presented to Lifelong Learning Committee in August 2018. Since the Proposal Paper was published, no additional or new information has been provided or come to light about additional children or parents which would lead to any change in the outcome of the assessment.

Dual catchment areas do not provide any certainty of a sustainable pupil roll as parents would have a right not to choose to attend their nearest school. There are also a number of different elements which the Council would need to consider in terms increased transport costs to support a dual catchment area.

8.11 Using an occupancy rate to assess the viability of Abernyte Primary School is not consistent with guidance issued by the Scottish Government.

The occupancy level of 60% was a principle agreed by the Council's Lifelong Learning Committee to identify schools which would be included in the school estate transformation programme. This figure has not been used to assess the viability of the school. The proposal paper and options appraisal set out the factors which were considered and which led to the decision to proceed to a statutory consultation on closure of the school.

8.12 The Council has incorrectly stated that the playing field is owned by the Abernyte Community Interest Company.

This matter was addressed within a Notice issued under section 5 of the 2010 Act on 14 March 2019. This is attached at Appendix 6. The Council accepts that if the playing field is not owned by Abernyte Community Interest Company, then there was an error in the proposal paper.

However, the Council does not consider that this error relates to a material consideration relevant to the Council's decision as to implementation of the proposal.

The proposal paper did state that the playing field was not in Council ownership and therefore is not part of the Abernyte Primary School site. In the Council's view, this is the key piece of information relating to the playing field, as opposed to who owns it.

As it is not within the control of the Council, it does not form part of the school site and there is no certainty over access to this space for the school, as access is dependent on the will of the owner of the land.

8.13 Although there is no planned housebuilding in the Abernyte area contained within the LDP, house building is permitted. In 2016-2018, there are planning applications for 8 new house builds within Abernyte catchment area.

There are 8 full applications in the planning system between 2016 and 2018. One is for 2 holiday homes and one is a replacement for a current house. Of the six applications which remain, there is planning consent for 6 single dwellings. Projected numbers of pupils from this level of housebuilding would be two on the basis of information set out in paragraph 8.8 above.

8.14 Why would additional vehicles be required to transport pupils? We do not agree the additional transport costs of £17,977.

The overall cost of transport would be lower if pupils living in the area north of the A90 who attend Inchtute Primary School were to attend Abernyte Primary School.

Some pupils live close to Longforan and it would be unreasonable to expect them to travel to Inchtute.

We do not consider there would be environmental benefits to Abernyte Primary School pupils being transported by the Council rather than travelling individually.

Existing Transport Arrangements

There is existing transport provided by the Council that currently serves both Inchtute Primary School and Abernyte Primary School.

Catchment Area Change – Proposed Transport and Cost

The amount of £17,977 is an increase in the amount required to pay for transporting children who live north of the A90 in the Inchtute Primary School catchment if the catchment was changed to Abernyte Primary School. This is a cost of £94.62 a day for an 8-seater vehicle that would be required over and above the existing transport currently used to transport children in this area to Inchtute Primary School. This is due to the requirement for two transport routes to Abernyte Primary School for pupils rather than one route to Inchtute Primary School due to the location of pupils' home addresses.

Catchment Area Change – Travel Distance and Time

Council officers in the Public Transport Unit calculated a route that includes all pupils entitled to home to school transport if Abernyte Primary School was closed and pupils were to attend Inchtute Primary School.

The Council does not consider that the travel distance or travel time for existing Abernyte Primary School catchment pupils to attend Inchtute Primary School is unreasonable. Pupils attending other schools in Perth and Kinross travel over greater distances than what would be expected of Abernyte catchment pupils travelling to Inchtute.

There are families currently choosing to send their children to Inchtute Primary School from Abernyte and these children are transported separately and at a cost to the parents. If the catchment was to change these children would be entitled to free transport if they lived further than 2 miles from the school, therefore, reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

For those pupils who live closer to Longforgan, the distance between Longforgan and Inchtute is approximately 2.4 miles. Those pupils who currently live closer to Longforgan are already travelling further than that to attend Abernyte Primary School as the distance between Longforgan and Abernyte is between 4.7 miles and 5.5 miles, depending on the route travelled. Therefore, if those pupils were to attend Inchtute Primary School if Abernyte Primary School were to close, they would have a shorter travel distance to and from school.

This would not be considered an unreasonable distance for pupils to travel to school and, therefore, it would not be considered unreasonable if Abernyte Primary School was closed and pupils were to attend Inchturre Primary School. In addition, parents would have the right to make a placing request for an alternative school which may be closer to their home address than the school designated by the Council if Abernyte Primary School were to close.

Parents from Abernyte who have made placing requests for their children to attend Inchturre Primary School would be entitled to free home to school transport if the proposal was implemented as Inchturre Primary School would become their catchment school.

8.15 We are concerned about the reliability of the capacity projections given the history of additional building work being required to increase the capacity of Inchturre Primary School. Planning capacity is not achievable in practice, therefore there may be insufficient capacity in Inchturre Primary School.

In 2011 as part of its Capital Programme, the Council anticipated that Inchturre Primary School would need expanded to accommodate pupil numbers from planned housebuilding. Works were subsequently undertaken which included 2 additional classrooms, a general purpose room and extending the school learning resource library and a new hall to deliver the primary school PE curriculum. The capacity of Inchturre Primary School was revised in 2014 to 264 following completion of these works.

The planning capacity of Inchturre Primary School is based on 9 classes. The table below sets out the various potential capacities of the school depending on the space used.

The school has 10 teaching spaces currently which would give the school a capacity of 289. At Perth and Kinross, class sizes are based on 2.0m² per child.

The expansion of the nursery for 1140 hours will release a further teaching space increasing the planning capacity to 314 as it will create the potential for an 11th teaching space.

Inchturre	9 classes	10 classes	11 classes
Planning Capacity 2m2	264	289	314

The working capacity of a school is generally lower than the planning capacity and depends on the class composition for a particular academic year.

The working capacity for Inchturre Primary School for session 2018/2019 is 251. Based solely on this same 9 class composition, the working capacity for 10 classes would be 276 and 11 classes would be 301.

Using the assumptions above there would be sufficient working capacity at Inchtute Primary School, based on projected rolls, should Abernyte Primary School pupils attend Inchtute Primary School and house building in Inchtute Primary School catchment area increase as detailed in sections 3.11 and 8.1.

The Council has reviewed the information provided in relation to the capacity of Inchtute Primary School, and the pupil projections and there is sufficient capacity at Inchtute Primary School to accommodate current and future pupil numbers. There is potential to increase the capacity at Inchtute Primary School without the need for further building works.

8.16 What evidence is there that the closure of the school would not be considered to have a negative impact on the sustainability of the community?

There would be no public buildings left as the school is the only public building.

It is unreasonable to conclude that travelling to access education and services is an accepted part of life for the community. Not everyone has access to private transport and public transport is very limited.

The church is not suitable to hold large social events.

The community impact of the loss of the school and the use of the building was considered during the options appraisal. The Council had special regard to the various rural school factors during the options appraisal process. The Council's assessment of these factors is also set out in the proposal paper. The Council has reviewed its assessment of these factors in light of the representations received, and the outcome of that review is set out below:

Community Impact - Affect of loss of the school to the community

The Council set out its consideration of the impact on the community of the loss of the school on pages 23-24 of the options appraisal and on pages 22-23 of the Proposal Paper. It is the case that everyone living in the village of Abernyte has to travel to access shops, post offices, health services and leisure services, as there are no such services in Abernyte. In that respect, this is part of life for those living in Abernyte and those who wish to move to the area will be aware of this. The need to travel to access services is not unusual for small communities.

The community has easy access to amenities. The village of Abernyte is close to good road links to both Perth and Dundee and a number of relatively large villages including Errol, Inchtute, Longforgan and St Madoes. These villages have amenities including post offices, shops, GP surgeries, churches, hotels and schools. The closest village is Inchtute which is approximately 3.4 miles away. These are factors which will support the continued sustainability of the community.

94% of households have access to a car in the Abernyte census data zone (Source: Scotland's Census 2011). As car ownership for this area is 94%, it is likely that the majority of people living in the Abernyte area either drive or use the limited public transport.

For those people who do not drive, they are likely to be supported by the community or family to access nearby facilities which are all located elsewhere which require them to travel.

It is understood that a new community-led transport group has started up through the Madoch Centre, a community hall in St Madoes. This service is in the early stages but is looking to provide an 8-seater minibus service to help residents in the Carse area attend GP appointments. When established, the group hopes to expand the service for other activities through a volunteer scheme. This is an example of community efforts to address transport issues for less mobile members of the community and there could be opportunities for the residents of Abernyte.

Numerous clubs and social activities take place in the surrounding area, throughout the week and at all times of the day – all less than 15 minutes travel from Abernyte. Activities include Baby & Toddler Groups; Playgroups; Brownies; Rainbows; Exercise Classes; Lunch Clubs; Community Cafés, Scottish Women’s Institute meetings and a Men’s Shed. It is understood that some older people living in the Abernyte area already travel to Inchture to attend lunch clubs and 50+ club. The Abernyte community promotes a range of social activities which take place in neighbouring villages. Abernyte is, therefore, a well-supported community with access to many activities in close proximity which provide opportunities to come together as part of the wider community, even if the school were to close.

In its Proposal Paper the Council cited examples of other communities in more remote areas which had continued to attract families. Further detail in relation to these is provided in section 8.18 below. It is also worth noting that there are a number of families who live in the Abernyte area, whose children attend other schools. This would suggest that for some families, the need to travel to access education is not a deterrent to living within a community, particularly where the distances between different schools are relatively small.

The school itself has increased the number of events it holds in the last year. Although these are school led events and the primary aim of these is to support children’s learning, the community has been invited to a number of these. There have been 3 community cafes, a community litter pick and plant party.

As stated in section 8.21 below, there is no reason why links between Abernyte and its local school could not continue to be developed, should the proposal be implemented.

It also continues to be the case that if the school were to close, this would provide the community with an opportunity to use it as a facility for community use. If the proposal to permanently close Abernyte Primary School is implemented, it is envisaged that Education and Children’s Services would declare the building surplus to the requirements of Perth and Kinross Council.

This would provide an opportunity for the building to be sold, leased or could present the local community with an opportunity for alternative uses of the building as part of a Community Asset Transfer. The Council has a Communities Team who focus on building community capacity. The Communities Team supports communities in the community asset transfer process. The Abernyte community is in a very positive position to progress a community asset transfer as they already have access to a 'community-controlled body' through the Abernyte Community Interest Company.

Having reviewed the representations made, the Council remains of the view that there will be little impact on the sustainability of the community should the school close. will be little effect on the sustainability of the community if the school were to close.

Community Impact - availability of the school for community use

The Council set out its consideration of the impact on the community of the loss of the school on page 24 of the options appraisal and on page 23 of the Proposal Paper.

The Council acknowledges that given the size of the church, larger community events may not be able to meet there. It is acknowledged that it will not be possible for the Wine and Heritage Club to continue to meet within a publicly available building within the village once per month, as is currently the case. The Council is also aware of a quiz night having taken place within the school and if this event were to be repeated, then it may not be possible for this or similar events to take place within the village itself if they cannot be accommodated in the church. However, there are a range of other venues available locally which could accommodate such events.

Local venues include Inchtute Primary School, Inchtute Village Hall, Inchtute Hotel, Annat Hall (Rait), Church Hall Longforgan, Errol Village Hall and Errol Primary School. Although there would be additional travel required when compared to the school, the distances involved are relatively small (for example Annat Hall is approximately 4.6 miles from Abernyte) and are similar to distances travelled to access other services. If there are less mobile members of the community who attend the Wine and Heritage Club then it would be hoped that arrangements could be made within the community to enable those members to continue to attend.

The Council is aware that the Harvest Festival takes place annually in the playing field adjacent to the school. The school is made available to enable access to water and toilet facilities. The playing field is privately owned and, therefore, could still be available to the community if the school closes, subject to continued agreement from the owner. Alternative arrangements to using the school for catering and toilets would have to be made. Throughout Perth and Kinross outdoor community events such as Festivals and galas take place throughout the year where arrangements are made to source toilets and water. There is no reason to believe that similar arrangements could not be made by those who organise the Harvest Festival.

Overall, the building is not significantly used by the community. The main user is the Wine and Heritage Club which meets once per month. The building is not used for any community activities such as Mother and Toddler Groups, Brownies/Cubs or lunch clubs. These are available in nearby villages. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Wine and Heritage Club may be affected if the school were to close, it remains the Council's view that this impact can be managed through relocating the Club to other nearby venues.

Therefore, having reviewed the position, the Council remains of the view that the impact on availability of the school for community use would be minimal. The impact on travel arrangements for those who currently use the school would also be minimal and it would be hoped that the community could support less mobile members of the community to access events rearranged nearby.

- 8.17 **None of the negative aspects of moving rural children to a large school like Inchtute Primary School have been considered.**
Inchtute Primary School is noisy.
Reduced quality of the educational experience and individual attention.
Inchtute Primary School is not easily accessible for disabled people.
Inchtute Primary School has limited disabled parking which would make it difficult for Abernyte community to attend school events in the future.

Inchtute Primary School is also classified as an accessible rural school, albeit larger than Abernyte Primary School. Should the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School be implemented, the transition for children would be carefully managed to support them into their new school environment.

While at present, the pupils at Abernyte Primary School have space inside and outside the school building, this space is afforded by the very low school roll. At Inchtute Primary School, the opportunities for imaginative use of spaces in and out of school, in the building and in school grounds, are enhanced by the opportunity to use the space with a larger peer group, and a larger variety of spaces.

The Council has fully considered the implications of moving pupils from Abernyte Primary School to Inchtute Primary School and it remains the Council's view that the pupils will not be disadvantaged from an educational perspective and there would not be a reduction in the quality of educational experience for the pupils.

It is acknowledged that there is a good standard of education provided at Abernyte Primary School and that children have a positive educational experience there. However, the very low roll, while providing space and individual attention, presents a number of challenges. It does not afford the opportunities that the pupils have at Inchtute Primary School to experience the breadth, depth and challenge that the curriculum offers, through a larger school with a more diverse peer group in a way that fully meets children's educational, social and emotional needs.

Work is differentiated in both schools, which means it is always adapted to pupils' needs, and the opportunity to work in ability as well as cooperative groups is of benefit to the pupils. With a larger number of pupils, this would allow the pupils currently at Abernyte Primary School to experience the benefits that come with working in pairs, groups and teams with children of a similar age and stage, and also allowing them to share their learning with peers who are working at the same level as they are. The opportunities to work together, to negotiate with others at a similar level, and to develop confidence in working with larger groups are a benefit.

While there will always be a potential for noise within a school, this is an area that is managed by each school. Clearly, with a very low school roll, the sound generated by staff and pupils would not compare to that in a larger school. However, there is no evidence that the environment at Inchturre Primary School would be detrimental to any of the pupils, and staff at the school manage activities in such a way as to minimise any potential issue of excessive noise.

Inchturre Primary School is fully accessible for children and adults with Additional Support Needs. It is on one level and has DDA compliant toilet facilities for children and adults.

With regard to parking at Inchturre Primary School, it is unlikely that the families of the small number of pupils from Abernyte would have a great impact on the traffic levels and parking around Inchturre Primary School for school events.

8.18 No evidence has been provided in relation to how the communities of Calvine and Enochdu compare to Abernyte.

No information has been provided on the impact of the closure of the schools on the less mobile members of the community.

These communities have been used as examples as their schools have been closed for some time and they have to travel to access local services:

- The closest GP surgery to Abernyte is 7 miles away, in Invergowrie, whereas the communities of Calvine & Enochdu travel 11-12.4 miles to access the Atholl Medical Centre in Pitlochry.
- For Abernyte, the local shop and post office are 3.1 miles away. People living in the Calvine area access Blair Atholl for shops & post office (5.2 miles). People living in the Enochdu area travel to Kirkmichael 2 miles away, or to Pitlochry which is 10 miles away.

There is no indication that the closure of Struan Primary School or the closure of Straloch Primary School has impacted on the numbers of families with children living in these areas and, therefore, the sustainability of the community. There continues to be families with primary school age children living in both Struan and Straloch area. There are more primary aged children currently live in Struan catchment area (9) than when the school closed (4) in 2011. There are less primary aged children currently live in Straloch catchment area (5) than when the school closed (10) in 2011.

8.19 The Council has not set out what their plans would be if the building was to close.

If the proposal to permanently close Abernyte Primary School is approved, it is envisaged that the Council would declare the building surplus to requirements.

Closure of the school would provide opportunities for the building to be used for the benefit of the community, either for business or residential use, or for community use if a suitable plan was identified.

Perth and Kinross Council would continue to engage with the local community regarding options for the future use of the Abernyte Primary School building should the proposal be implemented. The closure of the school could provide the community with an opportunity to use the building as a facility solely for community use.

The Council has a Communities Team who focus on building community capacity. The Communities Team supports communities in the community asset transfer process. The Abernyte community is in a very positive position to progress a community asset transfer as they already have access to a 'community-controlled body' through the Abernyte Community Interest Company. If the building was not transferred as a community asset, then it would be sold.

8.20 We consider that combining pupils from both catchment areas into one school does not maximize the use of the school estate and does not represent optimal asset management.

Taking account of asset management and best value, it is not considered good practice to have buildings which are not well used in terms of occupancy, especially where there are buildings nearby which also have free capacity. However, the reasons for formulating the proposal relate to the inability to create a sustainable school roll, rather than any reason related to asset management.

8.21 This proposal takes pupils out of their community, thereby weakening cross-generational links between pupils and the wider community of Abernyte.

Cross-generational links should not be dependent on there being a school as many Perth and Kinross communities do not have schools but have links with neighbouring schools. It should be possible for Inchtute Primary School to extend its links with the wider community to include the community of Abernyte and the Council would welcome the involvement of the community in Abernyte in developing this.

8.22 What about a nursery at Abernyte. Why build a nursery at Inchtute when a nursery could be incorporated in Abernyte.

There are empty classrooms at Abernyte which could accommodate nursery pupils.

In planning for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) as outlined in the Scottish Government's Blueprint for 2020, Perth and Kinross Council has arranged ELC into geographical areas.

The [Perth and Kinross Council Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) Expansion Plan](#) articulates the planned delivery models of 1140 hours ELC in Perth and Kinross and ensures that within localities there is a range of options for parents/carers to access funded ELC. This will include partner provider nurseries, childminders and a number of local authority settings offering all year round provision and longer opening hours. The ELC options available will be influenced by further consultation with parents/carers in localities. The expansion of ELC to 1140 hours requires significant changes to how ELC is currently delivered within PKC. There is an opportunity to deliver flexible, affordable and most importantly, high quality ELC for children, which supports more parents to work, train or study, especially those who need routes into sustainable employment and out of poverty.

[Eleven distinct "Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) Community Groups"](#) have been developed to take account of the geographical spread of localities across Perth and Kinross.

Specifically, Abernyte falls into the Carse of Gowrie area where, by 2020, 1140 hours will be available at 1 Partner Provider, 4 Local Authority Nurseries offering term time places and 1 offering an extended year model. Each community group in Perth and Kinross will contain a "mixed economy" of provisions to deliver 1140 hours of ELC made up of local authority settings, partner providers and childminders. Therefore, the overall demand for nursery places within Abernyte can be met by the number of places available within the Carse of Gowrie ELC community group.

The figures for the number of children under 5 years old in the Abernyte area led the Council to conclude that there are insufficient numbers of children in the area to sustain nursery provision or out of school care within the school. It is not considered to be the case that a nursery will attract families into the catchment area to then remain at the school. Families' choice of child care will be influenced by a range of factors and not all children attend a school nursery. This is why the ELC plan looks at delivery of a mixed economy of care. The fundamental issue is the low numbers of children under 5 years old in the catchment area, compounded by parents choosing other schools for their children. Neither of these issues would be fully addressed through introducing a nursery class.

- 8.23 The cost to community groups using education facilities and the building not being promoted for use.
The Council has not promoted the use of the school by community groups with an attractive charging system.**

The charges levied for the use of Abernyte Primary School building are in accordance with the Council approved charges for school lets which apply to all schools in Perth and Kinross. School let charges are between £4.00 - £15.00 per hour for multiple concession bookings and between £15.00 - £30.00 per hour for single concession bookings. Community halls also charge for their use and typically charge between £3.85 – £30.45 per hour depending on venue, facility and peak/off peak times. Community halls charge a flat rate regardless of whether the booking is a single or multiple booking. Therefore, there is little difference in the level of charges and, in many cases, a school let will be cheaper for block bookings for junior community activities such as Brownies, Beavers etc.

**8.24 Who is Education Scotland.
Would Education Scotland meet with parents of children not currently attending Abernyte.
What can be raised with Scottish Ministers and when would Scottish Ministers become involved.**

The role and remit of Education Scotland and Scottish Ministers is set out within the Council's Proposal Paper.

Education Scotland is a Scottish Government executive agency who support and inspect the quality and improvement in Scottish education. Education Scotland operates independently and impartially, whilst remaining directly accountable to Scottish Government Ministers. Education Scotland undertakes inspection, review and reporting within the overall context of the National Performance Framework.

Education Scotland met with a focus group of parents of pupils currently attending Abernyte Primary School. Other interested parties were able to make their views known as part of the consultation process by making a formal representation.

If the Council decides to proceed with the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School, consultees have the opportunity to make any representations they wish to make on the proposal directly to Ministers. If Scottish Ministers call-in the Council's proposal, this is then referred to an independent School Closure Review Panel for determination. This is set out within the Proposal Paper and information on the School Closure Review Panel is available on the Scottish Government website.

**8.25 What about the pupils all across the Carse that are not in the catchment area who want to attend Abernyte Primary School.
Can parents make placing requests for 2 year olds.**

Parents from across the Carse have always been able to make placing requests for their children to attend Abernyte Primary School if they wanted to do so and can continue to do so.

To date, there is no evidence that there are parents who wish their children to attend Abernyte as the numbers of placing requests for pupils from outwith the catchment area to attend Abernyte Primary School is very low.

Parents cannot legally make a placing request for a child until they are deemed to be of school age.

8.26 Pupils are being decanted from Longforgan to Errol. Why can't these pupils attend Abernyte.

The arrangements being put in place are for a temporary decant of Longforgan Primary School pupils whilst the school extension is being built.

Abernyte Primary School is not big enough to accommodate all the pupils from Longforgan and it is best to keep the pupils together during the decant than disperse across other schools. This can be achieved by decanting the pupils to Errol Primary School.

8.27 Inchtute pupils could use Abernyte Primary School as a campus. ASN pupils could attend Abernyte Primary School.

ASN provision is specialist provision which should be specifically designed to meet the additional support needs of pupils who require significant levels of support. ASN provision requires installation of specialist equipment and space demands are greater. A school such as Abernyte would not be suitable for ASN provision. There is ASN provision at Errol Primary School and, therefore, the location is not suitable.

Perth and Kinross Council would seek to avoid schools being over split sites due to the operational and management issues which can arise from split sites, particularly where travel between the sites would require transport.

8.28 Innovative ideas to help boost the school roll have been suggested to the Council over the past 10 years but not one of the ideas has been supported.

Suggestions set out by the Parent Council to increase the school roll are:

- allow pupils to travel on the school bus to and from Inchtute Primary School to use breakfast and after school clubs;
- establish nursery provision in Abernyte Primary School; and
- allow pupils attending Abernyte Primary School as placing requests access to the school bus to and from Inchtute.

The fundamental issue at Abernyte Primary School is the low number of pupils living within the catchment area and the number of children from within the catchment area who attend other schools by means of placing requests. Solutions such as the Council offering transport, whilst attractive on the surface, come with significant additional cost to the Council.

This would by no means necessarily provide a solution as parents will make decisions about their children’s schooling based on a range of factors.

8.29 In 5 years’ time the Council will need to build a new campus at Inchtute as it will have reached capacity. All the schools in the Carse are full and Abernyte should be used to create capacity.

The Council has set out the projected rolls and capacity for Inchtute Primary School in sections 8.1 and 8.15. This demonstrates that Inchtute Primary School has sufficient capacity to accommodate the projected numbers of pupils due to attend in future years.

The occupancy of primary schools in the Carse is detailed below:

School	Capacity	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Errol Primary School	316	60%	60%	56%
Longforgan Primary School	314	76%	78%	75%
St Madoes Primary School	150	87%	79%	76%
Invergowrie Primary School	283	63%	62%	55%

9. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

- 9.1 In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal.
- 9.2 The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Perth and Kinross Council’s proposal to close Abernyte Primary School.
- 9.3 Education Scotland visited Abernyte and Inchtute Primary Schools the week commencing 7 January 2019 to speak to relevant consultees. Education Scotland attended the public meeting held on 14 November 2018 in connection with the Council’s proposals.
- 9.4 The Education Scotland report is reproduced in full at Appendix 5.
- 9.5 The report concluded that the proposal has some potential educational benefits. HM Inspectors agreed that Abernyte children will have access to wider experiences and increased socialisation through being part of a larger school at Inchtute. Opportunities to engage in assemblies, after school and team events will be increased. Transition from the nursery class to the P1 class will be enhanced. Projected numbers of children within the catchment do not indicate that the roll at Abernyte is likely to grow significantly. HM Inspectors agreed that Inchtute Primary School has the capacity to accommodate additional children. HM Inspectors also concluded that the proposal will assist the Council to deliver ‘best value’ through making more efficient and effective use of its resources.

The report also noted that the Council had set out a number of reasonable arguments in support of its proposal. These are summarised below:

- HM Inspectors noted that data indicate that the roll of Abernyte Primary School has been falling over the last five years. Future projections indicate that pupil numbers are unlikely to increase above their current level. The Council is aware of six catchment children who currently attend neighbouring schools. If this pattern of parental choice continues, then the future sustainability of Abernyte Primary School is challenging.
- Improved social interaction opportunities from attending a larger school among children of their own age. Participating in larger year groups will increase the opportunity for collaborative working with children of a similar age and stage of development. Opportunities to engage in a broader range of activities which enrich the curriculum will be increased. Children will benefit from participating in a wider variety of after school activities and the Inchtire House System. The proposal will assist the Council to make efficient and effective use of its resources as it will not incur costs for running Abernyte Primary School. Inchtire Primary School has the capacity to accommodate additional children should Abernyte Primary School close.
- HM Inspectors concluded that, in arriving at its proposal the Council had assessed the likely benefits to children and in doing so had given due consideration to any reasonable alternatives. The report noted that the Council carried out a detailed options assessment in which it considered four options. These included: keeping Abernyte Primary School open with the existing catchment area; mothballing Abernyte Primary School and moving children to Inchtire Primary School; reviewing the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School to determine whether or not this would increase the roll to a sustainable level; and closing Abernyte Primary School and moving children to Inchtire Primary School. Due to insufficient demand, coupled with parents choosing to place their children at other primary schools, none of the options bar closure were considered as viable or sustainable.

HM Inspectors felt that the proposal would not impact negatively on children at Inchtire Primary School. Abernyte children will be entitled to free transport. The journey time is not unreasonable when compared with other parts of the authority and is likely to have limited environmental impact.

HM Inspectors concluded that the Council's proposal to close Abernyte Primary School, move pupils to Inchtire Primary School and permanently extend the Inchtire Primary School delineated catchment area to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School has some potential educational benefits. However, HM Inspectors noted that, the Council will need to balance these potential benefits against the potential loss to the children, families and community of the local village school.

HM inspectors also noted that children at Abernyte Primary School currently enjoy learning in a bright, attractive, inclusive and supportive environment. They noted that children currently have access to an extensive and varied outdoor area to play and learn. HM Inspectors felt that, whilst there are many accurate and sound arguments within the Council's outline of educational benefits, there are some instances where the Council overstates the advantages for children should they move to Inchtute. HM Inspectors agreed that the educational benefits statement does not give an appropriately balanced view of the improved outcomes for children should Abernyte Primary School close, for example, in its assessment of the school grounds, the environment for learning, the school's work as an Eco school or being twinned with a school in France and the support of the Parent Council. HM Inspectors felt that the Council had failed to acknowledge that Abernyte Primary School provides these equally well.

HM Inspectors noted that the local community believes the Council is wrong about the impact on the wider community should Abernyte Primary School close as the community believes that the school is used for a greater range of community activities. However, the report from HM Inspectors noted the Council's consideration that the current school building is not used sufficiently regularly for community activity to impact negatively.

Inspectors also noted that:

- in the last year the school has extended its activities with the local community through, for example, the community café;
- parents of children attending Abernyte believe that there are inaccuracies in the outline of council's financial costs, roll projections and educational benefits statement. HM Inspectors agreed that the financial arguments are not evidenced clearly enough in the Council's proposals.
- Parents and children from Abernyte Primary School who met with HM Inspectors did not support the proposal. Parents did not agree that there would be educational benefits for Abernyte children. Concerns were expressed about the perceived loss of the inclusive, supportive environment the children currently experience. Children enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and the space within and outside of the school building. The outdoor space is used imaginatively by children, sometimes directed by staff. Both parents and children were concerned about the potential for greater noise in a larger school. Parents felt there would be a reduction in the quality of the educational experience and individual attention. Parents did not accept the projected roll figures. They felt that in the future the school roll could increase.

Parents acknowledged that the lack of nursery provision and parents exercising the right to send their child to other schools contributed to the lower numbers at Abernyte. Significant concern was expressed about the loss of the school as a community facility. Parents raised a legitimate concern regarding requiring greater clarity with regard to the approximate costs of upgrading the school fabric in the medium term.

Whilst HM Inspectors acknowledged the legitimate concerns of parents, they concluded there was no evidence to suggest children would not make appropriate progress and enjoy rich educational experiences should they move to Inchtute.

- Staff and children in Inchtute Primary School who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. Staff thought that engagement with a wider peer group of similar age and stage would improve children's learning. They felt that transitions were easier for children both from the nursery into P1 and from P7 to secondary education in a much bigger school. They felt that children would benefit from access to a wider pool of staff.

Teachers thought that a larger staff provided more opportunities for moderation activities and professional learning. Inchtute children would welcome the chance to develop new friendships. Children from Abernyte currently join some classes in Inchtute Primary School for art on a weekly basis. Children in Inchtute thought Abernyte children would benefit from having access to an increased range of school teams.

They also felt that their P7 residential trip was one of the highlights of their school experience and children from Abernyte missed out on this kind of opportunity. Parents, staff and children did not have any concerns about the potential increase in the school roll if the proposal proceeds.

The following section addresses the issues raised in the report by Education Scotland.

9.6 **Perth and Kinross Council's Response to Education Scotland's Report**

The Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts its findings and notes the concerns raised by pupils, parents and staff from Abernyte Primary School in response to the Council's proposal.

In response to the findings contained within the Education Scotland report, Perth and Kinross response is as follows:

9.6.1 **The local community believes the Council is wrong about the impact on the wider community should Abernyte Primary School close as they believe that the school is used for a greater range of community activities. In finalising its proposal, the Council needs to reconsider any further relevant information on this aspect.**

Perth and Kinross Council has carefully considered the representations made by the local community during the consultation period. The Council is required to publish its response to representations made during the consultation period within its final Consultation Report. The Council's detailed response to the issues raised about community impact is set out within this Consultation Report in Section 8.

9.6.2 In its final consultation report, the Council will need to set out a more balanced educational benefits statement.

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act sets out the legal requirements in relation to the preparation of Educational Benefits Statements. This is supplemented by Statutory Guidance. In addition, Education Scotland gives non-statutory [guidance](#) to local authorities to assist them in meeting the requirements of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

The Council was required to set out an assessment of the likely educational benefits resulting from implementation of the proposal. The Council believes that it has done so. The Educational Benefits Statement (EBS), following the same format used by the Council for other statutory consultations relating to school closures, sets out the benefits that would accrue for Abernyte Primary School pupils attending Inchtute Primary School, if the proposal is implemented.

In producing the EBS, the Council has focussed on the benefit for all pupils if the proposal is implemented. There has been no indication in the EBS or elsewhere in the Proposal Paper that there are no educational benefits at Abernyte Primary School for the pupils currently educated there. Many of the examples identified in relation to Inchtute Primary School could equally be identified for Abernyte Primary School, and this would not be unexpected. However, the Council does not believe that this means that some of the educational benefits of the proposal, if implemented, have been overstated.

The Council acknowledges that the children currently experience a positive education at Abernyte Primary School. It also acknowledges and accepts that some of the benefits children will experience at Inchtute Primary School, should the proposal be implemented, are provided currently for children at Abernyte Primary School. These include the quality of the school grounds at Abernyte Primary School, the environment for learning, the school's work as an Eco school, the school's twinning arrangements with a school in France and the supportive Parent Council. The Council has provided more detail in relation to these particular examples in section 8, as part of its response to the representations received.

However, the Council believes that, if implemented, the proposal will be of overall educational benefit to the children directly affected by it. If implemented, the proposal will create specific opportunities for children that only the move to Inchtute Primary School can bring. At Inchtute, the children will have a broader range of opportunities to develop their skills. There will be increased breadth, continuity, coherence and progression in the curriculum with enhanced opportunities for personalisation and choice. There will be increased and enhanced opportunities for children to be active in their learning and development. They will benefit from improved learning experiences with, for example, increased opportunities to work together in pairs, groups and teams with children of a similar age and stage. They will enjoy access to an improved environment for learning with access to a wider range of facilities.

Implementation of the proposal will also help the Council secure best value through the effective and efficient use of the Council's resources.

In summary, while it is acknowledged that there are existing benefits at Abernyte Primary School, the very low pupil roll, while providing space and individual attention, does not afford the opportunities that the pupils will have at Inchtute Primary School to experience the breadth, depth and challenge that the curriculum offers through a larger school with a more diverse peer group. The Council believes that this is reflected in the EBS prepared and published in the Proposal Paper.

The Council believes that the proposal is of overall educational benefit. There are clear educational benefits available at Inchtute Primary School. These provide the children with the learning experiences and environment which will ensure that the children will have enhanced access to the entitlements of a coherent, broad and balanced curriculum, in a bright, modern learning environment. HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential to deliver these benefits.

9.6.3 Should the Council decide to take forward the proposal for closure, it should set out how it will ensure that current Abernyte children are supported to positively make the transition to Inchtute Primary School.

The Local Authority has experience of supporting pupils to make a positive transition from one school to another. If the proposal was to be implemented, the schools would work together to ensure that children were familiar with their new school through visits to Inchtute Primary School.

Pupils from Abernyte Primary School are already familiar with Inchtute Primary School, the building, the pupils and the staff, having previously visited the school for Art and PE lessons, which provides a solid foundation for a successful transition.

Plans to help pupils settle into life at Inchtute Primary School would include a tour of the school, pupils being allocated a "buddy" if appropriate, visits to school, including the lunchtime experience, transition discussions with staff and parents and the key transfer of information, including pupils' strengths and next steps. The staff from Inchtute Primary School would also visit Abernyte Primary School to get to know the children. Resources would be taken to Inchtute Primary School so that there was still a link and a focus for discussion.

All staff are experienced in making children feel welcome and helping to settle them into a new environment.

Events would be held with parents at Inchtute Primary School to allow them to meet staff and become familiar with the school and the curriculum offered there. This approach has proved successful with a number of schools over recent years.

9.6.4 The Council should also work with parents to address, and correct where necessary, any inaccuracies as outlined by the Abernyte Parent Council, including a more transparent financial case.

Perth and Kinross Council has carefully considered the alleged inaccuracies and omissions set out by Abernyte Parent Council and others who made representations.

In response to these alleged inaccuracies, the Council issued a Notice setting out its determination in relation to the representations made.

This Notice included additional detailed financial information setting out how the cost savings are calculated and the capital costs to upgrade the building. This is attached at Appendix 6. The Council allowed a further 2-week period within which representations could be made in light of the additional information provided in the Notice.

The Council is required to publish its response to representations made during the consultation period within its final Consultation Report. The Council's detailed responses to the alleged inaccuracies is set out within this Consultation Report in Section 8.

9.6.5 The Council should also consider carefully how the vacant school might be used to the benefit of the local Abernyte community.

Perth and Kinross Council will continue to engage with the local community regarding options for the future use of the Abernyte Primary School building should the proposal be implemented. The closure of the school could provide the community with an opportunity to use the building as a facility solely for community use if a suitable plan was identified.

If the proposal to permanently close Abernyte Primary School is approved, it is envisaged that the Council would declare the building surplus to the requirements. This would provide an opportunity for the building to be sold, leased or could present the local community with an opportunity for alternative uses of the building as part of a Community Asset Transfer. The Council has a Communities Team who focus on building community capacity. The Communities Team supports communities in the community asset transfer process. The Abernyte community is in a very positive position to progress a community asset transfer as they already have access to a 'community-controlled body' through the Abernyte Community Interest Company.

10. RURAL SCHOOL – COMPLIANCE WITH SECTIONS 11A TO 13 OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

- 10.1 Abernyte Primary School is an accessible rural school, and the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 therefore requires the Education Authority to have special regard to the following factors:

- the likely effect on the local community as a consequence of the proposal; and
- the likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements that may be required.

As Abernyte Primary School is a rural school, special regard was paid to the rural school factors. These were considered fully in the [Options Appraisal](#) stage and were a focus of the pre-consultation with the community.

The Council's assessment of these rural school factors was set out in the [Proposal Paper](#). The Council received a number of representations regarding the loss of the school, the use of the building, the impact on the community and the likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements which were relevant to the Council's assessment of the rural school factors.

The Council has reviewed its proposal with particular regard to the rural school factors.

The review considered whether our assessment of the rural school factors continued to be appropriate in light of representations received. The Council's updated assessment is detailed further as follows:

10.2 Effect on the Local Community

Community Impact – Loss of the school

- 10.2.1 In response to representations made during the consultation period, the Council's further assessment of the loss of the school to the community is detailed in section 8.16.

Community Impact - Use of the Building

- 10.2.2 In response to representations made during the consultation period, the Council's further assessment of the impact on the community's use of the building is detailed in sections 8.16 and 8.19.

10.3 Travel Arrangements

- 10.3.1 In response to representations made during the consultation period, further information on the likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements is detailed in section 8.14.

10.4 Environmental Impact

- 10.4.1 There are 8 pupils as at Census 2018 who already travel from the Abernyte Primary School catchment area to other schools in Perth and Kinross as the result of successful placing requests, for which there is an environmental impact. This environmental impact would be offset by the requirement to run Abernyte Primary School as an operational school building.

10.4.2 Pupils from Abernyte catchment area who are already attending Inchtute Primary School as placing requests would be transported by the Council to Inchtute Primary School which reduces environmental impact as they would travel together rather than separately with parents.

10.4.3 The community already requires to travel to access other services such as GP and dental surgeries, shops, post offices and leisure facilities. Therefore, there will be little additional environmental impact if Abernyte Primary School were to close.

11. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES

11.1 Section (10) (3) of the 2010 Act also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees.

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.

11.2 At the end of the consultation period, there were areas identified by respondents as being inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Paper during the consultation period.

11.3 Perth and Kinross Council carefully considered the alleged inaccuracies and omissions set out by those who responded to the consultation. In response to these alleged inaccuracies and omissions, the Council issued a Notice setting out its determination in relation to the representations made. This Notice included additional detailed financial information setting out how the cost savings are calculated and the capital costs to upgrade the building. This is attached at Appendix 6.

The Council allowed a further 2 week period within which representations could be made in light of the additional information provided in the Notice. Two further representations were received during the further consultation period.

11.4 The Council considered that the representations made did not affect the Council's decision regarding the implementation of the proposal. The representations made did not require a fresh determination or correction of its proposal.

11.5 The Council is required to publish its response to representations made during the consultation period within its final Consultation Report. The Council's detailed responses to the alleged inaccuracies is set out within this Consultation Report in Section 8.

12. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

- 12.1 Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that: After the Education Authority has received Education Scotland's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:
- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period;
 - (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public Meeting; and
 - (iii) Education Scotland's report.
- 12.2 Following receipt of the Education Scotland report, 26 online representations, 27 written representations and oral representations made at 2 public meetings held during the consultation period, officers reviewed the proposals.
- 12.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by officers where all the questions and comments raised were considered in detail. Data and factual information were checked where required and advice and input were sought from other Council Services where needed to consider the issues raised. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under section 9(1) and 13(5) of the 2010 Act.
- 12.4 Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meetings and have considered equally carefully the Education Scotland report and the online and written representations. The proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations should lead the Council to reconsider other options as being reasonable alternatives to the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School. None of the representations led officers to conclude that any of these options should be reconsidered as reasonable alternatives.
- 12.5 The educational benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made.
- 12.6 The factors included in the Education Scotland report and representations made regarding the educational benefits have been reconsidered and the Council has set out a more balanced assessment including the overall educational benefits which would accrue if the proposal was to be implemented.
- 12.7 There were no aspects included in the representations made which provided a different conclusion in relation to the rural school factors.
- 12.8 Having reviewed the Education Scotland report and feedback from consultees, officers concluded that the basis of the original proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to the low and unsustainable school roll of Abernyte Primary School.

- 12.9 It is considered that the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School is of clear educational benefit to the children directly affected by it. There is sufficient capacity at Inchtute Primary School to meet fully the needs of the Abernyte Primary School children without disrupting the learning of the Inchtute Primary School children.

The proposal addresses the issue of the low and unsustainable school roll at Abernyte Primary School and is the most reasonable, appropriate, viable and sustainable option available to the Council.

13. OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO SCOTTISH MINISTERS IN TERMS OF SECTION 15(4) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

- 13.1 If the Education Authority makes a final decision to implement the proposal, it will require to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision, and provide them with a copy of the proposal document and consultation report. This must be done within six working days of that decision. The Scottish Ministers have an eight-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal.
- 13.2 Within the first three weeks of that eight week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the eight week call-in process is known, the Authority cannot proceed to implement the proposal.
- 13.3 If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, they must refer the proposal to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels who may refuse to consent to the proposal or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally.
- 13.4 Recipients of this Consultation Report, and other readers, should note that the legislation allows for any person to make representations to Scottish Ministers within three weeks of the Council taking their final decision to implement a closure proposal. Perth and Kinross Council's Lifelong Learning Committee will take the decision on whether or not to implement this closure proposal at its meeting on 22 May 2019. If the decision is taken to implement the closure proposal, any representations to Scottish Ministers, therefore, in this context need to be with the Ministers within three weeks of this date. Therefore, any representations must be made to Scottish Ministers by 11 June 2019.

- 13.5 Anyone wishing to make representation to Scottish Ministers during the three-week period referred to above should do so by email to schoolclosure@gov.scot or in writing to:

School Infrastructure Unit
The Scottish Government
Area 2B (North)
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

14. LEGAL ISSUES

- 14.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 throughout this statutory consultation.
- 14.2 The Council is mindful of its duties in respect of equality and the Equality Impact Assessment did not identify that any parent, child or young person would be treated less favourably as a result of this proposal. Pupils would have access to a wider peer group of both sexes at Inchtute Primary School which is a positive impact.

In terms of Socio-Economic Impact, the assessment identified that there may be a small disadvantage for some parents who would have further to travel when attending meetings or events in school. However, the identified benefits significantly outweigh any disadvantage. It is also not considered to be a significant disadvantage as parents are already travelling to access all other services outside Abernyte village.

In addition, a number of pupils from Abernyte catchment area are already attending Inchtute Primary School as the result of successful placing requests. If the proposal is implemented, these pupils will be transported to Inchtute Primary School by the Council rather than travelling separately at a cost to the parents.

- 14.3 Under the terms of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.
- 14.4 As it is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in written form, if required, on 18 April 2019, this meets the statutory requirement to publish this report for more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by Lifelong Learning Committee on 22 May 2019.

15. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There may be staffing implications relating to the proposal if implemented. Where necessary, any aspect of the implementation of these proposals that impacts on staff will result in consultation with the relevant trade unions and the individuals concerned. Appropriate arrangements would be made for staff at Abernyte Primary School in planning and consultation should the proposal be implemented.

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1 The Council now has 4 broad options to consider, namely:
- (a) adopt the proposal;
 - (b) withdraw the proposal;
 - (c) amend the proposal in some way which allows the proposal to proceed; or
 - (d) amend the proposal significantly and undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal.
- 16.2 Education Scotland has identified that the proposal has potential educational benefits for children. This includes access to wider experiences and increased socialisation through being part of a larger school with a larger number and wider range of peers in Inchtute Primary School. This allows children to access learning with groups of learners at all stages within a primary school and to develop their social and interpersonal skills in a broader range of appropriate contexts.
- 16.3 If the Council adopts the proposal, it is understood that the educational benefits set out in the Proposal Paper would materialise.
- 16.4 The key points that have been highlighted during the consultation period are as follows:
- The report from Education Scotland acknowledges that the proposal has potential educational benefits for pupils at Inchtute Primary School providing the children with the learning experiences and environment which delivers on the entitlements of a coherent, broad and balanced curriculum, available in a bright, modern learning environment. If implemented, the proposal also has the potential to increase pupils' resilience through being part of a larger school community and will also help promote their social and emotional development by providing greater challenge as well as the opportunity to be part of a wider, age-appropriate peer group. HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential to deliver these benefits.
 - The Council, having had special regard to the rural school factors, does not consider that the proposal will adversely affect the sustainability of the community.

Indeed, there may be a positive opportunity for the Abernyte Primary School building to be used for community use if it ceases to be used as a school.

- Whilst the Council's proposals have generally not been supported by the Abernyte parents/carers, pupils and the wider community who responded to the proposal, the vast majority of those consulted on the proposal did not respond.
- The distance between the two schools is approximately 3.4 miles and a number of pupils are already making this journey attending Inchtute Primary School as the result of successful placing requests. Free home to school transport would be provided for all pupils from Abernyte catchment area to attend Inchtute Primary School.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 On the basis of the feedback received and taking account of the overall educational benefits of the proposal, it is concluded that the following proposal is the most reasonable, appropriate, viable and sustainable option open to the Council.

It is recommended that the Council approves that:

- the provision of a school at Abernyte Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 1 July 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- the pupils of Abernyte Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Inchtute Primary School, from 2 July 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- the delineated catchment area of Inchtute Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School from 2 July 2020.

Sheena Devlin
Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
18 April 2019



**Perth & Kinross Council
Education & Children's Services
Statutory Consultation Public Meeting**

**Minute of Meeting Held on Monday 12 November 2018
At 7.00pm in Abernyte Primary School**

Present

Councillor Caroline Shiers	Convener, Lifelong Learning Committee
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director (Education & Children's Services)
Sharon Johnston	Head of Service, Early Years & Primary
Karen Robertson	Service Manager - Business Services
Carol Taylor	Service Manager - Resources

In Attendance

Councillor Angus Forbes	Perth and Kinross Council
Caroline Nash – Minutes	Perth and Kinross Council

29 members of the public

Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Shiers opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public in attendance to the statutory consultation public meeting and introduced herself and the Council Officers to the members of the public.

Format of Meeting

Sheena Devlin explained the format the meeting would follow and how other similar events had been undertaken.

The Proposal

Sheena Devlin explained the consultation proposal to the attendees:

The Council proposes that subject to the outcome of this proposal:

- Provision of a school at Abernyte Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 1 July 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the pupils of Abernyte Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Inchtute Primary School, from 2 July 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- That the delineated catchment area of Inchtute Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School from 2 July 2020

Sheena Devlin advised that copies of the slides can be provided.

Statutory Consultation Process

Karen Robertson outlined the process of the statutory consultation. She highlighted that the process is strictly determined by legislation to ensure thorough and robust processes across authorities in Scotland. The legislation sets out how and when the Council must undertake certain activities. The process started with the consideration by Lifelong Learning Committee on 22 August 2018 which granted permission to undertake a statutory consultation. Karen Robertson emphasised that no decisions regarding the permanent future of Abernyte Primary School have been made. The Council must first seek the views of statutory consultees and report back to Committee with recommendations.

The Proposal Paper including an educational benefits statement was published on the Council's website and statutory consultees were written to. Public notice adverts and social media were used to publicise the consultation to other interested parties. The period of consultation will run from Monday 29 October 2018 to Friday 14 December 2018 which includes a period of 33 school days. The purpose of this consultation is to seek representations from interested parties.

Anyone who wishes to make their views on the proposal known to the Council can do so, and there are a number of ways they can do this, whether online, in writing or in person. Any representations are minuted and will be included as verbal representations.

Q. Is this the first public consultation?

A. Yes, this is the statutory consultation period. The pre-consultation work which was undertaken to inform the options appraisal was pre-consultation work and is not part of the statutory consultation. This consultation is to seek formal representations on the proposal and people can complete an online form, email to a specific email address or write to the Council to express their views on the proposal. All representations made will be submitted to Education Scotland who have a statutory role in this process. Education Scotland have a 3-week period to prepare their own report on the educational aspects of the proposal and visit the affected schools.

Q. Will report from Education Scotland be a public report?

A. Yes, the report will be published by the Council as part of the Consultation Report and it will be published by Education Scotland on the same day the Council makes the report public.

Q. Who is Education Scotland?

A. SD explained Education Scotland is a Scottish Government executive agency who support and inspect the quality and improvement in Scottish education. Education Scotland operates as an executive agency and operates independently and impartially, whilst remaining directly accountable to Scottish Government ministers. Education Scotland undertakes inspection, review and reporting within the overall context of the National Performance Framework.

Q. Has the proposal paper been given to Education Scotland?

A. Karen Robertson confirmed that the Education Scotland have the proposal paper. At the end of the consultation period all representations and a summary of the consultation is sent to Education Scotland prior to their visits to prepare their report. Education Scotland will commence their visits week commencing 7 January 2019 and will meet with focus groups of staff, pupils and parents. Education Scotland will make contact with the Headteacher to discuss who would be available for them to meet.

Q. Would the consultation with Education Scotland invite parents of children not currently attending the school?

A. Sheena Devlin informed that we could ask Education Scotland. Post meeting note – No. Education Scotland will meet with a focus group of parents of pupils currently attending Abernyte Primary School. Other interested parties may make their views known as part of the consultation process by making a formal representation.

Q. Why can't the proposal paper be altered? We don't agree with the proposal.

A. Karen Robertson explained that the proposal as it stood had been agreed by Lifelong Learning Committee. Officers are undertaking statutory consultation on the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School which was agreed by Committee. This consultation is the formal opportunity for consultees to make their views on the proposal known for these to be considered as part of the statutory process.

The Council must consider all representations and respond to these within its Consultation Report which is prepared after Education Scotland has provided the Council with its report. The Consultation Report has to be published for 3 weeks prior to being submitted to Lifelong Learning Committee. The estimated time for the final report on the outcome of the consultation and recommendations to be submitted to Lifelong Learning Committee is May 2019.

Q. What will happen when the recommendation is made?

If the recommendation is to approve the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School and Lifelong Learning Committee does not approve the recommendation, then that is the end of the process and the same proposal cannot be revisited for 5 years. However, if the Committee agree with the proposal then this decision must be notified to the Scottish Minister within 6 days.

Scottish Ministers then have 8 weeks to consider the Council's decision and make a decision on whether or not consent is to be given to implement the proposal. Within the first 3 weeks representations can be made directly by any persons to Scottish Ministers. If a decision is made to call-in the Council's proposal then Scottish Ministers will refer this to the independent School Closure Review Panel who then have up to 16 weeks to make a decision on the proposal.

Q. Are these timelines on the Council website?

A. Yes, these are set out within the Proposal Paper. All reports and documents are on the Abernyte consultation page on the Council website. Future reports and documents will continue to be published there.

Q. What can be raised with Scottish Ministers?

A. If the Council decides to proceed with the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School, consultees have the opportunity to make any representations they wish to make on the proposal directly to Ministers.

Q. Is this another level of governance by Scottish Ministers?

A. Sheena Devlin informed that it is not a political decision. If Scottish Ministers call in the Council's proposal, this is then referred to an independent School Closure Review Panel for determination. This is set out within the Proposal Paper and information on the School Closure Review Panel is available on the Scottish Government website.

Q. When would Scottish Ministers become involved?

A. Only if a decision is taken by Perth and Kinross Council at the end of the consultation process to implement the proposal. This would be notified to Scottish Ministers to consider if consent is to be given or whether to issue a notice of call-in for the matter to be referred to the School Closure Review Panel.

Comment - The pre-report to Lifelong Learning Committee was all about the school roll. We have information from other parents that they were interested in attending the school and that would bring the school roll up to 11 or 12 pupils. We have spoken with John Swinney who told us the Scottish Government wouldn't close the school on monetary grounds.

Comment - Recommendation needs to consider the future school rolls. The key consideration should be put to Councillors that in 5 years' time you'd have to build a new campus at Inchtute.

A. Sheena Devlin informed the meeting of the current occupancy of Inchtute Primary School is 81% projected to go up to 92% in 2022/2023.

Q. Is that the extent of your planning? 4 years in advance?

A. Carol Taylor explained that projections were undertaken 4 years in advance as that is based on known birth rates and pupils under 5 years old living in catchment areas.

Q. If working backwards down the Carse, what are the occupancy rates in the other schools?

A. Carol Taylor advised that Longforgan is 78% and whilst she did not have the exact figures to hand for Errol, Errol is below 70%.

Q. The upper school is getting bigger and years 5, 6 and 7 are much lower. When presented to the next stage, can this not just be a global figure but broken down into year groups?

A. Sheena Devlin and Carol Taylor are happy to investigate that.

Comment - There is the assumption that the Scottish population will increase

A. Carol Taylor responded that the 0 -19 age group has decreased in Scotland, however it is acknowledged that this is not the case in the Carse of Gowrie.

Comment - There is a need to look further than the next 4 years.

A. Sheena Devlin advised that she is happy to consider this.

Comment - Facts are based on GP figures; however, there are 6 new children moving into the catchment area.

A. Carol Taylor advised that the Council was made aware of a family with 3 children moving into the catchment area and these were included in the figures. Sheena Devlin informed that these pupils were not living in the catchment area when the report was done.

Comment - The future school roll figures used were just for the catchment area and are not factually correct.

A. Sheena Devlin explained that fundamentally the data for the school catchment area is used as these are the pupils who live in the catchment area and are entitled to attend the school.

Q. What about the pupils all across the Carse that are not in the catchment area who want to attend?

A. Karen Robertson advised that parents from across the Carse have always been able to make placing requests for their children to attend Abernyte Primary School if they wanted to do so. To date, there is no evidence that is the case as the numbers of placing requests for pupils from outwith the catchment area to attend Abernyte Primary School is very low. If parents have not made placing requests, these are not included in the projected rolls on the suggestion that parents want to make a placing request but haven't done so. Evidence would be required of the details of who these people are who want to make a placing request but have not done so and this can be provided to the Council so this can be investigated further.

Comment - I have moved up to start work in Dundee and have put a placing request into Inchtute as I was informed Abernyte Primary School is closing and I don't want to move the children more than once. Other people could be in the same situation.

Comment - The consultation period is too damaging and stopping people from enrolling their children in the school.

Q. Could the catchment area being extended be an option and if not why not?

A. Karen Robertson advised that the catchment area being extended had been considered following the pre consultation work to inform the options appraisal. The initial work to determine if there was support for the catchment area to be extended was not conclusive. This was reported to Lifelong Learning Committee in March 2018 and it was agreed that further work on the potential to review and extend the catchment area was to be undertaken. This work was undertaken between Easter and the Summer and the outcome of this was reported to Lifelong Learning Committee in August 2018 where it was determined that the option of extending the catchment area to include the part of Inchtute catchment area which is north of the A90 would not create an increased and sustainable pupil roll for Abernyte Primary School.

Q. Could a different catchment area be looked into?

A. This proposal is not consulting on extending the catchment area but representation can be made as part of the consultation process.

Comment - Ask if those that don't have school age children if they want the catchment to extend.

Comment – We asked for a catchment review and you asked the 7 families that already have children in Inchtute Primary School. You should have asked those who have nursery children and you didn't do that.

A. Carol Taylor advised that the Council tried to contact the nursery parents and the Parent Council were very helpful in providing information to do this, however people didn't come forward to participate.

Comment - The size of the response was so small, and it was based on a small bit of data.

A. Carol Taylor advised that she spoke to 17 families north of the A90.

Q. Why not consider the Knapp area?

A. Knapp was considered as part of the Longforgan on-line questionnaire.

Comment - I have had no contact from the Council and I live north of the A90 and have a 3-year-old and another on the way.

Comment – I saw the consultation advertised on Facebook. I couldn't find the information easily on the Council website to register for this meeting. I wonder how hard the Council tried to reach and be proactive.

A. Sheena Devlin advised she will take the feedback regarding the Council website and review that.

Comment – The consultation implies no potential pupils. There is scope we are aware of for 23 children to attend Abernyte Primary School.

A. The proposal is correct based on the information known to the Council. The purpose of the consultation is to seek views and gather any further information that needs to be taken in to account. The detail of this should be provided as part of representations made to the Council to evidence these pupils.

Comment - There are others that are not here and therefore are not hearing what we are.

A. The options appraisal and proposal paper are published on the Council website which contain the detail of the Council's proposal. Interested parties can make representation on the proposal whether or not they attended either of the public meetings.

Q. Will the final report include anything regarding the difference in pupil numbers?

A. The present information within the proposal paper is based on known pupils and potential pupils in the catchment area. If we find that other people that have moved into the area or made placing requests to attend Abernyte Primary School and the pupil numbers have changed, this will be reflected in the Consultation Report.

Comment - People will bring their child to Abernyte if it remains open.

A. Sheena Devlin advised that if people are making placing requests to attend then this information and evidence should be provided to the Council.

Q. What about considering Option 5 to extend the catchment area?

A. The options appraisal was considered by Lifelong Learning Committee in August and that option was not approved. As instructed by Committee we are undertaking statutory consultation on the approved option to propose to close the school.

Comment - If you increase the catchment area and let the school grow over the next 10 years then it would grow.

Q. If the community provides a report with everyone in the potential catchment area and includes placing requests, would it be provided in the report and submitted to the Scottish Government?

A. Yes, all information submitted as part of the statutory consultation would be included in the Council's final Consultation Report.

Q. What about a dual catchment area?

A. Karen Robertson advised that dual catchment areas do not provide any certainty of a sustainable pupil roll as parents would then have a right not to choose to attend their nearest school. There are also a number of different elements which the Council would need to consider in terms increased transport costs to support a dual catchment area.

Comment - You only had 15 / 20% of parents respond to the catchment consultation. Parents were told that if they had siblings they wouldn't have a choice for younger siblings to stay at the same school if the catchment changed. Families would be split through a catchment change.

A. Perth and Kinross Council cannot commit that siblings would get in to the previous catchment school after a catchment area has changed as these pupils would no longer be entitled to attend that school once the catchment was changed.

Q. Would Perth and Kinross Council accept placing requests for 2-year olds?

A. No. Parents cannot legally make a placing request for a child until they are deemed to be of school age.

Q. Is there an option to put in a placing request but not move the child until they know if the school will remain open?

A. No. Placing requests can only be made for the school session that the pupil is expected to attend the school.

Comment – When parents were consulted on the catchment area change they had information of 5 pupils on the school roll at Abernyte. If it was 18-20 their view might be different.

Comment – The population projection has been calculated using the same method as before and how accurate is it? What does it mean for Inchtute and the Carse? In the last few years Errol has been extended, doesn't that show that these projections were wrong? The Council should be using two sources of data to project pupil numbers.

A. Carol Taylor advised that the projected roll is based on GP figures for under 5's and actual pupil numbers. This model was not used prior to the Errol extension.

Vision and Background

Sheena Devlin outlined the process of the school estate review so far. Communities had been encouraged to participate in the pre consultation work to inform the options appraisal using a wide variety of mechanisms, including a drop-in session, email as well as the availability of an online questionnaire. This information was presented to Lifelong Learning Committee on 21 March 2018. Further work was undertaken to investigate extending the catchment area. The outcome of this was presented to Lifelong Learning Committee on 22 August 2018, and it was approved that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School and this meeting is part of that process.

Q. What process to date has already been taken?

A. Pre-consultation is not part of the Statutory Consultation. The formal Consultation commenced on 29 October 2018 and this is the first part of the Statutory Consultation. The Options Appraisal and Proposal paper are on the website which details the work which has been undertaken to inform this proposal.

Q. Could notices be put in shops and nurseries etc?

A. Sheena Devlin advised that she is happy to look at that.

Current Arrangements

The capacity of Abernyte Primary School is 44 pupils. At Census 2017 there were 5 pupils. There are currently 11 pupils living in the catchment area and 6 of these attend other PKC schools. There is a duty on Council to make best use of public resources and ensure best value is achieved whilst optimising the educational experience for every pupil.

Comment – The School Estate Review is all about money and assets, not education. To achieve best value for the pound requires wider change, utilise assets in the best way possible.

Q. Why build a nursery at Inchtute when a nursery could be incorporated in Abernyte? This would offer wrap around care.

A. Sheena Devlin advised that the expansion of the Early Learning and Childcare is very much demand-led regarding the locations approved for expansion.

Comment - People are happy to drive to 'Red Squirrel' so why couldn't Abernyte be used?

Comment – The school could play a wider part, offering educational activities. It has a massive safe playing field. Consider using the school on a whole Carse basis – giving it a stay of execution.

Q. You are moving children from Longforgan to Errol into a portacabin. Why not disperse Longforgan pupils into Abernyte rather than use a portacabin?

A. Sheena Devlin explained that the arrangements being put in place for a temporary decant of Longforgan pupils whilst the school extension is being built has been carefully considered. Abernyte is not big enough to take all the pupils from Longforgan and it is best to keep the pupils together than disperse across other schools.

Comment - If the school had 17 pupils then it would pay for itself as £3,000 per pupil is paid from Scottish Government.

Sharon Johnston explained regarding the Early Learning and Childcare expansion moving from 600 hours to 1140 hours and the Scottish Government funding which determined what could and couldn't be done. Funding was received in May 2018 and the Council had to look at what provision was in place and where expansion would be required due to demand. It has been agreed by Committee that the nursery in Inchtute Primary School is to be expanded.

Comment - How much money is being spent? 'Red Squirrel' is a Partner Provider and Perth and Kinross Council currently fund 600 hours and the nursery will provide 1140 hours.

Comment - Abernyste building can be used as a nursery and it's free as it is already here. Abernyste could provide wrap around care, safe start, after school care.

A. Sharon Johnston advised that it is not free to a private business.

Educational Benefits

Sharon Johnston detailed a summary of the key Educational Benefits which are set out in detail in the Proposal Paper.

The Educational Benefits Statement is an important part of the process and Education Scotland will assess the educational aspects of the Council's proposal. The Educational Benefits set out what education provision would be provided to children if the school was to close and education was to be provided in a different setting. It is not intended to provide a comparison between the two schools.

Comment - I am astonished that the Education Benefits is a description of what would be provided if the pupils were to attend Inchtute.

Comment - Do you need to be provided with the dictionary definition of benefit to understand what benefit means?

A. Education Scotland have to assess the education that is provided and we provide excellent education in all our schools.

Comment - Why write an Educational Benefit Statement. Accept the fact that schools can be different and still provide an excellent education.

A. The Council has a legal requirement to prepare an Educational Benefits Statement as part of any school closure proposal.

Comment - We see - you have requirements and have to meet them. Making judgements on schools.

Comment - If the school closes, my child will be unable to come here so that's not a benefit.

Comment - Don't shoot the messenger but I think that parents in developing their response to the Council need to consider what are the relevant benefits of having a child educated at Abernyste? That should be what the consultees set out in their response.

Comment - I wouldn't have to put in a placing request if there wasn't the threat of closure at Abernyte. What if there are other parents in the same situation?

Comment – The Scottish Government give guidance on rural schools and not a minimum occupancy for schools. I have seen no evidence of this. The Council is supposed to consider innovative ideas and there is no evidence of this in the work which the Council has done. This is against the legislation.

Travel Arrangements

Karen Robertson advised that the approximate travel distance between Abernyte Primary School and Inchtute Primary School was 3.4 miles. If Abernyte Primary School was permanently closed, all children would be transported by the Council to Inchtute Primary School, including those who currently attend Inchtute Primary School from Abernyte Primary School catchment area as a placing request.

Comment - When putting the proposal together did you look at the distance for pupils to other schools and not just that Abernyte pupils would go to Inchtute? It's a shorter distance to Longforgan rather than move to Inchtute for some.

Q. If the proposal is not approved and Abernyte Primary School remains open, will the Council do a new catchment review? Will pupils go to same school as siblings?

A. It is not possible to speculate on what the outcome will be or whether any further catchment review would be proposed. A further statutory consultation would be required if that were to be the case.

Comment – You have spoken about travel, catchment areas, finance and Educational Benefits. What about the social aspect of the school? 6 pupils came to Inchtute Church with fantastic poems regarding the Act of Remembrance. Parents and grandparents etc. came down and effectively there were all ages of the community joined together for the Remembrance Service as they do for Harvest Festival and other events. These are attended by the whole community. The proposal should look at all to ensure it is evenly balanced. Please include social benefit as well as impact on the community.

Q. Why not have a nursery here at Abernyte as well as Inchtute?

A. Local Authority nursery provision is dependent on demand.

Comment - You are building a nursery in Inchtute.

A. The Council is extending the current nursery at Inchtute Primary School.

Q. What is the basis of the £333,000 property upgrade costs? The costs in the previous 3 years were only £14,000.

A. Carol Taylor stated that Property Colleagues had provided the figures based on future requirements. Her recollection was that there were energy efficiency works included in the figures, however she would seek to clarify this.

Sheena Devlin thanked everyone for attending and advised that a further public meeting was to take place in Inchturk Primary School on 14 November 2018. The meeting was then closed at 9.00pm.



**Perth & Kinross Council
Education & Children's Services
Statutory Consultation Public Meeting**

**Minute of Meeting Held on Wednesday 14 November 2018
At 7.00pm in Inchtute Primary School**

Present

Councillor Caroline Shiers	Convener, Lifelong Learning Committee
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director (Education & Children's Services)
Karen Robertson	Service Manager - Business Services
Carol Taylor	Service Manager - Resources

In Attendance

Councillor Angus Forbes	Perth and Kinross Council
Councillor Alasdair Bailey	Perth and Kinross Council
Ken McAra	Education Scotland

Caroline Nash – Minutes	Perth & Kinross Council
-------------------------	-------------------------

5 members of the public

Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Shiers opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public in attendance to the statutory consultation public meeting and introduced herself and the Council Officers to the members of the public.

Format of meeting

Sheena Devlin explained the format the meeting would follow and how other similar events had been undertaken.

The proposal

Sheena Devlin explained the consultation proposal to the attendees:

The Council proposes that subject to the outcome of this proposal:

- Provision of a school at Abernyte Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 1 July 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the pupils of Abernyte Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Inchtute Primary School, from 2 July 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- That the delineated catchment area of Inchtute Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte

Primary School from 2 July 2020.

Sheena Devlin advised that copies of the slides can be provided.

Sheena Devlin informed the meeting what each officer would discuss and gave Sharon Johnston's apologies to the meeting. Sheena Devlin explained that if officers were unable to answer to any questions raised, the answers would be incorporated into the Consultation Report.

Statutory Consultation Process

Karen Robertson outlined the process of the statutory consultation. She highlighted that the process is strictly determined by legislation to ensure thorough and robust processes across authorities in Scotland. The legislation sets out how and when the Council must undertake certain activities. The process started with the consideration by Lifelong Learning Committee on 22 August 2018 which granted permission to undertake a statutory consultation. Karen Robertson emphasised that no decisions regarding the permanent future of Abernyte Primary School have been made. The Council must first seek the views of statutory consultees and report back to Committee with recommendations.

The Proposal Paper including an educational benefits statement was published on the Council's website and statutory consultees were written to. Public notice adverts and social media were used to publicise the consultation to other interested parties. The period of consultation will run from Monday 29 October 2018 to Friday 14 December 2018 which includes a period of 33 school days. The purpose of this consultation is to seek representations from interested parties. Anyone who wishes to make their views on the proposal known to the Council can do so, and there are a number of ways they can do this, whether online, in writing or in person. Any representations made at the public meetings are noted and will be included as verbal representations and will be published.

Karen Robertson explained the next steps:

- Involvement of Education Scotland
- Preparation of the Consultation Report
- Decision of Lifelong Learning Committee
- Notification to Scottish Ministers

Q. When Education Scotland reviews the education aspect of both schools what are they doing?

A. Sheena Devlin explained the phrase to review the education aspect of the proposal as being an independent and impartial review of the Council's Proposal Paper. The review will have a particular focus on the educational aspects of the proposal. Education Scotland visit the schools and meet with focus groups of pupils, staff and parents as part of that review.

Q. What does Education Benefit mean?

A. Sheena Devlin advised that the education benefits are the Council's assessment of the likely educational benefits that it believes would accrue for the children and young people affected if the proposal was to be implemented.

The Council must demonstrate why the proposal is of overall positive educational benefit to the pupils of the affected schools.

Comment - After the meeting I looked for the Act and couldn't locate it.

Comment - The wording is overall benefit – this is what the pupils gain.

A. Sheena Devlin advised that the Educational Benefits Statement is not comparing the schools. Education Scotland will make a judgement of what the educational experience is.

Comment – The educational benefits could be neutral which means they could be the same at both schools.

A. Sheena Devlin advised that where there are Education Benefits, we need to state what they are.

Karen Robertson advised that once the Council received the report from Education Scotland it is required to consider the content of that report along with representations made and respond to these within its Consultation Report. The Consultation Report is required to be published for at least 3 weeks before being presented to Elected Members of Lifelong Learning Committee for a final decision.

If the report is submitted with the proposal as it stands, and Lifelong Learning Committee do not approve that, then that is the end of the process and the Local Authority cannot review the proposal to close the school again for at least 5 years.

Comment - So you are giving instruction to the Council to approve or not approve.

A. Karen Robertson advised that it is not the Officers that make the decision. Officers present a report to the Elected Members with a recommendation and that is considered as part of the democratic decision-making process of the Council. Officers do not give instruction to Elected Members.

Sheena Devlin explained that the independent and impartial report from Education Scotland carries significant weight. However, the final report must set out what the benefits of the proposal would be and set out the story of what justifies the preferred recommendation.

Comment - I am just wondering on the timeline which is lengthy hanging over the school.

A. Sheena Devlin confirmed that the timeline is lengthy and the process requires to be undertaken robustly and not be rushed.

Q. In terms of this stage, is it an option to go back to pre-consultation? This proposal was prompted by the pre-consultation outcome. Can these consultations go back? We would have provided critique to the original catchment review in the options appraisal. My concern is that this is written in language that the catchment review information is fact. We feel the facts are inaccurate. How can the process go back to what the community pushed for?

A. Karen Robertson advised that it is not an option to go back to pre-consultation at this stage. Lifelong Learning Committee had considered all the options within the options appraisal and agreed to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School.

That process will be completed and the outcomes reported back to Lifelong Learning Committee for any further decisions to be made. What needs to happen now is for the consultees who advise that the facts are inaccurate is for the evidence of these to be submitted as representations on the proposal.

Comment – Requests to change the catchment at Abernyte for 20 years have been rejected as it was too complicated. Now a catchment review is part of this so it can be done.

Comment - The catchment review was limited. The Council needs to look at what catchment area would work. You have not looked at what will alleviate pressure in Carse schools. You have chosen certain areas and this is what has been put in front of the Council. The community provided feedback but my feedback was not included as we live in Inchtute and not Abernyte. Feedback was provided that the catchment area should be reviewed and you conclude that people are happy for the school to close and pupils to be bussed to another school.

A. Carol Taylor advised that in order to develop a more accurate understanding of the potential for a catchment change which would lead to an increased roll at Abernyte, all families (parents/carers living with primary or children under 5) known to the Council living in the potential new catchment area were contacted to discuss the potential catchment change. This included those families living in the current catchment for Abernyte and those included in the identified area north of the A90. Families living in the Abernyte Primary School catchment area were included in the meetings to ascertain whether they would consider moving their school age children back to the school or placing their under 5's at the school in the future if the catchment was extended.

Comment - Families that live in the catchment area have put in placing requests for other schools as they thought Abernyte is going to be closing.

Comment - The Council ignored a request for families to be housed in affordable housing and have placed people in affordable housing who do not have any children. Education and Property should be working together. It's difficult to get planning permission in this area. It's taken me 2 years to get planning permission. This report is damaging to the Abernyte area with its inaccurate figures and facts. There are outright lies in this report.

Sheena Devlin addressed the statements made on the inaccuracies and lies in report and expressed they are not lies or factually incorrect. If other information comes to light with significant substance then this is what will be included in the Council's Consultation Report and submitted to Lifelong Learning Committee.

Comment – You are not prepared to stand up in public and admit you are liars and the report is full of lies.

Sheena Devlin refuted the statement made by the member of the public. Sheena Devlin clarified that she would address the two particular examples provided.

With regard to placing a couple in a house that didn't have children, it was advised that Education and Children's Services has no input to the legal allocation of housing and had sight of the letter which had been sent advising of the Council's Housing Policy priorities for allocating affordable housing.

Comment – But it was thoughtless though, taking away affordable housing that could have had children that would attend the school.

In response to the second point of inaccurate pupil numbers, Sheena Devlin advised that the Council is very clear regarding the number of pupils living in school catchment areas. However, there are lots of different reasons people make placing requests to attend other schools.

Q. What is the one main reason?

A. Sheena Devlin confirmed there are many reasons and parents don't have to state their reason for making a placing request. Carol Taylor advised in respect of the catchment review the outcome of the initial assessment was detailed in the options appraisal which went to Lifelong Learning Committee in March 2018. A further report was presented to Lifelong Learning Committee in August 2018 which provided the outcome of the further assessment.

Comment - I read that.

A. Carol Taylor advised that as a result of feedback from the Abernyte Primary School community drop-in sessions, Council Officers engaged twice with families of primary aged children and under 5's who live in area to the north of the A90 in the Inchtute Primary School catchment area as this was identified as a potential extension to the Abernyte Primary School catchment area. This was carried out firstly through an on-line survey and secondly through individual meetings with families held in May 2018.

Comment - People who already have children in Longforgan don't want to send their children to Abernyte.

Comment – It was brought up at the time of the pre-consultation why Knapp was taken out of Abernyte catchment area.

A. Sheena Devlin advised that she could not comment on when Knapp children stopped attending Abernyte Primary School. A catchment review can only be undertaken by Officers if the Council have given permission.
Post meeting note - There have been no changes to the catchment area affecting Longforgan since 1996.

Comment - Longforgan pupils are moving to Errol. Abernyte could be used for them.

A. Carol Taylor advised there are too many pupils at Longforgan to fit into Abernyte.

Q. What is Inchtute capacity at the moment?

A. Carol Taylor advised the current occupancy is 81%.

Q. What is Errol capacity at the moment?

A. Carol Taylor advised she did not have the exact figure to hand but that the current occupancy is less than 70%.

Q. Why not look at Knapp?

A. Carol Taylor advised that the Council did consider all areas north of the A90.

Comment - You didn't think of changing it to Abernyte. Longforgan parents didn't want to move to Abernyte.

Sheena Devlin summarised that there has been significant debate around catchment area and there are clear concerns regarding the catchment review. The Council will consider the points brought up.

Comment - We have spoken to John Swinney MSP about this.

A. Sheena Devlin noted that there is significant dissent around the catchment review report that was used and will undertake to ensure this is considered fully in the Council's final report.

Q. So what we think is inaccurate, we can do a report and send it in?

A. Sheena Devlin advised that any information in the report that is considered not to be accurate should be submitted to the Council as part of the consultation for further consideration.

Karen Robertson advised of the indicative timescales which were working on taking the final report back to Lifelong Learning Committee in May 2019. If the final report states the school is still proposed to close then that is not the end of the process. The Council have to inform Scottish Ministers within 6 working days. Scottish Ministers will consider the consultation and representations can be made to Scottish Ministers during the first 3 weeks of their consideration. Scottish Ministers have 8 weeks to make a decision on whether to grant consent or refer the matter to the independent School Closure Review Panel. Therefore, this could take up to November 2019

All the reports and related documents are on the Abernyte page of Perth and Kinross Council website.

Comment – The report does not include when other schools closed.

A. The report commences from the start of this consultation and further information will be published on representations made in the final Consultation Report. That will include points recorded tonight. Any comments or views after tonight must be submitted by 5.00pm on 14 December via online form, email or in writing to the Council.

Vision and Background

Sheena Devlin outlined the process of the school estate review so far. Communities had been encouraged to participate in the pre consultation work to inform the options appraisal using a wide variety of mechanisms, including a drop-in session, email as well as the availability of an online questionnaire. This information was presented to Lifelong Learning Committee on 21 March 2018.

Further work was undertaken to investigate extending the catchment area. The outcome of this was presented to Lifelong Learning Committee on 22 August 2018, and it was approved that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School and this meeting is part of that process.

The capacity of Abernyte Primary School is 44 pupils. At Census 2017 there were 5 pupils. There are currently 11 pupils living in the catchment area and 6 of these attend other PKC schools. There is a duty on Council to make best use of public resources and ensure best value is achieved whilst optimising the educational experience for every pupil.

Sheena Devlin acknowledged that the audience may have different views on the information shared.

Likely Effect of the Proposal on the Local Community

Sheena Devlin advised that rural schools are classified by the Scottish Government as accessible rural, remote rural or very remote rural. Abernyte is classified as an accessible rural school. Families living in the catchment area are travelling to access education as well as other services in nearby relatively large villages. The community has easy access to amenities. The village of Abernyte is close to good road links to both Perth and Dundee and a number of relatively large villages including Errol, Inchtute, Longforgan and St Madoes. These villages have amenities including post offices, shops, GP surgeries, churches, hotels and schools.

The local community use the school for activities such as the wine club and heritage group use the school throughout the year. Within Abernyte itself, the church building is also available for use by the community and there are village halls and church buildings in nearby villages as well as the other Carse schools.

Comment - Think some of the feedback we will put in when discussing the report will be around these statements.

Transport Arrangements

Karen Robertson advised that the approximate travel distance between Abernyte Primary School and Inchtute Primary School was 3.4 miles. If Abernyte Primary School was permanently closed, all children would be transported by the Council to Inchtute Primary School, including those who currently attend Inchtute Primary School from Abernyte Primary School catchment area as a placing request.

Q. When the meeting was held in 2017, lots of ideas were put forward regarding improving Abernyte School as it is a good building. Inchtute classes are big. Why not have the idea of Inchtute children using Abernyte as a Campus? What happened to those suggestions? Nowhere in the report are there any options for addressing the school roll apart from the catchment area. Where are the all the ideas that were shared in this report?

A. Sheena Devlin confirmed that all the information gathered was considered.

Carol Taylor advised that all the information is in the options appraisal report reports in March and August. She also stated that the catchment review was overwhelmingly the preferred response from the pre-consultation.

Q. What about a nursery at Abernyte? You get nursery at Inchtute and you are looking at expanding nursery provision and what about exploring suggestions that have been put forward. You were given lots of suggestions and options but now we have only been given one.

A. Carol Taylor advised that there are few pre-school pupils living in Abernyte catchment area. The Council explored the catchment review option as that was the key area which could create an increased and sustainable pupil roll for Abernyte.

Comment - You didn't explore the other options. We all know the school roll is decreasing. An ASN pupil has thrived in Abernyte.

A. Sheena Devlin acknowledged that different people have different views on what can be provided at small schools and what can be provided at larger schools such as better sporting opportunities at bigger schools.

Comment - Choice is good.

Sheena Devlin explained the Early Learning and Childcare expansion from 600 hours to 1140hours. Funding has been received from the Scottish Government and the Council has to maximise the use of existing buildings or increase capacity in existing provision, not build new. Not all premises would be suitable for nursery provision and this is determined by the Care inspectorate. Each child is entitled to the number of hours within a certain area but not necessarily at a named place.

Comment – You are building to expand Inchtute. We have empty classrooms already at Abernyte. Consider putting some nursery pupils in Abernyte. Or ASN pupils.

A. Sheena Devlin confirmed that this feedback will be considered and included in the final Consultation Report. In respect of the point made regarding ASN, ASN provision or classes cannot be established without statutory consultation. However, Perth and Kinross Council would seek to avoid schools being over split sites due to the operational and management issues which can arise from split sites.

Educational Benefits

Sheena Devlin detailed a summary of the key Educational Benefits which are set out in detail in the Proposal Paper.

The Educational Benefits Statement is an important part of the process and Education Scotland will assess the educational aspects of the Council's proposal. The Educational Benefits set out what education provision would be provided to children if the school was to close and education was to be provided in a different setting. It is not intended to provide a comparison between the two schools. When a closure proposal is assessed there needs to be criteria and the balance between educational benefit and best value must be taken into account. Education Scotland has a statutory role to assess the educational benefits and if the Council overstated these, they would be quick to tell us. Some aspects may be neutral in terms of educational benefit and, therefore, these would not be included as an educational benefit.

Comment - The Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education Report, Chapter 6 paragraph 86 says “the educational difference between schools is more often marginal than decisive and that requiring an authority to magnify small differences in provision has led to tensions between communities within a local authority’s area, which benefits no party in these decisions.” Is this not implying you do get the same benefits at both schools?

A. Sheena Devlin advised the report does not imply there is no educational benefit at Abernyte. The report sets out what education provision would be provided to children if Abernyte was to close and education was to be provided in a different setting.

Comment - The Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education Report says “Educational impact of a closure proposal is neutral with no overall educational detriment to the children directly concerned. In such circumstances, if a closure continued to be proposed it would be crucial that any other factors were fully and transparently scrutinised and identified clear overall benefit to the rural communities involved.”

A. Sheena Devlin acknowledged that a different view was being expressed that the educational benefits were considered to be neutral and this will be recorded.

Comment - Now that this proposal paper is out here, if you are thinking of sending your child to school you would read this report and think they do all this at Inchture and don’t do it at Abernyte when that is not the case.

Comment – This is a slur on the Headteacher at Abernyte.

Comment - English language that we are not understanding that education benefit didn’t mean it was a benefit to education.

Sheena Devlin acknowledged that there was a clear difference of opinion in respect of the educational benefits and this would be recorded.

Comment - Can’t you see that this is wrong and needs to be reworded?

Comment - You are not open to differences and have a biased mind set reading that report.

Comment – It concerns us that you are not impartial.

A. Sheena Devlin refuted that point and advised that the Council Officers are impartial as that’s their job.

Councillor Shiers advised that the Committee have asked the Officers to undertake this work and they are doing so on the instruction of Lifelong Learning Committee.

Councillor Bailey advised that all Committee meetings are published on YouTube and you can see the scrutiny we undergo.

Comment – Good job.

Comment - Rural schools get extra money from Scottish Government.

Comment - My school should be part of the solution. If I was an Inchture parent, I would hope you got that right and thought Abernyte was part of the solution.

Q. Can you explain the costs for running Abernyte being over £300,000?

A. Carol Taylor advised that this was based on an assessment by Property Colleagues for medium term work which would be required upgrade the property in terms of building fabric, mechanical and electrical works, fire alarm systems, heating and hot water pipework, insulation and building fabric improvements. These works are not required immediately but in the medium term which is 2-5 years.

Q. Where will I find that?

A. Carol Taylor advised it was on Page 11 of 4.3 / 4.4 in the Options Appraisal report.

Q What rating is Abernyte?

A. Carol Taylor confirmed that Abernyte was rated Condition B and Suitability A. Suitability is determined by the Headteacher.

Comment - There is misinformation on the Inchture Primary School map. The playing field is not used. The school playing field is only used one day a year. This time of year they can only use the MUGA. The square footage per capita is not shown.

Comment - The fence between the field and the A90 was broken at Inchture so pupils were not allowed to use the playing field until this was fixed. Yes, the playing field is used.

Comment - Abernyte is an Eco school benefitting from an outdoor area. You have not shown the playing field at Abernyte on the map so it looks like Abernyte does not have a playing field when that is not the case.

Q. Do we get access to the minutes to approve them prior to them being sent to Education Scotland?

A. No.

Q. How quickly will the minutes be produced?

A. It is not possible to put a timescale on that at this stage. All documentation will require to be ready to send to Education Scotland before Christmas.

SD thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.



Perth & Kinross Council
Education and Children's Services
Abernyte Primary School
Summary of Consultation Responses

The statutory consultation on the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School commenced on Monday 29 October 2018 and closed on Friday 14 December 2018.

Details of the proposal document were issued to the list of consultees contained within the Proposal Paper. 356 letters were issued with a link to the proposal paper and details of where and how to obtain a paper copy. The Proposal Paper was also published on the Council website. Public Notice adverts were placed in the local press on 29 October 2018 and 30 October 2018. The consultation was also published on social media.

A specific email address was set up for representations and enquiries. This was in addition to the usual methods of submitting representations. An online response form was set up on the consultation webpage.

Online Response Forms

26 response forms were received. 1 response agreed with the Council's proposal and 24 disagreed with the Council's proposal and 1 did not agree or disagree.

RESPONDENT GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	AGREE	DISAGREE
Parents	7		7
Pupils	2		2
Staff	-		
Elected Members	-		
Parent Councils	-		
Community Members	2		2
Grandparents	-		
Trade Unions	-		
Other	15	1	13
Total	26	1	24

Public Meetings

As part of the statutory consultation process, 2 public meetings were held on 12 November 2018 at Abernyte Primary School and 14 November 2018 at Inchture Primary School. The same presentation was given at each meeting.

Monday 12 November 2018 – Abernyte Primary School

Attended by 29 members of the public.

Questions and comments were around:

- The role of Education Scotland and Scottish Ministers

- Projected pupil numbers
- Disagreement with the content of the options appraisal
- The catchment area review
- Potential for nursery provision at Abernyte
- Use of Abernyte for Longforgan pupils/ASN pupils
- Disagreement with the content of the Educational Benefits Statement
- The costs associated with upgrading Abernyte Primary School

Wednesday 14 November 2018 – Inchtute Primary School

Attended by 5 members of the public.

Questions and comments can be broadly grouped as follows:

- Disagreement with the content of the Educational Benefits Statement
- The role of Education Scotland
- Disagreement with the content of the options appraisal
- The catchment area review
- Potential for nursery provision at Abernyte
- The costs associated with upgrading Abernyte Primary School
- Use of Abernyte for Longforgan pupils/ASN pupils

Written Representations

During the consultation period between 29 October 2018 and 14 December 2018, representations were invited from statutory consultees and interested parties. 27 written responses were received in total:

Parent Council	- 1
Community Council	- 1
MSP	- 1
MP	- 1
Others	- 23

All the written representations stated they did not agree with the proposals. A number of responses were members of the public who had also attended either one or both of the public meetings and many of the issues/queries submitted were also raised at the public meetings.

The main concerns were around the same issues raised at the public meetings and can be broadly grouped as follows:

- Education provision in Abernyte is excellent and there are no educational reasons for closure
- The savings associated with closing Abernyte are overstated
- Loss of the school building for community/social events
- The Church building being an unsuitable venue for community/social events

- The pre-consultation process was insufficient
- The loss of the school would be detrimental to the future of the community and wider economy
- The capacity of neighbouring schools in the Carse and population growth
- There are no educational benefits to the proposal
- The cost to community groups using education facilities and the building not being promoted for use
- The assessment to review of the catchment area was unsatisfactory
- The costs associated with upgrading Abernyte Primary School

Comments Received on Response Forms

Comments can be broadly grouped as follows:

- The school is the hub of the community
- There are no educational reasons for closure
- The loss of the school would result in less families moving to the area, affecting the economy and community
- The school is the only remaining public building
- The pre-consultation process has been unsatisfactory
- The Council has not promoted the use of the school by community groups with an attractive charging system, or taken steps to reduce costs by utilising surplus capacity to increase revenue
- Inchtute is not accessible for people from Abernyte
- Population growth and housebuilding in the Carse
- Review of the catchment area

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Pupil consultation, Inchtute Primary School

22 November 2018

Anne Lemon, Quality Improvement Officer

Lorna Hamilton, Project Officer (Early Years & Primary)

Each class group had a short, age appropriate presentation on the proposal, which was to close Abernyte and have all children in the Abernyte and Inchtute catchment areas attend Inchtute Primary School.

The pupils' understanding of the proposal was checked, with discussion taking place to ensure that all pupils understood.

Pupils were then asked to indicate by sticker which of three emotions best described how they felt about the proposal. These are detailed below.

Pupils were also given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are also summarised below, for each class group

P1 (22 pupils)

		
19	2	1

Questions

Q. "Why are they making a suggestion to close Abernyte?"

A. *Because not many children go there just now*

Q. "Where would the children in Abernyte go?"

A. *They would come here to Inchtute*

Q. "If you lived in Abernyte, you would have to drive all this way"

A. *You would get a bus or a taxi here*

Comments

I don't understand why Abernyte is shutting down

I used to live in Abernyte

P1/2 (21 pupils) 22 November 2018

		
15	6	0

Questions

Q. "Why are you closing Abernyte?"

A. *Because not many children go there just now*

Q When is it happening?

A. *if it goes ahead it would be in two years' time. When you will be in P3 and P4*

Q. "Where would the children in Abernyte go?"

A. *They would come here to Inchtute*

Q. "If you lived in Abernyte, you would have to drive all this way"

A. *You would get a bus or a taxi here*

P2 (26 pupils) 22 November 2018

		
16	8	2

About 6 children were aware of Abernyte and had been to the village.

There were no questions or comments.

P3 & P3/4 (44 pupils) 22 November 2018

		
31	8	5

Questions

Q. Would they replace us in our school

A. *No, they would come and join you, not replace you.*

Q. Why is Abernyte closing?

A. *Because they don't have many pupils.*

Q. What will happen to the school?

A. *We don't know what would happen to the building*

P4/5 (20 pupils)

		
16	2	2

Comments

A consultation is where there is a big argument when some people say yes to something and some say no

There are not enough children at Abernyte Primary School

P5/6 (22 pupils) 22 November 2018

		
11	11	0

Comments

Abernyte is closing down and the children are coming here

P6 (27 pupils)

Although this proposal will not affect the current P6 class, as they will have moved to Secondary School by 2020, they were still given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are summarised below:

10 children knew where Abernyte is.

Questions

Q. Do they all do the same work?

A. No, because there are different levels in the one class, the children work at their own level. While they may all do one topic, they will learn at their own level.

Q. Are they all in 1 classroom and do different work?

A. Yes, they are all in the one classroom, but they do different work.

Q. How many teachers are at Abernyte?

A. There is one teacher, who is also the Headteacher. There is also another member of staff who supports her.

Q. Wouldn't the Inchtire bus have to go all the way to Abernyte and back?

A. The route the bus would take would depend on who was getting it, and whether there was a bus or taxi put on for the children.

Q. Would their teacher come to Inchtire?

A. We don't know that yet.

Q. What will happen to the school?" (Some pupils suggested kids club, houses, shop, swimming pool, church, and nursery)

A. We don't know that yet

Comments

"It's not as big as Inchtire

Not as many pupils

There are not a lot of teachers so they might not need Abernyte

It's harder for teachers to do stuff with different age

Hard for children to have friends their age, they can make friends here

Would be good if P1-3 were at Inchtire and P4-7 went to Abernyte

P7 (27 pupils) 22 November 2018

Although this proposal will not affect the current P7 class, as they will have moved to Secondary School by 2020, they were still given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are summarised below:

Six children knew where Abernyte was.

Questions

Q. Why are Abernyte children coming here?

A. *Because there is such a small number of pupils*

The children were asked to have group discussions and think of pros and cons of Abernyte closing and the pupils coming to Inchtute:

Pros

**We have a bigger gym hall and classrooms
Their building is old and has been there for ages
A chance to be around new people and make friends”
They would be in their own class and not mixed with younger/older children
They know the school because they come here for Art anyway
A bigger playground
Maybe they’ll be excited for a new school**

Cons

**They might like their own school
They might struggle to settle in a big school**

The children were asked if they had one thing to say to the children at Abernyte to make them worry less about coming to Inchtute, what would it be?

Have fun

Everyone is welcome at Inchtute

We have a buddy bench

If you have any worries or problems, there are lots of people who can help

Lots of people here to make friends with

Lots to do outside

Our teachers are nice

If you are ever hurt, there are trained people to help you

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Pupil consultation (6 pupils) – Abernyte Primary School

Anne Lemon, Quality Improvement Officer

Lorna Hamilton, Project Officer (Early Years & Primary) (note taking)

23 November 2018

There were 6 children in the class. Only one of the pupils, in P5, would be included as a statutory consultee. In the interest of consulting as widely as possible, the other five pupils, from P6 and P7, were included in the session.

Consultation was held as an informal circle time session, and the pupils were prompted with some questions.

1. What makes the school special?

- There's not a lot of people here, It's easy to get help
- The classes are all together and not separate. We can work together with other ages
- There's more education here than at a bigger school. In a bigger school you would have to wait to get help.
- All of us are friends and because we're all in the same classroom, we can't be held back.
- I like helping other people if they're stuck
- The teacher knows you well. Mrs Clark knows everything. In a big school they wouldn't know anything about you.
- We do lots outside, we've got a big playing field and we do eco schools and things like that.
- I've got [diagnosed condition] and at my old school I didn't get much education. Here I can go through things with Mrs Legge.
- We're allowed to go into the community for selling poppies every year.
- We do fundraising for other things – a few years ago we did enterprise. We have Bookworms and a pupil council (four of the six pupils said they were on the pupil council)

2. What do you like doing here at Abernyte?

- Maths
- Science
- Art
- Music

- Outdoors
- PE – there's lots of equipment here
- We had no PE teacher for last year
- There's a laptop or computer for everyone
- Everyone has an ipad each.
- For learning instruments, Mrs Young comes in
- We go to Inchtute for Art

3. Do you know what we mean by the word “proposal”?

- Yes – doesn't it mean you're going to shut the school?

AL explained what proposal meant and then what was meant by consultation. She explained that this was the pupils' opportunity to say what they are thinking and feeling.

AL showed the pupils some photographs of Abernyte building and the school grounds, as well as some photographs of Inchtute. She acknowledged that some of the pupils were familiar with the Inchtute building. She explained what the proposal was, ie to close Abernyte Primary School, all the children in the area would then have Inchtute as the school they would go to.

When explaining the dates and asking who would still be at Abernyte when this was proposed to happen, only one child raised their hand. One other said it wouldn't affect her, but she wanted to have her say.

4. How does this proposal make you feel?

- I would rather stay here. My cousins might be coming here, because they've just discovered that they are not allowed to play football at Inchtute.
- I don't want to go to Inchtute as there is no room. They're already building an extension as there is no space in the school.
- If the school doesn't close, I would want to stay here with my friends

5. What concerns would you have about going to Inchtute?

- It will be too loud and too noisy. When I go for art I can't concentrate on my work.
- I don't really have any concerns. I already have friends in the P6 class
- We can do work much quicker here

- When we go for art, the pupils there don't really get their work done. We're the only ones who do any work. When I came to this school, I found it easier to work.
- It's hard to concentrate there
- At Inchtute you don't get tested. At Abernyte you learn at your own level but at Inchtute you don't get assessed and don't learn at the right level.
- In art, we've done work already that Inchtute are still learning.

The session then moved on to a general question and answer session, with the pupils being encouraged to give their views

Questions

Q. Why do we have to go to Inchtute. Why can't we go to another school, like Collace?

A. *AL explained why Inchtute had been chosen, as it was close to Abernyte and it had enough space. She explained how catchment areas worked.*

Q. What would happen to the school?

A. *That would still have to be decided and the community might be involved in that decision.*

Q. Why is the school going to shut?

A. *It is being considered because of the low number of pupils*

Q. Why don't they change the Abernyte catchment area?

A. *It had been thought about but there were not enough people saying they would come to Abernyte.*

Q. How do you know that?

A. *Explained that people had been asked.*

Q. What did you say to them? Did you tell them the school was under threat of closure? Did you say it only had six pupils?

A. *AL explained that she had not asked those questions and was not aware of the wording used.*

Q. How do you know if someone moves into the house next door and changes their mind?

A. *If houses are empty at the moment, when people moved in the parents would decide about the school. This happens everywhere, when houses are empty. Parents would have a choice about school.*

Q. Will the playing fields be given back to the owners. It is our grannies that own it

A. *Not sure what will happen to the playing fields*

Q. If the school closed, could we buy it and open it as a school?

A. *They would need to make a decision about what to do with the school*

Q. Why don't you wait until there are no pupils before you close the school?

A. *If we waited for that to happen, there would be children at the school in even smaller numbers leading up to that, and might be only one child in the school.*

Comments

- In a bigger school, we won't get more friends. You would only have about three friends.
AL explained that there would be opportunities to mix with other children, through committees and groups, just as it would be at secondary school.
- [child] listed the names of children she said were going to come to Abernyte.
- My cousins will be coming to the school too.
- There will be more boys coming to the school
- My granny owns [name of cottage]. My cousins will be moving in, then they will build a new house and move into that, so there will be space for another family to move into [name of cottage]
- My family are building a house as well
- If I knew a school was under threat of closure, I might not want it. It would be fairer if they got to come and look around.
AL explained that anyone is free to come to a school and look around.
- [other child] won't get the opportunity to be a junior Carseonian.
- We all get a part in the school play
- We have an orchard and made apple juice
- At a small school, you get to play lots of characters in the school play. At a bigger school you only get one line.
- After a few generations, new families could come in if they make the catchment area bigger.

- [other child] has made progress here. When they came, they were at level 1, now they're at level 2 and are reading faster.
- [other child] was doing easier work at their last school, they were doing P3 work in P5. Now they've come to Abernyte they've caught up.

To close off the session, AL asked if there were any more comments. All six children shouted "Don't close the school".

One child asked AL what she would do. When she answered that she was here to gather their views, several of the children joined in, asking what she would do, and if she thought the school should close.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Staff meeting – 22 November 2018

Inchture Primary School

Anne Lemon, Quality Improvement Officer
Lorna Hamilton, Project Officer – Early Years & Primary
Jodie Watt Business Assistant (notes)
Nine members of staff

This meeting was held to allow staff the opportunity to see the presentation that was shared at the public meetings on 12 and 14 November 2018, as part of the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School, and include the catchment area currently for Abernyte into the Inchture Primary catchment area.

Anne Lemon and Lorna Hamilton outlined the basis of the proposal, the statutory timetable and the next steps.

Copies of consultation proposal response form left for staff to complete, either on an individual basis, or as a staff group.

Staff were asked if they had anything to share/questions to ask but there was nothing raised.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Staff meeting – 23 November 2018

Abernyte Primary School

Anne Lemon, Quality Improvement Officer
Lorna Hamilton, Project Officer – Early Years & Primary
Two members of staff

This meeting was held to allow staff the opportunity to see the presentation that was shared at the public meetings on 12 and 14 November 2018, as part of the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School, and include the catchment area currently for Abernyte into the Inchtute Primary School catchment area.

Anne Lemon and Lorna Hamilton outlined the basis of the proposal, the statutory timetable and the next steps.

Copies of consultation proposal response form left for staff to complete, either on an individual basis, or as a staff group.

Staff were asked if they had anything to share/questions to ask but there was nothing raised.



Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to close Abernyte Primary School, move pupils to Inchtute Primary School and that the delineated catchment area of Inchtute Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School from July 2020.

January 2019

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to close Abernyte Primary School, move pupils to Inchtute Primary School and that the delineated catchment area of Inchtute Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School from July 2020. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers and the special provisions that apply to proposals to close a rural school.

HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of Abernyte Primary School and Inchtute Primary School; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper and other children 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.

1.2 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 14 November 2018 in Inchtute Primary School 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 Abernyte Primary School and Inchtute Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

1.3 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure of Abernyte Primary School, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Perth and Kinross Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 29 October 2018 to 14 December 2018. Copies of the proposal were made available electronically on the council website with a link to an online response form. Letters were issued to statutory consultees with a link to the proposal paper and details of where and how to obtain a paper copy. A public notice advert was placed in the local press on 29 October 2018. Public meetings were held at Abernyste Primary School on 12 November 2018 and at Inchtute Primary School on 14 November 2018. Twenty-nine members of the public attended the public meeting at Abernyste Primary School. Five members of the public attended the public meeting at Inchtute Primary School. Almost all were not in favour of the proposal.

2.3 The council received 26 online responses, including seven from parents and two from children. Of the 26 responses, one response agreed with the council's proposal, 24 disagreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed. In addition, 27 written responses were received. These included responses from the Abernyste Parent Council, the local community council, MP and MSP. All of the written responses disagreed with the proposals. Key areas of concern included: challenging the idea that experiences in Inchtute would provide educational benefit to Abernyste children through attending a larger school, the potential impact on the community of the proposed school closure and aspects of detail and procedure in the council's processes and conclusions.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Abernyste Primary School is a non-denominational school providing education to P1-P7 pupils from the village of Abernyste and the surrounding area. There is no nursery provision at Abernyste Primary School. Local nursery provision is located at Inchtute Primary School. The school structure has one composite class across stages P1-P7. At the time of the HM Inspector's visit, the school roll had recently increased to eight children. The class consisted of one P2, one P4, one P5, three P6 and two P7 children. In January 2017, Abernyste Primary School was rated as 'B' (satisfactory) for building condition and 'A' (good) for educational suitability. Inchtute Primary School was rated as 'B' (satisfactory) for building condition and 'B' (satisfactory) for educational suitability. Data indicates that the roll of Abernyste Primary School has been falling over the last five years. Future projections indicate that pupil numbers are unlikely to increase above their current level. Currently, six catchment children attend neighbouring schools. If this pattern of parental choice continues, then the future sustainability of Abernyste is challenging.

3.2 The council has set out a number of reasonable arguments in support of its proposal. The council states there will be educational benefits for children if the proposal goes ahead. These include improved social interaction opportunities from attending a larger school among children of their own age. Participating in larger year groups will increase the opportunity for collaborative working with children of a similar age and stage of development. Opportunities to engage in a broader range of activities which enrich the curriculum will be increased. Children will benefit from participating in a wider variety of after school activities and the Inchtute House System. The proposal will assist the council to make efficient and effective use of its resources as it will not incur costs for running Abernyste Primary School. Inchtute Primary School has the capacity to accommodate additional children should Abernyste Primary School close. However, parents of children attending Abernyste believe that there are inaccuracies in the outline of council's financial costs, roll projections and educational benefits statement. HM Inspectors agree that the financial arguments are not evidenced clearly enough in the council's proposals. Inspectors also agree that the educational benefits statement does not give an appropriately balanced view of the improved

outcomes for children should Abernyte Primary School close. Whilst there are many accurate and sound arguments within the council's outline of educational benefits, there are some instances where the council overstates the advantages for children should they move to Inchture. For example, in its assessment of the school grounds, the environment for learning, the school's work as an Eco school or being twinned with a school in France and the support of the Parent Council, the council fails to acknowledge that Abernyte Primary School provides these equally well. The local community believes the council is wrong about the impact on the wider community should Abernyte Primary School close as they believe that the school is used for a greater range of community activities. In finalising its proposal, the council needs to reconsider any further relevant information on this aspect.

3.3 Parents and children from Abernyte Primary School who met with HM Inspectors did not support the proposal. Parents did not agree that there would be educational benefits for Abernyte children. Concerns were expressed about the perceived loss of the inclusive, supportive environment the children currently experience. Children enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and the space within and outside of the school building. The outdoor space is used imaginatively by children, sometimes directed by staff. Both parents and children were concerned about the potential for greater noise in a larger school. Parents felt there would be a reduction in the quality of the educational experience and individual attention. Parents did not accept the projected roll figures. They felt that in the future the school roll could increase. Parents acknowledged that the lack of nursery provision and parents exercising the right to send their child to other schools contributed to the lower numbers at Abernyte. Significant concern was expressed about the loss of the school as a community facility. Parents raised a legitimate concern regarding requiring greater clarity with regard to the approximate costs of upgrading the school fabric in the medium term. Whilst HM Inspectors acknowledge the legitimate concerns of parents, there is no evidence to suggest children would not make appropriate progress and enjoy rich educational experiences should they move to Inchture.

3.4 Staff and children in Inchture Primary School who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. Staff thought that engagement with a wider peer group of similar age and stage would improve children's learning. They felt that transitions were easier for children both from the nursery into P1 and from P7 to secondary education in a much bigger school. They felt that children would benefit from access to a wider pool of staff. Teachers thought that a larger staff provided more opportunities for moderation activities and professional learning. Inchture children would welcome the chance to develop new friendships. Children from Abernyte currently join some classes in Inchture Primary School for art on a weekly basis. Children in Inchture thought Abernyte children would benefit from having access to an increased range of school teams. They also felt that their P7 residential trip was one of the highlights of their school experience and children from Abernyte missed out on this kind of opportunity. Parents, staff and children did not have any concerns about the potential increase in the school roll if the proposal proceeds.

3.5 During the consultation period, parents alleged inaccuracies in the proposal. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to investigate these alleged inaccuracies. In its final consultation report, the council will need to set out a more balanced educational benefits statement and outline the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it, including a more transparent financial case.

3.6 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of the factors to which it should have special regard. In arriving at its proposal the council has assessed the likely benefits to children and in doing so has given due consideration to any reasonable alternatives. The council carried out a detailed options assessment in which it considered four options. These included: keeping Abernyte Primary School open with the existing catchment area; mothballing Abernyte Primary School and moving children

to Inchtute Primary School; reviewing the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School to determine whether or not this would increase the roll to a sustainable level; and closing Abernyte Primary School and moving children to Inchtute Primary School. Due to insufficient demand, coupled with parents choosing to place their children at other primary schools, none of the options bar closure were considered as viable or sustainable. The council considers that the current school building is not used sufficiently regularly for community activity to impact negatively. Inspectors note, however, that in the last year the school has extended its activities with the local community through, for example, the community café. The proposal does not impact negatively on children at Inchtute Primary School. Abernyte children will be entitled to free transport. The journey time is not unreasonable when compared with other parts of the authority and is likely to have limited environmental impact.

4. Summary

Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to close Abernyte Primary School, move pupils to Inchtute Primary School and permanently extend the Inchtute Primary School delineated catchment area to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Abernyte Primary School has some potential educational benefits. The council will need to balance these potential benefits against the potential loss to the children, families and community of the local village school. Abernyte Primary School children currently enjoy learning in a bright, attractive, inclusive and supportive environment. Children currently have access to an extensive and varied outdoor area to play and learn. HM Inspectors agree that Abernyte children will have access to wider experiences and increased socialisation through being part of a larger school at Inchtute. Opportunities to engage in assemblies, after school and team events will be increased. Transition from the nursery class to the P1 class will be enhanced. Projected numbers of children within the catchment do not indicate that the roll at Abernyte is likely to grow significantly. An important factor in this is parental placing requests to other schools in recent years. The small number of pupils and earlier gender imbalance at Abernyte Primary School have proved to be important factors for some families making choices about the kind of school they want for their children. Inchtute Primary School has the capacity to accommodate additional children. The proposal will assist the council to deliver 'Best Value' through making more efficient and effective use of its resources. Should the council decide to take forward the proposal for closure, it should set out how it will ensure that current Abernyte children are supported to positively make the transition to Inchtute Primary School. It should also work with parents to address, and correct where necessary, any inaccuracies as outlined by the Abernyte Parent Council. The council should also consider carefully how the vacant school might be used to the benefit of the local Abernyte community.

**HM Inspectors
January 2019**

**Delayed Office Opening
for Employee Training**

*This office will be closed from 8.45
am - 11.00 am on the first
Thursday of each month.*



Appendix 6

**Education & Children's Services
Executive Director – Sheena Devlin**

2 High Street, PERTH, PH1 5PH
Tel 01738 475000 Fax 01738 475710

Contact Karen Robertson
Direct Dial (01738) 476218
Email: ECSStatutoryConsultations@pkc.gov.uk
www.pkc.gov.uk

Our ref SD/KR/

Your ref

Date 14 March 2019

Dear Consultee and/or Respondee

Abernyte Primary School Consultation Notice

As you will be aware, the consultation period in relation to the Council's proposal to close Abernyte Primary School closed on Friday 14 December 2018.

Section 5 of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out the process the Council is required to follow when it is notified of any alleged omissions or inaccuracies in its proposal paper.

For those who made representations which notified the Council of alleged inaccuracies or omissions in its proposal paper, this letter sets out the Council's determination in relation to those representations, and what action the Council is taking in response.

This letter is also to be treated as a Notice to the statutory consultees, setting out how the Council intends to respond to the alleged inaccuracies or omissions, again under section 5 of the Act.

1. Abernyte Primary School Pupil Projections

There was reference in some of the responses to the pupil projections for Abernyte Primary School, set out by the Council in the proposal paper. The methodology in arriving at those projections was questioned by some who responded and alternative pupil projections were suggested.

The Council has considered whether any of the responses made in relation to pupil projections have identified an inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper.

The Council's view is that those who responded have set out alternative projections which have been formulated by including information about potential future placing requests.

The Council has therefore determined that there is no inaccuracy or omission in the Council's pupil projections for Abernyte Primary School and, therefore, is taking no further action in response to those alleged inaccuracies. The Council will respond to the issues raised in relation to the methodology used in arriving at pupil projections within the Council's final consultation report.

2. Inchtore Primary School Pupil Projections and Capacity

There was reference in some of the responses to the pupil projections for Inchtore Primary School and capacity of the school, set out by the Council in the proposal paper. The capacity of Inchtore Primary School was questioned by some who responded and alternative class combinations were suggested.

The Council has considered whether any of the responses made in relation to pupil projections have identified an inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper.

The Council's view is that those who responded have set out alternative class combinations which have been formulated based on assumptions being made regarding the use of additional composite classes. The composition and structure of classes in primary schools is a professional function and this is devolved to headteachers in consultation with the education authority.

The Council has therefore determined that there is no inaccuracy or omission in the Council's pupil projections and capacity for Inchtore Primary School and, therefore, is taking no further action in response to those alleged inaccuracies. The Council will respond to the issues raised in relation to pupil projections and capacity of Inchtore Primary School within the consultation report.

3. Catchment Review Figures

There was reference in some of the responses to the option of extending the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School not being properly investigated. The methodology used to undertake the review of potential changes to extend the catchment area was questioned by some who responded.

The Council has considered whether any of the responses made in relation to the option to review the catchment area have identified an inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper.

The Council's view is that those who raised this as an issue expressed an opinion that there were other families living within the area identified for possible inclusion in the catchment.

It was felt by those who responded that those families would have provided a different view on the proposal to that expressed by those families who were involved in the consultation process carried out by the Council.

The Council has determined that there is no inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper in so far as it relates to the option to extend the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School. Therefore, the Council is taking no further action in response to those alleged inaccuracies.

The Council will respond to the issues raised in relation to the review of extending the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School within the consultation report.

4. Educational Benefits

In its response the Parent Council stated that the Council had not complied with the legal requirements placed on it in relation to the Educational Benefits Statement. The Council has considered the representations made in relation to this, but remains satisfied that it has complied with the legal requirements in relation to the preparation of the Educational Benefits Statement. The Council does not consider that the representations made identify any inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper. It is noted that those who responded have set out their view in relation to the Educational Benefits Statement, and the Council will respond to those comments in the consultation report.

5. Financial Information

There was reference in some of the responses to the cost savings for Abernyte Primary School being materially overstated by the Council in the proposal paper. The methodology in arriving at those savings was questioned by some who responded and alternative cost savings were suggested.

The Council has considered whether any of the responses made in relation to cost savings have identified an inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper.

The Council has determined that there is no inaccuracy in the Council's cost savings for Abernyte Primary School. The Council accepts that more detailed information regarding how the cost savings were calculated could have been helpful for those reading the proposal paper. The Council has made use of the financial template developed by COSLA and which is supported by the Scottish Government for the provision of financial information. It is considered that it would be helpful to provide this detail now and give consultees the opportunity to consider this detail and make any further representation in light of this additional information. The additional information is attached as Appendix 1 to this letter.

6. Range of Community Events

There was reference in some of the responses to the range of community events held in Abernyte Primary School set out by the Council in the proposal paper. The range of community events mentioned in the proposal paper was questioned by some who responded and it was indicated that additional community events were now taking place in the school which had not been considered.

The Council has considered whether any of the responses made in relation to the range of community events taking place within the school have identified an inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper.

The Council is aware of some events held by the school as part of the delivery of the curriculum, which are opened up to the community. As these are not events arranged by/led by the community, the Council does not consider there was any omission by not making reference to these as community events.

The Council has therefore determined that there is no inaccuracy or omission in the Council's consideration of the range of community events taking place in Abernyte Primary School and, therefore, is taking no further action in response to those alleged inaccuracies. The Council will respond within the consultation report to the issues raised in relation to the range of community events and will also consider any additional information which has become known since the proposal paper was published.

7. Suitability of the Church

There was reference in some of the responses to the suitability of the Church to hold large community events set out by the Council in the proposal paper. The suitability of the Church was questioned by some who responded and it was indicated that large community events could not take place if the school was closed.

The Council has considered whether any of the responses made in relation to the use of the Church as a community facility have identified an inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper.

The Council's view is that those who responded have set out that there is no alternative venue to hold large community events. Within the proposal paper, the church was identified as an available venue within the community. The Council's view is that this is correct.

The Council has therefore determined that there is no inaccuracy or omission in the Council's consideration of the availability of the Church and, therefore, is taking no further action in response to those alleged inaccuracies. The Council will respond to the issues raised in relation to the suitability of the Church within the consultation report.

8. Ownership of the Playing Field

The Council was advised in a response to the consultation that the Council had incorrectly stated that the playing field adjacent to the school was owned by the Abernyte Community Interest Company. It was stated within the response that the playing field is owned by a private individual, who permits use of it by the school.

The Council accepts that if this is correct, then there is an error in the proposal paper. However, the Council does not consider that this error relates to a material consideration relevant to the Council's decision as to implementation of the proposal.

The proposal paper did state that the playing field was not in Council ownership and therefore is not part of the Abernyte Primary School site. In the Council's view, this is the key piece of information relating to the playing field, as opposed to who owns it.

The Council has therefore determined to take no further action in relation to this error.

Next Steps

This letter informs those who made a representation of the outcome of the Council's determination in relation to alleged inaccuracies or omissions in the proposal paper.

You may make representations to the Council if you disagree with the Council's determination in relation to any of the matters set out above (i.e. the Council's decision about whether there is an alleged inaccuracy or omission). Any representations should be made by email to ECStatutoryConsultations@pkc.gov.uk or in writing to Abernyte Primary School Consultation, Education and Children's Services, 2 High Street, Perth, PH1 5PH **to be submitted no later than 27 March 2019.**

In relation to item 5 above (financial information), the Council has considered the representations made. As stated above, it is the Council's view that the information provided within the proposal paper is accurate, but accepts that further detail might have been helpful to those reading the proposal paper. That additional information is provided at Appendix 1 to this letter. Given that additional information has now been provided which was not within the proposal paper, the Council has determined that it should allow a further period within which representations may be made on the proposal, in light of the additional information provided in this Notice.

Therefore, any additional representations should be made in relation to the information contained in Appendix 1 **to be submitted no later than 27 March 2019.** That period will be treated as part of the consultation period and any representations made will be considered as part of the consultation process.

Representations should be made by email to ECStatutoryConsultations@pkc.gov.uk or in writing to Abernyte Primary School Consultation, Education and Children's Services, 2 High Street, Perth, PH1 5PH.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheena Devlin', written in a cursive style.

Sheena Devlin
Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)

Enc Appendix 1 Financial Information

Financial Information

Grant Aided Expenditure

The financial template published in the Council's proposal paper uses a format agreed at a national level having been developed by COSLA and supported by the Scottish Government. The financial template within the Council's proposal paper shows that, if the proposal were to be implemented, the Council's Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocation may reduce by up to £18,840. However, this potential adjustment does not directly affect the Education & Children's Services (ECS) Revenue Budget or the school running costs for the following reasons:

GAE is not a budget, target or expenditure guideline for local authorities – it is an allocation based on a theoretical assessment of local need. This differs from the actual amount of funding received by local authorities. It is for individual local authorities to determine how they allocate the resources they receive as part of the Scottish Government Settlement as they are not considered to be "ring fenced" for specific purposes.

The methodology uses a number of primary and secondary indicators to distribute funding. Since the 2008-11 settlement, the total amount available at a national level for distribution has remained unchanged. However, there can be variations between Councils between years.

We do agree that the overall Perth and Kinross Council proportion of funding allocation within the 2008-11 settlement total amounts may be reduced by £18,840. The overall GAE allocation for Perth and Kinross Council is £186.275 million.

However, GAE is not an allocation of school running costs or budget which is what is required to be published and shown on the financial template provided by the Scottish Government. Therefore, any reduction in GAE does not reduce the actual running costs of the school.

Revenue Savings

The revenue savings from closing Abernyte Primary School are £108,213 after allowing for mothballing costs of £750 per year. The budget allocation to Inchtute Primary School is based on the Perth and Kinross Council Devolved School Management Scheme (DSM) which allocates budgets based on various formulas and school roll bandings. The relevant allocation which would affect the amounts shown within column 3 of the financial template of the proposal paper is shown below.

Within the Perth and Kinross Council DSM scheme, allocations are made to schools for 'Per Capita' which is the budget provision made to schools for the purchase of books and educational equipment for pupils.

Outwith Per Capita is the budget issued mainly for the purchase of educational equipment, maintenance of equipment and postage and cleaning materials and the calculation rates are shown below:

Per Capita £30.90 per pupil

Outwith Per Capita £8.40 per pupil

Cleaning Materials £2.10 per pupil

The total amount per pupil is £41.40 @ 6 pupils = £248.40 as per Appendix 8 in the Council's proposal paper. The number of pupils used to determine the budget allocation is based on the reported Census 2018 pupil roll for all schools. For Abernyte Primary School, the Census 2018 reported 6 pupils. Any increase in a school roll after the Census figures are reported are not included until the following year's budget calculation. The same applies to circumstances where a school roll decreases during the financial year.

Small schools such as Abernyte Primary School also get a small school allowance for the above which totals £262.50. This would not transfer to Inchtute Primary School if the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School was to be implemented.

The allocation of teachers and support staff is also based on the total school roll for each school and the following bandings show that the projected roll at the time of the proposal paper did not increase Teaching or Support Staff at Inchtute Primary School. It should be highlighted that when a school does meet the next level on a banding it does not guarantee that the additional staffing resources are provided, as it will depend if the roll is going to be maintained over the longer period.

The Staffing Standard is a local agreement with teaching staff and professional associations which determines the level of allocation of staff to schools. An annual staffing exercise is undertaken each year to assess the intake levels, total school roll and class configurations to agree the staffing level for each school for the following school session.

No additional staff costs have been included to accommodate Abernyte Primary School pupils attending Inchtute Primary School should the proposal be implemented as the total school roll would remain within the current staff banding. Any future staff costs which may be necessary as a result of the school roll increasing at Inchtute Primary School, without the inclusion of any additional pupils from Abernyte Primary School, would not be attributed to the costs savings relating to Abernyte Primary School.

Staffing Standard for Primary Teachers

Staffing Standard for school roll - 215 to 241 pupils is 10 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Staffing Standard for school roll - 242 to 266 pupils is 11 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Staffing Standard for School Clerical Support Staff (allows for the nursery roll also)

Pupil School Assistants - school roll 200 -299 pupils = 67.50 hours

Pupil School Assistants - school roll 300 -399 pupils = 75.50 hours

Primary School Support Worker – school roll 40 – 249 pupils = 27.5 hours

Primary School Support Worker – school roll >250pupils = 55 hours

Capital Costs for Abernyte Primary School

The Council's proposal paper included information on the approximate total cost to upgrade Abernyte Primary School property of £333,090 for building fabric, mechanical and electrical works which include ventilation, fire alarm systems, heating and hot water pipework, insulation and building fabric improvements. These works are not required immediately but in the medium term which is 2-5 years.

The detail of these works required is provided below and includes the following:

- Replace heating pipework to recently replaced boiler
- Install plate heat exchanger to existing heating system to improve efficiency
- Replace hot water pipework
- Rewire electrical system
- Replace electrical switchgear
- Replace socket outlets
- Upgrade IT/data installation
- Upgrade fire alarm system
- Builder work associated with above
- Fit solar PV for hot water service to supplement boiler
- Replace mechanical ventilation to toilets & server room
- Improve energy efficiency by improving insulation and building fabric
- Builder work associated with above
- Supplement existing boiler with solar PV for hot water services to reduce oil consumption
- Heating energy efficiency works
- Redecoration
- General builder works

Due to the age and condition of the building, and the respective elements within, the required works have been prioritised accordingly as follows:

There are no Priority 1 items (required immediately)

Priority 2 - Essential work required within 2 years

Approximate costs - £183,621

- Replace heating pipework to recently replaced boiler
- Install plate heat exchanger to existing heating system to improve efficiency
- Replace hot water pipework
- Rewire electrical system
- Replace electrical switchgear
- Replace socket outlets
- Upgrade IT/data installation
- Upgrade fire alarm system
- Builder work associated with above

Priority 3 - Desirable work required within 3-5 years

Approximate costs - £51,598

- Fit solar PV for hot water service to supplement boiler
- Replace mechanical ventilation to toilets & server room
- Improve energy efficiency by improving insulation and building fabric
- Builder work associated with above

Priority 4 - Long term work required outwith 5 years

Approximate costs – £89,906

- Supplement existing boiler with solar PV for hot water services to reduce oil consumption

Works outwith Mechanical and Electrical items

Approximate costs - £7965

- Full external redecoration to main building
- Patch or full redecoration to various rooms within
- Deep clean various floor coverings
- Repair to wall plaster damage
- Replace single glazed windows

These total works have been costed up to approximately £333,090.

Costings were carried out by Perth and Kinross Council's Quantity Surveyor team; costs are on a square metre rate for the specific elements noted above.