

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Lifelong Learning Committee – 25 August 2010

REVIEW OF SCHOOL ESTATE - STRUAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)

ABSTRACT

This Report seeks approval from the Lifelong Learning Committee for the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to proceed with undertaking an Options Appraisal and, if appropriate, produce a Proposal Paper containing an Educational Benefits Statement in respect of Struan Primary School. The options to be considered will include the possible closure of the school.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1.1 instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to proceed with undertaking an Options Appraisal and, if appropriate, produce a Proposal Paper containing an Educational Benefits Statement in respect of Struan Primary School; and
- 1.2 instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to bring a detailed report back to the Committee in due course.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Education Authorities have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended, to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and future pattern of demand. In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value.

Most importantly, the Education Authority would wish to optimise the educational experience for every pupil by providing:

- a range of social and emotional experiences
- an enriched and broad learning experience
- the best possible education which meets the needs of all learners

- 2.2 On 30 June 2010, the Council approved the report Securing the Future – Towards 2015 and Beyond (Report 10/357 refers). This report set out our continuing strategy for securing the future, aiming to support the delivery of savings through revised service delivery models and ongoing improvement activities in the Council. Education and Children's Services Service Review Programme within this report contains a re-design project to "review the school estate".

- 2.3 Initial work has been undertaken which considered a combination of factors including current pupil rolls (September 2009 census), projected school rolls, school occupancy levels, number and location of future housing developments, distance to neighbouring schools and the capacities of these neighbouring schools.
- 2.3.1 All primary schools were considered within their secondary cluster area. Those that were examined in more detail were those with:-
- A low number of pupils on the roll (as at September 2009 census) [<15]
 - A low number of pupils on the highest projected roll to 2016/17 [<15]
 - A low percentage occupancy level (as at September 2009 census) [<40%]
- 2.3.2 The above criteria identified 6 primary schools.
- 2.3.3 Thereafter, the potential percentage occupancy based on highest projected rolls and potential pupil numbers from received planning applications to date (as at May 2010), distance to neighbouring schools and the capacity of these neighbouring schools to accommodate additional pupils now, and in the future, was also considered.
- 2.3.4 Only 4 primary schools continued to meet the criteria after these additional factors were examined.
- 2.3.5 Following this initial work where schools have been identified, it is now appropriate to look beyond the initial criteria and undertake an Options Appraisal and, if appropriate, produce a Proposal Paper containing an Educational Benefits Statement for these schools.
- 2.3.6 It must be emphasised that having selected schools on the basis above, the work that will now be undertaken will focus on the social and educational aspects of the pupils' experiences. The Educational Benefits Statement will be paramount with regards to the Executive Director's (Education and Children's Services) consideration in what is brought back to a future Lifelong Learning Committee.
- 2.4 Struan Primary School is a single teacher primary school serving the village of Calvine and the surrounding area and is situated 6.1 miles from Blair Atholl. The school roll as at September 2009 census is 4 pupils. The highest projected roll to 2016/2017 is 7 pupils. The capacity of Struan Primary School is 47 pupils.
- 2.4.1 Blair Atholl Primary School has a roll of 26 pupils as at September 2009 Census and a capacity of 50 pupils. The highest projected roll to 2016/2017 is 32 pupils.
- 2.4.2 Struan Primary School and Blair Atholl Primary School are already part of a Shared Headship arrangement.

3 PROPOSALS

It is therefore proposed that a detailed Options Appraisal and, if appropriate, Proposal Paper containing an Educational Benefits Statement are prepared for Struan Primary School. This will allow Education and Children's Services to fully investigate and determine appropriate proposals for consideration in respect of Struan Primary School. One of which includes the possible closure of the school.

4 CONSULTATION

The Head of Democratic Services and Head of Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Any resource implications arising from preparation of the Options Appraisal and Educational Benefits Statement are likely to relate primarily to staff time and will therefore be contained within the Education and Children's Services revenue budget.

6 COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012

6.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 lays out five objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. They are as follows:-

- (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
- (ii) Healthy, Caring Communities
- (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
- (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
- (v) Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

This report relates to all of the above five objectives.

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

- Change and Improvement

7 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics.

This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.

The procedure presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (Eq1A) with the following outcome:

- i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of Eq1A.

8. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

9 CONCLUSION

The preparation of a comprehensive Options Appraisal and, if appropriate, a Proposal Paper containing an Educational Benefits Statement will allow for informed consideration to be given to any future proposals in relation to Struan Primary School. One of which includes the possible closure of the school.

JOHN FYFFE
Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)

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

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