



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

Minute of Meeting Held on Tuesday 13 September 2016

At 7.00pm in Kirkmichael Primary School

Present

Councillor Bob Band	Convener, Lifelong Learning Committee
Sheena Devlin	Director, Education and 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 Caroline Shiers	Perth and Kinross Council
Margaret Wynd	Headteacher - Kirkmichael Primary School

2 members of the public

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sheena Devlin opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public in attendance to the statutory consultation public meeting. Sheena Devlin introduced herself, the Convener and Council Officers to the members of the public.

2. Format of meeting

Sheena Devlin explained the format the meeting would follow.

3. The proposal

Sheena Devlin advised that Straloch Primary School had been mothballed since August 2011 and outlined the reasons for this and explained the consultation proposal to the attendees.

Education provision at Straloch Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31 March 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter;
That the pupils of Straloch Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Kirkmichael Primary School, from 1 April 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
That the delineated area of Kirkmichael Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated area of Straloch Primary School from 1 April 2017.

4. Presentation

Karen Robertson gave a presentation explaining the Proposal and educational benefits in further detail.

Background

Karen Robertson gave a presentation on the background to the proposal and outlined that the reasons for the Council proposing to close Straloch Primary School. An options appraisal had been developed in 2010; however the Commission for the Delivery of Rural Education was set up and a moratorium was imposed. The Commission published a report on 19 April 2013 making 38 recommendations relevant to rural education. The recommendations required legislation to be changed which was concluded in March 2015. The previously agreed arrangements to mothball Straloch Primary School continued during this time, with pupils attending Kirkmichael Primary School.

On 4 November 2015 the Lifelong Learning Committee approved the review and updating of the options appraisal for Straloch Primary School. Public engagement sessions took place in February and March 2016 to inform the options appraisal. 21 people attended in total and gave views.

Transport Arrangements

Travel distance between Straloch Primary School and Kirkmichael Primary School is 3.5 miles. In good weather this takes approximately 7 minutes. The range travelled by pupils is between 2.7 – 3.5 miles and this has been happening for the last 5 years without any significant issue.

Educational Benefits

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

Statutory Consultation Process

Karen Robertson detailed the statutory consultation process including the legal framework, consideration by Lifelong Learning Committee, the content of the proposal including the Educational Benefits statement, statutory consultation period and representation from interested parties as the first part of the consultation process. Karen Robertson then went on to explain the next stages of the process which includes the involvement of Education Scotland, the preparation and publication of the consultation report and the decision made by the Lifelong Learning Committee.

Karen Robertson assured that the Committee have made no decision at this time; they have only given approval for the consultation exercise to be undertaken.

Any comments or views must be submitted by 5.00pm on 28 September via online form, email or in writing to the Council.

If the decision is to proceed with closure, then Scottish Ministers must be informed and they will decide if approval to close the school is to be given and whether any conditions are required.

Karen Robertson then opened up the meeting to any questions or observations from the floor.

Question 1

Why has the school been mothballed for so long?

- A.** Karen Robertson advised that under normal circumstances the Council would not seek to mothball a school for 5 years. The new guidance is that schools should not be mothballed for longer than 3 years. The Council was seeking to consult on a proposal to close Straloch in 2011 when the Scottish Government moratorium was announced. The Council was then awaiting the Rural Schools Commission report and finally changes to legislation which were concluded in March 2015 before seeking to recommence with the consultation to propose to close the school.

Question 2

Why has it taken the Council so long to proceed to close the school?

- A.** It would not have been correct nor sensible for the Council to proceed with a proposal to close a rural school until the changes to legislation were known and approved by the Scottish Parliament. Once these were known, the Council had to undertake a new Options Appraisal as so much time had passed and which took account of the changes in legislation.

Question 3

What will happen to the school building and will the sale proceeds go to Kirkmichael Primary School?

- A.** Karen Robertson explained that the school would be declared surplus to requirements and would be managed through the Council's Disposal Policy. Sheena Devlin explained that capital receipts for Council properties were managed within the Council and it would not be the case that Kirkmichael Primary School would receive any sale proceeds

Question 4

Can resources in Straloch Primary School be given to Kirkmichael Primary School?

- A.** Karen Robertson confirmed that the resources in Straloch Primary School could be given to Kirkmichael Primary School if a decision was taken to close Straloch Primary School.

Question 5

Where have the servers and computers gone that were in Straloch Primary School?

- A.** Carol Taylor informed the meeting that the resources were still in Straloch Primary School and a full inventory of resources was taken at the time of the school being mothballed.

Comment 1

A view was expressed that the Council should close the school, sell the building and get the money into Kirkmichael Primary School.

Comment 2

A view was expressed that the Council is making the right decision and the community fully supports the decision with any money from Straloch Primary School to come back to the community.

Sheena Devlin thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.