



PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

OPTIONS APPRAISAL REPORT



STRALOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Introduction

The Council's Corporate Plan identifies the vision of *'a confident and ambitious Perth and Kinross with a strong identity and clear outcomes that everyone works together to achieve. Our area will be vibrant and successful; a safe secure and healthy environment; and a place where people and communities are nurtured and supported'*.

This strategic approach embraces the vision for our area, our communities and our people as outlined in the Corporate Plan. Our key service priorities support the delivery of our commitments in the Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement, Service Asset Management Plan and Corporate Plan, helping ECS to focus on the local outcomes that will achieve meaningful improvements for the area, our local communities and our citizens.

Councils, as an Education Authority, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand.

Councils also have a statutory responsibility in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to achieve best value. Education and Children's Services Service Asset Management Plan provides a review of the property assets used to deliver services. It incorporates the School Estate Management Plan which reflects the local implementation of Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future, the national school estate strategy developed by the Scottish Government in conjunction with local authorities.

The aspirations, guiding principles and objectives contained within Building Better Schools are reflected throughout Education and Children's Services Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for schools and public buildings, both in the management of the existing assets and in the design and construction of developments.

<http://www.pkc.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=35064&p=0>

2. Background

2.1 History

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".

Initial work was 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.

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) [$<40\%$]

The above criteria identified 6 primary schools.

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.

Only 4 primary schools continued to meet the criteria after these additional factors were examined.

Straloch Primary School was one of the four schools. On 1 June 2011, the Lifelong Learning Committee approved the report Statutory Consultation – Straloch Primary School ([Report 11/254 refers](#)). This report sought approval to commence formal consultations on the proposal to close Straloch Primary School.

The Straloch Primary School pupil roll at September 2009 Census was 5 pupils and at September 2010 Census was 8 pupils. As at May 2011, there were 6 pupils attending Straloch Primary School, 3 from within the catchment and 3 placing requests. (Report 10/426 refers).

As the pupil roll at Straloch Primary School was to fall to 2 pupils at the start of academic session 2011/2012, the decision was taken by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services), in consultation with the Convener of the Lifelong Learning Committee, that Straloch Primary School would be mothballed from August 2011. This is a term which means provision in a school is suspended with pupils zoned to another catchment area. Mutually agreed arrangements were made with the parents of the remaining pupils for session 2011/12.

At May 2011, another 7 primary pupils lived within the Straloch Primary School catchment area but, as a result of successful placing requests made by the parents, attended Kirkmichael Primary School and Pitlochry Primary School. These parents were advised of the arrangements to be implemented from August 2011.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning then announced the setting up of a Commission for the Delivery of Rural Education and requested a moratorium on rural closures for one year. The moratorium was proposed to run from 20 June 2011 until 20 June 2012.

On 31 August 2011, Lifelong Learning Committee agreed that the decision to commence formal consultations to close Straloch Primary School would be deferred until the outcome of the Commission of the Delivery of Rural Education was reported ([Report 11/430 refers](#)).

As a result of the recommendations made by the Commission, the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#), was amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Most of the amendments came into force on 1 August 2014. The final part of the amendments relating to the School Closure Review Panel were introduced and came into force on 30 March 2015.

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.

The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools, establishing in effect a presumption against closure of rural schools. The result of this is that education authorities must have special regard to a number of factors before formulating a proposal to close a rural school and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.

The new duties are outlined in the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) and the accompanying [Statutory Guidance](#).

In addition, the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) sets out a new right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. Public bodies including Councils must consider such requests and respond within a reasonable timescale to them.

2.2 Options Appraisal

On 4 November 2015 the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No 15/514 refers](#)). agreed that the options appraisal for Straloch Primary School be reviewed and updated. This review will enable Education and Children's Services to determine whether the options identified in 2011 are still relevant and whether additional options require to be investigated further.

This is the reviewed and updated options appraisal. This will be submitted to Lifelong Learning Committee to determine the basis under which any statutory consultation will proceed.

2.3 Current Position

The summary position is as follows:

- Following the mothballing of Straloch Primary School, the pupils from Straloch Primary School catchment area are currently designated to attend Kirkmichael Primary School which is 3.5 miles (Google maps) from Straloch Primary School.
- The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools establishment in effect a presumption against the closure of rural schools. There is a requirement to have special regard to the rural school factors before formulating a proposal to close a rural school. In particular, it is necessary to consider any reasonable alternatives before considering closure. It is also necessary to consider the impact on the wider community of a potential closure and the impact of any different travelling arrangements. These factors have been considered in this options appraisal.

3. Context

3.1 Story of Place/Community Profile

The catchment area for Straloch Primary School sits primarily within the locality of Eastern Perthshire. Eastern Perthshire covers a geographical area of approximately 468km². The locality includes Blairgowrie and Rattray, Perthshire's largest town and where nearly half of all Eastern Perthshire residents live. There are also a number of smaller villages including Alyth, Coupar Angus and Burrelton.

The entire catchment area is designated as 'remote rural' within the Scottish Government urban-rural 6-fold classification¹. Additionally,

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification>

parts of the catchment fall within the 'very remote' category within the 8-fold classification.

Eastern Perthshire LCPP² covers an area of 989 square kilometres and covers the areas of Strathardle and Glenshee in the north, through Strathmore to the Carse of Gowrie in the South. In the neighbouring LCPP area of Highland and Strathtay, Pitlochry is the nearest settlement, at a road distance of 9 miles.

The Community Learning and Development (CLD) team, working in the area, have developed a 'Story of Place/Community Profile' to assist in supporting communities and in meeting the Council's strategic objectives for these communities. The Community Profile for Eastern Perthshire details some of the key facts and figures which describe the community, but also the proposals from the CLD team to work with the community to make positive changes. This information provides a context in which the rural factors can be considered in relation to key strategic objectives such as health, sustainability and education. This is supplemented by information provided by the community at engagement events which is detailed in section 7.

3.2 Strategic Objective: Giving every child the best start in life

The birth rate in Eastern Perthshire between 2001 and 2011 was 10.91 births per 1,000 of the population. The average number of births per annum over the last 10 years in the area is 300. Eastern Perthshire, as with Perth and Kinross, has a lower birth rate than Scotland overall. However since 2008 Eastern Perthshire as a whole has had a slightly higher birth rate than Perth and Kinross.

3.3 Strategic Objective: Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens

The estimated percentage of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations in Eastern Perthshire in 2014/15 was 90%³. This is slightly lower than the Perth and Kinross average of 92% and the Scottish average of 93%.

3.4 Strategic Objective: Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy

In 2011, 69% of 16 to 74 year olds were economically active in Eastern Perthshire, compared with 71% in Perth and Kinross and 70% in Scotland.

² Local Community Planning Partnership area. These have been recently defined and work is ongoing to establish 'Stories of Place' for the five areas.

³ Blairgowrie High School, Initial Destinations of School Leavers 2014/15, Skills Development Scotland

The three most common industries in which people who live in the area work within are similar to those of Perth and Kinross and Scotland. The industry 'Wholesale and retail trade, motor vehicle and repair' is the main industry in the area. 'Agriculture forestry and fishing' is an industry which the area relies on more than Perth and Kinross as a whole, with the proportion of people being employed in this industry almost double of the region and almost three times that of the Scottish average.

The area has a slightly higher percentage of self-employed people with 12% of Eastern Perthshire residents being self-employed compared with 11% of Perth and Kinross residents and 7% of Scottish residents.

The Mount Blair Community Development Trust (a Blairgowrie based company and charity) work covers the Glens of Strathardle and Glenshee. It works on a range of community projects of benefit to the area e.g. Community Bulk Oil Purchase.

3.5 Strategic objective: Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives

The 2011 Census information indicates a local population in general good health and not limited in daily activities by health or disability issues.

A variety of services and local organisations are working together to support members of the local community to lead independent, healthy and active lives. The Integrated Health and Social Care conversation is actively engaging with residents to hear their views which will advise future delivery of provision. Activities and programmes that help reduce the potential for social isolation and issues with mental health are vital for this community which covers a large rural area.

3.6 Strategic objective: Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Crime has been falling locally and nationally, in Eastern Perthshire the number of crimes per 10,000 people has been falling at a faster rate. The rate of domestic abuse incidents is currently lower in Eastern Perthshire compared to Perth and Kinross and Scotland.

Across Eastern Perthshire there are numerous Community groups and organisations from Bridge Clubs and Lunch Clubs, to theatre and dance groups, Community Councils, Development Trusts and Community Youth Organisations. These organisations sometimes meet in community or council operated buildings occasionally meeting as a stand-alone group, offering service whereas others work with other community groups to create change within their communities. CLD often works with these groups to support their activities.

Through many of the youth programmes and organisations young people are supported to influence decisions that affect them locally and address issues within their community. In 2015 a local young person was elected as a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP).

The recently opened Community Connect@Ratray offers a range of activities for community groups and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) services to reflect the needs of local people. A recently completed building in the Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie will provide a focus for young people in the eastern Perthshire area, as well as job opportunities.

4. Straloch and the Local Area

4.1 Location of School

Straloch Primary School is approximately 3.5 miles from Kirkmichael. Straloch and the local area is sparsely populated. Straloch is small dispersed village lying at the foot of the Cairngorm mountain range. It lies within the Forest of Clunie Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Area (SPA) that cover many of the farms and estates within the area.

Attractions accessible from the area include fishing, mountain biking, walking and golf.

Visitors to the area are accommodated at various hotels, holiday cottages and bed & breakfast establishments within the catchment area. There is a shop/post office and garage within Kirkmichael which operates as a community enterprise. There is also a shop and post office within Bridge of Cally.

4.2 The School within the Community

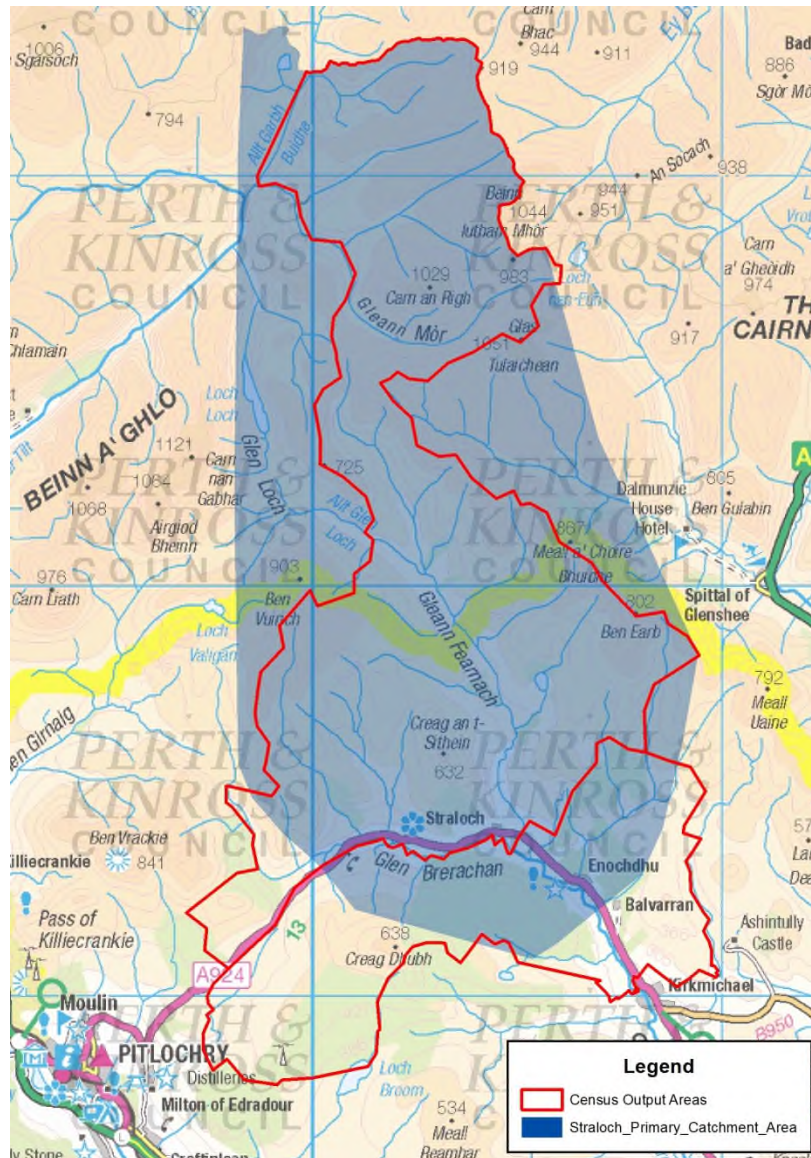
There are a number of halls in the area available for community use; located at Kirkmichael, Bridge of Cally, Ballintuim and Blackwater. The Session House at Kirkmichael is available for community activities. There are other facilities available including Kindrogan Field Centre which provides a range of learning opportunities for all.

Straloch Primary School was not used for community events latterly when it was open, for example there were no external bookings for 2010/11. The pupils had close links with the community however and neighbours were invited to visit the school for events on a regular basis.

4.3 Population

For the purposes of this options appraisal the census output areas S00126256 and S00126257 were chosen because of the good fit with the catchment area of Straloch Primary School, as can be seen on the map below.

Figure 1: Straloch Primary School catchment area & Census Output Areas Map



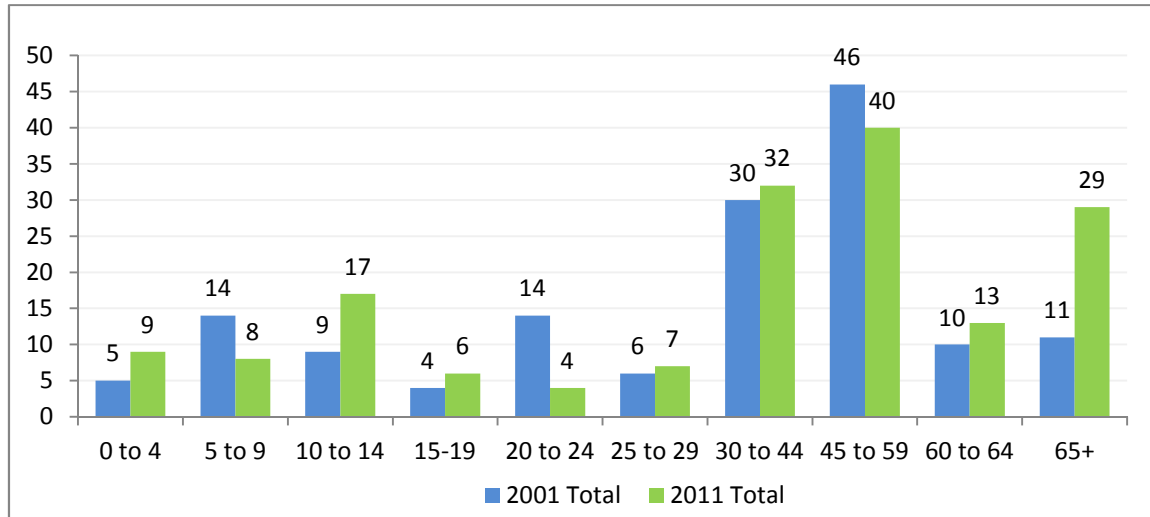
© Crown copyright [and database rights] 2016. OS 100016971. Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions.

The current population of the area⁴, as indicated by the 2011 census is 165 people.

⁴ Census output areas S00126256 and S00126257

Since 2001 to 2011 the population of the area⁴ increased by 16 people. The majority of this increase was in the 65 and over populations⁵. The 0-14 population increased slightly by 6 persons in that time. The 20-29 age group declined by nearly 50%.

Figure 2: Population Breakdown of COAs S00126256 & S00126257



4.4 Development and House Building

The current Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in 2014 and the Council is required to keep it up to date and review it at a maximum of five year intervals. The development of the next LDP is already underway with the Main Issues Report (MIR) being consulted upon.

The TAYplan sets out a hierarchical approach to directing new development to existing settlements and identifies Blairgowrie and Rattray as the tier 2 settlements which should take the largest proportion of any new development in Strathmore and the Glens. The remainder of main development will likely be split between the (Tier 3) settlements of Alyth and Coupar Angus.

Areas considered for the landward housing requirement in the Strathmore and the Glens area are Ardler, Bridge of Cally, Caputh, Carsie, Concraigie, Craigie, Kettins, Kinloch, Kirkmichael, Meigle, Meikleour and Spittalfield. Any other development identified in the area is likely to be small scale (less than 5 houses).

A new TAYplan is currently under preparation. This will set revised housing land requirements for the next LDP.

⁵ Scotland's Census, 2001 Table CAS001 and Scotland's Census, 2011 Table KS102SC; National Records of Scotland

In the proposed TAYplan the annual number of houses required in the Strathmore & the Glens area is 145 per year.

There is a possibility however that this could increase but if it does this would most likely be to 160 per annum, depending on the outcome of the examination into the proposed TAYplan. In terms of pupil numbers, 145 houses would equate to 39.15 pupils per annum. The houses and therefore the pupils will be largely within Blairgowrie, Rattray, Alyth and Coupar Angus as in line with the TAYplan, little development is likely to be identified outwith these settlements in the landward areas and any such development is likely to be of smaller scale.

In terms of potential new business ventures in the area, there have been no enquiries to the Council's Business Development team. They have advised that there are unlikely to be any significant changes to the population relative to the Straloch Primary School catchment area as a result of business growth.

4.5 Pupil Numbers

The methodology used for pupil projections in this report allows us to project a detailed year by year analysis for each catchment. Information is based on pupil census data from September 2015.

The methodology applied for current and projected data uses aggregated GP registration data to ascertain future P1 intakes. The data, available from the NHS reflects children registered with a GP, anonymously located within specific school catchment areas, providing 4 years of information for primary school children. See Appendix 1 for further details.

The tables below show the historic, current and projected pupil numbers for the schools detailed within this report should Straloch remain mothballed or be closed.

Individual School Roll Pupil Numbers – Historic Data (Based on Census)

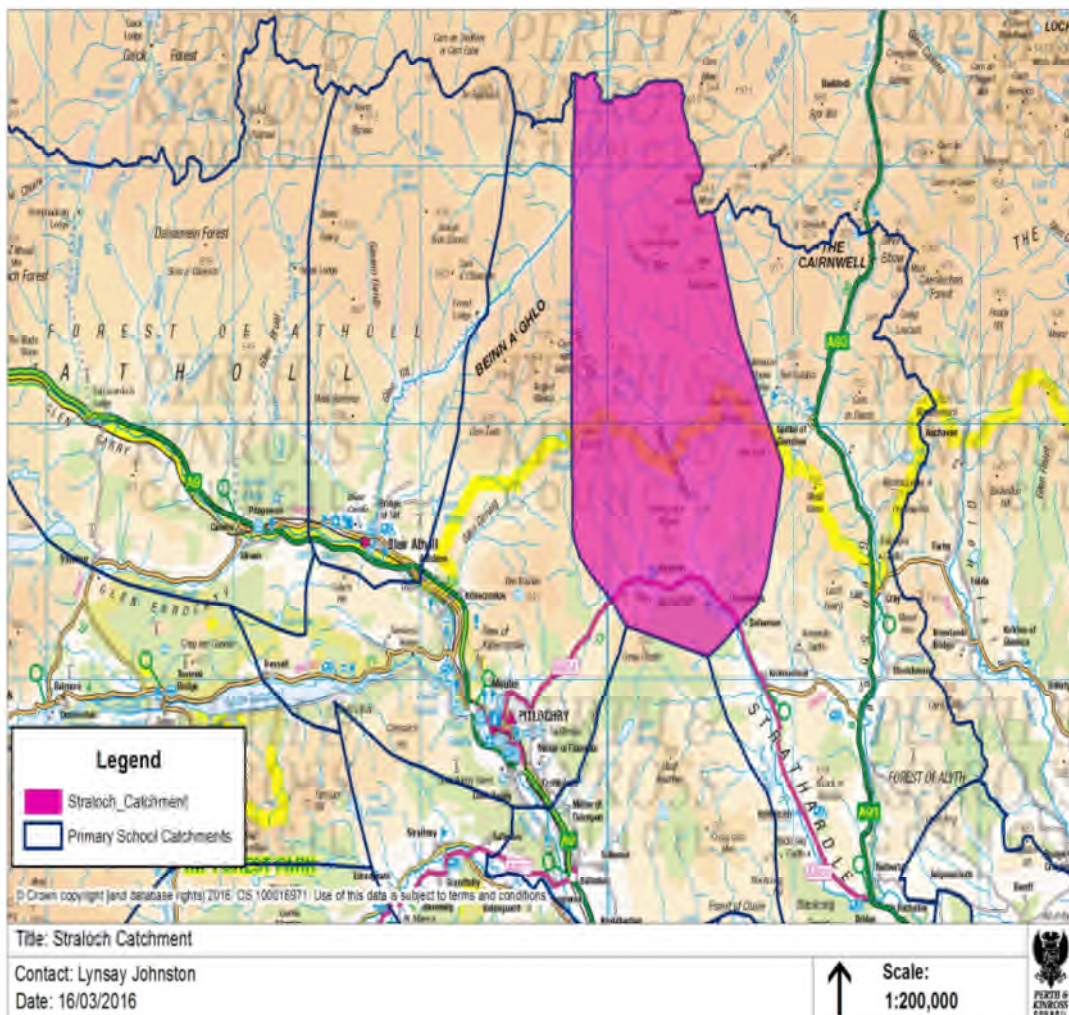
Primary School	Capacity	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015
Kirkmichael	72	37	39	33	28	43	45
Pitlochry	300	200	199	219	218	202	208
Straloch	22	5	8	0	0	0	0

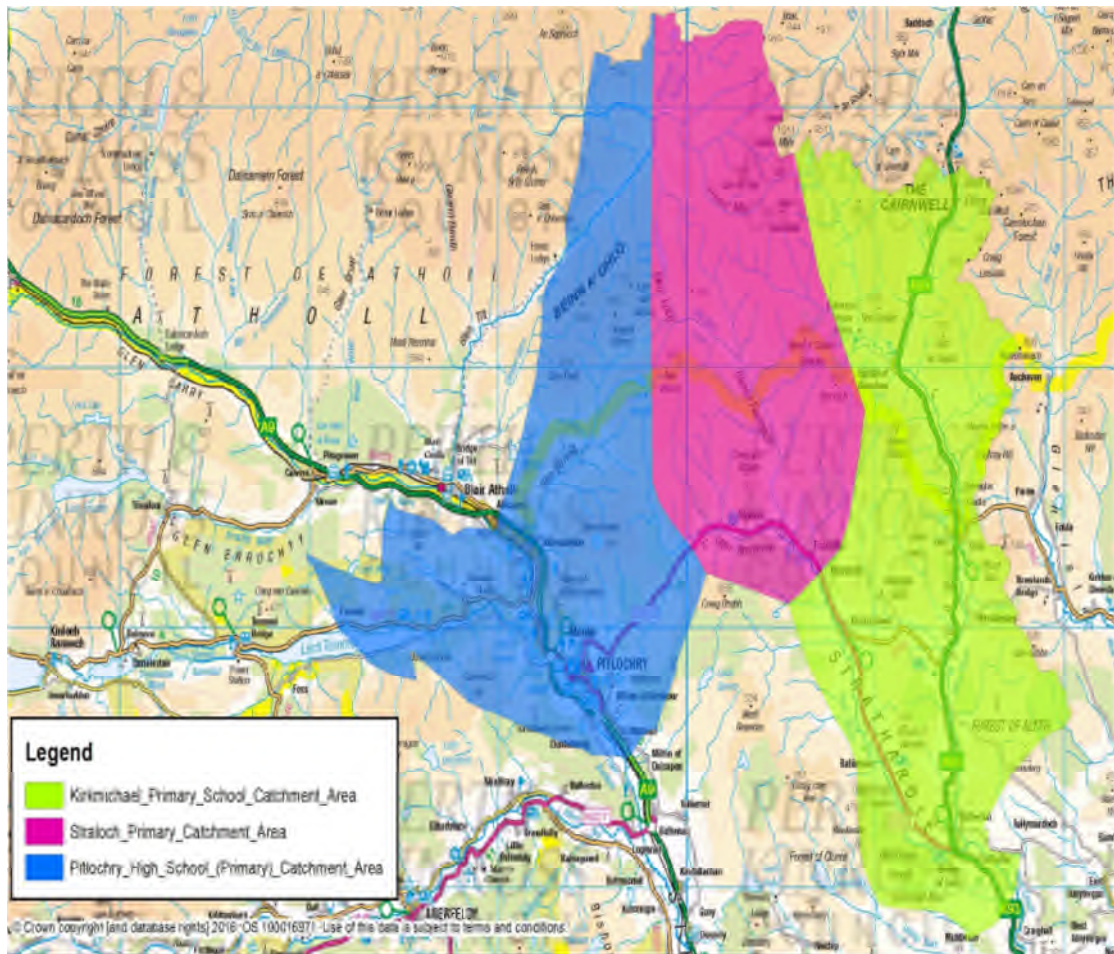
Individual School Roll Pupil Numbers – Current and Projected
(2015/16 based on Census 2015 incl house building)

Primary School	Capacity	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020
Kirkmichael	72	49	50	51	45	47
Pitlochry	300	193	202	210	213	220

5. Straloch Primary School

Straloch Primary School is a single teacher school serving the village of Straloch and the local area. The catchment area for the school covers an area of 186 square kilometres (71.81 square miles) and is detailed on the maps below.





The Scottish Government’s Rural School List 2015 classifies Straloch Primary School as “remote rural” school under Section 14 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The classification is based on two main criteria, settlement size and accessibility based on drive time. For Straloch Primary School the classification criteria is “settlements of fewer than 3,000 people and with a drive time of between 30 and 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more”. (Source: Scottish Government Rural School List 2015).

Straloch Primary School main building is single storey attached to a two storey former school house, now part of the school accommodation. The building was built around 1875 and is of roughly squared stone under a pitched roof. The building is a Grade C listed building. The listing includes the school building, previous schoolhouse and post box.

The ground floor of the school contains a classroom, a GP room, a library, staffroom, office, cloakroom and the toilets. The first floor accommodation was used for storage of learning resources and other materials. Site plans of the school are attached as Appendix 2.

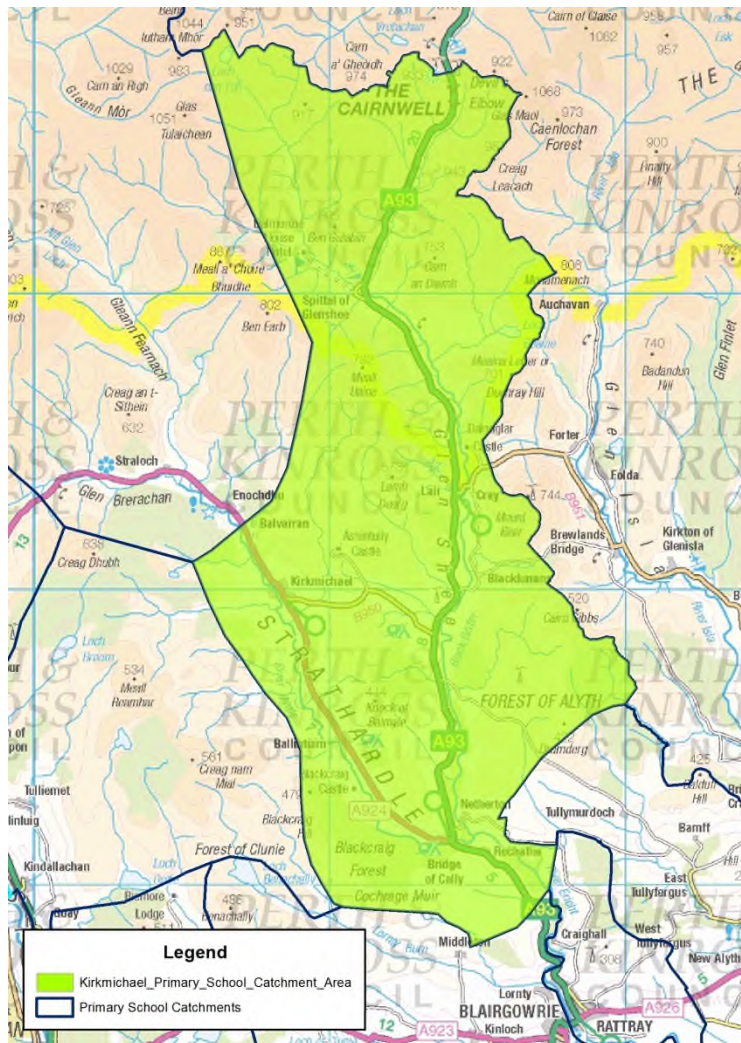
Straloch Primary School belongs to the Council and there are no restrictions on the title.

A condition survey was carried out on the building in January 2016 and the overall site is rated as condition 'B' (performing adequately but showing minor deterioration). Condition is an assessment of the physical condition of the school and its grounds.

The suitability of Straloch Primary School prior to mothballing was categorised as 'B' (performing well but with minor problems). Suitability is an assessment of the school as a whole, its buildings and its grounds and the impact these have on learning and teaching, leisure and social activities and the health and wellbeing of all users.

6. Kirkmichael Primary School

Kirkmichael Primary School serves the village of Kirkmichael and the local area. The catchment area for the school covers an area of 257 square kilometres (99.22 square miles) and is highlighted on the map below.



The Scottish Government's Rural School List 2015 classifies Kirkmichael Primary School as "remote rural" school under Section 14 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The classification is based on two main criteria, settlement size and accessibility based on drive time. The classification criteria is "settlements of fewer than 3,000 people and with a drive time of between 30 and 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more". (Source: Scottish Government Rural School List 2015).

In May 2011, 36 pupils attended Kirkmichael Primary School. After a Statutory Consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Scottish Ministers gave approval in October 2011 for Perth and Kinross Council to proceed with the permanent closure of Strone of Cally Primary School. The school officially closed on 27 June 2012. All pupils from Stone of Cally were already attending Kirkmichael Primary School through submitting successful placing requests.

In addition to the Headteacher there is a principal teacher, 2 class teachers, pupil support teacher, primary school support worker, 2 primary school support assistants, early childhood practitioner, nursery play assistant, peripatetic nursery teacher and a visiting specialist for PE. The school also receives janitorial support.

At Kirkmichael Primary School the main school building is a pre-1919 two storey stone building under a pitched slate roof with cast iron gutters and downpipes. The building sits below road level and the site overlooks the river. There is also a 2 classroom annexe situated within the site to the south west of the main building which houses the nursery and early years class. There is a large outdoor area with a mix of hard and soft landscaping and a multi use games area.

Site plans of Kirkmichael Primary School are attached in Appendix 3. The following facilities and accommodation are offered: 3 classrooms for primary education, nursery, toilets, staff/resources room, dining/general purpose room, offices and storage.

A condition survey was carried out on the building in October 2013 and the overall site is rated as condition 'B' (performing adequately but showing minor deterioration). Condition is an assessment of the physical condition of the school and its grounds.

A suitability assessment was undertaken in February 2013 and the overall rating is B (performing adequately but with minor problems). Suitability is an assessment of the school as a whole, its buildings and its grounds and the impact these have on learning and teaching, leisure and social activities and the health and wellbeing of all users.

The roll of Kirkmichael Primary School at Census 2015 was 49 pupils, 5 of these pupils live in the Straloch catchment area.

The most recent inspection carried out by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in August 2010 can be accessed via the following link. [HMIE Report](#)

7. Community Engagement



7.1 Meetings

Meetings were held in Session House, Kirkmichael on Thursday 25 February (3.45pm – 6pm and 7pm – 8.30pm) and Saturday 5 March 2016 (9.30am – 11am) to seek feedback from the community on the future of Straloch Primary School. The meetings were attended by 21 people, including 3 pupils. The Council is grateful to the Community Council for its assistance in the planning and publicity for these meetings.

A session was also held at Blairgowrie High School to seek views of pupils who had previously attended Kirkmichael or Straloch primary schools, 1 pupil attended. In addition, 3 email responses were received.



7.2 Content of Meetings

Visitors to the meetings were given an overview of information that the Council would be using in this options appraisal, including pupil projections, building and financial information and local services and facilities. They were asked to respond to a series of questions related to the options appraisals and to provide comments on the information presented. The questions were as follows:

- Over the last four years, what has been the effect of mothballing Straloch Primary to you, your family and community?
- In your view what are the pros/cons of the following options:
 - Continue with mothballing
 - Re-open the school (current catchment)
 - Close the school
 - Re-open the school but widen the catchment
- Other points or information that should be considered (significant changes) in the options appraisal



7.3 Feedback

Details of the feedback are contained in Appendix 4 and are also referred to in relation to individual options. The feedback from all sessions has been sent out to the visitors/meeting attendees who provided contact details and to the Community Council.

There was a range of viewpoints on the future of Straloch Primary School:

- The mothballing has been wasteful in terms of resources.
- The mothballing has had a negative social impact on the Straloch area as the school used to invite the community to school events.
- The mothballing has been positive for pupils and the wider community.
- Kirkmichael has benefited from the additional pupils through additional teaching resources.
- The future of Kirkmichael School has been secured through the closure of Strone of Cally Primary School and mothballing of Straloch Primary School.
- There are unlikely to be sufficient children to make Straloch Primary School viable.
- There are alternative uses for the building. It could be used to benefit the community.
- There are sufficient community buildings in Kirkmichael and the surrounding areas, the school building could be sold and some of the money put back into the community.



8. Options for Consideration

A number of options are considered for the future of Straloch Primary School as part of this options appraisal:

- a) Re-open Straloch Primary School with its existing catchment area.
- b) Continued mothballing of Straloch Primary School with the pupils zoned to Kirkmichael Primary School.
- c) Re-open Straloch Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.
- d) Close Straloch Primary School and zone any pupils to Kirkmichael Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.
- e) Close Kirkmichael Primary School and transfer the pupils to Straloch Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.
- f) Close Straloch Primary School and transfer the pupils to Pitlochry Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.

8.1 Option: Re-open Straloch Primary School with its existing catchment area

Community Feedback

The majority of people who attended the meetings were in not in favour of re-opening Straloch Primary School:

“Children settled in other schools”
“My family would not put children back to Straloch. No children in area”
“Pupil numbers - just not sustainable”
“Population has decreased. Children going to Kirkmichael or Pitlochry when school was still open”
“No-one is thinking it is ever going to be a school again”
“There are more pupils at Kirkmichael, so more friends to make”
“(Re-opening would) impact on the use of facilities at Kirkmichael would maybe take some usage of facilities away from Kirkmichael”

There were a small number of people who expressed a preference for the school to reopen:

“It depends on whether new houses are being built then it might be worth re-opening”
“The mothballing has deprived the surrounding community of a heart, a centre where we were invited to each term to come to whatever school event was happening”
“Nice to know had a choice. Was in catchment area”

Pupil Numbers

Straloch Primary (Census Sept 2015)	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Approved Capacity	22	22	22	22	22
Roll Projection Total (with house building) * assumes current pupils from Straloch area who attend Pitlochry Primary and Kirkmichael Primary will return to Straloch Primary.	6	7	6	5	6

If the school were to re-open in August 2016, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment would be 7. Pupils currently within the catchment attend Kirkmichael and Pitlochry primary schools. It is not certain that any of the pupils from the Straloch Primary School catchment area would return to the school were it to re-open. In addition, pupil numbers over the next 4 years, based on aggregated data are not projected to rise significantly.

Financial Information

The approximate cost to bring the property into an acceptable condition for re-opening is £104,004 for fabric and mechanical and electrical works. It should be noted there may be potentially further costs for structural works if the building were to re-open permanently and be used into the long term. A visual structural survey has been undertaken.

The financial savings generated from mothballing Straloch Primary School amount to approximately £89,057 annually. This is predominately made up of staff and building costs.

Rural Factors – Travel Arrangements

The travel distance from Straloch Primary School to Kirkmichael Primary School is 3.5 miles⁶. The time taken to travel between the two schools is approximately 7 minutes (Google Maps) Pupils in the Straloch catchment area currently travel distances of between 2.17 miles and 3.15 miles to Kirkmichael and travel 8.6 miles to Pitlochry Primary School (Google Maps⁷). These travel arrangements have been in place for almost 5 years.

There were few comments on travel arrangements at the community meeting, which suggests that travelling to access services and facilities is generally accepted:

“Distance is not the issue for travel. People will travel”
“People willing to drive to Pitlochry, where have better facilities”

In terms of adverse weather, Straloch Primary School would generally be affected more than Kirkmichael, however there are always likely to be issues in this area because of the location.

“Need to consider the weather in the area (makes school difficult to access). Different climate in the Glen than at Kirkmichael”

Rural Factors – Community Impact

The school was not used for external lets prior to being mothballed, however parents and neighbours as well as the wider community were regularly invited along to the school and people miss this interaction:

“The social events for the community at the Straloch/Enochdu area have stopped. The Straloch School ran a number of events which included the whole catchment area”

There was a widespread view that the building could provide either provide opportunities for the community or be converted into a dwelling with a view to increasing the population:

“Community care about the school, want it to have another life”.
“Sell the school but ring fence the money for primary school education”
“Holiday homes usage”

⁶ School distances are calculated using Google Maps and the distance measured is school to school.

⁷ Travel to school distances are calculated using Location Centre and the measure relates to the pick-up point to the school. Location Centre is Perth and Kinross Council's enterprise GIS solution. It contains background mapping for the Ordnance Survey and the Council's spatial data sets which can be overlaid on the background mapping.

***“Possibility for affordable housing to attract young people.
Concern about it being a holiday home”
“The building should be given to the community”
“If closed would be good to put building into use for community
or business and not just sold for private housing”***

Summary

Pupil numbers for the Straloch Primary School catchment area are low, 6 pupils as at September 2015 census, and are not projected to rise by 2019/20. It is not certain whether any of the pupils from the catchment area would return to the school should it re-open, so it is possible if it re-opened in August 2016 that there would be no pupils.

The travel arrangements for pupils have been in place for nearly 5 years.

The travel distance from Straloch Primary School to Kirkmichael Primary School is 3.5 miles. The time taken to travel between the two schools is approximately 7 minutes (Google Maps). An additional 7 minutes is not an unreasonable time to expect children to travel for primary school education in rural areas. Adverse weather is a factor in this area, however all local schools are generally impacted by winter weather.

Based on the fact that there would potentially be no pupils in August 2016, the school was not previously used as a community facility, and the community are keen to find an alternative use for the building, this is not considered a reasonable option.

8.2 Option: Continued Mothballing of Straloch Primary School with the pupils zoned to Kirkmichael Primary School

The school has been mothballed for nearly 5 years. The Statutory Guidance for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, in relation to mothballing, states “the maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote.”.

Pupil numbers are not projected to increase over the next 4 years, as per section 8.1 above.

The 2014/15 annual running cost for electricity, repairs and maintenance was £4,033, however it is possible that this would rise in the future in relation to maintenance costs.

There was a significant view at the community meetings that mothballing the school over a long period was wasteful.

“Re mothballing – money being spent with no direct benefit to the local community”

“Building still requires funding while in use”

“Resources still in school – waste not being used”

“Anything is better than having lying empty”

“Community care about the school. Want it to have a new life”

“Don’t leave lying empty – sell”

There were a large number of suggestions from the community as to the future of the building in the village, which are contained in Appendix 4.

Summary

The school has been mothballed for 5 years which is in excess of the Statutory Guidance timescale of 3 years. Pupil numbers are not projected to rise in terms of pre-school children living within the catchment and there is no planned house building.

At the community meetings, people were disappointed that the school was still mothballed and that resources were being ‘wasted’ instead of being used at Kirkmichael or more widely for education within Perth and Kinross.

The community, based on the meetings, view the future development or sale of the building as an opportunity. There were a large number of suggestions as to the future of the building, which was in fact the key discussion topic at all 3 meetings.

On the basis, that pupil numbers will not increase, mothballing is not a good use of resources, and that the building could be used to benefit the community, continued mothballing is not viewed as a reasonable option.

8.3 Re-open Straloch Primary School and redelineate the catchment area

A mapping analysis of pupil addresses has been carried out to identify whether the catchment area for Straloch could be made more sustainable by extending it into one or more of the neighbouring catchment areas of Kirkmichael and Pitlochry primary schools. A large part of each of these catchment areas are sparsely populated because of the terrain and options in relation to travel are also limited. A summary of the findings is as follows:

Pitlochry Primary School: the majority of primary pupils in Pitlochry live in the town or close to the town. There are few pupils that live in the area between Pitlochry Primary School and the catchment area for Straloch Primary School. The catchment for Straloch would need to take into account Pitlochry town in order for significant numbers to make Straloch more sustainable.

Kirkmichael Primary School: many of the pupils attending Kirkmichael Primary School live in the village or close to the village. Moving the catchment area significantly would result in pupils from the village of Kirkmichael being transported to Straloch to attend school.

Community Feedback on this option was:

“Widening the catchment would impact on other local schools and with the road system would be impractical”

Summary

Following a mapping exercise it is unlikely the catchment area could be made more sustainable with the options examined. This is because most pupils in the neighbouring catchment areas live either in Kirkmichael or Pitlochry. This is therefore not a reasonable option.

8.4 Close Straloch Primary School and zone any pupils to Kirkmichael Primary School and redelinate the catchment area.

Kirkmichael Primary	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020
Approved Capacity	72	72	72	72	72
Kirkmichael Roll Projection Total (with house building)	44	44	46	40	41
Straloch Primary Roll Projection Total (with house building)	5	6	5	5	6
Total Roll Projection Total (with house building)	49	50	51	45	47

Kirkmichael Primary School currently accommodates pupils from the Straloch Primary School catchment area as a result of the mothballing in 2011. The pupil numbers in the Straloch Primary School catchment are not projected to increase and Kirkmichael Primary School has capacity to accommodate these pupils. It should be noted that the projected pupil numbers at Kirkmichael are likely to remain the same or reduce slightly for at least the next 4 years.

The current occupancy rate for Kirkmichael Primary school including current pupils from Straloch Primary School catchment is 68%.(Census 2015)

The travel distance from school to school is 3.5 miles (Google maps), although pupils in the Straloch catchment area travel distances of between 2.17 miles and 3.15 miles to Kirkmichael (Location Centre).

The majority of comments in relation to the experiences since mothballing were positive.

“People are happy with Kirkmichael Primary School”

“Kirkmichael had positive impact. It secured future of Kirkmichael with the closure of Strone of Cally. It maintained teacher numbers at Kirkmichael “

“Unifying experience for community”

“There are more children at Kirkmichael and the park isn’t always empty”

“There are more people volunteering- parent teacher association”

In addition, people supported the school closure and many had suggestions for its use after closure:

“Pointless retaining as a school. Should be converted into dwelling houses”

“Sell the school but ring fence the money for primary school education. If possible to go to Kirkmichael Primary School or to help with the potential new community hall, this is well used by the school”

“Closure of Straloch at the projected numbers, doesn’t justify the costs”

A number of people commented on a negative impact of mothballing Straloch Primary School however:

“Miss the school and interaction with the kids”

“It was sad to see the school close and then an empty building”

Summary

Kirkmichael Primary School currently accommodates pupils from Straloch Primary and the pupil numbers are not projected to increase significantly. Kirkmichael Primary has capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers.

This option is considered to be reasonable and further detail is provided in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact in Section 9 below.

8.5 Option: Close Kirkmichael Primary School and transfer the pupils to Straloch Primary School and redelineate the catchment area

This option was not included in the 2011 options appraisal. It is likely that it was not considered because the number of pupils in the Kirkmichael Primary catchment (39 at the September 2010 census) exceeded the capacity of Straloch Primary School which is 22 pupils. In addition, pupils would be travelling higher into the glen, which would cause issues in adverse weather. This option was not discussed at the Community Engagement events.

Summary

This is not considered a reasonable option as it would not be possible to accommodate all pupils from the Kirkmichael and Straloch catchment areas at Straloch Primary School. It is included for 'completeness' of the options appraisal.

8.6 Option: Close Straloch Primary School and transfer the pupils to Pitlochry Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.

In the options appraisal carried out in 2011, the option of Pitlochry Primary School as a possible alternative for pupils from Straloch was discounted. The following reasons were given:

- The travel distance between primary schools at Straloch and Pitlochry is 8.6 miles i.e. it is 5.1 miles greater than the distance between Kirkmichael and Straloch.
- There were capacity issues at Pitlochry in 2011, with some stages at the school already full.
- Straloch Primary School's feeder secondary school is Blairgowrie High School and Pitlochry Primary School's feeder secondary school is Pitlochry High School.

Pitlochry Primary School (Census Sept 15)					
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Approved Capacity	300	300	300	300	300
Roll Projection Total (without house building)	193	198	200	197	200
Roll Projection Total (with house building)	193	202	210	213	220

This option was not put forward for discussion at the community meetings, nor was it raised.

Summary

Pupils have been zoned to Kirkmichael for 5 years. At the community meetings, there was a view that this had benefitted Kirkmichael Primary School through resources, teaching staff and unifying the communities. It is unlikely that Pitlochry Primary School or Pitlochry would benefit in the same way. For these reasons and the reasons which were stated in 2011, this is not considered a reasonable option.

8.7 Overview of options

The outcome of the options appraisal is summarised below.

Option	Option Description	Outcome
a)	Re-open Straloch Primary School with its existing catchment area.	Rejected. Not a reasonable option.
b)	Continued mothballing of Straloch Primary School with the pupils zoned to Kirkmichael Primary School.	Rejected. Not a reasonable option.
c)	Re-open Straloch Primary School and delineate the catchment area.	Rejected. Not a reasonable option.
d)	Close Straloch Primary School and zone any pupils to Kirkmichael Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.	Accepted as a reasonable option.
e)	Close Kirkmichael Primary School and transfer the pupils to Straloch Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.	Rejected. Not a reasonable option.
f)	Close Straloch Primary School and transfer the pupils to Pitlochry Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.	Rejected. Not a reasonable option.

The outcome of the option appraisal recommends Option d) (Close Straloch Primary School and zone any pupils to Kirkmichael Primary School and redelineate the catchment area) as the only reasonable option.

9. Detailed Analysis of Reasonable Option: Close Straloch Primary School and zone any pupils to Kirkmichael Primary School and redelineate the catchment area.

9.1 Pupil Projections

If Straloch Primary School were to re-open in August 2016, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment would be 7. Pupils currently within the catchment attend Kirkmichael and Pitlochry. It is not certain that any of the pupils from the Straloch Primary School catchment area would return to the school were it to re-open. In addition pupil numbers over the next 4 years, based on aggregated data are not projected to rise by more than one or two pupils.

Population information detailed in section 4.3 based on the 2011 census shows a decrease of nearly 50% in the 20-29 age group, which is likely to impact on the birth rates.

9.2 Educational Benefits

This statement is focused on Kirkmichael Primary School as children from Straloch Primary School catchment area have been attending the school since 2011.

Learning and Teaching

Curriculum for Excellence is designed to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18. Every school curriculum includes the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated. The curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future, and to appreciate their place in the world.

Kirkmichael Primary School offers a learning environment that encourages 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.

There is a continual challenge for all schools to deliver a quality improvement agenda and deliver effectively the principles and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence to enhance the educational experience for children.

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence recognise the professionalism of teachers and the importance of this in exercising the freedom and responsibility associated with broader guidance. This means that schools are able to design their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children and community. At Kirkmichael Primary School, staff are challenged and supported through a range of continuous professional development and review opportunities gained by working and learning with a range of colleagues.

These are offered through a planned programme of development activities and opportunities for quality professional dialogue on an ongoing basis. All teachers have been actively involved in key school developments. Curricular frameworks are being created for Numeracy, Literacy, Science and Health and Wellbeing. A teacher at Kirkmichael has taken on a leadership role in the Teacher Learning Communities, where good practice is shared with colleagues from other schools.

In recent years children in Kirkmichael Primary School have been taught in three classes composed of a number of children from more than one year group. They benefit from being part of a social context in which they can build relationships with different groups and individuals, develop social skills, meet challenges and exercise responsibilities as members of a social group. They are able to interact and socialise with groups of children of their own age and gender, take part in team activities and move with their peers to secondary school.

The co-location of the nursery and primary classes within the same campus enhances the transition process for the children moving from nursery into primary 1 through joint educational programmes and liaison between the two settings.

Outcomes

Meeting the needs of every child continues to be a priority and teachers carefully plan and assess to ensure each child has the opportunity to reach their potential.

An assurance programme is planned throughout the year to monitor learning and teaching. This includes professional dialogue with teachers, learning discussions with children, classroom observations and careful tracking of pupils' progress in learning. Where appropriate, intervention is put in place working effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure the needs of each child are met.

In the primary classes, standards in attainment have been maintained over the last 3 years. Most children are achieving national expectations in reading, writing, listening, talking and mathematics. Reading attainment across the school is particularly strong, with strategies from 'Muckle Reading' helping to maintain motivation.

Big Maths is being introduced throughout the school to challenge pupils and to allow clearer progression. All pupils have developed the use of VCOP strategies (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation) to support their writing.

All round achievement is an important aspect of each child's development. The school's Wall of Achievement displays children's personal successes which are celebrated at a special assembly every year. Through the Stepping Stones Challenges, which have recently been introduced in some classes, children receive recognition and certificates for completing a range of activities some in school and some with the support of parents

Experiences - Broadening the range of Opportunities

Children are offered a broad range of active, well-planned experiences which help them develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing both now and in the future.

In the nursery class children enjoy a range of experiences. Staff know the children very well and are sensitive to their individual needs.

Pupils from nursery to P7 have taken on responsibilities which enhance the development of a positive ethos across the school. Children are provided with a variety of experiences to develop their sense of responsibility, independence, confidence and enterprising attitude. These include:

- Topic related trips to Verdant Works, Edinburgh Zoo, Wallace Monument and Blair Castle
- Skiing lessons for P4-5
- A residential experience for P7 pupils in Scarborough
- Art and Craft workshops organised by a member of the community and displayed in the Session House to share with the community
- Links with the local community to Pitcarmick Estate for P1-P3

Parents and the Parent Teacher Association have assisted the school with trips and experiences and financially supported them through fundraising and social events.

Environment for Learning

At Kirkmichael Primary School the children benefit from a range of facilities and resources. As well as up to date class and IT resources there is a separate dining area and an extensive outdoor area which includes a large grassy section, a woodland garden and a multi-use games area which facilitate eco learning and promote health and wellbeing through play and team games.

The whole outdoor area is enclosed for children to learn and play together during curricular and play times. The school makes very good use of the school grounds and the local area for outdoor learning in curriculum areas such as science, mathematics and art.

Children also benefit from access to a range of community facilities which are in close proximity to Kirkmichael Primary School including the village hall, the session house, the shop and local businesses.

9.3 Rural Factors - Impact from Travel Arrangements

The travel distance from Straloch Primary School to Kirkmichael Primary School is 3.5 miles. The time taken to travel between the two schools is approximately 7 minutes (Google Maps). Pupils in the Straloch catchment area currently travel distances of between 2.17 miles and 3.15 miles to Kirkmichael and travel 8.6 miles to Pitlochry Primary School (Location Centre). These travel arrangements have been in place for almost 5 years.

A travel distance of between 2.17 miles and 3.15 miles is not an unreasonable distance to expect children to travel for primary school education in rural areas. Other catchment areas in Perth & Kinross also have such a travel distance within them. However, it is recognised that adverse weather in the winter currently impacts on travel arrangements in this area. In terms of adverse weather, Straloch Primary School would generally be affected more than Kirkmichael, however there are always likely to be issues in this area because of the location. Headteachers take into account the local circumstances when deciding to close the school and/or send pupils home early. All schools in Perth and Kinross have an emergency closure plan for severe weather in place which is drawn up by the Headteacher following a risk assessment.

Some comments from the community meetings on travelling arrangements were as follows:

“Distance is not the issue for travel. People will travel.”

9.4 Rural Factors - Community Impact

As stated in section 8.1, there is a sense of a loss of social connection which was maintained by school events at Straloch.

At the community events, people were clear about the challenges which faced their community:

“No people in the area, old or young. Population is very small”

“Population has decreased. Children going to Pitlochry or Kirkmichael when school was still open”

“Holiday homes (a lot of houses are)”

“Buying houses and working away (weekends) – pattern now”

“...as already we have seen that in the past, social housing with no suitable jobs in the area for residents”

However, there were a large number of suggestions as to a use of the building which would benefit the community if it did not re-open as a school:

“School should be purchased by or for the community and used as a business centre for small and start-up businesses”

“Business use training/craft/tourist shop. Not housing!!!”

“Training area for young and old community members can be offered to those who need to improve their skills and improve their employment possibilities within the Mount Blair area”

“Community asset transfer for another use if supported by the community”

“Family living there would be good”

“How do we stop it being sold as holiday homes?”

There were one or two suggestions that the building could still be used for education:

“second campus for Kirkmichael, would be good for outdoor education and garden”

“potential to use as a specialist education provision if there is a need”

There were also views that the area could not sustain another community building.

“Kirkmichael is well resourced and doesn't need another community building”

“Who uses Kirkmichael hall? Very little use, dancing. Possibly already underused”

“No lets in Straloch, no-one wanted to hire when open”

At the community events, people were clear about the challenges which faced their community, less employment, fewer families, less pupils and more holiday homes or weekenders.

However, they were positive about the possibilities and opportunities which could be created, if the school building were developed or sold and do not see Straloch Primary School as being critical to the future of the community.

The Council's Community Learning and Development team work with communities across Perth and Kinross in the context of strategic objectives as detailed in section 3 of this report. In addition, this area is supported by the Mount Blair Community Development Trust which works on a range of projects to benefit the community e.g. the café, shop and garage at Kirkmichael, which is a community enterprise.

Financial Impact

The financial savings generated from mothballing Straloch Primary School amount to approximately £89,057 annually. The saving is predominantly made up of staff and building costs. The 2014/15 annual running cost for electricity and property maintenance was £4,033. See Appendix 5 for detailed financial information.

The approximate cost to bring the property into an acceptable condition for re-opening is £104,004 for fabric and mechanical and electrical works. It should be noted there may be potentially further costs for structural works if the building were to re-open permanently and be used into the long term. These financial savings support the delivery of education across the whole of Perth and Kinross.

9.5 Environmental Impact

Currently 6 pupils travel to Kirkmichael Primary School and Pitlochry Primary School from the Straloch Primary School catchment area, for which there is an environmental impact. However, this has been offset by the requirement to only run Straloch Primary School as a mothballed building rather than as an operational building.

10. Conclusion

Six alternative options have been reviewed in considering the future of Straloch Primary School. Information was collated on pupil numbers, housebuilding, finances, the school, travel arrangements, environmental impact and the local area and community to inform the options.

As part of the review, a pre-consultation exercise was carried out with the local community.

Each of the options was then considered at a high level. The only option which was considered to be reasonable was then considered in more detail, including considering the rural factors of travel arrangements, community impact and also the educational benefits.

The option which was considered reasonable was **to close Straloch Primary School and zone any pupils to Kirkmichael Primary School and redelineate the catchment area of Straloch Primary School to Kirkmichael Primary School.**

Future pupil projections have been considered using aggregated data and both Kirkmichael Primary School and Straloch Primary School pupil numbers are projected to decrease slightly over the next 4 years with little house building planned. The highest projected occupancy level, including house building, for future years at Kirkmichael Primary School is 79% in 2017/18.

Travel distance to the neighbouring school is not excessive, with 7 minutes travel time between the two schools. Pupils attending Kirkmichael Primary School already make this journey with some pupils choosing to go further and attend Pitlochry Primary School.

Environmental impacts are negligible considering the small number of pupils travelling.

The financial savings generated from mothballing Straloch Primary School amount to approximately £89,057 annually. These savings support the delivery of education across the whole of Perth and Kinross.

Pupils from the Straloch Primary School catchment area have been zoned to Kirkmichael Primary School for nearly 5 years. Kirkmichael Primary School offers a learning environment that encourages 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.

Straloch Primary School was not used for local community events, other than those associated with the school. Kirkmichael has a number of community facilities including the village hall and the church session house. There is also the Kirkmichael Inn and a community shop, café and garage.

The school has now been mothballed for 5 years and the community have a view that it is 'wasteful', and that resources within the school and the school itself should have a future.

At the community events, people were clear about the challenges which faced their community, less employment, fewer families, less pupils and more holiday homes or weekenders.

However, they were positive about the possibilities and opportunities which could be created, if the school building were developed or sold. (Appendix 4).

In summary, it is proposed that a statutory consultation exercise takes place on a proposal to close Straloch Primary School and zone any pupils to Kirkmichael Primary School and redelineate the catchment area of Straloch Primary School to Kirkmichael Primary School. Straloch Primary School has been mothballed since 2011 and arrangements have been in place for pupils to attend Kirkmichael Primary School since this time.

Pupil Numbers and Projections**Pupil Projection Methodology**

The methodology used for pupil projections in this report allows us to project a detailed year by year analysis for each catchment. Information is based on pupil census data from September 2015.

The methodology applied uses aggregated GP registration data to ascertain future P1 intakes. The data available from the NHS reflects children registered with a GP, anonymously located within specific school catchment areas, providing 4 years of information for primary school children.

The potential number of pupils from house building is then added to this data on a year by year basis. The house building data reflects the most likely build rates based on the Housing Land Audit (HLA). The HLA is produced by The Environment Service (TES) in consultation with housing developers, the Scottish Government and Scottish Water. The most recent HLA was published in October 2015.

A figure of 65% of total house building has been used as this is felt to reflect the most likely build rate. In addition to the HLA, windfall (potential future applications for small scale housing not included in the HLA) are included.

The average pupil product ratio for each new house, used to project pupil numbers, is 0.27 although it is recognised that this can vary dependant on house type.

All information other than the number of children currently in each school is projected and will be subject to change.

School Capacity Calculation

All Perth and Kinross Primary schools have capacities which are adjusted from time to time to reflect any building works or alterations which have taken place within the school. The Scottish Government has consulted on guidelines to develop a consistent approach to school capacity modelling across all Scottish Local Authorities. This is an outcome of a recommendation by the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education published in 2013.

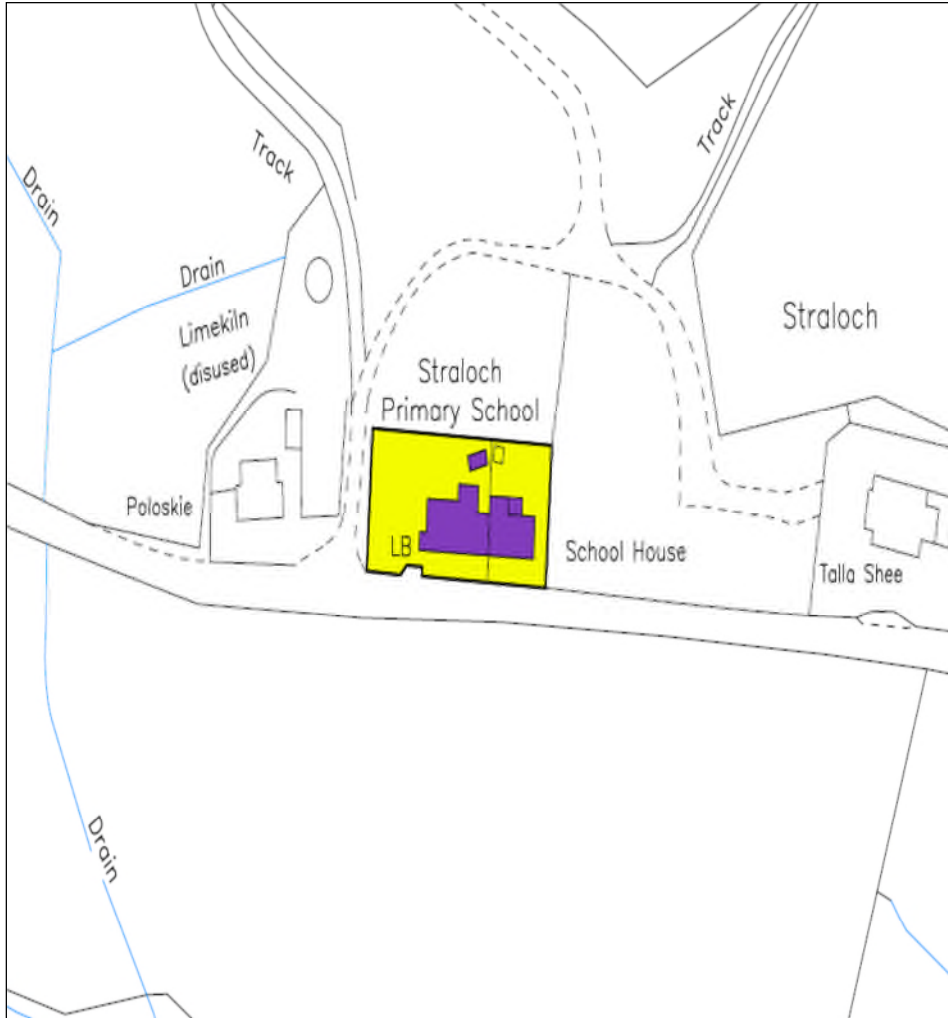
The Scottish Government guidelines propose a standard 1.7m² per child per classroom. Current Perth and Kinross Council Policy states 2m² per child per classroom and this report reflects 2m² per pupil.

Planning Capacity is a physical, theoretical measure of the total number of pupils which could be accommodated in a school, based on the total number of teaching spaces, the size of those spaces and the maximum legal class size:

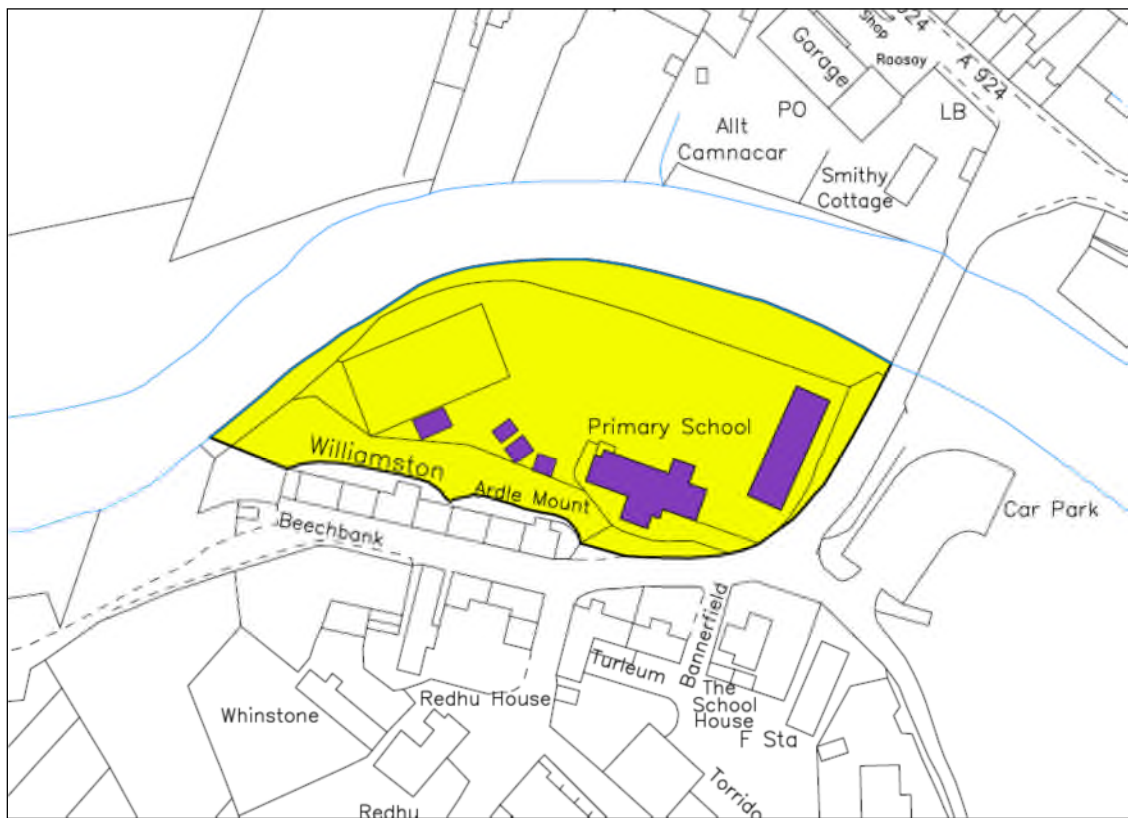
Stage/class type	Maximum class size
Single stage P1	25
Single stage P2-P3	30
Single stage P4-P7	33
Composite classes	25

It is important to note that Planning Capacity is rarely achieved due to the size of a school, and how many classes it can offer including differences in class sizes for different age groups. Some pupil distributions are more efficient, allowing some schools to operate more closely to Planning Capacity than others. Pupil distribution can change significantly in some schools on an annual basis based on P1 intake and this subsequently can impact on class configurations.

Straloch Primary School Site Plan



Kirkmichael Primary School Site plan



**Straloch Primary School
Session notes**

Thursday 25.02.2016 (afternoon and evening) and Saturday 05.03.2016

Impact of Mothballing?

- Straloch children felt using Kirkmichael was a wonderful opportunity based on their needs.
- Kirkmichael had positive impact. It secured future of Kirkmichael with the closure of Strone of Cally. It maintained teacher numbers at Kirkmichael.
- Unifying experience for community.
- There are more people volunteering- parent teacher association.
- There are more pupils at the Kirkmichael so more friends to make.
- Children get less attention than they are used to.
- Bad because people that live there will take more time to get to a school.
- We had different friends at school.
- People travel further on the bus.
- It was alright because it was good for Kirkmichael to get the pupils but more people could move to Straloch and have longer time to get to another.
- More play equipment.
- There are more people joining the nursery.
- More noise.
- We got new friends.
- Children settled in other schools.
- People are happy with school facilities.
- No affect. Just put children on bus.
- Impact- not a thing... they went to Kirkmichael then to Blair (High).
- I think that Kirkmichael School benefits from 3 extra kids.
- Kirkmichael benefitted from additional teacher due to the mothballing.
- Have a science lab.
- Less pupils.
- There are more children at Kirkmichael and the park is not always empty.
- Has met and made new friends travelling on the school bus and is now meeting them and going into town with friends.
- The mothballing has deprived the surrounding community of a heart, a centre where we were invited to every school term to come to whatever school event was happening.
- Miss school events.
- Miss the school and interactions with kids.

- Less social events so less contact with other people in Straloch/ Enochdu area.
- The social events for the community at the Straloch/Enochdu area have stopped. The Straloch School ran a number of events which included the whole catchment area.
- It is good because there was no point in running.
- It was sad to see the school close and then an empty building.
- Straloch resources should be transferred to Kirkmichael Primary School.
- Re of mothballing- Money being spent with no direct benefit to the local community.
- Re of mothballing- Library resources not being utilised- could benefit KPS. – Computer resources, these could be getting used by KPS primary pupils/ session house.
- Building still requires funding whilst not in use.
- Resources are not used by other school and are deteriorating – going out of date.
- Kirkmichael could get the stuff.
- Keeping it mothballed is wasting resources, when all the extra children moved to Kirkmichael, resources didn't move with them.
- PC's still in the school. Not enough PC's at Kirkmichael. Could some be used at Kirkmichael from Straloch.
- Resources still in school- waste not being used.
- Good for Kirkmichael to get pupils and the school could become into bigger and better things.
- Lots of rumours, waste of resources, mouldy walls, etc., but not aware if correct.
- It looks kind of sad and run down.

Preferred Option?

- If used for something else, older kids have a reason to stay.
- Closure- realistic option.
- My family would not put children back to Straloch. No children in the area.
- Don't leave lying empty- sell.
- Feels like the school belongs to the community. If sold and becomes commercial bunk house could provide some people (to the area).
Would prefer option of community use.
- Sell.
- (Re-Opening would) Impact on use of facilities at Kirkmichael. Would maybe take some usage of facilities away from Kirkmichael.
- Use it for another purpose.
- No one is ever thinking that it's going to be a school again.

- Anything is better than having lying empty.
- People are happy with Kirkmichael Primary School.
- There are not enough children to re-open school.
- Closure of Straloch at the projected numbers, doesn't justify the costs.
- Widening catchment would impact on other local schools and with road system would be impractical.
- Close it. Move flashing speed lights to Ballintium. The money you get from selling it MUST stay within the Mount Blair Community Council area.
- Pointless retaining as a school. Should be converted into a dwelling house(s).
- Closure. Sale- funds put into Kirkmichael Hall for benefit of community and school.
- Got used to it being closed. Realistic to realise unlikely to re-open due to drop in population.
- Would help maintain a small rural community.
- Community care about the school, want it to have a new life.
- Sell the school but ring fence the money for primary school education. If possible, to go to Kirkmichael Primary School to enhance the facilities or to help with the potential new community hall, this is well used by the school.
- School to be purchased by or for the community and used as a business centre for small and start-up businesses.
- It depends on if new houses are being built then it might be worth re-opening.
- It depends on whether people need jobs in the area and if the council can afford a more reliable service.
- Resigned that school will not re-open.
- Second campus for Kirkmichael School would be good for outdoor education and garden.
- Potential to use as a specialist education provision if there is a need.
- Use of building as a local area for teenagers to use, ride bikes, café, etc.
- Could be potential to use the building for something else.
- Holiday's homes usage.
- Needs to be an events destination to be successful i.e Peel farm is attractive.
- Something for teenagers (there isn't much provision at the moment).

- This closed school which has served the pupil community for years would be an ideal building for future development in this area. It could be taken over by MBCDT for various projects which would benefit the community, create jobs and possibly be of a cultural addition to the area craft wise. It could also be used as a bunk house, cafe or gallery.
- Possibility for affordable housing to attract young people. Concern about being a holiday home.
- Nice to know had a choice. Was in the catchment area.
- Bunk house- could be an option, someone would need to run the business, is it an option for the council to run?
- Community asset transfer for another use if supported by community.
- Would need to be something interesting to do with it.
- (Could be used for) ASN Facilities- (however have) concerns about how would they get there?
- Would be nice if not sold for a holiday cottage.
- Can the community decide what the building can be used for? I.e bunk house, Kindrogan.
- Straloch- No one thinks of hiring it, how would you get there? It's ok in the good weather but what about the winter?
- If they continue to mothball – could it not be opened on specific days for community use; like an open learning centre?
- The building should be given to the community.
- Could be leased out for a private business- tearoom – antiques business.
- If closed would be good to put building into use for community or business and not just sold for private housing.
- Business use training/craft/tourist shop. Not housing!!!
- Could use the building for more than 1 purpose for example a small business and a space for community use.
- Against a hostel for safety reasons.
- Family living there would be good.
- Small business.
- Should be sold and have a use - house, summer business, art gallery, workshop, tearoom (seasonal).
- Important to have it lived in – should be dwelling.
- Training area for young and old community members can be offered to those who need to improve their skills and improve their employment possibilities within the Mount Blair area.
- Perhaps some types of rural skills apprenticeships to young people resident in the area.

- I would not want the school converted into social housing as already we have seen that in the past, social housing with no suitable jobs in the area for the residents of some of the social houses, has meant unemployment and/ or unemployable individuals moving into the social house in the Mount Blair area.
- I would not like the school converted into some sort of Bunkhouse for Backpackers as this would require a warden and salaried staff and don't think there is much demand for this type of accommodation in the Straloch area.
- Kirkmichael is well resourced and doesn't need another community building.
- Kirkmichael is well resourced- houses, hall, café, etc.
- Who uses Kirkmichael hall? Very little use, dancing. Possibly already under used.
- How do we stop it being sold as "Holiday Homes"?
- No lets in Straloch, no one wanted to hire when open.
- Could Kindrogan field centre use the facilities?
- Property hard to sell- old church been on market for 1 year. Another B&B 1 year.

Community Feedback Information?

- Children are now grown up.
- Young people may not choose to live in countryside.
- No people in the area- old or young. Population is very small, less than 10.
- Where are you going to get the children? There are no people.
- Pupil numbers - just not sustainable.
- Families choosing to go to Pitlochry and Kirkmichael.
- Population has decreased. Children going to Kirkmichael or Pitlochry when school was still open.
- Children have diminished.
- Would be good if activities could be able to support.
- Bike path to the school (need bridge).
- Blackwater closed.
- Small houses- could be new pupils.
- Buying houses and working away (weekends) – pattern now.
- Holiday homes (a lot of houses are).
- Would like to see more houses in Glen (If populated).
- Can we move some of the resources to Kirkmichael?
- Mount Blair Development Trust- gives information/profile of area.
- Drumderg Windfarm possible funding (SSE).
- On route to the Glenshee, Blackwater attracts a lot of skiers.

- (Many local houses) Being used as holiday homes.
- Other facilities used as bunk houses - Blackwater and Kindrogan.
- Would there then be the business?
- Straloch not on Cateran trail – possible 4 miles (away) and has a bridge.
- Need to consider the weather in the area (makes school difficult to access). Different climate in the Glen than at Kirkmichael.
- Thanks, it's been a good evening.
- Distance is not the issue for travel. People will travel.
- From the annual savings at Straloch it would be nice to have some of this (20%) put back directly into the local community.
- Would be nice if 10% of funding to the local community from the savings.
- No stopping place between Kirkmichael and Pitlochry. Car Rally/ Cyclists/ Tourists- summer custom.
- Access may be an issue if sold to private buyer.
- People willing to drive to Pitlochry, where have better facilities.
- Shop is the hub.
- (Local) view (of Straloch was that) felt children better educated at other schools. Pitlochry favoured for older children. Early years was seen as okay.
- As employer always made big feature of school in walking distance, which was a tremendous draw. However now fewer employed and accept this situation. No longer advertise school.
- Kirkmichael Primary is growing and needs to keep up with the modern issues.
- Once decision has been made as to what is going to happen to the building, could immediate steps be taken to transfer the equipment in the school to Kirkmichael Primary School where it can be used by pupils within our community.
- Upper area de populated (Glen).
- Upgrade to water supply in school allowed some other local houses to connect to mains.
- Was a temporary closure a number of years ago due to feeders.

Other – Queries?

- It was queried whether PKC had title rights to Straloch- they were of the view that PKC owned the building but not the land. ?
- Confirm who owns the land behind the wall. If not the Estate, could be the church?
- Can there be a proviso on how it would be used? Make into a house.
- Can you sell something with a condition put on it?

- If it's sold- what happens to the money?
- Will need gutters looked at within the school.

Comments via email:

- I would not want the school converted into social housing as already we have seen that in the past, social housing with no suitable jobs in the area for the residents of some of the social houses, has meant unemployment and/ or unemployable individuals moving into the social house in the Mount Blair area.
- Perhaps some types of rural skills apprenticeships to young people resident in the area.
- School to be purchased by or for the community and used as a business centre for small and start-up businesses.
- Training area for young and old community members can be offered to those who need to improve their skills and improve their employment possibilities within the Mount Blair area.
- I would not like the school converted into some sort of Bunkhouse for Backpackers as this would require a warden and salaried staff and don't think there is much demand for this type of accommodation in the Straloch area.
- Once decision has been made as to what is going to happen to the building, could immediate steps be taken to transfer the equipment in the school to Kirkmichael Primary School where it can be used by pupils within our community.
- Sell the school but ring fence the money for primary school education. If possible, to go to Kirkmichael Primary School to enhance the facilities or to help with the potential new community hall, this is well used by the school.
- Kirkmichael Primary is growing and needs to keep up with the modern issues.
- Struggling service budgets. Depopulation. Two issues facing Straloch School and community just as faced by numerous communities across Scotland. The issues are linked. Both are the results of flawed taxation policies that favour London and the South-east and debilitate the peripheral population by design.
- What will it take to rebuild economically peripheral communities and start distributing the country's resources equitably? A fair revenue system called Annual Ground Rent (AGR) – as proposed by the Scottish Land Revenue Group www.slrg.scot

- AGR was once the policy of Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, the central reform in their 1909 “People’s Budget”. AGR was passed into law by the House of Commons. Then blocked by the Lords. With it we would today have enjoyed incomes at double current levels and rural communities would not have been economically sucked to the South-east.
- I would like to see Councils once again taking the lead in calling for a radical change to funding our public services. It is not too late for Straloch, because adopting AGR would create the conditions for repopulation of Scotland’s depleted communities. Perth and Kinross Council, please take a lead for us!

Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure			
Name of School	Costs for full financial year (2016-17)	Additional financial impact on receiving school [Kirkmichael PS]	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
Straloch Primary School			
School costs			
<i>Employee costs</i>			
teaching staff	£ 67,821.00	£ -	£ 67,821.00
support staff	£ 18,384.00	£ -	£ 18,384.00
teaching staff training (CPD etc)	£ 238.00	£ -	£ 238.00
support staff training	£ -	£ -	£ -
Supply costs	£ 1,204.00	£ -	£ 1,204.00
Building costs:			
property insurance	£ -	£ -	£ -
non domestic rates	£ -	£ -	£ -
water & sewerage charges	£ -	£ -	£ -
energy costs	£ 4,722.00	£ -	£ 4,722.00
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	£ 5,338.00	£ -	£ 5,338.00
building repair & maintenance	£ 1,313.00	£ -	£ 1,313.00
grounds maintenance	£ 3,275.00	£ -	£ 3,275.00
facilities management costs	£ -	£ -	£ -

Table 2

Capital costs	School proposed for closure	Receiving school
Capital Life Cycle cost	£ -	£ -
Third party contributions to capital costs	£ -	£ -

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	£ -
non domestic rates	£ -
water & sewerage charges	£ -
energy costs	£ 3,221.00
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	£ -
security costs	£ -

revenue costs arising from capital	£	-	£	-	£	-
other	£	490.00	£	-	£	490.00
<i>School operational costs:</i>						
learning materials	£	473.00	£	267.60	£	205.40
catering (contract or inhouse)	£	-	£	-	£	-
SQA costs	£	-	£	-	£	-
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	£	-	£	-	£	-
<i>Transport costs:</i>						
home to school	£	-	£	13,018.80	£	13,018.80
other pupil transport costs	£	-	£	-	£	-
staff travel	£	640.00	£	-	£	640.00
SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	£	103,898.00	£	13,286.40	£	90,611.60
Income:						
Sale of meals	£	-			£	-
Lets	£	-			£	-
External care provider	£	-			£	-
Other	£	-			£	-
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	£	-			£	-
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	£	103,898.00	£	13,286.40	£	90,611.00

UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	£	17,316.33	£	2,214.40	£	15,101.93
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building repair & maintenance	£	812.00
grounds maintenance	£	-
facilities management costs	£	-
other	£	-
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	£	4,033.00

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
Property Costs (fabric, mechanical and electrical)	£ 104,004.00
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	£ 104,004.00

Table 5

Impact on GAE	
based on pupils going to Pitlochry PS	£ 1,555.00
GAE IMPACT	£ 1,555.00

