



PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CONSULTATION REPORT

**REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION RELATING
TO THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL:**

- **Education provision at Balhousie Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31 July 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;**
- **The pupils of Balhousie Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at a larger, new build North Muirton Primary School, from August 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter; and**
- **The delineated catchment area of North Muirton Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Balhousie Primary School from August 2022.**

27 SEPTEMBER 2018

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

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

- Education provision at Balhousie Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31 July 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The pupils of Balhousie Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at a larger, new build North Muirton Primary School, from August 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- The delineated catchment area of North Muirton Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Balhousie Primary School from August 2022.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- (a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period;
- (b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meetings held on 24 April 2018 and 1 May 2018; and
- (c) Education Scotland's report on the proposal.

1. INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written responses;
- Provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meetings held on 24 April 2018 and 1 May 2018;
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;

- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the [Proposal Paper](#) and state how the Council acted upon it; and
- State how the Council has complied with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposals.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Perth and Kinross Council works to enhance quality of life, make best use of public resources and ensure continuously improving services. Perth and Kinross Council's Corporate Plan "Securing the Future" aims to ensure that individuals, families and communities experience the best possible outcomes from a range of services.
- 2.2 Perth and Kinross Council has a strong identity and clear priorities which everyone works together to achieve, creating areas which are vibrant and successful; safe, secure, healthy and sustainable environments; educated, responsible and informed citizens; confident and active communities; and places where people are nurtured and supported, giving every child the best start in life.
- 2.3 The Council's Transformation Strategy 2015-2020 'Building Ambition' and Organisational Development Framework were approved by Council on 1 July 2015 ([Report No. 15/292 refers](#)). They detail how Perth and Kinross Council will deliver transformation the five year period. Accompanying the strategy is a programme of major reviews which are considered to be key drivers and enablers of transformation across the organisation.

On 24 August 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No. 16/347 refers](#)) approved principles to be used as a basis for the transformation review, 'Securing the Future of the School Estate'.

- 2.4 The transformation review reflects the Local Outcome that "Our services will be responsive, of high quality and continually improving". This also links with the School Estate Management Plan, Education and Children's Services Policy Framework Maximising Resources and with the Education and Children's Services objective to develop the range and quality learning experiences for all.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 On 2 November 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report 16/485 refers](#)) approved the development of a number of options appraisals to consider in detail schools which were identified as requiring further consideration as part of the School Estate Review. Balhousie Primary School was included in the schools to be considered by an options appraisal due to the poor condition and suitability of the school. The condition was rated 'C' meaning Poor – Showing major defect and/or not operating adequately.

The suitability rating of the school was rated 'C' meaning Poor – Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally. Elements of the external social areas and accessibility were rated as suitability 'D' meaning Bad – Does not support the delivery of services to children and communities. Significant spend would be required to improve its condition rating and their being limitations to what can be achieved to improve its suitability due to being a restricted site. The occupancy of the school was also low at 45%.

North Muirton Primary School was included in the schools to be considered by an options appraisal due to the poor condition rating of the school with a recommendation that it should be replaced.

- 3.2 The provision of primary education at both Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School needs to be considered in the context of the needs of the pupils and the local community, both now and in the future.
- 3.3 The options appraisals for Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School were combined because there is funding in the Composite Capital Budget for a replacement primary school in the 'North' of Perth. The options appraisal considered whether there were opportunities for both schools, which have adjoining boundaries, to benefit jointly or separately from the funding in the capital programme. Although the options appraisals were combined, the options were a mixture of options affecting one school only and others where there was an effect on both schools.
- 3.4 Information was collated on pupil numbers, housebuilding, the school, travel arrangements, environmental impact, the local area and community and finances to inform the options. As part of the review, a pre-consultation exercise was carried out with the local community to inform the options appraisal for Balhousie Primary School. The detail of which is included in the options appraisal report. This allowed the community to consider options for the future of Balhousie Primary School and was an opportunity for the community to provide views on these options and identify any additional options which the Council should consider.
- 3.5 On 24 January 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee considered the [options appraisal](#) and agreed to commence formal consultation on a proposal to close Balhousie Primary School ([Report No. 18/15](#) refers) in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (The 2010 Act).
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 These duties are outlined in the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010 and the accompanying Statutory Guidance](#).

- 3.8 Lifelong Learning Committee reports and the Proposal Paper referred to above are available on the Council's website www.pkc.gov.uk.
- 3.9 The main considerations relating to the proposal are fully explained in the [Proposal Paper](#), and the main points are highlighted as follows:
- 3.10 Balhousie Primary School is a 5 class school with a nursery located on Dunkeld Road, Perth and is a feeder primary school for Perth Grammar School. Balhousie Primary School is located approximately 1.2 miles from North Muirton Primary School.
- 3.11 Balhousie Primary School had a roll of 101 (Census 2017) with capacity for 224 pupils providing an occupancy rate of 45%. The school roll as at September 2018 is 117 pupils providing an occupancy of 52.2%. The principles approved by Lifelong Learning Committee as a basis for the transformation review were that:
- schools should have an occupancy rate where possible greater than 60% of the capacity and ideally should be operating at over 80% capacity;
 - every school should be rated as A or B i.e. at least satisfactory for condition and suitability; and
 - life expired buildings¹ within the school estate should be prioritised for replacement.
- 3.12 At Census 2017, of the pupils who attended Balhousie Primary School, 66% of pupils (69 in total) lived within the catchment area. The remaining pupil roll (32 pupils) was made up of pupils who live outside of the catchment and attend the school as the result of placing requests. The catchment areas of these pupils include Tulloch Primary School, Goodlyburn Primary School and North Muirton Primary School.
- 3.13 At Census 2017, there were over 200 pupils living within the catchment area for Balhousie Primary School attending other schools. Of these pupils, 135 pupils attended St John's RC Primary School which is a denominational school in close proximity to Balhousie Primary School, forming part of the North Inch Community Campus.
- 3.14 Balhousie Primary School building is suffering from significant deterioration to the external and internal fabric. Externally work is required to prevent and resolve issues as a result of water ingress and further deterioration to stone work. A programme of repair/replacement to windows is also required. Internally, particularly in the upper level classrooms and stairwells, further investigative work is required to establish a full programme of repairs including accessibility compliance and resolving issues with dampness and its effect on internal finishes.

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

The existing boilers, lighting and fire alarm systems are at the end of their serviceable life and require replacement in the short term.

- 3.15 It is not possible to replace Balhousie Primary School on the existing school site or in close proximity to the school. The school requires refurbishment at a cost of between approximately £4.8m and £5.7m. Revenue costs of approximately £600,000, would also be required for a decant if refurbishment was to take place.

These works are not likely to improve the suitability of the school to any great degree and there would be limited changes or improvements to the teaching and learning environment.

- 3.16 The proposal for pupils from Balhousie to attend the proposed, larger new build North Muirton Primary School has strong educational benefits for pupils from the Balhousie catchment area.

The new school will offer a fit for purpose, modern learning and teaching environment for all pupils attending.

- 3.17 The Council has engaged with stakeholders and has considered other uses for the premises prior to formulating this proposal. The details of the other options are detailed in this report in Section 4.

- 3.18 Parents still retain the right to make a placing request for another school of their choice as outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended.

- 3.19 The permanent discontinuation of education provision at Balhousie Primary School with effect from 31 July 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter with the pupils of Balhousie Primary School catchment area permanently receiving their education at a larger, new build primary school, from August 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter will have the following benefits.

3.21 **Learning and Teaching**

- Children attending the new build primary school will have access to a wide range of teaching and support staff. The new building will house a double stream school i.e 14 classes, with a nurture class and enhanced provision, which will be purpose built for pupils with Additional Support Needs. This enhanced provision, and the allocated resources, will provide the opportunity for targeted support and safe and secure break out and intervention spaces.
- Within the larger, new build primary school, pupils will have access to a modern nursery area, with internal and external play areas, utilising a range of surfaces to support learning and play. The new school will have the benefit of having the early years provision in the same building as the primary classes, thus supporting a smooth transition from nursery to primary, with shared spaces and resources, accommodated in one place. The condition and suitability of the early years provision will be of the highest standard.

- The new build primary school will provide Strong Start places, as well as full time provision for nursery aged children within the Early Years setting, in purpose built accommodation and with staff who are experienced in supporting children from vulnerable families. In addition, the accommodation will have been built specifically for the 2 year old age group.
- Within a new build primary school, good practice can be shared between staff from both schools with opportunities to take forward continuous improvement through effective self-evaluation which involves pupils, staff and school community.
- Staff who currently don't have a stage partner, because the school is single stream, will have the benefit of working alongside a partner in the new school, providing new opportunities for peer support, challenge and a sharing of ideas. The support and challenge of a senior management team, who are not class committed, will be available. This in turn supports the teaching practice in the classrooms and the delivery of the curriculum, to the benefit of all pupils, delivered in a way most appropriate to their individual needs.

3.22 Environment for Learning

- Experience in the Council's other new school buildings has demonstrated that a new, flexible learning environment has inspired pupils. The modern, purpose built teaching spaces, breakout areas, communal and outdoor areas allow for greater flexibility in how the curriculum can be delivered, maximising use of both physical space and staff.
- In addition to classroom space, there will be General Purpose (GP) rooms, meeting and group rooms and a multi-purpose games hall. This will extend the opportunities for the pupils to utilise flexible accommodation, which is attractive, bright, with well-designed classrooms, naturally lit and with modern teaching equipment and resources. Spaces for learning will be designed in such a way as to allow a range of teaching styles and approaches including active outdoor learning.
- Within the new build school, classrooms will have the most up-to-date technology providing the opportunity for all children to access the curriculum in modern and innovative ways.
- The provision of a new build primary school will provide a range of facilities in school grounds, offering opportunities for the pupils to experience a range of team and individual sports. These outdoor facilities, which can be used by all children, will provide a space where such physical activity, both planned and informal, can take place throughout the year, regardless of inclement weather. Playtime will be a much more enjoyable experience for all children and young people given the size and nature of the outdoor space.

- A new build primary school will be fully accessible for both children and adults with Additional Support Needs with fully accessible toilet and changing facilities.

The new build will meet the requirements of accessibility for learners with disabilities, complying with the Council's Accessibility Strategy and the Equality Act (2010).

3.23 Experiences and Opportunities

- Within the new build primary school, there will be numerous opportunities for social interaction as well as the more formal learning experiences planned for all children. This will include peer activities in class and at break times, availability of school clubs and extra-curricular activities and team activities and sports.
- All staff are encouraged to work collaboratively within a climate of continuous professional development that encourages and promotes a culture of shared leadership. Benefits to pupils from such activities are evident in their increased levels of confidence, their ability to compromise and to work as part of a team.
- There are many examples at present where children contribute to the life of the school in a range of ways, including Primary 7 prefects, buddies and a range of committees. One example of this is the successful eco development which has been sustained over a number of years and has included members of the community. Pupils are given opportunities to lead and make decisions. Pupils also have opportunities with an elected Pupil Council representing every class in school. Pupils are also actively involved in the day to day running of the school through activities such as organising playground activities and games, presenting learning events to parents and assisting younger children during assemblies. These activities are designed to develop independence and a sense of responsibility in pupils. All of these experiences and opportunities will be afforded to the pupils in the new build school.
- Staff actively seek opportunities for children to develop confidence, personal skills and physical fitness. Examples include a wide range of sporting events; participation in school productions and performances for parents, carers and peers on an annual basis; and after school clubs run by staff, Learning Evenings and Afternoons and a French Café. In addition there is a popular Glee Club. Within the new build primary school, the modern facilities will support these opportunities for all pupils.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to have links with the local community. These opportunities allow the pupils to develop social skills and assists with emotional wellbeing as well as the intergenerational work being undertaken. Skills gained within these areas have been transferrable and strengthened the children's engagement in developing the skills required to be a successful contributor to society.

These very important links can be maintained and possibly enhanced in the new build primary school.

- Pupils from both schools use the local area for their “Daily Mile”, promoting healthy activity and strengthening links with the local community and the varied environment around the school, with the river, trees and wildlife. With the location of the new build school, this will continue.
- Both North Muirton Primary School and Balhousie Primary School currently have active Parent Councils and parents are encouraged to participate in the life of the school. It is anticipated the new Parent Council will continue to be active and involved in all aspects of school life where appropriate.
- There is currently provision at North Muirton Primary School for After School Care, which offers structured play for the children and also provides a useful service to working parents and carers. This service would continue to be offered at the new build primary school, thus benefiting all children and their families.
- Pupils at both North Muirton Primary School and Balhousie Primary School currently have a range of educational experiences and opportunities. The coming together of both groups of staff and pupils in the new school will broaden these experiences and opportunities for all.

In Summary:

- The school roll at the new build primary school will allow all children to participate in peer support, classroom learning, and learning groups across stages and between classes, with the benefit of allowing children to have a wide and varied range of learning experiences.
- The new build school will easily lend itself to modern teaching methodology, with good use of break out space, accessible and flexible teaching spaces, outdoor areas and good facilities for sport and leisure.

In addition the new technology available through a new build school will help support learning and teaching.
- The new build school will incorporate all stages from early years to P7 and will also include nurture and Additional Support Needs provision, allowing a range of learning opportunities for all children. The facilities for this provision will be purpose built, including those with Additional Support Needs.
- The children and parents of both Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School will have access to an educational establishment which has an excellent environment for learning. There will be sufficient capacity at the new primary school to fully meet the needs of children from both schools.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A number of options were considered for the future of Balhousie Primary School as part of the Options Appraisal. In summary, these were:

a) **Both schools remain open – consider building a new school at North Muirton Primary School and improve condition and suitability at Balhousie Primary School**

North Muirton Primary School is uneconomic to refurbish and maintain and replacement of the school is required. This option proposes that North Muirton Primary School will be replaced on the site of the existing school. There is funding of £16 million available in the capital programme for a replacement primary school in North Perth. £11.7 million will be required for the replacement of North Muirton Primary School which would accommodate the current capacity, including purpose built Additional Support Needs (ASN) and nursery accommodation.

Balhousie Primary School is currently under occupied, and it is unlikely that the roll will increase significantly in the future. The condition of the school is such that major refurbishment of Balhousie Primary School is required if the school is to remain open. It is estimated that the cost of refurbishing the school will be in the region of £4.8 - £5.7 million. There would also be ongoing maintenance costs associated with the upkeep of an older building. Although the condition of the school would be improved, there would be limited improvement to the suitability and to the learning and teaching environment.

It is considered that it does not represent best value to commit this level of funding to refurbish Balhousie Primary School when the school is under occupied and where the roll is unlikely to increase greatly in the future.

Even if additional funding was committed, over and above the £5.7m, to attempt to improve the suitability, it is unlikely that the learning and teaching environment can be fully modernised.

The available capital funding is insufficient to build a new school at North Muirton and refurbish Balhousie Primary School.

Even if there was sufficient funding, for the reasons outlined above, it is not considered that replacing North Muirton Primary School while also refurbishing Balhousie Primary School would represent best value.

This is not considered a reasonable option in terms of best value as the expenditure required to refurbish the school would not achieve a significant improvement in the learning and teaching environment at Balhousie Primary School.

b) Consider closing Balhousie Primary School and moving pupils to a larger, new build North Muirton Primary School

A new school at North Muirton would benefit both existing North Muirton Primary School and Balhousie Primary School pupils and staff by providing a well-designed, spacious, accessible, bright and modern learning environment. Children with Additional Support Needs would have purpose built facilities which would provide support for individual and family needs. Nursery children from North Muirton Primary School, who are currently in a separate building, would benefit from being based in the same building as the primary school children.

Travel distance and time will be increased for some pupils living within the existing Balhousie Primary School catchment area, but all pupils would be within statutory walking distance of the school.

The staff at both Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School have experience in working with children and parents whose first language is not English. There are well established supports in place across schools for children and their parents. Support for those families whose first language is not English would remain through the use of the PKAVS Minority Communities Hub. The Council would support the transition to the new school through joint working with PKAVS.

The cost associated with a new build, which would accommodate pupils from North Muirton Primary School and Balhousie Primary School, is approximately £13 million. This assumes the building is completed within 4 years. This would allow for a statutory consultation and 3 years design and build.

Capital funding will be required for essential works to keep Balhousie Primary School operational until the new school at North Muirton is completed.

A new school would be rated 'A' for condition and 'A' for suitability. The refurbishment of Balhousie Primary School will not achieve these ratings with little improvement in the learning and teaching environment.

The cost of the larger new school would be approximately £4.4m less than the cost of building a new school at North Muirton and refurbishing Balhousie Primary School.

There is a positive environmental impact as a result of this option as both existing school buildings would be replaced by one energy efficient building which reduces carbon emissions and energy costs by utilising zero carbon construction and renewable technologies.

This option will have a better outcome in terms of the learning and teaching environment for more than 300 pupils, additionally it will allow approximately £3m of capital to be reinvested in the wider school estate. Revenue savings will also support the wider delivery of education services.

c) Balhousie Primary School remains open – expand the provision of other Perth and Kinross Council services utilising space within the school for these services and improve condition and suitability. Consider building a new North Muirton Primary School

Accommodating additional services in the school would be better value as the running costs and capital spend required for Balhousie Primary School would provide greater benefits in a more fully occupied building. It would retain the school for current pupils and maintain links between the school and the local community.

However, no other service was identified which could utilise the available space within Balhousie Primary School: The Parenting Team are currently located in Balhousie Primary School; The Additional Support Needs provision which was previously located within Balhousie Primary School was moved to a more accessible school; there is no requirement for additional nursery places and there is no potential, suitable community use identified for the building.

It should be noted that any additional service would not be able to utilise space within Balhousie Primary School until refurbishment works were completed and, therefore, this would have to be considered at a future date when service/asset requirements are known. This creates an added uncertainty as it cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty that other additional services could be identified at that time. Therefore this option is not considered reasonable

d) Alternative Option

One option suggested as part of the pre-consultation was that St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School could be closed and pupils from St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School move into Balhousie Primary School. St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School is located in close proximity (0.2 miles) to Balhousie Primary School.

St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School is denominational school and, therefore, an appraisal of this option was undertaken on the basis that St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School would retain its denominational status and move into Balhousie Primary School building and operate as a separate school.

It would be possible to move St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School into Balhousie Primary School and operate it as a separate school.

However, there will be operational compromises to be made by pupils and staff in both schools with the sharing and timetabling of ancillary space such as dining, hall and outdoor space. It is likely that these compromises will not benefit either set of pupils.

Financial benefits would be achieved through the closure of St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School, in terms of the reduction in annual property costs and the capital cost of upgrading St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School.

The cost of upgrading Balhousie Primary School would represent better value with increased pupil numbers. However, this assumes that St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School pupil numbers are maintained with the move to Balhousie Primary School.

The key issue with this option is, however, the fact that pupils from St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School would be moving to a school which is a less suitable environment than their current school, even if the works were carried out on Balhousie Primary School. Although the condition of Balhousie Primary School would be improved through the carrying out of those works, there would be limited improvement to the suitability and to the learning and teaching environment, and no upgrading across other areas

Pupils generally attend St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School as a result of a successful placing request and it is possible that pupil numbers would not be sustained if the school was relocated to Balhousie Primary School. This option could result in uncertainty over the future of St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School through a reduction in pupil numbers. This would result in Balhousie Primary School once again being under occupied. Therefore, this is not considered a reasonable option.

- e) In developing the Options Appraisal for Balhousie Primary School, Perth and Kinross Council undertook a robust process of consultation work and consulted face to face with key stakeholders which allowed opportunities to consider and discuss the alternatives with the Council and provide valuable feedback to the Council on the aspects of the alternatives which were reasonable and not reasonable as well as the opportunity to explore other alternatives. This ensured the opportunity for any other alternatives or suggestions to be communicated to the Council in order that the Options Appraisal was comprehensive and inclusive of the key stakeholders' views. This also ensured further opportunity to provide representation of any other alternatives providing the Council with confidence that the Options Appraisals and assessment of alternatives was robust and comprehensive.

The statutory consultation process also provided an opportunity for consultees to suggest other alternatives to the proposal during the statutory consultation process.

5. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 5.1 On 24 January 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee considered the [options appraisal](#) for Balhousie Primary School and agreed to commence formal consultation on a proposal to close Balhousie Primary School ([Report No 18/15](#) refers) in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 5.2 An electronic link to the Proposal Paper was issued by letter on 16 March 2018 to those individuals and bodies listed overleaf:

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

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

5.3 The Proposal Paper was also published on the Council's website:
www.pkc.gov.uk

5.4 The Proposal Paper made clear to consultees that the consultation period would run from Monday 19 March 2018 until Thursday 17 May 2018 – a period of at least 30 school days.

5.5 The proposal on which consultation took place was that:

- Education provision at Balhousie Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31 July 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The pupils of Balhousie Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at a larger, new build North Muirton Primary School, from August 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- The delineated catchment area of North Muirton Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Balhousie Primary School from August 2022.

5.6 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- A Proposal Paper was published on Monday 19 March 2018. A copy of this document was available free of charge to the consultees listed within the document.

- The Proposal Paper was published on the Perth and Kinross Council website www.pkc.gov.uk and was available in paper copy upon request.
- An advertisement ran in the Courier and Advertiser and the Perthshire Advertiser on 16 March 2018.
- Two public meetings were held to discuss the proposal on Tuesday 24 April 2018 and Tuesday 1 May 2018.
- The Consultation period ended on Thursday 17 May 2018.
- Education Scotland's involvement consisted of: the options appraisal and proposal document being sent to them, and visits to the sites of North Muirton and Balhousie Primary Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees. They also received a copy of all written representations and minutes of the public meetings. They then prepared a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. This is attached as Appendix 5.

5.7 The following schools are affected by the proposal:

- Balhousie Primary School
- North Muirton Primary School

5.8 The number of letters issued with details of the Proposal Paper was 556.

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

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

5.11 This Consultation Report was published on the Council's website for a period of no less than 3 weeks prior to final consideration by Lifelong Learning Committee on 31 October 2018.

6. THE PUBLIC MEETINGS

6.1 A public meeting was held in North Inch Community Campus on Tuesday 24 April 2018. One parent and five members of the public from the community attended. A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 1 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting.

6.2 A second public meeting was held in North Inch Community Campus on Tuesday 1 May 2018. Seven members of the public from the community attended. No parents attended and three of the seven members of the public also attended the public meeting on 24 April 2018. A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 2 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting.

7. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

7.1 From the 556 consultees who were invited to respond to the Council's proposal, 53 online response forms were received. Ten responses agreed with the Council's proposal and 43 disagreed with the Council's proposal. Five responses were only partially completed and did not contain the respondents' names, addresses or respondent groups.

In addition, six written representations were received. One member of the public from the community submitted two written responses, therefore this represents 5 individuals. All the written responses stated they did not agree with the Council's proposal. The details of the respondents are contained within the Summary of Consultation Responses, attached as Appendix 3 which also includes details of the comments which were received.

7.2 In summary, the responses can be grouped broadly as follows:

- Travel and Safety including the implications of distance, safe walking routes and cost of transport.
- Financial including the implications of the use of funding for the new school and the use of funding for the maintenance for Balhousie Primary School.
- Community impact including the implications of the loss of a community amenity and community focal point, the relationship with the wider community, the impact on the residential area of a closed school if left empty and the opportunity to redevelop the area is being missed. Queries regarding what would happen to the building if Balhousie Primary School was to close and views that Balhousie PS serves a distinct and diverse community with different needs from those in North Muirton.
- The new school including the implications of house building and future house building and the impact on pupil numbers, projected pupil numbers and class sizes in the new school. Queries on how the decision was reached on where to build the new school and where North Muirton pupils would be during the building works. Queries on why St Ninian's is allowed to stay open.
- Impact on pupils and families including the implications of the new school at North Muirton must not come at the expense of Balhousie Primary School and that Balhousie's character and ethos may be lost, views that that pupils at both schools are socio-economically disadvantaged and views that the proposal could have a serious impact on the educational development and overall level of happiness of pupils.

7.3 In summary, 556 letters were issued inviting comments and participation in the consultation. The number of parents known to have participated in the consultation to make their views known is 26. However, it is recognised that for the majority of parents of pupils at Balhousie Primary School that their children will not be affected by the proposal as they will have left the school by the proposed implementation date of August 2022.

- 7.4 Specific consultation meetings took place with affected pupils and staff at Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School and full details of these is attached as Appendix 4.

8. EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO WRITTEN AND ORAL REPRESENTATIONS

8.1 Clarification was sought on whether the overall occupancy of the school includes nursery pupils?

The reported occupancy level of the school only considers P1 – 7 pupils and does not include nursery pupils which is the case for all primary schools.

8.2 Query raised that parents bought their house due to the proximity to Balhousie Primary School and that children will not be safe walking to North Muirton to the new school due to the volume of traffic, and whether there would be School Crossing Patrollers on the route.

The Council would not expect parents to allow their children to walk to school alone until such time as they are satisfied they could do so unaccompanied safely. Safe walking routes to school including the requirement for School Crossing Patrollers will be taken forward if the proposal is agreed.

8.3 Query raised that the Council was just going through the motions, regardless of views of the public the proposal will ultimately go ahead anyway? There is a low turnout to the public meetings because no one is listening. The public meetings have not been pushed to raise awareness. It was felt that it is a 'fait accompli'.

Information regarding the statutory consultation and public meetings was made widely available, through social media (Facebook, Twitter), the Perth and Kinross Council website, local press and directly from the school. This was in addition to the statutory consultees being written to directly. Perth & Kinross Council used all reasonable mechanisms available to reach all statutory consultees. It is assured that the proposal is not a 'fait accompli'; no outcome has been decided at this stage. As a local democracy the Council is following due process and it is by no means complete. In addition, Education Scotland is an external body and is involved in the process by assessing the educational aspects of the proposal.

8.4 Query raised that money could have been better spent by the Council to increase the lifetime of the school building.

It is recognised that sometimes buildings are no longer fit for purpose. Balhousie Primary School is rated category C for condition and suitability. The external social areas and accessibility are rated as suitability D.

The cost of refurbishing the structure of Balhousie Primary School building and the limited impact that would have on the suitability of the school as a consequence of the internal design and building limitations in the surrounding area have resulted in the proposal.

8.5 Clarification was sought on what is meant by a flexible learning environment and whether this meant open plan.

Flexible learning may include moveable walls; large spaces able to be subdivided readily. Examples of this are included new buildings at Oakbank Primary School and North Inch Community Campus. A range of different spaces suitable for different learning experiences are provided in schools. It is recognised that semi-open plan is an emerging model (e.g. Oakbank and Crieff Schools); where teaching areas have 3 walls and one side remains open to a shared breakout area. Feedback from staff at Tulloch Primary School is recognised as an example of semi-open plan being used well. Feedback from staff at Tulloch Primary School has indicated that any prior concerns they had about noise in this new environment are unfounded.

8.6 Clarification was sought on whether there could be a radio broadcast to notify local residents of the consultation.

Radio broadcasts have not been used in school proposal consultations to date. However, the Council will consult with the Council's media team for future consultations.

8.7 It was noted that the report focuses on the only reasonable option being to close Balhousie and clarification was sought on what is the projected lifespan of a school.

The approximate lifespan of a school building is approximately 50 years.

8.8 Query raised that 3 miles is a long walk for a secondary school child, as is 2 miles for a primary school child. It was noted that will take up a large part of the day to walk this far and the socio economic status of parents in the area should be considered if public transport is to be used.

The majority of children living within the catchment of Balhousie Primary School currently live within 1 mile of the proposed new school at North Muirton Primary School. It is recognised that there may be an economic impact on families, if parents choose to take public transport or the car instead of walking to school. The majority of pupils are likely to take less than 20 minutes to get to school by walking. In overall terms, the socio economic impact for some pupils and families must be balanced against both the educational and socio economic benefits that will arise from pupils being educated in a modern, fit for purpose, new build school and the benefits which that can offer. The provision of a new build school will benefit a significant number of pupils attending Balhousie Primary School who fall into the category of living in the most deprived areas.

This could encourage the wider promotion of walking to school and initiatives such as park and stride which is a positive outcome.

Pupils living within Perth City Centre are generally well placed to be able to walk to school due to the proximity and distance to travel to school.

The provision of footpaths, mechanical crossings, street lighting and traffic speeds are all considerations when determining safe walking routes for pupils accompanied by a responsible adult to travel to and from school.

It is recognised that large number of families living in the catchment area for Balhousie Primary School are already travelling to St John's RC Primary School and North Muirton Primary School.

8.9 Query raised that the Infrastructure in the local areas does not support travel to school by car/bus.

Travel patterns have been reviewed as part of the options appraisal. It is intended that further work will be undertaken to maximise opportunities for safe walking or cycling to school including the requirement for School Crossing Patrollers, if the proposal is implemented. Any existing concerns around the safety of walking/cycling to North Muirton Primary School will also be considered as part of the design of the new school, if the proposal is implemented. Planning will consider traffic as part of the application for the new school.

8.10 Query that the report refers to 'date of closure' and therefore it's a done deal.

The date contained within the Proposal Paper is a proposed date should this be implemented. No decisions have been taken regarding the closure of Balhousie Primary School and the Council is only undertaking statutory consultation at this stage and the outcome of this will be referred to Lifelong Learning Committee on 31 October 2018.

8.11 Query raised that the residents of the local care home were not aware of the proposal and there has been a lack of communication.

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) act 2010 determines the people who must be made aware of a statutory consultation relating to a school proposal and that law determines who the Council must consult: Parents/carers of children at the directly affected schools and those pupils who will be affected in the future, staff at the directly affected schools, Parent Councils, Community Councils, Trade Unions and users of the schools. There is no legal requirement to contact those in the wider local area, however, Perth and Kinross Council has been open and transparent and in order to allow other local residents the opportunity to make a representation, public meetings were open to anyone who has an interest in the school. In addition, information regarding the consultation and public meetings has been made widely available through social and local media. Some residents and staff attended the public meeting on 1 May 2018.

8.12 Clarification was sought on how the decision was reached on where to build the new school.

The proposed site has been identified as the only suitable site available in the area.

8.13 Clarification was sought on what the projected roll number for the school would be.

Should the proposal be implemented, the current projected roll for the larger, new build primary school at North Muirton would be 380 pupils in 2022.

8.14 Query raised about the children who may struggle in a school environment with high pupil numbers.

The proposed new school is comparable in size to other Perth primary schools. All schools, regardless of size, are required to support the individual needs of pupils.

8.15 Clarification was sought on why Historic Scotland has not been involved as it is a listed building and what input Historic Scotland would have.

Historic Scotland would be fully consulted as part of any planning process on any works required to the current Balhousie Primary School building.

8.16 Query raised that more houses are being built in the future and more are planned and this will mean more children and numbers will increase in the years ahead.

The planned new house building programmes have been taken into consideration and the pupil numbers have been factored in the school roll projections which are detailed in the Proposal Paper.

8.17 Clarification was sought on St Ninian's Primary School - why was this saved and why is it allowed to remain?

The Options Appraisal for St Ninian's Primary School was considered and approved by Lifelong Learning Committee which determined the school was to remain open. The reasons for this are set out in Section 4 of this report.

The key issue with this option was the fact that pupils from St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School would be moving to a school which is a less suitable environment than their current school, even if works were carried out on Balhousie Primary School. Although the condition of Balhousie Primary School would be improved through the carrying out of those works, there would be limited improvement to the suitability and to the learning and teaching environment, and no upgrading across other areas

In addition, pupils generally attend St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School as a result of a successful placing request and it is possible that pupil numbers would not be sustained if the school was relocated to Balhousie Primary School. This option could result in uncertainty over the future of St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School through a reduction in pupil numbers. This would result in Balhousie Primary School once again being under occupied. Therefore, this was not considered a reasonable option

8.18 Clarification was sought on where pupils at North Muirton PS will be situated during the building works?

Pupils at North Muirton Primary School will remain in their current school as the new build is undertaken on another part of the current school site as a tandem build. This has recently been the way in which the new schools build at Alyth, Tulloch and Kinross have been undertaken.

8.19 **Clarification was sought on what the intention is for Balhousie after what happened with Caledonian Road.**

If the Proposal is approved, then Education & Children's Services would declare the building surplus to the requirements of their service. Thereafter, the Council will look at the options which can include community asset transfer or the building placed on the open market.

8.20 **It was suggested that the £14m for a new school could be split into £5.7m into improving Balhousie Primary School and £5m into improving North Muirton Primary School, leaving a substantial amount of funding leftover. Is there another way of using that funding?**

The Council has already approved the funding to be used for a new primary school in North Perth. North Muirton Primary School cannot be refurbished in a cost effective way which led to the recommendation that it requires to be replaced.

8.21 **The new school should have a new identity and new name so not to exclude either community.**

If the proposal is to be implemented, the Council would be working with pupils, parents, staff and the wider communities to establish the identity, ethos and culture of the new school. This would take account of the wide range of views to ensure the identity of the new school was truly representative of both communities recognising the history and value of both schools and there is sufficient time to plan and prepare for this.

8.22 **Balhousie Primary School serves a distinct and diverse community with a different set of needs from those in North Muirton. A large proportion of pupils at Balhousie, for example, do not speak English as their first language.**

It is recognised that a significant proportion of the families of those attending Balhousie Primary School are either from minority ethnic communities or have English as a second language.

The impact on these families of changing school will be addressed through continuing access to the universal services of English as an Additional Language (EAL) and support provided through Minority Ethnic Access Development (MEAD) as part of the PKAVS Minority Communities Hub, which are currently accessed by families at Balhousie Primary School and these will continue to be provided at the new primary school. All schools are required to meet the educational needs of all pupils who attend regardless of their needs or ethnicity.

If the proposal is to be implemented, then children and their families would continue have their needs supported as is the case currently.

8.23 **The commute through a heavily-congested city centre could pose a significant safety risk to parents and, in particular, young children.**

There is national criteria which is used to determine whether or not a walking route to school would be determined as unsafe for pupils to walk accompanied by a responsible adult.

Pupils living within Perth City Centre are generally well placed to be able to walk to school due to the proximity and distance to travel to school. The provision of footpaths, mechanical crossings, street lighting and traffic speeds are all considerations when determining safe walking routes for pupils accompanied by a responsible adult to travel to and from school. These are all available to pupils travelling within Perth City to attend school. It is also recognised that large number of families living in the catchment area for Balhousie Primary School are already travelling to attend other schools.

8.24 Balhousie Primary School has a good reputation for helping a diverse section of children, especially those with additional support needs.
All schools in Perth and Kinross, regardless of location, demographic or size, are required to support the individual needs of all pupils who attend the school.

8.25 Extra space at Balhousie Primary School could be utilised for the local community offering exercise/art/cooking/English classes.
This was considered as part of the options appraisal. Accommodating additional services in the school would be better value as the running costs and capital spend required for Balhousie Primary School would provide greater benefits in a more fully occupied building. It would retain the school for current pupils and maintain links between the school and the local community.

However, no other service was identified which could utilise the available space within Balhousie Primary School: The Parenting Team are currently located in Balhousie Primary School; The Additional Support Needs provision which was previously located within Balhousie Primary School was moved to a more accessible school; there is no requirement for additional nursery places and there is no potential, suitable community use identified for the building.

It should be noted that any additional service would not be able to utilise space within Balhousie Primary School until refurbishment works were completed and, therefore, this would have to be considered at a future date when service/asset requirements are known. This creates an added uncertainty as it cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty that other additional services could be identified at that time.

8.26 Query regarding the environmental impact of more buses and cars accessing the area of the new school.
The majority of children living within the catchment of Balhousie Primary School currently live within 1 mile of the proposed new school at North Muirton Primary School which is well within the statutory walking distance to school. It is recognised that there may be an environmental impact and economic impact on families, if parents choose to take public transport or the car instead of walking to school. However, the majority of pupils are likely to take less than 20 minutes to get to school by walking.

In overall terms, the socio economic impact for some pupils and families must be balanced against both the educational and socio economic benefits that will arise from pupils being educated in a modern, fit for purpose, new build school and the benefits which that can offer. The provision of a new build school will benefit a significant number of pupils attending Balhousie Primary School who fall into the category of living in the most deprived areas.

This could encourage the wider promotion of walking to school and initiatives such as park and stride which is a positive outcome. Pupils living within Perth City Centre are generally well placed to be able to walk to school due to the proximity and distance to travel to school. The provision of footpaths, mechanical crossings, street lighting and traffic speeds are all considerations when determining safe walking routes for pupils accompanied by a responsible adult to travel to and from school. It is recognised that large number of families living in the catchment area for Balhousie Primary School are already travelling to St John's RC Primary School and North Muirton Primary School.

8.27 Two schools would mean the schools were geographically spread out in the area and would provide two school options for parents to choose.

The distance between Balhousie Primary School and the new school site at North Muirton is approximately 1.2 miles. The distance between Balhousie Primary School and St Ninian's Primary School is approximately 0.2 miles. The distance between Balhousie Primary School and St John's RC Primary School is approximately 0.48 miles. These schools all provide for pupils and parents in the area.

Notwithstanding each catchment area having a designated primary school, the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 makes provision for parents to choose a school for their child other than the school designated by the Council by way of making a placing request. Therefore, parents are not restricted to sending their children to the school designated by the Council.

8.28 There is vagueness in the cost of repairing Balhousie Primary School between £4.8 - £5.7 million.

The Options Appraisal and Proposal Paper both advised that the condition of the school is such that major refurbishment of Balhousie Primary School is required if the school is to remain open. It is currently estimated that the cost of refurbishing the school will be in the region of £4.8 - £5.7 million and should the proposal not be implemented, then these figures would need to be updated. There would also be ongoing maintenance costs associated with the upkeep of an older building.

8.29 Class sizes will be large in the new school.

All class sizes will be operating in accordance with the legal maximum class sizes for primary classes in Scotland as is the case in all schools.

9. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

- 9.1 In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal.
- 9.2 Education Scotland visited North Muirton and Balhousie Primary Schools week commencing 21 May 2018 to speak to relevant consultees. Education Scotland attended the public meeting held on 24 April 2018 in connection with the Council's proposals.
- 9.3 The Education Scotland report is reproduced in full (Appendix 5).
- 9.4 The report supports the proposal and is summarised below:
- Education Scotland notes that there are clear potential educational benefits to Perth and Kinross Council's proposal. The council intends to establish a two stream primary school with flexible learning spaces, improved technology, outdoor areas and good facilities for sport and leisure. Its proposal includes plans to provide improved early years facilities, a nurture class and enhanced provision for children with additional support needs. Children and staff from both Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School could benefit from much improved and modern learning facilities. The council's proposal has the potential to improve experiences and outcomes for children from both of the affected schools.
 - Education Scotland notes that the existing Balhousie Primary School building is under occupied and in a very poor condition with significant limitations to learning and teaching areas and to outdoor play space which impact negatively on the experience of children and staff. Prior to the consultation, the council examined the cost of refurbishing the existing building and concluded that refurbishment would be unduly costly and would not resolve many of the limitations of the existing building.
 - Education Scotland notes that the existing North Muirton Primary School building also has significant limitations. The Council has concluded that it would be uneconomic to refurbish and maintain the existing building.

In addition to the benefits to children and staff from both affected schools, the proposal to build a new school brings potential wider benefits to children and young people in Perth and Kinross arising from the Council's approach to securing best value.

- Education Scotland notes that children currently attending from Balhousie Primary School would have an increased distance to travel to a new school in North Muirton but all pupils would be within the statutory walking distances to school. Appropriately, the council has undertaken to develop a travel plan for the new school including safe walking routes.

- Almost all parents, staff and children from Balhousie Primary School who spoke with HM Inspectors were not in favour of the Council's proposal. Although they could see benefits to the purpose built, modern and enhanced facilities in the council's proposal, they felt the existing school building should be refurbished and brought up to standard.

They valued the strong sense of community in Balhousie Primary School, the existing ethos, positive relationships and the strong historical and community links to their school.

- Almost all parents, staff and children from North Muirton Primary School were in favour of the Council's proposal and enthusiastic about the opportunities a new building could provide to enhance learning and teaching. Staff agreed that the proposed two stage primary school could provide benefits to staff for mutual support and challenge to improve learning and teaching. They welcomed the proposals for improved space for early years and enhanced provision for additional support needs. They were aware of the limitations of the existing building and felt that the facilities were in serious need of improvement. They were confident that with appropriate planning the two school communities could be brought together successfully to benefit from the new facilities.
- Staff and children from both schools expressed a wish to be involved in detailed decisions about the design and layout of the new school, should the Council decide to implement its proposal. Parents of Balhousie Primary School felt that if the Council were to decide to proceed, a new school name and uniform should be considered to ensure that the new school's identity represented the whole catchment area. Appropriately, the Council in its proposal document has undertaken to consult with staff, parents and Parent Councils of both schools on the development of plans for the integration of pupils into the new school.
- Education Scotland notes that there are clear and strong potential educational benefits to Perth and Kinross Council's proposal.

Staff and children from both schools could benefit from much improved modern facilities for learning and teaching and better outdoor space, improved early years provision and improved provision for children with additional support needs.

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

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

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

The council will need to provide reassurance to parents, children and staff from Balhousie Primary School that the school's existing links with the local community can be maintained and enhanced.

Perth and Kinross Council has undertaken to involve and consult with stakeholders in the implementation process if it decides to proceed with its proposal. Perth and Kinross Council will continue to engage with parents, pupils and staff to ensure the school's existing links with the local community can be maintained and enhanced as part of the new build school and wider catchment area which would serve the school.

Both schools currently have strong links with their local communities. Although the catchment would be larger, this may bring more opportunities and plans can be made well in advance to retain these links.

10. EFFECT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

10.1 Although not required to do so (as Balhousie Primary School is not a rural school), the Council has set out the anticipated effect on the local community and travelling arrangements as these were fully considered in developing the options appraisal for Balhousie Primary School.

10.2 Effect on the Local Community

10.2.1 The feedback from the community drop-in sessions and online questionnaire from Balhousie Primary School was that the school plays a vital link in engaging with the local community.

10.2.2 From both drop-in sessions held as part of the options appraisal process, concerns regarding the integration of the pupils and community were raised. However, there were also positive comments in relation to the opportunity for the communities to mix.

The integration of pupils and community members would have to be carefully managed and supported in the event of Balhousie Primary School closing. By the time the new school is being built, the Council will also have the benefit of experience in creating and supporting the formation of a new pupil group at Bertha Park High School.

10.2.3 Families living in the Balhousie Primary School catchment area who use the existing school as a link to the local community would continue to be supported by organisations such as PKAVS.

Both schools are also experienced in dealing with families who do not have English as a first language.

10.2.4 Both schools have strong links with their local communities. Although the catchment would be larger if the proposal is implemented, this may bring more opportunities and plans can be made well in advance to retain these links.

10.3 Travel Arrangements

- 10.3.1 A high level assessment was undertaken regarding the impact on those pupils who currently walk to Balhousie Primary School and how they would be affected should the school close and they move to North Muirton Primary School. Out of 83 catchment pupils, 46 live within a mile of North Muirton Primary School. The pupils who live a mile away would take approximately 20 minutes to walk to school. The furthest current pupils would have to travel is approximately 1.7 miles; this would take approximately 33 minutes. There are 5 pupils who would travel this distance.
- 10.3.2 A number of pupils within the Balhousie Primary School catchment are already travelling to schools which are further from their home than Balhousie Primary School.
- 10.3.3 If the proposal is to be implemented, then a Travel Plan for the new school would be developed. This work would be undertaken to maximise opportunities for safe walking or cycling to school including the requirement for crossing patrollers. Any existing concerns around the safety of walking/cycling to North Muirton Primary School will also be considered as part of the design of the new school, if the proposal is implemented.
- 10.3.4 There are existing concerns regarding vehicle movements at the current North Muirton Primary School. An option that will be considered to alleviate these issues is to create vehicle drop off/pick up in Argyll Road when the new school is built.
- 10.3.5 Staff in Perth and Kinross tend to travel throughout the area to work in schools. Many staff do not live within the catchment area of the school they work in. A distance of 1.2 miles is a relatively short distance to travel in Perth. It is, therefore, considered that there is very limited impact on staff travelling arrangements.
- 10.3.6 In overall terms, the adverse effects arising from the additional travel time for some pupils must be balanced against the educational benefits that will arise for pupils from attending a modern, fit for purpose, new build school.

11. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES

- 11.1 Section (10) (3) of the 2010 Act also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.
- 11.2 In the course of the consultation exercise, there were no areas identified by respondents as being inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Paper during the consultation period.

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

- 12.1 Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that: After the Education Authority has received Education Scotland's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:
- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,
 - (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meetings,
 - (iii) Education Scotland's report.
- 12.2 Following receipt of the Education Scotland report, the online and written representations and oral representations made at the public meetings held during the consultation period, officers reviewed the proposals.
- 12.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by officers where all the questions and comments raised were considered in detail. Data and factual information was checked where required and advice and input was sought from other Council Services where needed to consider the issues raised. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under section 9(1) and 13(5) of the 2010 Act.
- 12.4 Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meetings and have considered equally carefully the Education Scotland report and the online and written representations.

The proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations led to the Council to reconsider other options as being reasonable alternatives to the proposal to close Balhousie Primary School.

None of the representations led officers to conclude that any of these options should be reconsidered as reasonable alternatives.

The Educational Benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made. There were no factors included in the Education Scotland report or representations made requiring any aspect of the Educational Benefits to be reconsidered.

Having reviewed the Education Scotland report and feedback from consultees, officers concluded that the basis of the original proposal continues to be the most appropriate response to the poor condition and suitability rating of Balhousie Primary School and the low occupancy of the school.

- 12.5 It is considered that the proposal addresses the issue of the poor condition and suitability rating of Balhousie Primary School and low occupancy and remains the best solution to ensure the children and parents of Balhousie Primary School will have access to a well-designed, accessible, modern, fit for purpose educational establishment.

There would be sufficient capacity at a larger, new build North Muirton Primary School to fully meet the needs of the Balhousie Primary School children without disrupting the learning of the North Muirton Primary School children.

A refurbishment of Balhousie Primary School is not likely to improve the suitability of the school to any degree and there would be limited changes or improvements to the teaching and learning environment.

A refurbishment would be unduly costly and would not resolve many of the limitations of the existing building and this is not considered to be in the best educational interests of the current and future pupils from Balhousie Primary School catchment area.

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

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

Perth and Kinross Council's Lifelong Learning Committee will take the decision on whether or not to implement this closure proposal at its meeting on 31 October 2018. If the decision is taken to implement the closure proposal, any representations to Scottish Ministers, therefore, in this context need to be with the Ministers within three weeks of this date. Therefore, any representations must be made to Scottish Ministers by 22 November 2018.

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

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

14. LEGAL ISSUES

- 14.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 throughout this statutory consultation.
- 14.2 The Council is mindful of its duties in respect of equality and the Equality Impact Assessment did not identify that any parent, child or young person would be treated less favourably as a result of this proposal. Pupils would have access to a modern, fully accessible, fit for purpose new build school and the benefits which that can offer at a new build primary school, which include improved accessibility for disabled pupils and parents and improved facilities for pupils with Additional Support Needs, which is a positive impact.
- 14.3 In terms of Socio Economic Impact, the assessment identified that a significant number of pupils attending Balhousie Primary School live in households that are categorised as deprived based on ACORN and SIMD. SIMD quintile 1 represents the most deprived areas. 38% of the pupils attending Balhousie Primary School live in areas which are in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintile 1. This compares to an average of 7% in SIMD quintile 1 across Perth and Kinross. ACORN 5 represents the most deprived areas. 59% of pupils attending Balhousie Primary School fall into category 5. This compares to an average of 13% across Perth and Kinross.
- 14.4 It is recognised that a significant proportion of the families of those attending Balhousie Primary School are either from minority ethnic communities or have English as a second language.

The impact on these families of changing school will be addressed through continuing access to the universal services of English as an Additional Language (EAL) and support provided through Minority Ethnic Access Development (MEAD) as part of the PKAVS Minority Communities Hub, which are currently accessed by families at Balhousie Primary School and these will continue to be provided at the new primary school. All schools are required to meet the educational needs of all pupils who attend regardless of their needs or ethnicity.

- 14.5 Both Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School are in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). PEF is being provided as part of the £750m Attainment Scotland Fund which will be invested over the current Parliamentary term to tackle the poverty related attainment gap.
- 14.6 There may be an economic impact on families, if parents choose to take public transport or the car instead of walking to school through increased cost of transport to school. However, the majority of pupils are likely to take less than 20 minutes to get to school by walking and all will be within the statutory walking distance to school. This could encourage the wider promotion of walking to school and initiatives such as park and stride which is a positive outcome. Pupils living within Perth City Centre are generally well placed to be able to walk to school due to the proximity and distance to travel to school. The provision of footpaths, mechanical crossings, street lighting and traffic speeds are all considerations when determining safe walking routes for pupils accompanied by a responsible adult to travel to and from school. A large number of families living in the catchment area for Balhousie Primary School already choose to travel to St John's RC Primary School and North Muirton Primary School.
- 14.7 The new build primary school would benefit families from Balhousie Primary School by allow children to access a breakfast club and after school club within the school. Currently children from Balhousie Primary School are transported to St John's RC Primary School for after school care. This would allow for easier access to wraparound care for those parents who are working or are in education, and providing an opportunity to encourage and support those parents who are looking to return to work or education.
- 14.8 In overall terms, the potential socio economic impact for some pupils and families is considered to be small and must be balanced against both the educational and socio economic benefits that will arise from pupils being educated in a modern, fit for purpose, new build school and the benefits which that can offer. The provision of a new build school will benefit a significant number of pupils attending Balhousie Primary School who fall into the category of living in the most deprived areas.
- 14.9 Under the terms of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.
- 14.10 As it is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in written form, if required, on 28 September 2018 until 26 October 2018, this meets the statutory requirement to publish this report for more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by Lifelong Learning Committee.

15. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1 The Council now has 4 broad options to consider, namely:
- (a) adopt the proposal;
 - (b) withdraw the proposal;
 - (c) amend the proposal in some way which allows the proposal to proceed; or
 - (d) amend the proposal significantly and undertake a further consultation exercise on a new proposal.
- 16.2 Education Scotland has identified that the proposal has many clear and strong potential educational benefits for young people. These include staff and children from both schools benefitting from much improved modern facilities for learning and teaching and better outdoor space, improved early years provision and improved provision for children with additional support needs. Education Scotland has identified that the Council's proposal has the potential to improve experiences and outcomes for children from both of the affected schools.

The larger, new build primary school will incorporate all stages of early years and primary, nurture and ASN provision, allowing a range of learning opportunities for all children and young people attending the facility which cannot be met within the current Balhousie Primary School building.

In withdrawing the proposal, the Council would be failing to recognise or respond to the poor condition and suitability of Balhousie Primary School and the impact that has on the learning and teaching environment. The Council would be failing to recognise the significant benefits which could be provided to pupils from the Balhousie Primary School catchment area through access to a modern, purpose-built, fully accessible and well-designed learning environment.

- 16.3 If the Council adopts the proposal, it is understood that the educational benefits set out in the Proposal Paper would materialise. There would also be a requirement that close joint planning with parents/carers, staff and pupils from both schools is well managed in ways which are supportive to the pupils concerned, and in their long term interests.

The Council would also be working with pupils, parents, staff and the wider communities to establish the identity, ethos and culture of the new school. This would take account of the wide range of views to ensure the identity of the new school was truly representative of both communities recognising the history and value of both schools and there is sufficient time to plan and prepare for this.

16.4 The key points that have been highlighted during the consultation period are as follows:

- The report from Education Scotland acknowledges that the proposal would lead to many clear and strong educational benefits for pupils. This includes staff and children from both schools benefiting from much improved modern facilities for learning and teaching and better outdoor space, improved early years provision and improved provision for children with additional support needs. Education Scotland has identified that the Council's proposal has the potential to improve experiences and outcomes for children from both of the affected schools.
- The estimated cost of refurbishing Balhousie Primary School if it remains open will be in the region of £4.8 - £5.7 million. There would also be ongoing maintenance costs associated with the upkeep of an older building. Although the condition of the school would be improved, there would be limited improvement to the suitability and to the learning and teaching environment as it is unlikely that the learning and teaching environment can be fully modernised. It is considered that it does not represent best value to commit this level of funding to refurbish Balhousie Primary School when the school is under occupied and where the roll is unlikely to increase greatly in the future.
- The potential socio economic impact for some pupils and families is considered to be small and must be balanced against both the educational and socio economic benefits that will arise from pupils being educated in a modern, fully accessible, fit for purpose, new build school and the benefits which that can offer. Any potential socio economic disadvantage will be outweighed by the benefits a new school can offer. The provision of a new build school will benefit a significant number of pupils attending Balhousie Primary School who fall into the category of living in the most deprived areas.
- Whilst the Council's proposals have generally not been supported by the parents/carers, staff and the wider community who responded to the proposal, the vast majority of those consulted have raised no issues or opposition to the proposal.
- The distance between the two schools is approximately 1.2 miles and the majority of pupils live within a mile of North Muirton Primary School.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 On the basis of the feedback received and taking account of the educational, environment and social benefits of the proposal, it is concluded that the following proposal is the most suitable option and it is recommended that the Council:

- Approves that Education provision at Balhousie Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31 July 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The pupils of Balhousie Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at a larger, new build North Muirton Primary School, from August 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- The delineated catchment area of North Muirton Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Balhousie Primary School from August 2022.

Sheena Devlin
Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
27 September 2018



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

Minute of Meeting Held on Tuesday 24 April 2018

7.00pm at North Inch Community Campus

Present

Councillor Caroline Shiers	Convener, Lifelong Learning Committee
Councillor Callum Purves	Vice-Convener, Lifelong Learning Committee
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director, Education and Children's Services
Karen Robertson	Service Manager - Business Services
Carol Taylor	Service Manager – Resource Management
John Beveridge	Service Manager – Property Services

In Attendance

Councillor Andrew Parrott	Perth and Kinross Council
Ken McAra	Education Scotland
J Buchan	The Courier & Advertiser

Gillian Holden – Minute Perth and Kinross Council

Six members of the public.

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

2. Statutory Consultation

Sheena Devlin briefly outlined the statutory consultation process and the proposal. Sheena Devlin advised that attendees of the meeting are encouraged to express their views or concerns which would be recorded and published in the minute of the public meeting. She explained that she would stop at intervals during the presentation to take questions. For ease of reading, all questions and comments are detailed at section 6 and 7 respectively. Members of the public were advised that the Council Officers in attendance would be able to provide more specific information regarding parts of the proposal relating to their respective service areas. Karen Robertson advised that 17 May 2018 is the deadline for any representations to be made on the proposal.

3. The Proposal




Sheena Devlin gave a presentation on the background of the proposal which outlines the reasons for the Council's proposal. The reasons included the current condition of Balhousie Primary School (which is rated as a category C) and the under occupancy of Balhousie Primary School.

Sheena Devlin advised that, for the purposes of the proposal, the new school would be referred to as North Muirton Primary School. However reiterated that it is not assumed that the new school will be called North Muirton Primary School; there would be an opportunity to develop a new school identity, school name and school uniform if the proposal is to be implemented.

4. Presentation

Background

On 24 August 2016 the Lifelong Learning Committee approved the review of Perth & Kinross Council's School Estate. On 2 November 2016, further approval was given by the Lifelong Learning Committee for the development of number of Options Appraisals, including for Balhousie Primary School.

Following this,  Report No 18/15 [217Kb] was presented to the Lifelong Learning Committee on Wednesday 24 January 2018. This report presented an  Options Appraisal [876Kb] containing an Educational Benefits Statement regarding Balhousie Primary School. As a result, this Committee approved to prepare and publish a  proposal paper [2Mb] and commence formal consultation on the following proposals:

- Education provision at Balhousie Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31 July 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- That the pupils of Balhousie Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at a larger, new build North Muirton Primary School from August 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- That the delineated catchment area of North Muirton Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Balhousie Primary School from August 2022.

Current Arrangements & Options

Sheena Devlin outlined reasons for the proposal: occupancy, condition and suitability. Details of these were contained within the options appraisal which was considered by the Lifelong Learning Committee.

Likely Effect of Proposal on the Local Community

Sheena Devlin gave a summary of the likely effects on the local community which are set out in detail in the proposal paper.

Travel/Transport

Karen Robertson advised that a high level assessment has been undertaken to identify how pupils at Balhousie Primary School would be affected by the proposal.

Karen Robertson provided information about the maximum statutory walking distances set out in legislation (2 miles for children aged up to 8 years and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over) for children attending their catchment school. She advised that Perth & Kinross Council Policy is more generous and extends this to 2 miles for children in primary school and 3 miles for children in secondary school. The high level assessment identified that no child currently attending Balhousie primary School would be required to travel more than 2 miles to the new school site at North Muirton Primary School.

The potential increase in travel time/distance for some pupils was offset by the educational benefits which could be provided by a new school, which are set out in detail in the proposal paper.

Educational Benefits

Sheena Devlin detailed the educational benefits for pupils who may attend the proposed new school. It was advised that the relevant appendix from the Report can be sent to individuals on request.

It was explained that by highlighting the educational benefits of the new school, the Council are not implying that these benefits do not already exist at Balhousie, but they are being considered when looking at the proposal in terms of what would be provided in the proposed new school.

Summary

Sheena Devlin provided a summary of the presentation and proposal.

5. Statutory Consultation Process

Karen Robertson provided information on the legal framework as per the Schools Consultation Scotland Act 2010.

Attendees were advised that questions from the evening would be published in the minute of the meeting on the Perth & Kinross Council website under Statutory Consultations for Balhousie Primary School.

Karen Robertson advised that Perth and Kinross Council is currently half way through the process and detailed the next steps:

- Involvement of Education Scotland to review and prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal.
- Final Consultation Report must be published for 3 weeks before being presented to the Lifelong Learning Committee (LLC) of Perth & Kinross Council.
- It is anticipated that by the end of October 2018 – the LLC will consider and determine whether they agree that the proposal should be implemented.

- If LLC agree it is to be implemented, notification will be given to the Scottish Ministers, who will decide if the proposal will be called-in or not and whether the proposal can be implemented in full, in part or not at all.

6. Questions

Question 1

Does the overall occupancy of the school include nursery pupils?

- A. Sheena Devlin advised that, for the purposes of reporting, occupancy only considers P1 – 7. Not all schools have nurseries and, although it is statutory that the Council provides free early learning and childcare, it is not statutory for parents to access this provision.

Question 2

I bought my house due to the proximity to Balhousie Primary School. My children will not be safe walking to North Muirton Primary School due to the volume of traffic. Will there be Crossing Patrollers on the route?

- A. School pupils would not be expected to walk to school alone until such time as their parent was satisfied they could do so unaccompanied safely. Safe walking routes to school including the requirement for Crossing Patrollers will be taken into consideration if the proposal is agreed.

Question 3

Are we just going through the motions, regardless of views of the public the Council will ultimately go ahead with the proposal anyway? There is a low turnout (to the public meeting) because no one is listening. The public meetings have not been pushed to raise awareness. I feel it is a 'fait accompli'.

- A. Sheena Devlin assured the attendees that information regarding the statutory consultation and public meetings has been made widely available, through social media (Facebook, Twitter), the Perth and Kinross Council website, local press and directly from the school. This is in addition to the statutory consultees being written to directly. Perth & Kinross Council has used all reasonable mechanisms available to reach everyone affected. Sheena Devlin assured attendees that the proposal is not a 'fait accompli'; no outcome has been decided. As a local democracy we are in the middle of due process, it is by no means complete. We are monitored by Education Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government to ensure that the statutory process is undertaken in accordance with the Law (Act 2010).

Question 4

Could money have been better spent by the Council to increase the lifetime of the school building?

- A. Sheena Devlin advised that sometimes buildings are no longer fit for purpose. Balhousie is a category C. It is the internal design and building limitations in the surrounding area that have resulted in the proposal.

Question 5

Clarify what is meant by a flexible learning environment? Does this mean open plan?

- A. Sheena Devlin advised that this may include moveable walls; large spaces able to be subdivided readily. Examples include new buildings at Oakbank and North Inch Community Campus. Sheena Devlin advised that semi-open plan is an emerging model (e.g. Oakbank and Crieff Schools); teaching areas have 3 walls and one side remains open to a shared breakout area. Feedback from staff at Tulloch was highlighted as an example of semi-open plan being used well. Feedback from staff has indicated that any prior concerns they had about noise in this new environment were unfounded.

Question 6

Can there be a radio broadcast to notify local residents of the consultation?

- A. We will consult with the Perth and Kinross Council media team.

Question 7

The report focuses on the only reasonable option being to close Balhousie, what is the projected lifespan of a school

- A. John Beveridge responded that it was approximately 50 years.

7. Comments

Comment 1

3 miles is a long walk for a secondary school child, as is 2 miles for a primary school child. It will take up a large part of the day to walk this far and the socio economic status of parents in the area should be considered if public transport is to be used.

Karen Robertson reiterated that the majority of children living within the catchment of Balhousie Primary School currently live within 1 mile of the proposed new school at North Muirton Primary School.

Comment 2

Infrastructure in the local areas does not support travel to school by car/bus.

Karen Robertson advised that travel patterns have been looked at as part of the design. It is intended that work will be undertaken to maximise safe walking or cycling to school. Any existing concerns around the safety of walking/cycling to North Muirton Primary School will also be considered as part of the design. Carol Taylor advised that Planning will consider traffic as part of the application for the new design.

Comment 3

Attendance at Balhousie is not great; we should encourage pupils to attend. In addition to monetary value, other categories should be considered.

Comment 4

Report refers to 'date of closure' it's a done deal.

Sheena Devlin confirmed that this is a proposed date. No decisions have been taken (as per Q3).

Comment 5

The residents of the local care home were not aware of the proposal. There has been a lack of communication.

Karen Robertson advised that, by Law, there are people that must be made aware of a statutory consultation relating to a school proposal and the Law determines who the Council must contact: Parents/carers of children at the directly affected schools and those pupils who will be affected in the future, staff at the directly affected schools, Parent Councils, Community Councils, Trade Unions and users of the schools. There is no legal requirement to contact those in the wider local area, however, Perth and Kinross Council has been open and transparent and in order to allow other local residents the opportunity to make a representation, this is a public meeting open to anyone who has an interest in the school. As advised by Sheena Devlin, information regarding the consultation and public meetings has been made widely available through social and local media.

Comment 6

Councillor Parrott advised that he spoke against the closure of Balhousie Primary School. Councillor Parrott stated that he respects the statutory process of the consultation which is not to be viewed as a 'box ticking' exercise and he was disappointed by the turnout; he hopes that there will be more people at the next meeting.

Comment 7

Attendee raised concerns that the other public meeting is to be held on the same day of the week at the same time (as the meeting held on 24 April); this may make it difficult for those with work commitments to attend.

Comment 8

One attendee made a statement, main points as summarised below:

- Pupils at both schools (Balhousie and North Muirton) are socioeconomically disadvantaged, concerns around Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- Councillors who voted against closure are not here to represent, their status is preventing them from coming out.
- Closing one of the few community resources in that area of Perth does not promote community.

- How much consultation has there been with parents? Has this taken consideration of social trends, social cohesion when identifying proposal options. The feeling is that all other proposal options have been rejected in favour of closure.
- Proposed alternatives: sheds could be made a community hub; English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes could be carried out in the additional space at Balhousie; private nurseries could lease space from Balhousie; regeneration of the playground.
- The opportunity to redevelop the area of Balhousie Primary School is being missed.
- A direct intervention needs to be made for Acorn 4 & 5 pupils, to encourage parents to engage in education. How do we turn around “historic underachievement” in terms of Acorn 4 & 5 pupils.

6. Closing

Sheena Devlin closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending and their contribution and provided assurance that Perth and Kinross Council will continue to publicise the statutory consultation and again reiterated that this is not a ‘done deal’; anyone who wishes to share their views is encouraged to make a representation through the consultation process.



**Perth & Kinross Council
Education & Children's Services**

**Statutory Consultation Public Meeting
Minute of Meeting held on Tuesday 1 May 2018 at 7.00pm
in the Lecture Theatre, North Inch Community Campus**

Present

Sharon Johnston	Head of Service, (Early Years & Primary)
Karen Robertson	Service Manager, (Business Services)
Carol Taylor	Service Manager - Resource Management
Ryan Graham	Maintenance Team Leader, TES

In Attendance

Councillor Caroline Shiers	Perth & Kinross Council
Councillor John Rebbeck	Perth & Kinross Council
Councillor Chris Ahern	Perth & Kinross Council
Councillor Andrew Parrot	Perth & Kinross Council
Councillor Dave Doogan	Perth & Kinross Council
Cath Grieve – minute	Perth & Kinross Council

7 members of the public

1. Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Shiers opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public attending. Councillor Shiers went on to introduce herself and Council Officers to the members of the public.

2. Format of meeting

Sharon Johnston outlined the format for the meeting by explaining that the statutory consultation public meeting is a very formal process and will follow a set route. A minute would be taken of the meeting and views would be recorded and taken into account. For ease of reading, all questions and comments are detailed at section 5 and 6 respectively. This would then be forwarded to Education Scotland and also published on the Council website. Sharon indicated she would provide a summary of the journey to date, describe the thinking behind the proposals and outline the next steps going forward. Perth and Kinross Council Officers and Elected Members were present to listen to the views expressed by the members of the public. The meeting is also an opportunity for the members of the public to ask any questions or voice any concerns they may have.

3. The proposal

Sharon Johnston set the scene by explaining that a report approved at Lifelong Learning Committee in November 2016 proposed a review of the Schools

Estate. Following this a number of Options Appraisals were developed and Balhousie Primary School was included in this.

The proposals are:

- Education provision at Balhousie Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 31 July 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter
- That the pupils of Balhousie Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at a larger, new build North Muirton Primary School from August 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- That the delineated catchment area of North Muirton Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Balhousie Primary School from August 2022.

Balhousie Primary School

The building is in poor condition and deterioration is getting progressively worse. It is deemed as unsuitable for providing the best learning experience for children. and is graded at condition "C". Also pupil numbers at the school are low.

As part of the informal consultation process drop-in events for stakeholders were organised and it was noted these were well attended. An on-line questionnaire was also available from August to October. It was noted that 34 forms were submitted although only 23 were completed.

Sharon Johnston went on to give details of the education provision within the school. 66% of children who attend the school live within the catchment area with placing requests making up the remainder.

North Muirton Primary School

Sharon Johnston provided details of the current provision at North Muirton including education, nursery and specialist provision. The building is also graded at condition "C". 74% of pupils live within the catchment area, with placing requests being the remainder.

4. Presentation

Karen Robertson gave a presentation describing the Statutory consultation process in further detail and explained what the Council is required to do and what duties the Council must fulfil.

Travel Arrangements / Walking Distances

It is the Education (Scotland) Act which sets maximum walking distances for pupils and these are: Aged 8 & over (3 miles) and Under 8s (2 miles). A high level assessment was undertaken with regard to the impact of travel for pupils currently attending Balhousie Primary School. The policy of Perth and Kinross Council in respect of walking distances to school is more generous: Primary school pupils - (2 miles) and Secondary School pupils - (3 miles). Of the 69 pupils who live within catchment area of Balhousie, 48 pupils live within 1 mile which is calculated to take 20 minutes to travel. Placing Requests invariably have to travel further.

Educational Benefits

Sharon Johnston detailed what the key Educational Benefits will look like in the new build these will include enhanced provision; break out areas, outdoor areas, nursery and early years provision all in one place. Peer support, wide and varied learning experiences, ASN purpose built, communal areas, up to date IT technology and resources.

Karen Robertson gave an assurance that the Lifelong Learning Committee has made no decision at this time; it has only given approval for the statutory consultation exercise to be undertaken. The consultation period runs from 19 March 2018 to 17 May 2018 and any comments or views must be submitted by 5.00pm on 17 May. Various communication methods have been used and views can either be submitted online, by email or in writing to the Council. Further details are provided in the Proposal Paper and on the Council website.

Next Steps / Timescale

- Education Scotland involvement - visits to schools are planned during week beginning 21 May 2018
- 3 week period for consultation report to be drafted (before end of summer 2018)
- Consultation report - (will set out information from the public meetings)
- The Council will publish on their website for 3 weeks (around August 2018 and respondents would be advised of this)
- Report to Lifelong Learning Committee - (end of October 2018) for final decision.

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 provided further details on the process that has to be adhered to.

If the decision is not be implemented then the process stops.

5. Questions

Q1

How was the decision reached on where to build?

A. The proposed site has been identified as the only suitable site available in the area.

Q2

What is the projected roll number for the school?

A. The projected roll currently is high 300s.

Q3

What about the children who may struggle in a school environment with high pupil numbers?

A. The proposed new school is comparable in size to other Perth primary schools. All schools, regardless of size, are required to support the individual needs of pupils.

Q4

It is a listed building, why has Historic Scotland not been involved?

A. Historic Scotland would be fully consulted as part of any planning process on any works required to the building.

Q5

More houses are being built in the future and more are planned this will mean more children and numbers will increase in the years ahead

A. The planned new house building programmes have been taken into consideration and the pupil numbers have been factored in the school roll projections.

Q6

St Ninian's Primary School - how was this saved, how is it allowed to remain?

A. The Options Appraisal for St Ninian's Primary School was considered and approved by Lifelong Learning Committee which determined the school remaining open. However, the school building at St Ninian's is not of the same poor condition as Balhousie.

Q7

Where will pupils at North Muirton PS be situated during the building works?

A. Pupils will remain where they are as the new build in undertaken.

Q8

What is the input from Historic Scotland?

A. Historic Scotland would be fully consulted as part of any planning process on any works required to the building.

Q9

What is intention for Balhousie after what happened with Caledonian Road?

A. If the Proposal is approved, then Education & Children's Services would declare the building surplus to their service then the Estates Team will look at 2 possible options - either community asset transfer process route or the building will be placed on the open market.

6. Comments

Comment 1

£430k has been spent on maintenance in over 20 years which doesn't seem very much. Newer builds also have maintenance costs. Look at Tulloch PS, Oakbank PS, Kinross PS and North Muirton PS these buildings are only 45 years old yet are being replaced.

Comment 2

Perth and Kinross Council does not have a good track record of looking after buildings. It should be a case of promoting a culture of valuing old buildings and making them fit for purpose rather than discarding.

Comment 3

I agree that the first priority is the children's education. The small classes at the school and the relationship built up with Balhousie Care Home in particular, and also with the community in general, was good to see. Now I'm rather concerned about the detrimental effect of the proposals.

Comment 4

It appears that all city centre schools are closing - for example if I lived in Craigie but because of work commitments chose a city centre school. It seems you are not being accommodating or making it easy in this respect.

Comment 5

£14m for new school - this could be split into £5.7m into improving Balhousie Primary School and £5m into improving North Muirton Primary School leaving a substantial amount of funding leftover.

Is there another way of using funding?

- A. The Council has already approved the funding to be used for a new school in North Perth.

Sharon Johnston thanked everyone for their time and attendance and the meeting was closed.



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

The statutory consultation on the proposal to close Balhousie Primary School commenced on Monday 19 March 2018 and closed on Thursday 17 May 2018.

Details of the proposal document were issued to the list of consultees contained within the Proposal Paper. 556 letters were issued with a link to the proposal paper and details of where and how to obtain a paper copy. The Proposal Paper was also published on the Council website. Public Notice adverts were placed in the local press on 16 March 2018.

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

Response Forms

53 response forms were received. 10 responses agreed with the Council's proposal and 43 disagreed with the Council's proposal. 5 responses were only partially completed and did not contain the respondents' names, addresses or respondent groups. Comments on the response forms have been reported below exactly as they were submitted.

RESPONDENT GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	AGREE	DISAGREE
Parents	26	9	17
Pupils	1		1
Staff	8		8
Elected Members	-		
Parent Councils	-		
Community Members	6		6
Grandparents	7		7
Trade Unions	-		
Unknown	5	1	4
Total	53	10	43

Public Meetings

As part of the statutory consultation process, 2 public meetings were held on 24 April 2018 and 1 May 2018 at North Inch Community Campus, Perth. The same presentation was given at each meeting.

Tuesday 24 April 2018 – North Inch Community Campus

Attended by 1 parent and 5 members of the public from the local community.

Questions and comments were around:

- the occupancy of the school, safe walking routes to the new school and traffic congestion
- views that the proposal will be implemented regardless of the views of the public
- that the meetings have not been pushed enough to raise awareness
- whether money could have been spent better to increase the lifetime of Balhousie school building
- clarification on what is meant by flexible learning environments
- what is the projected lifespan of a school building
- the walking distance to the new school is considered excessive and public transport will be costly
- infrastructure in the local area does not support travel to school by bus or car
- attendance at Balhousie is not good and pupils should be encouraged to attend
- the Council should consider more categories in addition to monetary value
- the residents of the local care home were not communicated with about the proposal
- the day and time of the public meetings may be difficult for people with work commitments to attend
- pupils at both schools are socio-economically disadvantaged and concerns about Getting it Right for Every Child
- closing one of the few community resources does not promote community
- how much consultation has there been with parents
- whether the proposal has taken account of social trends and social cohesion
- proposed alternatives could be a community hub, English as an Additional Language classes, private nurseries could lease space and the playground could be regenerated
- the opportunity to redevelop the area is being missed
- direct intervention needs to be made for Acorn 4 and 5 pupils to encourage parents to engage in education and turn around “historic underachievement”.

Tuesday 1 May 2018 – North Inch Community Campus

Attended by 7 members of the public from the local community. No parents attended and 3 of the 7 members of the public also attended the public meeting on 24 April 2018.

Questions and comments were mainly around:

- how the decision was reached on where to build the new school
- the projected pupil numbers for the new school
- pupils who may struggle in a school with large pupil numbers
- why Historic Scotland had not been involved and what is their input
- house building and future house building and the impact on pupil numbers
- why St Ninian’s is allowed to stay open
- where will North Muirton pupils be during the building works
- what would happen with the Balhousie school building if the school were to close

- money spent on maintenance of Balhousie over the past 20 years does not seem very much
- Perth and Kinross Council should be promoting a culture of valuing old buildings and making them fit for purpose rather than discarding them
- the small classes and relationship built with Balhousie Care Home and the community is good
- concerned about the detrimental effect of the proposals, it appears all city centre schools are closing and Perth and Kinross Council is not being accommodating or making it easy for parents to choose schools because of work commitments
- the funds for the new school could be split to improve Balhousie and improve North Muirton leaving a substantial amount of funding leftover.

Written Representations

During the consultation period between 19 March 2018 and 17 May 2018, representations were invited from statutory consultees and interested parties. 6 written responses were received in total:

Community Members	- 4
MSP	- 1
MP	- 1

One community member submitted 2 written representations, therefore this represents 5 individuals.

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

The main concerns were around the same issues raised at the public meetings:

- the new school at North Muirton must not come at the expense of Balhousie Primary School
- Balhousie Primary School serves a distinct and diverse community with different needs from those in North Muirton
- the proposal could have a serious impact on their educational development and overall level of happiness
- many will have to walk up to a mile through a city centre which could pose significant safety risk to parents and pupils
- Balhousie Primary School has a good reputation for supporting for helping a diverse section of children especially ones with additional support needs
- Balhousie's character and ethos may be lost
- concern that the building will be boarded up and left empty for years which will make the area look run down
- money should be spent to improve Balhousie making it fit for purpose, old buildings far outlast new buildings

- Balhousie can continue to have smaller class sizes giving choice to parents and schools would be geographically spread out
- Proposal seems to point to the precedence of financial concerns over community capital
- The same educational benefits would accrue at a refurbished Balhousie Primary School
- Concern that both schools have been allowed to reach such a state of disrepair
- Two different school communities appeal to parents and pupils in different ways
- Concerns that projected pupils from new housebuilding have been underestimated to attend Balhousie Primary School
- It is unclear why the option of refurbishing both Balhousie and North Muirton schools is not being considered
- If Balhousie Primary School closed then the opportunity for a local community point will be lost
- Private nursery provision in the area could be integrated into Balhousie Primary School to achieve full social integration
- If the site is sold for housing, there will be no long term benefit to the community and will detract from the residential amenity of the area.

Comments Received on Response Forms

- Many students who attend Balhousie are EAL and low income and an even further distance for them to travel will cause greater hardship
- Balhousie may be falling down but at least classrooms are quiet and teachers can teach
- Buildings being built by procurement to the lowest bidder will never last the amount of time Balhousie has
- Tear down Balhousie and build and create a smaller, better built facility on the same site and selling off part of the land to help finance or combining it with St Ninian's.
- Ethos at Balhousie has a community/big family feel. This would be lost if moved to a bigger school.
- If closing Balhousie, name change of new school to ensure smooth transition.
- Keeping two separate schools would benefit the needs of children and more likely to meet all individual needs
- Close St Ninian's and combine with Balhousie as Balhousie has plenty of room and an established nursery.
- School with history and proud teachers
- If Balhousie was more physically attractive, more families would choose the school
- Balhousie to remain open; some money from proposed new build to be directed towards building works at Balhousie; Balhousie to be decanted to Inch View at that time.
- School to remain open but open up the catchment area to increase capacity and include other services.

- New school should have a new identity and new name so not to exclude either community
- Rent out space for community use in the evening such as youth groups, fitness classes etc
- Many parents walk their children to school from town and surrounding areas. They will now need to take cars or buses adding to congestion on the roads, pollution and unhealthy children
- Balhousie School to stay open and make it more appealing for families to send their children there
- Expand catchment area for Balhousie Primary School
- If Balhousie were to close my concerns would include the size of the classes. The next issue would be traffic and parking problems – will there be a large car park for parents dropping off?
- The children of Balhousie are settled and currently have all of their needs met and moving pupils in the middle of the schooling is not something that should even be considered. They don't need a shiny new school building they need theirs repaired.
- Renovating or rebuilding the school would have been good because it is in a good location for a lot of people
- If the Council can afford a new school at Bertha Park and North Muirton, they could afford to actually maintain Balhousie. These proceedings are a sham anyway because it's obvious that the decision to close Balhousie has already been made
- Has anyone thought of the impact the closure would have on the local community and businesses?
- Restore the building and invest in education of future children
- The cost to bring Balhousie up to standard would surely be worth it considering the number of children who will gain education there. The value of the education of the future children as the school would be open for another 50+ years
- Balhousie is also a landmark building which if not brought up to standard will be left to ruin like many other Council buildings
- The current class sizes within the school allow the children to get the perfect child/teacher attention
- The smaller pupil roll also allows teachers to recognise children throughout the school on first name basis
- The smaller class sizes at Balhousie are beneficial to the children and their learning
- I think that it is better for my children to study in a small community school because I know every parent and I feel I can share things better
- I think the decision to my our kids to North Muirton is ridiculous and unfair
- Balhousie school is very close to my house and we would like them to stay in the school
- It is better for my grandchildren to be in Balhousie because it is closer to my house and they are happier in Balhousie
- All family are living very close to the school and also I have been studied in a small village school which everybody know everybody and feels very safe and better organise than big school is

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010




Balhousie Pupil consultation P1/2

17 April 2018

After a short, age appropriate presentation on the proposal, the pupils were asked about how they felt about the option to close Balhousie, build a new school at North Muirton and move all pupils in together?

There were 20 children in the class. After a first check, 18 of the children said they understood the option. After further explanation, all 20 children said that they understood.

Pupils were then asked to indicate by sticker which of the three emotions best described how they felt about each option. The results were:

		
13	2	5

Children were also given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are summarised below:

Hope same thickness but taller so more people will fit in

Needs to be big enough for all

Be like a new family

How will we know way to new school?

How will they knock down school?

It will be better for teachers

Will we take everything from this school?

This school is a nice school I love it I don't want to leave

What name will it have?

Are we all going together?

Seeing all friends

All the children learning

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010


Pupil consultation P2/3 Balhousie

17 April 2018

After a short, age appropriate presentation on the proposal, the pupils were asked about how they felt about the option to close Balhousie, build a new school at North Muirton and move all pupils in together?

There were 21 children in the class. After a first check, 17 of the children said they understood the option. After further explanation, all 21 children said that they understood.

Pupils were then asked to indicate by sticker which of the three emotions best described how they felt about each option. The results were:

		
13	6	2

Children were also given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are summarised below:

Why do we have to do it?

Getting too old

Would you still wear same clothes?

What would be the name?

Why can't you build here?

New name

Will it be bigger?

How many classes?

Will there be a nursery?

Will it be one school or split?

I will be concerned I will be in p7 and will have to move

Who will build it?

Will there be a North Muirton side and a Balhousie side?

More friends

What will they do with this school?

Balhousesie fun, it's big, lots of classrooms and people

Get to play outside

See friends and family

North Muirton near my house

Would you wear new clothes?

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010




North Muirton Primary School P2

18 April 2018 Pupil consultation

After a short, age appropriate presentation on the proposal, the pupils were asked about how they felt about the option to close Balhousie, build a new school at North Muirton and move all pupils in together?

There were 21 children in the class. After a first check, 18 of the children said they understood the option. After further explanation, all 21 children said that they understood.

Pupils were then asked to indicate by sticker which of the three emotions best described how they felt about each option. The results were:

		
13		8

Children were also given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are summarised below:

Mix all together

Would miss reading corner

Sad like being in shop

I would like a swing

I would like a new school playground

My cousin at Balhousie

All now one

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Pupil consultation P1/2S North Muirton

18 April 2018

After a short, age appropriate presentation on the proposal, the pupils were asked about how they felt about the option to close Balhousie, build a new school at North Muirton and move all pupils in together?

There were 20 children in the class. All of the children said they understood the option.

Pupils were then asked to indicate by sticker which of the three emotions best described how they felt about each option. The results were:

		
7	4	9

Children were also given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are summarised below:

Will there be new stuff

I like it don't mind cause school getting older

Both old don't mind and there will be a new one

Happy cause new children


Pupil consultation P1/2M North Muirton

18 April 2018

After a short, age appropriate presentation on the proposal, the pupils were asked about how they felt about the option to close Balhousie, build a new school at North Muirton and move all pupils in together?

There were 18 children in the class. All of the children said they understood the option.

Pupils were then asked to indicate by sticker which of the three emotions best described how they felt about each option. The results were:

		
13	2	3

Children were also given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are summarised below:

Happy new school

Want to see what it looks like

Happy getting new school

I don't care, will be getting three days off

Pupil consultation P3 North Muirton

18 April 2018

After a short, age appropriate presentation on the proposal, the pupils were asked about how they felt about the option to close Balhousie, build a new school at North Muirton and move all pupils in together?

There were 31 children in the class. All of the children said they understood the option.

Pupils were then asked to indicate by sticker which of the three emotions best described how they felt about each option. The results were:

		
15	9	7

Children were also given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are summarised below:

I don't know people from Balhousie

They might be mean to me

I have friend at the other school

I have one friend at this school I might get more with new school

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 staff meeting 17 April 2018

Balhouses Primary School

Gill Doogan, Quality Improvement Officer

Lorna Hamilton, Project Officer (Early Years & Primary)

22 staff

This meeting was held to allow staff the opportunity to see the presentation that will be shared at the public meetings on 24 April 2018 and 1 May 2018. Staff had the opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation

Educational benefits - proposed new building

Q.1 *Do you think the new school will be enough*

A New build calculations are taken into consideration by Asset management team (LH) and the proposal will be for *14 classes, giving a double stream school.*

Q.2 *Will we get a chance on how the building will look. - will PE Hall be separate*

A If it goes ahead there will be opportunities to consult on the building. Staff included from design stage (user group) (GD/LH).

Q.3 *What will make the decision for the council to merge the two schools?*

A There is a proposal paper online. The consultation period runs from Monday 19 March to close of business on Thursday 17 May 2018. Consultation report, public meeting notes, info collated Education Scotland view these once gathered then review paper over summer (LH)

Education Scotland Inspectors review educational aspects of the proposal. They will consider the proposal paper and responses to the consultation. They may also visit schools affected. They will then send a report to the council by 8 June 2018. Their involvement ends there, unless the decision is called in by the government, when they will be asked to provide advice.

The Consultation Report will be prepared over the summer and published after the summer holidays.

LLC will consider this on 31 October 2018.

Scottish ministers will be informed of decision by 6 November 2018 and they have up to 8 weeks to consider.

If "called in" the School Closure Review Panel have up to 16 weeks to review. (LH/GD)

Q.4 *Why decision Balhouses and not St Ninian's?*

Why keep smaller school open?

Why was this decision made ?

Was it because it is episcopal ?

- Why in favour of keeping small school and refurbish this one.*
- A There would be operational issue in having two schools within one building. The building at St Ninian's is in a better condition, suggest staff read proposal paper, lots of factors, shared school not workable (LH).
- Q.5 *Is there to be a new build nursery at St Ninian's?*
- A There are no plans for a new build. The nursery will utilise existing accommodation in St Ninian's, which has the added benefit of reducing the capacity.
- Q.6 *Why have staff not been consulted?
Should we not have been consulted before it went to LLC.
We would have liked to have had some consultation.
Left in the dark.
We work here our contribution would be valuable feel it is too far down line now*
- A Community meetings were held for wider community. (LH)
We were told not to go (Staff)
You would have different question, this was not to exclude you.
There have been no decisions made. Fill in the online consultation form or the paper copy this is your opportunity to have your say (GD/LH)
- Q.7 *Are you able to share pupil consultation from this afternoon. (FW)*
- A Gave an overview of the pupil consultation (GD/LH)
- Q.8 *P4 - 7 not consulted feel this should have happened
Feel it's not right. It would have been nice for P4-7 to be included*
- A As per the Schools (Consultation) Act 2010 we do not have to consult them as they will not be affected by the proposal (GD).
P4- 7 nothing stopping you getting them to complete consultation proposal (LH).
FW as staff teaching we can include pupil council to have their say.
- Q.9 *What makes up the LLC members, how many parties?
Feel one members mind already made up.
Feel like a foregone conclusion*
- A DMM to forward information to Gill.
- Q.10 *What will the name of the school be or a new name to unite not fair if it's North Muirton. FW parents have raised this at community drop in.*
- A Presently new build North Muirton.
- Q.11 *FW is it too early what will happen to us.*
- A Early stages as might not happen. There is the Framework for Managing Workforce Changes on Eric which staff can view. If it does go ahead HR will support, offer training, staff matched, promoted posts considered.(LH)
- Q.12 *So what will happen with 2 HTs ?
What if you decide you don't want to work in a bigger nursery, would it be taken into consideration. (ECP)*

- A We can't say yet (LH).
FW there is voluntary transfer scheme look at numbers, skills, if it works for the nursery.
- A GD we will ask the question
If it is going ahead you will get an idea soon.

FW explained to the staff that the potential decision wouldn't be made until October 2018, so in the meantime it would be business as usual. The fabric of the building will get the attention needed, more restoration round the school.

As no decision has yet been made, maintenance will take place to ensure staff and pupils are not working and learning in unsuitable conditions. If the school does not close, further attention will be given to planning how the building can be improved.

GD - Education Scotland Inspectors are involved in every proposal and review the council's proposal paper, focusing on educational aspects. Sometimes they attend the public meetings, or they will get a written summary from the council

Inspectors will prepare a professional and independent report on the educational aspects of the proposal. They will consider the proposal paper and responses to the consultation. They will also visit schools affected. They will then send a report to the council by 8 June 2018. Their involvement ends there, unless the decision is called in by the government, when they will be asked to provide advice.

Consultation report finalised over summer published September 2018, LLC will consider proposal on 31 October, Scottish ministers informed of decision and they have 8 weeks to consider.

Q.13 FW 6million to get up to standard would it be less to build one school.

A Explanation in proposal paper (LH).

A copy of the proposal left for staff to look at.

Copies of consultation proposal response form left for staff to complete.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 staff meeting 18 April 2018

North Muirton Primary School

Gill Doogan, Quality Improvement Officer
Lorna Hamilton, Project Officer (Early Years & Primary)
22 staff

This meeting was held to allow staff the opportunity to see the presentation that will be shared at the public meetings on 24 April 2018 and 1 May 2018. Staff had the opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation

A copy of the proposal left for staff to look at.
Copies of consultation proposal response form left for staff to complete.

GD said that if they had any more relevant questions/ thoughts to forward to the Headteacher.

Q.1 *What constitutes suitability?*

A Grading around class size/break out space.

Q.2 *If it is only North Muirton would it affect the size of the school/budget and will this affect the time (build) time line?*

A Not clear yet will know more after 31/10.

Q.3 *Proposal to close North Muirton School has it been considered rebranding the new school, why do we have to continue with name?*

A It's easier to build a new build for an existing school and money has been allocated for a new school in North Perth so North Muirton proposed. Logistically it's not good to close two schools close together. (LH/GD)

AB *Change of uniform would feel all as one*

Q.4 *Will the new school have walls/doors?*

A If it goes ahead there will be opportunities to consult on the building. Staff included from design stage (user group) (GD/LH).

Q.5 *Do we have projections for new builds in areas?*

A Asset management teams project figures and this is included in the proposed / projected figures (0.75children per house) (LH).

Q.6 *Is there a diagram of the catchment area?*

A Yes that is in the proposal paper (copy left with school) (GD).

Q.7 *How many more children, approximately 100?*

A Could be more if it goes ahead it will be built to accommodate catchment area (LH).

LH Anyone worried about jobs?

LH explained that there is the Framework for Managing Workforce Changes on Eric which staff can view. If it does go ahead HR will support, offer training, staff matched, promoted posts considered.(LH).

LH gave an overview of what will happen now.

Inspectors will prepare a professional and independent report on the educational aspects of the proposal. They will consider the proposal paper and responses to the consultation. They will also visit schools affected. They will then send a report to the council by 8 June 2018. Their involvement ends there, unless the decision is called in by the government, when they will be asked to provide advice.

Consultation report finalised over summer and published after the summer holidays, LLC will consider.

31/10 consider proposal, Scottish ministers informed of decision and they have 8 weeks to consider.

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to close Balhousie Primary School and combine its catchment area with a new build North Muirton Primary School from August 2022.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to close Balhousie Primary School and combine its catchment area with a new build North Muirton Primary School from August 2022. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School, any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

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

- attendance at the public meeting held on 24 April 2018 in connection with the council's proposals;

- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Perth and Kinross Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 Prior to the consultation, the council undertook an options appraisal and a pre-consultation exercise in which a number of alternative options for Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School were explored. The council concluded that the proposal option was the most viable and consistent with its statutory responsibilities to secure best value and to make adequate and efficient provision of school education.

2.3 The council undertook the consultation between 19 March and 17 May 2018. Letters were issued to the list of statutory consultees with a link to the proposal paper and details of where and how to obtain a paper copy and advertisements were placed in the local press. Two public meetings were held. The first, held on 24 April 2018, was attended by seven members of the public. The second, held on 1 May 2018, was attended by six members of the public. The council received 53 returned consultation forms of which 43 were against the proposal and ten in favour. A further six written representations opposing the proposal were received by the council.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 There are clear potential educational benefits to Perth and Kinross Council's proposal. The council intends to establish a two stream primary school with flexible learning spaces, improved technology, outdoor areas and good facilities for sport and leisure. Its proposal includes plans to provide improved early years facilities, a nurture class and enhanced provision for children with additional support needs. Children and staff from both Balhousie Primary School and North Muirton Primary School could benefit from much improved and modern learning facilities. The council's proposal has the potential to improve experiences and outcomes for children from both of the affected schools.

3.2 The existing Balhousie Primary School building is under occupied and in a very poor condition with significant limitations to learning and teaching areas and to outdoor play space which impact negatively on the experience of children and staff. Prior to the consultation, the council examined the cost of refurbishing the existing building and concluded that refurbishment would be unduly costly and would not resolve many of the limitations of the existing building.

3.3 The existing North Muirton Primary School building also has significant limitations. The council has concluded that it would be uneconomic to refurbish and maintain the existing building. In addition to the benefits to children and staff from both affected schools, the proposal to build a new school brings potential wider benefits to children and young people in Perth and Kinross arising from the council's approach to securing best value.

3.4 Children currently attending from Balhousie Primary School would have an increased distance to travel to a new school in North Muirton but all pupils would be within the statutory walking distances to school. Appropriately, the council has undertaken to develop a travel plan for the new school including safe walking routes.

3.5 Almost all parents, staff and children from Balhousie Primary School who spoke with HM Inspectors were not in favour of the council's proposal. Although they could see benefits to the purpose built, modern and enhanced facilities in the council's proposal, they felt the existing school building should be refurbished and brought up to standard. They valued the strong sense of community in Balhousie Primary School, the existing ethos, positive relationships and the strong historical and community links to their school. Parents were of the view that the council had allowed the school building to fall into disrepair over a number of years and now had a responsibility to fund refurbishment. Staff and parents felt that the additional distance to the proposed new build school would bring several disadvantages and could negatively impact on existing community links and levels of parental engagement. Parents and staff spoke of the important intergenerational work which involves children working with residents of a local care home. They were concerned that this and other examples of community partnerships could suffer in the council's proposal. Perth and Kinross Council will need to provide reassurance that the school's existing work in partnership with the local community in Balhousie can be maintained if it decides to implement its proposal.

3.6 Almost all parents, staff and children from North Muirton Primary School were in favour of the council's proposal and enthusiastic about the opportunities a new building could provide to enhance learning and teaching. Staff agreed that the proposed two stage primary school could provide benefits to staff for mutual support and challenge to improve learning and teaching. They welcomed the proposals for improved space for early years and enhanced provision for additional support needs. They were aware of the limitations of the existing building and felt that the facilities were in serious need of improvement. They were confident that with appropriate planning the two school communities could be brought together successfully to benefit from the new facilities.

3.7 Staff and children from both schools expressed a wish to be involved in detailed decisions about the design and layout of the new school, should the council decide to implement its proposal. Parents of Balhousie Primary School felt that if the council were to decide to proceed, a new school name and uniform should be considered to ensure that the new school's identity represented the whole catchment area. Appropriately, the council in its proposal document has undertaken to consult with staff, parents and Parent Councils of both schools on the development of plans for the integration of pupils into the new school.

4. Summary

There are clear and strong potential educational benefits to Perth and Kinross Council's proposal. Staff and children from both schools could benefit from much improved modern facilities for learning and teaching and better outdoor space, improved early years provision and improved provision for children with additional support needs. Perth and Kinross Council has undertaken to involve and consult with stakeholders in the implementation process if it decides to proceed with its proposal. The council will need to provide reassurance to parents, children and staff from Balhousie Primary School that the school's existing links with the local community can be maintained and enhanced.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
May 2018**