

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Lifelong Learning Committee****21 March 2018****Options Appraisal****Braco Primary School and Greenloaning Primary School****Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report seeks approval of the recommendation of the Options Appraisal (Appendix A) which has been undertaken in respect of Braco Primary School and Greenloaning Primary School.

Lifelong Learning Committee is asked to agree that the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) commence a statutory consultation on a proposal to close Greenloaning Primary School. The report also seeks approval to carry out works to improve the suitability of Braco Primary School.

1. BACKGROUND**School Estate Transformation**

- 1.1 The school estate is a significant and valuable asset to the communities of Perth and Kinross. Between 2017 and 2023, the Council will invest £141m in the school estate, including a number of new or replacement primary schools and a substantial upgrade programme for secondary schools. In addition a new £32.5m secondary school at Bertha Park.
- 1.2 The School Estate Strategy ([Report No. 12/370 refers](#)) sets out the Council's aspirations for our schools, and in particular the high value we place on learning, through our vision for well designed, maintained and managed schools.
- 1.3 It is important, in light of the significant investment and cost associated with the school estate, that it is managed in an efficient and effective manner, and that the priorities which are addressed meet the wider strategic objectives of the Council and the needs of our communities.
- 1.4 There are significant challenges for managing the school estate over the coming years. These include changing demographics including population growth and movement, house building in certain locations, ongoing deterioration in building infrastructure, pressure on planned maintenance budgets, increasing revenue costs and the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare from 600 to 1140 hours.

1.5 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](#)). Together they detail how Perth and Kinross Council will deliver transformation over the next five years. Accompanying the strategy is a programme of major reviews which are considered to be key drivers and enablers of transformation across the organisation.

1.6 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'. The principles approved by Lifelong Learning Committee as a basis for the transformation review were as follows:

- (i) schools should have an occupancy rate where possible greater than 60% of the capacity and ideally should be operating at over 80% capacity;
- (ii) every school should be rated as A or B ie at least satisfactory for condition and suitability; and
- (iii) life expired buildings¹ within the school estate should be prioritised for replacement.

1.7 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.

1.8 Braco Primary School was included in the schools to be considered by an options appraisal due to the projected decrease in occupancy and suitability rating of the school.

The overall suitability of Braco Primary School building is rated 'C' (Poor - showing major problems and/or not operating properly).

The condition of Braco Primary School building is rated 'B' (Satisfactory – performing adequately but showing minor deterioration).

1.9 Greenloaning Primary School was included in the schools to be considered by an options appraisal due to the under occupancy at the school.

1.10 On 24 October 2016, prior to the options appraisal commencing, Greenloaning Primary School was officially mothballed with the agreement of parents of pupils attending Greenloaning Primary School. This means the operation of the school was suspended with pupils being educated at Braco Primary School.

The overall suitability of Greenloaning Primary School building is rated 'B' (Satisfactory - performing adequately but with minor problems).

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

The condition of Greenloaning Primary School building is rated 'B' (Satisfactory – performing adequately but showing minor deterioration).

Key Legislation

- 1.11 Councils, as Education Authorities, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand.
- 1.12 Councils also have a statutory responsibility in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to achieve best value.
- 1.13 The Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 provides a strong, accountable statutory consultation process 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.
- 1.14 The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in relation to rural schools, establishing a presumption against closure of rural schools. The result of this is that education authorities must have special regard to a number of factors before formulating a proposal to close a rural school and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal. These factors are:
 - Effect on the Community
 - Effect on Travel Arrangements
 - Educational Benefits

2. OPTIONS PROPOSALS

- 2.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken to consider the future of Braco Primary School and Greenloaning Primary School. The options appraisal is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.2 The options appraisal considered the projected decrease in occupancy and suitability rating of Braco Primary School. The school had 53 pupils and an occupancy level of 78% at Census² 2015. The suitability rating for the school is 'C' (Poor – showing major defects and/or not operating adequately).

The options appraisal considered the under occupancy at Greenloaning Primary School, which had 12 pupils and an occupancy level of 24% at Census 2015. The roll fell to 7 pupils and an occupancy level of 14% at Census 2016. Subsequently, Greenloaning Primary School was officially

² An annual pupil census in publicly funded schools in Scotland is carried out every year for publication by the Scottish Government. This usually takes place in September.

mothballed on 24 October 2016 with the agreement of parents with pupils at the school.

2.3 The Scottish Government’s Rural School List 2017 classifies both Braco Primary School and Greenloaning Primary School as “accessible rural” school under Section 14 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Therefore in considering the options the rural school factors detailed in paragraph 1.14 were explored fully in the Options Appraisal.

2.4 The findings contained within the Options Appraisal conclude that the only reasonable option is to close Greenloaning Primary School with pupils remaining at Braco Primary School and the suitability rating improved at the school. The delineated area of Braco Primary School would be extended to subsume the whole catchment of Greenloaning Primary School.

This option would provide best value for the Council and improve the Braco Primary School building, providing a better learning and teaching environment for pupils.

None of the other options looked at were considered to be reasonable alternatives to closure, for the reasons set out in the Options Appraisal.

2.5 The findings of the options appraisal are summarised below:

	Option Description	Outcome
Option 1	Continue with mothballing of Greenloaning Primary School – all pupils remain at Braco Primary School and suitability rating improved	Rejected. Not a reasonable option due to there not being a sustainable roll in the school in the next 3-4 years due to small numbers of children living in the area.
Option 2	Consider closing Greenloaning Primary School – pupils remain at Braco Primary School and suitability rating improved	Accepted as a reasonable option for the following reasons; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reasonable action can be taken to increase the school roll at Greenloaning Primary School ensuring this is sustainable in future years. • Suitability rating of Braco Primary School improved.

Option 3	Re-open Greenloaning Primary School and improve suitability rating at Braco Primary School improved	Rejected. Not a reasonable option due to there not being a sustainable roll in the school due to small numbers of children living in the area.
Option 4	Re-open Greenloaning Primary School and split the stages of education between both schools. Suitability rating improved at Braco Primary School	Rejected. Not a reasonable option due to the compromises associated with running a split site and the fact that the school could operate as a single site.
Option 5	Catchment areas of the schools are reviewed to determine whether this would increase the school roll at Greenloaning Primary School and ensure the future sustainability of both schools	Rejected. Not a reasonable option due to small numbers of pupils living in proximity to the existing catchments to create a sustainable catchment which does not put pupils in other catchments at a detriment through travel distance.
Option 6	Consider closing Braco Primary School and pupils moved to an extended Greenloaning Primary School	Rejected. Not a reasonable option due to the additional travel distance and time associated for the majority of pupils.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 It is therefore proposed to formally embark upon a statutory consultation in relation to the closure of Greenloaning Primary School.
- 3.2 This would be undertaken in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.3 A formal Proposal Paper, based on the options appraisal will be prepared for publication.
- 3.4 A public meeting will be undertaken by the Convener of the Lifelong Learning Committee and the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services), supported by officers from Education and Children's Services.
- 3.5 Following this, a report will be submitted to a future Lifelong Learning Committee detailing the outcome of the statutory consultation.

3.6 It is also proposed to carry out works to Braco Primary School and Braco Village Hall to improve the suitability of the school environment.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Following the preparation of a comprehensive Options Appraisal, it is proposed that a formal statutory consultation in relation to the closure of Greenloaning Primary School should take place.

4.2 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approves the recommendation of the Options Appraisal that a statutory consultation in relation to the closure of Greenloaning Primary School should take place;
- (ii) Instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to prepare and publish a proposal paper to close Greenloaning Primary School, transfer pupils to Braco Primary School and extend the delineated area of Braco Primary School to subsume the whole catchment area of Greenloaning Primary School;
- (iii) Instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to formally consult the appropriate bodies and persons on the terms of the proposal paper, all in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010;
- (iv) Delegates authority to the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to investigate and manage any alleged omissions or inaccuracies during the consultation process and to take appropriate action in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010; and
- (v) Instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to prepare a report on the results of the consultation and report back to the Committee on the outcome of the consultation at a future meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee.

4.3 It is also recommended that the Committee approves the recommendation of the options appraisal to improve the suitability of Braco Primary School through funding in the Modernising Primaries Programme which forms part of the composite capital programme 2017-2023.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to all of these objectives.

Corporate Plan

1.2 The Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013-2023 and Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2013/2018 set out five strategic objectives:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to all of these Objectives.

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

- Maximising Resources

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 There are no other direct financial implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

Workforce

2.2 As a result of this report there will be workforce implications in terms of resourcing the statutory consultation for several teams across Council Services which include ECS Resource Management, ECS Business Services, ECS Finance, Human Resources and Legal and Governance Services.

As part of the statutory consultation there is a requirement to consult with staff affected by the proposal.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 There are no direct asset management implications arising from this report at this point. Asset management implications will not be known until the statutory consultation is complete.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

3.1.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the statutory consultation.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

3.2.1 The environmental impact of each option is considered in the options appraisal; however there are no implications at this stage of the process. The environmental impact will be considered further through the statutory consultation.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.3.1 There is no direct impact on sustainability as a result of this report, and sustainability will be considered further as part of the statutory consultation process.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report. Any consultation would require to be carried out in accordance with the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010

Risk

- 3.5 A risk log is being maintained for the School Estate Transformation Programme. A further risk log will be created as part of the statutory consultation process.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Head of Legal, Head of Property Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

External

- 4.2 The Options Appraisal details the consultation which has been carried out in the development of this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 A communication plan has been prepared which will support effective communication and engagement with stakeholders, and to promote the anticipated efficiencies and benefits of this Transformation Project as well as the links to the wider Transformation Programme. A range of methods will be used to consult with internal and external stakeholders as identified in the draft communication plan, such as meetings, briefings, community consultation and focus groups. A separate communications plan will be developed for the Statutory Consultation process.

2. Background Papers

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

3. Appendices

- 3.1 Appendix A - Options Appraisal Report – Braco Primary School and Greenloaning Primary School