



PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CONSULTATION REPORT

**REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION RELATING TO THE
PROPOSAL TO CLOSE GREENLOANING PRIMARY SCHOOL**

22 February 2019

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

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PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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

- Provision of a school at Greenloaning Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 28 June 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The pupils of Greenloaning Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Braco Primary School, from 1 July 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- The delineated catchment area of Braco Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Greenloaning Primary School from 1 July 2019.

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 meeting held on 11 September 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 meeting held on 11 September 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 Sections 11A to 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposals.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Greenloaning Primary School has been mothballed since October 2016. This was as a result of low numbers of primary age pupils living in the catchment area and parental choice to send children living in the catchment area to other schools. The previously agreed arrangements to mothball the school have continued during this period.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 2 November 2016, the Lifelong Learning Committee of Perth and Kinross Council approved [Report No 16/485](#) by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services). It approved the development of an options appraisal in relation to the future of Greenloaning Primary School.
- 2.3 On 21 March 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee considered the [options appraisal](#) and agreed to commence formal consultation on a proposal to close Greenloaning Primary School ([Report No 18/87 refers](#)) in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in relation to rural schools, and establishes a presumption against the closure of rural schools. The result of this is that education authorities must have special regard to a number of factors before formalising 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.
- 2.6 These duties are outlined in the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010 and the accompanying Statutory Guidance](#).
- 2.7 Lifelong Learning Committee reports and the Proposal Paper referred to above are available on the Council's website www.pkc.gov.uk.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The main considerations relating to the proposal are fully explained in the [Proposal Paper](#), and the main points are highlighted as follows:
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 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 over 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.
- 3.5 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'.
- 3.6 This approach reflects the Single Outcome Agreement National Outcome 15 that "Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs", and the Local Outcome that "Our services will be responsive, of high quality and continually improving". This report 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.
- 3.7 Greenloaning Primary School was a single teacher primary school serving the village of Greenloaning and the surrounding area and is a feeder primary school for Crieff High School. Greenloaning is located approximately 1.7 miles (walking) and 2.0 miles (driving) from Braco Primary School and pupils have been zoned to Braco Primary School since the school was mothballed in October 2016.
- 3.8 The capacity of Greenloaning Primary School is 49 pupils. The Greenloaning Primary School roll at Census 2010 was 29 pupils and at Census 2016 was 7 pupils. At Census 2016, there were 16 pupils in total living within the catchment area for Greenloaning Primary School but 9 of these pupils attended other schools as a result of successful placing requests made by their parents.
- 3.9 At Census 2017, there were 24 primary age pupils living within the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area with 8 of these pupils attending Braco Primary School and 15 of the pupils attending other schools in the Stirling Council area. At Census 2018, there were 21 primary age pupils living within the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area with 6 of these pupils attending Braco Primary School and 14 pupils attending other schools in the Stirling Council area.
- 3.10 Greenloaning Primary School and Braco Primary School had a close relationship prior to the mothballing as the result of a shared headship. Whilst a shared headship provided a means of improving cost effectiveness, it did not address the reducing pupil roll at Greenloaning Primary School as the result of placing requests being made for other schools.
- 3.11 These circumstances result in a diminished and unsustainable school pupil population for Greenloaning Primary School. There is no foreseeable prospect of an increased, stable pupil population. The provision of primary education within Greenloaning needs to be considered in the context of the needs of the pupils and the local community, both now and in the future.

- 3.12 As part of an [options appraisal](#), 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 also carried out with the local community to inform the options appraisal for Greenloaning Primary School. This allowed the community to consider options for the future of Greenloaning 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.
- 3.13 Future pupil projections have been considered using aggregated GP registration data from the NHS and both Braco Primary School and Greenloaning Primary School pupil numbers are projected to remain static over the next 4 years. There are low numbers of children under 5 years old in the Greenloaning catchment area over the next 4 years with no house building planned in the area. Pupil projections in the catchment area do not indicate that the potential pupil numbers will increase significantly in the future and there is no suggestion going forward that this is likely to change.
- 3.14 The data for Greenloaning shows that the number of children eligible to start school over the period 2019 – 2022 is 13 pupils. At the time of undertaking the options appraisal, the number of children eligible to start school over that period was 5 pupils. Updated aggregated GP registration data received from the NHS indicates that this number has increased during that period. However, this is highly unlikely to be an continuing upward trend because the child population in this area is not increasing by 50%.

In considering future pupil projections, a range of data sources is used to evidence and predict pupil population trends. The available data does not evidence that this is an upward trend which will continue. One of the methodologies for projecting pupil numbers is based on the average intake of pupils in each school across the previous 5 year period. This provides a baseline of pupil projections for a 7 year period within Perth and Kinross which has provided pupil projections within an accuracy tolerance of within 1%. Demographic information on general population data provides actual and trend evidence across all age groups within the defined demographic zone. Evidence from this data shows a trend of significant and steady decline in the 0-4 years population of 67% over the past 15 years. The 0-15 years age group makes up 16.4% of the general population in this area with 63% of the population in this area being in the 40-90 and over years age group. The overall general population in this area has declined by 11.8% in that period.

Projected pupil growth from housebuilding is also considered and there is no planned housebuilding within the catchment area for Greenloaning Primary School and this evidence leads the Council to the conclusion that there will be no increase in pupil population through housebuilding. With such low numbers, it is more likely the increase has come about as a result of a very small number of families moving into existing housing stock.

In considering the potential impact of this increase, it continues to be the case that this presents a low pupil population for Greenloaning. This would provide an occupancy level of 29% if these pupils were all to attend Greenloaning primary School. However, based on the established pattern of placing requests made for other schools by parents living in the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area, the number of pupils enrolling for school in Perth and Kinross is likely to be lower.

This increase in pupils eligible to start school over the period 2019 – 2022 would not create a sustainable pupil roll for Greenloaning Primary School.

- 3.15 The highest projected occupancy level up to 2022/23 at Greenloaning Primary School is 29%. This is based on pupils who attended the school when it was mothballed returning to the school if it were to re-open. The highest projected occupancy level at Braco Primary School is 77%. This includes pupils who currently attend the school from Greenloaning.
- 3.16 Prior to Greenloaning Primary School being mothballed, the majority of parents had already made placing requests for their children to be educated in Braco Primary School and other schools outwith Perth and Kinross.
- 3.17 Based on there being low numbers of children living in the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area and the impact of placing requests being made by parents for pupils to attend other schools both within and outwith Perth and Kinross, there is no foreseeable prospect of a sustainable school population in the near future.
- 3.18 The low pupil roll at Greenloaning Primary School presented challenges in providing a breadth of experiences required to meet the needs of pupils.
- 3.19 The proposal for pupils from Greenloaning to attend Braco Primary School has strong educational benefits for pupils from the Greenloaning catchment area. It will increase pupils' resilience through being part of a larger school community and will also help promote their social and emotional development by providing greater challenge as well as the opportunity to be part of a wider, age-appropriate peer group.
- 3.20 Pupils from the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area have been zoned to Braco Primary School for more than 2 years. Braco Primary School offers high quality learning experiences across the four contexts of learning that encourages high levels of achievement and provides a wide range of opportunities for children to achieve their full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- 3.21 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.
- 3.22 Parents still retain the right to make a placing request for another school of their choice as outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.
- 3.23 The permanent discontinuation of provision of a school at Greenloaning Primary School with effect from 28 June 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter with the pupils of Greenloaning Primary School catchment area permanently receiving their education at Braco Primary School, from 1 July 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter will have the following benefits (based on Braco Primary School as children from Greenloaning Primary School catchment area have been attending the school since October 2016).

Learning and Teaching

- 3.24 Children attending Braco have access to a range of teaching and support staff from early years and primary. Braco has a nursery and three primary classes.

This allows children to transition throughout the school as they get older and be taught by different practitioners in different settings.

- 3.25 Pupils have access to early years provision within the setting of the school, allowing for seamless transition to P1, with pupils already familiar with the physical setting as well as the opportunity for regular work with primary peers.
- 3.26 At Braco Primary School, staff are challenged and supported through a range of continuous professional development and review, which comes of having a Headteacher and three members of teaching staff, in three classes for 44 pupils (Census 2018). Staff are able to collaborate across the school for planning learning and teaching to ensure children receive experiences that are relevant and present clear challenge and enjoyment. Flexibility in staffing at Braco means that good use can be made of the local context for example by involving children in Forest Schools. Staff are also able to work together to moderate standards of learning and achievement in the school to ensure that children make appropriate progress in a structured and progressive way through Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- 3.27 A collegiate approach to professional engagement amongst all staff is evident within the school. They come together regularly to review and improve practice as a school, with partner services and other schools in the Local Management Group.

This enhances the quality of learning and teaching through shared opportunities to develop effective approaches to learning and teaching and to share and moderate standards.

Currently, Braco Primary School staff collaborate with other schools on 1+2 languages, maths development work and moderation of writing, allowing staff to share good practice across other schools in the area to enhance learning and teaching in Braco.

- 3.28 Work is differentiated to adapt to pupils' needs and pupils benefit from being able to work on co-operative learning tasks with others. Flexibility in staffing allows Braco to be creative in planning for children with additional support needs both universally and for targeted need thus removing potential barriers to learning.
- 3.29 Braco affords the opportunity for all children to build relationships with different groups and individuals, develop a range of skills and undertake group responsibilities, which the larger class sizes enable. This gives all pupils the opportunity to work in groups, at peer level and across all stages in the school and in mixed sex groups. This allows the sharing of ideas, peer support, informal mentoring and relationship building, all of which contribute to the whole school experience for all pupils.
- 3.30 Braco has support from a Pupil Support Teacher, which not only benefits pupils with Additional Support Needs, but all other pupils.

Environment for Learning

- 3.31 Braco Primary makes use of the village hall. As part of the planned improvements to the school, the hall will benefit from improved access and upgraded toilet and redecoration providing better facilities for PE and community learning space. The adjacent park offers a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to experience a range of team and individual sports, such as football and cricket. The school also makes good use of local land and forest for the Forest Schools programme.

- 3.32 Braco Primary School's building will benefit from significant upgrade and adaptations. The refurbishment will provide upgraded accessible classroom spaces and flexible spaces to offer nurture support and meetings.
- 3.33 The school has a strong Restorative Practices values base to the learning environment where children are able to work together to investigate and solve problems.

Experiences and Opportunities

- 3.34 Braco currently has pupils of both sexes at each stage other than P7, allowing all pupils to interact and socialise with groups of children their own age and sex, at appropriate levels and within composite classes.
- 3.35 The school hosts weekly 'Get Togethers' with children across the school coming together to celebrate and share learning. These also include parents and partners in the life of the school.
- 3.36 Braco has an active Parent Council, which supports the school in its work with parents and encourages links between school, parents, pupils and the community. Parental support enables the school to gain experiences outwith the local community, with trips to the theatre, ski trip for P5-7 and residential trip. The support of the Parent Council and the wider Parent Forum helps to provide resources to allow these to take place, as well as support through attendance on the trips.
- 3.37 There are opportunities available to pupils at Braco, through links with a school in Malawi, supporting resources and widening their understanding of the experiences and opportunities presented to children in another part of the world.
- 3.38 There are numerous opportunities, for both present and future pupils, for social interaction in terms of peer activities in class and at break times and access to school clubs and extra-curricular activities, team activities and sports, such as football and athletics. In addition, there are pupil committees, facilitated by a teacher, but pupil led. These are the Eco Council, Arts & Crafts, Baking and Health & Wellbeing. These Pupil Councils are comprised of children of all stages.
- 3.39 School pupils at Braco enjoy a number of links with the community, providing entertainment, church services and festivals and the inclusion of local people in the children's learning experiences. These opportunities foster a feeling of belonging for the children and their social and emotional skills are enhanced through the relationships built.

In Summary

- 3.40 The school roll allows 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.
- 3.41 Braco Primary School building will benefit from a significant upgrade and adaptations, enhancing the environment for learning.
- 3.42 Re-designating the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area to Braco Primary School will allow all pupils access to a school with learning groups across all stages.

- 3.43 The range of learning experiences for children will be wide and varied, with classroom learning being supplemented by learning groups across stages and between classes, bringing with that the opportunity to share learning experiences between the youngest and oldest pupils, as well as within the immediate peer group.
- 3.44 All pupils will have access to peer support, helping to develop their social and interpersonal skills, both in the classroom and in the social activities available at the school.
- 3.45 The children and parents of Greenloaning Primary School will have access to an educational establishment which has a well-planned and committed approach to taking forward improvement. There is sufficient capacity at Braco Primary School to fully meet the needs of the Greenloaning Primary School children without having a detrimental impact on the learning of the existing pupils of Braco Primary School.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 A number of options were considered for the future of Greenloaning Primary School as part of the Options Appraisal:

a) Continue with mothballing of Greenloaning Primary School – all pupils remain at Braco Primary School and suitability rating improved.

The school has been mothballed since October 2016. Leaving the school open but with continued mothballing of the school is only a reasonable option if there are likely to be significant changes within the catchment area in the next 2 -3 years which would result in an increase in the pupil roll. Pupil numbers are not projected to increase significantly in the next 4 years. There has been a downward trend in the number of people under 16 living in the catchment area in recent years. Pupil numbers had reduced relatively rapidly from 29 to 7 over the previous 6 years. Prior to mothballing, a large number of pupils from Greenloaning Primary School catchment attended schools in the Stirling Council area or Braco Primary School as a result of parental choice. The number of children of pre-school age living in the catchment area is very small, and in recent years there have been occasions where there have been no P1 age children choosing to attend Greenloaning Primary School. There are no housing or other developments which are likely to impact positively on the size of the pupil population in the next 2-3 years.

If the school remains mothballed, the building would remain out of use awaiting a potential reopening or final closure. While the school is mothballed, there is a possibility of it reopening, which could be viewed as a positive. However, continued mothballing creates continued uncertainty for parents and the community. In addition, there are no opportunities to progress alternative uses for the building, which may include community asset transfer, lease or sale of the building, all of which may benefit the wider community. Therefore, on balance, it is considered that continued mothballing is more likely to be a negative than a positive, in terms of community impact.

If Greenloaning Primary School was left mothballed on an indefinite basis, Perth and Kinross Council would incur annual costs to maintain the building.

Unoccupied buildings can deteriorate more rapidly than operational premises and can become a focus for opportunistic crimes and/or targets for vandalism whether the premises are located in urban or rural areas.

In summary, on the basis that there is no indication that pupil numbers will increase significantly in the next 2-3 years, mothballing is not considered a good use of resources and would prevent the building being used to benefit the community. Therefore, continued mothballing was not viewed as a reasonable alternative.

b) Consider closing Greenloaning Primary School – pupils remain at Braco Primary School and suitability rating improved.

This option would see the suitability rating for Braco Primary School improved. Facilities within the Braco Village Hall would also be improved for the benefit of both Braco and Greenloaning communities

Braco Primary School currently accommodates a number of pupils from Greenloaning Primary as a result of the mothballing. Pupil numbers at Braco are projected to remain static for the next 4 years. Braco Primary has capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers should Greenloaning Primary School be closed. This option is considered to be reasonable and further detail is provided in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact.

Greenloaning Primary School and Braco Primary School already had links with each other prior to the mothballing, including a shared headship and pupils who moved there in October 2016 following the mothballing are now settled at Braco Primary School.

Travel arrangements for pupils and staff have been in place since October 2016 and there are no known issues with that. There are environmental benefits to Greenloaning Primary School pupils being transferred to Braco Primary School in that they would be transported by the Council rather than travelling individually.

Pupil numbers at Greenloaning Primary School have been reducing year on year since 2005 when the school had 42 pupils. This is due to the increase in pupil numbers from housebuilding levelling off and fewer primary school age pupils living in the village. Pupil numbers have further decreased due to parents requesting placements at other schools both within and outwith Perth and Kinross.

The data for Greenloaning shows that the number of children eligible to start school over the period 2019 – 2022 is 13 pupils. At the time of undertaking the options appraisal, the number of children eligible to start school over that period was 5 pupils. Updated aggregated GP registration data received from the NHS indicates that this number has increased during that period. This is more than likely to be as a result of families moving into the Greenloaning area since the initial data was provided as there has been no additional housebuilding in the area. In considering the potential impact of this increase, it continues to be the case that this presents a low pupil population for Greenloaning. This would provide an occupancy level of 29% if these pupils were all to attend Greenloaning primary School. However, based on the established pattern of placing requests made for other schools by parents living in the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area, the number of pupils enrolling for school in Perth and Kinross is likely to be lower.

This increase in pupils eligible to start school over the period 2019 – 2022 would not create a sustainable pupil roll for Greenloaning Primary School.

The highest projected occupancy level, including projected pupils through house building, up to 2022/23 at Greenloaning Primary School is 29%. This is based on pupils who attended the school when it was mothballed returning to the school if it were to re-open.

If the school was to close, there would be no significant impact on the community in terms of access to facilities for community events. Braco Village Hall is available for community use and is currently well used by the community. Greenloaning Primary School was used by the Community Council to hold their meetings prior to the school being mothballed.

It is not considered that the closure of the school would have a negative impact on the sustainability of the community. Greenloaning is located approximately 2 miles from Braco. The community currently travel to access health, retail and leisure facilities.

The Council has received requests from a number of sources for the use of the school should it close. Closure of the school would provide opportunities for the building to be used for the benefit of the community, either for business or residential use, or for community use if a suitable plan was identified.

Pupil numbers at Greenloaning Primary School have been reducing over recent years and the positive impact of Greenloaning pupils on the school roll supports the sustainability of Braco Primary School which is also in a rural location and is a rural school.

Improving the suitability rating of Braco Primary School benefits the pupils from both Braco and Greenloaning by providing a better environment for learning.

It is considered that closure of the school is the most appropriate response to the issue of a decreasing roll. Low numbers of pre-school children coupled with parents choosing to place their children at other primary schools, has led to the school being mothballed. There are currently 14 pupils attending schools in the Stirling Council area. There is no indication that the roll will increase significantly in future years. This option also has the benefit of supporting the sustainability of Braco Primary School, which is approximately 2 miles from Greenloaning Primary School and is also a small rural school. There is no evidence to indicate that this option would have an adverse impact on the community, travelling arrangements or the environment.

c) Re-open Greenloaning Primary School and suitability rating at Braco Primary School improved.

Calculations show that if the school re-opened in August 2019, the school roll would be a maximum of 4 pupils, rising to 14 pupils if all the catchment pupils attended in the next 4 years. At the time of undertaking the options appraisal, the school roll was projected to be a maximum of 3 pupils rising to 6 pupils in the next 3 years. Updated aggregated GP registration data received from the NHS indicates that this number has increased during that period. This is more than likely to be as a result of families moving into the Greenloaning area since the initial data was provided as there has been no additional housebuilding in the area.

In considering the potential impact of this increase, it continues to be the case that this presents a low pupil population for Greenloaning. This would provide a highest occupancy level of 29% if these pupils were all to attend Greenloaning primary School.

However, based on the established pattern of placing requests made for other schools by parents living in the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area, the number of pupils enrolling for school in Perth and Kinross is likely to be lower. This increase in pupils eligible to start school over the period 2019 – 2022 would not create a sustainable pupil roll for Greenloaning Primary School. However, based on the settled pattern of placing requests made for other schools by parents living in the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area, the number of pupils enrolling for school in Perth and Kinross is likely to be lower.

There would be a revenue cost of approximately £125,451 annually if Greenloaning Primary School were to re-open. This is predominantly made up of staff and building costs. The capital cost of upgrading the building of £319,987 would be required for Greenloaning Primary School, in addition to the costs associated with improving the suitability rating at Braco Primary School. The cost to improve the suitability and condition of Braco Primary School is approximately £2.1m. There would be additional costs for transporting the pupils to Greenloaning Primary School for the duration of the decant whilst improvement works were underway at Braco Primary School. Estimated preliminary costs for the decant is £233,500. There would also be a cost of £62,000 to improve facilities in the Braco Village Hall.

This is not a sustainable school roll and would incur significant increased costs and therefore this option was not considered to be a reasonable alternative.

d) Re-open Greenloaning Primary School and split the stages of education between both schools. Suitability rating improved at Braco Primary School.

This option proposed to transport children from Braco to Greenloaning to retain an operational school building in the village of Greenloaning. This option would in effect be the closure of Greenloaning Primary School with the retention of the building and its operation as part of Braco Primary School operating over a split site.

This would require Braco Primary School building to be used for nursery to P3 pupils and the building at Greenloaning would be used for P4 – P7 pupils. Arrangements would need to be put in place to ensure that the educational and social environment for both sets of pupils was managed to take into consideration the separate locations. The school would have to consider how it may adapt learning and teaching to ensure that there is still a 'whole school' ethos over the two sites. In particular, arrangements would have to be made to ensure that younger children and older children were given opportunities to interact both socially and educationally and that vertical learning is still a feature of the curriculum. The transition between P3 and P4 would also need to be considered carefully.

Staggered school start and end times and possibly lunchtimes would need to be implemented to accommodate families who have children of different ages, who would be accommodated on separate sites two miles apart.

The costs for the upgrade of Braco Primary School are approximately £2.1m with additional decant costs of approximately £233,500. In addition there is a capital cost of £319,987 for upgrading the building at Greenloaning.

There would also be an annual cost of £125,451 if Greenloaning Primary School was to re-open as an 'annex' of Braco Primary School. This is predominantly made up of staff and building costs. There would also be transport costs of approximately

£35,100 to transport pupils from Greenloaning to Braco for PE and whole school events. Home to school transport for this option would currently be approximately £104,500 per annum.

This option would result in an operational school building remaining in Greenloaning. However, the benefits of having pupils attend a school building in Greenloaning as part of Braco Primary School are outweighed by the compromises that would have to be made.

These include operating hours, logistical issues created for both parents and staff and the increase in daily travel of pupils and the impact this may have on learning and teaching. This would result in 18 pupils having to travel further to school than their current journey to Braco Primary School.

Careful consideration would be required to ensure that the educational and social environment for both sets of pupils was managed to take into consideration the separate locations. The school would have to consider how it could adapt learning and teaching to ensure that there is still a 'whole school' ethos over the two sites. In particular, arrangements would have to be made to ensure that younger children and older children were given opportunities to interact both socially and educationally and that vertical learning was still a feature of the curriculum. The transition between P3 and P4 would also need to be considered carefully.

Staffing and timetabling for personalised support would require to consider staff moving between both sites and how this would impact on their direct work with children. Arrangements would have to consider the possibility of leaving one site without additional support for unforeseen circumstances. Arrangements for family learning projects and initiatives would also have to be considered for parents with children with siblings in different sites. Similar considerations would require planning for buddy and mentoring programmes where children from older classes support younger children both in the classroom and during break and lunch periods.

In terms of safeguarding and child protection both buildings sites would require a trained Child Protection Officer who was able to deal with child protection concerns and wellbeing concerns raised by staff. In relation to the ethos and life with whole school projects, working groups, assemblies etc, consideration would have to be given to arrangements for transporting children between both schools during the school day, while minimising the reduction in curriculum learning and teaching time. Travelling will also have to consider staffing ratios for children travelling between both sites.

Staggered school start and end times and possibly lunchtimes would need to be implemented to accommodate families who have children of different ages, who will be accommodated on separate sites two miles apart and for those pupils who have lunch at home

Therefore this option was not considered to be a reasonable alternative.

e) Catchment area 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.

A catchment review can in principle be a reasonable option, in some cases, to increase the sustainability of a school. An in-depth analysis in each case is required to ascertain if a sustainable increase in school roll could be achieved and a detrimental impact on neighbouring schools is not created as a result.

There are limited numbers of pupils living in the catchment areas surrounding Braco Primary School and Greenloaning Primary School catchments and the boundaries would have to be moved a significant distance in each direction to increase pupil rolls. This would lead to some other rural school rolls being detrimentally impacted and pupils having increased travel time to reach their school.

Therefore, it is unlikely that increasing the catchment areas for the schools would lead to a sustainable roll at Greenloaning Primary School. This is due to the small numbers of children living in these areas. This option was therefore not considered a reasonable alternative.

f) Consider closing Braco Primary School and pupils moved to an extended Greenloaning Primary School

The Greenloaning Primary School building and outdoor areas currently have a higher suitability rating than Braco Primary School, however the suitability at Braco Primary School can be improved.

This option would see the majority of pupils ie those from Braco Primary School having to travel further to reach their catchment school than they do currently.

The revenue cost for operating Greenloaning Primary School would increase to a similar amount of £248,443 which it costs to operate Braco Primary School as the schools would be a similar size. A revenue saving of approximately £125,161 would be anticipated if Braco Primary School closed. There would be additional transport costs of £108,000 associated with Braco pupils being transported to Greenloaning, which would reduce the revenue saving to £17,161.

Capital funding of approximately £2.2m would be required to increase the capacity at Greenloaning Primary School which is broadly equivalent to the cost of improving the suitability of Braco Primary School.

It is also possible that this option would put the future of the village hall in Braco in jeopardy. The Council has a management agreement with Braco Hall Committee for the village hall and the school is one of the main users of Braco Village Hall.

The Hall is used daily for lunches and a number of times a week for other activities including PE. The school pays for the use of the hall and, therefore, it is possible that the future of Braco Village Hall would be at risk if the school no longer used and paid for the facilities. This would have a negative impact on both villages.

This option was not considered a reasonable alternative due to the fact that the majority of pupils live in or near Braco Primary School and would have to travel further to get to their local school.

4.2 Discounted options

Immediate re-opening of the school was not considered to be a reasonable option, given the very small number of children resident in the catchment area who attended the school prior to mothballing. If the school had re-opened in August 2018, the maximum pupil numbers from the catchment would be 2.

It is highly unlikely that any of the pupils from the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area would return to the school were it to re-open, based on feedback from the pre-consultation sessions.

Even assuming all future P1 pupils living in Greenloaning catchment area were to attend Greenloaning Primary School if it were to re-open, the school roll would only reach between 4 and 14 pupils for the period 2019 - 2022. This was, therefore, not included as an option for consideration.

4.3 Alternative Options

In developing the Options Appraisal for Greenloaning Primary School, Perth and Kinross Council undertook a robust process of consultation work and consulted face to face with key stakeholders which allowed opportunities for parents, staff, pupils and the wider communities to consider and discuss the alternatives with the Council.

Stakeholders were able to provide valuable feedback to the Council on the aspects of the alternatives which were reasonable and not reasonable as well as being given the opportunity to explore other alternatives, ensuring that these were communicated to the Council. The result of this was an Options Appraisal that was comprehensive and inclusive of the key stakeholders' views. In giving further opportunity to provide representation of any other alternatives, the Council has 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. No other alternatives were notified to the Council during this process.

5. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 5.1 On 21 March 2018, Lifelong Learning Committee considered the [options appraisal](#) for Greenloaning Primary School and agreed to commence formal consultation on a proposal to close Greenloaning Primary School ([Report No 18/87 refers](#)) in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 5.2 An electronic link to the Proposal Paper was issued by letter on 23 August 2018 to those individuals and bodies listed under Distribution within the document. The Proposal Paper was also published on the Council's website: www.pkc.gov.uk
- 5.3 The Proposal Paper made clear to consultees that the consultation period would run from Monday 27 August 2018 until Friday 5 October 2018 – a period of at least 30 school days.

5.4 The proposal on which consultation took place was that:

- Provision of a school at Greenloaning Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 28 June 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The pupils of Greenloaning Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Braco Primary School, from 1 July 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- The delineated catchment area of Braco Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Greenloaning Primary School from 1 July 2019.

5.5 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 27 August 2018. All statutory consultees were written to providing a link to the proposal paper and details of where and how to obtain a paper copy. 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 27 August 2018.
- One public meeting was held to discuss the proposal on Tuesday 11 September 2018.
- The Consultation period ended on Friday 5 October 2018.
- Education Scotland's involvement consisted of: the options appraisal and proposal paper documents being sent to them, and visits to the sites of both Braco and Greenloaning Primary Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees. They also received a copy of all written representations and the minute of the public meeting. They then prepared a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. This is attached as Appendix 4.

5.6 The following schools are affected by the proposal:

- Greenloaning Primary School
- Braco Primary School

5.7 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

5.8 The number of letters issued with details of the Proposal Paper was 141.

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 representations and enquiries on the proposal.

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 27 March 2019.

6. THE PUBLIC MEETING

6.1 The public meeting was held in Braco Primary School on Tuesday 11 September 2018. This meeting was attended by 15 members of the public. A full note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 1 which details the questions and issues raised at the meeting.

7. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

7.1 In all, three online response forms were received. All three responses received were from parents. Two responses agreed with the Council's proposal and one response disagreed with the Council's proposal. No other written representations were received. The details of the respondents are contained within the Summary of Consultation Responses, attached as Appendix 2.

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

- The decant arrangements for Braco Primary School to be refurbished.
- Whether pupils living in Greenloaning would officially become part of Braco catchment area.
- Whether a cost comparison was undertaken for works required at both sites as it is considered that Greenloaning is a superior site.
- Why the wider communities were not made aware of the public meeting.
- Population data, projected rolls and potential future growth.

- Why Greenloaning building can't be used as a community resource whilst mothballed.
- School transport and safe walking routes.
- Nursery provision, nursery hours and out of school care provision.
- The capacity of Braco Primary School.
- The use of the village hall for school activities.
- The Community Council use of Greenloaning Primary School prior to mothballing and charges for using the school when it was open.
- Capacity at Braco Primary School to include the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare and future growth of the school to support the expanded catchment area.
- Greenloaning building should be retained for nursery and out of school care provision.

- 7.3 In summary, 141 letters were issued inviting comments and participation in the consultation. Three parents participated in the consultation to make their views known in writing, with two of those parents supporting the Council's proposal.
- 7.4 Specific consultation meetings took place with pupils and staff at Braco Primary School and full details of these is attached as Appendix 3.

8. EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO WRITTEN AND ORAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 8.1 **Clarification was sought regarding how the proposal fits in with the temporary decant arrangements being planned when Braco is being refurbished.**
 A timeline has been planned for the statutory consultation and this will be concluded well in advance of the decant arrangements starting. The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to the Lifelong Learning Committee for a final decision on whether or not to implement the proposal to permanently close Greenloaning Primary School. This proposal is not seeking views on whether or not to refurbish Braco Primary School as that decision has already been taken by Lifelong Learning Committee on 21 March 2018. It has been agreed that works are to be carried out at Braco Primary School and Braco Village Hall to improve the suitability of the school environment. These works will be carried out whether or not the proposal to permanently close Greenloaning Primary School is implemented.
- 8.2 **Clarification was sought regarding pupils who live in Greenloaning catchment area where parents had already made a placing request for their child to attend Braco Primary School and whether these pupils will officially become part of Braco catchment area.**
 If the decision is taken to implement the proposal, then Braco Primary School catchment area would be permanently extended to include all of Greenloaning and all pupils living in Greenloaning would then be eligible to be included as part of the new, larger Braco Primary School catchment area. Pupils from Greenloaning would be

entitled to free home to school transport to attend Braco Primary School. It was noted that some parents currently transported their own children to Braco as they had attended as a result of placing requests.

Parents were advised that should the proposal be implemented, they could complete a transport application form online to apply for home to school transport.

8.3 It was queried that a superior site has been abandoned at Greenloaning and whether a cost comparison had been undertaken for the works required at both schools and whether the future potential growth had been considered.

This has been considered as part of the options appraisal. The capacity at both sites has been considered. Greenloaning Primary School currently has capacity for 49 pupils which is not sufficient for current and future pupil numbers from both Braco and Greenloaning. Capital funding of approximately £2.2m would be required to increase the capacity at Greenloaning Primary School which is broadly equivalent to the cost of improving Braco Primary School. The cost for the refurbishment of Braco Primary School is approximately £2.1m plus additional decant costs. However, as the costs are much the same, additional consideration has to be given to the fact that the majority of pupils live in or near Braco Primary School and would have to travel further to get to school than they currently do.

In addition, the option to close Braco and move pupils to an extended Greenloaning Primary School could potentially put the future of the village hall in Braco in jeopardy if the school no longer used and paid for the facilities, with a potential negative impact on both communities.

The future potential growth has been considered based on what is known now and will continue to be monitored as is the case for all schools.

8.4 Clarification was sought regarding when the decision was made, was the population looked at.

Population data for under 5s was provided by the NHS for both Braco and Greenloaning communities and pupil numbers are projected to remain static over the next 4 years. Pupil projections in the catchment area do not indicate that the potential pupil numbers will increase in the future. There are low numbers of pre-school children over the next 4 years and no house building planned in the area. The demographics will continue to be monitored.

8.5 A query was raised why the community was not made aware of this meeting.

Legislation sets out who must be consulted when a Council is consulting on a school proposal. The Council has specifically written to those statutory consultees who require to be notified of the proposal. Individual members of the wider community who are not parents of pupils who are attending an affected school are not statutory consultees. The Community Council is a statutory consultee representing the wider community and they were notified of the consultation. Community Councils would normally publish this information for the wider community through their communication channels/social media etc. Public notice adverts have been published in the local press and it has also been published on the Council's website for interested members of the wider community.

Attendance at the public meeting is not the only way representations can be made and anyone wishing to express a view on the proposal, was able to do so online or by email

or in writing by 5 October 2018. It was agreed that the Council would post an article on social media regarding the consultation following the public meeting.

- 8.6 **Clarification was sought regarding why Greenloaning building can't be used when it is mothballed and whether it can be used as a community resource.**
When a school is mothballed, it is a temporary ceasing of operations and the building must be able to be reinstated as a school, if required, at short notice. It is acknowledged that this is frustrating for the community not to be able to use the building when it is still mothballed. The Council has taken advice on this matter but there are risks to the Council and the Council's ability to use the building at short notice in terms of any lease arrangements and, therefore, this is not considered appropriate.

In respect of whether the building could be temporarily retained as a school but available to the community to book for let access, this would need to be investigated further in terms of the requirements of the community and to see if it would be feasible to provide access to the building in terms of staffing costs, energy costs etc. It is not part of the statutory consultation proposal but could be looked at to see if costs are a factor and whether the building could be used in the evenings and weekends. There was, however, no pattern of previous regular community use by Greenloaning community.

- 8.7 **A query was raised regarding school transport and what will be provided given the unsuitability of some of the roads used with different speeds and lack of safe walking routes, including why the speed limit has not been reduced and there being no safe area to cross.**

It is acknowledged that whilst almost all the children live within the statutory walking distance to Braco Primary School and to Greenloaning Primary School during the decant, one particular part of the road does not meet the national criteria for a safe walking route to school. Therefore, home to school transport would be provided for pupils from Greenloaning to attend Braco Primary School. The Council can investigate whether the speed limit could be reduced and pavement areas improved as part of the decant/refurbishment plans. However, it should be noted that it takes a very long time to implement a speed limit reduction.

- 8.8 **A query was raised regarding whether there will be changes to the nursery hours as the nursery day is longer than the school day. To help working parents, will pre-school and school finish at the same time?**

As part of the work that is being undertaken on the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 hours, the Early Years Team will be considering this further with parents. It is recognised that there are difficulties where nursery and school start and finish times are different. There is a national review of Out of School Care underway as part of the Scottish Government's National Framework for Out of School Care and Perth and Kinross Council will be taking cognisance of national developments in this area. It is noted that the additional hours being delivered in nursery may have an impact on parents' choices for nursery.

- 8.9 **Clarification was sought regarding the capacity of Braco Primary School.**
The capacity at Braco Primary School is 68 pupils based on the space standard of 2m². At Census 2018, the school roll was 44 pupils and the future projections predict the highest roll will be 52 pupils. There is an expansion plan for nursery places and there is flexibility, if required, in terms of the space standard used to calculate capacity.

8.10 A query was raised regarding whether the community is able to use the hall as a community facility and not just for school activities.

The village hall is used for school activities during the school day as the village hall is owned by the Council and the Council has a management agreement with Braco Hall Committee for the village hall. The use of the hall is required by the school for lunches and PE, as well as some other activities. The refurbishment works to the hall, as part of the refurbishment of Braco Primary School, will benefit both communities. It is considered that the hall can be used by the community when not required during the school day for the school.

8.11 A query was raised regarding whether movement in/out of the community has been properly considered when projecting pupil numbers as the methodology does not show true figures regarding placing requests. If projections are based on those currently attending Braco and not the total number of pupils who could attend, the projections will be underestimated.

A number of factors are considered when projecting pupil numbers. If pupils attend another school as the result of a placing request, it is most unlikely that they will return to their catchment school. Therefore, the base number for projections is based on the numbers of pupils who are actually in attendance along with consideration of NHS data for pre-school pupils and expected pupils from planned housebuilding.

8.12 Clarification was sought regarding where information will be shared about the refurbishment.

There will be a separate project to take the refurbishment forward. Pupils, staff, parents and wider community representatives will be involved as part of a User Reference Group for the project.

8.13 A comment was made that it is misleading to state that there is little evidence that Greenloaning Primary School building was well used by the community when it was operational. The Community Council held meetings in the school before it was mothballed and it has not been available for use since then. However, the Council charges for using the school when it was open were prohibitive for community groups to use the school. Therefore, it is not the case that the community did not want to use the school building; it was due the school being unaffordable for community groups to use and then being mothballed.

The comment is noted. The charges levied for the use of Greenloaning Primary School building were in accordance with the Council approved charges for School Lets which apply to all schools in Perth and Kinross. School let charges are between £4.00 - £15.00 per hour for multiple concession bookings and between £15.00 - £30.00 per hour for single concession bookings. Community halls also charge for their use and typically charge between £3.85 – £30.45 per hour depending on venue, facility and peak/off peak times. Community halls charge a flat rate regardless of whether the booking is a single or multiple booking. Therefore, there is little difference in the level of charges and, in many cases, a school let will be cheaper for block bookings for junior community activities such as Brownies, Beavers etc.

8.14 **A comment was made that a number of parents choose to send their children to schools and nurseries outwith the local area but that may not always be the case and this pattern cannot be relied upon going forward when considering future pupil numbers. With improved childcare, new families may be encouraged into the area.**

The comment is noted.

8.15 **A comment was made that there may not be enough space at Braco (even after the refurbishment) to also include the extra statutory early years childcare that will need to be provided from 2020. I would like PKC to consider using the present Greenloaning Primary site and premises to deliver future nursery education for the Braco and Greenloaning catchment area, and also before and after school childcare with some staffing provided by PKC. This would provide more space on the existing Braco site for the planned refurbishment for primary education and future growth should more children move to the area, particularly if out of school childcare was available. The Greenloaning Primary School site (next to A9) is also very central for parental drop-off and pick-up before and after school for children attending other schools locally, e.g. Blackford and Auchterarder, helping alleviate some of the current childcare pressures in the surrounding communities.**

A comment was made that the related planned improvements for Braco Primary School potentially have insufficient nursery places to support a thriving school for the revised catchment area. The predictions re numbers may be wrong in that the impact of the additional nursery hours provision may well not be very predictable.

The [Perth and Kinross Council Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) Expansion Plan](#) articulates the planned delivery models of 1140 hours ELC in Perth and Kinross and ensures that within localities there is a range of options for parents/carers to access funded ELC. This will include partner provider nurseries, childminders and a number of local authority settings offering a “mixed economy” of provision, including in some settings, all year round provision and longer opening hours. The ELC options available will be influenced by further consultation with parents/carers in localities and available resources.

The expansion of ELC to 1140 hours requires significant changes to how ELC is currently delivered within PKC. There is an opportunity to deliver flexible, affordable and most importantly, high quality ELC for children, which supports more parents to work, train or study, especially those who need routes into sustainable employment and out of poverty. [Eleven distinct “Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) Community Groups”](#) have been developed to take account of the geographical spread of localities across Perth and Kinross.

The concern from parents/carers that there may be insufficient capacity at Braco to deliver 1140 hours ELC from 2020 has been taken into account in terms of planning for Early Learning and Childcare in the area.

Specifically, Braco Primary School catchment area forms part of the Auchterarder Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) community group. Each community group in Perth and

Kinross will contain a “mixed economy” of provisions to deliver 1140 hours of ELC made up of local authority settings, partner providers and childminders. Within each ELC community, there will be a mix of providers, and a range of delivery models for families to choose from.

There are 203 nursery places within the Auchterarder ELC community group, comprising 121 local authority places and 82 partner provider places. The projected number of nursery places required within the Auchterarder ELC community group for 2019 is 189 and in 2020 is 187. There are also 11 childminders in this community group, which will increase the supply further.

Therefore, the overall demand for nursery places within Braco and Greenloaning can be met by the number of places available within the Auchterarder ELC community group assuming all eligible children access the service. This position would be no different to that where Greenloaning Primary School was continuing to operate as a school as it did not have a nursery class.

The refurbished Braco Primary School will have sufficient capacity to accommodate the projected number of pupils from Braco and Greenloaning. The highest projected occupancy of Braco Primary School is 77%. However, there is flexibility to increase the capacity of Braco Primary School, should it be required, within the planned refurbishment.

Therefore, there is no requirement for the Council to establish nursery provision at Greenloaning. There is sufficient capacity within Braco Primary School for the projected number of primary school pupils. The overall demand for nursery places within Braco and Greenloaning can be met by the number of places available within the Auchterarder ELC community group.

In respect of the request for before and after school care to be established at the Greenloaning site, there is a national review of Out of School Care underway as part of the Scottish Government’s National Framework for Out of School Care and Perth and Kinross Council will be taking cognisance of national developments in this area in considering future requirements.

The Childcare Strategy Team supports parents and volunteers to explore a range of childcare models and options within communities. Out of School Care is not a statutory service and it is not something which the Council would be able to set up or manage. The Childcare Strategy Team can provide support to set up a sustainable childcare service in terms of advice, guidance and training for committees or staff.

8.16 A comment was made that Greenloaning school site should be conserved for the local community especially in view of the dire need for before and after school care.

The Council has received formal enquires from members of the community for the use of the building to benefit the community. The closure of the school would provide the community with an opportunity to use the building as a facility solely for community use. Greenloaning Primary School building is to be used as a decant facility for Braco Primary School during the refurbishment of Braco Primary School. If the proposal to permanently close Greenloaning Primary School is approved, the building will be surplus to the requirements of Education and Children’s Services when the

refurbishment and decant is complete. This would provide an opportunity for consideration to be given to a community asset transfer. As there have been notes of interest in the school building should it close and subsequently be sold or leased, it is likely that an alternative use for the building could be found.

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 The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to close Greenloaning Primary School.
- 9.3 Education Scotland visited Braco and Greenloaning Primary Schools the week commencing 22 October 2018 to speak to relevant consultees. Education Scotland did not attend the public meeting held on 11 September 2018 in connection with the Council's proposals.
- 9.4 The Education Scotland report is reproduced in full (Appendix 4).
- 9.5 The report supports the proposal and is summarised below:
- Perth and Kinross Council's proposal has clear educational benefits. The Council has concluded that there is no foreseeable prospect of an increased and stable pupil roll at Greenloaning Primary School. The Council's proposal would be consistent with its statutory duty to secure best value in the use of resources.
 - Children attending Braco Primary School would benefit from learning and participation with their peers and have access to a broader range of teachers and other staff. Staff would benefit from greater opportunities for professional dialogue at Braco Primary School including arrangements for peer support in assessment and moderation.
 - The Council proposes to undertake refurbishment work at Braco Primary School and the village hall to improve the environment for learning.
 - Children, parents and staff who spoke with HM Inspectors supported the proposal and agreed with the educational benefits outlined by the Council.
 - The Council put forward a clear rationale for its proposal. Five alternative options were explored in detail, including an option to consider closing Braco Primary School and extend Greenloaning Primary School. This option would have required a greater number of children to travel from Braco to Greenloaning. The Council concluded appropriately that the permanent closure of Greenloaning Primary School was the only reasonable option.
 - The Council considered the likely effects on the local community and concluded that there would be little effect on the sustainability of the community arising from the closure of Greenloaning Primary School. The Council has indicated that the

closure of the school would provide an opportunity to use the school building as a facility for community use.

- The Council considered the likely effect of different travel arrangements arising from its proposal and concluded reasonably that given the short distance of approximately two miles between the schools the impact of different travel arrangements would be limited.

9.6 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 that pupils, parents and staff have raised no objections to the Council's proposal.

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

9.6.1 **In its final paper, the Council will need to provide a timescale for refurbishment of Braco Primary School and village hall and, if possible, further details on the work proposed.**

The programme for Braco Primary School has not been finalised, however it is currently anticipated that works will be completed by summer 2021. The works will include reconfiguration of the existing building to allow all teaching facilities to be on the ground floor. A small extension will be provided for ancillary services, this will include offices and meeting rooms. The whole building will be rewired and IT facilities upgraded. There will be new heating and lighting and the building will be redecorated throughout.

Work on the village hall began in 2018. The scope of the project includes redecoration, additional storage, creation of a disabled access and toilet refurbishment.

9.6.2 **In its final paper, the Council will need to provide reassurance to parents on sufficient capacity for early years provision as parents were concerned that there might not be enough space at Braco Primary School to meet demand for local nursery provision.**

The [Perth and Kinross Council Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) Expansion Plan](#) articulates the planned delivery models of 1140 hours ELC in Perth and Kinross and ensures that within localities there is a range of options for parents/carers to access funded ELC. This will include partner provider nurseries, childminders and a number of local authority settings offering a "mixed economy" of provision, including in some settings, all year round provision and longer opening hours. The ELC options available will be influenced by further consultation with parents/carers in localities and available resources.

The expansion of ELC to 1140 hours requires significant changes to how ELC is currently delivered within PKC. There is an opportunity to deliver flexible, affordable and most importantly, high quality ELC for children, which supports more parents to work, train or study, especially those who need routes into sustainable employment and out of poverty. [Eleven distinct "Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) Community Groups"](#) have been developed to take account of the geographical spread of localities across Perth and Kinross.

The concern from parents/carers appear to be that the additional hours being delivered at Braco Primary School as part of 1140 hours may increase the number of pupils choosing to attend the nursery. This assumption has been taken into account in terms of planning for Early Learning and Childcare in the area.

Specifically, Braco Primary School catchment area forms part of the Auchterarder Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) community group. Each community group in Perth and Kinross will contain a “mixed economy” of provisions to deliver 1140 hours of ELC made up of local authority settings, partner providers and childminders. Within each ELC community, there will be a mix of providers, and a range of delivery models for families to choose from.

There are 203 nursery places within the Auchterarder ELC community group, comprising 121 local authority places and 82 partner provider places. The projected number of nursery places required within the Auchterarder ELC community group for 2019 is 189 and in 2020 is 187. There are also 11 childminders in this community group, which will increase the supply further.

Therefore, the overall demand for nursery places within Braco and Greenloaning can be met by the number of places available within the Auchterarder ELC community group assuming all eligible children access the service.

This position would be no different to that where Greenloaning Primary School was continuing to operate as a school as it did not have a nursery class.

9.6.3 **The Council will also need to outline its plans to engage with the local community on options for future use of the Greenloaning Primary School building.**

Perth and Kinross Council will continue to engage with the local community regarding options for the future use of the Greenloaning Primary School building should the proposal be implemented. The future use of the Greenloaning Primary School building can only be considered following the conclusion of the decant arrangements which will be in place for the duration of the refurbishment of Braco Primary School.

If the proposal to permanently close Greenloaning Primary School is approved, Education and Children’s services would declare the building surplus to the requirements of Perth and Kinross Council. This would provide an opportunity for the building to be sold, leased or could present the local community with an opportunity for alternative uses of the building as part of a Community Asset Transfer. The Council has received enquiries from members of the community for the use of the building to benefit the community should it be closed.

10. RURAL SCHOOL – COMPLIANCE WITH SECTIONS 11A TO 13 OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

10.1 Greenloaning Primary School is an accessible rural school, and the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 therefore requires the Education Authority to have special regard to the following factors:

- The likely effect on the local community as a consequence of the proposal; and
- The likely effect caused by different travelling arrangements that may be required.

10.2 Effect on the Local Community

Community Impact – Loss of the school

- 10.2.1 The number of primary pupils has fallen leading to a drop in the numbers of children living in the catchment area. However, it also seems to be the case that families who do live within the catchment area are more mobile and exercising their right to choose other schools for their children.
- 10.2.2 The community did not suggest that the lack of a school would deter new families from moving into the area. It is clear that families living in the catchment area are travelling to access education as well as other services and so it appears to be an accepted part of life within the community.
- 10.2.3 In 2017, the Council closed schools in Calvine (Struan Primary School) and Enochdhu (Straloch Primary School) after they had been mothballed for 5 years. The evidence from both areas was that families were not deterred from moving into the area by having to travel to a neighbouring village. There are clear parallels with Greenloaning in that the communities already travelled to other local communities to access services. Neither school/community was as accessible as Greenloaning, which is close to Dunblane, Auchterarder and Crieff and has good road links.
- 10.2.4 The evidence indicates that there will be little effect on the sustainability of the community if the school were to close.

Community Impact - Use of the Building

- 10.2.5 Community events between Braco and Greenloaning are generally held within Braco Village Hall. Although the Community Council held meetings in Greenloaning Primary School prior to the school being mothballed, there is little evidence that the Greenloaning Primary School was well used by the wider community when it was operational.
- 10.2.6 There are no other facilities or services in Greenloaning other than the primary school. Although the school is described as important to the community, a large number of pupils attend alternative primary schools and the school has been mothballed due to lack of pupil numbers.
- 10.2.7 The Greenloaning community require to travel to access most services due to a lack of amenities within the village. This is facilitated by the fact that the village lies in close proximity to the main A9 trunk road. Many other communities in rural Perth and Kinross travel significantly further distances on more minor roads to access services.
- 10.2.8 The closure of the school would provide the community with an opportunity to use the building as a facility solely for community use. If the community do not use the school building upon closure, Braco Village Hall is approximately 2 miles from Greenloaning accessed by a main road. Closure of the school would therefore have little impact on the existing arrangements of the community.
- 10.2.9 This option supports the retention of Braco Village Hall for the use of both communities.

10.2.10 The Council has received enquiries from members of the community for the use of the building to benefit the community should it be closed.

10.3 Travel Arrangements

10.3.1 As Greenloaning Primary School is a rural school, special regard was paid to the rural school factors. These were considered fully in the Options Appraisal stage and were a focus of the pre-consultation with the community.

10.3.2 The travel distance from Greenloaning Primary School to Braco Primary School is approximately 2 miles (driving) with an approximate travel time of 4 minutes. The current travel arrangements have been in place since Greenloaning Primary School was mothballed in October 2016 and there are no known issues. There is a small number of pupils who are currently travelling from Greenloaning to Braco to attend school.

10.3.3 If Greenloaning Primary School was permanently closed, all children would be transported by the Council to Braco Primary School. The travel distance between Greenloaning and Braco is not far and in other more rural parts of Perth and Kinross it is not uncommon for pupils to travel greater distances on more minor roads to reach their school. Taking this option forward would not adversely affect the travel arrangements for current pupils and future pupils are unlikely to have hugely different travel arrangements.

10.3.4 Travelling for primary school education is common across Perth & Kinross because of the geography of the area. Prior to the mothballing of Greenloaning Primary School, a number of pupils from Greenloaning travelled to Braco Primary School by choice as the result of successful placing requests which is an indicator that many parents consider this to be a manageable travel distance for their children.

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 in which they work. A distance of 2 miles is a relatively short distance to travel in rural Perth and Kinross. It is therefore considered that there would be very limited impact on staff travelling arrangements.

10.3.6 As the school was not generally used regularly by the community, there should be no impact on travelling arrangements for any other users of the school's facilities. In any event, the distance is relatively small and the local community is used to travelling to access other services such as GP and dental surgeries, shops and post offices. Braco Primary School is closer than most other facilities which the community require to access and community events are generally held in Braco Village Hall.

10.4 Environmental Impact

10.4.1 At the time Greenloaning Primary School was mothballed, 8 pupils were travelling to Braco Primary School from the Greenloaning Primary School catchment area as the result of successful placing requests, for which there is an environmental impact. This has been offset by the requirement to run Greenloaning Primary School as a mothballed building rather than as an operational building currently. This would continue to be offset if the school were closed.

10.4.2 Pupils from Greenloaning catchment area would be transported by the Council to Braco Primary School which reduces environmental impact as they would travel together rather than separately with parents.

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 meeting, and
- (iii) Education Scotland's report.

12.2 Following receipt of the Education Scotland report, three online representations and oral representations made at a public meeting 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 meeting and have considered equally carefully the Education Scotland report and the online representations.

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

12.6 The educational benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made.

- 12.7 There were no factors included in the Education Scotland report or representations made requiring any aspect of the educational benefits to be reconsidered.
- 12.8 There were no aspects included in the representations made which provided a different conclusion in relation to the rural school factors.
- 12.9 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 falling and unsustainable school roll of Greenloaning Primary School.
- 12.10 It is considered that the proposal addresses the issue of the falling and unsustainable school roll and remains the best solution to ensure the children and parents of Greenloaning Primary School will have access to an educational establishment which has a well planned and committed approach to taking forward improvement. There is sufficient capacity at Braco Primary School to fully meet the needs of the Greenloaning Primary School children without disrupting the learning of the Braco Primary School children.

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

- 13.1 If the Education Authority makes 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 27 March 2019. 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 17 April 2019.

- 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 wider peer group of both sexes at Braco Primary School which is a positive impact.

In terms of Socio Economic Impact, the assessment identified that there may be a small disadvantage for some parents who would have further to travel when attending meetings or events in school. However, the identified benefits significantly outweigh any disadvantage. It is also not considered to be a significant disadvantage as parents are already travelling to access all other services outside Greenloaning village. In addition, a number of pupils from Greenloaning catchment area were already attending Braco Primary School as the result of successful placing requests prior to Greenloaning Primary School being mothballed. If the proposal is to be implemented, these pupils would receive free home to school transport provided by the Council to attend Braco Primary School rather than being transported separately and at a cost to their parents.

- 14.3 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.
- 14.4 As it is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in written form, if required, on 22 February 2019, this meets the statutory requirement to publish this report for more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by Lifelong Learning Committee on 27 March 2019.

15. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no staffing implications relating to the proposal. Appropriate arrangements were made for staff at Greenloaning Primary School when the school was mothballed in October 2016 and these arrangements have been in place since then.

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 clear educational benefits for young people. This includes the larger number and wider range of peers in Braco Primary School. This allows children to access learning with groups of learners at all stages within a primary school and to develop their social and interpersonal skills in a broader range of appropriate contexts.

16.3 If the Council adopts the proposal, it is understood that the educational benefits set out in the Proposal Paper would materialise.

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 has clear educational benefits for pupils.

This includes the larger number and wider range of peers in Braco Primary School, which allows children to access a learning environment where there are groups of learners at all stages of school, further allowing them to develop their social and interpersonal skills in a broader range of appropriate contexts.

- The Council, having had special regard to the rural school factors, does not consider that the proposal will adversely affect the sustainability of the community. Indeed, there may be a positive opportunity for the Greenloaning Primary School building to be used for community use if it ceases to be used as a school following the decant arrangements during the refurbishment of Braco Primary School.
- The Council's proposals have been generally supported by parents/carers, staff and the wider community. In withdrawing the proposal, the Council would be failing to recognise or respond to there being no opposition from parents, staff and pupils towards the proposal.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 On the basis of the feedback received and taking account of the educational 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:

- The provision of a school at Greenloaning Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 28 June 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter;

- The pupils of Greenloaning Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Braco Primary School, from 1 July 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- The delineated catchment area of Braco Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Greenloaning Primary School from 1 July 2019.

Sheena Devlin
Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
22 February 2019



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

Minute of meeting held on Tuesday 11 September 2018

7.00pm at Braco Village Hall, Braco

Present

Councillor Callum Purves	Vice Convener, Lifelong Learning Committee
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director, Education and Children's Services
Sharon Johnston	Head of Education, Early Years & Primary
Karen Robertson	Service Manager, Business Services

In Attendance

Councillor Murray Lyle	Perth and Kinross Council
Gareth Findlay	Transformation Project Officer

Rose Harcus – Minute	Perth and Kinross Council
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15 members of the public.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Purves opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public in attendance to the statutory consultation public meeting. Councillor Purves introduced himself and the Council officers to those in attendance.

2. Context for Statutory Consultation

Sheena Devlin explained the background and context for the School Estate Review. The review stems from the Council's vision to make the best use of resources while optimising the educational experiences for pupils in Perth and Kinross. In November 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee agreed to include Greenloaning Primary School in the review. For ease of reading, questions and comments are detailed at section 5 and 6 respectively.

3. The Proposal

Sheena Devlin explained the consultation proposal to the attendees:

The Council proposes that:

Provision of a school at Greenloaning Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 28 June 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter;

That the pupils of Greenloaning Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Braco Primary School, from 1 July 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter; and

That the delineated catchment area of Braco Primary School be permanently extended to subsume the whole delineated catchment area of Greenloaning Primary School from 1 July 2019.

4. Presentations

Sheena Devlin, Sharon Johnston and Karen Robertson gave presentations explaining the proposal in further detail.

Sheena Devlin outlined the process of the review so far. Communities had been encouraged to participate in the pre consultation work to inform the options appraisal using a wide variety of mechanisms, including a drop-in session, email as well as the availability of an online questionnaire. This information was presented to Lifelong Learning Committee on 21 March 2018, and it was approved that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to close Greenloaning Primary School and this meeting is part of that process.

Sheena Devlin explained that Greenloaning Primary School had been mothballed since October 2016 and provided information on the capacity of the school, pupil roll and projected pupil roll. The options appraisal had demonstrated that the option of closure was considered the only reasonable option and presents the best value for education purposes. Based on feedback gathered during the appraisal of options, the Council believes the closure of Greenloaning PS is likely to have minimal adverse impact on the community.

Karen Robertson then provided information on the possible impact on travel for both pupils and the community of Greenloaning. If Greenloaning Primary was to close permanently, pupils living in Greenloaning would be eligible for free home-to-school transport. It is considered that there would likely be no significant impact caused by different travel arrangements for the wider community as they already travel to access other services.

Sharon Johnston then outlined the main educational benefits of Greenloaning pupils attending Braco PS. Braco Primary School is to benefit from a significant upgrade and adaptations, enhancing the environment for learning for all pupils. Advantages include attending a school with a larger pupil roll, opportunities to work in learning groups across stages, allowing children to have a wide and varied range of learning experiences. The early years provision at Braco supports a seamless transition in Primary 1.

Sheena Devlin summarised the rationale for the proposal, highlighting a number of pupils attend alternative primary schools, the travel distance to Braco is not unreasonable, it is unlikely the school roll at Greenloaning will increase to a sustainable level and Braco Primary School can accommodate the projected and potential pupils from the combined catchment area.

Karen Robertson outlined the process of statutory consultation. She highlighted that the process is strictly determined by legislation to ensure thorough and robust processes across authorities in Scotland. The legislation sets out how and when the Council must undertake certain activities. The process started with the consideration by Lifelong Learning Committee on 21 March 2018 which granted permission to undertake a statutory consultation. Karen Robertson emphasised that no decisions regarding the permanent future of Greenloaning Primary School have been made. The Council must first seek the views of statutory consultees and report back to Committee with recommendations.

The period of consultation will run from **Monday 27 August to Friday 5 October** which includes 30 school days. The purpose of this consultation is to seek representations from interested parties.

Anyone who wishes to make their views on the proposal known to the Council can do so, and there are a number of ways they can do this, whether online or in person. Any representations are minuted and then published so that anyone who cannot attend public meetings can see the views which have been expressed.

At the end of the consultation period the Council is required to send the consultation documentation to Education Scotland, who then have 3 weeks to consider representations, visit affected schools and speak with staff, parents and pupils. The Council will then publish the consultation report which will include representations, Education Scotland's report and responses to any representations that were made. The report must be published for at least 3 weeks before a decision can be taken by the Lifelong Learning Committee which is likely to be March 2019. It was emphasised that these timescales are indicative and purposefully kept flexible should any part of the process require to be extended.

If the decision of Lifelong Learning Committee is to keep the school open then the Council cannot revisit the decision for 5 years. If the decision is made to close Greenloaning Primary School then the Council would notify Scottish Ministers by the end of March 2019. Ministers then have 8 weeks to consider the Council's decision. Representations can be made in writing to Scottish Ministers during the first 3 weeks. If Ministers decide not to close the school then the decision could be referred to the School Closure Panel, who then have a further 16 weeks for consideration.

A discussion followed the presentations.

5. Questions

Q. How does this proposal fit in with the temporary decant arrangements being planned when Braco is being refurbished?

A. A timeline has been planned for the statutory consultation and this will be concluded well in advance of the decant arrangements starting.

The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to the Lifelong Learning Committee for a final decision on whether or not to implement the proposal to permanently close Greenloaning Primary School. This proposal is not seeking views on whether or not to refurbish Braco Primary School as that decision has already been taken by Lifelong Learning Committee on 21 March 2018. It has been agreed that works are to be carried out at Braco Primary School and Braco Village Hall to improve the suitability of the school environment. These works will be carried out whether or not the proposal to permanently close Greenloaning Primary School is implemented.

Q. If pupils live in Greenloaning catchment area and parents had already made a placing request for their child to attend Braco Primary School, will these pupils officially become part of Braco catchment area?

A. If the decision is taken to implement the proposal, then Braco Primary School catchment area would be extended to include all of Greenloaning and all pupils living in Greenloaning would then be eligible to be included as part of the new, larger Braco Primary School catchment area. Pupils from Greenloaning would be entitled to free home to school transport to attend Braco Primary School. It was noted that some parents currently transported their own children to Braco as they had attended as a result of placing requests. Parents were advised that they could complete a transport application form online to apply for home to school transport.

Q. There is concern that a superior site has been abandoned at Greenloaning. Has a cost comparison been undertaken for the works required at both schools? What about the future potential growth?

A. Yes, this has been considered as part of the options appraisal. The capacity at both sites has been considered. Greenloaning Primary School currently has capacity for 49 pupils which is not sufficient for current and future pupil numbers from both Braco and Greenloaning. Capital funding of approximately £2.2m would be required to increase the capacity at Greenloaning Primary School which is broadly equivalent to the cost of improving Braco Primary School. The cost for the refurbishment of Braco Primary School is approximately £2.1m plus additional decant costs. However, as the costs are much the same, additional consideration has to be given to the fact that the majority of pupils live in or near Braco Primary School and would have to travel further to get to school than they currently do.

In addition, the option to close Braco and move pupils to an extended Greenloaning Primary School could potentially put the future of the village hall in Braco in jeopardy. If the school no longer used and paid for the facilities, it is possible that the future of Braco Village Hall would be at risk which would have a negative impact on both communities.

The future potential growth has been considered based on what is known now and will continue to be monitored as is the case for all schools.

Q. When the decision was made was the population looked at?

A. Population data for under 5s was provided by the NHS for both Braco and Greenloaning communities and pupil numbers are projected to remain static over the next 4 years. Pupil projections in the catchment area do not indicate that the potential pupil numbers will increase in the future. There are low numbers of pre-school children over the next 4 years and no house building planned in the area. The demographics will continue to be monitored.

Q. Why was the community not made aware of this meeting?

A. Legislation sets out who must be consulted when a Council is consulting on a school proposal. The Council has specifically written to those statutory consultees who require to be notified of the proposal. Individual members of the wider community who are not parents of pupils who are attending an affected school are not statutory consultees. The Community Council is a statutory consultee representing the wider community and they have been notified of the consultation.

Community Councils would normally publish this information for the wider community through their communication channels/social media etc. Public notice adverts have been published in the local press and it has also been published on the Council's website for interested members of the wider community. It was stated that most people do not read the press or the Council's website and were unaware of this meeting.

It was noted that attendance at the public meeting is not the only way representations can be made and anyone wishing to express a view on the proposal, can do online or by email or in writing by 5 October 2018. It was agreed that the Council would post an article on social media regarding the consultation.

Q. Why can't Greenloaning building be used when it is mothballed? Can it be used as a community resource?

- A. When a school is mothballed, it is a temporary ceasing of operations and the building must be able to be reinstated as a school, if required, at short notice. It was acknowledged that this is frustrating for the community not to be able to use the building when it is still mothballed. The Council has taken advice on this matter but there are risks to the Council and the Council's ability to use the building at short notice in terms of any lease arrangements and, therefore, this is not considered appropriate.

Discussion then focused on whether the building could be temporarily retained as a school but available to the community to book for let access. It was confirmed that this would need to be investigated further in terms of the requirements of the community and to see if it would be feasible to provide access to the building in terms of staffing costs, energy costs etc. It is not part of the statutory consultation proposal but will be looked at to see if costs are a factor and whether the building could be used in the evenings and weekends.

Q. In terms of school transport, what will be provided given the unsuitability of some of the roads used with different speeds and lack of safe walking routes? Why has the speed not been reduced, there is no safe area to cross?

- A. it is acknowledged that whilst almost all the children live within the statutory walking distance to Braco Primary School and to Greenloaning Primary School during the decant, one particular part of the road does not meet the national criteria for a safe walking route to school. Therefore, home to school transport would be provided. The Council can investigate whether the speed limit could be reduced and pavement areas improved as part of the decant/refurbishment plans. It was noted that it takes a very long time to implement a speed limit reduction.

Q. Will there be changes to the nursery hours? The nursery day is longer than the school day. To help working parents, will pre-school and school finish at the same time?

- A. As part of the work that is being undertaken on the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 hours, the Early Years Team will be considering this further with parents. It is recognised that there are difficulties where nursery and school start and finish times are different. It was noted that the additional hours being delivered in nursery may have an impact on parents' choices for nursery if options such as full-time was available in the local school, as many parents do not currently use the school nursery due to full-time placements not being available and lack of child care in the local area. This may increase the number of pupils attending nursery and subsequently moving into to P1 at Braco Primary School.

Q. What is the capacity of Braco Primary School?

A. The capacity at Braco Primary School is 68 pupils based on the space standard of 2m². As at yesterday, the school roll was 44 pupils and the future projections predict the highest roll will be 56 pupils. There is an expansion plan for nursery places and there is flexibility, if required, in terms of the space standard used to calculate capacity.

Q. Are we able to use the hall as a community facility and not just for school activities?

A. The village hall is used for school activities during the school day and the Council has a management agreement with Braco Hall Committee for the village hall. The use of the hall is required by the school for lunches and PE, as well as some other activities. The refurbishment works to the hall, as part of the refurbishment of Braco Primary School, will benefit both communities. It is considered that the hall can be used by the community when not required during the school day for the school.

Q. Is movement in/out of the community properly considered when projecting pupil numbers as the methodology does not show true figures regarding placing requests? If projections are based on those currently attending Braco and not the total number of pupils who could attend, the projections will be underestimated?

A. A number of factors are considered when projecting pupil numbers. If pupils attend another school as the result of a placing request, it is most unlikely that they will return to their catchment school. Therefore, the base number for projections is based on the numbers of pupils who are actually in attendance along with consideration of NHS data for pre-school pupils and expected pupils from planned housebuilding.

Q. Where will information be shared about the refurbishment?

A. There will be a separate project to take the refurbishment forward. Pupils, staff, parents and wider community representatives will be involved as part of a User Reference Group for the project.

6. Comments

It was stated by a member of the public that the Council's statement that there is little evidence that Greenloaning Primary School building was well used by the community when it was operational, is misleading. The Community Council held meetings in the school before it was mothballed and it has not been available for use since then. However, the Council charges for using the school when it was open were prohibitive for community groups to use the school. Therefore, it is not the case that the community did not want to use the school building; it was due the school being unaffordable for community groups to use and then being mothballed.

It was stated by a member of the public that a number of parents choose to send their children to schools and nurseries outwith the local area but that may not always be the case and this pattern cannot be relied upon going forward when considering future pupil numbers. With improved childcare, new families may be encouraged into the area.

Closing

Sheena Devlin thanked everyone for attending and for their contribution and closed the meeting.



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

The statutory consultation on the proposal to close Greenloaning Primary School commenced on Monday 27 August 2018 and closed on Friday 5 October 2018.

Details of the proposal document were issued to the list of consultees contained within the Proposal Paper. 141 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. A Public Notice advert was placed in the local press on 27 August 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.

Public Meeting

As part of the statutory consultation process, one public meeting was held on 11 September 2018 at Braco Village Hall, Braco.

Tuesday 11 September 2018 – Braco Village Hall

Attended by 15 members of the public.

Questions and comments were mainly around:

- The decant arrangements for Braco Primary School to be refurbished.
- Whether pupils living in Greenloaning would officially become part of Braco catchment area.
- Whether a cost comparison was undertaken for works required at both sites as it is considered that Greenloaning is a superior site.
- Why the wider communities were not made aware of this meeting.
- Population data, projected rolls and potential future growth.
- Why Greenloaning building can't be used as a community resource whilst mothballed.
- School transport and safe walking routes.
- Nursery provision and out of school care provision.
- The capacity of Braco Primary School.
- The use of the village hall for school activities.

Response Forms

3 online response forms were received. 2 responses agreed with the Council's proposal and 1 disagreed with the Council's proposal.

RESPONDENT GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	AGREE	DISAGREE
Parents	3	2	1
Pupils	-	-	-
Staff	-	-	-
Elected Members	-	-	-
Parent Councils	-	-	-
Community Members	-	-	-
Grandparents	-	-	-
Trade Unions	-	-	-
Unknown	-	-	-
Total	3	2	1

Comments Received on Response Forms as Submitted

- Although I agree with the proposals outlined, I am concerned that there may not be enough space at Braco (even after the refurbishment) to also include the extra statutory early years childcare that will need to be provided from 2020. With this in mind, I would like PKC to consider using the present Greenloaning Primary site and premises to deliver future nursery education for the Braco and Greenloaning catchment area, and also before and after school childcare with some staffing provided by PKC. This would provide more space on the existing Braco site for the planned refurbishment for primary education and future growth should more children move to the area, particularly if out of school childcare was available. The Greenloaning Primary School site (next to A9) is also very central for parental drop-off and pick-up before and after school for children attending other schools locally, e.g. Blackford and Auchterarder, helping alleviate some of the current childcare pressures in the surrounding communities.
- I disagree with the aspect of the related planned improvements for Braco school potentially having insufficient nursery places to support a thriving school for the revised catchment area. I believe that the predictions re. necessary numbers may be wrong in that the impact of the additional nursery hours provision may well not be very predictable.
- I believe the Greenloaning school site should be conserved for the local community especially in view of the dire need for before and after school care.

Written Representations

During the consultation period between 27 August 2018 and 5 October 2018, representations were invited from statutory consultees and interested parties. No written responses were received.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**Pupil consultation, Braco Primary School****10 September 2018****Mark Neil, Service Manager (Inclusion)****Lorna Hamilton, Project Officer (Early Years & Primary)**

Each class group had a short, age appropriate presentation on the proposal, which was to close Greenloaning permanently and have all children in the Greenloaning and Braco catchment areas attend Braco Primary School.

The pupils' understanding of the proposal was checked, with discussion taking place to ensure that all pupils understood.

Pupils were then asked to indicate by sticker which of three emotions best described how they felt about the proposal. These are detailed below.

Pupils were also given the opportunity to ask questions/share thoughts and these are also summarised below, for each class group.

P1/2 (13 pupils)

		
10	2	1

Questions***Why is everyone coming to Braco Primary School?***

It was explained that there were not many pupils at Greenloaning School, and then all the children had moved to other schools, leaving the school empty.

Why can't we go to Greenloaning Primary School?

It was explained that Braco had been chosen as it was a bigger school, and was big enough to take all the pupils.

P3/4 (14 pupils)

		
1	12	1

Comments

“Excited because of new people to make friends with”

“Sad because I live in Greenloaning and Braco is far away”

“Sad because Braco is a nice small school”

Questions

I don't understand what that means?

MN explained that there won't be much difference to how Braco school is now, because all children from the Greenloaning catchment area are already at Braco Primary School or other schools. We are just making it permanent.

P5/6/7 (16 pupils)

		
12	2	2

Comments

“I think closing down Greenloaning School would be a good idea because both schools are quite close so there isn't much point in having Greenloaning School there.”

“I think it might be sad, the children of Greenloaning Primary are moving from a school where they've been for so long but apart from that I think it is a good choice because Greenloaning has been around for so long.”

“I think it would be good for Braco Primary School, but a bit sad that Greenloaning is closing because I went there.”

“I don't really mind what happens.”

“It might spoil Greenloaning.”

“It doesn't really affect me or any other children. I honestly thought it had already been shut down.”

“I think Greenloaning Primary School should maybe be turned into a High School for this area!”

Questions

Does this mean if you move to Greenloaning or Braco, you will go to Braco Primary School? Children who went to Greenloaning PS moved to another school because they didn't want to attend Braco PS.

Yes, it will mean that it will be what is called the catchment school. Children that have moved to other schools have done so because their parents made that choice, which they are entitled to make.

If all children go to Braco, won't there be too many children and the school won't be big enough?

No, PKC do projections and know that Braco Primary School is not too small to accommodate the children in Braco and Greenloaning catchment area.

What will you do with Greenloaning Primary School when it permanently closes?

We do not know as we do not make this decision.

How will this affect Braco Primary School?

If someone buys a house in the Greenloaning catchment area, they will attend Braco Primary School and not Greenloaning Primary School. Nothing will change for the children already attending Braco Primary School.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
Braco Primary School
Staff meeting – 10 September 2018

In Attendance **Mark Neil, Service Manager (Inclusion) (MN)**
 Lorna Hamilton, Project Officer (Early Years & Primary) (LH)
 Jodie Watt, Business Assistant – note taker
 6 members of staff

This meeting was held to allow staff the opportunity to receive the same information that will be shared at the public meeting on 11 September 2018. Staff had the opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation.

MN and LH gave an overview of the reasons for the proposal, the current arrangements at both Braco and Greenloaning, the effect on the community, travelling arrangements and the educational benefits.

In addition, LH talked through the process for consultation, including the input from Education Scotland. The timeline for the different stages was shared.

Questions

Does entitlement to free school transport only commence when Greenloaning Primary School officially closes its doors?

As PKC have zoned the children from Greenloaning to Braco, we would provide transport if it is required, as the pupils are temporarily within the catchment area for Braco.

Is closing Greenloaning Primary School the only option?

The Lifelong Learning Committee were given options, but this is the proposal that the elected members decided should be progressed. The Proposal paper gives background to how this decision was reached.

Copies of consultation proposal response forms were left for staff to complete, either on an individual basis, and/or to be used for a collective staff response.

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to close Greenloaning Primary School.

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 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to close Greenloaning Primary School. 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 statutory 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 and the special provisions that apply to proposals to close a rural school.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the Greenloaning Primary School and Braco 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:

- 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 sites of Greenloaning Primary School and Braco Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

1.4 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of any reasonable alternatives to the closure of Greenloaning Primary School, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Perth and Kinross Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 The council undertook its consultation from 27 August to 5 October 2018. An advertisement was placed in local newspapers and a letter containing a link to an electronic copy of the proposal document was sent to stakeholders. A public meeting held on 11 September 2018 was attended by 15 people. The council received three responses to its consultation of which two agreed with the proposal and one disagreed. Those who responded raised questions about the sufficiency of space for early years provision in the area and felt that the school building should be retained for community use.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 Greenloaning Primary School was officially mothballed in October 2016 when the school roll dropped to four pupils. Since then, children zoned for Greenloaning Primary School have attended Braco Primary School. Perth and Kinross Council proposes to permanently discontinue the provision of a primary school at Greenloaning with effect from June 2019. Thereafter, children would receive their primary education at Braco Primary School.

3.2 Perth and Kinross Council's proposal has clear educational benefits. The council has concluded that there is no foreseeable prospect of an increased and stable pupil roll at Greenloaning Primary School. The council's proposal would be consistent with its statutory duty to secure best value in the use of resources.

3.3 The school roll at Braco Primary School is currently 51 pupils. The school has capacity for 68. It currently has three primary classes and a nursery. Children attending Braco Primary School would benefit from learning and participation with their peers and have access to a broader range of teachers and other staff. Children would benefit from better transition experiences from nursery to primary stages. Staff would benefit from greater opportunities for professional dialogue at Braco Primary School including arrangements for peer support in assessment and moderation.

3.4 The council proposes to undertake refurbishment work at Braco Primary School and the village hall to improve the environment for learning. It has approved budget for this purpose. The council proposes to make temporary use of the Greenloaning Primary School building during these works. In its final paper, the council will need to provide details of its timescale for this work and, if possible, further details on the work proposed.

3.5 Children, parents and staff who spoke with HM Inspectors supported the proposal and agreed with the educational benefits outlined by the council. Parents were concerned about the lack of a safe walking route between Greenloaning and Braco Primary School and welcomed the council's assurances that transport would be provided.

Parents were concerned that there might not be enough space at Braco Primary School to meet demand for local nursery provision. The council will need to provide assurance on this point in its final paper.

3.6 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of the factors to which it should have special regard.

3.7 Prior to the statutory consultation Perth and Kinross Council undertook a pre-consultation exercise to inform an options appraisal for the future of Greenloaning Primary School. The council put forward a clear rationale for its proposal. Five alternative options were explored in detail, including an option to consider closing Braco Primary School and extend Greenloaning Primary School. This option would have required a greater number of children to travel from Braco to Greenloaning. The council concluded appropriately that the permanent closure of Greenloaning Primary School was the only reasonable option.

3.8 The council considered the likely effects on the local community and concluded that there would be little effect on the sustainability of the community arising from the closure of Greenloaning Primary School. The council has indicated that the closure of the school would provide an opportunity to use the school building as a facility for community use. In its proposal paper, the council outlined potential opportunities to progress alternative uses for the school building, including community asset transfer, lease or sale of the building. In its final paper, the council will need to include details of how it will engage with the local community to explore future use of the school building.

3.9 The council considered the likely effect of different travel arrangements arising from its proposal and concluded reasonably that given the short distance of approximately two miles between the schools the impact of different travel arrangements would be limited. The council has undertaken to provide transport for children affected by its proposal.

4. Summary

Perth and Kinross Council's proposal has clear educational benefits. It will enable the council to secure best value and make best use of educational resources. It will provide pupils with opportunities to learn and participate with their peers and improve children's experiences of transition from nursery to primary stages. The proposal will enable staff to work together and share practice more easily. In its final paper, the council will need to provide a timescale for refurbishment of Braco Primary School and village hall and provide reassurance to parents on sufficient capacity for early years provision. The council will also need to outline its plans to engage with the local community on options for future use of the Greenloaning Primary School building.