

Cabinet Committee

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes /
Blended Meeting



Thursday, 6 June, 2024 - 10.00 am

AGENDA

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct, members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **MINUTES**
 - (i) Cabinet Committee of 9 May 2024. 4 – 9
 - (ii) Education Appointment Committee of 19, 24 and 25 April 2024. 10 - 12
4. **STATUTORY CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MILTON OF BALGONIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REZONE THE CATCHMENT AREAS OF COALTOWN OF BALGONIE, PITTEUCHAR EAST AND THORNTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS** – Report by the Head of Education. 13 - 216
5. **STRATEGIC EQUITY FUND - SESSION 2024/25** – Report by the Head of Education. 217 - 224
6. **REVIEW OF PAYMENTS TO FOSTER CARERS, KINSHIP CARERS AND SUPPORTED LODGINGS CARERS** – Report by the Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Service. 225 - 234
7. **CARE HOMES REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME** – Joint report by the Director of Health and Social Care and Head of Housing Services. 235 - 240
8. **OPPORTUNITIES FIFE PARTNERSHIP - STRATEGY 2024-30** – Report by the Head of Business and Employability Services. 241 - 265
9. **HOUSING EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (HEAP) 2024-27** – Report by the Head of Housing Services. 266 - 272
10. **BUS STATION TOILETS - REMOVAL OF CHARGES** – Report by the Head of Roads and Transportation Services. 273 - 275
11. **PUBLIC ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING - REGIONAL COLLABORATION** – Report by the Head of Roads and Transportation Services. 276 - 283
12. **FIFE COUNCIL ELECTRIC VEHICLE PUBLIC CHARGING TARIFFS** – Report by the Head of Roads and Transportation Services. 284 - 292

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15. INCREASE IN FEES FOR PLANNING PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE – Report by the Head of Planning.	303 - 308
16. CABINET COMMITTEE - OUTSTANDING REMITS FROM COMMITTEES	309 - 311

The Committee is asked to resolve, under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

17. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME - BURNTISLAND ROAD, KINGHORN (PRIVATE REPORT) – Joint report by the Head of Housing Services and Head of Property Services.	312 - 320
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Members are reminded that should they have queries on the detail of a report they should, where possible, contact the report authors in advance of the meeting to seek clarification.

Lindsay Thomson
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Finance and Corporate Services
Fife House
North Street
Glenrothes
Fife, KY7 5LT

30 May 2024

If telephoning, please ask for:
Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes
Telephone: 03451 555555, ext. 442238; email: Michelle.McDermott@fife.gov.uk

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BLENDED MEETING NOTICE

This is a formal meeting of the Committee and the required standards of behaviour and discussion are the same as in a face to face meeting. Unless otherwise agreed, Standing Orders will apply to the proceedings and the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct will apply in the normal way

For those members who have joined the meeting remotely, if they need to leave the meeting for any reason, they should use the Meeting Chat to advise of this. If a member loses their connection during the meeting, they should make every effort to rejoin the meeting but, if this is not possible, the Committee Officer will note their absence for the remainder of the meeting. If a member must leave the meeting due to a declaration of interest, they should remain out of the meeting until invited back in by the Committee Officer.

If a member wishes to ask a question, speak on any item or move a motion or amendment, they should indicate this by raising their hand at the appropriate time and will then be invited to speak. Those joining remotely should use the "Raise hand" function in Teams.

All decisions taken during this meeting, will be done so by means of a Roll Call vote.

Where items are for noting or where there has been no dissent or contrary view expressed during any debate, either verbally or by the member indicating they wish to speak, the Convener will assume the matter has been agreed.

There will be a short break in proceedings after approximately 90 minutes.

Members joining remotely are reminded to have cameras switched on during meetings and mute microphones when not speaking. During any breaks or adjournments please switch cameras off.

THE FIFE COUNCIL - CABINET COMMITTEE - BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

9 May 2024

10.00 am - 1.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors David Ross (Convener), David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, David Barratt, John Beare, James Calder, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Graeme Downie, Linda Erskine, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall (substituting for Councillor Rosemary Liewald), Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Allan Knox, Kathleen Leslie, Carol Lindsay, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker and Jan Wincott.

ATTENDING: Ken Gourlay, Chief Executive; Eileen Rowand, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services), Elaine Muir, Head of Finance, Lesley Kenworthy, Finance Business Partner, Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources, Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Calum Ross, Solicitor, Helena Couperwhite, Committee Services Manager and Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Corporate Services; Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services and Morag Millar, Service Manager (Strategic Growth and City Deals), Business and Employability Services; John Mills, Head of Housing Services and Mhairi Mullen, Service Manager, Housing Services; Nigel Kerr, Head of Protective Services and Rob Bowditch, Service Manager, Protective Services; Pam Ewen, Head of Planning Services, Ross Spalding, Service Manager, Hugh Muschamp, Lead Officer, Shona Cargill, Lead Officer and Caroyne Bell, Technical Officer, Planning Services; Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service; Alan Paul, Head of Property Services and Louise Playford, Service Manager, Property Services.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Rosemary Liewald; and Mr. Alastair Crockett and Ian Macaulay, Religious Representatives.

236. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Councillor Graeme Downie declared an interest at para. 241 - Tackling Dampness and Mould in Private Sector Housing - Proposed Action Plan - as he worked with various private landlords.
- Councillor Cara Hilton declared an interest at para. 244 - Food4Fife - as she was employed by the Trussell Trust.

237. MINUTES

- (i) Minute of the Cabinet Committee of 4 April 2024.

Decision

The committee agreed to approve the minute.

- (ii) The Education Appointment Committee of 26 February 2024 and the Appeals Sub-Committee of 22 March 2024 were submitted for noting.

Decision

The minutes were noted.

238. UK GOVERNMENT LEVELLING-UP FUNDING: CITY OF DUNFERMLINE CULTURE FUNDING

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services seeking approval of projects to be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as a cultural investment plan for the City of Dunfermline. The report included information on the UK Government funding requirements, eligible projects and an approach to develop a long-term cultural investment plan.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved the prioritisation of the four cultural projects detailed in Appendix 2 of the report to secure the provisional award by the UK Government's Levelling Up Funding (LUF) for which Dunfermline would benefit from £5 million of capital funding over two years from 2024/25; and noted that these were subject to endorsement by the UK Government and completion of their design processes;
- (2) delegated to the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) and Executive Director (Place) to submit and conclude the Levelling Up Culture Investment Plan for the City of Dunfermline with the UK Government;
- (3) agreed the proposed next steps; and
- (4) agreed that quarterly update reports would be submitted to the City of Dunfermline Area Committee.

239. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER (CPO)

The committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources advising that from 1 April 2024 there was a new statutory requirement for the council to appoint a Chief Planning Officer and to agree the Head of Planning as the council's Chief Planning Officer.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the statutory requirement for the council to appoint a Chief Planning Officer; and
- (2) agreed that the responsibilities of the Chief Planning Officer role be incorporated into the remit of the Head of Planning.

240. SHORT TERM LET LICENSING AND THE AIG WOMEN'S OPEN

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services seeking approval for the Head of Housing Services to declare the Women's Open in St. Andrews a national event in line with the Fife Council Short Term Let (STL) Policy.

Decision

The committee agreed to declare the Women's Open in St. Andrews a national event in line with the Fife Council Short Term Let Policy.

Having declared an interest in the following item, Councillor Downie left the meeting at this stage.

241. TACKLING DAMPNESS AND MOULD IN PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING - PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Protective Services outlining the work to date that council services had taken supporting private sector tenants and owners to ensure that the evidence of condensation, dampness and mould could be more effectively mitigated for the wellbeing of tenants and their families. The report proposed a strategic approach and Action Plan to take this important work forward during 2024/25.

Decision

The committee noted:-

- (1) the update report as required by the previous Cabinet decision in May 2023;
- (2) the updated Repairing Standard obligations on private landlords;
- (3) the council's obligations and how they were being delivered including realignment of resources to support service response, the progress on current caseload, the focus on reviewing process procedures and data and the delivery of training to staff;
- (4) the progress made against the Action Plan to mitigate the incidence of dampness, condensation and black mould more effectively in private sector properties; and
- (5) agreed that an update report be submitted to the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee in a year's time.

Councillor Downie rejoined the meeting following consideration of the above item.

242. INVESTING IN PLANNING - RESOURCING SCOTLAND'S PLANNING SYSTEM: CONSULTATION

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning Services seeking approval of a proposed response to the Scottish Government consultation paper on Investing in Planning - Resourcing Scotland's Planning System.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) reviewed and approved the proposed consultation response as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) authorised officers to submit the consultation to the Scottish Government; and
- (3) delegated to the Head of Planning Services, in conjunction with the Convener, to include additional comments agreed by this committee and respond to the consultation.

243. TACKLING MARINE POLLUTION - MEMBERSHIP OF KIMO UK

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning Services advising on the benefits of membership and budget implications of KIMO UK and to consider whether the council should pursue membership of KIMO UK as requested by Motion 1 raised at the Fife Council meeting on 16 March 2023.

Motion

Councillor David Alexander, seconded by Councillor Brian Goodall, moved the recommendations contained within the report.

Amendment

Councillor Jan Wincott, seconded by Councillor Kathleen Leslie, moved (i) that the council sought formal membership of KIMO UK with a review being undertaken in a year's time detailing the benefits of membership and (ii) to expand promotion of KIMO UK's Fishing for Litter project to other harbours in Fife.

Roll Call Vote

For the motion - 9 votes

Councillors David Alexander, Lesley Backhouse, David Barratt, John Beare, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Carol Lindsay, Ross Vettraino and Craig Walker.

For the Amendment - 13 votes

Councillors James Calder, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Graeme Downie, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Allan Knox, Kathleen Leslie, David Ross and Jan Wincott.

Decision

The committee agreed:-

- (1) that Fife Council pursues formal membership of KIMO UK and that a review be undertaken in a year's time detailing the benefits of membership; and
- (2) that Fife Council would continue to support KIMO UK's Fishing for Litter project that was operational in Pittenweem Harbour and the private St. Andrew's harbour and that promotion of the project should be expanded to other harbours in Fife.

Having declared an interest in the following item, Councillor Hilton left the meeting at this stage.

The meeting adjourned at 11.15 am and reconvened at 11.30 am.

244. FOOD4FIFE

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Planning Services and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service seeking approval of the Food4Fife Strategy and Action Plan.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved the Food4Fife Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) noted that:-
 - Food4Fife was a joint plan with NHS Fife and the Public Health and Wellbeing Committee would also be approached for approval;
 - the Community Growing Pillar was largely delivered through the Allotment and Community Growing Strategy as approved at the 8 February 2024 Cabinet Committee; and
 - the full scope of the strategy would only be possible where additional external funding was provided, considered alongside other priorities and project business cases approved.

Councillor Hilton rejoined the meeting following consideration of the above item.

245. COMMON GOOD POLICY

The committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service presenting a revised Common Good Policy Statement.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the context for the review and the work undertaken; and
- (2) approved the revised Common Good Policy Statement subject to minor amendments to the wording relating to the disposal of common good assets and surplus balances.

246. CABINET COMMITTEE - OUTSTANDING REMITS FROM COMMITTEES

Decision

The committee noted the list of outstanding remits from committees.

The committee resolved, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

247. BUILDING FIFE'S FUTURE: REPLACEMENT OF INVERKEITHING HIGH SCHOOL (SOUTH AND WEST FIFE) - FULL BUSINESS CASE (PRIVATE REPORT)

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Education and Head of Property Services presenting the full Business Case for the proposed investment to replace Inverkeithing High School and sought approval from committee to progress to Financial Close and proceed with the main construction work for the replacement building.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) reviewed and approved the Full Business Case;
- (2) approved the increase in budget allocation;
- (3) agreed delegated authority for officers to progress to Financial Close and main construction work;
- (4) agreed delegated authority for officers to progress land transactions as detailed in the report; and
- (5) agreed that officers would provide regular updates through capital monitoring reports to future committees.

Councillor Leslie left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

248. ACQUISITION OF 4 HOUSES IN ST. CATHERINE WYND, HIGH VALLEYFIELD (PRIVATE REPORT)

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Housing Services and Head of Property Services seeking approval of the proposed acquisition of four new three bedroom homes in St. Catherine Wynd, High Valleyfield as part of the council's Open Market Transactions Project.

Decision

The committee authorised the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to enter into legally binding agreements on terms to their satisfaction for the acquisition of houses built in St. Catherine Wynd, High Valleyfield.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – CABINET COMMITTEE – EDUCATION
APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

19th April 2024

12.20 pm – 3.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Brian Goodall and Alistair Suttie; Rona Weir and Karen Lees, Education Manager; and Katherine Roucoux and Genevieve McMonagle, Parent Council representatives.

47. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

48. **JOINT HEADTEACHER – CERES AND CRAIGROHIE PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

The Committee interviewed 2 applicants on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of one of the applicants.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – CABINET COMMITTEE – EDUCATION
APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

24th April 2024

11.30 am – 3:00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Dave Dempsey and Brian Goodall, Maria Lloyd, Head of Service, Karen Lees, Education Manager, Fiona Eadie, Parent Council, Ruth Lockier, Parent Council.

43. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

44. **HEADTEACHER – INVERKEITHING HIGH SCHOOL**

The Committee interviewed 2 applicant on the short leet for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of one of the applicants.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – CABINET COMMITTEE – EDUCATION
APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

25 April 2024

11.00 am – 1.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Auxi Barrera, Sarah Else, Education Manager, Angela Logue, Head of Service, Mary Caldwell, Catholic Church Representative, Cheryl Cassidy, Parent Council Chair and Laura Willet, Parent Council.

45. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

46. HEADTEACHER – ST JOHN’S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee interviewed 2 applicants on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of one of the applicants.

Statutory Consultation Report on the Proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools

Report by: Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services

Wards Affected: 14 and 15

Purpose

This report presents the statutory Consultation Report, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, for full consideration by members.

This report also seeks approval to proceed with the recommendation contained within the Consultation Report.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is invited to approve the proposal to:

- 1) close Milton of Balgonie Primary School on Monday, 19 August 2024;
- 2) rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to incorporate all of the current catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, from Monday, 19 August 2024;
- 3) seek alternative uses for the Milton of Balgonie Primary School site, with the presumption that these will be within the control of the Education Service to ensure that should the number of primary aged pupils in this area increase to a level that may require provision of an additional primary school in future, it may be done so at the least cost to the council; and
- 4) rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools to realign these primary school catchments from Monday, 19 August 2024;

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to implement the recommendations of the proposal and resources have been allocated for the implementation, if approved.

Legal & Risk Implications

The consideration and determination of this report is by the council acting as education authority. Statutory Consultation on the Proposal is required in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Ministers may call-in the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and remit to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panel to make a determination.

Milton of Balgonie Primary School was mothballed formally, by committee decision, on 26 January 2021. The present academic year (2023/24) is the fourth academic year during which the school has been mothballed formally. The period of mothballing has exceeded the maximum duration for rural schools referred to in the Scottish Government Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 Guidance from 26 January 2024. Fife Council is required to have regard to the Guidance.

Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a rural school, being a school listed on the Rural Schools List maintained by the Scottish Ministers. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 includes a presumption against the closure of a rural school. In the event of the committee rejecting the recommendation to approve the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School, unless there is a significant change in the school's circumstances, the council will be unable to consult on a further proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School for a period of five years.

Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment concerning the proposal has been prepared and is contained within Appendix I of the Consultation Report (Appendix A). A summary page is attached to this report.

Consultation

Officers of the Education Directorate and Legal Services have been consulted in preparation of the Statutory Consultation Report. The proposal has been subject to the process of statutory public consultation as defined by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a small rural school with a maximum capacity for 75 pupils. Milton of Balgonie Primary School has not been in operation for academic sessions 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. Currently, the school does not meet Fife Council's guiding principles for the school estate as:
 - (a) Occupancy of the school is less than 60%
 - (b) The school has fewer than 50 pupils
 - (c) The school has fewer than 3 classes.
- 1.2 The pupil roll of Milton of Balgonie Primary School had fallen from 30 pupils in 2009 to 26 pupils in both 2015 and 2016, and from 23 pupils in 2017 to 14 pupils in 2018. The school has operated with a Joint Headteacher, also covering Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, since August 2018. During academic session 2018/19, the school operated with a single class teacher, covering all primary stages. During session 2018/19, there was one pupil in Primary 1, Primary 3 and Primary 6, which can be challenging for these pupils having no peers in their same primary grouping.
- 1.3 At the end of session 2018/19, the expected school roll for August 2019 was one pupil, as a number of P7 pupils were transferring to secondary school and the remainder of pupils in year groups P1-P6 made placing requests elsewhere or enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The Headteacher advised the parent of the pupil that this would be the case, after which the parent decided to move their child to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.

- 1.4 For the subsequent academic sessions, all Primary 1 pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area have enrolled within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or made placing requests to other primary schools. For academic session 2024/25, the P1 pupils due to start in August 2024 have made placing requests to other schools. These placing requests have been accepted.
- 1.5 During academic session 2020/21, following a decision by the Education and Children's Services Committee on 26 January 2021, the school was mothballed. Once a school is mothballed, it is necessary to undertake a regular review of the decision to mothball. In line with that requirement, the decision was reviewed at committee in November 2021 and the mothballing was formally continued on 9 November 2021, on 17 November 2022 and then reviewed in June 2023 prior to a paper being submitted to the Cabinet Committee on 11 January 2024.
- 1.6 Whilst reviewing the position in respect of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, the Education Directorate also appraised the school occupancy, catchment boundaries, births and proposed housing development sites in Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary School catchment areas. This showed the A92 regional road bisects catchment areas creating catchment boundary anomalies. Taking this into consideration, together with the impact of new housing sites, the proposal to realign the catchments of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools was developed to enable three sustainable school communities for the future.
- 1.7 The continued mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School cannot be justified as it would be contrary to the Statutory Guidance on the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 issued by the Scottish Government. Having explored alternative options, to encourage viability, there is no mechanism available to the Education Directorate to increase the school roll of Milton of Balgonie Primary School which would not have significant effect on the viability of the neighbouring schools. Milton of Balgonie Primary School does not meet the guiding principles for the sustainability of the school estate and the education authority considers that there is no reasonable alternative to closure.
- 1.8 The Cabinet Committee on 11 January 2024 approved the content of the draft Consultation Proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools and authorised officers to proceed to statutory consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 1.9 This report presents the statutory Consultation Report, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, for full consideration by members and also seeks approval to proceed with the recommendation contained within the Consultation Report.

2.0 Compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 2.1 Where, in relation to any school, an education authority has formulated a relevant proposal, before proceeding with the proposal, the education authority must comply with the following requirements:
 - to prepare an educational benefits statement (EBS);
 - to prepare (and publish) a proposal paper;

- to give notice of the proposal to the relevant consultees (and invite representations);
 - to hold (and give notice of) a public meeting;
 - to involve Education Scotland;
 - to review the proposal;
 - to prepare (and publish) a consultation report.
- 2.2 The preparation of the EBS provided the Education Directorate with the opportunity to set out the educational case for the proposal, while the proposal paper sets out all the other contextual and relevant evidence and information around and in support of the proposal. The EBS was included within the published proposal paper, so that consultees could consider the whole case together.
- 2.3 Within the proposal paper, the Education Directorate considered the wider community and other issues, beyond the purely educational, where these have relevance to the context, timing and detail of the particular proposal and also the community and other implications the Directorate considered specific requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in relation to rural schools.
- 2.4 The Education Directorate must ensure the most effective use of assets and control of both revenue and capital costs and the school estate is a major aspect of this planning process.
- 2.5 The Education Directorate advised the relevant consultees of the proposal by Consultation Notice dated 23 January 2024. The consultation period was at least six weeks, from Wednesday, 24 January to Tuesday, 12 March 2024, including 30 days of term time.
- 2.6 Four public meetings were held during the consultation period and advance notice of the date, time and location of these meetings were given to the relevant consultees and to HMIE, Education Scotland. In addition, six separate drop-in sessions were offered to parents, pupils, councillors and other interested parties, who may not have been able to attend the public meeting. The public meetings were as follows:
- Monday, 5 February 2024 - Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School
 - Monday, 12 February 2024 - Thornton Primary School
 - Wednesday, 21 February 2024 - Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie
 - Wednesday, 28 February 2024 - Pitteuchar East Primary School
- 2.7 These meeting venues, across the existing four primary catchment areas, provided an opportunity for all parents/carers and interested stakeholders to attend a meeting near where they live. Drop-in sessions were scheduled at different times of the day, i.e. at morning drop-off, at afternoon pick up and just prior to each of the four public meetings. All these sessions and the public meetings were publicised on the council's website; in the local newspaper; by posters in the affected schools and through school Groupcall mail. The informal drop-in sessions provided an opportunity for parents/carers or interested parties to have a one-to-one session with officers and to discuss any aspects of the proposal.
- 2.8 Other than HMIE, Education Scotland, 11 parents/carers or other interested parties attended the public meetings. Five parents/carers or other interested parties attended the meeting at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and six attended the meeting in Milton of Balgonie. None attended the meetings at Thornton or Pitteuchar East Primary Schools. There was also little uptake at the informal drop-in sessions by parents/carers or interested parties.

2.9 As required, Education Scotland was involved in considering the proposal. Their report sets out the views expressed by consultees during the initial consultation process and considers the educational aspects of the proposal. It also considers compliance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the particular requirements of a proposal relating to a rural school. Prior to their own consultation with Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East or Thornton Primary Schools through various meetings, Fife Council provided Education Scotland with a summary of all written representations received during the public consultation period and copies of representations. A transcript of each of the four public meetings was also provided, as well as the Powerpoint presented during the meetings, setting out the proposal. Education Scotland attended all the public meetings and consulted separately in person with staff, pupils and parents/carers in producing the draft report, which was submitted to Fife Council to check for inaccuracies. Following this review, Education Scotland then issued their final report, which has been responded to, by Fife Council in the consultation report. Education Scotland published their report on the same day as the publication of the Consultation Report by Fife Council (**15 May 2024**). The dates on which information was supplied by Fife Council to Education Scotland and the reports received were as follows:

- Information sent to Education Scotland: 15 March 2024
- Draft Education Scotland report received: 27 March 2024
- Final Education Scotland report received: 2 April 2024

2.10 Where an omission of relevant information or an inaccuracy is discovered by the education authority, or where such has been alleged, consideration must be given as to whether or not relevant information has been omitted or the paper is inaccurate and, if so, a decision made regarding what appropriate and proportionate action to take. In addition, if an omission was identified from, or there were inaccuracies in the proposal paper, the consultation report must set out the details and the action taken and, if no action was taken, why.

2.11 Following issue of the Notice of Consultation on 23 January 2024, officers from the Education Directorate noticed some errors in the proposal document. A Notice of Correction was issued. The Notice of Correction is provided within Appendix C of the Consultation Report, titled Appendix A to this report.

2.12 As stated in the Notice of Correction, the Education Directorate determined that each of the errors did not relate to material considerations relevant to the council's decision as to implementation of the proposal. These determinations were made in accordance with Section 5 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It was the view of the Education Directorate that the incorrect hyperlink to the online Consultation Response Form was not a material consideration relevant to the authority's decision to implement the proposal. The correct link and the correct response form was available via multiple channels. It was the view of the Education Directorate that the other errors were typographical errors which were not material considerations relevant to the authority's decision to implement the proposal. Where that is the case, the Education Directorate is not required to take action but may take action in terms of section 5 (a) or (b) or may take no further action other than mentioning the inaccuracy in the consultation report as required by section 10 (3). Considering this, the Education Directorate decided to proceed in accordance with Section 5 (5) (b) of the Act, to issue a Notice of Correction to the relevant consultees and HMIE advising of the errors and correcting them in a corrected Consultation Proposal Document. It was the view of the Education Directorate that no extension of the consultation period was required. The Notice of Corrections and revised Consultation Proposal Document were issued early in the consultation period ensuring parents/carers and interested parties were aware of the errors and the steps implemented, allowing them to make representations within the consultation period.

- 2.13 The Education Directorate has reviewed the proposal consulted on in light of both the written and oral representations received, the report from HMIE, Education Scotland and the Pupil Consultation. Following review, it has prepared and published the Consultation Report.
- 2.14 The Education Directorate has ensured that a period of three weeks has elapsed between the publication of the Consultation Report and the council making a decision whether to implement the proposal in whole or in part, or not. Interested parties have had time to see and digest the contents of the Consultation Report and, if they so wished, to voice concerns and approach and lobby the councillors who are deciding on the proposal.
- 2.15 The Consultation Report explains that, following any decision by this committee to implement the decision, in whole or in part, or not, the decision will be subject to internal governance procedures before it becomes final. It will become a final decision of the council at the conclusion of either the internal call-in period if there is no call-in, or at the end of the call-in procedure if there is a call-in.
- 2.16 The Consultation Report also explains that the decision insofar as it relates to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be notified to the Scottish Ministers and may be subject to call-in by them. The Scottish Ministers have an eight week period from the date of the council's decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of the eight week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. The Scottish Ministers can issue a call-in notice if they consider that the council has failed in a significant regard to comply with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which are relevant to the closure proposal or if they consider that the council has failed to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to the decision to implement the closure proposal. Unless the Scottish Ministers inform the council before the end of the eight week period that they do not intend to call-in the proposal, the council will not proceed to implement the proposal during the eight week period. Until the outcome of any call-in has been notified to the council, it is unable to proceed to implement the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers decide to call-in a closure proposal, they must refer it to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panel for determination by a School Closure Review Panel. The council may not then implement the proposal in whole or in part unless the Panel has granted consent to it (with or without conditions) and either an appeal to the Sheriff has expired or, if an appeal has been made, it has either been abandoned or the Sheriff has confirmed the Panel's decision.
- 2.17 Therefore, Fife Council has complied with all the requirements of the Act.

3.0 Consultation Report

- 3.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires the publication of a Consultation Report that provides:
- a record of the total number of any written representations made to the education authority (by any person) on the proposal during the consultation period;
 - a summary of those written representations and any oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting;
 - a statement of the authority's response to those written and oral representations;
 - a statement of the authority's response to Education Scotland's report and a copy of that report;

- a review of the proposal by the authority having regard in particular to any relevant written representations received from any person during the consultation period, oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting and Education Scotland's report;
 - details of any omission or inaccuracy (including a statement of the authority's opinion on it), a statement of the action taken in respect of the omission or inaccuracy, or if no action has been taken, of that fact (and why).
- 3.2 In total, 21 written representations were received in writing or online in response to the consultation on the proposal. These comprised 20 Consultation Response Forms (Appendix 15 of the Proposal Document, contained in Appendix A of the Consultation Report) and one written statement received by email.
- 3.3 The pupil census from 2023 detailed there were 100 pupils enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, 225 pupils enrolled at Pitteuchar East Primary School and 158 pupils enrolled at Thornton Primary School. The parents/carers of each of the pupils attending the three primary schools were notified of the proposal as relevant statutory consultees and invited to make representations.
- 3.4 Of the 483 pupils whose parents/carers were notified, along with the other statutory consultees, only 17 parents/carers, along with four others who identified themselves as interested parties, made written representations.
- 3.5 Pupil consultation was carried out in accordance with Education Scotland best practice and in accordance with Participants, Not Pawns – Guidance on Consulting with Children and Young People, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People. Eighty-four primary aged pupils from stages P4-P7 (30.5% of P4-P7 rolls) took part in the face-to-face groups.
- 3.6 It was clear that the majority of children and young people were excited about new pupils joining their school to enable larger friendship groups. The pupils also recognised the importance of being able to walk to school and the rezoning proposals would support this.
- 3.7 The key points identified from the comments received within the consultation response forms, the additional written representations received and the oral representations from the four public meetings were summarised in the Consultation Report and Fife Council has responded to these.
- 3.8 The Education Directorate is satisfied that there will be educational benefits for the pupils and the communities of the primary school catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton. The Education Directorate does acknowledge the concern regarding house building in the area and will continue to monitor this and school roll projections.
- 3.9 The school roll projection model includes methodology to identify pupil numbers from new housing development sites that are included in the Housing Land Audit (HLA). The HLA report is published annually and provides the most up to date information on site status, including whether sites have planning consent, are under construction, have no consent or, indeed, where there are any constraints such as marketing or no interest demonstrated by a developer. The school roll projections will also change if the projected pupil product is not manifested across this area. Also included in the review was analysis of the latest placing request statistics and trends and potential opportunities to realign catchments geographically. In including these factors, the Education Directorate anticipates future housing development, building capacity and resilience, ensuring that school occupancy levels now, and in the future, can be managed.

- 3.10 The Education Directorate is confident that the collaboration with the Planning Service to analyse and respond to planning applications is robust. School capacity risks are reviewed whenever the Housing Land Audit is renewed and when every new planning application is received and the roll projections reflect current pupil numbers, school capacity, class organisation and other relevant legislation and policies. These assessments are and will continue to be based on school data that is updated annually e.g. Pupil Census, School Estate Core Facts and Housing Land Audit.
- 3.11 The three housing sites documented in the proposal document were Balfour Place / Main Street, Milton of Balgonie; Queens Meadow and Millburn Avenue in Coaltown of Balgonie.
- 3.12 The development site at Balfour Place / Main Street, Milton of Balgonie for 63 units has no planning consent. The planning application submitted detailed that the site would commence in 2023 with 30 units and finish in 2024/25 with 33 units. In the event that planning consent is granted for this application, the delivery of the units will be rephased to future dates. In any event, the anticipated number of pupils from this has been included in the school roll projections.
- 3.13 The Queens Meadow site in Coaltown of Balgonie, referred to in the Consultation Proposal Document, received planning consent on 25 July 2023. This site is for 80 units, 30 units above the Local Development Plan capacity. The school roll projections detailed in paragraph 5.3.9 of the Consultation Proposal Document detail that this site will impact on the school capacity at Coaltown of Balgonie and, as a result, this site will contribute towards the one classroom permanent extension at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Construction has commenced on this site.
- 3.14 The Millburn Avenue Site in Coaltown of Balgonie, referred to in the Consultation Proposal Document was approved by the West and Central Fife Planning Committee on 3 April 2024. A full planning consent notice will be issued in due course to the developer. The anticipated pupil numbers generated from this site were included in the pupil roll projections detailed in paragraph 5.3.9 of the Consultation Proposal Document. This site will also contribute to the one classroom extension at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, which is expected to be ready for occupation in August 2025.
- 3.15 There has been no material change in planned housing development since the publication of the Consultation Proposal Document. These sites relating to the four primary school catchment areas are contained in Appendix 10 of the Consultation Proposal Document.
- 3.16 As Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a rural school, when formulating the proposal, the Education Directorate considered whether there were any reasonable alternatives to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, as a response to the reasons for formulating the proposal and concluded that there were not.
- 3.17 One of the written representations received suggested that Markinch Primary School should be considered as a reasonable alternative.
- 3.18 The rezoning of part of the Markinch Primary School catchment area to Milton of Balgonie Primary School was not considered at the time of drafting the proposal. This option would require transport from Markinch to Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Currently, all the catchment area of Markinch Primary School is within one mile walking distance, with the exception of a small number of houses to the north of Stob Cross Road. Therefore, as the remainder of housing is within one mile of the catchment area, there would be no reason to rezone part of this catchment area to Milton of Balgonie

Primary School. To rezone the southern part of the Markinch Primary School catchment area to Milton of Balgonie Primary School would require at least 50 pupils to enable the school to be more than two classes and would require a larger vehicle to transport pupils than is currently in place for the pupils travelling from Milton of Balgonie to Coaltown of Balgonie. There also would be no opportunity for any Markinch Primary School catchment pupils to walk to school, which the majority are currently able to do.

- 3.19 Accordingly, the Education Directorate does not consider rezoning part of the catchment area of Markinch Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School to be reasonable alternatives to the reasons for formulating the proposal. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community. It would not provide educational benefit to the children living in the catchment areas of either Milton of Balgonie or Markinch Primary Schools.
- 3.20 The Education Directorate remains convinced that implementation of the closure proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal. In line with the principles outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the Consultation Proposal Document, the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools represents the only viable way to provide sustainable primary education for these four communities. Implementation of the proposal will resolve the catchment anomalies created by the construction of the A92, balance the school rolls between the three remaining catchment areas and ensure more sustainable school communities longer term.
- 3.21 Fife Council has complied with the special provision requirements for rural schools detailed in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as outlined in sections 11A, 12, 12A and 13.
- 3.22 It is recommended, therefore, that approval be given to implement the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, with effect from Monday, 19 August 2024.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 This report provides the detailed Consultation Report (Appendix A) required following the decision of the Cabinet Committee on 11 January 2024 to consult on the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. The Consultation Proposal paper and Consultation Report meet the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 4.2 This report includes the recommendations for the proposal, following review of the proposal consulted on, in light of the written and oral representations received, the report from HMIE, Education Scotland and the Pupil Consultation.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Report on the Proposal to Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools

Appendix B – EqIA Summary

Background Papers

The following were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

- Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010: Guidance <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477028.pdf>
- Proposed Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School [Agenda-and-Papers-for-Meeting-of-Education-and-Childrens-Services-Sub-Committee-of-26-January-2021.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- Statutory Consultation for Proposed Changes to the School Estate and Catchment Areas [Agenda-and-papers-for-Cabinet-Committee-meeting-22nd-September-2022.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- Review of the Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School [Public Agenda Pack Cabinet 171122.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- Review of the Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School [Public Agenda Pack Cabinet Committee 11 January 2024 \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- West and Central Planning Committee 12 April 2023 [Agenda & Papers for Meeting of West & Central Planning Committee of 12 April 2023 \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- West and Central Planning Committee 3 April 2024 [Agenda & Papers for Meeting of West & Central Planning Committee of 12 April 2023 \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Establishing the Walked Routes to Schools – Assessment Policy \(Document is only available on Intranet – a copy can be requested\)](#)
- Education Scotland Report - [Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Fife Council to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools.](#)
- School Admissions Policy [Schools-Admission-Policy-April-2018.docx \(live.com\)](#)
- Local Development Plan [Adopted FIFEplan - Keystone \(objective.co.uk\)](#)
- Housing Land Audit [Fife Housing Land Audit 2023 \(arcgis.com\)](#)

Report Contacts

Shelagh McLean

Head of Education & Children's Services
Education Directorate
Fife House
Email - shelagh.mclean@fife.gov.uk

Avril Graham

Team Manager (Systems and Infrastructure)
Education Directorate
Fife House
Email – avril.graham@fife.gov.uk

FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

**CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE
PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MILTON OF
BALGONIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TO
REZONE THE CATCHMENT AREAS OF
COALTOWN OF BALGONIE,
PITTEUCHAR EAST AND THORNTON
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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- 2.0 Summary of the Proposal
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- 4.0 Total Number of and Summary of Written Representations Received
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- 9.0 Statement of Fife Council's Response to the Report from HMIE, Education Scotland
- 10.0 Errors, Omissions and Additional Information
- 11.0 Review of the Proposal by Fife Council Including an Explanation of Compliance with Sections 11, 11A, 12, 12A and 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 When Carrying out the Review

Appendices

- A) The Consultation Proposal Document (as revised in accordance with Appendix C)
- B) Notice of Consultation
- C) Notice of Correction
- D) Responses to the Consultation Response Form
- E) Comments contained on the returned Consultation Response Forms
- F) Other Written Responses, Including Requests for Information (whether Freedom of Information or Otherwise)
- G) Record of Public Meetings
- H) Pupil Consultation Feedback
- I) Any relevant plans, maps and photographs
- J) Walked Route to School Assessments
- K) Equality Impact Assessment

1.0 Background to the Proposal

- 1.1 In order to ensure that the school estate provides best value for money, the Education Directorate must ensure that the number of pupil places is matched as efficiently as possible to the numbers of pupils living in each catchment area. To support this, the Education Directorate undertakes regular reviews of the school estate. Included within these reviews, the Education Directorate must take account of changing demographic patterns leading to falling and rising school rolls in different parts of Fife, planned housing development and other factors which might impact on the need for school places.
- 1.2 Acknowledging the above and taking into account the three guiding principles relating to condition and suitability, occupancy and the progressive reduction in the overall carbon footprint for the Council, a proposal was developed regarding the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. Following consideration by the Cabinet Committee, on 11 January 2024, the decision was made to proceed to statutory consultation on the proposal in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 1.3 Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a small rural school with a maximum capacity for 75 pupils. Milton of Balgonie Primary School has not been in operation for academic sessions 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. Currently the school does not meet the Council's guiding principles for the school estate as:
- (a) Occupancy of the school is less than 60%
 - (b) The school has fewer than 50 pupils
 - (c) The school has fewer than 3 classes.
- 1.4 The pupil roll of Milton of Balgonie Primary School had fallen from 30 pupils in 2009 to 26 pupils in both 2015 and 2016, and from 23 pupils in 2017 to 14 pupils in 2018. The school had operated with a Joint Headteacher, also covering Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, from August 2018. During academic session 2018/19, the school operated with a single class teacher, covering all primary stages. During academic session 2018/19, there was one pupil in each of Primary 1, Primary 3 and Primary 6 stages. It can be challenging for pupils who have no peers in the same primary grouping.
- 1.5 At the end of session 2018/19, the expected school roll for August 2019 was one pupil, as a number of P7 pupils were transferring to secondary school and the remainder of pupils in year groups P1-P6 made placing requests elsewhere or enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The Headteacher advised the parent of the pupil that this would be the case, after which the parent decided to move their child to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- 1.6 For each subsequent academic session, any Primary 1 pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area have enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or made placing requests to other primary schools.

- 1.7 During academic session 2020/21, following a decision by the Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee, on 26 January 2021, the school was formally mothballed. Once a school is mothballed, it is necessary to undertake a regular review of the decision to mothball. In line with that requirement, the decision was reviewed and the mothballing arrangements were continued by committee on 9 November 2021, on 17 November 2022 and on 11 January 2024.
- 1.8 It is not anticipated that catchment pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area already enrolled in other schools would return to Milton of Balgonie Primary School if the school were to reopen. The consultation sessions with pupils at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School highlighted pupils enjoy being part of a larger school with a larger friendship group. The Headteacher of Coaltown of Balgonie has advised that there is no suggestion that parents of pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area are not happy with the education provision on offer, as children are thriving within this learning environment.
- 1.9 Continued mothballing is not justified. It would also be contrary to the Statutory Guidance on the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) act 2010 issued by the Scottish Government. Having explored alternative options, to encourage viability, there is no mechanism available to increase the school roll of Milton of Balgonie Primary School which would not have significant effect on the viability of the neighbouring schools. Milton of Balgonie Primary School does not meet the guiding principles for the sustainability of the school estate and the Education Directorate considers that there is no reasonable alternative to closure.
- 1.10 In reaching this conclusion account has been taken of Milton of Balgonie Primary School's rural school status and full regard has been given to the relevant factors, which are:
- When formulating the proposal, the Council is required to:
- (i) identify and explain the reasons for formulating the proposal,
 - (ii) describe what steps (if any) it took to address those reasons before formulating the proposal or if it took no such steps explain why it did not do so, and
 - (iii) consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to those reasons.
- 1.11 As Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a rural school, in the proposal the Council must also give special regard to:
- (i) the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), and
 - (ii) the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented).
- 1.12 Whilst reviewing the position in respect of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, the Education Directorate also appraised the school occupancy, catchment boundaries, births and proposed housing development sites in Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary School catchment

areas. This showed the A92 regional road bisects catchment areas creating catchment boundary anomalies. Taking this anomaly into consideration together with the impact of new housing sites, the proposal to realign the catchments of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools was developed to enable 3 sustainable school communities for the future.

1.13 The following links are to the committee papers referred to above in relation to the mothballing and proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the proposed rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools:

- Proposed Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School
[Agenda-and-Papers-for-Meeting-of-Education-and-Childrens-Services-Sub-Committee-of-26-January-2021.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
[Minute-Education-and-Childrens-Services-Sub-Committee-26th-January,-2021-subject-to-approval-at-their-next-meeting.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- Statutory Consultation for Proposed Changes to the School Estate and Catchment Areas
[Agenda-and-papers-for-Cabinet-Committee-meeting-22nd-September-2022.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
[Minute of Meeting of Cabinet Committee of 22 September 2022 \(subject to approval at the next meeting\) \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- Review of the Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School
[Public Agenda Pack Cabinet 171122.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
[Minute-of-Meeting-of-Cabinet-Committee-of-17-November-2022-v2.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
- Review of the Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School
[Public Agenda Pack Cabinet Committee 11 January 2024 \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)
[Cabinet Committee Minute 11 Jan 2024 \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)

2.0 Summary of the Proposal

2.1 The statutory consultation process was undertaken in respect of the following proposal, to:

- (a) Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 19 August 2024.
- (b) Rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to incorporate all of the current catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, from Monday 19 August 2024.
- (c) Seek alternative uses for the Milton of Balgonie Primary School site, with the presumption that these will be within the control of the Education Service to ensure that should the number of primary aged pupils in this area increase to a level that may require provision of an additional primary school in future, that it may be done so at the least cost to the Council.
- (d) Rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, to realign these primary school catchments from Monday 19 August 2024.

2.2 The Consultation Proposal Document is contained in Appendix A.

3.0 The Consultation Process

3.1 The consultation process was undertaken in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. A proposal document was published, which included an educational benefits statement. The relevant consultees included the parents/carers of pupils attending the following primary schools; parents of pupils expected to attend the schools within 2 years; pupils of the schools, staff members and Parent Councils:

- Milton of Balgonie Primary School
- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School
- Pitteuchar East Primary School
- Thornton Primary School

3.2 The relevant consultees also included trade unions, community councils and other users of the schools. The relevant consultees were notified of the proposal by Notice of Consultation dated 23 January 2024 (contained in Appendix B) and by advertisement in the local newspaper covering the villages associated with the catchment areas, week commencing 22 January 2024. The statutory period of consultation included the minimum requirement of 30 school days and ran from Wednesday 24 January 2024 until close of business on Tuesday 12 March 2024.

3.3 A number of pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area were enrolled in alternative primary schools. For those parents/carers, the Education Directorate ensured that they also received the Notice of Consultation and information where they could make representations on the proposal. This also included parents/carers of nursery aged children.

3.4 Section 7 of the 2010 Act requires, as part of statutory consultations on school organisation matters, e.g. closures, establishments of new schools, changes to admission arrangements and catchment areas, that education authorities hold a public meeting. To ensure parents/carers and interested parties had an opportunity to hear about the proposal and ask questions of the officers involved, 4 public meetings were arranged.

3.5 These 4 public meetings were publicised in the proposal document and relevant notices; with the links sent to parents through Groupcall and the meetings advertised in the local newspaper and through Fife Council's social media platforms of Twitter and Facebook. This ensured that sufficient notice was given to parents/carers or other interested parties to allow them to take part. The meetings were also publicised on the website at [Proposal to Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to Rezone the Catchment Areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools | Fife Council](#). The meetings took place at:

- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 6-7 pm

- Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 6-7 pm

3.6 The Education Directorate was also able to offer drop-in sessions. These drop-in sessions were arranged and publicised for parents/carers and interested parties, to have an informal chat with officers, where officers were available to discuss the content of the proposal document. These informal drop-in sessions took place at:

- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Tuesday 30 January 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am
- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 5-6 pm
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 5-6 pm
- Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 5-6pm
- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 5-6 pm

3.7 In person pupil consultation sessions were facilitated by the Quality Improvement Officer and the Compliance Officer in individual school settings on the following days:

Tuesday 30 January 2024 – Pitteuchar East Primary School
 Monday 5 February 2024 – Coaltown of Balgonie
 Wednesday 21 February 2024 – Thornton Primary School

3.8 The pupils involved in the consultation sessions equated to 30.5% of the total number of P4-P7 pupils across the 3 primary schools.

School Name	School Roll Census 2023	No. of P1-P3 Pupils	No. of P4-P7 Pupils	% of P4-P7 on the roll	P4-P7 participation in sessions	% of P4-P7 pupils
Coaltown of Balgonie PS	100	46	54	54.0%	15	27.7%
Pitteuchar East PS	225	95	130	57.7%	42	32.3%
Thornton PS	158	67	91	57.6%	27	29.7%
Total	483	208	275	56.9%	84	30.5%

3.9 In total, 84 primary aged pupils from P4-P7 took part in the face-to-face consultation sessions. Pupils from all of the schools were asked to provide feedback following a short presentation on the proposal.

3.10 From the information received from the 3 pupil consultation sessions, almost all of the pupils were keen for more pupils to join their schools, to enable more friendship groups and new pupils to support the values of each of the schools. The pupils recognised the importance of being able to walk to school and felt that both of the areas that were being considered for rezoning would allow pupils the

opportunity to walk to school. Overall, the pupils from all the groups at the individual schools were positive and enthusiastic to provide well considered feedback.

- 3.11 The proposal document was sent to HMIE, Education Scotland, on Wednesday 24 January 2024, together with the Notice of Consultation dated 23rd January 2024, issued to all statutory consultees. At the end of the statutory consultation period on Tuesday 12 March 2024, Fife Council provided Education Scotland with a summary of the written and oral representations received in response to the consultation. Fife Council also provided copies of the Consultation Proposal Document (Initial); Notice of Consultation; Notice of Correction; Consultation Proposal Document (Revised); blank Consultation Response Form; PowerPoint Presentation from the public meetings and Pupil Consultation Feedback. These documents were issued to Education Scotland on Thursday 14 March 2024 for the purpose of the preparation of their report.
- 3.12 Education Scotland provided a draft report to Fife Council on 27 March 2024 and the final report on 2 April 2024. The report is contained in Part 8 of this report.
- 3.13 Fife Council has reviewed the proposal having regard to the written and oral representations received and the Education Scotland report, before preparing this Consultation Report. This report will be published in electronic and printed form. Notification of the publication of this Consultation Report will be given to those who made written representation on the proposal and the publication of this Consultation Report will be advertised. Opportunities will then be available for consultees and other interested parties to make representations to the elected members of Fife Council who will make the decision on whether to implement the proposal, in whole or in part, or not. The Cabinet Committee, on 6 June 2024, will consider the Consultation Report and be invited to decide on it. The decision of that committee will be subject to internal governance procedures before it becomes final.
- 3.14 If Fife Council decides to implement the proposal, in whole or in part, the decision insofar as it relates to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be notified to the Scottish Ministers. The Council will notify the Scottish Ministers of the decision and provide them with a copy of the Consultation Proposal Document, this Consultation Report and the notice published under section 11A (3) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, within 6 days of the decision becoming final. The Council will also publish the fact it has done so on its website together with details of the opportunity for making representations to the Scottish Ministers within the first 3 weeks of the 8-week period. The Scottish Ministers have an 8-week period from the date of the Council's decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Any call-in by the Scottish Ministers will only apply to the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Within the first 3 weeks of the 8-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. The Scottish Ministers can issue a call-in notice if they consider that the Council has failed in a significant regard to comply with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which are relevant to the closure proposal or if they consider that the Council has failed to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to the decision to implement the closure proposal. Unless the Scottish Ministers inform the Council

that they do not intend to call-in the proposal by the end of the 8-week period, the Council will not proceed to implement the proposal during the 8-week period. Until the outcome of any call-in has been notified to the Council, it is unable to proceed to implement the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers decide to call-in a closure proposal, they must refer it to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panel for determination by a School Closure Review Panel. The Council may not then implement the proposal in whole or in part unless the Panel has granted consent to it (with or without conditions) and either an appeal to the Sheriff has expired or, if an appeal has been made, it has either been abandoned or the Sheriff has confirmed the Panel's decision.

4.0 **Total Number of and Summary of Written Representations Received**

4.1 In total, 21 written representations were received in writing or online. These comprised 20 Consultation Response Forms (some with detailed comments) and one written statement received by email.

4.2 The Consultation Response Form was available online at [Proposal to Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to Rezone the Catchment Areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools | Fife Council](#) and in paper format at the affected schools, from the Main Reception at Fife House, Glenrothes and from Auchmuty High School, for those who requested it.

4.3 A copy is reprinted at Appendix 1.15 of Appendix A to this report. One completed paper copy was received, which was entered into the online system and is included in the 20 completed online.

4.4 All 20 respondents who completed the Consultation Response Form responded to all 3 questions within the questionnaire, indicating whether they supported each part of the proposal or did not support each part of the proposal or they answered 'Don't' know' if they were unsure on how to answer each part of the proposal.

4.5 In response to Question 3.1 - Do you support the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to include the existing catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School from Monday 19 August 2024?

Summary of responses to Consultation Response Form	Number of respondents	Question 3.1					
		No of Yes responses	%	No of No responses	%	No of Don't know responses	%
Parents/carers	16	6	30%	7	35%	3	15%
Pupils	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Staff	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other interested parties	4	3	15%	1	5%	0	0%
Total	20	9	45%	8	40%	3	15%

- 4.6 In response to Question 3.2 - Do you support the proposal to rezone part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (Westwood Park) to Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area from Monday 19 August 2024?

		Question 3.2					
Summary of responses to Consultation Response Form	Number of respondents	No of Yes responses	%	No of No responses	%	No of Don't know responses	%
Parents/carers	16	5	25%	5	25%	6	30%
Pupils	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Staff	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other interested parties	4	3	15%	0	0%	1	5%
Total	20	8	40%	5	25%	7	35%

- 4.7 In response to Question 3.3 - Do you support the proposal to rezone part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (Lochtyview area) to Thornton Primary School catchment area from Monday 19 August 2024?

		Question 3.3					
Summary of responses to Consultation Response Form	Number of respondents	No of Yes responses	%	No of No responses	%	No of Don't know responses	%
Parents/carers	16	5	25%	9	45%	2	10%
Pupils	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Staff	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other interested parties	4	2	10%	2	10%	0	0%
Total	20	7	35%	11	55%	2	10%

- 4.8 Three of the 21 responses received were from parents of children currently living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area.

- 4.9 A summary of the comments, using the Consultation Response Forms is given below and a further breakdown of the responses is provided within Appendix E.

4.10 Summary of comments from the Consultation Response Forms

- 4.10.1 The following summarises the comments made from the written statements received via the Consultation Response Form in writing or by email.

- A small number of respondents feel it is premature to change the catchment areas before the impact of new housing is known. These respondents feel that there is too much housebuilding planned across the area.
- A small number of respondents felt that there are not enough spaces in the schools to support the housing proposed.
- One respondent believes that the rezoning of part of Coaltown of Balgonie to Milton of Balgonie, to enable Milton of Balgonie Primary School to reopen, is a

better alternative for the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment.

- A small number of respondents expressed concern for the future enrolment of younger siblings of children already enrolled in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, if the entire proposal is approved, as they would need to apply for a place at Coaltown of Balgonie through a placing request application and this would have an impact on transport to and from school. These respondents expressed concern at the possibility of having children in two different schools.
- One respondent expressed concern over the wellbeing of existing pupils in Thornton Primary School if the school roll increases.

4.11 **Summary of other written representations made**

4.11.1 The written statement received expresses concern that:

- The proposal would mean that their child, currently enrolled in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School as a catchment pupil, would be expected to move to their new catchment school, if the proposal were to be approved for August 2024.

4.11.2 This written statement was received early in the consultation period and the opportunity was taken to explain to the person making the written representation that no child already enrolled in any of the affected schools, would be expected to move, should the proposal be implemented, unless they chose to do so. The explanation provided resolved the concern.

4.11.3 As this parent/carer had misunderstood the position, the Education Directorate ensured that the proposed implementation of the proposal was clearly communicated at the public meetings. Paragraph 17.1 of the Consultation Proposal Document states "If approved in full by the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council, it is intended that the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools would be implemented from Monday 19 August 2024 and would apply to all applications for enrolment, including placing requests, from that date".

4.12 **Requests for information**

- There were no requests for information during the consultation process.

5.0 **Summary of Oral Representations made at the Public Meetings**

5.1 As indicated in paragraph 3.5, 4 public meetings were held, one in each of the respective primary school catchment areas. Other than HMIE, Education Scotland, 11 parents/carers or other interested parties attended the public meetings. 5 parents/carers or other interested parties attended the meeting at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and 6 attended the meeting in Milton of Balgonie. None attended the meetings at Thornton or Pitteuchar East Primary Schools. The Record of Public Meetings is contained in Appendix G.

5.2 Impact of Siblings not attending the same school

A small number of parents/carers expressed concern for the future enrolment of younger siblings to children already enrolled in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, if the entire proposal is approved, as they would need to apply for a place at Coaltown of Balgonie through a placing request application and this would have an impact on transport to and from school. These parents/carers expressed concern at the possibility of having children in two different schools.

5.3 Capacity of local schools/Impact of New Housing

A small number of stakeholders expressed concern about schools already being full, without the addition of new pupils. This included concern that all the housing has not been factored into the proposal and that Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School will exceed capacity.

5.4 Future Educational Considerations

A small number of stakeholders asked that consideration be given to the Milton of Balgonie Primary School building being used, in future, to support pupils with additional support needs.

5.5 Community Impact

A few people expressed sadness that the community could be losing a school and that there is very little interaction between children and the elderly population. Concern was raised about the fact that no positives for keeping Milton of Balgonie Primary School open were identified.

5.6 Impact on Enrolled Pupils and Childcare

One parent/carer expressed concern over the wellbeing of existing pupils in Thornton Primary School if the school roll increases; the impact on siblings if they were not enrolled at the same school and the impact on those enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School whose catchment area is going to change.

5.7 Distance to School/Walking Route

One parent/carer raised concern regarding the distances to school shown in the presentation and the availability of a walking route.

5.8 Educational benefits/Small Schools

A minority of respondents feel that small schools provide equally successful learners. There is a belief from a minority of respondents that children from the Milton of Balgonie area are missing out on developing independence through walking to school and that they are not able to develop friendships with peers in the village.

5.9 Alternative options to the proposal

One stakeholder suggested that alternative schools, such as Markinch or Balcurvie Primary Schools, should be considered as part of the proposal.

6.0 **Summary of Comments from the Pupil Consultation**

6.1 The pupil consultation was carried out in accordance with Education Scotland best practice and in accordance with 'Participants, Not Pawns – Guidance on Consulting with Children and Young People,' Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People.

6.2 A Groupcall message was issued by the schools to all parents/carers with a child in P4-P7, to advise that their child may be selected to take part in one of these sessions. Parents who did not want their child to attend were asked to contact their school. These consultation sessions took place from 30 January to 21 February 2024, with groups comprising of P4/P5 and P6/7 pupils.

6.3 A total of 84 pupils across the 3 primary schools took part in the pupil consultation sessions. This equated to over 30.5% of pupils from P4-P7 stages in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, Pitteuchar East Primary School and Thornton Primary Schools.

6.4 The questions and the information provided by pupil groups is detailed in Appendix H. A summary of responses to the questions is listed below:

6.4.1 Are you aware of a consultation proposal to change the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie/Pitteuchar East/Thornton Primary School and close Milton of Balgonie Primary School?

Almost all pupils across the 3 schools were not aware of the consultation taking place, as it had not been discussed at home. A few pupils had heard about the proposal or had overhead conversations at home around the detail.

6.4.2 What do you think about the proposals to:

Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment area to Coaltown of Balgonie permanently?

A few pupils thought it would be harder to see people if the school closed and more difficult for parents to meet. Although one pupil thought the school should remain open, a number of pupils felt that having P1-P7 in the school would be a struggle; the younger children would have different interests to the older pupils and would not be able to get a sports team together. The pupils felt that more pupils at Coaltown of Balgonie would require more staff and space.

Rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School – Lochtyview area out, but those already in school can remain and be transported to school

Some of the pupils at Coaltown of Balgonie thought it would be better to have the Lochtyview area in one catchment area.

Rezone the catchment area of Thornton Primary School – Lochtyview area in

A few of the Thornton Primary School pupils thought it was a good idea to rezone this area as they currently have space. Pupils from this area could walk to school and there would be more pupils to take part in gym and games. However, a few children commented that the school would need more resources.

Rezone the catchment area of Pitteuchar East Primary School – Westwood Park in

Pitteuchar East Primary School pupils thought this would be an opportunity to make new friends, support the values of the school and enable parents/children to walk to school.

6.4.3 What do you think about the plan to try and keep the same number of children attending your school?

Pupil comments from all sessions highlight almost all pupils are keen for more pupils to join their schools, to enable more friendship groups and new pupils to support the values of each of the schools. Additional pupils may allow more groups for gym and enable bigger groups for games.

6.4.4 Are you aware of what changing the catchment area may mean for your school?

Pupils recognised the importance of being able to walk to school and felt that both of the areas that were being considered for rezoning would allow pupils the opportunity to walk to school.

6.4.5 Do you think this will make any difference to your time in school (P4/5/6/7) and educational experience?

Pupils stated that it would be difficult for pupils in Milton of Balgonie Primary School if they were the only pupil in a year and pupils could be lonely. They also felt that being a one class school would create a lack of sports teams. For a single class school, younger pupils would also have different interests. The majority of children did not think the proposals would make a difference to their time in school.

6.4.6 Would they have any concerns for more/less/same number of pupils attending the school?

The majority of pupils liked being part of a bigger school, but feel that more pupils would require more resources such as tables/chairs etc.

6.4.7 Any other comments or worries about the proposal you want to share?

Overall, the pupils from all the groups at the individual schools were positive and enthusiastic to provide well considered feedback.

7.0 Fife Council's Response to the Written and Oral Representations made and to the Pupil Consultation

7.1 Siblings possibly not attending the same school

Concerns were expressed by a small number of parents that a younger sibling would not be able to attend the same school as their older sibling if the catchment rezoning were implemented. The Education Directorate notes these concerns and has given them full consideration throughout the consultation process.

- 7.1.1 As outlined in Part 9 of the Consultation Proposal Document, if the proposal is implemented it may result in siblings being zoned to different primary school catchment areas. A situation may arise where a younger sibling of a child currently attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is zoned to a different primary school. In those circumstances, where parents/carers want both children to attend the same school, this will be possible in the newly zoned catchment school. Alternatively, if the parents/carers want both children to attend Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School they can make a placing request for the younger child to attend there. Placing requests will be granted in most circumstances, when pupil places are available, but the pupil will not automatically be entitled to free or subsidised school transport. The Council cannot guarantee a placing request will be granted in advance. Placing requests are governed by the Education Scotland Act 1980 and are administered in terms of the School Admissions Policy for Primary and Secondary Schools in Fife. If, after catchment pupils have been enrolled, the number of placing requests exceeds the number of available places at the school, the priority criteria within the School Admissions Policy are applied. These priority criteria provide that a child living at the same household address as their sibling is given a higher priority (following pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN)), than a pupil whose non-catchment school is closer to their home address than their catchment school or a pupil whose parent or carers' place of employment or domestic arrangements would result in the pupil being in before or after school care closer to the non-catchment school than to the catchment area school.
- 7.1.2 If the proposal is approved, the Education Directorate will work with parents and carers and review the nursery information to determine whether siblings can be accommodated in terms of placing requests or by enrolment at their new catchment school if desired. Where appropriate, siblings will be supported to move to their new catchment school with enhanced transition arrangements to minimise impact. Priority will be given to ensuring continuity and support for children with Additional Support Needs.
- 7.1.3 While there can be no guarantee that placing requests can be accommodated, this proposed change is, in part, designed to reinstate this type of flexibility for enrolment at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The Education Directorate will apply the Schools Admissions Policy and it is probable that siblings will be able to be accommodated, through parental placing requests, without this significantly impacting on the future occupancy of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- 7.1.4 From previous history, the Education Directorate has always worked with parents/carers across Fife who would otherwise have siblings separated following a catchment rezoning proposal, to manage enrolment effectively in the same school as their older sibling.

7.2 Capacity of Local Schools and Impact of New Housing

- 7.2.1 In developing the proposal, the Education Directorate has taken into consideration the new housing developments planned in the 4 existing primary school catchment areas, detailed in Appendix 10 of the Consultation Proposal Document, within the school roll projection methodology.
- 7.2.2 Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools each have a maximum pupil capacity which does not take into account multi-purpose areas, which may be used for a temporary period, should the need arise. Each August, the primary schools will be given a staffing allocation for the number of catchment pupils expected to attend the school. This staffing allocation may not mean the school is at maximum pupil capacity, only that it is staffed according to the number of pupils wishing to attend the school.
- 7.2.3 Reference was made in the Consultation Proposal Document to a potential Local Development Plan site at Balfour Place/Main Street, Milton of Balgonie for 63 units. The site has no planning consent. The planning application submitted detailed that the site would commence in 2023 with 30 units and finish in 2024/25 with 33 units. In the event that planning consent is granted for this application, the delivery of the units will be rephased to future dates. The anticipated number of pupils from this development has been included in the school roll projections.
- 7.2.4 The Queens Meadow site in Coaltown of Balgonie, referred to in the Consultation Proposal Document, received planning consent on 25 July 2023. This site is for 80 units, 30 units above the Local Development Plan capacity. The school roll projections detailed in paragraph 5.3.9 of the Consultation Proposal Document detail that this site will impact on the school capacity at Coaltown of Balgonie, and as a result, this site will contribute towards the one classroom permanent extension at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Construction has commenced on the Queens Meadow site.
- 7.2.5 The Millburn Avenue Site in Coaltown of Balgonie, referred to in the Consultation Proposal Document, was approved by the West and Central Fife Planning Committee on 3 April 2024. A full planning consent notice will be issued in due course to the developer. The anticipated pupil numbers generated from this site were included in the pupil roll projections detailed in paragraph 5.3.9 of the Consultation Proposal Document. This site will also contribute to the one classroom extension at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, which is expected to be ready for occupation in August 2025.
- 7.2.6 The housing at Westwood Park, within the Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area, referred to in the Consultation Proposal Document, continues to be developed, with a 12-year build period.
- 7.2.7 The Thornton East Strategic Development Area within the Thornton Primary School catchment area, referred to in the Consultation Proposal Document, is for 900 units. An application has been received for the first 300 units. The planning application for 300 units has not received planning consent.

- 7.2.8 There has been no material change in planned housing development since the publication of the Consultation Proposal Document. These sites relating to the 4 primary school catchment areas are contained in Appendix 10 of the Consultation Proposal Document.
- 7.2.9 The Education Directorate will continue to monitor house building and the pupil product from all housing in the 4 existing primary school catchment areas. The Education Directorate considers that, based on current NHS births in Milton of Balgonie and the pupil product used in assessing demand from new housing developments, the average pupil product is unlikely to manifest from the Milton of Balgonie site should it receive planning consent. The Education Directorate is confident that the projected number of pupils can be accommodated within Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools.
- 7.2.10 The Education Directorate is confident that the collaboration with the Planning Service to analyse and respond to planning applications is robust. School capacity risks are reviewed whenever the Housing Land Audit is renewed and when every new planning application is received and the roll projections reflect current pupil numbers, school capacity, class organisation and other relevant legislation and policies. These assessments are and will continue to be based on school data that is updated annually e.g. Pupil Census, School Estate Core Facts and Housing Land Audit.

7.3 Future Educational Considerations

- 7.3.1 It was raised, at a public meeting, that the community would prefer if Milton of Balgonie Primary School is to be closed, that the building be used for another educational purpose, such as a school for pupils with additional support needs.
- 7.3.2 As detailed in paragraph 2.1, part (c) of the proposal includes to “Seek alternative uses for the Milton of Balgonie Primary School site, with the presumption that these will be within the control of the Education Service to ensure that should the number of primary aged pupils in this area increase to a level that may require provision of an additional primary school in future, that it may be done so at the least cost to the Council.”
- 7.3.3 Part 14 of the Consultation Proposal Document details, if the closure proposal is approved, presumption will be given to other educational uses for the site. If none can be identified other uses by the Council will be considered. If no alternatives can be identified in this way the site will be disposed of. While no decision can be made on the future use of the site unless and until the closure proposal is approved by Cabinet Committee and the call-in period has expired, potential educational uses will continue to be explored. For the avoidance of doubt the site will not be put to any alternative use until the closure proposal is approved by Cabinet Committee and that decision has become final.

7.4 Community

- 7.4.1 The Education Directorate notes the concerns of the community. In terms of community access, the loss of the village primary school will not impact on local community groups or residents who wish to operate activities within the village.

Prior to the mothballing of the school, local groups did not use the school for community activities and, therefore, these groups will still have access to the Village Hall on Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie. The Education Directorate understands that for residents in the village there appears to be very little interaction between children and the elderly population and it was suggested that Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School concerts could be held in the village hall at certain times of the year, to increase this interaction with elderly residents in the village.

7.5 Enrolled Pupils

7.5.1 The Education Directorate understands the concern of parents/carers that if the proposal is approved there may be an impact on enrolled pupils, as a result of the perceived increase of class sizes. As explained at the public meetings, there will be no impact on pupils currently enrolled in any of the 3 schools. If the proposal is approved, pupils currently in attendance at Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East or Thornton Primary School will **not** be required to change school during their primary years, unless they wish to do so. There is no indication that class sizes will increase at any of the schools and this proposal will support the long-term viability of education at all 3 schools and sustain the school rolls for future years. The proposal will also enable pupils in Coaltown of Balgonie and Thornton Primary Schools to be educated in classes organised in a narrower range of school years (e.g. also narrowing the age range in school years in any composite class).

7.6 Distance to School/Walking Route

7.6.1 The Education Directorate recognises that, for a small number of families in the Lochtyview area proposed to be rezoned from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Thornton Primary School, there will be an impact on the distance travelled to school and pupils will be expected to walk, unless they are distance entitled in terms of the current School Transport Policy. This may also mean pupils will cross different roads to those they are currently familiar with.

7.6.2 Fife Council currently exceeds the statutory requirement in respect of the provision of free transport for primary aged children and provides all primary pupils living more than one mile from their catchment school with free transport. For those who walk to school, the safety of our pupils enroute is important, therefore Walked Route Assessments have been carried out for the 2 different routes arising from the proposal: Lochtyview Estate to Thornton Primary School and Westwood Park to Pitteuchar East Primary School, to ensure that the routes would be available in accordance with the Fife Council Walked Routes To School Assessment Policy. There are specific criteria to be considered by officers undertaking these assessments. Additionally, in accordance with legislation and the Fife Council Policy, it is assumed that a pupil will be accompanied by an adult when walking to school until parents/carers decide that their child is able to walk on their own or with a group of friends.

7.6.3 Fife Council's Transportation Service has identified a walk route to Thornton Primary School. With the exception of 9 houses within the Lochtyview Estate, the route is within one mile of Thornton Primary School. From Lochtyview Way at number 51, the walked route proceeded along Lochtyview Gardens, and

Lochtyview Way to the entrance of this housing development. A pedestrian crossing was used on Blackwood Road (B9130) to enable the walk on the footpath prior to crossing at Main Street, just after the Burnbank Terrace entrance. The footpath through Donald Crescent, onto Birchtree Place, was accessed and then a crossing at Station Road, just across from the school.

- 7.6.4 Fife Council's Transportation Service has identified a walk route to Pitteuchar East Primary School from the Westwood Park development. At the entrance to the new development, the walk route started at Lawder Gardens. On approach to Foxton Drive, the cycle path was used to join up with the main path leading from Mar Drive to Foxton Drive. This footpath was used by walkers and cyclists. Officers crossed at Mar Drive and continued on the footpath through the housing estate to join the footbridge over the Kinglassie Road (B921). This footpath continues on to Blair Avenue, where officers crossed to join the footpath that leads to the rear entrance of the school.
- 7.6.5 Further detail about these walk routes is contained in Appendix J. Included in the assessments are details of speed restrictions on roads in and around the areas affected. These routes were walked by different officers in the morning and afternoon. All routes were assessed as available walking routes, as per the Walked Routes to School Assessment Policy.
- 7.6.6 If the proposal is approved, any pupil currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School in receipt of transport to and from school will continue to receive free transport for the duration of their education at that school, should they continue to live at their current home address. The availability of school transport for pupils attending a school as a placing request is not guaranteed and if an offer of a school place is accepted, parents would be responsible for getting their child to and from school. Where there are spare seats on existing school buses or suitable commercial bus services, pupils can pay a fare or use their NEC card (with the travel entitlement loaded) to travel free.

7.7 Educational Benefits/Small Schools

- 7.7.1 The comments made by parents/carers and other interested parties regarding small schools and successful learners from small schools are acknowledged. The Education Directorate considers that the educational benefits outlined in Part 6 of the Consultation Proposal Document would be delivered if the proposal is implemented. These benefits include the more varied experiences that can be delivered by attending a larger school. They also include being part of a larger peer group to enable pupils to have bigger friendship groups.

7.8 Alternatives to the Proposal

- 7.8.1 One respondent believed rezoning part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment to Milton of Balgonie Primary School was a better alternative. Another suggested that alternative schools such as Markinch or Balcurvie Primary Schools should be considered as part of the proposal.
- 7.8.2 In formulating the proposal, the Education Directorate considered whether there were any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to the reasons for

the proposal. In doing so, it reviewed the nearest schools (under the management of Fife Council) to consider whether the catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School could be extended. The nearest schools to Milton of Balgonie Primary School are:

- (a) Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School (1.7 miles)
- (b) Balcurvie Primary School (1.7 miles)

- 7.8.3 As detailed in paragraphs 4.2.6.20 to 4.2.6.30 of the Consultation Proposal Document (Appendix A), the Council did consider whether part of the existing Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area could be rezoned to Milton of Balgonie Primary School to increase the school roll at Milton of Balgonie Primary School. At least 51 pupils would need to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School to increase the occupancy to more than 2 classes. This would then result in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School reducing to 2 classes. This could result in the operation of two small schools neither of which would meet the guiding principles set out in paragraph 3.1 of the Consultation Proposal Document. This in turn would affect the long terms sustainability of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. In the long term, based on current trends it could result in a declining school roll and occupancy.
- 7.8.4 This alternative option would result in an increased number of pupils requiring transport to Milton of Balgonie Primary School. This would incur increased transport costs for transporting 2 classes of pupils from the current Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to Milton of Balgonie Primary School, compared to the current cost of transporting fewer than 10 pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- 7.8.5 This alternative option would also result in Fife Council maintaining 2 small schools, both with 2 classes and the revenue costs associated with operating 2 schools. Accordingly, the Education Directorate does not consider rezoning part of the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School a reasonable alternative to the proposal as a response to the reasons for formulating the proposal. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community to rezone pupils from another community to sustain Milton of Balgonie Primary School. It would not provide any educational benefits to the children living in the catchment areas of either Milton of Balgonie or Coaltown of Balgonie Primary Schools.
- 7.8.6 As detailed in paragraphs 4.2.6.31 to 4.2.6.37 of the Consultation Proposal Document (Appendix A), the Council did consider whether part of the existing Balcurvie Primary School catchment area could be rezoned to Milton of Balgonie Primary School to increase the school roll at Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Balcurvie Primary School has temporary modular accommodation on site. Fife Council intends to remove this accommodation when the school roll declines. Balcurvie Primary School is part of a different secondary school cluster and is associated with Levenmouth Academy. Although Balcurvie Primary School is also located 1.7 miles from Milton of Balgonie Primary School, the route to and from Balcurvie is via the A911 commuter route from Glenrothes to Leven, with no pedestrian footpaths and a speed limit of 60 mph. Rezoning some of this

catchment area to Milton of Balgonie would result in additional revenue expenditure as currently the majority of school pupils walk to Balcurvie Primary School. Accordingly, the Education Directorate does not consider rezoning part of the catchment area of Balcurvie Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School a reasonable alternative to the proposal as a response to the reasons for formulating the proposal. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community to rezone pupils from another community to sustain Milton of Balgonie Primary School. It would not provide any educational benefits to the children living in the catchment areas of either Milton of Balgonie or Balcurvie Primary Schools.

7.8.7 The rezoning of part of the Markinch Primary School catchment area to Milton of Balgonie Primary School was not considered at the time of drafting the proposal. This option would require transport from Markinch to Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Currently, all the catchment area of Markinch Primary School is within 1 mile walking distance, with the exception of a small number of houses to the north of Stob Cross Road. Therefore, as the remainder of housing is within one mile of the catchment area, there would be no reason to rezone part of this catchment area to Milton of Balgonie Primary School. To rezone the southern part of the Markinch Primary School catchment area to Milton of Balgonie Primary School would require at least 50 pupils to enable the school to be more than 2 classes and would require a larger vehicle to transport pupils than is currently in place for the pupils travelling from Milton of Balgonie to Coaltown of Balgonie. There also would be no opportunity for any Markinch Primary School catchment pupils to walk to school, which the majority are currently able to do.

7.8.8 Accordingly, the Education Directorate does not consider rezoning part of the catchment area of Markinch Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School to be a reasonable alternative to the proposal. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community. It would not provide any educational benefits to the children living in the catchment areas of either Milton of Balgonie or Markinch Primary Schools.

7.9 Implementation Date

7.9.1 Concern was raised by a small number of parents that the implementation date should be changed to allow for those families with younger siblings to be enrolled at the same school. The proposed date for implementation of the proposal is Monday 19 August 2024. All nursery aged pupils due to commence Primary One in August 2024 will have enrolled at their current catchment school in January 2024. Any new pupil moving into Fife or from another primary school into one of these 3 primary school catchment areas, from Monday 19 August 2024, should enrol at their new catchment school. The timing of any proposal which may impact on nursery or primary aged pupils is difficult to manage, as there is always someone impacted by such a proposal. However, support will be given to any pupil at nursery or primary stage, to ensure they settle into a new environment. Transition arrangements for any pupil moving between schools is well managed by the schools involved.

7.9.2 As detailed in part 9 of the Consultation Proposal Document and at Part 7 above, parents have the right to make a placing request, requesting that their child attend

a school other than their designated catchment school.

7.10 Pupil Consultation Feedback

- 7.10.1 The Education Directorate is pleased to hear the comments from all of the pupils who took part in the sessions. It is encouraging to hear that the majority of pupils would welcome new pupils to their school and that the majority of pupils thought it would be a good idea to rezone the catchment areas. Pupils felt that the rezoning of the catchment areas would allow pupils to be able to walk to school, have larger friendship groups and enable bigger groups for games and gym activities.
- 7.10.2 The pupils also were aware of the challenges for pupils in a school with all pupils in one single class and how it would be difficult to have enough pupils for sports groups or for younger pupils having different interests from older pupils.
- 7.10.3 Although the pupils were concerned regarding an increase of pupils, additional staff resources would be provided should the number of classes increase in each of the schools and additional furniture/classrooms resources will be sourced if required.

8.0 Report from HMIE, Education Scotland

The report from HMIE, Education Scotland is reproduced on the following pages.



Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Fife Council to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools.

March 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His 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 a proposal from Fife Council to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. 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 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 of the schools; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

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

- attendance at the public meetings held on 5, 12, 21 and 28 February 2024 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, 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 closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. HM Inspectors also considered the likely effect on the local community and of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Fife Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 Milton of Balgonie Primary School is classified as an accessible rural school. For academic session 2019-20, the remaining pupils moved to other primary schools as a result of parental choice. Fife Council arranged free school transport to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School for those distance entitled pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area from August 2019. The council agreed to mothball the school in January 2021. The council established the catchment areas of all four primary schools affected by this proposal prior to the construction of a regional trunk road. This road now bisects these catchment areas and has resulted in catchment boundary anomalies.

2.3 The statutory consultation ran from 24 January to 12 March 2024. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders, including parents and pupils. Four public meetings were held throughout February 2024 in the catchment areas affected, which were attended by 11 stakeholders in total. The council received 20 responses to their consultation and one written representation. A minority of respondents were supportive of the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. There were mixed views about the proposal to rezone catchment areas. A few respondents expressed concern that it was too early to make changes to catchment areas due to planned housing developments. A few parents were also concerned about the future capacity of schools to accept placing requests. They feel this may result in siblings attending different primary schools.

2.4 The council facilitated consultation sessions with 84 P4-7 children from each of the schools affected. Almost all children are keen for more children to join their school. The majority of children enjoy being part of a bigger school. They feel that being part of a one class school could limit opportunities to be involved in team sports.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree that Fife Council has clearly outlined a range of education benefits in the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School. The school roll for Milton of Balgonie Primary School is not predicted to rise significantly in the next four years and children from the catchment area are settled in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. They continue to benefit from an enhanced range of curricular experiences, more opportunities including team activities, and the wider social aspects of attending a larger school. Children also benefit from a buddy system, which helps them to support each other with learning and with whole school activities.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree with the education benefits outlined from rezoning the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. This will help to balance school rolls, which should support the sustainability and viability of the schools. It will enable children living in the Westwood Park area to attend the same school and be educated with peers living in close proximity. It will also enable those living in the Lochtyview area to attend the school in the community that they live in and increase options walk to school.

3.3 HM Inspectors met with children, parents and staff, including headteachers. All were supportive of the council's proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Almost all were supportive of the council's proposal to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools.

3.4 A few children who met with HM Inspectors had attended Milton of Balgonie Primary School. They are happy attending their current school and feel they have lots of opportunities to participate in clubs and after-school activities. They benefit from having a larger friendship group and value additional opportunities to try new things. Almost all children that met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposed changes to primary school catchment areas. Children recognised the importance of being able to walk to school. They believe the proposal

may reduce travel distances from home to school for some families and increase opportunities for more active travel. A few children were concerned that it may result in siblings attending different schools and the potential impact this may have on their parents. Children living in the current Milton of Balgonie catchment area are concerned about the future use of the school building. If the school closes, they would like to see the building used for community benefit.

3.5 The staff and parents that met with HM Inspectors consider that the proposed changes make sense. They believe it will bring catchment areas of the schools in line with the geography of the surrounding area and reduce the need to cross busy roads. They are clear that the proposal will enable more children to attend their nearest school and will help to sustain the school rolls in a more balanced way. Those living in the Thornton area believe children will make stronger connections with their local town. All staff believe that, should this proposal proceed, the changes will have little impact on children and families. No parents from the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or the Milton of Balgonie catchment area took up the opportunity to meet with HM Inspectors.

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 in special regard. The council took appropriate steps to consider reasonable alternatives to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School. These included the continued mothballing of the school and rezoning the catchment areas for other schools to allow Milton of Balgonie to reopen. Currently, children residing in the Milton of Balgonie catchment travel to school by private car or school transport and are settled in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The implementation of the proposal would have little impact on almost all children. Most children from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area would like to see a positive outcome to be found for the use of the existing school building that could be used for community benefit.

4. Summary

Overall, HM Inspectors agree that the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the changes to catchment areas will result in educational benefits. Children from Milton of Balgonie catchment area are settled in their current school and enjoy learning alongside their peers in a larger school community. Almost all stakeholders agree that proposed changes to catchment areas will resolve catchment anomalies and enable children to attend their nearest school. The proposal will also help to balance school rolls and school capacity. If the proposal is approved, there may be a need to work with parents to reduce the likelihood of siblings attending different primary schools. The council should also work with the local community to explore the potential future use of the school building.

HM Inspectors
March 2024

9.0 Statement of Fife Council's response to the report from HMIE, Education Scotland

9.1 Fife Council is pleased to note that the report from HMIE, Education Scotland accepts that the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the proposed changes to the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools will result in educational benefits. The report also highlights that the pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area are settled within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and enjoy their learning alongside peers in a larger school community. Fife Council has noted that these pupils continue to benefit from an enhanced range of curricular experiences, more opportunities including team activities and the wider social aspects of attending a larger school. Children are also benefiting from a buddy system, which helps them to support each other with learning and with whole school activities. The benefits in a number of areas are recognised and the report acknowledges that the Council took appropriate steps to consider reasonable alternatives to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School as well as due consideration to the impact of the proposal on the local community and the effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

9.2 The report raises the following points which can be responded to as follows:

9.2.1 Paragraph 2.3: 'There were mixed views about the proposal to rezone catchment areas. A few respondents expressed concern that it was too early to make changes to catchment areas due to planned housing developments. A few parents were also concerned about the future capacity of schools to accept placing requests. They feel this may result in siblings attending different primary schools'.

9.2.2 House Building

In response, Fife Council refers to paragraphs 7.2.1 to 7.2.10 above. Fife Council will continue to monitor house building and the pupil product from all proposed and consented housing in the 4 existing primary school catchment areas. Fife Council considers that, based on current NHS births in Milton of Balgonie catchment area and the pupil product used in assessing demand from new housing developments, the average pupil product is unlikely to manifest from the Milton of Balgonie site should it receive planning consent. Fife Council is confident that the projected number of pupils can be accommodated within Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. Fife Council acknowledges that the school roll of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is expected to require the use of the multi-purpose room in the future, however, every effort will be made to manage the school roll to enable catchment pupils to attend. For Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, the additional housing to Pitteuchar East Primary School will sustain the roll and for the small number of pupils from Lochtyview, these pupils can be accommodated within the school roll at Thornton Primary School.

9.2.3 Fife Council is confident that the collaboration between the Planning Service and the Education Directorate, to analyse and respond to planning applications, is robust. School capacity risks are reviewed whenever the Housing Land Audit is renewed and when every new planning application is received and the roll projections reflect current pupil numbers, school capacity, class organisation and

other relevant legislation and policies. These assessments are and will continue to be based on school data that is updated annually e.g. Pupil Census, School Estate Core Facts and Housing Land Audit.

9.2.4 Siblings

In response, Fife Council refers to paragraph 7.1.1 to 7.1.4 above. As outlined in Part 9 of the Consultation Proposal Document, if the proposal is implemented it may result in siblings being zoned to different primary school catchment areas. A situation may arise where a younger sibling of a child currently attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is zoned to a different primary school. In those circumstances, where parents/carers want both children to attend the same school, this will be possible in the newly zoned catchment school. Alternatively, if the parents/carers want both children to attend Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School they can make a placing request for the younger child to attend there. Placing requests will be granted in most circumstances, when pupil places are available but the pupil will not automatically be entitled to free or subsidised school transport. The Council cannot guarantee a placing request will be granted in advance. Placing requests are governed by the Education Scotland Act 1980 and are administered in terms of the School Admissions Policy for Primary and Secondary Schools in Fife. If, after catchment pupils have been enrolled, the number of placing requests exceeds the number of available places at the school, the priority criteria within the School Admissions Policy are applied. These priority criteria provide that a child living at the same household address as their sibling is given a higher priority (following pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN)), than a pupil whose non-catchment school is closer to their home address than their catchment school or a pupil whose parent or carers' place of employment or domestic arrangements would result in the pupil being in before or after school care closer to the non-catchment school than to the catchment area school.

9.2.5 If the proposal is approved, Fife Council will work with parents and carers and review the nursery information to determine whether siblings can be accommodated in terms of placing requests or by enrolment at their new catchment school if desired. Where appropriate, siblings will be supported to move to their new catchment school with enhanced transition arrangements to minimise impact. Priority will be given to ensuring continuity and support for children with Additional Support Needs.

9.2.6 While there can be no guarantee that placing requests can be accommodated, this proposed change is, in part, designed to reinstate this type of flexibility for enrolment for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Fife Council will apply the Schools Admissions Policy and it is probable that siblings will be able to be accommodated, through parental placing requests, without this significantly impacting on the future occupancy of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.

9.2.7 From previous history, Fife Council has always worked with parents/carers across Fife who would otherwise have siblings separated following a catchment rezoning proposal, to manage enrolment effectively in the same school as their older sibling.

9.2.8 Paragraph 3.4: "A few children were concerned that it may result in siblings attending different schools and the potential impact this may have on their

parents. Children living in the current Milton of Balgonie catchment area are concerned about the future use of the school building. If the school closes, they would like to see the building used for community benefit.”

9.2.9 Siblings

In response to the concerns raised by pupils, Fife Council refers to paragraphs 9.2.4 to 9.2.7 where every effort will be made to try and accommodate younger siblings into Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School unless the school is over-subscribed by catchment pupils.

9.2.10 Future Use of the Building

In response to the concerns raised by pupils regarding the future use of the school building, Fife Council refers to paragraph 7.3.2 to 7.3.3 above. Fife Council understands both the pupils’ concerns and the wider concerns of the community regarding the future use of the building. If approval is given to this proposal, once the decision becomes final, the presumption will be that alternative uses will be within the control of the Education Service and presumption will be given to other educational uses for the site. Only if none can be identified, other uses by the Council will be considered. Only if none of those can be identified, the site will be disposed of.

10.0 **Errors, Omissions and Additional Information**

10.1 Following publication of the Consultation Proposal Document on 24th January 2024, officers from the Education Directorate discovered some errors in the proposal document. The errors were as follows:

- **Page 4**

Within paragraph 6 – Responding to the Proposal, the 3rd bullet point provides a link to the Consultation Response Form online. The form was accessible from the website at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary but unable to be accessed from the link detailed in the 3rd bullet point in paragraph 6. Within the Statutory Consultation Notice issued on 23 January 2024, the correct link of <https://forms.office.com/e/LgQ0Qxkmkz> was provided. This online form could be accessed straight from this link or through navigation at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary.

- **Page 2**

Within paragraph 2 – Notice of Consultation and Publication of the Proposal Document, as Auchmuty High School is not an affected school, it should not have been listed as a separate bullet point.

- **Page 26**

Within paragraph 4.2.2 (ii) – the letter “k” is missing from “took”. It should have read “Describe what steps (if any) it took to address those reasons before formulating the proposal or if it took no such steps explain why it did not do so, and”.

- **Page 40**

Within paragraph 5.3.16 – the letter “i” is missing from “it”. It should have read “(it was included in the 2015 Housing Land Audit).”

- **Page 64**

Within paragraph 18 – Statutory Consultation Process – Proposed Timeline, “Tuesday 23 April 2023” should read “Tuesday 23 April 2024”. This was an error.

- 10.2 The Notice of Correction is provided within Appendix C of the Consultation Report, titled Appendix A to this report.
- 10.3 Fife Council determined that each of the above errors did not relate to material considerations relevant to the Council’s decision as to implementation of the proposal. These determinations were made in accordance with Section 5 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It was the view of the Education Directorate, that the incorrect hyperlink to the online Consultation Response Form was not a material consideration relevant to the authority’s decision to implement the proposal. The correct link and the correct response form was available via multiple channels. It was the view of the Education Directorate that the other errors were typographical errors which were not material considerations relevant to the Authority’s decision to implement the proposal. Where that is the case, the Authority is not required to take action but may take action in terms of section 5 (a) or (b) or may take no further action other than mentioning the inaccuracy in the consultation report as required by section 10 (3). Considering this, the Education Directorate decided to proceed in accordance with Section 5 (5) (b) of the Act, to issue a Notice of Correction the relevant consultees and HMIE advising of the errors and correcting them in a corrected Consultation Proposal Document. The Notice of Correction is attached at Appendix C and the revised Consultation Proposal Document is attached at Appendix A. It was the view of the Education Directorate that no extension of the consultation period was required. The Notice of Corrections and revised Consultation Proposal Document were issued early in the consultation period ensuring parents/carers and interested parties were aware of the errors and the steps implemented, allowing them to make representations within the consultation period.
- 11.0 Review of the Proposal by Fife Council Including an Explanation of Compliance with sections 11A, 12, 12A and 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 When carrying out the Review**
- 11.1 When reviewing the proposal, Fife Council confirms that it is satisfied that implementation of the proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal identified by the authority under section 12A (2) (a).
- 11.2 Fife Council, in the Consultation Proposal Document (Appendix A), clearly identified the reasons for formulating the proposal. It also detailed the alternatives that were considered prior to formulating the proposal. Fife Council has identified that the representations made during the consultation period have not provided any options which are reasonable alternatives to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School.
- 11.3 The consultation process has identified a number of educational benefits associated with the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. It also identified some concerns raised by a small number of consultees. While these concerns are understandable, Fife Council does not believe that they constitute an adequate reason to withdraw the proposal, nor do they propose a reasonable

alternative to the closure of the school.

- 11.4 Through representation in the consultation process, Markinch Primary School was suggested as an alternative. As outlined in paragraphs 7.8.7 to 7.8.9, Markinch Primary School is located 2.3 miles from Milton of Balgonie Primary School, a greater distance than Coaltown of Balgonie or Balcurvie Primary Schools.
- 11.5 Accordingly, Fife Council does not consider rezoning part of the catchment area of Markinch Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School to be a reasonable alternative to the proposal as outlined in paragraphs 7.8.7 to 7.8.9. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community. It would not provide any educational benefits to the children living in the catchment areas of either Milton of Balgonie or Markinch Primary Schools.
- 11.6 Fife Council remains convinced that implementation of the closure proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal. In line with the principles outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the Consultation Proposal Document, the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools represents the only viable way to provide sustainable primary education for these 4 communities. Implementation of the proposal will resolve the catchment anomalies created by the construction of the A92, balance the school rolls between the 3 remaining catchment areas and ensure sustainable school communities longer term.
- 11.7 Fife Council has complied with the provisions for rural schools in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as contained in sections 11A, 12, 12A and 13.
- 11.8 Fife Council has special regard to the following factors mentioned in section 12 (3),
- (b) the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented)
 - (c) the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented).
- 11.9 Fife Council has considered section 12 (4), 'the effect on the community is to be assessed by reference (in particular) to -

- (a) the sustainability of the community'

Fife Council has considered the representations made in terms of the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal being implemented. The village or settlement of Milton of Balgonie is not a major employer within the community. Therefore, Fife Council does not believe that the closure of the school will have a major effect on the sustainability of the community.

- (b) 'the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community'.

Milton of Balgonie Primary School was not used by the community as there is a separate Village Hall on Dickson Lane. The closure of the primary school will not

impact on the availability of the Village Hall for community groups/residents.

11.10 Fife Council has considered section 12 (5), for the purpose of subsection 3 (c)

- (a) the effect caused by such travelling arrangements includes (in particular) -
 - (i) that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities,
 - (ii) any environmental impact,
- (b) the travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities.

Fife Council has also considered the transport impact for pupils attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from the current Milton of Balgonie catchment area. Whilst there has been a small increase in the carbon footprint for the Council, the Milton of Balgonie pupils are already travelling a longer distance to school. Fife Council is content that these distances, and the travel times involved, are within the range which currently exist for other pupils across Fife. The transport costs for pupils travelling from Lochtyview to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School will decrease in time if the proposal is approved to rezone the Lochtyview area to Thornton Primary School.

11.11 Fife Council considers that, in reflecting on the written and oral representations made and in reviewing the proposal in light of those representations, in light of the report from HMIE Education Scotland and in terms of section 12, 12A and 13, it is appropriate to implement the proposal.

11.12 In view of the above the Education Directorate recommends that approval be given to the proposal to:

- (a) Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 19 August 2024.
- 10. Rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to incorporate all of the current catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, from Monday 19 August 2024.
- 11. Seek alternative uses for the Milton of Balgonie Primary School site, with the presumption that these will be within the control of the Education Directorate to ensure that should the number of primary aged pupils in this area increase to a level that may require provision of an additional primary school in future, that it may be done so at the least cost to the Council.
- 12. Rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, to realign these primary school catchments from Monday 19 August 2024.

11.13 As detailed in paragraph 3.14 above, if Fife Council decides to implement the proposal, in whole or in part, the decision insofar as it relates to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be notified to the Scottish Ministers. The Council will notify the Scottish Ministers of the decision and provide them with a copy of the Consultation Proposal Document, this Consultation Report and the notice published under section 11A (3) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, within 6 days of the decision becoming final. The Council will also publish the fact it has done so on its website together with details of the

opportunity for making representations to the Scottish Ministers within the first 3 weeks of the 8-week period. The Scottish Ministers have an 8-week period from the date of the Council's decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Any call-in by the Scottish Ministers will only apply to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Within the first 3 weeks of the 8-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. The Scottish Ministers can issue a call-in notice if they consider that the Council has failed in a significant regard to comply with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which are relevant to the closure proposal or if they consider that the Council has failed to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to the decision to implement the closure proposal. Unless the Scottish Ministers inform the Council that they do not intend to call-in the proposal by the end of the 8-week period, the Council will not proceed to implement the proposal during the 8-week period. Until the outcome of any call-in has been notified to the Council, it is unable to proceed to implement the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers decide to call-in a closure proposal, they must refer it to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panel for determination by a School Closure Review Panel. The Council may not then implement the proposal in whole or in part unless the Panel has granted consent to it (with or without conditions) and either an appeal to the Sheriff has expired or, if an appeal has been made, it has either been abandoned or the Sheriff has confirmed the Panel's decision.

FIFE COUNCIL EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The following schools are affected by this Proposal Document:

- Milton of Balgonie Primary School
- Pitteuchar East Primary School
- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School
- Thornton Primary School

This document has been issued by Fife Council as a proposal paper in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Fife Council website:

<http://www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary>

A link to this document, published on the website, will be provided to:

- The Parent Council or Combined Parent Council of any affected school,
- The parents of the pupils at any affected school,
- The parents of any children expected by the education authority to attend any affected school within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper
- The pupils at any affected school (in so far as the education authority considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity),
- The staff (teaching and other) at any affected school,
- The trade union/s which appear to the education authority to be representative of the above staff
- The Community Council (if any) (Milton & Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar, Stenton & Finglassie and Thornton),
- The community planning partnership (within the meaning of section 4(5) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) for the area of the local authority in which any affected school is situated,
- Any other community planning partnership that the education authority considers relevant,
- Any other users of any affected school that the education authority considers relevant,
- Any other education authority that the education authority considers relevant,
- Elected Members for the area (Wards 14 and 15 - Cllr John Beare, Cllr Peter Gulline, Cllr Lynn Mowatt, Cllr Jan Wincott, Cllr Derek Noble, Cllr Ross Vettraino, Cllr Daniel Wilson),
- MSPs for the area (Jenny Gilruth, Murdo Fraser, Alex Rowley, Liz Smith, Claire Baker, Mark Ruskell, Alexander Stewart, Roz McCall)
- The Constituency MP (Peter Grant).

A copy of this document is also available for inspection at and collection from:

- Main Reception, Fife Council, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5LT
- The following primary schools affected by the proposal:
 - Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, School Road, Coaltown of Balgonie, KY7 6HY
 - Pitteuchar East Primary School, 1 Glamis Avenue, Glenrothes, KY7 4NU
 - Thornton Primary School, 65 Station Road, Thornton, KY1 4AY
- Auchmuty High School, Dovecot Road, Glenrothes, KY7 5JL
- Or via email to sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk
- [Online at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary](http://www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary)

This document can be made available, on request, free of charge, in alternative formats, or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply in writing to: Education & Children's Services Directorate, 4th Floor, Fife House North Street, Glenrothes or by email to: avril.graham@fife.gov.uk (Telephone 03451 555555 ext. 444204). Page 66 of this document provides additional contact numbers, in different languages.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

1. Consideration by the Cabinet Committee

This Proposal Document has been issued as a result of a decision taken by the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council on Thursday 11 January 2024. Views are now sought in formal consultation on the proposals in this document.

2. Notice of Consultation and Publication of the Proposal Document

Statutory consultees will be given notice of the proposal. The proposal document will be published on the council website www.fife.gov.uk and available from this link, www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary. Copies will be available for inspection at and collection from:

- Main Reception, Fife Council, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT
- The following schools affected by the proposal (between the hours of 9 am and 3 pm):
 - Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, School Road, Coaltown of Balgonie, KY7 6HY
 - Pitteuchar East Primary School, 1 Glamis Avenue, Glenrothes, KY7 4NU
 - Thornton Primary School, 65 Station Road, Thornton, KY1 4AY
- Auchmuty High School, Dovecot Road, Glenrothes, KY7 5JL
- Or via email to sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

3. Advertisement of the Proposal

The proposal will be advertised through Fife Council's social media accounts e.g. Facebook and Twitter. An advertisement will also be placed in local newspapers, week commencing Monday 22 January 2024. The affected schools (in operation) will

also publicise the consultation process in newsletters, by Groupcall and email.

4. Length of Consultation period

The consultation will commence on Wednesday 24 January 2024 and will, thereafter, run until close of business on Tuesday 12 March 2024. This meets the statutory requirement for a minimum period of 6 weeks, that runs continuously and includes 30 school days.

5. Public meetings

Although only one public meeting is required, the Education Service will hold 4 public meetings, on the respective dates listed below:

- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 6-7 pm

At the public meetings, there will be opportunities to:

- hear more about the proposal and any alternatives to the proposal considered by the Council
- ask questions about the proposal and the alternatives
- have your views recorded so that they can be considered as part of the consultation process, including views on any alternatives to the proposal, and
- complete a Consultation Response Form.

In addition to the public meetings offered above, informal drop-in sessions have been arranged as follows:

- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Tuesday 30 January 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am
- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 5-6 pm
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 5-6 pm
- Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 5-6pm
- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 5-6 pm

At the informal drop-in sessions there will be opportunities to:

- hear more about the proposal and any alternatives to the proposal considered by the Council
- ask questions about the proposal and the alternatives
- complete a Consultation Response Form.

6. Responding to the Proposal

Interested parties can also respond to this proposal document by making a written representation (by letter, email or completion of a Consultation Response form) on the proposal, before close of business Tuesday 12 March 2024, to any of the

following:

- Milton of Balgonie Primary School Proposal, Education & Children's Services Directorate, Fife Council, 4th Floor (West), Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5LT.
- sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk
- by completing the Consultation Response Form online at ([Managing Our School Estate | Fife Council](#))
- <https://forms.office.com/e/LgQ0Qxkmkz>
- by emailing a completed Consultation Response Form to: sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

The proposal details possible alternatives to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. After assessment, the Council does not consider those to be reasonable alternatives to the closure. You can make written representations on the proposal and to the alternatives included in the proposal paper. If you consider there are other alternatives to the proposal you can include those alternatives in your written representations on the proposal.

7. Involvement of Education Scotland HM Inspectors

A copy of the proposal paper will be sent to Education Scotland by Fife Council. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period or, if Education Scotland agrees, a summary of them. Education Scotland will further receive a summary of any oral representation made to the Council at the public meetings and, as available (and so far as otherwise practicable), a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare and submit a report on the educational aspects of the proposal within a 3-week period (unless the Council and Education Scotland agree a longer period) after the Council has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above. However, for the avoidance of doubt, the 3-week period will not start until after the consultation period ends. Education Scotland may make such reasonable enquiries of such people at the school (e.g. Headteacher, staff, pupils) as they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries of such other people as they consider appropriate.

8. Preparation of Consultation Report

The Council will review the proposal having regard (in particular) to the Education Scotland Report and written representations that it has received. In addition, oral representations made at the public meetings will form part of that review. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations and a summary of the oral representations made at the public meetings as well as a copy of the Education Scotland Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the Education Scotland Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of 3 weeks before a decision can be made on the proposal. The report will be published, made available for inspection and where reasonably required, made

available without charge in other forms. The publication of the report will be advertised and any person who made written representations during the consultation period will be advised of its publication. The report will also explain the opportunity that may arise from making representations to Scottish Ministers in respect of call-in of the proposal.

9. Decision

The Consultation Report, together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council, which will come to a decision whether to implement the proposal, in whole or in part, or not. The decision of the Cabinet Committee will be subject to the Council's internal governance procedures before it becomes final. If the Council decides to implement the proposal, in whole or in part, the decision insofar as it relates to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be notified to the Scottish Ministers.

10. Scottish Ministers Call-in

Fife Council will notify the Scottish Ministers of the decision and give them a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report within 6 days of the Council making a decision to implement the proposal in whole or in part. The Council will also publish the fact it has done so on its website together with details on how to make representations to Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Ministers have an 8-week period, from the date of the Council's decision, to decide if they will call-in the proposal. As any call-in by the Scottish Ministers will only apply to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, it would be that decision which would be notified to Scottish Ministers, as set out in paragraph 9 above. Within the first 3 weeks of that 8-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Unless the Scottish Ministers inform the Council that they do not intend to call-in the proposal before the end of the 8-week period, the Council will not proceed to implement any proposal during the 8-week period. If the Scottish Ministers decide to call in a closure proposal, they must refer it to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panel for determination by a School Closure Review Panel. The authority may not implement the proposal in whole or in part unless the Panel has granted consent to it (with or without conditions) and either the period for making an appeal to the sheriff has expired or, if an appeal has been made, it has either been abandoned or the sheriff has confirmed the Panel's decision.

Until the outcome of any call-in has been notified to the Council, it is unable to proceed to implement the proposal.

The Scottish Ministers can issue a call-in notice if they consider that the Council has failed in a significant regard to comply with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which are relevant to the closure proposal or if they consider that the Council has failed to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to the decision to implement the closure proposal.

11. Note on Corrections

If during the consultation period any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this proposal document, either by the Council or by notification from any other person, the Council will determine whether relevant information has in its opinion been omitted,

or whether there is in fact an inaccuracy, and whether the omission or inaccuracy relates to a material consideration relevant to the education authority's decision as to the implementation of the proposal. It will then take appropriate action in respect of the inaccuracy or omission which may include deciding to take no further action, issuing a notice in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, extending the consultation period or publishing a correct proposal document and giving revised notice of the consultation. Where applicable, the notifier of the inaccuracy or omissions will be advised of the determination, the reasons for that determination and the action (if any) the Council is taking and of the reasons why it is or is not taking such action and the notifier will be invited to make representations to the Council if they disagree with the determination or decision whether to take action. Where the notifier makes representations, the education authority can make a fresh determination and decision in respect of the inaccuracy or omission and must inform the notifier if it does so.

Fife Council

Education & Children's Services Directorate

THE CONSULTATION PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MILTON OF BALGONIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TO REZONE THE CATCHMENT AREAS OF COALTOWN OF BALGONIE, PITTEUCHAR EAST AND THORNTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Format of the Proposal Document

1. Introduction
2. The Proposal
3. Contextual Analysis
4. Milton of Balgonie Primary School - The Case for Closure
5. Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools - The Case for Rezoning the Catchment Areas
6. Educational Benefits Statement
7. Transport Arrangements
8. Nursery Provision
9. Siblings
10. Secondary School Implications
11. Cost Per Pupil Calculation
12. Financial Implications of the Closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School
13. Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE)
14. Future Use of the Site
15. Community Impact of the Closure
16. Summary of Proposal
17. Proposed Date for Implementation
18. Statutory Consultation Process – Proposed Timeline

Appendices

Appendix 1	Map of existing catchment areas –Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary Schools
Appendix 2	Map of existing catchment areas – Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools
Appendix 3	Map of existing Milton school community, local community and wider community
Appendix 4	Map of proposed Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (including Milton of Balgonie catchment area)
Appendix 5	Map of proposed Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area (including the housing in full at Westwood Park)
Appendix 6	Map of proposed Thornton Primary School catchment area (including the housing at Lochtyview)
Appendix 7	Map showing proposed catchment areas with the A92 regional road
Appendix 8	Travel route currently in use by pupils being transported from Milton of Balgonie village to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School
Appendix 9	Core Facts
Appendix 10	Proposed Housing Sites across the 4 Primary School Catchment Areas
Appendix 11	Financial analysis
Appendix 12	Feedback from Engagement Sessions held in November 2023
Appendix 13	Presentation from Engagement Sessions held in November 2023
Appendix 14	Glossary of terms
Appendix 15	Consultation Response Form

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation paper sets out the rationale and implications in respect of the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the primary catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools.
- 1.2 This paper also sets out the consultation process, the timescales and the ways by which parents/carers and other interested parties can make representations on the proposal.
- 1.3 In Fife, the Education Authority discharges its duty to secure adequate and efficient education for the local authority area by operating a “catchment” system, to enable parents/carers to comply with their duty to provide efficient education for their child(ren). Postcodes for each address in Fife are associated with a denominational (Roman Catholic) and non-denominational primary and secondary school, known as catchment schools. Parents can check their catchment area at [Check school catchment areas | Fife Council](#).
- 1.4 To ensure that the school estate provides best value, the Education and Children’s Services Directorate must ensure that the number of pupil places is matched as efficiently as possible to the numbers of pupils living in each school catchment area.
- 1.5 There are no proposed changes to the denominational primary school, nor either denominational or non-denominational secondary school catchment areas relevant to the proposal.
- 1.6 This paper details the closure proposal for Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment area for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Whilst reviewing the information in respect of the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School, the Education Service also appraised the school occupancy, catchment boundaries, births and proposed housing development sites in Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary School catchment areas. In light of that, this paper also details the proposal to rezone the catchment areas of Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. However, parents will continue to have the right to exercise parental choice and to make placing requests to alternative schools, subject to the normal constraints of school capacity.
- 1.7 The catchment areas of all 4 primary schools were established before the A92 regional road was constructed. The A92 now bisects these catchment areas. This has resulted in catchment boundary anomalies for housing development sites situated on the west of the A92. For example, part of the new housing site at Westwood Park (which is currently under construction) and the entire completed site of Lochtyview Way currently lie within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area.
- 1.8 Taking the opportunity to review this alongside the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School will allow the Education Service an opportunity to realign the school catchment areas, whilst maximising occupancy at Thornton and Pitteuchar East Primary Schools based on existing and future housing

development plans.

- 1.9 Several additional factors have been considered in the development of this proposal. These include projected pupil numbers from effective local plan development sites in Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie. One of these development sites has planning consent and a signed section 75 legal agreement for the provision of additional accommodation at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- 1.10 There is one housing development site in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area and this is currently being considered by statutory planning consultees. This site has not yet received planning consent. As this is a local plan site, this has been included in school roll projections.
- 1.11 Also included in the review, was analysis of the latest placing request statistics and trends, and potential opportunities to realign catchments geographically. In including these factors, the Education Service is anticipating future housing development, building capacity and resilience, ensuring that school occupancy levels now, and in the future, can be managed.
- 1.12 During academic session 2018/19, Milton of Balgonie operated as a one class, single teacher primary school, covering all primary stages. At the end of academic session 2018/19 the expected school roll for August 2019 was one pupil. The Headteacher advised the parent of the pupil that this would be the case, after which the parent decided to move their child to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. For session 2019/20, all Primary 1 pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area had enrolled within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or made a placing request to other primary schools.
- 1.13 Due to this unanticipated situation, the Education Service wrote to all parents, on 25 June 2019, and arranged free school transport to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School for those distance entitled pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, commencing from August 2019. This arrangement continues. In session 2022/23 there were fewer than 10 primary aged pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment receiving free transport to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Of those travelling last session, fewer than 5 pupils travelled in one taxi, with collection points near to their home addresses, while another vehicle had fewer than 5 pupils who travelled with pupils from the existing Coaltown of Balgonie catchment area. For academic session 2023-2024, again there are fewer than 10 pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, all travelling together in one vehicle, with pick up points close to their home addresses. Pupils are escorted to/from the school building and to/from the transport provided.
- 1.14 During session 2018/19, the last year the school was operational, Milton of Balgonie Primary School had one teacher, one Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) and one Clerical Assistant. A Catering Assistant was also employed by Fife Council's Facilities Management Service. These members of staff accepted transfer to alternative schools, to suit their own individual circumstances. The PSA from Milton of Balgonie joined the staff at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary

School, which supported the transition process for pupils who had previously known the staff member at Milton of Balgonie Primary School.

- 1.15 Engagement has continued with the parents/carers within the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area. The Education Service invited nursery parents (letter dated 14 January 2020), with children due to start Primary 1 in August 2020, to a meeting in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on 28 January 2020. Two families attended this meeting with the Head of Service and the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School Headteacher. This meeting was held to allow parents an opportunity to ask questions about education provision.
- 1.16 In January 2020, the Education Service was aware that all the expected Primary 1 pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area had either enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or made placing requests to other primary schools, for session 2020/21. The Milton of Balgonie school roll remained 0 for session 2020/21.
- 1.17 The Education Service wrote to parents on 11 January 2021 advising them of the decision to request approval of the mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and asked parents to provide any feedback if they were unhappy with this approach. No feedback was received by the Education Service or through direct contact with the Headteacher.
- 1.18 Therefore, as Milton of Balgonie Primary School was again expected to have no pupils for session 2021/22, the Education Service sought permission to mothball the school, through a report to the Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee on 26 January 2021.
- 1.19 The Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee, on 26 January 2021, considered the recommendation to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School as the school had had no pupils enrolled for any academic session from August 2019 onwards. The decision of the committee on 26 January 2021 was:
- (a) to Mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School with immediate effect.
 - (b) that during the mothballing period, any children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they meet the distance criteria.
 - (c) that the resources and furniture within the school be offered to surrounding schools; and
 - (d) that a further report reviewing the decision be considered by the Sub-Committee in September 2021.
- 1.20 The Education Service wrote to all parents of pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, on 1 November 2021, advising that an update paper regarding Milton of Balgonie Primary School would be submitted to the Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee on 9

November 2021. The decision of the committee on 9 November was:

- (1) to continue with the existing mothballing arrangements for Milton of Balgonie Primary School;
- (2) that, during the mothballing period, any children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School would continue to be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they met the distance criteria; and
- (3) that a further review by the Education Service would take place in June 2022, reporting the outcomes to the earliest relevant and available Committee of the Council thereafter.

1.21 Following this decision, the Education Service continued to monitor the number of pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, the number of births in the catchment area and local housebuilding and anticipated housebuilding.

1.22 On 22 September 2022, the Education Service presented a report to the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council, seeking authority to proceed with a statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. The decision of the committee on 22 September 2022 in relation to the proposed closure and rezoning was:

(a) to defer a decision on the Statutory Consultation Proposal paper, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, relating to the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools until the next scheduled meeting of the Cabinet Committee on 20th October, 2022 and, in relation to the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, agreed that the report would outline the legal position regarding the previous decision to mothball the school and would clarify the position regarding any previously approved planning applications.

1.23 Due to the timing of the October Committee, the first available date that the Cabinet Committee could consider the report providing information on (a) above was the Cabinet Committee of 17 November 2022. Within the report officers:

- (a) provided the legal position to the current mothballing status of Milton of Balgonie Primary Schools;
- (b) detailed background information on the lead up to the mothballing decision;
- (c) presented information on the latest review of the mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School;
- (d) provided information on previously approved planning applications within the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area;
- (e) presented statistical information from the school roll census and roll projections; and

(f) provided a summary and a next steps for elected members to consider.

1.24 The decision of the Cabinet Committee on 17 November 2022 was:

- (1) noted the terms of the report in respect of the matters that the Committee on 22nd September 2022 asked to be addressed; those being the legal position regarding the previous decision to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School and clarification of any previously approved planning applications within the catchment area; and
- (2) agreed to continue with the existing mothballing arrangements for Milton of Balgonie Primary School;
- (3) agreed that, during the mothballing period, any children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School would continue to be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they met the distance criteria; and
- (4) noted that a further review of the mothballing by the Education Service was to take place in June 2023, reporting the outcomes to the earliest available Committee thereafter.

1.25 On 9 March 2023, the Education Service wrote to all parents, including those catchment pupils attending other primary schools, updating them on the decisions of these committees.

1.26 The school has been mothballed since January 2021. The school building is currently being maintained by Property Services, to ensure it is wind and watertight. There has been no enrolment of any pupils in Milton of Balgonie Primary School for academic sessions 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 or 2023/24.

1.27 This proposal paper reflects the outcome of the June 2023 review of the decision to mothball the school, which concluded that the Service should proceed with development of a proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, to include the rezoning of the catchment areas of Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. As Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a rural school, as required by Section 12A (2) (a), of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, this proposal identifies the reasons for formulating the proposal. These are:

- (a) Milton of Balgonie Primary School has had no pupils enrolled for academic sessions 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/2024.
- (b) There are no pupils enrolled in Milton of Balgonie Primary School for session 2023/24. The one pupil due to enrol for primary 1, living in the catchment area, has chosen to attend an alternative school following a placing request application. Overall, the current number of primary age pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area is 13.

- (c) Milton of Balgonie Primary School has been formally mothballed since January 2021. The school building is currently being maintained by Property Services to ensure it is wind and watertight.
- (d) Updated birth information has shown that the births in the catchment area have not significantly increased in the last year and there is no other anticipated significant increased growth in the pupil population in the catchment area from, for example, large scale housing development of over 100 units.
- (e) Milton of Balgonie Primary School does not meet the Fife Council guiding principles as outlined in paragraph 3.1 of this proposal.

- 1.28 On 1 November 2023, the Education Service wrote to parent/carers of pupils living in the catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School; pupils attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and nursery aged pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, to invite them to 2 engagement sessions. There are fewer than 15 pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area and there are approximately 100 pupils attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- 1.29 The two engagement sessions were held in the local communities. The first on Tuesday 7 November in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and the second on Wednesday 8 November in Milton of Balgonie village hall. The session held in Milton of Balgonie village hall was also attended by residents in the community. The feedback from these sessions is contained within Appendix 12.
- 1.30 A presentation was given by the Head of Education (Appendix 13) which detailed the current status of Milton of Balgonie Primary School; the reasons for the engagement sessions; information around the catchment area; the existing decisions made by Fife Council Committees; house building in the area and the next steps.
- 1.31 The issues raised during the engagement sessions are summarised as follows:
- Impact of housebuilding on schools rolls in both Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and Milton of Balgonie Primary School
 - Loss of a community asset
 - Consideration, by the council, of births in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area
 - Benefits to the community from extra-curricular activities provided at the school
 - Financial implications as a result of the school not being in operation
 - Milton of Balgonie PS catchment pupils are now settled within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and have friendship groups and more opportunities for social activities within a larger school
 - Option of repurposing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School for another educational purpose
 - Concern that all P1-P7 pupils could be in one class
 - Mothballing has not been a fair process as pupils enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School may not leave
 - Costs incurred as a result of transporting pupils from Milton of Balgonie to Coaltown of Balgonie

- Pupils from Milton of Balgonie are unable to walk to school
- Smaller class sizes support better learning opportunities
- The process for making a placing request to Milton of Balgonie
- Why extend at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School when a school is available in the next village?
- Planning contributions being requested for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and not Milton of Balgonie Primary School
- Children should go to the school in the village they live in.

1.32 An opportunity was also provided for participants to feedback via an online form, or in writing, by 30 November 2023. 12 responses were received:

The responses were as follows:

1	I am (choose one of the categories below):	Total
	Parent/carer of a child living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School	1
	Parent/carer of a child living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area attending another primary school	0
	Parent/carer of a child living in the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School	5
	Staff member working at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School	0
	Grandparent of a child attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School	0
	Member of the Community Council	
	Resident in the community	4
	Other	2
2	Do you understand the term 'mothballing'?	
	Yes	11
	No	1
3	Are you aware Milton of Balgonie Primary School is currently 'mothballed'?	
	Yes	11
	No	1
4	Are you aware that since August 2019, primary aged pupils in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area have been offered places at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School as their alternative catchment area school and offered free school transport?	
	Yes	12
	No	0
5	For pupils from Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, enrolled in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, are you happy with current arrangements that catchment Milton of Balgonie Primary pupils are offered a place within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School?	
	Yes	4
	No	7
	This question was answered by participants that were not parents/ carers of pupils from Milton of Balgonie catchment i.e. residents in the community or other categories	

6	<p>Please share your views on the current 'mothballing' arrangements at Milton of Balgonie Primary School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School needs to be closed. • I am a parent living in Milton of Balgonie with a nursery aged child who currently attends Markinch Nursery, if Milton of Balgonie Primary was an option my child would be enrolled there for school year 2024/25. • It's a shame that more small schools are closing when these villages have young families within them that can use the settings not only that with proposed and developing housing schemes coming to Coaltown it's going to create a greater demand on the stretched space and class size at Coaltown and compromise the quality of learning. It's unfair on our children and their development and if the council really cared about that they'd open up Milton and ease the pressure on both villages/surrounding areas in catchment. It will give job opportunities to newly qualified teachers and other roles involved. • The children at Coaltown had their library taken away to accommodate the rise in school roll. There was also a significant increase in the number of children with additional support needs who attended the school. This was challenging for both the staff and the children. The children of Milton should be in the school at Milton to allow them to develop a sense of belonging and community. The children already attend nursery outwith their village and now may attend schools in different areas - coaltown and Markinch- if the numbers go up. • I understand the "why" of the current mothballed state, however I don't believe this state should remain. • It would be great to get the school open again if enough kids was to join. • With new housing in the surrounding areas and more planned within Coaltown and potentially also Milton, this will impact capacity within schools. Milton is a community in its own right and children are not being afforded the same opportunities as their peers due to being schooled outside of this community. This has a detrimental impact of friendships, social opportunities and children's sense of inclusion and belonging. • I feel that as a community the school should not have been mothballed. 				
7	<p>Did you attend an update information session on 7 or 8 November about the current 'mothballing' arrangements?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	2	No	10
Yes	2				
No	10				
8	<p>Following the information shared, what are your views on reopening or closing Milton of Balgonie Primary School on a permanent basis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to see the school reopened. • I firmly believe the school should be reopened. Children should attend school in their own community. 				
9	<p>What are your views on reopening or closing Milton of Balgonie Primary School on a permanent basis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school should have be originally been left open but the then headteacher in 2019 pressurised parents to take their children out of Milton and send them to coaltown or other schools, children from other areas like windygates and Kennoway were stopped by her from trying to attend, with the amount of houses that are getting build at markinch and Thornton opening up Milton would probably help in taking in some children 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not re-open and children should remain at Coaltown • I am a formal Milton of Balgonie Pupil, as were my two older children, it saddens me that my youngest may never get the opportunity to attend our wee village school which was once a hive of busyness with a fun, relaxed learning environment • It should be reopened since surrounding schools are teaching capacity and new houses are being built in the area. There are also a number of teaching professionals sitting without jobs so opening a school would help with this well. • As pupil numbers at Coaltown are increased perhaps Milton should be reopened. • Positive. As per previous answer. It will allow continued quality of education, open up employment opportunities and help a sense of community in both the Coaltown and the Milton. • I think it will be a great loss. There a number of housing developments planned both in Milton and Coaltown of Balgonie. This has to have an impact on the number of children attending Coaltown Primary School. Over time the population changes and the school will become needed. • I firmly believe the school should be reopened and remain open • Should be reopened due to the amount of kids attending other schools • Milton Primary school has always been the heart of the community. It is incredibly sad that future generations may not be able to attend their local school when there is a perfectly viable option available for them within the village. • I think it should be considered to stay open due to the village and surrounding areas having future plans for more houses to be built which will increase the population in the village and also surrounding areas which will see an impact on the schools • Closing and repurpose the building for other uses, or sell.
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1.33 In summary, fewer than 15 parent/carers or other interested parties attended the 2 engagement sessions and 12 completed the online questionnaire with responses shown above. Two of those who completed the questionnaire also attended the information sessions. In addition, one comment was received in writing from a parent/carer, outwith the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, wishing to submit a placing request to Milton of Balgonie Primary School should the school be reopened.

1.34 On 11 January 2024 the Education Service submitted a report to the Cabinet Committee responding to the decision of the Cabinet Committee of 17 November 2022, and information contained within the 22 September 2022 committee report, with the findings of the review of the current information relating to Milton of Balgonie Primary School. The report also detailed the feedback from the two engagement sessions held in November 2023. As a result of the review and the feedback from the engagement sessions, a statutory consultation proposal paper was presented with a proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. Approval of the content of the proposal was sought and the committee was asked to authorise officers to proceed to statutory consultation in respect of the proposal. The decision of the committee on 11 January 2024 was:

The committee:

- (1) noted the information contained within the report in respect of the current position regarding pupil numbers within the catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the current position with planning applications in both the Milton of Balgonie Primary School and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment areas;
- (2) approved the content of the statutory Consultation Proposal paper, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, relating to the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools with the following amendments:
 - (i) para. 13.3 - change to read "No decision can be made on the future use of the site unless the closure proposal is approved by the Cabinet Committee, meantime, potential educational uses will continue to be explored; and
 - (ii) para 15.1(c) - add the following at the end of the sentence "with the presumption that these will be within the control of the Education Service to ensure that, should the number of primary aged pupils in this area increase to a level that may require provision of an additional primary school in the future, that it may be done so at the least cost to the council";
- (3) authorised officers to proceed to statutory consultation in terms of the Consultation Proposal;
- (4) authorised officers to make inconsequential amendments to the Consultation Proposal paper (including the timeline) as may be necessary and councillors for Glenrothes North, Leslie and Markinch and Glenrothes Central and Thornton to be consulted in relation to any other amendments to the Consultation Proposal;
- (5) authorised the continued mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School until the outcome of the statutory consultation process was determined and, during the continued mothballing period, approved the arrangement whereby any child or children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School would be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they met the distance criteria;
- (6) noted that the Consultation Report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Cabinet Committee.

1.35 The committee papers can be accessed at [Cabinet Committee \(11th January 2024\) | Fife Council](#).

2 The Proposal

2.1 The proposal is to:

- a) Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 19 August 2024.
- b) Rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to incorporate all of the current catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, from Monday 19 August 2024.
- c) Seek alternative uses for the Milton of Balgonie Primary School site, with the presumption that these will be within the control of the Education Service to ensure that should the number of primary aged pupils in this area increase to a level that may require provision of an additional primary school in future, that it may be done so at the least cost to the Council.
- d) Rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, to realign these primary school catchments from Monday 19 August 2024.

2.2 After the consultation, a consultation report will be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Committee. If approved in full, the closure and changes to the catchment areas would be implemented on Monday 19 August 2024 and would apply to all applications for enrolment, including placing requests, made from that date. Nursery aged pupils beginning Primary 1 in August 2024 will enrol in their existing catchment primary school in January 2024.

2.3 The mothballing arrangements for Milton of Balgonie Primary School will continue until the outcome of the statutory consultation process is decided.

2.4 In terms of the mothballing arrangements, Milton of Balgonie Primary School remains on the Council's online enrolment system. Any new primary one pupil due to start school in August 2024, living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area and seeking to enrol online, will be contacted by Coaltown of Balgonie Primary school. For any new pupils seeking to enrol from stages P2 to P7, the parent/carer should make contact with Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School direct.

3 Contextual Analysis

3.1 Guiding Principles

3.1.1 The Council has set a number of guiding principles for reviewing the school estate, which were agreed by the Council's Executive Committee on 2 October 2012, following a Fife school review, and more recently at the Education & Children's Services Committee on 28 August 2018. These are:

- (a) Every school should be rated as 'A' or 'B' for both condition and suitability, to include a number of accessible schools in each geographical area.
- (b) Schools should have an occupancy rate greater than 60% of capacity and, in order to ensure equity in provision, schools should be operating within an optimal occupancy and efficiency range of 80-100%. Consideration should be given to establishing a minimum number of pupils in any school which is less than 5 miles from another school; therefore, schools should have a minimum of 3 classes, recognising that effective learning requires interaction between pupils. This group activity is most effective when

children are of a similar age and, to enable this, where possible schools should have a minimum roll of 50 pupils.

- (c) A strategy for a sustainable school estate should support the progressive reduction in the overall carbon footprint for the Council.

3.2 **Review Factors**

3.2.1 The factors considered in the review of the school estate include:

- Educational benefits
- Condition surveys
- Suitability assessments
- Recent investment in school buildings
- Energy performance data
- School roll projections and capacities
- Catchment areas, including impact of Strategic Development Allocations and Local Development Plans
- Cost per pupil
- Distance to nearest school
- Best Value model for existing Public Private Partnership (PPP) contracts i.e. increasing occupancy.

3.3 **New Housing Developments within Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary School Catchment Areas**

3.3.1 Fife Council adopted the Fife Local Development Plan (FIFEplan) on 21 September 2017, following a review by the Scottish Government. This plan sets out the planning policies and proposals for the development and use of land across Fife.

3.3.2 The roll projection model includes methodology to identify pupil numbers from new housing development sites that are included in the Housing Land Audit (HLA). The HLA report is published annually and provides the most up to date information on site status, including whether sites have planning consent, are under construction, have no consent or indeed whether there are any constraints such as marketing or no interest demonstrated by a developer.

3.3.3 Appendix 10 illustrates new housing sites across the 4 primary school catchment areas.

3.3.4 The latest publication of the Housing Land Audit, dated 2022, presents the Balfour Place/Main Street site in Milton of Balgonie as a non-effective site. This site had previously been shown within the Housing Land Audit 2021 publication, with projected phasing of 6 units built within 2025 and 51 units built post 2026. The site has an estimated capacity of 63 units in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area. Subsequently, a planning application has been received for this site (ref. 23/00231), however, to date, no planning consent has been granted. The planning application has suggested that construction would commence in the latter part of 2023, for 30 units, with the remaining 33 units in 2024/25.

3.3.5 In the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area there are 3 sites listed in the local development plan. One of these sites, Queens Meadow, (ref. 22/04156/Full) has received planning permission for 80 units, and the S75 agreement has been signed. A planning application for the second site, which is land to the south of Millburn Avenue (ref. 23/00997/Full), has been submitted for 102 units and is currently being assessed by statutory consultees. This site has not yet received planning consent and it is not currently included in the Housing Land Audit; however, it has been included in updated school roll projections. There has been no planning application received for the remaining site, at Pytree Road North, for 23 units. This site is non effective and is therefore not included in school roll projections. The two effective sites (i.e. Queens Meadow and Millburn Avenue) have submitted planning applications which total 44 units above the site capacity detailed in the Local Development Plan.

3.3.6 Westwood Park (GLE102) is a strategic development area for 420 units, which currently extends into both Pitteuchar East and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment areas. Due to the geographical location of the site, it is anticipated that all the pupils from this new housing development should be accommodated within Pitteuchar East Primary School. This site is under construction, with a phasing of 24 units per year over a 15-year period (2022-2039). A number of these new homes have been completed and are occupied.

3.3.7 A planning application for the first 300 units of a Strategic Development Area (SDA) site within the Thornton Primary School catchment area has been received (ref. 20/01156/PPP). Although new pupils from the first 300 units can be accommodated, together with the pupils from the Lochtyview development, an extension to Thornton Primary School is required for the pupils from the additional 600 units, for which an education solution has been developed, to be fully funded by the developers. There is no planning consent for either of these applications to date.

4 Milton of Balgonie Primary School - The Case for Closure

4.1 Milton of Balgonie - Background Information

4.1.1 Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a small rural school with a maximum capacity for 75 pupils. The school roll for Milton of Balgonie Primary School steadily declined over a period of 9 years and for the last 5 academic sessions no pupils have enrolled in the school. There are approximately 204 residential homes in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area. The previous school rolls and occupancy rates were as follows:

School Year	School Roll	Capacity	Occupancy
2023	0	75	0%
2022	0	75	0%
2021	0	75	0%
2020	0	75	0%
2019	0	75	0%
2018	14	75	19%
2017	23	75	31%
2016	26	75	35%
2015	26	75	35%
2014	24	75	32%

2013	27	75	36%
2012	29	75	39%

4.1.2 For academic session 2018/19 the school roll at Milton of Balgonie Primary School, was 14 pupils, consisting of 9 catchment pupils and 5 placing requests. There were 3 pupils who had no peers at the same primary stage. At the end of that academic session, 3 primary 7 pupils moved to secondary school and the remainder of the pupils moved to other primary schools for session 2019/20 as a result of parental choice. Therefore, in academic session 2019/20 there was one catchment pupil, due to start Primary 1, who would attend the school. Following the enrolment discussion with the Headteacher, this family enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. At that point it was accepted that the school would not be operational in August 2019.

4.1.3 The analysis of the September 2023 pupil census data highlights there were 13 primary aged pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area. 8 of these 13 are enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and the remaining 5 chose alternative primary schools in the area, including denominational provision. The one expected primary 1 pupil for session 2023/24 did not enrol at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School in terms of the mothballing arrangements and, instead, submitted a placing request for an alternative school.

4.1.4 From the current nursery information, there are fewer than 5 pupils enrolled in nursery provision from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area.

4.1.5 Information provided by the NHS (Community Health Index record of births up to 28 February 2023) has been used to identify the number of births in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, showing those pupils who would be due to start school in the next 4 years. These figures are a snapshot of residence at birth and are subject to change where, for example, families may relocate into and out of a school catchment area. The figures are listed in the table below:

August 2023	Fewer than 5 pupils
August 2024	Fewer than 5 pupils
August 2025	Fewer than 5 pupils
August 2026	Fewer than 5 pupils
August 2027	Fewer than 5 pupils

4.1.6 Prior to mothballing the school, the Education Service held a meeting with parents/carers, in January 2020, to outline the position. The Education Service monitored the school roll and reviewed the number of nursery pupils eligible to commence P1 in August 2020. None of the parents of nursery pupils formally requested a place for Primary 1 in Milton of Balgonie Primary School. The Education Service subsequently wrote to parents/carers of pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to advise it was moving forward with a committee paper seeking approval to formally mothball the school. The Education Service did not receive any objections by parents/carers, in response.

4.1.7 Milton of Balgonie Primary School has been mothballed formally since January 2021 and has not been operational with staff and pupils since July 2019. The

school building is currently being maintained by Property Services, to ensure it is wind and watertight and all resources have been removed from the building, to comply with Risk Management guidance. No pupils have been enrolled for session 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 or 2023/24.

- 4.1.8 The transfer of existing pupils to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, prior to academic session 2019/2020, was managed appropriately by Education and Children Service's Directorate staff, school staff and parents/carers, to ensure that children were supported through their transition of moving from one school to another. School staff supported the pupils, who moved from Milton of Balgonie Primary School to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School in August 2019, to integrate into their new class setting and establish new friendships.
- 4.1.9 To date, the current Headteacher has not received any concerns from parents regarding the learning experience of Milton of Balgonie pupils within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Parents of pupils from Milton of Balgonie have been very supportive and are happy with the current arrangement, as the small number of pupils have a larger peer group within each of the primary stages.
- 4.1.10 Although Milton of Balgonie Primary School had a small area used for pupil dining, the school was not used for any (non-school) community activities during academic sessions 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19. During the time the school was operational, Milton of Balgonie Primary school did not run a breakfast or after school club for pupils.
- 4.1.11 A village hall is situated on Dickson Lane, which is used by local residents for community activities, as well as used for voting during local elections. This is located 0.16 miles (250 metres) from Milton of Balgonie Primary School.

4.2 **Milton of Balgonie – A Rural School**

- 4.2.1 Milton of Balgonie Primary School is classified as an accessible rural school, based on the criteria applied by the Scottish Government. As a result of this classification, and because fewer than 70 children were attending the school up until August 2019, the local authority received additional funding of £3000 per pupil per annum as a contribution to the higher cost of educating children in such settings.
- 4.2.2 As Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a rural school, when formulating this proposal the Council is required to:
 - i. Identify and explain the reasons for formulating the proposal,
 - ii. Describe what steps (if any) it took to address those reasons before formulating the proposal or if it took no such steps explain why it did not do so, and
 - iii. Consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to those reasons.
- 4.2.3 In addition, to para 4.2.2, in the proposal the Council must also give special regard to:
 - i. The likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), and

- ii. The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented).

4.2.4 The reasons for formulating the proposal

4.2.4.1 As indicated in paragraph 1.27, this proposal was formulated for the following reasons:

- (a) Milton of Balgonie Primary School has had no pupils enrolled for academic sessions 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- (b) There are no pupils enrolled in Milton of Balgonie Primary School for session 2023/24. The one pupil due to enrol for primary 1, living in the catchment area, has chosen to attend an alternative school following a placing request application. Overall, the current number of primary age pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area is less than 10.
- (c) Milton of Balgonie Primary School has been formally mothballed since January 2021. The school building is currently being maintained by Property Services to ensure it is wind and watertight.
- (d) Updated birth information has shown that the births in the catchment area have not significantly increased in the last year and there is no other anticipated significant increased growth in the pupil population in the catchment area from, for example, large scale housing development of over 100 units.
- (e) Milton of Balgonie Primary School does not meet two of the Fife Council guiding principles as outlined in paragraph 3.1 of this proposal.

4.2.5 Steps taken to address the reasons before formulating the proposal

4.2.5.1 When the school roll fell to zero in 2019, and the school was no longer operational, the authority monitored relevant factors including the number of primary age children, the number of births and housebuilding in the catchment area to establish whether the position might change. When the school roll remained zero in 2021, as an alternative to proceeding with a closure proposal at that stage, the authority mothballed the school to allow a further opportunity to monitor these factors. As indicated earlier in this proposal the mothballing of the school was reviewed later in 2021 and again in 2022 and 2023. The authority reviewed the relevant factors on each of these occasions. In 2021 and 2022 the ultimate decision of the authority was to continue to mothball the school. The outcome of the 2023 review led to this proposal.

4.2.6 Reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to those reasons

4.2.6.1 The Education Service is required to consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to the reasons for the proposal provided above.

4.2.6.2 Continued Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School

- 4.2.6.3 As contained within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 Statutory Guidance, mothballing is an alternative to closure for local authorities. The term ‘mothballing’ is used to refer to a temporary decision to close a school where the roll has fallen to zero. Mothballing, rather than closing a school, gives the opportunity for it to reopen should circumstances change. The decision to mothball the school was taken in January 2021, as a temporary measure, as an alternative to full closure. Full closure would require statutory consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and a decision following the consultation.
- 4.2.6.4 In circumstances where a school is mothballed rather than closed, and some children and young people remain in the catchment area, this decision should be taken in consultation with parents involved, and the possibility should be raised as early as possible.
- 4.2.6.5 The Education Service arranged a meeting for any parent affected by the declining school roll in January 2020 and subsequently wrote to all parents advising them that as no pupils had requested to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School for session 2020/21, the Education Service would take forward a paper to the Education & Children’s Services Sub-Committee (on 26 January 2021) to seek approval to mothball the school.
- 4.2.6.6 The Education & Children’s Services Sub-Committee, on 26 January 2021, considered the recommendation to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School as the school had had no pupils enrolled for the academic session from August 2020. The Committee Decision of 26 January 2021 was:
- (a) to Mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School with immediate effect.
 - (b) that during the mothballing period, any children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they meet the distance criteria.
 - (c) that the resources and furniture within the school be offered to surrounding schools; and
 - (d) that a further report reviewing the decision be considered by the Sub-Committee in September 2021.
- 4.2.6.7 The school has remained formally mothballed since 26 January 2021. The school building is currently being maintained by Property Services to ensure it is wind and watertight. There has been no attempt by parents to seek the reopening of Milton of Balgonie Primary School for academic sessions 2020/21 or 2021/22, 2022/23 or 2023/24. All pupils in this area have enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or other schools.
- 4.2.6.8 The decision to mothball in January 2021 was reviewed in November 2021, June 2022, November 2022 and June 2023. This proposal paper reflects the outcome of the further review of the decision to mothball the school, which is to proceed with this proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and

Thornton Primary Schools.

- 4.2.6.9 The Statutory Guidance <https://www.gov.scot/publications/schools-consultation-scotland-act-2010-statutory-guidance/pages/2/> provides, at paragraph 64, “Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period and should be subject to regular review, at least annually, against the same requirements which led to the original decision to mothball the school. The maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote.”
- 4.2.6.10 The Education Service does not consider that continuing with the current mothballing arrangements is a reasonable alternative to the proposal as a response to the reasons for formulating the proposal. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community to continue with the existing mothballing arrangements. To retain a building, which is empty and not in operation, for another year, would require Fife Council to continue to ensure security, undertake repairs and sustain maintenance contracts. Where there are no anticipated enrolments of pupils, continued mothballing of the school is not justified. Mothballing further would also be contrary to the terms of the Statutory Guidance referred to. It would deny statutory consultees and other interested parties the opportunity to have their say on the future of Milton of Balgonie Primary School.**
- 4.2.6.11 Milton of Balgonie Primary School to reopen
- 4.2.6.12 Pupil enrolment trend data demonstrates that parents/carers within the Milton of Balgonie village have chosen to make placing requests to other schools over the last number of years and therefore the parents have chosen their preferred primary provision. The school roll at September 2018 census was 14 pupils (19% occupancy). Fife Council believes that whilst the school was in operation with 14 pupils, the educational experience would be different to other schools with a higher occupancy and larger peer group and that the Milton of Balgonie Primary school catchment pupils are now benefitting from being part of a larger school. There is no mechanism available to Fife Council to increase the school roll.
- 4.2.6.13 The parents who attended the parents’ meeting in January 2020 were disappointed that the school roll could not be sustained in Milton of Balgonie Primary School. However, the parents/carers have acknowledged that at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School there is a larger peer group to support pupils. The current Headteacher has advised that there is no suggestion by parents that they are not happy with the education provision on offer within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Parents have advised that their children are thriving within this learning environment.
- 4.2.6.14 Based on the school roll, from September 2022 census, there were fewer than 10 pupils living within the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- 4.2.6.15 The table below shows the school roll, year on year, if all the projected pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area attended the school.

This does not include the current catchment pupils who are enrolled in any other primary schools. Nor does it include pupils from new housing. It has been determined by a trend of births in the catchment area.

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
1	2	5	6	8	10	12	13	14	13	13	13

- 4.2.6.16 The following table details the projected roll, year on year, for Milton of Balgonie Primary School with new pupils from the one development site of Balfour Place/Main Street for 63 units, if all the catchment pupils attended and the births materialised at the existing Fife average rate per housing unit. The house build has been factored in for 2023, with new pupils joining in 2024.

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
1	12	24	25	25	25	25	24	22	19	19	19

- 4.2.6.17 Pupil enrolment trend data indicates that it is highly unlikely that all projected pupils would actually enrol in Milton of Balgonie Primary School if it were to reopen.
- 4.2.6.18 Should a decision be made to reopen Milton of Balgonie Primary School, there would be no requirement for current primary age pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, currently enrolled in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or any other primary school, to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School. If the school were to reopen during session 2023/24, there would be:
- (a) 13 pupils living in the catchment area for session 2023/24, including those currently attending denominational primary school provision.
 - (b) one pupil at P1, P4, P5 and P6 stages
 - (c) one class with all pupils taught in a composite class ranging from P1 to P7.
 - (d) minimum staffing costs of approximately £105,000. In addition, costs to fully equip the school with ICT (information and computer technology), furniture and resources would require to be met, together with the costs of redecorating the school, providing new floor coverings and providing enhancement to the dining facilities. These costs could equate to approximately £70,000. The total budget required to reopen the school is estimated to be in the region of £175,000.

- 4.2.6.19 **The Education Service does not consider that the reopening Milton of Balgonie Primary School is a reasonable alternative to the proposal as a response to the reasons for formulating the proposal. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community to reopen because the projected pupil roll (based on birth rates and known pupils living in the catchment area) falls short of one of the guiding principles.**

4.2.6.20 Consideration of the rezoning of the nearest primary schools' catchment areas

- 4.2.6.21 There are 2 other schools in close proximity to Milton of Balgonie Primary School, where consideration could be given to rezoning their catchment areas to increase the occupancy of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. The closest primary schools to Milton of Balgonie Primary School are:

- (a) Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School (1.7 miles)
- (b) Balcurvie Primary School PS (1.7 miles)

- 4.2.6.22 (a) Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School
- 4.2.6.23 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is located 1.7 miles from Milton of Balgonie Primary School, with a published capacity for 100 pupils. In accordance with the committee decision of 26 January 2021, any pupil of school age currently living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, or any new pupils to the village, are advised Coaltown of Balgonie is their local school. The small number of pupils currently living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area have been accommodated in Coaltown of Balgonie and integrated within the school or have chosen to attend other primary school provision, including denominational provision
- 4.2.6.24 To increase the occupancy of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, to meet the Council's guiding principles, at least 51 pupils would need to enrol at the school, to increase the occupancy to more than 2 classes. This would result in the closest school, Coaltown of Balgonie, then reducing to 2 classes. By reducing the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School in this way, this could result in the operation of 2 small schools, neither of which would meet the guiding principles set out in paragraph 3.1 above.
- 4.2.6.25 Reducing the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, by rezoning part of the catchment to Milton of Balgonie Primary School, would, therefore, affect the long-term sustainability of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. It would not be practicable to rezone properties from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to Milton of Balgonie Primary School, as this could result in a declining school roll and occupancy for Coaltown of Balgonie in the long term, based on the current trends.
- 4.2.6.26 In addition, an increased number of pupils would require transport to Milton of Balgonie Primary School. This scenario would result in an increased revenue cost for the Education Service, by procuring a larger vehicle to transport pupils from Coaltown of Balgonie to Milton of Balgonie Primary School. At present the vehicle(s) transport fewer than 10 pupils from Milton of Balgonie to Coaltown of Balgonie. It would also take away the opportunity to build independence for those Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School pupils who currently walk to school.
- 4.2.6.27 The Education and Children Service's Directorate believes that being part of a larger school will enable both the existing pupils living in the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area and those pupils from Milton of Balgonie catchment area attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to continue to benefit from an enhanced range of curricular experiences, providing more opportunities to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- 4.2.6.28 Decreasing the pupil population for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School will, over both schools, increase the number of pupils educated in classes organised in a broader range of school years (e.g. P1 - P4 instead of P1/2). This will limit the ability for targeted teacher planning, taking account of the 7 principles of

Curriculum for Excellence design, ensuring learner's experience a coherent curriculum across all 4 contexts (opportunities for personal achievement, interdisciplinary learning, ethos and life of the school and Curriculum areas and subjects). It will also reduce the opportunities for children to collaborate during planned learning activities and reduce the ability to adapt the learning environment to more closely reflect the age and stage of the pupils learning within it.

- 4.2.6.29 Composite class organisation spanning 3 or more primary year groups provides fewer opportunities for planned and focused collaborative and cooperative learning activities, undermining a more rigorous development and progression of pupils' skills and knowledge. Importantly, pupils will have fewer opportunities to learn with and from their similar age peers. They will have fewer opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning, articulate arguments, explore new ideas and find creative solutions to problems within groups of their peers.
- 4.2.6.30 **The Education Service does not consider rezoning part of the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School a reasonable alternative to the proposal as a response to the reasons for formulating the proposal. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community to rezone pupils from another community to sustain Milton of Balgonie Primary School. It would not provide any educational benefits to the children living in the catchment areas of either Milton of Balgonie Primary School or Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.**
- 4.2.6.31 (b) Balcurvie Primary School
- 4.2.6.32 Balcurvie Primary School has a maximum capacity of 217 pupils, distributed across 7 classrooms, and could also accommodate the small number of catchment pupils from Milton of Balgonie Primary School. However, there is temporary modular accommodation on site. It would be the intention of the Education Service to remove this accommodation once the school roll declines to 5 classes. This would remove the long-term requirement to sustain temporary modular accommodation and reduce the accommodation footprint on site, thus providing a saving on energy for the Council.
- 4.2.6.33 Balcurvie Primary School is part of a different secondary school cluster and is associated with Levenmouth Academy. For this reason alone, it would not be an appropriate option to rezone pupils from the Balcurvie Primary School catchment area to Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area.
- 4.2.6.34 Balcurvie Primary School is located 1.7 miles from Milton of Balgonie and can be accessed off the busy A911. The A911 to and from Milton of Balgonie village to Balcurvie is a main commuter route from Glenrothes to Leven and the speed limit is 60 mph with no pedestrian footpaths.
- 4.2.6.35 Rezoning some of the properties within this catchment area would result in additional revenue expenditure for the Education Service. At present there are very few pupils transported to Balcurvie Primary School, as most residential houses are within the one-mile criterion and therefore pupils will be walking to school. This would result in additional revenue expenditure for the Education

Service, to provide free transport, whilst currently most Balcurvie Primary School pupils are able to walk to their primary school.

4.2.6.36 This option would result in a number of pupils travelling past Balcurvie Primary School to attend Milton of Balgonie Primary School. This option would also take away the opportunity to build independence for those Balcurvie Primary School pupils who currently walk to school.

4.2.6.37 The Education Service does not consider rezoning part of the catchment area of Balcurvie Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School a reasonable alternative to the proposal as a response to the reasons for formulating the proposal. It would not be in the interests of the pupils and wider community to rezone pupils from another community to sustain Milton of Balgonie Primary School. It would not provide any educational benefits to the children living in the catchment areas of either Milton of Balgonie Primary School or Balcurvie Primary School.

4.2.7 The likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented)

4.2.7.1 The local community has been defined in three ways, as demonstrated in Appendix 3.

4.2.7.2 The first community considered is the school community. The existing school community of Milton of Balgonie has already become part of a larger, sustainable school community and as such brings together all the children within the Coaltown of Balgonie school community. The Parent Council of Milton of Balgonie Primary School was made up of a number of parents/carers of the last P7 stage of the school, whilst in operation. As the P7 pupils moved on to secondary school, the number of parents reduced. Coaltown of Balgonie Parent Council would welcome more parents onto the Parent Council. This Parent Council meets regularly over the course of an academic session. Neither school community has previously had any significant engagement or links to the Coaltown of Balgonie and Milton Community Council, however links are made with the village hall where activities have been undertaken. The Headteacher of Coaltown of Balgonie now regularly attends any Community Council meetings.

4.2.7.3 As stated above, the school community made no use of the school building for activities involving the local community, and no impact in this respect is anticipated.

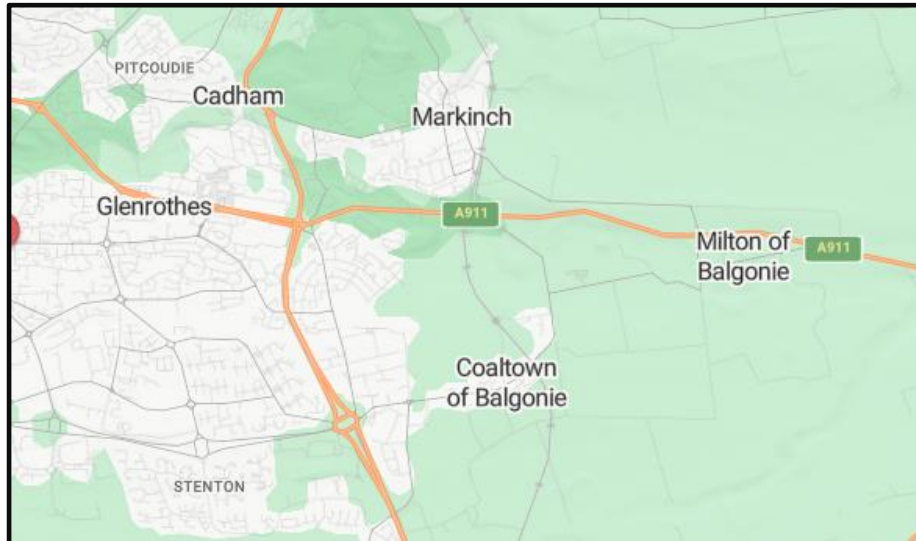
4.2.7.4 The second community considered is the local community which is the Milton of Balgonie village community. This community makes no use of the school building for community activities. The community can make use of a village hall situated on Dickson Lane, approximately 250 metres from the school, and implementation of the proposal would therefore not affect the holding of community events in the village. It is the view of the Council that the loss of the school premises would not adversely affect the community. The school, prior to mothballing, did not have any links with the Community Council.

4.2.7.5 If the proposal is implemented, it is the view of Fife Council that the sustainability of the Milton of Balgonie village community will not be affected,

and the community will continue. Children will continue to live in the community and will attend a school fewer than 2 miles from their existing school. In August 2018, the Headteacher of Coaltown and Milton of Balgonie Primary Schools worked to enhance the link between the two communities. Combined activities such as woodland visits, school excursion to Ardoy for P7 pupils, special assemblies once a term, where Milton of Balgonie pupils would join pupils at Coaltown of Balgonie, and peer mediation training, commenced. This allowed pupils and parents/carers an opportunity to hear about the joint activities and provided the pupils a broader school experience.

- 4.2.7.6 It is also the view of Fife Council that there will be no significant impact on the desire for housing in the area. The expected number of pupils, from new housing and natural births in this catchment area, is likely to have no significant impact for the Education Service and would not be likely to lead to refusal of support for any planning application. The proposed extension to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is as a direct result of the new housing in the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area. The one site within Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the existing pupils living in the area from births, can be accommodated in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, prior to the housing in Coaltown of Balgonie coming forward. However, with the new housing consented in the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, the number of pupils from all the new housing sites will require to be monitored.
- 4.2.7.7 A more detailed analysis of local community impact is provided in section 15.
- 4.2.7.8 Finally, the wider community of which Milton of Balgonie village is a part, will benefit from the development of a more sustainable school estate, with a reduction in the revenue costs due to under-occupation and maintenance of a council asset. The longevity of the remaining schools will be improved, providing stability to the area. There will be no impact on the use of shops, services and facilities in this wider community by residents of the Milton of Balgonie community because of the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School.
- 4.2.7.9 If the proposal is implemented, Fife Council does not consider that there will be any adverse effect on the local community, whether defined as the school community, the village community or the wider rural community surrounding the village of Milton of Balgonie. Overall, Fife Council considers that there will be a positive effect on the local community.
- 4.2.7.10 The picture¹ below demonstrates the close proximity of Milton of Balgonie to other communities in the Glenrothes area.

¹ Map courtesy of Bing Maps



- 4.2.8 The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that might be required as a result of the proposal
- 4.2.8.1 Coalton of Balgonie Primary School is situated 1.7 miles from Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Primary age pupils who live more than one mile from their catchment school are entitled to free transport under the present Fife Council policy. As a result of pupils moving at the end of session 2018/19, Fife Council offered all parents residing in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, who were already attending Coalton of Balgonie Primary School because of a placing request, and any new pupils, free transport to Coalton of Balgonie Primary School. For those pupils who meet the distance criteria, this arrangement will continue for their school duration. The journey time from Milton of Balgonie Primary School to Coalton of Balgonie Primary School is less than 10 minutes by mini-bus or car, and whilst there will be variations in this for some pupils, Fife Council does not consider that there will be any significant adverse effects as a result of this proposal. There will be a small environmental impact of busing the Milton of Balgonie pupils who may have previously walked to school.
- 4.2.8.2 It is unlikely that the arrangements school staff make to get to school will change in any significant way. There is unlikely to be any environmental impact arising from the arrangements staff make to get to school.
- 4.2.8.3 Other users of the school premises or facilities will not be affected in relation to transport arrangements. There were no other users of the school premises prior to the mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and therefore there is no effect on transport. As previously indicated, the village hall is approximately 250 metres from the school.
- 4.2.9 Therefore, the Education Service has concluded that there is no reasonable alternative to the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment area to Coalton of Balgonie Primary School. The rezoning of Coalton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area will sustain the long-term school roll at Coalton of Balgonie Primary School, as well as meet the occupancy rate of above 60% and allow Coalton of Balgonie Primary School to continue to operate with more than 3 Primary classes. Implementation of the proposal to close Milton of**

Balgonie Primary School is the most appropriate response to the reasons for this proposal as outlined above at paragraph 1.27 and 4.2.4.1.

5. Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools - The Case for Rezoning the Catchment Areas

5.1 Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools are not classified as rural schools in accordance with the Scottish Government Rural Schools Classification dated October 2021.

5.2 As previously outlined in paragraph 1.7, the existing catchment areas of all 4 primary schools were established before the A92 regional road was constructed. The A92 now bisects these catchment areas. This has resulted in catchment boundary anomalies for housing development sites situated on the west of the A92. For example, part of the new housing site at Westwood Park (which is currently under construction) and the entire completed site of Lochtyview Way currently lie within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area.

5.3 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School

5.3.1 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is the nearest primary school, within the Auchmuty High School cluster, to the Milton of Balgonie village and is also located in a small village. Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is situated 1.7 miles from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School building and the journey from school to school takes less than 10 minutes by mini-bus or car. There are currently approximately 731 residential homes in the Coaltown of Balgonie catchment area. Pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, who have attended Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School in the last 3 academic sessions, have helped sustain the roll at Coaltown of Balgonie. The school has also accepted approximately 20 placing requests across P1-P7 (excluding the pupils from Milton of Balgonie). There have also been 18 pupils across all primary stages who have chosen to attend other schools. The school roll year on year has been as follows:

Academic Year	School Roll	Academic Year	School Roll
2023	100	2017	75
2022	102	2016	79
2021	95	2015	83
2020	89	2014	88
2019	83	2013	96
2018	81	2012	96

5.3.2 There are 3 development sites within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area listed in the local development plan. One of these sites has planning consent with a signed S75 legal agreement. The other site has no planning consent, and the remaining site is classed as non-effective.

5.3.3 A one classroom extension is a requirement to accommodate the projected increase pupil roll as a result of planned housing development. This extension would still be required with or without the small number of pupils from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area.

- 5.3.4 The accommodation for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is situated in 2 separate buildings in close proximity to each other. The infant building has one classroom and a dining/gym hall, while the main building has 4 classroom spaces, with one currently allocated as a multi-purpose room, as well as office accommodation. The published pupil capacity within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is 100 pupils, consisting of 4 composite classes of 25 pupils. However, there is a 5th (multi-use) space which can be used to accommodate an increase to the pupil roll if required, up to 125 pupils. This was the case in session 2022-23.
- 5.3.5 The school roll at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School was recorded as 102 pupils in the September 2022 census, with an occupancy of 102%. The figures above include pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area who made placing requests to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School prior to session 2019/20, when the school was last operational and any subsequently enrolled in terms of the mothballing arrangements. The school roll for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School for session 2023/24 is 100 pupils, accommodated within 4 teaching spaces. This allows the multi-use area to be used flexibly, to deliver aspects of the curriculum, for session 2023/24.
- 5.3.6 For session 2022/2023, there were 28 nursery aged pupils living in the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area attending nursery provision across the Glenrothes area. For session 2023/24 there are 26 nursery aged pupils living in the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area due to attend nursery provision across this area, across the August, January and April intakes. The figures included N4 (anti-pre-school) and N5 pupils (pre-school).
- 5.3.7 The addition of Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment pupils into the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area would help to ensure the continued sustainability of this school roll, with more than 50 pupils, 3 classes and an occupancy over 60%, thus continuing to meet the guiding principles as set out in paragraph 3.1.
- 5.3.8 School roll projections for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School (based on the 2022 pupil census), indicate the roll of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is expected to decline over a 10-year period to an occupancy of 65% in 2033 (without any additional pupils from new housing sites or Milton of Balgonie catchment area pupils).

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Roll	98	100	88	87	83	75	69	70	66	65	65	63
Capacity	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Classes	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

- 5.3.9 School roll projections for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School (based on the 2022 pupil census), indicate the roll of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School (excluding new Milton of Balgonie pupils) is as follows. This projection includes the following housing sites:

Queens Meadow – 80 units (planning consent granted May 2023)
 Millburn Avenue – 102 units (no planning consent)
 Main Street, Milton of Balgonie – 63 (no planning consent)

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Roll	98	117	120	136	144	144	130	123	112	103	96	92
Capacity	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Classes	4	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	4

5.3.10 Although the roll projection shown above illustrates that Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School will exceed the 4 classes and 100% occupancy, this is based on an average pupil product across Fife. Based on new housing within the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area previously, it is not expected that the average pupil product would manifest from this development site.

5.3.11 As a result of additional units that have been consented, over and above the local plan threshold, the Education Service has requested contributions to mitigate the capacity risk at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. This capacity risk is purely associated with these new housing developments. The contributions will be used to provide a one classroom permanent extension to the building. The recent application for housing at Millburn Avenue is also in excess of the Local Plan Development capacity and, therefore, this application would also be expected to contribute to a permanent solution at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.

5.3.12 Although the above table in 5.3.9 demonstrates that the school is expected to exceed the maximum capacity of 100 pupils, the multi-purpose room and a planned extension to the school would ensure that all pupils from the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment areas can be accommodated within the accommodation at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. These figures do not show the projected number of pupils that would potentially move out from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools should the proposal to realign the catchment areas be approved.

5.3.13 The school roll projections showing Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, with projected pupils from Milton of Balgonie Primary School, and including the projected new pupils from the 3 housing developments listed in paragraph 5.3.9 are shown below. These figures do not show the projected number of pupils from the Lochtyview area, that would potentially move out from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools should the overall proposal be approved. Whilst the projections show the small possibility of children being required to be taught by 7 class teachers, this would not require 7 different learning spaces as 4 of the 5 learning spaces are able to accommodate at least 33 pupils. This would be an acceptable short-term solution.

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Roll	99	119	125	142	152	154	142	136	126	116	109	105
Capacity	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Classes	4	5	5	6	7	7	6	6	6	5	5	5

- 5.3.14 The proposed extension to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School for August 2025, is as a direct result of the new housing in the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area. The one site within Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the existing pupils from births, could have been accommodated in Coaltown of Balgonie, prior to this housing coming forward.
- 5.3.15 However, these projected pupil numbers, included in 5.3.9 and 5.3.13, include all projected pupils currently within the Coaltown of Balgonie and Milton of Balgonie catchment areas, while the full proposal includes the option to realign the primary school catchment areas of Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. This option will remove some addresses from the Coaltown of Balgonie projected numbers, allowing the occupancy of this school to be managed within the proposed accommodation.
- 5.3.16 There is planned housing development within the Local Development Plan within Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, which may have reversed a declining school roll should this site have come forward at the time (it was included in the 2015 Housing Land Audit). An application for 63 units has been received (ref. 23/00231/Full) with construction due to commence in the later part of 2023 and 2024/25. This site does not have planning consent. As detailed in section 3.3, this housing site has been available for construction since 2015 and phasing detailed within the Housing Land Audit 2021 is highlighted as 2025/2026 for the development. This site was not included in the Housing Land Audit 2022.
- 5.3.17 There is no nursery provision on site at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The local nurseries for pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment areas are situated at either: Carleton Nursery, and within the primary schools of Collydean, Pitcoudie or Markinch. In addition, there are a number of private providers and childminders in this geographical area. Most pupils from the catchment areas of Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie have chosen to attend Carleton nursery.
- 5.3.18 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School does not operate a morning or after school childcare service. The nearest childcare club is run from Carleton Primary School, which is situated 2.4 miles from Milton of Balgonie Primary School and 1 mile from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The school currently has Stephen's foundation providing a breakfast provision for all pupils between 9.00 and 9.30 am each day. There is discussion with the Community Council to provide an alternative breakfast opportunity in the Decimal Hall, located behind the Victoria Hall in Coaltown of Balgonie.
- 5.3.19 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School does have its own separate dining/ assembly hall located a short walk from the main school. However, on occasions such as school performances or a Christmas Fayre, the school has used the Victoria Hall on Rosebine Gardens, which is situated 320 metres away from the school. This building is less than a 10-minute walk from the school and classes are accompanied by the correct ratio of adults to pupils to ensure pupil safety.
- 5.3.20 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School has access to the public park which is located approximately 60 metres from the playground.

- 5.3.21 The proposed new catchment area for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, from Monday 19 August 2024, is shown within Appendix 4.
- 5.3.22 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School was visited by a team of inspectors from Education Scotland in September 2022. A report was published on 22nd November 2022, providing an evaluation of the quality indicators for both Learning, Teaching and Assessment and Raising Attainment and achievement as very good, following the gathering of evidence. The report can be found at: [Details | Find an inspection report | Find an inspection report | Inspection and Review | Education Scotland](#).
- 5.3.23 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:
- The school is a warm and caring community. The learning needs of all children are identified clearly and well met. Staff work well with children and parents to plan learning, set targets for children and evaluate their success. Staff and children make good use of digital approaches to support learning. Partners and parents are well involved in supporting children's learning. Children enjoy learning at Coaltown of Balgonie and are proud of their school.
 - The school is very successful in achieving positive outcomes for children. Attainment is high in key areas such as literacy and numeracy. Children make good progress in their learning across the school. The achievements of all children are encouraged, supported and celebrated throughout the work of the school.
 - Staff work well together and very well as a team. They support each other to learn and develop professionally. As a result, they focus their work on effectively meeting the needs of children as best as they can. Staff ensure that all children are well supported to achieve to the best of their abilities.
 - The following areas of improvement were identified and discussed with the Headteacher and a representative from Fife Council:
 - As planned, staff should continue to develop the extensive grounds to more fully extend outdoor learning and explore how best to track the skills children develop across their learning. This will help them ensure that children build on their prior learning and skills.
 - Staff should continue to develop regular opportunities to work with others to ensure a clear, agreed understanding of standards.
- 5.3.24 Whilst the roll projections for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, highlight that the school roll is projected to exceed the current published capacity of 4 classes, the multi-purpose room and the one classroom extension planned would provide the required accommodation to manage pupil numbers. The Education Service is confident that the collaboration between the Planning Service and the Education Service, to analyse and respond to planning applications, is robust. School capacity risks are reviewed whenever the Housing Land Audit is renewed and when every new planning application is received and the roll projections reflect current pupil numbers, school capacity, class organisation and other relevant legislation and policies. These

assessments are, and will continue to be, based on school data that is updated annually e.g. Pupil Census, School Estate Core Facts, and Housing Land Audit.

5.4 Pitteuchar East Primary School

5.4.1 The school roll at Pitteuchar East Primary School, at census 2023, was 225 pupils, with a maximum pupil capacity of 367 pupils (13 classes). There are currently approximately 2283 residential homes in the Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area.

5.4.2 Without the new development in the Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area, the school roll, as shown below (based on the 2022 census), would decline over a 10-year period to 57%, which is lower than the 60% guiding principle, detailed in para 3.1.

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Roll	237	226	235	243	233	233	220	225	221	215	210	210
Capacity	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367
Classes	9	9	9	10	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	8

5.4.3 The projected roll (based on the 2022 census) of Pitteuchar East Primary School can accommodate the projected new pupils from the following developments at:

GLE102 Westwood Park (420 units)
GLE167 Viewfield (48 units)

and is modelled below:

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Roll	237	235	247	265	262	265	261	267	266	260	262	265
Capacity	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367
Classes	9	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

5.4.4 The school roll projection, as shown above, demonstrates the housing development at Westwood Park can be accommodated within Pitteuchar East Primary School and will help sustain the pupil roll of Pitteuchar East Primary School in the long term. Planning consent has been granted and construction is under way. The occupancy of the school at census 2022 was 68% and with any new pupils, the school roll is not expected to exceed 75% occupancy for the 20-year period of school roll projections.

5.4.5 Pitteuchar East Primary School does have an out of school club (afternoon only) to support childcare for parents/carers in this catchment area.

5.4.6 The Headteacher of Pitteuchar East manages the nursery annex which is located approximately 2 minutes' walk from the main school building. This nursery accommodates up to 122 pupils (4 and 5 year olds) on a term time model (9am-3pm, 39 weeks per year) and has a nursery room to accommodate 2-year-old pupils.

5.4.7 As illustrated in Appendix 5, it is proposed that the partial site of GLE102 Westwood Park, that is currently within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, be rezoned to Pitteuchar East Primary School. This

will mean that all new pupils from this development site will be zoned to the same primary school.

5.4.8 There are currently fewer than 5 pupils from the Westwood Park development enrolled in our schools. The Education Service would not expect parents/carers to move children currently enrolled in any primary school unless they wished to do so. As illustrated in Appendix 6, it is proposed that the housing within this part of the Westwood Park development is rezoned, in full, from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Pitteuchar East Primary School. This means that any new pupil that moves into this catchment area after Monday 19 August 2024 would be zoned to Pitteuchar East Primary School.

5.4.9 The proposed new catchment area for Pitteuchar East Primary School, from Monday 19 August 2024, is shown within Appendix 5.

5.5 Thornton Primary School

5.5.1 The school roll at Thornton Primary School, at census 2023, was 158 pupils, with a maximum pupil capacity of 261 pupils (9 classes). The projected roll of Thornton Primary School, as shown below (based on the 2022 census) can accommodate the projected number of pupils from the Lochtyview Way development, as well as the pupils projected from the following sites, referred to in Appendix 10 Housing Sites Across the 4 Primary School Catchment Areas:

- GLE161 Thornton West 2 (300 of the 900 units of the SDA)
- GLE164 Middlefield Row (15 units)
- GLE155 Dormitory House (5 units)
- GLE163 South of Riverside (5 units)
- GLE150 Strathore Road (4 units)

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Roll	153	157	152	168	191	210	221	241	232	220	210	197
Capacity	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261	261
Classes	7	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	9	9	9	8

5.5.2 Although there is one year where the projected school roll increases to 10 classes, due to the distribution of pupils across the different stages impacting on class organisation, the multi-purpose room could be used short term as a teaching space, should this be the case in year 2030.

5.5.3 There are currently 32 pupils from the Lochtyview area in our primary schools. 72% of these pupils attend Coaltown of Balgonie and 28% attend other schools, including Thornton Primary School. The Education Service would not expect parents/carers to move children currently enrolled in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or other schools to Thornton Primary School unless they wished to do so. As illustrated in Appendix 6, it is proposed that the housing within the Lochtyview development is rezoned, in full, from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Thornton Primary School. This means that any new pupil that moves into this catchment area from 19 August 2024 would be zoned to Thornton Primary School.

- 5.5.4 There is a nursery on site within Thornton Primary School, located in a separate building in the playground. This nursery can accommodate 60 pupils within a full year model of 30 pupils in the morning and 30 pupils in the afternoon.
- 5.5.5 A review of out of school childcare provision is considering delivering this provision within the existing accommodation at Thornton Primary School, to support parents/carers who require childcare before or after school.
- 5.5.6 The Lochtyview housing site has been established for several years and is expected, in the future, to result in very few new pupils. However, the likely numbers from this development will be able to be accommodated within Thornton Primary School.
- 5.5.7 The proposed new catchment area for Thornton Primary School, from Monday 19 August 2024, is shown within Appendix 6.

6. Educational Benefits Statement

- 6.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that where an education authority has formulated a relevant proposal in relation to any school, it must comply with the requirements of the Act before proceeding with the proposal. The education authority must prepare an educational benefits statement which includes:
 - (a) the authority's assessment of the likely effects of a relevant proposal (if implemented) on:
 - (i) the pupils of any affected school,
 - (ii) any other users of the school's facilities,
 - (iii) any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school,
 - (iv) the pupils of any other schools in the authority's area,
 - (b) the authority's assessment of any other likely effects of the proposal (if implemented),
 - (c) an explanation of how the authority intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal (if implemented),
 - (d) a description of the benefits which the authority believes will result from implementation of the proposal (with reference to the persons whom it believes will derive them).
- 6.2 **The authority's assessment of the likely effects of this proposal (if implemented) on:**
 - 6.2.1 **(i) The pupils of any affected school**
 - 6.2.1.1 **Benefits for the pupils of Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area**
 - 6.2.1.2 In making this proposal, the Education and Children Service's Directorate believes that being part of a larger school will enable both the existing pupils living in the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, and those pupils from Milton of Balgonie catchment area attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, to continue to benefit from an enhanced range of curricular experiences, providing more opportunities to become successful learners,

confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

- 6.2.1.3 An increased pupil population (less than 20 moving to more than 90) will enable Milton of Balgonie catchment pupils to be educated in classes organised in a narrower range of school years (e.g. P1 - P2 instead of P1 - P7). This allows for more targeted teacher planning, taking account of the 7 principles of Curriculum for Excellence design, ensuring learner's experience a coherent curriculum across all 4 contexts (opportunities for personal achievement, interdisciplinary learning, ethos and life of the school and Curriculum areas and subjects). It also provides more opportunities for children to collaborate during planned learning activities as well as the learning environment more closely reflecting the age and stage of the pupils learning within it.
- 6.2.1.4 Composite class organisation spanning 3 or fewer primary year groups provides greater opportunities for planned and focused collaborative and cooperative learning activities, supporting a more rigorous development and progression of pupils' skills and knowledge. Importantly, pupils will have opportunities to learn with and from their similar age peers. They will have more opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning, articulate arguments, explore new ideas and find creative solutions to problems within groups of their peers.
- 6.2.1.5 Pupils from Milton of Balgonie village are thriving within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and the advantage for Milton of Balgonie catchment pupils is that they now have a bigger peer group at each primary stage. It is no longer the case where a single pupil from one primary stage is now playing with pupils from an older or younger year group, as previously there were no other pupils at the same age. This has reduced the risk of social isolation as a result of having no other peer group of same age. This has also reduced the lack of uncertainty with new pupils as Coaltown of Balgonie has 4 classes (for the past 13 years) which are organised in composite classes. When possible, there has always been a minimum of at least 4 pupils of each stage which provides greater peer support in each class setting.
- 6.2.1.6 Within the larger school, learners will have the opportunity to develop wider relationships and friendships which will see them better prepared to meet the social and learning opportunities and challenges ahead in the large context of secondary school. This is important in terms of developing their learner journey from 3 to 18 years of age.
- 6.2.1.7 Attending a larger school provides pupils from Milton of Balgonie with the opportunity to undertake a wider range of leadership and team roles during a wider variety of planned pupil experiences.
- 6.2.1.8 It is anticipated that the larger occupied school will provide more flexible support to children with additional support needs and will provide opportunities for these children to be supported by a range of adults over time. A greater pool of adults can help facilitate the development of children's independence and their capacity to interact with others.
- 6.2.1.9 A larger school roll at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School offers children from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area an increased possibility of participating in teams in a range of local and national competitions and events. These educational, cultural, and sporting activities provide a number of

benefits for children in terms of both academic and social development, whilst also supporting the process of transition towards the larger and more varied educational setting of secondary school.

- 6.2.1.10 Pupils currently transitioning from Nursery to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School Primary 1 are more likely to have attended Nursery with a child who is also transitioning to the same primary school. This will provide peer familiarity and reassurance for pupils. Similarly, a greater number of children transitioning from P7 at Coaltown of Balgonie to Auchmuty High School will ensure similar benefits for young people.
- 6.2.1.11 There are 30 nursery aged pupils living in the Coaltown of Balgonie and Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment areas attending Fife Council nurseries or partner providers. 14 of the 30 attend Carleton nursery, 11 attend other Fife Council nurseries and 5 attend partner providers.
- 6.2.1.12 It was previously exceptionally difficult to facilitate any after school activities at Milton of Balgonie, with a single teacher working within the school (in 3 of the last 10 years) as well as small numbers making some activities non-viable. Alongside a larger pool of teachers, partners offer a range of more viable opportunities for children in Coaltown of Balgonie, with activities taking place at lunchtime and after school.
- 6.2.1.13 Benefits for the pupils of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School**
- 6.2.1.14 The gradual move of children from Milton of Balgonie Primary School has resulted in no negative impact for pupils attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area.
- 6.2.1.15 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School pupils will have increased opportunities to develop relationships and friendships with peers from a wider geographical area. They will also have greater opportunities to participate in co-operative and shared learning experiences with more peers of a similar age.
- 6.2.1.16 An increased school roll supports the sustainability and viability of the school, offering greater certainty to learners within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School community. There will be a narrower age range of pupils in each composite class.
- 6.2.1.17 Pupils within Coaltown of Balgonie will continue to have access to any lunchtime and after school clubs on offer which are managed by school staff or Active Schools. The addition of pupils from Milton of Balgonie will provide an enhanced number of pupils to take part in teams organised by age.
- 6.2.1.18 There may be opportunities in future for pupils to get involved with any evening activities run by outside agencies. There is currently no demand for the school to be open in the evening for community events or activities, with the exception of school events such as Parent Council meetings.
- 6.2.1.19 As a result of an increased school roll, the overall staffing allocation would be reviewed.

6.2.1.20 Benefits for the pupils of Pitteuchar East Primary School

- 6.2.1.21 Re-zoning the Westwood Park area currently part zoned to Coaltown of Balgonie, will ensure that as the site is developed, pupils will be associated with an established school community that they are living in, being educated with peers living in close proximity.
- 6.2.1.22 Allocating all 420 units to the Pitteuchar East catchment area will sustain the school roll and ensure the projected occupancy remains above 60%.
- 6.2.1.23 Pupils attending Pitteuchar East Primary School have access to an after-school club operating at the close of the school day.
- 6.2.1.24 Pupils from the Westwood Park area will have increased opportunities to develop friendships with others from a wider geographical area.
- 6.2.1.25 As a result of an increased school roll, the overall staffing allocation would be reviewed.

6.2.1.26 Benefits for the pupils of Thornton Primary School

- 6.2.1.27 Pupils living at the housing development at Lochtyview will benefit from being able to walk to school with peers living in the local community.
- 6.2.1.28 Pupils currently living in the Lochtyview area are bused to Coaltown of Balgonie. While there is an available footpath on the B9130 (Blackwood Route), the route is longer than 1 mile to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. This road is 40 mph until the beginning of Main Street, Coaltown of Balgonie and the footpath on B9130 has the A92 underneath. The pupils will benefit by being able to develop their independence by walking using an available walk route, providing an opportunity to socialise with peers who live nearby before and after school.
- 6.2.1.29 Pupils from the Lochtyview area would more than likely be part of a single stream class based on the higher numbers of pupils at the same age, rather than a small number of pupils from a variety of stages within a composite class. For example, in session 2022/2023 at Thornton Primary School, there were 5 classes of straight primary classes and 2 composite classes. Therefore, pupils are more likely to have only 2 primary stages in their class at any one term of their education provision within Thornton Primary School.
- 6.2.1.30 As the nursery is located within Thornton Primary School, parents/carers have the opportunity of reducing their travel by walking both nursery and primary age children to school, where applicable.
- 6.2.1.31 As a result of an increased school roll, the overall staffing allocation would be reviewed.

6.2.2 (ii) Any other users of the school's facilities,

6.2.2.1 Effect on Staff as a result of the closure and rezoning proposal

- 6.2.2.2 The number of pupils in Milton of Balgonie, for the last 2 academic sessions it was operational, resulted in a single class school. Operating as a single class

for an academic session, results in limited opportunities for staff collaboration. As a result of an increased pupil roll at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School there will be a larger staff team who will have opportunities to work in collaboration with additional peers for a variety of different purposes. These opportunities include self-evaluation for self-improvement activities, developing and implementing school improvement priorities, as well as assessment and moderation activities to ensure consistent standards and expectations for all pupils.

- 6.2.2.3 At Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, there will be a greater number of staff than previously located within Milton of Balgonie Primary School. This will result in an increased range of staff specialism, knowledge, expertise, skills and talent as well as increased scope in the deployment of staff to meet the needs and respond to the differing interests and curricular choices of individuals.
- 6.2.2.4 Increased opportunities for collaborative working between a larger number of teachers and pupil support staff will provide a wider range of learning and teaching approaches, develop a consistency of expectations and opportunities to share good practice, leading to better outcomes for children. Furthermore, collective professional learning activity will offer increased opportunities for moderation and curriculum development which will directly impact on school improvement. This will support the national and Fife-wide empowerment agenda.
- 6.2.2.5 The larger occupied school will provide a progressive and coherent curriculum, based on an enhanced range of planned learning and teaching approaches, which will have a potential positive impact on the quality of pupils' wider achievements. More teachers and more Pupil Support Assistants will help ensure high quality staff interaction through joint planning and shared career-long professional learning opportunities.
- 6.2.2.6 This rezoning proposal is expected to sustain the existing school roll at both Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. As a result, the number of staff required in both schools is expected to remain at the same level supporting consistency across all aspects of school life.
- 6.2.2.7 Effect on Facilities as a result of the closure and rezoning proposal**
- 6.2.2.8 Milton of Balgonie Primary school comprises 3 classrooms smaller than the 57 sqm standard size. The school hall is considerably smaller than the size recommended by Sport Scotland.
- 6.2.2.9 Pupils who previously attended Milton of Balgonie Primary school will benefit from the enhanced facilities available at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. This will provide staff with greater flexibility of opportunities to use different types of learning environments that better support a range of learning activities and opportunities for all learners.
- 6.2.2.10 Outdoor physical education facilities at Coaltown of Balgonie can deliver the recommended 2 hours of physical education per week, to all pupils, throughout the year. This is crucial to the physical and emotional wellbeing of the children. The school has a larger dining hall which can also accommodate different types of physical activity. The local park is a 2-minute walk from the school and

provides plenty of outdoor space. The available greenspace at Milton was located 290 metres away from the school on Dickson Lane. A greater adult to pupil ratio would be required to take pupils to this greenspace for physical activity.

- 6.2.2.11 It is not expected that this proposal will have any significant impact on the facilities of Pitteuchar East or Thornton Primary Schools. Both of these schools have a variety of learning spaces to allow all pupils to receive the full breadth of the curriculum and meet learners needs.
- 6.2.2.12 Effect on Parents as a result of the closure and rezoning proposal**
- 6.2.2.13 In the session 2018/19, Milton of Balgonie Primary School did have a Parent Council comprising of parents from the Primary 7 cohort which looked unlikely to continue after the P7 pupils transferred to secondary school.
- 6.2.2.14 The increased number of pupils attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School provides all parents from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area the opportunity to be part of a larger parent forum of the school and wider geographical community area.
- 6.2.2.15 An active Parent Council at Coaltown of Balgonie gives the opportunity for parents from Milton of Balgonie catchment area to become a member of a supportive group which has regular meetings and fundraising events. All parents of Coaltown of Balgonie and Milton of Balgonie pupils are invited to join every meeting.
- 6.2.2.15 Parents from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area will be able to attend a wider range of events on offer at Coaltown of Balgonie, as a result of the enhanced curricular opportunities made available to pupils during and beyond the school day. The benefits of parental involvement in their children's education are clearly recognised and any increase in parental involvement has the potential to directly benefit children in their learning.
- 6.2.2.17 For parents of pupils currently living in the new housing at Westwood Park that is zoned to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, this will result in the entire site being zoned to one primary school catchment area. Parents of this new housing development will all be included in the community of Pitteuchar East Primary School and have the opportunity to be involved in the life of the school including their Parent Council.
- 6.2.2.18 For parents of pupils currently living in the Lochtyview area, this will allow them to be involved in the school within the community that they live. This would also allow parents an opportunity to walk their child to school and connect with families on route.
- 6.2.2.19 Effect on the Community as a result of the closure and rezoning proposal**
- 6.2.2.20 Due to the number of community facilities in Milton of Balgonie, pupils had limited opportunities to be active members of the immediate school community. However, this contrasts with the experience available in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, where pupils are an integral part of the community. Litter picks in the community, links with the Milton and Coaltown Community Council, links

with the bowling club and football club continue. The local shops and businesses at the retail park also continue to support the school.

6.2.2.21 Pupils from Milton of Balgonie catchment area will also benefit from links with the local convenience store, which has supported Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School through their generous donations for sports days and donations for McMillan coffee mornings. Pupils will also benefit from partnerships with businesses located at the local retail area at Bankhead roundabout. These include excellent links with McDonalds who provide opportunities to enhance pupil's learning experiences.

6.2.2.22 Benefits for any other users of the school's facilities

6.2.2.23 Milton of Balgonie Primary School has not been used by the community in the last 3 academic sessions prior to mothballing. The nearby village hall is available for wider community use. Should this proposal be implemented, any new community activities could be staged in the nearby village hall which is less than 275 metres from the existing school building.

6.2.2.24 This proposal seeks to sustain 3 school communities long term and resolve the existing catchment anomalies. This proposal will ensure the school estate is managed long term as the current information will future proof the provision required in these catchment areas. The proposal will meet the guiding principles around occupancy and enables communities to be brought together with housing situated in close proximity.

6.2.2.25 For those pupils attending Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East or Thornton Primary Schools, the schools may deliver community events in the evenings and there would not be any negative effect on any community activity continuing as a result of this proposal. Accordingly, there would be no negative impact for any other users of each of the school's facilities.

6.2.3 (iii) Benefits for any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school

6.2.3.1 The closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School from 19 August 2024 will alleviate uncertainties for current catchment pupils, future pupils and their families and will provide long term stability.

6.2.3.2 The rezoning of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools will ensure that housing is associated with primary schools in a geographical location and ensure long term stability for these communities.

6.2.3.3 At Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools all pupils and parents will benefit from a sustained school roll which will support continuity in school leadership team allocations, along with support for learning and admin support. These positions are allocated to schools based on the size of the school roll.

6.2.4 (iv) Benefits for the pupils of any other schools in the authority's area

6.2.4.1 The formal closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School would reduce inefficient operating expenditure, thus allowing redirection of resources to support pupils

across Fife. The more efficient use of resources will result in a more equitable and “best value” model for deployment of resources across Fife schools. This has implications for the school estate, resources and staffing, all of which are considered to impact positively on children’s learning. The financial operating costs of Coaltown of Balgonie have not increased from the time of Milton of Balgonie Primary School being mothballed.

- 6.2.4.2 The school catchment reviews at Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools will benefit other pupils in the local authority because those living in the same communities as them will be able to attend school alongside them, strengthening peer relationships both in and out of school.
- 6.2.4.3 A longer-term cost reduction in transport may be achieved as the transport costs of £59,622 for pupils travelling from Lochtyview to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School will reduce over time.

6.3 The authority’s assessment of any other likely effects of the proposal (if implemented)

- 6.3.1 As all the current Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area pupils live more than 1 mile from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, free school transport will continue to be provided to them, in line with current Fife Council policy.
- 6.3.2 If the proposed changes to the catchment areas are implemented, any pupil who remains at their current enrolled school for the duration of primary school and who is currently in receipt of free transport, will continue to be provided with free school transport, in line with current Fife Council policy until they move address and/or education setting.

6.4 How the Authority intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal (if implemented)

- 6.4.1 Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment pupils are well established within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School community, following successful transition prior to mothballing. Comprehensive transition arrangements continue to be in place at Coaltown of Balgonie to welcome children from a variety of nursery settings.
- 6.4.2 The school catchment reviews at Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools may result in siblings being zoned to different schools. No guarantee can be given that placing requests will be granted, as that would be contrary to the terms of the Schools Admissions Policy. However, the Education Service will endeavour to work with parents/carers to try and secure places, where possible, within available accommodation.
- 6.4.3 Priority will be given to ensuring continuity and support for children with additional support needs.
- 6.4.4 More information on siblings is contained in section 9.

6.5 Description of the benefits which the authority believes will result from implementation of the proposal (with reference to the persons whom it believes will derive them).

- 6.5.1 The education of current and future pupils from Milton of Balgonie village and the surrounding area will take place in a larger setting which will facilitate delivery of improved educational opportunities in a more sustainable context. Broadly, the Council believes the larger setting of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School provides an increased range of opportunities to deliver Curriculum for Excellence for existing Coaltown of Balgonie pupils and to enable any new and future Milton of Balgonie catchment pupils to benefit from an educational setting organised to meet their identified needs.
- 6.5.2 The expenditure currently required to maintain Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be redirected to the benefit of all learners in schools across Fife. This redirection can positively impact directly on staffing, resourcing and school estate management, and enhance educational opportunities for a larger group of children and young people. Taking account of the financial constraints which apply to all local authorities currently, and in the foreseeable future, this intention is consistent with prudent and efficient management of public funds.
- 6.5.3 This proposal will ensure better alignment of communities and catchment areas to enable housing building to progress and neighbourhoods and communities to be enhanced.
- 6.5.4 This proposal will ensure a best value approach to the management of the school estate, as capacity exists in Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary School to manage potential increased pupil rolls as a result of new housing developments.
- 6.5.6 This proposal will utilise capacity available within Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, ensuring the occupancy of both schools remains over 60%.
- 6.5.7 For a number of pupils, this proposal will ensure that pupils could walk to their catchment school, building relationships, resilience and independence for our young people.

7. Transport Arrangements

- 7.1 A pupil is legally entitled to free transport to school if:
- they're under 8 and live more than 2 miles from their catchment school or
 - they're over 8 and live more than 3 miles from their catchment school
- 7.2 However, in terms of the current school transport policy, Fife Council provides free school transport to all primary pupils living more than one mile and all secondary pupils living more than two miles from their catchment area school. Any distance entitled pupils will be entitled to free school transport according to the policy in place at that time.
- 7.3 Where there are spare seats on existing school buses or suitable commercial bus services, pupils can pay a fare or use their NEC card (with the travel entitlement loaded) to travel free. The availability of school transport for pupils

attending a school as a placing request is not guaranteed and if an offer of a place is accepted, parents would be responsible for getting their child to and from school.

7.4 Milton of Balgonie Primary School Catchment Pupils

7.4.1 There is no available walking route from Milton of Balgonie village to Coaltown of Balgonie Village.

7.4.2 For the current academic session (2023/24), all pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area who were attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School were offered free school transport. This applied to pupils attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School as a result of the mothballing arrangements and those pupils who previously attended Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School following placing request applications (prior to academic session 2019/20).

7.4.3 Whilst Milton of Balgonie Primary School was in operation, there was no school transport provided for academic sessions 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 as none of the pupils qualified for free school transport in accordance with the policy. Several pupils previously enrolled within Milton of Balgonie Primary School were placing requests to Milton of Balgonie Primary school and were not entitled to free school transport.

7.4.4 Should the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School be implemented, free school transport will continue to be provided for pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area who are living more than 1 mile from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, in line with current Council policy.

7.4.5 The current arrangements are that pupils are picked up in close proximity to their homes in Milton of Balgonie. Pupils are then dropped off in the car park situated 50 metres from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Pupils are escorted to/from the school building and to/from the transport provided.

7.5 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School Catchment Pupils

7.5.1 Included in this proposal paper is the opportunity to rezone part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to Thornton and part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to Pitteuchar East. The rezoning of these parts will ensure that the catchment areas are balanced and will ensure that pupils are not situated on the opposite side of the A92 from their catchment area primary school.

7.5.2 In relation to the proposal to rezone the Lochtyview Way part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, this area is currently provided with free school transport to Coaltown of Balgonie. Should the proposal be implemented, free school transport will continue to be provided for these existing pupils in line with current Fife Council policy.

7.5.3 The area of Westwood Park development site that is situated within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area is not under construction

as yet. Therefore, there are unlikely to be any pupils affected from this part of the site with the rezoning proposal.

7.6 Pitteuchar East Primary School Catchment Pupils

7.6.1 There are fewer than 10 pupils within the existing Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area who are entitled to receive free school transport as they are living more than one mile away from Pitteuchar East Primary School. This free school transport will continue to be provided in line with current Fife Council policy.

7.6.2 Following the completion of new housing units within the Westwood Park area, when footpath infrastructure is in place, a walking route assessment will be carried out to assess available walking routes to Pitteuchar East Primary School. Should the proposal be implemented, free school transport will be provided for any pupil who is distance entitled in accordance with the policy in place at that time.

7.7 Thornton Primary School Catchment Pupils

7.7.1 There are currently 0 pupils within the existing Thornton Primary School catchment area who are entitled to receive free school transport as they are living under one mile away from Thornton Primary School.

7.7.2 A walking route assessment will be carried out to assess any available walking routes from the Lochtyview area to Thornton Primary School. Most pupils from this area will be able to walk to Thornton Primary School as the distance is less than one mile. Should the proposal be implemented, free school transport will be provided for any pupil who is distance entitled in accordance with the policy in place at that time.

8. Nursery Provision

8.1 The proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, the transfer of the catchment to Coaltown of Balgonie, and the catchment rezoning of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools will have no impact on nursery provision available.

8.2 In addition to the nursery settings managed by the Education Service, there are a number of private providers and childminders in this geographical area. These nurseries will offer a variety of operational models to enable parents/carers to select their choices for nursery provision to suit their own individual family circumstances.

8.3 There is sufficient capacity across the wider local nursery area to accommodate all the nursery aged pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools.

9. Siblings

- 9.1 The school catchment reviews at Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools may result in siblings being zoned to different schools.
- 9.2 Parents have the right to request that their child attend a school other than their designated catchment school (or to their designated catchment school if the child has not been offered a place there). Any such request is called a placing request and is governed by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. In most circumstances placing requests will be granted where pupil places are available, but the pupil will not automatically be entitled to free or subsidised school transport. Further information on placing requests and the procedure involved can be found in the School Admissions Policy for Primary and Secondary Schools in Fife which can be found at [Apply for a school place | Fife Council](#).
- 9.3 The Council cannot guarantee a placing request will be granted in advance. Placing requests are allocated in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and the existing School Admissions Policy which referred to above.
- 9.4 A situation may arise that a sibling of a child currently attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School no longer has an automatic entitlement to attend the same primary school as their older sibling if the rezoning proposal is approved. In those circumstances, a placing request would be required for the child to attend Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School where their sibling is already in attendance. Where the number of placing requests exceeds the number of available places at the school, the priority criteria within the Admissions Policy. The priority criteria provides that a child living at the same household address as their sibling is given a higher priority (following pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN)), than if a child's non-catchment school is closer to the home address than the catchment school or due to childcare/parent's working arrangements.
- 9.5 Although no guarantee can be given that a sibling's placing request will be granted, the Education Service will endeavour to work with parents/carers to try and secure places, where possible, within available accommodation. Where appropriate, siblings will be supported to move to their new catchment school with enhanced transition arrangements in place to minimise impact. Priority will be given to ensuring continuity and support for children with additional support needs.

10. Secondary School Implications

- 10.1 In terms of the School Admissions Policy for Primary and Secondary Schools in Fife, enrolment at a secondary school is based on the catchment area in which a pupil's home address is situated. No changes to secondary school catchments are being proposed as part of this consultation.
- 10.2 The policy also provides that standard enrolment for transfer from primary to secondary are organised annually between the secondary school and its associated primary schools.

- 10.3 Milton of Balgonie Primary School, Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools are all associated primary schools for Auchmuty High School.
- 10.4 The denominational schools associated with these primary schools are St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School in Glenrothes and St Andrew's Roman Catholic High School in Kirkcaldy. As indicated in para 1.5, there are no proposed changes to the denominational primary and secondary catchment areas associated within the proposal.

11. Cost per Pupil Calculation

- 11.1 The cost per pupil broadly equates to the total expenditure for all running costs associated with a primary or secondary school, divided by the number of pupils enrolled in the school at the September census.
- 11.2 The cost per pupil for each of the schools was as follows:

	Financial Year 2018/19	Financial Year 2021/22	Financial Year 2022/23
Milton of Balgonie PS	£7,302 *	-	-
Coaltown of Balgonie PS	£4,767	£5,005 **	£5,349
Pitteuchar East PS	£3,616	£4,689 **	£5,072
Thornton PS	£3,840	£5,066 **	£5,248

* Based on the budgets from 2019-2020 and excludes any Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

** which excludes any Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and additional teachers funding as part of any Scottish Government initiative to increase teacher posts through the COVID-19 pandemic.

12. Financial Implications of the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School

- 12.1 No saving has yet been realised as no budgetary reduction has been approved. The budget associated with Milton of Balgonie Primary School has been, and if the closure proposal is approved, will be, distributed as part of the overall primary schools' budget. Some reduction in cost has been realised as a result of the mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. If Milton of Balgonie Primary School were to close on Monday 19 August 2024, the detailed breakdown of the estimated financial implications, at that time, is contained within Appendix 10.
- 12.2 If it were determined that the school should reopen, approximately £105,000 would be required to staff the school. In addition, costs to fully equip the school with ICT (information and communication technology), furniture and resources, to meet the needs of learners will be required. It will be necessary to redecorate the school, provide new floor coverings and provide enhancement to the dining facilities. These costs could equate to approximately £70,000. The total budget required to reopen the school is estimated to be in the region of £175,000.

13. Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE)

- 13.1 As indicated in paragraph 4.1.1, Milton of Balgonie Primary School is classified as an accessible rural school, based on the criteria applied by the Scottish Government. As a result of this classification, and because fewer than 70

children were attending the school up until August 2019, the local authority received additional funding of approximately £3000 per pupil per annum as a contribution to the higher cost of educating children in such settings.

- 13.2 However, as Milton of Balgonie Primary School is currently mothballed, the proposed closure of the school will have no impact on GAE allocations. GAE allocations are determined by school roll numbers and the school currently has no pupils. Any decrease in the number of pupils in rural schools does not necessarily result in a decrease in total GAE flowing to Fife. Any decrease is calculated relative to the movement over the other 31 authorities. GAE figures do not represent budgets, targets or expenditure guidelines but are simply a distribution method of determining each local authority's share of total revenue budget funding based on relative need. The GAE process is complex and the implications of one school closure cannot be calculated based on the overall allocation of GAE.

14. Future Use of the Site

- 14.1 Milton of Balgonie Primary School is situated on Main Street, Milton of Balgonie. The school is currently maintained by our Property Services Team and Orbis to ensure it is wind and watertight and is regularly checked by Janitorial Services. The school resources were removed in November 2021 to ensure compliance with Fife Council's insurance.
- 14.2 If the closure proposal is approved by the Cabinet Committee, presumption will be given to other educational uses for the site. If none can be identified other uses by the Council will be considered. If no alternative uses can be identified in this way the site will be disposed of.
- 14.3 No decision can be made on the future use of the site unless the closure proposal is approved by the Cabinet Committee, meantime, potential educational uses will continue to be explored.
- 14.4 For the avoidance of doubt the site will not be put to any alternative use until the closure proposal is approved by Cabinet Committee and that decision has become final.

15. Community Impact of the Closure

- 15.1 In preparing this proposal the Council has considered the ways in which the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School might impact on the community, taking account of research published by the Scottish Government in 2012 (Robinson and Whittaker, EAS Learning Research). This research identifies a number of key areas for consideration.
- 15.2 Based on this proposal all children from the Milton of Balgonie community would be educated within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School already has a small number of Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area pupils enrolled, following successful placing requests and also as a result of the mothballing arrangements for Milton of Balgonie Primary School. As no pupils are currently enrolled at Milton of Balgonie Primary School, in practical terms, no pupils will require to transfer to Coaltown of

Balgonie Primary School, upon closure of the school.

- 15.3 **Loss of social resource and community resource**
Milton of Balgonie Primary School has not been used by other community users during academic sessions 2018/19, 2019/20, 2021/22, 2022/23 or 2023/24). The community of Milton of Balgonie has access to a village hall, managed by Fife Council's Community Services less than 500 metres from the existing school building. The committee of the village hall issue a regular newsletter on clubs/activities that use the hall, and they have a current Facebook page. Closure of the school would have no impact on this aspect of village life.
- 15.4 **Economic impact**
Milton of Balgonie Primary School is not a major employer within the community and in this respect the closure of the school will not have any significant economic impact. In addition, there are currently no large retail or service facilities located within Milton of Balgonie village whose continued viability might be dependent on the school. From a google maps search it appears there is a Gift Shop and Kilt Hire shop listed as local businesses and a number of self-employed businesses that operate from residential addresses. The pub/restaurant is currently closed and on the open market for sale. More retail and service facilities are located in Coaltown of Balgonie (1.7 miles) and within Glenrothes at the Bankhead Roundabout (petrol station, McDonalds, nearby restaurants 3.8 miles) and in the Carleton Primary School area a selection of local shops (hairdresser, pub, post office and food shop/takeaways - 3.1 miles). There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed school closure will have any impact on the desirability of houses for purchase or let, and comparable Fife communities without schools continue to flourish.
- 15.5 **Community and parental involvement**
The education of children at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School has not negatively impacted on parents' desire to be involved in their children's education.
- 15.6 **Impact on pupils**
During academic session 2018/19, the Headteacher started to increase the educational and social links between Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary Schools and this continues with the current headteacher and pupils/parents/carers. Currently, all children within Coaltown of Balgonie are benefitting from having access to larger peer groups, increased friendships and the increased social opportunities which this offers, such as Christmas Fayres and movie nights.
- 15.7 **Attitudes to school closure**
Prior to the decision to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School, all parents/carers of those pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area attending Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or any other primary school in Fife were invited to provide feedback on the Council's proposal to mothball the school. It is unfortunate that the school roll has declined in previous years, but in practical terms, parents understand the decisions that have been made.

- 15.8 **Loss of close relationship between headteachers/teachers and the local community**
 In August 2019, there were no pupils enrolled in Milton of Balgonie Primary School. In the previous session, staff at Milton of Balgonie Primary School had established good communication and strong links with parents/carers from the Milton of Balgonie school community. To support the transition to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School in August 2019, the Pupil Support Assistant transferred from Milton of Balgonie Primary School to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. This member of staff was able to maintain the link with pupils which provided continuity for the pupil being supported, as well other former pupils from Milton of Balgonie Primary School. In session 2018/19, the Headteacher at Coaltown of Balgonie was also the Headteacher for Milton of Balgonie, providing continuity of leadership for the transition of pupils. There was also a class teacher who worked in Milton of Balgonie Primary School covering non-class contact time who became a Principal Teacher within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Arrangements have been in place to ensure that these links are maintained with parents/carers, and it is anticipated that there will be no impact on such relationships.
- 15.9 **Pupils' sense of community identity**
 The current participation of children in activities in the wider community would indicate that this does not represent an area of significant impact. Links were already being established in 2019/20. The staff within Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School do not make any pupils feel any different and all pupils are part of the same school community. Milton of Balgonie pupils have integrated into the school community and the school continues to reinforce links back to community groups to ensure all pupils from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School are included.
- 15.10 **Loss of community confidence and a general decline in quality of life**
 The potential impact of the closure of the school in terms of community confidence and quality of life, while limited, is recognised. However, there is a Community Council in operation for the Milton and Coaltown of Balgonie settlements and this should continue to maintain the community aspect for both small villages
- 15.11 In summary, if the proposal is implemented the Council does not consider that there will be any adverse effect on the local community, whether defined as the school community, the village community or the wider rural community surrounding the village of Milton of Balgonie. Overall, the Council considers that there will be a positive effect on the local community. The Council considers that any adverse impact is unlikely to be significant, but where identified, this will be addressed through a range of measures.
- 16. Summary of Proposal**
- 16.1 The proposal is to:
- (a) Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 19 August 2024.
 - (b) Rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to incorporate all the current catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, from Monday 19 August 2024

- (c) Seek alternative uses for the Milton of Balgonie Primary School site, with the presumption that these will be within the control of the Education Service to ensure that should the number of primary aged pupils in this area increase to a level that may require provision of an additional primary school in future, that it may be done so at the least cost to the Council.
- (d) Rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, to realign these primary school catchments areas from Monday 19 August 2024.

16.2 The school roll of Milton of Balgonie Primary School was 0 pupils for academic session 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24. With a maximum pupil capacity of 75, this represents 0% occupancy. The school does not meet the guiding principles of being more than 60% occupied, having more than 50 pupils or 3 classes or more. The school roll is unlikely to increase with the current demographic profile of the catchment area and there are no housing sites with approved planning consent within the school catchment area, which will adequately support a declining school roll, expected to start in the near future.

16.3 Having identified the reasons for this proposal and considered whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal, as a response to those reasons, the Council considers closure would be the most appropriate response to those reasons.

16.4 The reasons for formulating this proposal:

As indicated in paragraphs 1.27 and 4.2.4.1, this proposal was formulated for the following reasons:

- (a) Milton of Balgonie Primary School has had no pupils enrolled for academic sessions 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- (b) There are no pupils enrolled in Milton of Balgonie Primary School for session 2023/24. The one pupil due to enrol for primary 1, living in the catchment area, has chosen to attend an alternative school following a placing request application. Overall, the current number of primary age pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area is less than 10.
- (c) Milton of Balgonie Primary School has been formally mothballed since January 2021. The school building is currently being maintained by Property Services to ensure it is wind and watertight.
- (d) Updated birth information has shown that the births in the catchment area have not significantly increased in the last year and there is no other anticipated significant increased growth in the pupil population in the catchment area from, for example, large scale housing development of over 100 units.
- (e) Milton of Balgonie Primary School does not meet two of the Fife Council guiding principles as outlined in paragraph 3.1 of this proposal.

- 16.5 Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools are not classified as rural schools in accordance with the Scottish Government Rural Schools Classification dated October 2021.
- 16.6 Pupils from the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area can be accommodated within the existing accommodation at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, however, these projected pupil numbers include all pupils currently within the Coaltown of Balgonie and Milton of Balgonie catchment areas, while the full proposal also includes the option to realign the primary school catchments of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools. This option will remove some addresses from the Coaltown of Balgonie projected numbers, allowing the occupancy of this school to remain below the published capacity of 100. This will provide continued flexibility in the use of the accommodation.
- 16.7 The Education Service acknowledges that the school roll projections shown in paragraph 5.3.13 indicate that Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School will increase to 6 or 7 classes. At present 2 of the 3 sites included in this projection have not yet received planning consent and therefore the phasing of development will likely differ to that included in school roll projections. The school roll projections will also change if the projected pupil product is not manifested across this area. The extension to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is as a direct result of the 2 housing sites within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, and an additional 44 units over the local plan threshold. Regardless of the outcome of the consultation, an extension would be required to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- 16.8 The school roll at Pitteuchar East Primary School, at census 2023, was 225 pupils, with a maximum pupil capacity of 367 pupils (13 classes). Without the new development in the Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area, the school roll would decline over a 10-year period to 57%, which is lower than the 60% guiding principle. The latest school roll projection demonstrates the housing development at Westwood Park for 420 units can be accommodated within Pitteuchar East Primary School and this will help sustain the school roll in the long term. Therefore, it is proposed that the partial site of GLE102 Westwood Park, that is currently within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, will be rezoned to Pitteuchar East Primary School from Monday 19 August 2024. This will mean that all new pupils from this development site will be zoned to the same school.
- 16.9 The school roll at Thornton Primary School, at census 2023, was 158 pupils, with a maximum pupil capacity of 261 pupils (9 classes). The projected roll of Thornton Primary School can accommodate the projected number of pupils from the Lochtyview Way development, as well as the pupils projected from 300 of the 900 units of the Strategic Development Area (SDA) development for Thornton and the other small housing developments. Therefore, it is proposed that the housing within the Lochtyview development is rezoned, in full, from Coaltown of Balgonie to Thornton Primary School. This means that all new pupils from this development site from Monday 19 August 2024 will be zoned to this school.

17 **Proposed Date for Implementation**

- 17.1 If approved in full by the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council, it is intended that the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools would be implemented from Monday 19 August 2024 and would apply to all applications for enrolment, including placing requests, from that date.
- 17.2 Nursery aged pupils beginning Primary 1 in August 2024 will enrol in their existing catchment primary school in January 2024.
- 17.3 In terms of the mothballing arrangements in place for Milton of Balgonie Primary School, Milton of Balgonie Primary School remains on the Council’s online enrolment system. Any new primary one pupils, seeking to enrol online in their catchment school, will be contacted by Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. For any new pupils from stages P2 to P7, the parent/carer should make contact with Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School direct.

18 Statutory Consultation Process – Proposed Timeline

Thursday 11 January 2024	Consultation proposal considered by Fife Council ‘s Cabinet Committee
Tuesday 23 January 2024	Parents and other statutory consultees issued with Consultation Notice informing them of relevant dates and information about the statutory consultation
Wednesday 24 January 2024 – Tuesday 12 March 2024	Consultation live
Wednesday 14 – Friday 16 February 2024	School INSET and School holidays
	<p>Public meetings held on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 6-7 pm • Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 6-7 pm • Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 6-7 pm • Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 6-7 pm <p>Drop-in sessions at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitteuchar East Primary School on Tuesday 30 January 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am • Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 5-6 pm • Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am • Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 5-6 pm • Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 5-6pm • Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 5-6 pm

Tuesday 12 March 2024	Consultation Close
Friday 15 March 2024	Report on consultation process is submitted to Education Scotland
Monday 18 March 2024 – Friday 19 April 2024	Education Scotland 3-week review
Friday 29 March – Friday 12 April 2024	School holidays
Tuesday 23 April 2024	Education Service receive report from Education Scotland
Friday 26 April 2024	Sign off Education Scotland report
Tuesday 14 May 2024	Consultation Report published 3 weeks before the Cabinet Committee
Thursday 6 June 2024	Report submitted to the Cabinet Committee
Thursday 13 June 2024	Estimated end of Fife Council's internal Call-In Period
Friday 17 August 2024	Estimated end of Scottish Government Call-In Period
Monday 19 August 2024	Proposed date of implementation

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কলের জন্য ইউকে ল্যান্ডলাইন থেকে খরচ হবে প্রতি মিনিটে ৩পি থেকে ৭পি, মোবাইলের খরচ ভিন্ন হতে পারে।

عند الطلب، يمكن توفير المعلومات الواردة في هذا المستند في صورة مستندات مطبوعة بأحرف كبيرة ومستندات بطريقة برايل وعلى أشرطة/أقراص مضغوطة صوتية مع الترجمة بلغة الإشارة البريطانية من خلال الاتصال بالرقم 03451 55 55 77
تتراوح تكلفة المكالمات بين 3 إلى 7 بنسات في الدقيقة من أي خط أرضي في المملكة المتحدة، وقد تختلف أسعار المكالمات بالهاتف المحمول.

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用英國電訊固定座機撥打上述電話號碼收費每分鐘 3 至 7 便士，以手機撥打收費各異。

Informacje zawarte w tym dokumencie mogą zostać udostępnione w wersji drukowanej dużą czcionką, w alfabecie Braille'a, w wersji dźwiękowej na płycie CD/taśmie lub w tłumaczeniu na brytyjski język migowy – prosimy o kontakt pod numerem 03451 55 55 44.

Koszt połączenia wynosi 3-7p za minutę z brytyjskich telefonów stacjonarnych, koszty połączeń z telefonów komórkowych mogą być różne.

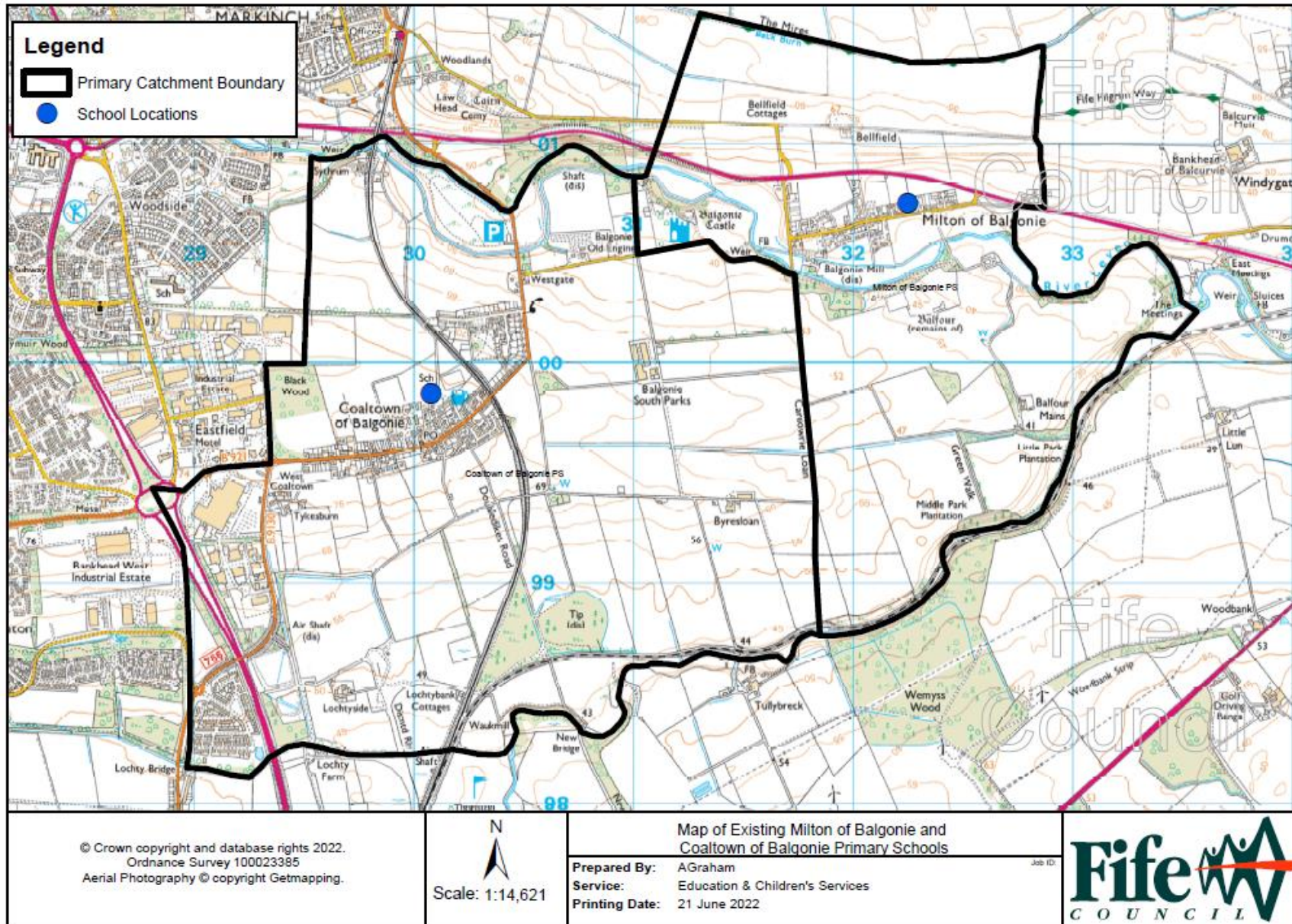
ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ 03451 55 55 66 ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬ੍ਰੇਅਲ, ਆਡੀਓ ਸੀ.ਡੀ./ਟੇਪ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਾਈਨ ਲੈਂਗੂਏਜ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕਰਾਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਲੈਂਡਲਾਈਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਖਰਚਾ 3 ਤੋਂ 7 ਪੈਨੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਮਿੰਟ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਮੋਬਾਈਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੇਟ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।

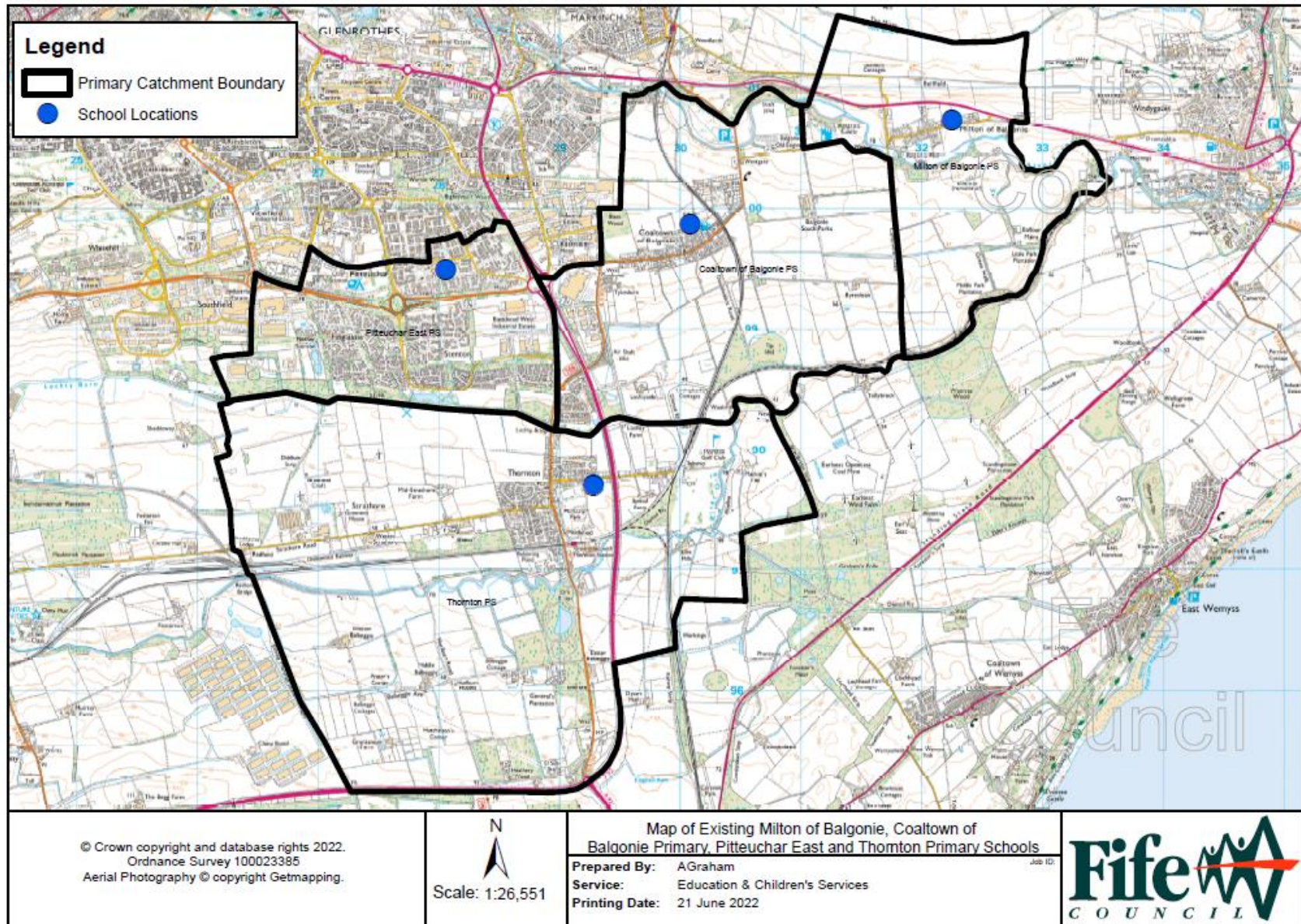
03451 55 55 66 پر درخواست کرنے سے اس تحریر میں دی گئی معلومات بڑے پرنٹ 'بریل' آڈیو سی ڈی/ٹیپ پر اور ترجمانی والی برطانوی اشاراتی زبان (برٹش سائن لینگویج) میں مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔

کسی برطانوی لینڈ لائن سے فون کے نرخ 3 تا 7 پنس فی منٹ ہیں' موبائل کے نرخ مختلف ہوسکتے ہیں۔

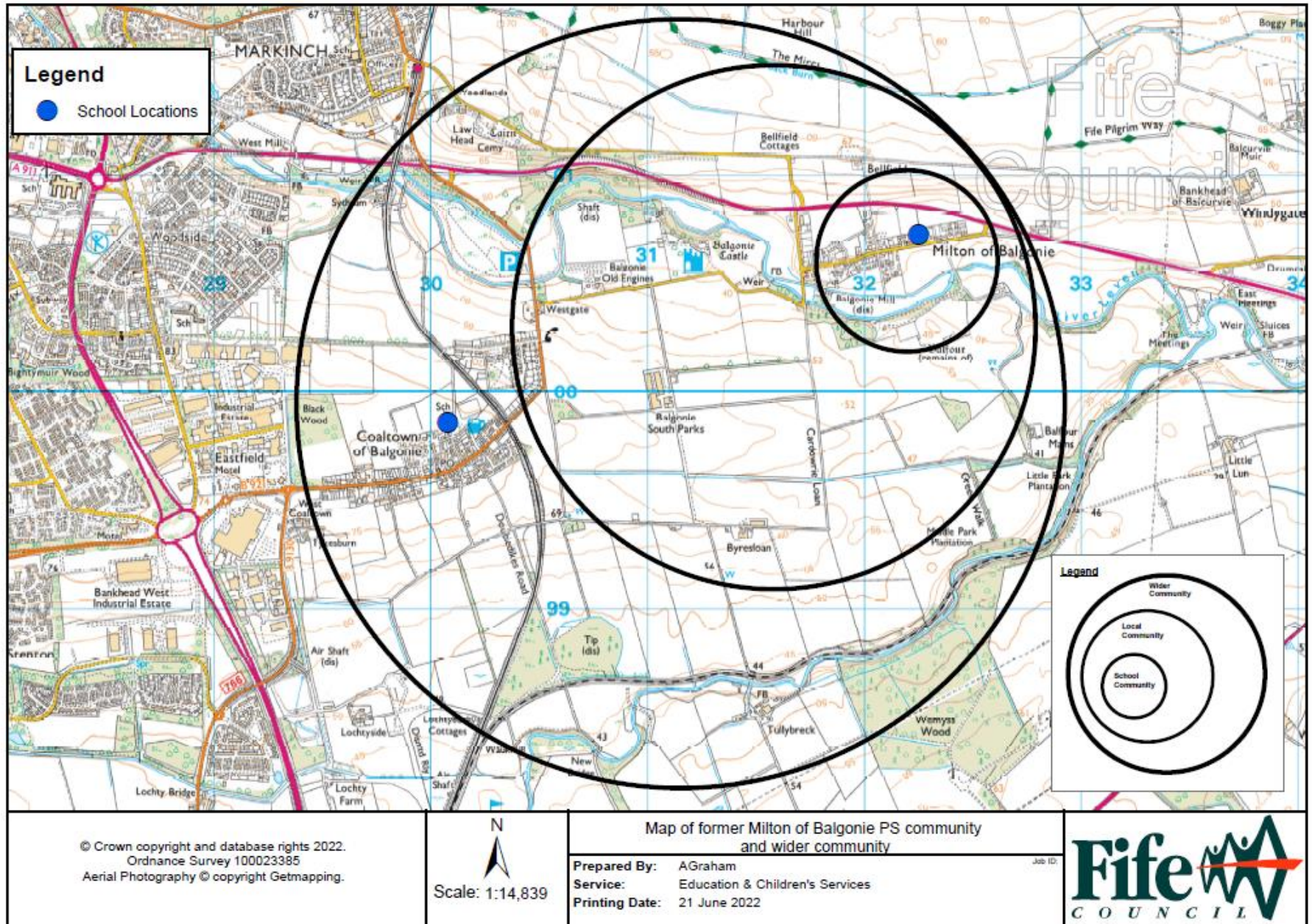
Appendix 1 - Map of existing catchment areas – Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary Schools



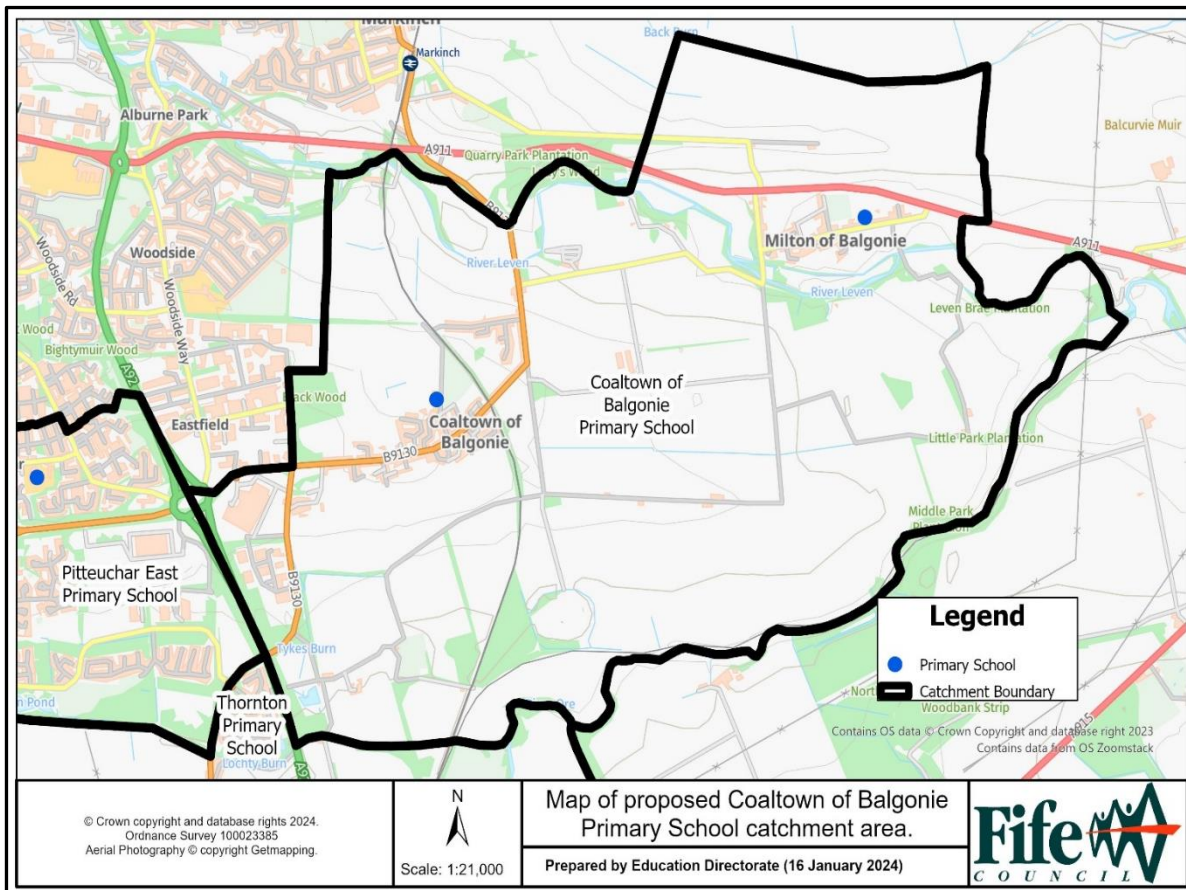
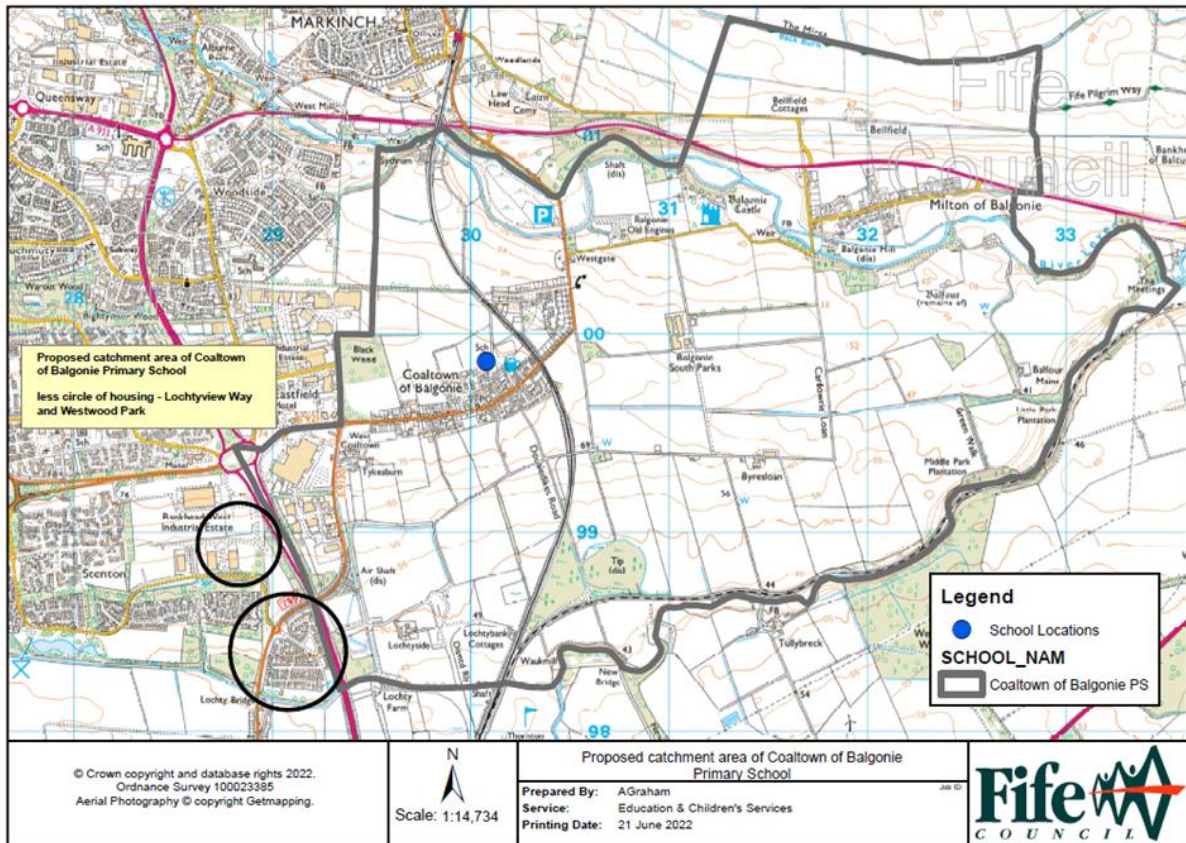
Appendix 2 - Map of existing catchment areas – Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools



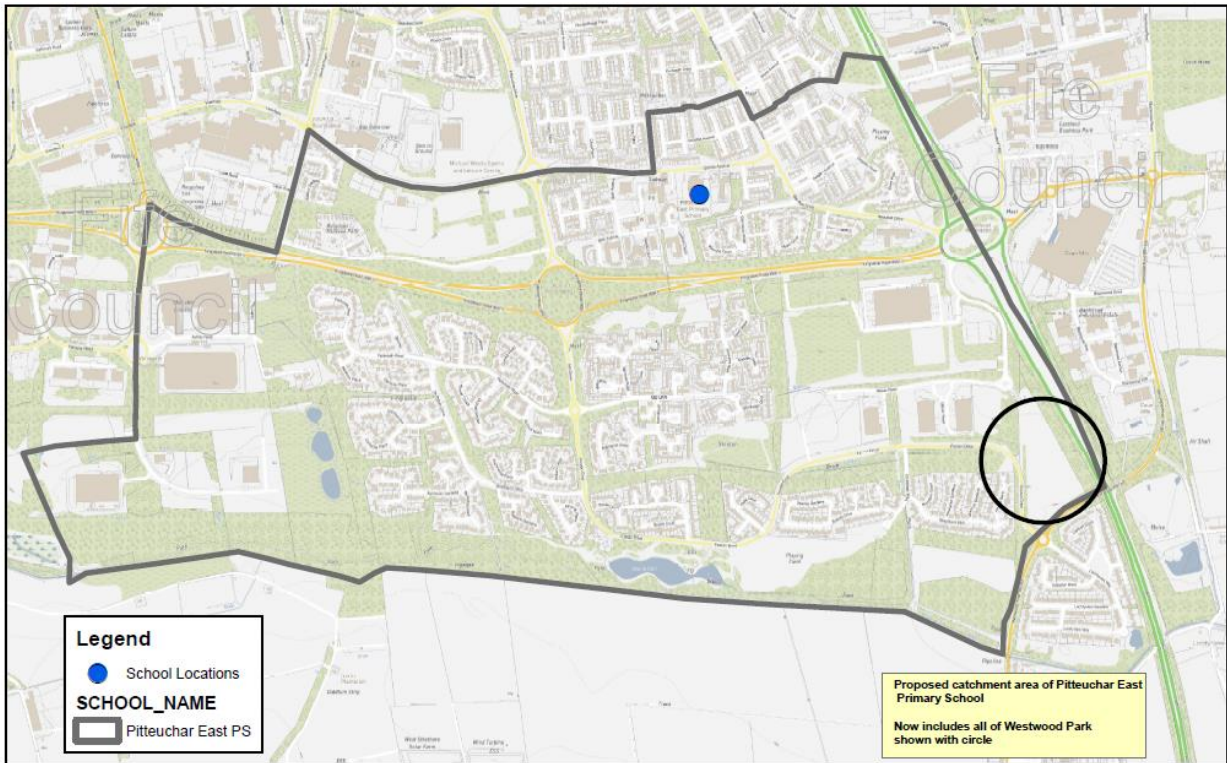
Appendix 3 - Map of existing Milton school community, local community and wider community



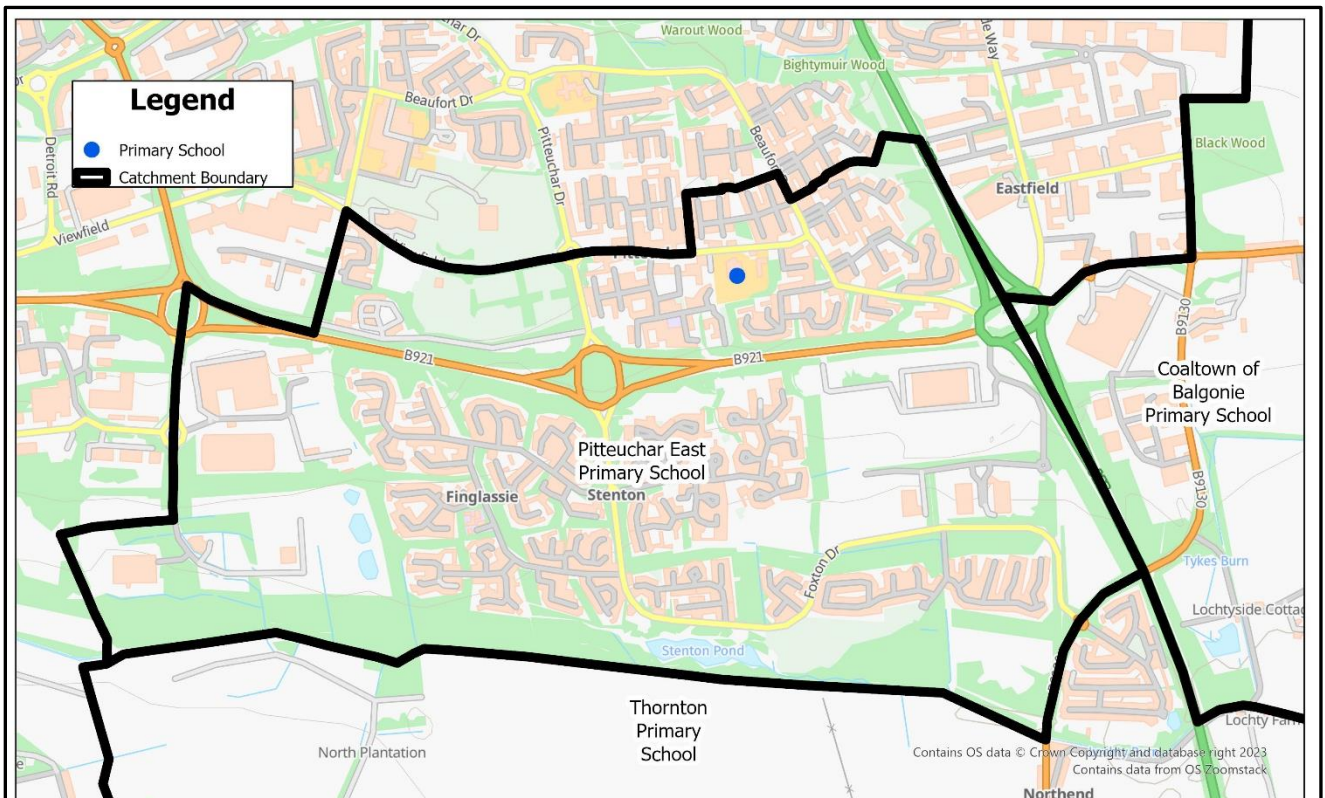
Appendix 4 - Map of proposed Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (including Milton of Balgonie catchment area)



Appendix 5 - Map of proposed Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area (includes the housing in full at Westwood Park)

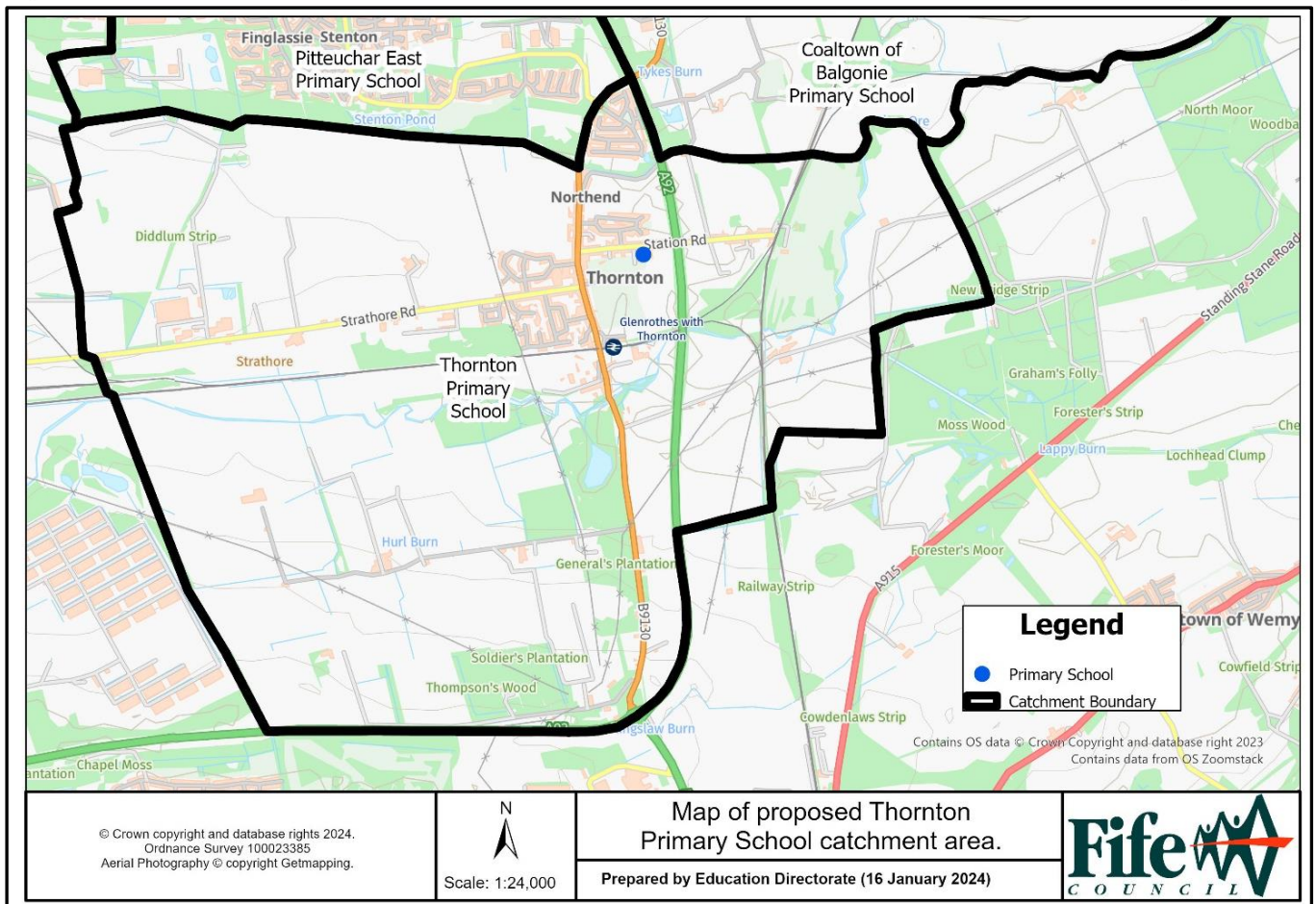
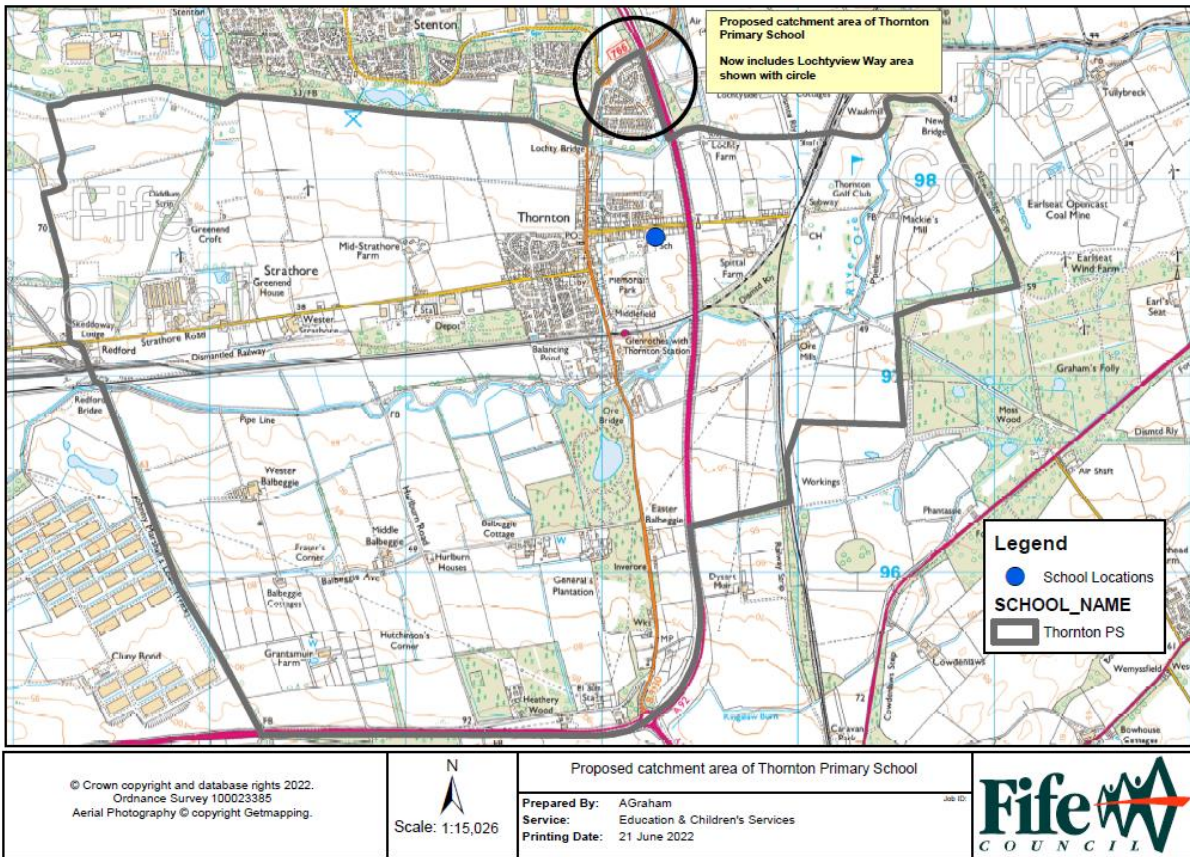


<p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey 100023385 Aerial Photography © copyright Getmapping.</p>	<p>N Scale: 1:8,628</p>	<p>Proposed catchment area of Pitteuchar East Primary School</p>		
		<p>Prepared By: A.Graham Service: Education & Children's Services Printing Date: 21 June 2022.</p>	<p>Job ID</p>	

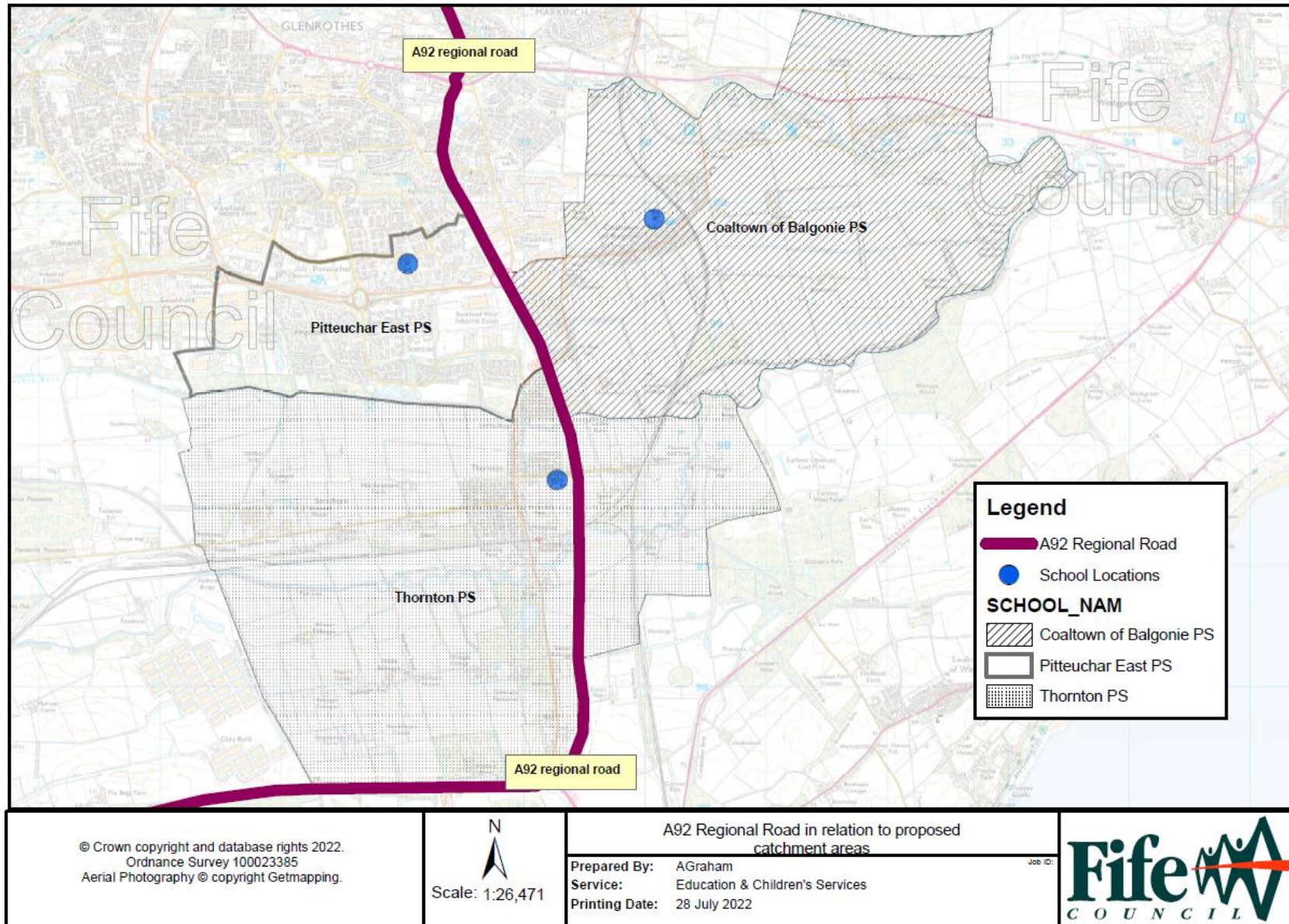


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		<p>Prepared by Education Directorate (16 January 2024)</p>		

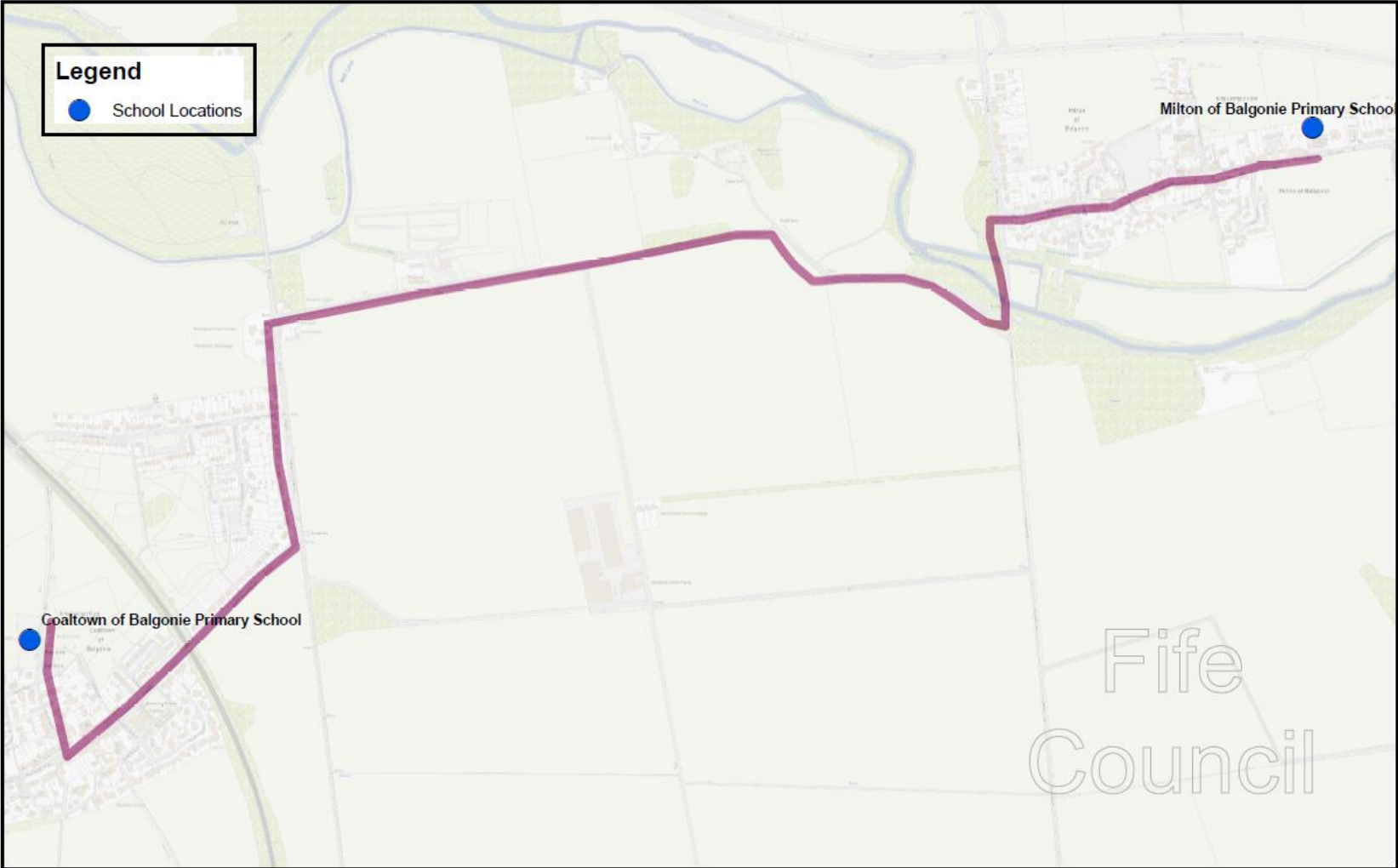
Appendix 6 - Map of proposed Thornton Primary School catchment area includes housing at Lochtyview)



Appendix 7 - Map showing proposed catchment areas with the A92 regional road



Appendix 8 – Travel route currently in use by pupils being transported from Milton of Balgonie village to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School



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Appendix 9 – Core Facts

School Name	Milton of Balgonie	Coaltown of Balgonie	Pitteuchar East	Thornton
Condition	B	B	B	B
Suitability	B	B	B	A
Accessibility	D	C	B	B
Capacity May 2023	75	100	367	261
School Roll Sept 2022	0	102	249	158
Distance from Milton	-	1.7 miles	3.1 miles	3.4 miles
Nursery on site	No	No	Yes	Yes
Rural school	Yes	No	No	No
Out of School club	No	No, collection pm from Coaltown of Balgonie PS, club held at Carleton PS	Yes (pm only)	In discussion
Village Hall	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Transport Costs	£5,700	£59,622	£26,486	£0

Appendix 10 – Proposed Housing Sites Across the 4 Primary School Catchment Areas

Site Name	HLA 2022 Status	Catchment Area	Local Development Plan (FIFEplan Site Capacity)	HLA 2022 Site Capacity	Qty within planning application	Planning application	Planning Consent	Year Start	Year Finish
Balfour Place/Main Street	Non-effective	Milton of Balgonie	63	-	63	23/00231/Full	No	2023 – 30 units	2024/2025 – 33 units
Queens Meadow	Effective	Coaltown of Balgonie	50	74	80	22/04156/Full	Yes	2023 – 20 units p/a	2027
Millburn Avenue	Non-effective	Coaltown of Balgonie	88	-	102	23/00997/Full	No	2025 – 33 units p/a	2028
Pytree Road North	Non-effective	Coaltown of Balgonie	23	-	n/a	None to date	n/a	n/a	n/a
Westwood Park	Effective	Pitteuchar East/Coaltown of Balgonie	420	420	420	12/01300/PPP	Yes	2023 – 24 p/a	2040
Thornton East SLA	Effective	Thornton	900	900	300	20/01156/PPP	No	2024 – 60 units p/a	2029
Auction Mart	Non-effective	Thornton	26						
Land off Main Street	Non-effective	Thornton	5						
Network Rail Land to the east of Thornton	Non-effective	Thornton	10						
Orebank Terrace/Strathore Road	Non-effective	Thornton	294						
Middlefield Row	Effective	Thornton		15		18/03408/FULL	Yes		
Dormitory House, Main Street	Effective	Thornton	5			18/00581/PPP	Yes		
Land to South of Riverside	Effective	Thornton	5			19/01804/PPP			2025

Appendix 11 - Financial analysis

Proposal for the Closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and the rezoning of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area to include the current catchment area of Milton of Balgonie from 19 August 2024		
The figures below detail the revenue budget allocation for the full financial year costs associated with the period the school was last operational (financial year 2019/20)		
Estimated cost reduction from closure		
Staff Costs	£	
Teachers staffing	54,184	Assuming no increase in classes/job-sizing at Coaltown of Balgonie as pupils have been absorbed into existing classes in the receiving school
Admin & clerical	17,116	No additional Admin & clerical resource required in Coaltown of Balgonie which is a receiving school
Classroom assistant	11,525	No increase in Coaltown of Balgonie required
Teacher training	10	Saving
Other training	44	Saving
Saving on Staff Costs	82,879	
Premises Costs		
Saving on Premises Costs	14,722	Assumed full amount saved once building is disposed of.
Other Costs		
Travel Exp-Mileage	41	Saving
Furniture	100	Saving
A Allocation (Classroom Resources)	470	Saving
B Allocation (Facilities Management Resources)	400	Saving
Parents Council	370	Saving
Supplies & Services	0	
Saving on Other Costs	1,381	
Transport Costs	0	Catchment pupils within walking distance
TOTAL	98,982	
Estimated cost increase from closure		
Transport	£5,700	Costs associated with pupils travelling to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from Milton of Balgonie village
ESTIMATED NET COST REDUCTION FROM CLOSURE	£93,282	

Appendix 12 – Feedback from Engagement Sessions held in November 2023

FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Engagement Session held at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School Tuesday, 7 November 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children’s Services (SMcL)

Lyn Meeks, Quality Improvement Officer (LM)

Kim Lawson, Compliance Officer, Education Service (KL)

5 people attended the session.

Shelagh McLean (SMcL) opened the meeting by introducing Fife Council representatives.

SMcL presented a PowerPoint presentation on the background of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, the current mothballing arrangement and how we move forward.

Below is a list of comments made by the stakeholders who attended the session:

1	Will any housebuilding in the Coaltown of Balgonie PS catchment area affect whether or not Milton of Balgonie PS reopens? If there were two schools there would be more space to allow for flexibility.
2	Are you aware of the number of births in the area?
3	It would be good if extracurricular activities could be undertaken at Milton of Balgonie PS.
4	How can the public get the school reopened? We did not know we could request a place at Milton of Balgonie PS.
5	It is unlikely you will fill P1-7 in a mothballed school.
6	I know there is a better social aspect in bigger schools.
7	Does the money saved from Milton of Balgonie PS come to Coaltown of Balgonie PS?
8	We would not send our children to Milton of Balgonie PS now as all of their friends are at Coaltown of Balgonie PS.
9	It would be good if Milton of Balgonie PS could be used for something educational
10	P1-7 in the one class is not a good idea.

Shelagh McLean concluded the meeting by thanking people for their attendance and their comments, as well as encouraging people to provide feedback by any of the various methods.

Meeting closed at 6.45pm.

FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES DIRECTORATE

**Engagement Session held at Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie
Wednesday, 8 November 2023 at 6.00 pm**

Present:

Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children’s Services (SMcL)

Lyn Meeks, Quality Improvement Officer (LM)

Kim Lawson, Compliance Officer, Education Service (KL)

8 people attended the session.

Shelagh McLean (SMcL) opened the meeting by introducing Fife Council representatives.

SMcL presented a PowerPoint presentation on the background of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, the current mothballing arrangement and how we move forward.

Below is a list of comments made by the stakeholders who attended the session:

1	Mothballing is not a fair process as children who are now enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie PS will not leave.
2	Milton of Balgonie PS did not close naturally. The quality of staff was poor and the parents started to move their children to other schools.
3	It was a money exercise.
4	Before Milton of Balgonie PS closed, they were advising people they were no longer able to accept placing requests.
5	The school roll did not naturally reduce to 0.
6	The closing of the school was all done underhandedly.
7	P1-7 in one class would not be any good. Previously, there was always a P1-4, and P5-7 regardless of the number of children attending.
8	The transport costs associated with children being bussed from Milton of Balgonie catchment to other schools would not be worth it. Milton of Balgonie PS would be better remaining open.
9	Outdoor learning and nurturing at Milton is ideal. It is not the same when children go elsewhere to learn.
10	When people make friends within the village, they make friends for life and are able to network within the community.
11	There is a loss of community within the village.
12	I strongly believe there is more learning and teaching undertaken in smaller classes.
13	Children are pushed on further at Milton of Balgonie PS as learning is more focussed due to the smaller classes.
14	It is harder for children to learn in a bigger class
15	When did P1-7 in the one class start? There were always two classes at Milton of Balgonie PS.
16	People missed out on enrolling at Milton of Balgonie PS.
17	Could Milton of Balgonie PS possibly open up as P1-4 only at the moment? There are currently 13 children in the village aged 0-5.
18	Could we make a placing request for our child to attend Milton of Balgonie PS?

19	People used to move to Milton so their child could attend Milton of Balgonie PS. People left when the school was closed.
20	Why would you extend Coaltown of Balgonie PS when there is an empty school in Milton of Balgonie?
21	House builders are being asked to make contributions for Coaltown of Balgonie PS however house builders in Milton of Balgonie are not being asked for the same. How does that work?
22	I disagree with the planning obligation payment being paid to Coaltown of Balgonie PS.
23	Milton of Balgonie PS never had a chance.
24	Milton of Balgonie has been smothered.
25	If you were to advertise that the school was reopening, children would come. What number of children would reopen the school?
26	We need an influx of children into the village.
27	Children should go to school in the area they live in.
28	I did not receive a letter in relation to this engagement session. I should have received a letter to give me a voice.
29	Most parents believe it is a done deal.
30	Communication is key in a process like this.
31	Milton of Balgonie will soon become a retirement village.
32	The village hall is all we have left in the village.
33	We have absolutely nothing here.
34	I am upset at how few people have turned up at the session tonight.
35	No one knows anyone anymore.
36	Milton of Balgonie PS was buzzing years ago.
37	I am happy to knock on every single door in the village and take flyers around.
38	People did not come tonight as they thought it was a session to tell us the date the building was going to permanently close.
39	The prices of houses in Milton of Balgonie stop young families from moving into the area.
40	People who have lived in the village for a while tend to live longer and are therefore in the village for longer.
41	Milton of Balgonie PS was a cracking wee school. I loved working there. We ran a gardening club which was extremely successful.
42	Children would also learn to be more independent as they would be able to walk to school regardless of where they stayed in the village.

Shelagh McLean concluded the meeting by thanking people for their attendance and their comments, as well as encouraging people to provide feedback by any of the various methods.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Education and Children's Services

Engagement regarding the future of Milton of Balgonie Primary School

Coaltown of Balgonie PS – Tuesday 7th November – 6-7pm
Village Hall, Milton of Balgonie - Wednesday 8th November – 6-7pm

Shelagh McLean, Head of Service



Agenda

Current status with Milton of Balgonie Primary School

Births in the catchment area

Committee Decisions

Housing Building

Education Provision in Coaltown of Balgonie

Next Steps

Questions

Improving the learning environment is one of the key priorities for the Education & Children's Services Directorate and the status of Milton of Balgonie Primary School creates challenges for officers, as the building has not been operational for 4 academic sessions.

Our ambition is to manage schools that are fit for purpose, with suitable and efficient learning environments for children, young people and other learners now and in the future.

Appendix 13 – Presentation from Engagement Sessions held in November 2023

Reason for the engagement sessions

- Fife Council will need to decide on the future of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, as no formal decision has been made to date
- The school has been mothballed from 26 January 2021 – the school has not formally closed.
- Within the legislative guidance from Scottish Government – mothballing a school for longer than a 3 year period is not supported
- To consider any proposal to change the arrangements relating to a school, a Statutory Consultation must be carried out in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
- Statutory Consultation process is designed to allow all statutory consultees the opportunity to engage, have their views heard and make representations
- These engagement sessions have been organised to help the Service to talk to parents/carers of all pupils living in Milton of Balgonie PS catchment area, all parents of pupils enrolled in Coaltown of Balgonie and any parents of nursery aged pupils living in Milton of Balgonie PS catchment area, to hear your views.
- These engagement sessions are not part of a formal statutory consultation

Milton of Balgonie PS & Catchment

- Milton of Balgonie Primary School is currently not operational i.e. is 'mothballed.'
- School has had no pupils on roll for sessions 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and no pupils have enrolled for session 2023/24
- The building is empty and is monitored by Fife Council's Property Services team.
- Any new primary age pupil within the village is offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- The Education Service has continued to review the number of pupils in the catchment area; the births in the catchment area and the proposed housing in the catchment area
- The Education Service has not been contacted by any family of primary aged children seeking the reopening of the school
- Fewer than 5 pupils have been born each year in the catchment area



Committee Decisions

- In January 2021, the building was formally mothballed by the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee. 'Mothballing' requires an annual review.
- Since then, any Milton of Balgonie catchment area pupil enrolling for school will have been offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie PS, and provided with free transport if they meet the distance criteria. Families can still choose Milton of Balgonie PS for enrolment purposes.
- 'Mothballing' requires an annual review, as a minimum. Following the first review, on 9 November 2021 the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee continued the 'mothballing' decision and asked the Education Service to undertake another review of the position in June 2022
- In June 2022 – there was no substantial change in the village and a report was submitted to Cabinet Committee, in September 2022, seeking approval to undertake a statutory consultation on a proposal to close Milton of Balgonie PS and rezone Coaltown, Pitteuchar East and Thornton PS catchment areas. Cabinet Committee requested a report on proposed new housing in the catchment area and legal position with mothballing of a school
- A report to Cabinet Committee in November 2022 outlined the proposed housing in the catchment area and the legal position. Cabinet Committee agreed to continue with mothballing arrangements and asked for a further review in June 2023 on pupil numbers in the catchment area
- January 2024 – the school will have been mothballed for 3 years.



Next Steps

- We would like parent/carers and any interested stakeholders to complete the online form or complete a paper copy tonight
- We are seeking feedback on current arrangements and any comments you have on the current mothballing of the school
- The Education Service will review all the comments from stakeholders
- Information from these sessions will be included in a report to the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council in January 2024 when the Education Service will be required to recommend a way forward



House Building

- One new site in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area identified in the Local Development Plan.
- Balfour Place/Main Street for 63 units – site does not have planning consent yet
- If all the catchment pupils attended and the pupils materialised at 0.354 pupils per housing unit, the school is projected to have a maximum of one class
- This would mean P1-P7 pupils in the same class
- If the school was reopened, it would not necessarily mean all pupils who are enrolled in other schools would return



Discussion Have Your say at

<https://forms.office.com/e/ZHEAEJ2cQm>



OR

send comments to:

Sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

Appendix 14 - Glossary of terms

Core Facts

Core Facts are a series of data which are collected by local authorities to measure progress and success of a school estate strategy as well as benchmarking against other local authorities in Scotland. The core facts are used at both local and national level to:

- establish a baseline
- inform targets
- inform spending decisions
- support monitoring and evaluation of progress over time
- support assessments of value for money.

More information is available at: [School estates: core facts overview - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/school-estates-core-facts-overview)

School Condition Rating

Condition core facts are established by professional review, carried out by the Council's Asset & Facilities Management Service. Schools are assessed against a range of criteria set down by the Scottish Government and are examined on a 5-year rolling programme.

- A: Good – Performing well and operating efficiently
- B: Satisfactory – Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration
- C: Poor – Showing major defects and/or not operating adequately
- D: Bad – Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure.

School Suitability Rating

Suitability core facts are established through a similar process to the condition core facts process, undertaken by Headteacher and Business Managers.

This information assesses how well the school environment supports the delivery of the curriculum against criteria laid down by the Scottish Government.

- A: Good – Performing well and operating efficiently (the school buildings support the delivery of services to children and communities)
- B: Satisfactory – Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings generally support the delivery of services to children and communities)
- C: Poor – Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (the school buildings impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school)
- D: Bad – Does not support the delivery of services to children and communities (the school buildings seriously impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school).

Suitability surveys are reviewed by Headteachers/Business Managers every 5 years through a rolling programme. Where school investment has been carried out in a particular school, the following year's Core Facts Update will be amended to reflect any subsequent change to the condition, suitability or accessibility rating.

School Accessibility Rating

Accessibility ratings are collated by the School Estate Team, along with the Education Access Officer, who undertake surveys of all the school buildings. These ratings are then ratified by the Accessibility Strategy Group. The ratings are classified as follows:

- A: Fully accessible
- B: Building partially accessible but Curriculum accessible
- C: Partially accessible or not currently accessible but has the potential to be made accessible

D: Inaccessible and unable to be reasonably adapted to be made accessible.

As part of the Accessibility Strategy, there will be a number of accessible schools in each geographical area.

Local Development Plan

Fife Council adopted FIFEplan (Fife's Local Development Plan) on 21 September 2017. This plan details the local development changes to infrastructure within settlements and include new plans with planning consent. **The Council are currently inviting communities to create Local Place Plans, which will help shape the next Local Development Plan. More information is available at [Invitation to create Local Place Plans](#) page.**

Housing Land Audit

Enterprise, Planning & Protective Services undertakes an annual audit (known as the Housing Land Audit) of the Housing Land Supply in Fife, using 1st April as the base date. The Audit monitors housing completions and makes predictions about future house building in Fife.

Homes for Scotland (representing the national house builders) and local developers are consulted on the information to be included in the Housing Land Audit to discuss and agree the Audit as far as possible. The latest publication for 2021 is published at [Planning Information and Land Use Audits | Fife Council](#)

Public Private Partnership (PPP)

There are 2 existing contracts in Fife (PPP1 and PPP2) where schools have been procured and constructed through this process. The schools are maintained for a period of 25 years by a contractor and after 25 years the building is handed to the Council for future repair and maintenance. An annual unitary charge includes design and construction, services delivery including building and grounds maintenance, finance costs, legal, insurances, management and risk.

Life Cycle Costs

Costs for replacing assets at the end of their life span. These include building, fabric, services and furniture and equipment to ensure the asset is maintain is a substantial condition.

Efficiency Range 80-100%

No local authority can effectively run at 100% occupied. The 80%-100% efficiency range allows a degree of flexibility within schools to support Curriculum for Excellence.

Cost per Pupil Calculation

The cost per pupil calculation for schools is computed in July of each year. The calculation is intended to bring together all comparable costs for each school and benchmark these at individual school level through the production of a cost per pupil figure.

The calculation is currently based on the School Revenue Budget Statements that are issued to schools in April of each year. The calculation takes into account a number of factors particularly the school roll from the last census in September of the previous year. The calculation takes schools running costs including an allocation for janitorial staffing costs. It excludes the costs for school transport, depreciation and the financing costs of schools built under PFI contract arrangements (PPP schools).

Having identified the relevant running costs for each school and by dividing these costs by the school roll this produces a cost per pupil figure which is used for comparison purposes.

Proposal Paper

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that where an education authority has formulated a relevant proposal in relation to any school, it must comply with the requirements of the Act before proceeding with the proposal. One of the requirements is that it must prepare and publish a proposal paper. Section 4 of the Act provides:

4 Proposal paper

- (1) The education authority must prepare a proposal paper which—
 - (a) sets out the details of the relevant proposal,
 - (b) proposes a date for implementation of the proposal,
 - (c) contains the educational benefits statement in respect of the proposal,
 - (d) refers to such evidence or other information in support of (or otherwise relevant in relation to) the proposal as the education authority considers appropriate.
- (2) The proposal paper must also give a summary of the process provided for in [sections 1 to 17D] (so far as applicable in relation to the proposal).
 - (2A) Where a proposal paper relates to a closure proposal, it must also contain information about the financial implications of the proposal.
- (3) A proposal paper may include more than one proposal.
- (4) The education authority must—
 - (a) publish the proposal paper in both electronic and printed form,
 - (b) make the paper, and (so far as practicable) a copy of any separate documentation that it refers to under subsection (1)(d), available for inspection at all reasonable times and without charge—
 - (i) at its head office and on its website,
 - (ii) at any affected school or at a public library or some other suitable place within the vicinity of the school,
 - (c) provide without charge the information contained in the proposal paper—
 - (i) to such persons as may reasonably require that information in another form, and
 - (ii) in such other form as may reasonably be requested by such persons.
- (5) The education authority must advertise the publication of the proposal paper by such means as it considers appropriate.

Educational Benefits Statement

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that where an education authority has formulated a relevant proposal in relation to any school, it must comply with the requirements of the Act before proceeding with the proposal. One of the requirements is that it must prepare an educational benefits statement. Section 3 of the Act provides:

3 Educational benefits statement

- (1) The education authority must prepare an educational benefits statement which includes:
 - (a) the authority's assessment of the likely effects of a relevant proposal (if implemented) on:
 - (i) the pupils of any affected school,
 - (ii) any other users of the school's facilities,
 - (iii) any children who would (in the future but for implementation) be likely to become pupils of the school,
 - (iv) the pupils of any other schools in the authority's area,
 - (b) the authority's assessment of any other likely effects of the proposal (if implemented),

- (c) an explanation of how the authority intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal (if implemented),
 - (d) a description of the benefits which the authority believes will result from implementation of the proposal (with reference to the persons whom it believes will derive them).
- (2) The statement must also include the education authority's reasons for coming to the beliefs expressed under subsection (1)(d).
- (3) In subsection (1), the references to effects and benefits are to educational effects and benefits.

Rural School

In terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 a rural school is a school designated as rural by Scottish Ministers. Section 14 provides:

14 Designation of rural schools

- (1) In this Act, a "rural school" is a school which is designated as such by its inclusion in the list of rural schools maintained by the Scottish Ministers for the purposes of this subsection.
- (2) In determining the question of rurality when considering whether a school falls to be included in or excluded from the list of rural schools, the Scottish Ministers are to have regard (in particular) to:
- (a) the population of the community (or settlement) in which the school is located,
 - (b) the geographical circumstances of that community (or settlement) including its relative remoteness or inaccessibility.
- (3) The list of rural schools is to be accompanied by an explanation of how the Scottish Ministers devised the list:
- (a) by reference to subsection (2), and
 - (b) if they consider it appropriate, by reference to any recognised criteria available from a reliable source.
- (4) The Scottish Ministers are to:
- (a) monitor the list of rural schools (and update it as regularly as they consider necessary),
 - (b) publish it (including as updated) in such way as they consider appropriate.
- (5) An education authority must provide the Scottish Ministers with such information as they may reasonably require of it in connection with the list of rural schools.

Special Provision for Rural Schools

11A Presumption against rural school closure

- (1) This section applies in relation to any closure proposal as respects a rural school.
- (2) The education authority may not decide to implement the proposal (wholly or partly) unless the authority—
- (a) has complied with sections 12, 12A and 13, and
 - (b) having so complied, is satisfied that such implementation of the proposal is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal identified by the authority under section 12A(2)(a).
- (3) The authority must publish on its website notice of—

- (a) its decision as to implementation of the proposal, and
- (b) where it decides to implement the proposal (wholly or partly), the reasons why it is satisfied that such implementation is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal identified by the authority under section 12A(2)(a).

12 Factors for rural closure proposals

- (1) Subsection (2) applies in relation to any closure proposal as respects a rural school.
- (2) The education authority must have special regard to the factors mentioned in subsection
- (3) The factors are—
 - (a) **[...]**¹ (Repealed by Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 asp 8 (Scottish Act) Pt 15 s.80(2)(a) (August 1, 2014: repeal has effect subject to transitional provision specified in SSI 2014/165art.5)
 - (b) the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented),
 - (c) the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented).
- (4) For the purpose of subsection (3)(b) [and sections 12A(2)(c)(ii) and 13(5)(b)(ii)] **2**, the effect on the community is to be assessed by reference (in particular) to—
 - (a) the sustainability of the community,
 - (b) the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community.
- (5) For the purpose of subsection (3)(c) and sections 12A(2)(c)(iii) and 13(5)(b)(iii) **3** —
 - (a) the effect caused by such travelling arrangements includes (in particular)—
 - (i) that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities,
 - (ii) any environmental impact,
 - (b) the travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities.

12A Preliminary requirements in relation to rural school closure

- (1) This section applies where an education authority is formulating a closure proposal as respects a rural school.
- (2) The authority must—
 - (a) identify its reasons for formulating the proposal,
 - (b) consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to those reasons,
 - (c) assess, for the proposal and each of the alternatives to the proposal identified under paragraph (b) (if any)—
 - (i) the likely educational benefits in consequence of the implementation of the proposal, or as the case may be, alternative,
 - (ii) the likely effect on the local community (assessed in accordance with section 12(4)) in consequence of such implementation,
 - (iii) the likely effect that would be caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required (assessed in accordance with section 12(5)) in consequence of such implementation.
- (3) For the purposes of this section and section 13, reasonable alternatives to the proposal include (but are not limited to) steps which would not result in the school or a stage of education in the school (within the meaning of paragraph 12 of schedule 1) being

discontinued.

- (4) The authority may not publish a proposal paper in relation to the proposal unless, having complied with subsection (2), it considers that implementation of the closure proposal would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.
- (5) In this section and section 13, the references to the reasons for the proposal are references to the reasons identified by the education authority under subsection (2)(a).

13 Additional consultation requirements

- (1) This section applies in relation to any closure proposal as respects a rural school.
- (2) The proposal paper must additionally—
 - (a) explain the reasons for the proposal,
 - (b) describe what (if any) steps the authority took to address those reasons before formulating the proposal,
 - (c) if the authority did not take such steps, explain why it did not do so,
 - (d) set out any alternatives to the proposal identified by the authority under section 12A(2)(b),
 - (e) explain the authority's assessment under section 12A(2)(c),
 - (f) explain the reasons why the authority considers, in light of that assessment, that implementation of the closure proposal would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.
- (3) The notice to be given to relevant consultees under section 6(1) must—
 - (a) give a summary of the alternatives to the proposal set out in the proposal paper,
 - (b) state that written representations may be made on those alternatives (as well as on the proposal), and
 - (c) state that written representations on the proposal may suggest other alternatives to the proposal.
- (4) In sections 8(4)(c), 9(4) and 10(2)(a), the references to written representations on the proposal include references to written representations on the alternatives to the proposal set out in the proposal paper.
- (5) When carrying out its review of the proposal under section 9(1), the education authority is to carry out—
 - (a) for the proposal and each of the alternatives to it set out in the proposal paper (if any), a further assessment of the matters mentioned in section 12A(2)(c)(i) to (iii), and
 - (b) an assessment, in relation to any other reasonable alternative to the proposal suggested in written representations on the proposal, of—
 - (i) the likely educational benefits in consequence of the implementation of the alternative,
 - (ii) the likely effect on the local community (assessed in accordance with section 12(4)) in consequence of such implementation,
 - (iii) the likely effect that would be caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required (assessed in accordance with section 12(5)) in consequence of such implementation.
- (6) The consultation report must additionally explain—
 - (a) the education authority's assessment under subsection (5)(a),
 - (b) how that assessment differs (if at all) from the authority's assessment under section 12A(2)(c),
 - (c) the authority's assessment under subsection (5)(b),

- (d) whether and, if so, the reasons why the authority considers that implementation of the proposal (wholly or partly) would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.

Appendix 15 – Consultation Response Form

FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools from Monday 19 August 2024.

Section 1 - Your Details

(to be provided by parent/carers or interested parties to enable the local authority to inform any person who makes written representations on the proposal of the publication of the consultation report as required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010).

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Email address (if applicable)	

Section 2 - What is your main interest in responding to this consultation? (choose one)

I am a:	Tick <input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/Carer	
Pupil	
Staff member	
Grandparent	
Other interested party, please explain the nature of your interest and/or if you are responding on behalf of an organisation e.g. a community council.	

Do you live in one of the following catchment areas? (choose one)

I live in the:	Tick <input type="checkbox"/>
Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area?	
Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area?	
Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area?	
Thornton Primary School catchment area?	
None of the above	

Which education establishment/s do you have a link with?

	Tick <input type="checkbox"/>
Milton of Balgonie PS	
Coaltown of Balgonie PS	
Pitteuchar East PS	
Thornton PS	
Another primary school in the Glenrothes area	
Any nursery in the Glenrothes local area	
Auchmuty High School	

None of the above	
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Section 3 - Your Views

Question 3.1 Do you support the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to include the existing catchment area of Milton of Balgonie from Monday 19 August 2024? **(please tick (✓) either Yes, No or Don't know)**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------	--------------------------

If you support the proposal, what are your reasons? (Please list these below)

If you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons? (Please list these below)

Are there any further comments on the proposal you would like to make, including any representations on the alternatives to the proposal referred to in the proposal paper or any other alternatives to the proposal you would like to suggest? (Please list these below)

Question 3.2 Do you support the proposal to rezone part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (Westwood Park) to Pitteuchar East Primary school catchment area from Monday 19 August 2024? **(please tick (✓) either Yes, No or Don't know)**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------	--------------------------

If you support the proposal, what are your reasons? (Please list these below)

If you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons? (Please list these below)

Are there any further comments on the proposal you would like to make?

Question 3.3 Do you support the proposal to rezone part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (Lochtyview area) to Thornton Primary School catchment area from Monday 19 August 2024? **(please tick (✓) either Yes, No or Don't know)**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------	--------------------------

If you support the proposal, what are your reasons? (Please list these below)

If you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons? (Please list these below)

Are there any further comments on the proposal you would like to make?

Section 4 - About You

The following questions are **voluntary**. They are to assist Fife Council in fulfilling its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the proposal. Your responses to these questions are confidential.

1. What is your age? **Please choose one** (√).

18 or under		25-34		45-54		65-74	
19-24		35-44		55-64		75 and over	

2. What is your gender? **Please choose one** (√).

Male		Female		Non-Binary		Prefer not to say	
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3. What is your ethnic background? **Please choose one** (√).

White Scottish		African	
Other White British		Asian, Asian Scottish, or other Asian British	
Other White background		Caribbean or Black	
Mixed or multiple ethnic background		Other ethnic background	

4. Do you consider yourself as having a disability? **Please choose one** (√).

YES			NO	
-----	--	--	----	--

Thank you for taking part in this consultation. For further information on how we use your data please visit: www.fife.gov.uk/privacy/education

Please complete online at:

- www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary
- return this form by post to: Milton of Balgonie Primary School Closure Proposal, Education & Children’s Services 4th floor (West), Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT

by close of business on Tuesday 12 March 2024.



For the attention of:

- The Parent Council of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools
- The parents of those pupils expected to attend the affected schools within 2 years
- The parents of those pupils expected in local nurseries associated with Milton of Balgonie PS
- The pupils at the affected schools
- School staff at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils – Milton & Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar, Stenton & Finglassie and Thornton
- Community Planning Partnerships
- Other Relevant users of the affected schools
- Any other relevant education authority
- Elected Members for the area
- MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP

Education and Children's Services

Shelagh McLean

03451 555555 ext. 444229

Shelagh.mclean@fife.gov.uk

Date: 23 January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Statutory Consultation Notice - Proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the Catchment Areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

On 11 January 2024, the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council authorised the Education & Children's Services Directorate to undertake a statutory consultation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to:

- Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 19 August 2024;
- Rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to incorporate all of the current catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School, from Monday 19 August 2024;
- Seek alternative uses for the Milton of Balgonie Primary School site, with the presumption that these will be within the control of the Education Service to ensure that should the number of primary aged pupils in this area increase to a level that may require provision of an additional primary school in future, that it may be done so at the least cost to the Council; and
- Rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools to realign these primary school catchment areas from Monday 19 August 2024.

The proposed changes to the catchment areas are shown on the attached maps.

If the proposal is approved in full, the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School and changes to the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools will take effect from Monday 19 August 2024 and will apply to applications for enrolment, including placing requests, made from that date. Nursery aged pupils beginning Primary 1 in August 2024 will enrol in their existing catchment primary school in January 2024. Any nursery aged pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area, beginning Primary 1 in August 2024, seeking to enrol online, will be contacted by Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Parents/carers of any new pupils from Primary 2 to Primary 7 stages, living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area should contact Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School direct.

A full copy of the proposal is available on the Fife Council website at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary. Printed copies are available for inspection at and collection from:

- Main Reception, Fife Council, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT;
- The following primary schools affected by the proposal:
 - Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, School Road, Coaltown of Balgonie, KY7 6HY
 - Pitteuchar East Primary School, 1 Glamis Avenue, Glenrothes, KY7 4NU
 - Thornton Primary School, 65 Station Road, Thornton, KY1 4AY;
- Auchmuty High School, Dovecot Road, Glenrothes, KY7 5JL; or
- Via email to sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

The proposal can also be made available, on request, free of charge, in other languages and formats, by contacting the Education Service on 03451 555555 ext. 444204.

The statutory consultation period will commence on Wednesday 24 January 2024 and will end on Tuesday 12 March 2024.

Public meetings have been arranged at:

- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 6-7 pm

At these meetings, council officers will give a presentation on the proposal, answer questions on it and record the oral representations of anyone who attends. There will also be an opportunity to complete a Consultation Response Form.

A number of **informal drop-in sessions** have also been arranged at:

- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Tuesday 30 January 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am
- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 5-6 pm
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 5-6 pm
- Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 5-6pm
- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 5-6 pm

At these sessions council officers will be available to give further information on the proposal and answer questions on it. There will also be an opportunity to complete a Consultation Response Form.

You are invited to have your say on this proposal. You can attend the public meeting, and/or you can make written representations:

- to Milton of Balgonie Primary School, Education & Children's Services Directorate, Fife Council, 4th Floor (West), Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5LT
- by e-mail to: sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk
- by completing the Consultation Response Form available online at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary or <https://forms.office.com/e/LgQ0Qxkmkz>
- by emailing a completed Consultation Response Form to: sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

Printed copies of the Consultation Response Form will also be available at the public meetings, informal drop-in sessions, and from the schools and council offices listed above.

The possible alternatives to closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School are set out in the proposal paper. Those are:

- Continued mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School;
- Milton of Balgonie Primary School to reopen;
- Rezoning part of the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School; and
- Rezoning part of the catchment area of Balcurvie Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School.

After assessment, the Council does not consider that those alternatives included in the proposal document are reasonable alternatives to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. You can make written representations on the proposal and on the alternatives that are included within the proposal paper. If you consider there are other alternatives to the proposal you can include those in your written representations on the proposal.

In order to be taken into account, all written representations by letter, by e-mail or by completion of the Consultation Response Form, must arrive by close of business on Tuesday 12 March 2024.

Following the conclusion of the consultation period the Council will review the proposal and prepare a Consultation Report for consideration by a future Cabinet Committee of Fife Council. Further detail on this process is contained in the proposal paper.

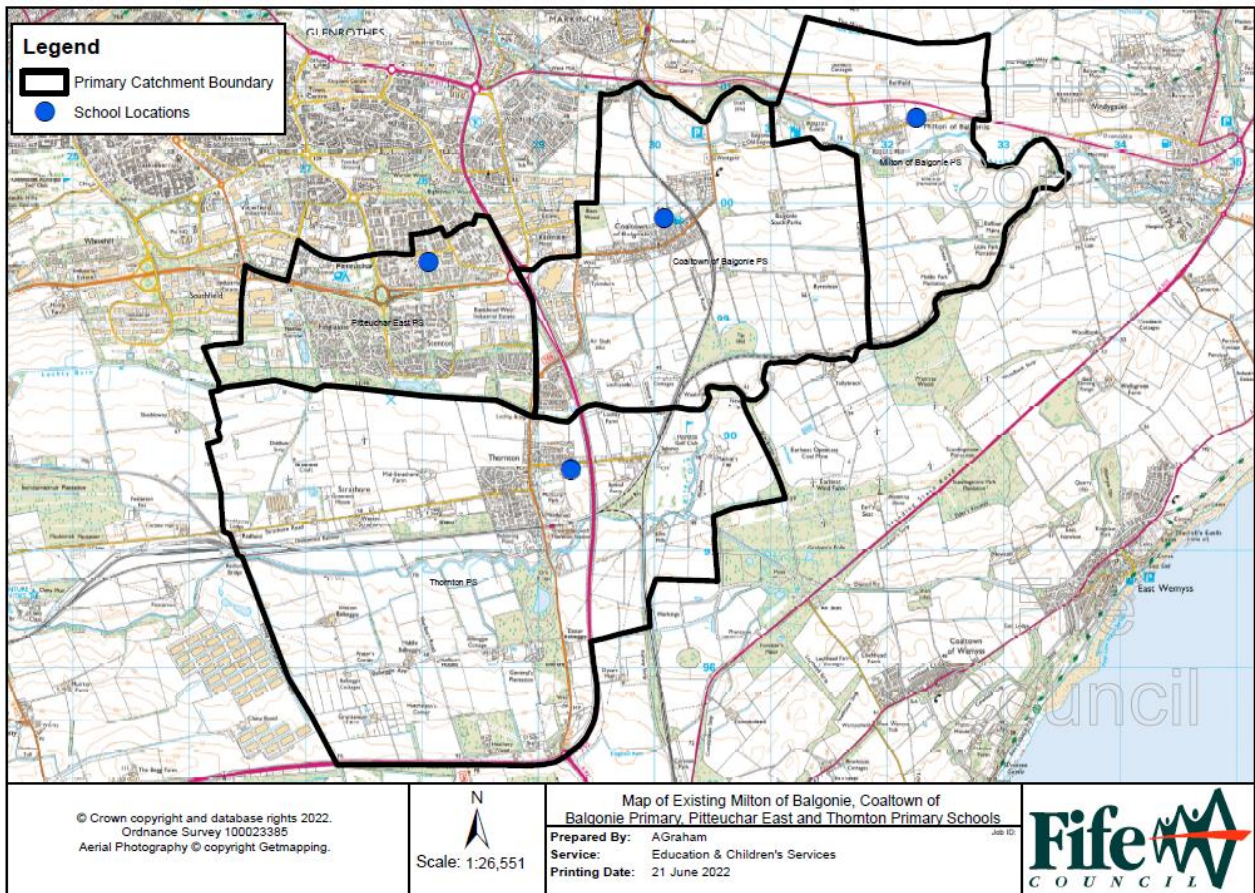
We look forward to seeing you at these events.

Yours sincerely

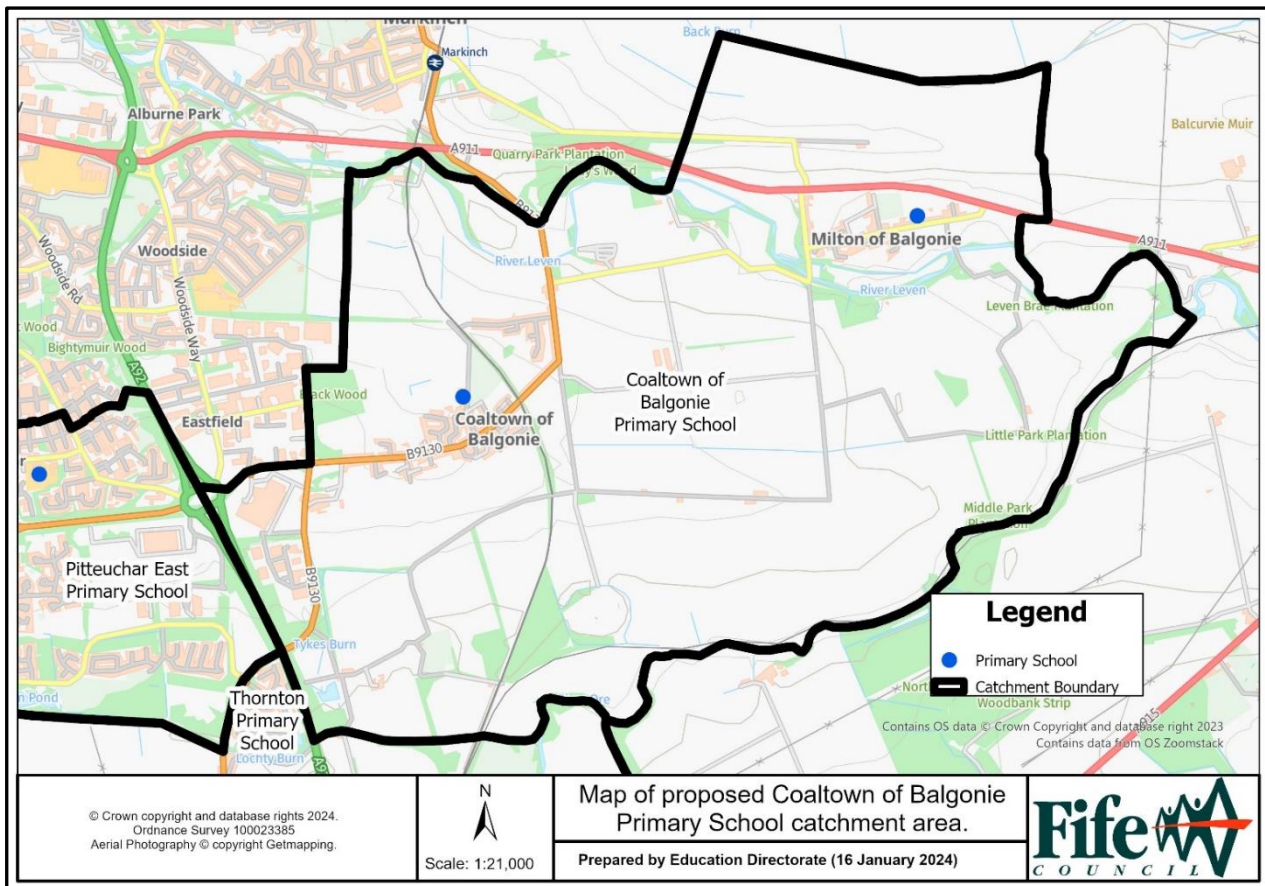
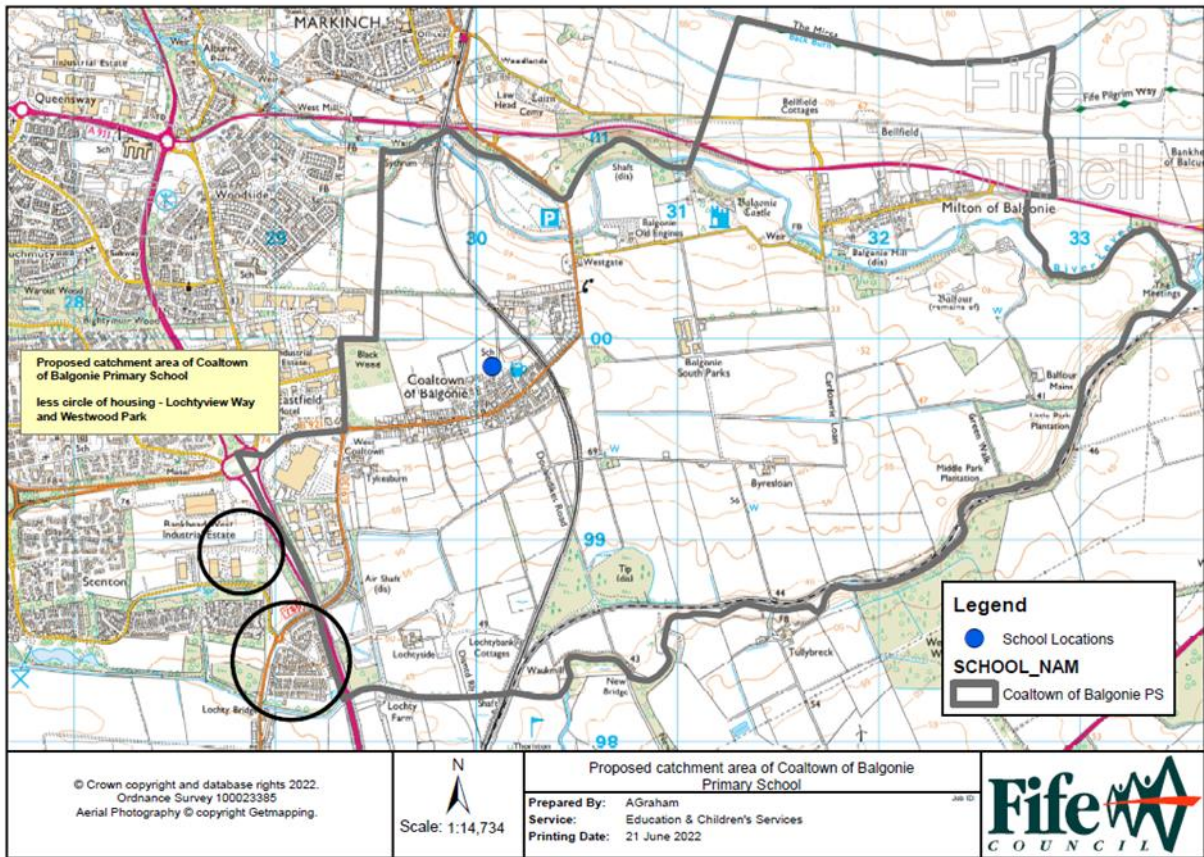


Shelagh McLean
Head of Education & Children's Services
(Early Years and Directorate Support)

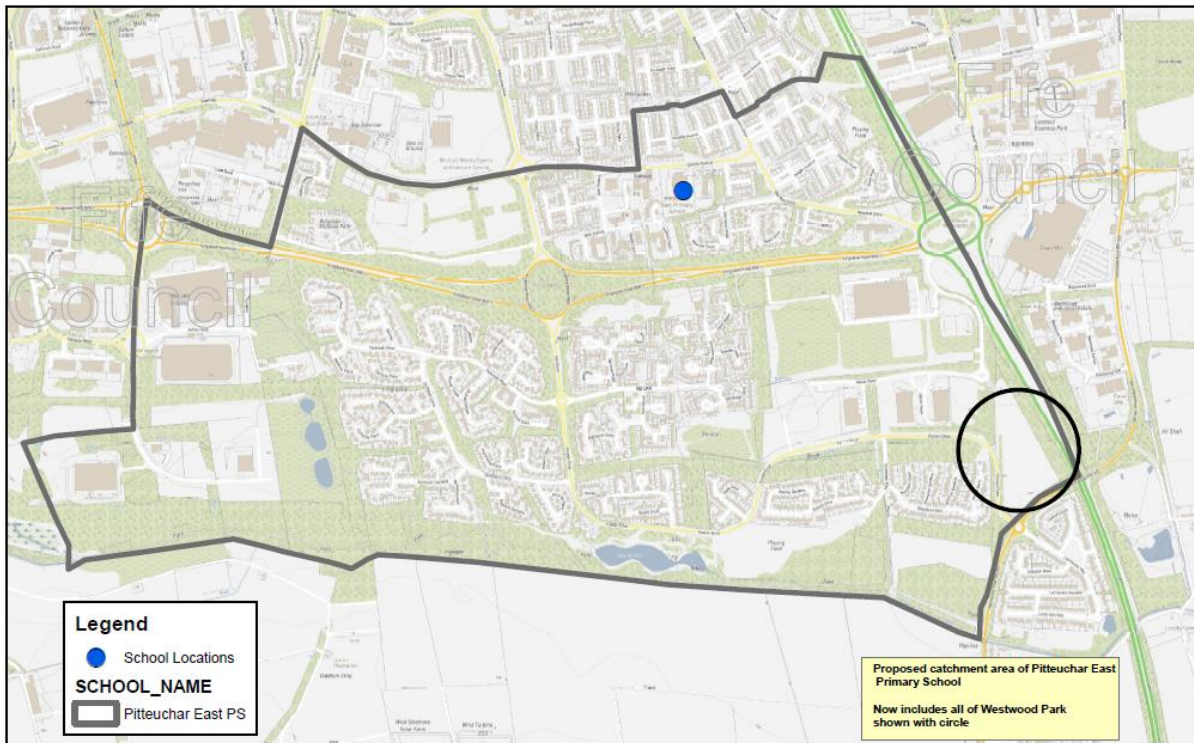
Map of Existing Primary School Catchment Areas of Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools




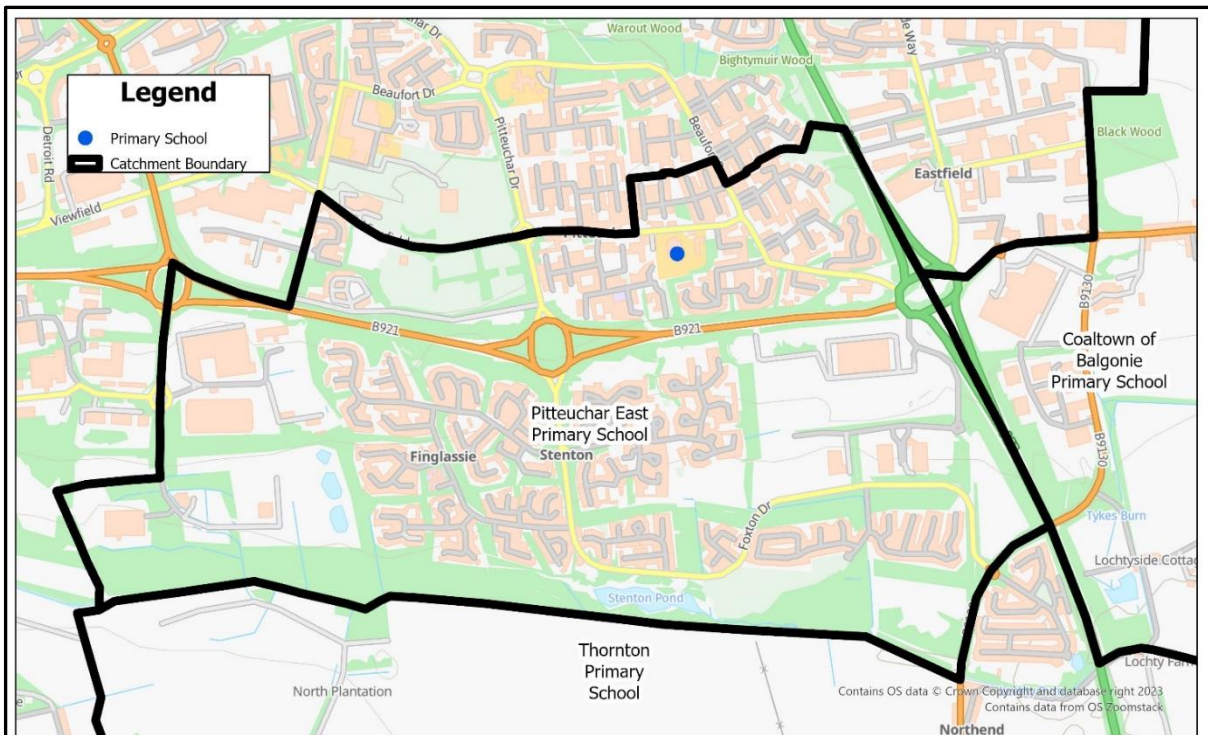
Catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School being rezoned to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School




The Westwood Park housing estate being rezoned from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Pitteuchar East Primary School

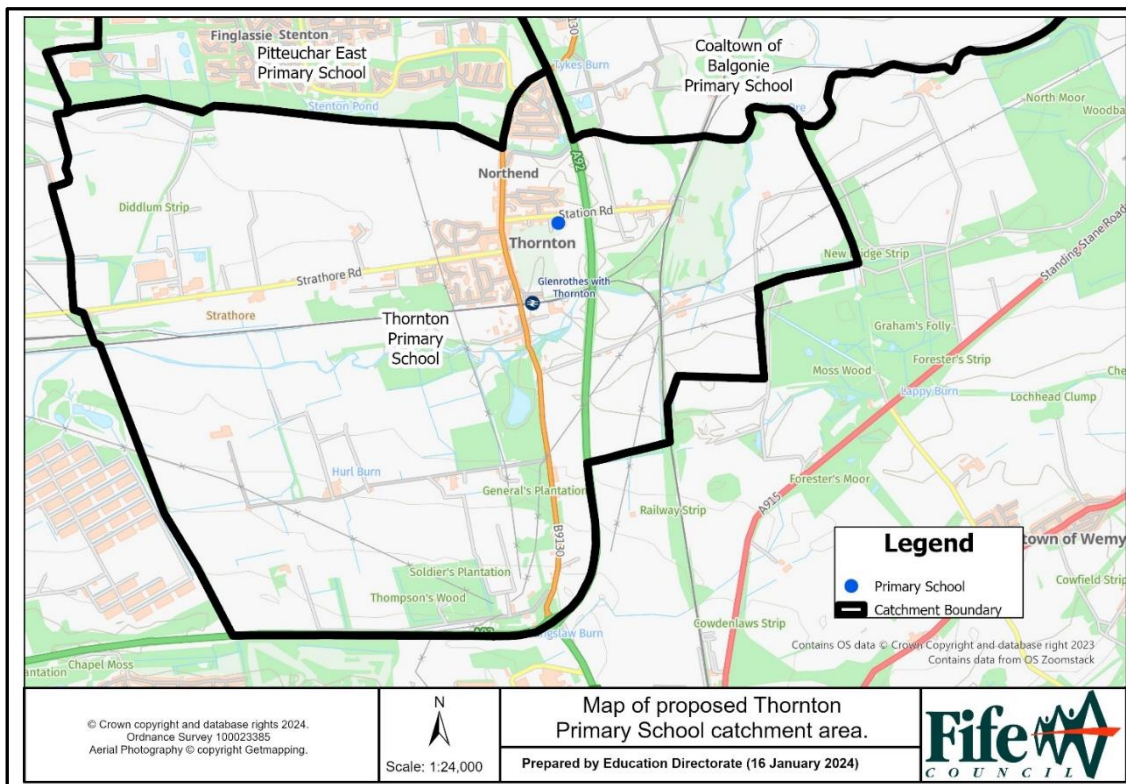
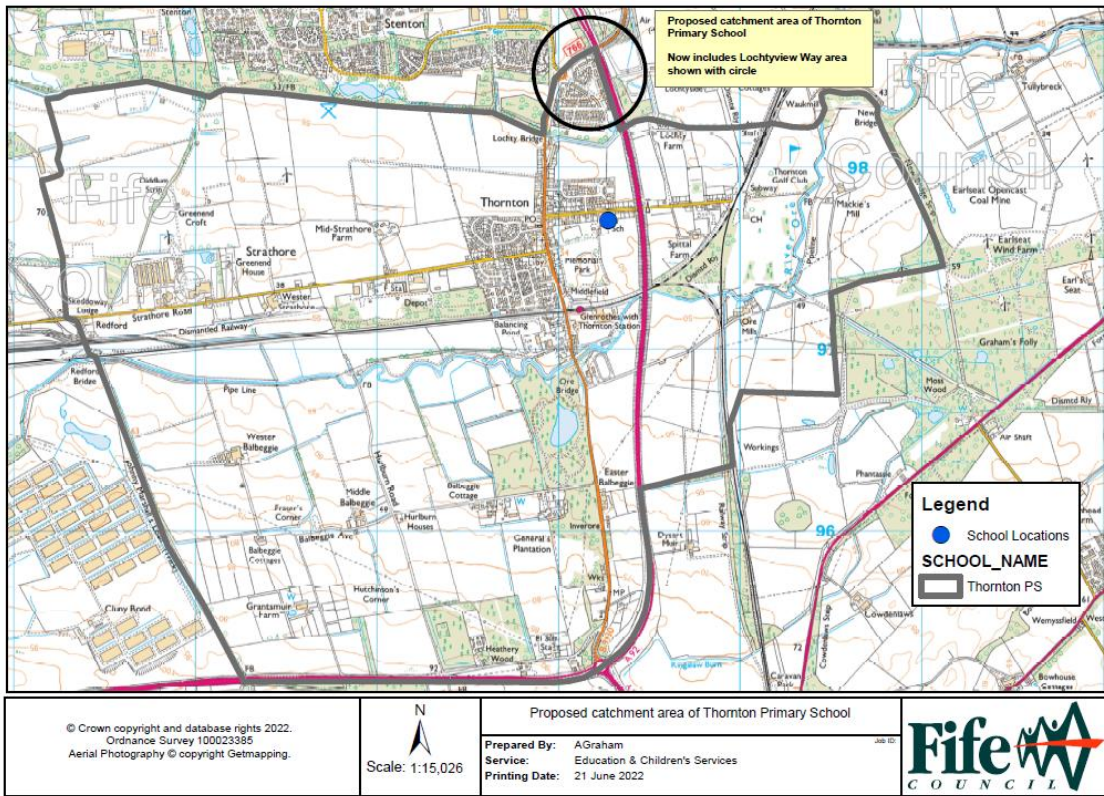


<p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey 100023385 Aerial Photography © copyright Getmapping.</p>	<p>N Scale: 1:8,628</p>	<p>Proposed catchment area of Pitteuchar East Primary School Prepared By: AGraham Service: Education & Children's Services Printing Date: 21 June 2022</p>	
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<p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2024. Ordnance Survey 100023385 Aerial Photography © copyright Getmapping.</p>	<p>N Scale: 1:13,000</p>	<p>Map of proposed Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area. Prepared by Education Directorate (16 January 2024)</p>	
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The Lochtyview part of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School being rezoned to Thornton Primary School



Appendix C:
Notice of Corrections



For the attention of:

- The Parent Council of the affected schools
- The parents of the pupils at the affected schools
- The parents of those pupils expected to attend the affected schools within 2 years
- The parents of those pupils expected in local nurseries associated with Milton of Balgonie PS
- The pupils at the affected schools
- School staff at the affected schools
- The trade unions representatives of the above staff
- The Community Councils – Milton & Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar, Stenton & Finglassie and Thornton
- Community Planning Partnerships
- Other Relevant users of the affected schools
- Any other relevant education authority
- Elected Members for the area
- MSPs for the area
- The Constituency MP

Education and Children's Services

Shelagh McLean

03451 555555 ext. 444229
Shelagh.mclean@fife.gov.uk

Your Ref:
Our Ref: SMcL/AG

Date: 1 February 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Notice of Corrections

Statutory Consultation Notice - Proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the Catchment Areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools

I refer to the Statutory Consultation Notice issued to you on 23 January 2024. As a statutory consultee, the notice provided you with information relevant to the commencement of the Consultation on the above proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools from Monday 19 August 2024.

Since then, it has come to the attention of the Education Authority that there are some errors in the proposal document. The errors are as follows:

- **Page 4**
Within paragraph 6 – Responding to the Proposal, the 3rd bullet point provides a link to the Consultation Response Form online. The form is accessible from the website at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary but unable to be accessed from the link detailed in the 3rd bullet point in paragraph 6. This is an error. The Education Authority has determined that this error does not relate to a material consideration relevant to the Council's decision as to implementation of the proposal.

Within the Statutory Consultation Notice issued on 23 January 2024, the correct link of <https://forms.office.com/e/LgQ0Qxkmkz> was provided. This online form can be accessed straight from this link or through navigation at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary.

- **Page 2**

Within paragraph 2 – Notice of Consultation and Publication of the Proposal Document, as Auchmuty High School is not an affected school, it should be listed as a separate bullet point. This is an error. The Education Authority has determined that this error does not relate to a material consideration relevant to the Council’s decision as to implementation of the proposal.

- **Page 26**

Within paragraph 4.2.2 (ii) – the letter “k” is missing from “took”. It should read “Describe what steps (if any) it took to address those reasons before formulating the proposal or if it took no such steps explain why it did not do so, and”. This is an error. The Education Authority has determined that this error does not relate to a material consideration relevant to the Council’s decision as to implementation of the proposal.

- **Page 40**

Within paragraph 5.3.16 – the letter “i” is missing from “it”. It should read “(it was included in the 2015 Housing Land Audit).” This is an error. The Education Authority has determined that this error does not relate to a material consideration relevant to the Council’s decision as to implementation of the proposal.

- **Page 64**

Within paragraph 18 – Statutory Consultation Process – Proposed Timeline, “Tuesday 23 April 2023” should read “Tuesday 23 April 2024”. This is an error. The Education Authority has determined that this error does not relate to a material consideration relevant to the Council’s decision as to implementation of the proposal.

As indicated above, the Education Authority has determined that these errors do not relate to material considerations relevant to the Council’s decision as to implementation of the proposal. These determinations have been made in accordance with Section 5 of the Act. Considering this, the Education Authority has decided to proceed in accordance with Section 5 (1) (b) of the Act, to issue this Notice of Correction to HMIE and all statutory consultees advising of the errors and correcting them in a corrected proposal.

The above actions have been taken early to ensure parents/carers and interested parties are aware of the errors and the steps implemented, allowing them to make representations within the consultation period.

A full copy of the corrected proposal is available on the Fife Council website at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary. Printed copies are available for inspection at and collection from:

- Main Reception, Fife Council, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT;
- The following primary schools affected by the proposal:
 - Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, School Road, Coaltown of Balgonie, KY7 6HY
 - Pitteuchar East Primary School, 1 Glamis Avenue, Glenrothes, KY7 4NU
 - Thornton Primary School, 65 Station Road, Thornton, KY1 4AY;
- Auchmuty High School, Dovecot Road, Glenrothes, KY7 5JL; or
- Via email to sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

The proposal can also be made available, on request, free of charge, in other languages and formats, by contacting the Education Service on 03451 555555 ext. 444204.

The statutory consultation period commenced on Wednesday 24 January 2024 and will end on Tuesday 12 March 2024.

Public meetings have been arranged at:

- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 6-7 pm
- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 6-7 pm

At these meetings, council officers will give a presentation on the proposal, answer questions on it and record the oral representations of anyone who attends. There will also be an opportunity to complete a Consultation Response Form.

A number of **informal drop-in sessions** have also been arranged at:

- Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 5-6 pm
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am
- Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 5-6 pm
- Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 5-6pm
- Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 5-6 pm

At these sessions council officers will be available to give further information on the proposal and answer questions on it. There will also be an opportunity to complete a Consultation Response Form.

You are invited to have your say on this proposal. You can attend the public meeting, and/or you can make written representations:

- to Milton of Balgonie Primary School, Education & Children's Services Directorate, Fife Council, 4th Floor (West), Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5LT
- by e-mail to: sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk
- by completing the Consultation Response Form available online at www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary or <https://forms.office.com/e/LgQ0Qxkkmkz>
- by emailing a completed Consultation Response Form to: sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

Printed copies of the Consultation Response Form will also be available at the public meetings, informal drop-in sessions, and from the schools and council offices listed above.

The possible alternatives to closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School are set out in the proposal paper. Those are:

- Continued mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School;
- Milton of Balgonie Primary School to reopen;
- Rezoning part of the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School; and
- Rezoning part of the catchment area of Balcurvie Primary School to Milton of Balgonie Primary School.

After assessment, the Council does not consider that those alternatives included in the proposal document are reasonable alternatives to the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. You can make written representations on the proposal and on the alternatives that are included within the proposal paper. If you consider there are other alternatives to the proposal, you can include those in your written representations on the proposal.

The statutory consultation period began on Wednesday 24 January 2024. In order to be taken into account, all written representations by letter, by e-mail or by completion of the Consultation Response Form, must arrive by close of business on Tuesday 12 March 2024.

Following the conclusion of the consultation period the Council will review the proposal and prepare a Consultation Report for consideration by a future Cabinet Committee of Fife Council. Further detail on this process is contained in the proposal paper.

We look forward to seeing you at these events.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelagh McLean". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'S'.

Shelagh McLean
Head of Education & Children's Services

**Appendix D:
Responses to the Consultation Response Form**

In total there were 20 responses through the online consultation response form.

Categories of stakeholders	%
Parent/Carer	80%
Pupil	
Staff member	
Grandparent	10%
Other interested party, please explain the nature of your interest and/or if you are responding on behalf of an organisation e.g. a community council.	10%

Percentage of respondents and the catchment area they live in?	%
Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area?	25%
Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area?	45%
Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area?	10%
Thornton Primary School catchment area?	15%
None of the above	5%

Which education establishment/s do you have a link with?	%
Milton of Balgonie PS	15%
Coaltown of Balgonie PS	60%
Pitteuchar East PS	5%
Thornton PS	10%
Another primary school in the Glenrothes area	
Any nursery in the Glenrothes local area	5%
Auchmuty High School	5%
None of the above	

During the consultation process a total of 20 responses to question 3 on the Consultation Response Form were received, either in written form or online. The table below provides details of the responses.

	Question 3.1 Do you support the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie and rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to include the catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School from Monday 19 August 2024? (please choose one ✓)					
Parent/Carer of a child living in the:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area	2		1			
Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area	3		4		1	
Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area	1		1			
Thornton Primary School catchment area			1		2	
None of the above						
Total	6		7		3	

Pupil living in the:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area						
Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area						
Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area						
Thornton Primary School catchment area						
None of the above						
Total	0		0		0	

Member of staff:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie PS						
Coaltown of Balgonie PS						
Pitteuchar East PS						
Thornton PS						
Another primary school in the Glenrothes area						
Any nursery in the Glenrothes local area						
Auchmuty High School						
None of the above						
Total	0		0		0	

Other Interested Party	3		1		0	
Total	9	45	8	40	3	15

	Question 3.2 Do you support the proposal to rezone part of the Coaltown of Balgonie catchment area (Westwood Park) to Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area from Monday 19 August 2024? (please choose one ✓)					
Parent/Carer of a child living in the:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area	1		1		1	
Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area	4		2		2	
Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area			2			
Thornton Primary School catchment area					3	
None of the above						
Total	5		5		6	

Pupil living in the:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area						
Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area						
Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area						
Thornton Primary School catchment area						
None of the above						
Total	0		0		0	

Member of staff:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie PS						
Coaltown of Balgonie PS						
Pitteuchar East PS						
Thornton PS						
Another primary school in the Glenrothes area						
Any nursery in the Glenrothes local area						
Auchmuty High School						
None of the above						
Total	0		0		0	

Other Interested Party	3		0		1	
Total	8	40	5	25	7	35

	Question 3.3 Do you support the proposal to rezone part of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (Lochtyview area) to Thornton Primary School catchment area from Monday 19 August 2024? (please choose one ✓)					
Parent/Carer of a child living in the:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area			2		1	
Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area	3		5			
Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area	2					
Thornton Primary School catchment area			2		1	
None of the above						
Total	5		9		2	

Pupil living in the:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area						
Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area						
Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area						
Thornton Primary School catchment area						
None of the above						
Total	0		0		0	

Member of staff:	Consultees who responded Yes	%	Consultees who responded No	%	Consultees who responded Don't know	%
Milton of Balgonie PS						
Coaltown of Balgonie PS						
Pitteuchar East PS						
Thornton PS						
Another primary school in the Glenrothes area						
Any nursery in the Glenrothes local area						
Auchmuty High School						
None of the above						
Total	0		0		0	

Other Interested Party	2		2		0	
Total	7	35	11	55	2	10

Appendix E:

Comments contained on the returned Consultation Response Forms

The Consultation Response form is reprinted at Appendix 1.15 of Appendix A to this document.

Comments made under 3.1 of the Consultation Response Form - if you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons?

1	If there are new houses being built in the Coaltown area, it seems premature to change the catchment area before the impact of the number of new children needing to attend the school is known.
2	There's a perfectly good school building in Milton that part of Coaltown can rezone go along with Milton children!!
3	As it stands there currently are not enough places within schools to support the houses that are proposed for the areas concerned. Keeping Milton open will help with this issue.
4	You are proposing to change the catchment area of coaltown primary. This would mean my daughter would end up being in a different school to my son due to her currently being 2. My son is currently primary 1 so would mean I would be forced to uplift a happy and settled child from his school. I could do a placement request for my daughter but on the slight chance that she gets in she still wouldn't be allowed on the school bus that currently transports the children to and from school. I feel there should at least be some compromises made for those families who have children already at the school with siblings waiting to go there.
5	My children currently attend this school and have a younger sibling who I was hoping would also be attending the school when he turns 5 in 3½ years. My older 2 children love the school. They are currently entitled to a school taxi each morning right now too. I would like to know that my youngest child will be attending the same school as his siblings without the worry of not knowing. Why not keep Milton school open and let the building continue to be a school without putting added pressure on the school with all the new houses. Or build a bigger school instead of added worries for parents.
6	Child safety, can't be in 2 places at once, splitting families up,
7	Shouldn't be closing schools. There is too much redevelopment work going on in the local areas. New housing will bring new families and less placements.

Comments made under 3.1 of the Consultation Response Form - Are there any further comments on the proposal you would like to make, including any representations on the alternatives to the proposal referred to in the proposal paper or any other alternatives to the proposal you would like to suggest?

1	I support the rezoning of the catchment area. However I do not support the full closure of Milton Primary School- what happens if there is a need in the future?
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Comments made under 3.2 of the Consultation Response Form - if you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons?

1	Milton is a better option small school to small school? Why Pitteuchar?
2	Same as above (My children currently attend this school and have a younger sibling who I was hoping would also be attending the school when he turns 5 in 3½ years. My older 2 children love the school. They are currently entitled to a school taxi)
3	Can't be in 2 places at once, child safety, splitting families up
4	Too much new housing being developed. Pitteuchar east already cannot cope with the amount of kids. The nursery has been extended the school hasn't.
5	No space at the school - large class sizes

Comments made under 3.2 of the Consultation Response Form - Are there any further comments on the proposal you would like to make, including any representations on the alternatives to the proposal referred to in the proposal paper or any other alternatives to the proposal you would like to suggest?

1	I wasn't aware this was part of the catchment
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Comments made under 3.3 of the Consultation Response Form - if you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons?

1	As a parent of a child due to start Primary 7 in 2024 I do not support the proposal starting from that date as a blanket change for all. Although I understand a change may be needed, I think circumstances need to be looked into more. It is very disruptive for a small group of 3 children to have to change their school in their final year of Primary when they should be building confidence for moving into High School.
2	Same reason why move village children to towns? When there is an empty building in one of the villages!!
3	Currently a lot of children and families have multiple siblings and some already attend Coaltown from this area.
4	You are proposing to change the catchment area of coaltown primary. This would mean my daughter would end up being in a different school to my son due to her currently being 2. My son is currently primary 1 so would mean I would be forced to uplift a happy and settled child from his school. I could do a placement request for my daughter but on the slight chance that she gets in she still wouldn't be allowed on the school bus that currently transports the children to and from school. I feel there should at least be some compromises made for those families who have children already at the school with siblings waiting to go there.
5	My children go to this school and they love it. I want their little brother to attend this school and to know he has a sibling there. We were happy knowing that coaltown was our catchment when we moved here. What should the youngest siblings suffer.
6	Can't be in 2 places at once, class of school events, splitting families up, child safety
7	Thornton Primary is a small school. I struggle to see how it is able to incorporate more students without expansion of the building and staff. The education that is provided by Thornton primary is good because they do not have large student numbers. I do not support the inclusion of Thornton primary as I believe it will negatively impact the well-being of the current students.

Comments made under 3.3 of the Consultation Response Form - Are there any further comments on the proposal you would like to make, including any representations on the alternatives to the proposal referred to in the proposal paper or any other alternatives to the proposal you would like to suggest?

There were none.

Appendix F:

**Other Written Responses including Requests for Information (whether
Freedom of Information or Otherwise)**

I refer to your letter dated 23/1/24 outlining the consultation for the above proposal. I have submitted the online consultation form but I want to express my views in more detail.

We live in Lochtyview Way and our three children have all attended Coaltown of Balgonie Primary, being their catchment school. Our youngest daughter is currently in Primary 6.

Although I appreciate the need for change with Coaltown Primary being at capacity, new housing being built, and us being slightly closer to Thornton Primary, I feel the timing of this change should be looked at in more detail.

I think it is extremely unfair on the small amount of pupils (only 3 from this estate I think) that would be going into their final year of Primary in 2024, to force them to move to another school. Primary 7 should be a year of confidence building and preparation for going onto High School, not a year of disruption and feeling unsettled. My daughter, who is autistic, would find this change just too much to cope with. She is already thinking about the change of going to High School and I feel it would be detrimental to her wellbeing if she had to go through this massive upheaval in her last year of Primary through no fault of her own.

I urge you to consider the timing of this and the effect on those pupils due to start Primary 7 in 2024. I am happy to discuss further if you wish. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on my response, and the outcome of the consultation.

Transcript of Public Meeting - Monday 5 February 2024 – Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School

**FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES DIRECTORATE
Public Consultation Meeting held at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School
Monday 5 February 2024 at 6.00 pm**

Attendees:

Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services (SMcL)
Avril Graham, Team Manager (AG)
Lyn Meeks, Quality Improvement Officer (LM)
Kim Lawson, Note Taker

This meeting was attended by a representative from HMle. Five members of the public attended this meeting.

Shelagh McLean (SMcL) opened the meeting by introducing the Fife Council representatives.

This was the first of four formal public meetings, scheduled in respect of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, following the decision by the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council on 11 January 2024, which authorised the Education & Children’s Services Directorate to consult with parents, pupils and other interested parties on the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools from Monday 19 August 2024.

The statutory consultation period is from Wednesday 24 January 2024 to Tuesday 12 March 2024.

SMcL delivered a PowerPoint presentation on the proposal, highlighting the educational benefits of the proposal, and gave an overview of the proposed catchment areas should the proposal be approved.

Questions were requested at the end of the presentation and any questions that arose after the meeting could be sent in, as outlined in the proposal paper. A summary of these questions would form part of the final report.

Question	Parent: My main concern is I would have one child who will be in P7 at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and another in P1 at Thornton Primary School. My parents, who look after my children, live in Coaltown of Balgonie. I can't be in two places dropping off/picking up at once.
Response	SMcL: We understand your concern. We try to work closely with families and individuals to facilitate your wishes. As a service, we need to take action to ensure all catchment schools are able to accept the projected

	numbers of children expected. We are extending this school building as a direct impact of the house building in the area and anticipate that there will be flexibility within the school to allow some placing requests. There are no guarantees placing requests can be accepted, however this would be our intention for families like yourself. If we do nothing, the number of catchment pupils expected would be exceed the capacity for this school.
Question	Parent: I would not want my oldest son to have to go to Thornton Primary School, as I would not be able to do two pick ups/drop offs at the same time.
Response	SMcL: We would intend to have these conversations early on with schools. We would anticipate this would not be the case, but we are unable to give a guarantee.
Question	Parent: My son is in P1 and my daughter will be in P1 in three years' time. I don't think having to submit a placing request is acceptable. I would need a guarantee that she would get a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. My son is currently entitled to transport to school, would my daughter be entitled to free transport as well if she was a placing request to Coaltown?
Response	SMcL: I cannot ever give anyone across Fife a guarantee about a placing request. Our intention is to provide flexibility within the roll at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. We would follow the School Admissions Policy and apply the placing request priority criteria. If your child has an older sibling at the school already, this would be one of the priority criteria when it comes to allocating places. Transport would continue for all children enrolled until they have completed their education at Coaltown of Balgonie. If there are spaces available in the transport provided, your daughter would then be able to use this as well. I cannot guarantee this however. The transport provided may not be the same size all the time. Children can apply for an NEC card and use the bus network for free.
Question	Parent: In the presentation you said Lochtyview is 0.22 miles from Thornton/Thornton Primary School, however it is much further.
Response	AG: This measures from the roundabout at Lochtyview to the first houses at the start of Coaltown of Balgonie and to the houses at the end of Thornton, to make a comparison.
Question	Parent: If any child was to travel from Lochtyview, they would need to walk on a 40mph road. This would not be safe. I have major concerns in relation to the walk route and the distance.
Response	SMcL: As part of any change we would undertake a Walked Route Assessment to establish if it would be considered a safe walking route. We would work with our colleagues in Transportation to carry out any necessary work, if it was deemed not to be accessible and we would work to establish alternatives.
Question	Parent: Would it be possible to stagger school start and finish times like the high schools do? I cannot drop two children off at different places at the same time. My child gets the bus to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School at 8.40am, then I couldn't walk to Thornton Primary School in 20 minutes.
Response	SMcL: These would all be local decisions if we identified any issues. The schools could consider specific arrangements for individual circumstances, and they would be able to put these in place. Some schools also offer

	before/after school clubs which would allow you to pick up/drop off your child at a different time.
Question	Parent: For our family, the before school club would need to start at 7.30am to fit in with our circumstances.
Response	SMcL: We know individual families will be affected differently. We will have discussions with each family to try and find solutions, if the proposal progresses. We are not trying to cause any families unnecessary issues. A number of families may be impacted by this. This is the reason we consult, so we can hear concerns.
Question	Parent: How many children are currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from Lochtyview?
Response	SMcL/Headteacher: There are currently 20 children from Lochtyview enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
Question	Parent: How many children are currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from Milton of Balgonie?
Response	SMcL: There are currently 7 or 8 children from Milton of Balgonie enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
Question	Parent: How far is Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from reaching full capacity?
Response	SMcL: Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School's current roll is close to reaching the current capacity, however, there is room for flexibility. As part of the agreement with housing developers, there will be planning obligation payments. This would in turn allow for an extension to be built to enable further flexibility.
Question	Parent: I've heard Thornton Primary School is almost full. Is this true?
Response	SMcL: We project future school rolls and are not predicting that Thornton Primary School will be at full capacity in the next few years. There is a strategic housing development in the area and this will require a new school to be developed. We need to look at the current position as it may be likely that we would be looking for Thornton Primary School to be developed. We would need to have the infrastructure in place to be able to provide support for the new housing. The projected numbers in the proposal also show the impact of some of the potential housing developments. Developers need to provide obligations to support new housing.

SMcL concluded the meeting by thanking people for their attendance and for all of the points they have raised. SMcL advised there will be other public meetings in Pitteuchar East Primary School, the village hall in Milton of Balgonie and Thornton Primary School and further drop-in sessions at various times of the day.

SMcL advised all points raised have been noted and will be responded to within the Consultation Report. Any parent/carer who completes the online form with their details will also be advised in advance of the publication of the Consultation Report. The PowerPoint presentation would be uploaded to the website where other information is available.

Parent/carers were asked to note they had from now until close of day on 12 March 2024 to have their say regarding the consultation and were advised how they could do this.

Meeting closed at 7.00 pm.

Transcript of Public Meeting - Monday 12 February 2024 – Thornton Primary School

FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES DIRECTORATE Public Consultation Meeting held at Thornton Primary School Monday 12 February 2024 at 6.00 pm

Attendees:

Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's (SMcL)
Avril Graham, Team Manager (AG)
Kim Lawson, Note Taker

This meeting was attended by a representative from HMle. No members of the public attended this meeting.

Transcript of Public Meeting - Wednesday 21 February 2024 – Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie

FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES DIRECTORATE Public Consultation Meeting held at Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie Wednesday 21 February 2024 at 6.00 pm

Attendees:

Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's (SMcL)
Lyn Meeks, Quality Improvement Officer (LM)
Sheila Hastie, Note Taker
Kim Lawson, Note Taker

This meeting was attended by a representative from HMle. Six members of the public attended this meeting.

Shelagh McLean (SMcL) opened the meeting by introducing Fife Council representatives.

This was the third of four formal public meetings, scheduled in respect of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, following the decision by the Cabinet Committee of Fife Council on 11 January 2024, which authorised the Education & Children’s Services Directorate to consult with parents, pupils and other interested parties on the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools from Monday 19 August 2024.

The statutory consultation period is from Wednesday 24 January 2024 to Tuesday 12 March 2024.

SMcL presented a PowerPoint presentation on the proposal, highlighting the educational benefits of the proposal and gave an overview of the proposed catchment areas should the proposal be approved.

Questions were requested at the end of the presentation and any questions that arose after the meeting could be sent in as outlined in the proposal paper. A summary of these questions would form part of the final report.

Question	Member of the local community: I personally think you are trying to sell coal. There is nothing in the Educational Benefits section of the PowerPoint about Milton of Balgonie and Milton of Balgonie Primary School.
Response	SMcL: We need to explain the Educational Benefits for the proposal if it is to go ahead. These are all factors we have considered.
Question	Member of the local community: In relation to point 6 on the Educational Benefits slide, I would like to raise that Milton of Balgonie is a different community from Coaltown of Balgonie. We are extremely different. This means there will not be an opportunity for parents to become involved in a bigger parent community in Milton of Balgonie, as everything will be based in Coaltown of Balgonie.
Response	SMcL: We are proposing that Coaltown of Balgonie will form part of the wider parental community within Milton of Balgonie.
Question	Member of the local community: How will there be a parental community within Milton of Balgonie when all of the children from Milton of Balgonie will be going to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School? The children from Milton of Balgonie will have no confidence. The children from Milton of Balgonie have no option to walk to school. They can't walk to Auchmuty High School either.
Response	SMcL: We have identified the wider parental community as a benefit to the proposal. Any child who lives outwith the distance criteria would be entitled to transport to get to school. Transport is currently running from Milton of Balgonie to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
Question	Member of the local community: The Educational Benefits slide also mentions 'being a successful learner.' When I was at Milton of Balgonie Primary School, we had one teacher at the school however the vast majority of people ended up being quite successful.
Response	SMcL: And we're not disagreeing with that. We aim to deliver the Educational Benefits for all learners. We aren't saying children and young people will not succeed in Milton of Balgonie PS but that larger schools can deliver more and varied experiences.
Question	Member of the local community: You're telling me that all you have found are the pros of closing Milton of Balgonie Primary School? There were no cons, nothing at all? Did you not find any advantages of keeping it at all?
Response	SMcL: We need to identify Educational Benefits for the proposal. There were alternatives to closing Milton of Balgonie Primary School detailed in

	the proposal, however, none of these have been deemed to be viable. One of the main issues is there are no pupils.
Question	Member of the local community: Would it be possible to use Milton of Balgonie Primary School for ASN pupils? There is a waiting list at Rimpleton PS for places. I am concerned about children with autism and ADHD who cannot cope well with noise. Milton of Balgonie Primary School has little rooms and plenty space which could be used for these children. Children with additional support needs are currently being let down. Teachers and other children within the schools are not coping.
Response	SMcL: There are a number of options which could be considered for the school building, however we need to undertake the statutory consultation process first. We need to finalise this proposal before we can start discussions regarding any other potential uses of the building. The Councillors have made it clear the Education Service would retain the building in the first instance.
Question	Member of the local community: I understand that you are currently transporting pupils to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, however there are currently other children who are not coping within schools. What you are saying is that you could close Milton of Balgonie Primary School to then open the building potentially for another use?
Response	SMcL: Yes, this is a possibility. We need to decide about Milton of Balgonie PS first.
Statement	Member of the local community: I'd like to add that Hyndhead is currently bursting at the seams.
Response	SMcL: We need to make sure we are providing the correct provision across Fife. We do need to provide alternative provisions. Milton of Balgonie Primary School is currently listed as a primary school, we cannot make a decision regarding alternative provision until we have considered the closure proposal. Once we have been through this process, one of the first things we are required to do is consider if we can use the building for alternative education purposes. Fife Council dictates that if Education establishes that there are no suitable alternative uses for the building, it would then transfer to Property Services to determine if other services could use the building. If they were not able to use the building, it would be considered for other uses.
Statement	Member of the local community: You have shown us all of the positives of closing the school however we would have successful learners at Milton of Balgonie Primary School. In my opinion, small schools are better. When the school was open, I'm not aware of any children who found the smaller class numbers detrimental to their learning. There was a very nurturing approach at the school. If you were in the P1-4 class, and you were in P1, you were grateful for the older children helping you. It encouraged peer group interaction. This was definitely a positive at Milton of Balgonie Primary School. One or two classes is not detrimental for children.
Question	Member of the local community: What you have shown us is all about Coaltown of Balgonie. It has nothing to do with those living in Milton of Balgonie. There are a number of housing developments in the area, which would potentially generate more children. Where will you put them?

Response	SMcL: We have to come forward with a proposal. We have listed the suggested Educational Benefits, and we are here to hear your views. Any housing developments we are aware of have been factored in.
Question	Member of the local community: If Milton of Balgonie was to reopen as a one class school, how many pupils could be in that class?
Response	SMcL: Up to 25 children.
Question	Member of the local community: I have been advised Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is currently at 60% capacity. How many pupils and classes are there?
Response	SMcL: There are currently 96 children enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and they have 4 classes.
Statement	Member of the local community: I don't think all of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School children are always in the one building.
Response	SMcL: In addition to the main Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School building, there is an annex which is located further down the same road.
Question	Member of the local community: What about house developers?
Response	SMcL: There would be no developer planning obligation payments due for Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School can accommodate all current children from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area. There is a need for an additional class at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School due to additional house building which would increase the school roll.
Question	Member of the local community: How many children from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area are currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School?
Response	SMcL: There are currently fewer than 10 children from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area who are enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. There are 8 children.
Question	Member of the local community: There will be more children living in Milton of Balgonie with the new housing. Will there be enough space for them?
Response	SMcL: The new housing has been included in the figures.
Question	Member of the local community: How is the developer for the new houses in Milton of Balgonie under no obligation to give planning obligation payments?
Response	SMcL: The developer is not required to fund this as there are spaces available for the children who could potentially move into these properties.
Question	Member of the local community: So, a property developer could be granted planning permission and not contribute to schools in the area they will be building within?
Response	SMcL: Property developers are under no obligation to give planning obligation payments unless it is part of the agreement. Education is a statutory consultee for any planning applications which come into Fife Council. If the catchment schools cannot accommodate the anticipated children from the development, we wouldn't be able to approve unless they agreed to provide planning obligation payments to allow us to ensure we had enough capacity at our establishments.

Question	Member of the local community: Is Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School's current capacity above 60%? There are always groups out and about, where are they going?
Response	SMcL: They are likely going to the annex, which is further down the same road. They use this for PE and for lunches.
Question	Member of the local community: If Milton of Balgonie Primary School was to reopen, would it be like them using the village hall for gym etc?
Response	SMcL: Yes, the annex is a flexible space. Rural schools tend to use community areas.
Statement	Member of the local community: When our children attended Milton of Balgonie Primary School, they had visiting music and drama teachers. They had the same experiences as children who attended larger schools.
Response	SMcL: We don't use the visiting teacher model anymore. The model we use now is based on non-class contact time. A class teacher will teach their class for 22.5 hours of the week then for the remaining 2.5 hours, the class will have a different teacher. The non-class contact time teacher might have a specialism such as drama or art however all of the staff are organised within the core service of the school.
Question	Member of the local community: Why is Balcurvie Primary School not up there as an option? Certain addresses in Milton of Balgonie will be closer to Balcurvie. One of my grandchildren currently attends Balcurvie Primary School however they have a younger sibling and I would not want them to go to two separate schools.
Response	SMcL: If Milton of Balgonie Primary School closes, there needs to be one catchment school for the area. We have considered alternatives to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School however established this would be the best option. We currently have no capacity issues at Balcurvie Primary School, however, we cannot guarantee placing request applications will be accepted.
Statement	Member of the local community: I wouldn't be able to take 2 children to different places at the same time.
Question	Member of the local community: I think that children from Milton of Balgonie are missing out. They are not independent and are not developing friendships within the village. To then add 2 different schools into the mix would be a step too far. People in Milton of Balgonie should get priority. They should be at the top of the priority list.
Response	SMcL: The law allows parental requests to be made, and if there is space in the requested school, with no requirement for an additional teacher or space, then the request can be granted.
Question	Member of the local community: Do you know roughly how many placing requests are declined on average?
Response	SMcL: Few placing requests are declined. The vast majority are accepted and the pupil roll is decreasing, which should help.
Statement	Member of the local community: The impression I'm getting is that we have no choice in this matter.
Question	Member of the local community: To rezone the catchment area is logical however, we are missing the Milton community. I think it is unfair a child would not get transport to Markinch Primary School or Balcurvie Primary School as they would be placing requests.

Response	SMcL: The School Admissions Policy states we do not offer transport to children who attend a school on the basis of their placing request being accepted.
Statement	Member of the local community: OK, so we (people from Milton of Balgonie) will be punished for choosing a school other than Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School as we would not be entitled to transport?
Response	SMcL: This would be the same in all cases across Fife. We would not be able to consider transport for those who have been given a place at a school by submitting a placing request. Transport is the responsibility of the parent.
Question	Member of the local community: No transport doesn't bother me, I would just like siblings to be able to go to the same school.
Response	SMcL: The School Admissions Policy details the priority criteria. If a school receives a placing request it can't guarantee a place, as at any point the school could be full.
Question	Member of the local community: What happens if Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School ends up at full capacity?
Response	SMcL: We do not anticipate this to be the case. The point of the proposed changes would be to review the catchments across the area. This would mean there would be some young people moving into catchment and some moving to another catchments.
Question	Member of the local community: What happens to the children currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School whose catchment area will change. It seems unfair.
Response	SMcL: We will try, as an Education Service, to accommodate any placing requests. We want parents to be able to make their own choice. We would like all children to have the best educational experience they can. We would work closely with parents if there were any issues.
Question	Member of the local community: If there are any appeals, who sits on the education panels?
Response	SMcL: Two councillors with one acting as the Convener, a parent representative, and a legal advisor. The child's parent/carer would be invited to attend along with the Education Manager and Headteacher of the school.
Question	Member of the local community: I would want to see the school used for something. I work at Ribleton and I know they are struggling. They have a waiting list.
Response	SMcL: We need to wait on the consultation reaches its conclusion then we can consider other potential uses.
Question	Member of the local community: In relation to the slide which refers to successful learners, what we are seeing is that all these points are very positive, but they could be delivered well at Milton of Balgonie Primary School. There could be an ASC for children. Staff could be employed for a lunch club at Milton of Balgonie Primary School. All of these could easily be delivered there.
Response	SMcL: It would be a positive outcome if Milton of Balgonie Primary School could reopen for another purpose.
Question	Member of the local community: There is no way any children came to any harm previously.

Response	SMcL: We are absolutely not saying that.
Statement	Member of the local community: People choose to live in rural areas for a number of reasons. One of them being because the schools are smaller and have less children. In Milton of Balgonie now, the younger children don't mix with the elderly population. There is no interaction at all. There are loads of losses to our community.
Question	Member of the local community: Are children who currently attend Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from Milton of Balgonie able to do all of the extra-curricular activities?
Response	SMcL: Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School tries to ensure any extra-curricular activities are undertaken during the school day. A parent would always be expected to pick their child up after after-school club so there would be no change. The headteacher at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is working with the Community Council to ensure not all events happen in Coaltown of Balgonie.
Question	Member of the local community: Would there be a possibility of having a Christmas concert in Milton of Balgonie?
Response	SMcL: We could potentially consider this.
Question	Member of the local community: If there were additional children, would all schools benefit from additional staffing?
Response	SMcL: Yes, there would be more staff in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School rather than one in Milton of Balgonie Primary School. PG: There are currently 4 teachers at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School with different backgrounds however I'm not suggesting 1 teacher wouldn't try their best.
Statement	Member of the local community: We had a teacher who was the master of all trades when I was at the school.
Question	Member of the local community: Could there be a show in Milton of Balgonie?
Response	SMcL: The headteacher is trying to do that.
Question	Member of the local community: How long have children from the Milton Primary School catchment gone to Coaltown Primary School?
Response	SMcL: This is the fifth year they have attended Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
Statement	Member of the local community: Well, there has been no show in all that time.
Question	Member of the local community: The points raised on the PowerPoint makes it sound better than it is. We were successful learners, effective contributors, and responsible citizens. I could say we'd achieved that with two teachers, what went wrong?
Response	SMcL: People have different experiences and outcomes. Nothing went wrong. There are eight curricular areas which we need to be covered. We've completed the pupil consultation and the pupils have highlighted they like to be part of a team. That's not to say they couldn't learn football but a pupil said there were more opportunities to do that. One said, 'I wouldn't want to be the only pupil at that age.' That's what they were able to share with us.

Question	Member of the local community: If any parents from Milton of Balgonie choose for their child to attend Thornton or Pitteuchar East Primary Schools, would they be entitled to free transport?
Response	SMcL: No, we would be rezoning the catchment areas, they'd become part of Pitteuchar East or Thornton if they lived at Lochtyview or Westwood. If a pupil lives more than 1 mile from their catchment school, they would be entitled to transport. Children from Milton of Balgonie would still be entitled to transport to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
Statement	Local Councillor – If we were rezoning the catchment areas based on geographical location, it would be a good option to include Markinch Primary School.
Response	SMcL: We have considered the nearest schools to the affected areas.
Statement	Member of the local community: I would like to see Milton of Balgonie Primary School used for educational purposes.
Response	SMcL: The Education Services will decide collectively if the building could be used for a different purpose. If we were to consider using the building for a different purpose i.e. an ASN school, we would need to consult.
Statement	Member of the local community: I would hate for options to be put forward then rejected.
Statement	Member of the local community: Everyone I have spoken to has said they would want Milton of Balgonie Primary School to be used instead of lying empty.

SMcL concluded the meeting by thanking people for their attendance and for all the points they have raised. Shelagh advised there will be one more public meeting in Pitteuchar East Primary School next week and the final drop-in session.

SMcL advised all points raised have been noted and will be responded to within the Consultation Report. Any parent/carers who completes the online form with their details will also be advised in advance of the publication of the Consultation Report. The PowerPoint presentation is available on the website where other information is available.

Parent/carers were asked to note they had from now until close of day on 12 March 2024 to have their say regarding the consultation and were advised how they could do this.

Meeting closed at 7.35 pm.

Transcript of Public Meeting - Wednesday 28 February 2024 – Pitteuchar East Primary School

**FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES DIRECTORATE
Public Consultation Meeting held at Pitteuchar East Primary School
Wednesday 28 February 2024 at 6.00 pm**

Attendees:

Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's (SMcL)

Lyn Meeks, Quality Improvement Officer (LM)

Kim Lawson, Note Taker

This meeting was attended by a representative from HMle. No members of the public attended this meeting.

Any other relevant information - Pupil Consultation report

Proposal by Fife Council to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools.

Pupil focus groups were undertaken with representative groups of over 25% of the pupils within P4-P7 in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, Pitteuchar East Primary School and Thornton Primary School. The table below provides the number of pupils at each of the affected schools and the percentage of P4-P7 pupils taking part in the pupil consultation sessions:

School Name	School Roll Census 2023	No. of P4-P7 Pupils	% of P4-P7 on the roll	P4-P7 participation in sessions	% of P4-P7 pupils
Coaltown of Balgonie PS	100	54	54.0%	15	27.7%
Pitteuchar East PS	225	130	57.7%	42	32.3%
Thornton PS	158	91	57.6%	27	29.7%

The pupil consultations took place between 30th January and 21st February 2024, to seek the views of pupils regarding the proposed plans to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools.

The Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) and Compliance Officer outlined the proposal to the pupils and explained that Milton of Balgonie Primary School had no pupils attending the school over the last 5 school sessions. Information was also shared regarding the reasons why the catchment areas would need to be rezoned. They discussed what that would mean for the catchment areas and the impact for new pupils.

A number of questions, listed below, were posed to pupils to allow officers to gather information and feedback. A series of picture prompts were shown to pupils to ensure they understood the process and what a consultation would mean for them.

Format of the sessions:

1. **Set the scene** – What does the phrase ‘Statutory Consultation’ mean?
2. **Context** – Why are we having a consultation?
 - Statutory duty to provide adequate and efficient provision of education;
 - Statutory duty of ‘Best Value in Public Services’;
 - Economic climate means there are not enough resources to do everything, so the current position is unsustainable;

- The more efficient use of resources will result in a more equitable and best value model for deployment of resources across Fife schools and impact positively on children's learning;
 - What is a **catchment** area? (*Map of Fife and local catchment areas relevant to the school*)
 - Impact of house building and road infrastructure on catchment areas within the proposal e.g. A92 was built through Coaltown of Balgonie's catchment area.
 - Pupils were shown the catchment anomalies on the display boards so they could visualise the issues.
 - What does it mean to be **oversubscribed**? (*Image shown*)
 - What does it mean for a school to be **under occupied**? (*Image shown*)
- Every school should be rated as **"A" or "B" for both condition and suitability**, to include a number of accessible schools in each geographical area,
- Schools should have an occupancy rate **greater than 60% of capacity** and should have a minimum of 3 classes, where possible,
- A strategy for a sustainable school estate should support the progressive reduction in the **overall carbon footprint for the Council**.

The issue:

- **For Pitteuchar East**
 - the Coaltown of Balgonie **Primary School** catchment spans the east and west of the A92. On the west there is a small area where new housing development is taking place. If the catchment areas remain, children could end up living next door in the same newly built houses but attend different schools.
 - numbers are due to fall below 60% and we want to help keep the school occupied above that number.
- **For Thornton Primary School**
 - Lochtyview is situated to the northern part of Thornton and within 1 mile of the Primary School. Children living in that area could walk to school if it was rezoned.
 - numbers are due to fall below 60% and we want to help keep the school occupied above that number.
- **For Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School pupils:**
 - pupils from Milton of Balgonie catchment area have ensured the school roll has stabilised at around 100 for the last years.
 - pupils currently living in the Lochtyview area, and being bused to school, would no longer attend Coaltown of Balgonie and instead be able to walk to Thornton Primary School.
 - pupils moving to the new houses at Westwood Park would all attend Pitteuchar East Primary School allowing all children in the new housing development to attend the same primary school.
 - Pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area would continue to be transported to Coaltown of Balgonie

- additional accommodation would be added to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School should it be required to accommodate future house building.
- The Council is trying to rezone the catchment areas to redistribute the number of pupils to make sure all the schools have an occupancy rate of over 60%.
- As part of the **Statutory Consultation**, we want to come out and speak to pupils regarding the proposals that we are consulting on. Pupils' views are important to us.
- **Education Scotland** will also come out to see the schools and will speak to several pupils, the Headteacher and parents.
- Advise pupils that all the comments are recorded, form part of a report, and a decision will be made in future by our elected members (explain to primary pupils who elected members are).
- Things that may change for some pupils in the future:
 - Catchment school
 - Catchment school for a sibling
 - Option to walk to school
- Things that would stay the same:
 - pupils would still attend Auchmuty High School
 - if children are enrolled in a school they can stay at their current school, be transported to that school (if eligible) and still play with friends in the community.

3. Prompt questions:

- Are you aware of a consultation proposal to change the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie/Pitteuchar East/Thornton Primary School and close Milton of Balgonie Primary School?
- If yes, has this been discussed at home or in school?
- What do you think about the proposals to:
 - close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment area to Coaltown of Balgonie permanently?
 - Rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie – Lochtyview out but those already enrolled can remain and be transported to school.
 - Rezone the catchment area of Thornton – Lochtyview in
 - Rezone the catchment area of Pitteuchar East Primary School – Westwood Park in
- What do you think about the plan to try and keep the same number of children attending your school?
- Are you aware of what changing the catchment area may mean for your school?
- Do you think this will make any difference to your time in school (P4/5/6/7) educational experience?
- Would they have any concerns for more/less/same number of pupils attending the school?
- What's important to you about your school?

- Any other comments or worries about the proposal you want to share?

Pitteuchar East Primary School – Tuesday 30 January 2024

Forty-two pupils of Pitteuchar East Primary School took part in the discussion. The same questions were asked of each group. The pupils were positive in their views and eager to share information with the officers.

The pupils were split into two focus groups, the first included 2 x P4s and 20 x P5s, the second group included 14 x P6s and 6 x P7s.

The comments from the first group were as follows:

- None of the pupils had heard about the consultation.
- The pupils thought adding the whole of the housing development to be part of the Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area would mean the following:
 - More opportunity to make new friends and meet new people
 - New people would help support the values of our school
 - People who couldn't afford a house in the area, might now be able to afford a house and can get a place at our school
 - It will help to save the planet as parents/children will be walking more and driving less
 - More people don't have to use their car to get to school which will save them money
 - It would be better to go to school with people who live in the same area as you.
- Two pupils did not want the school to be too crowded. They also thought that if the school was too busy, it would make it harder to get to their line.
- The pupils thought if there were fewer children to teach within a school, the teacher might get paid less or the school might close.
- The pupils raised that it might be harder for children to get to school if the catchment area for the new housing development did not change as they would have to travel further.
- All the pupils felt it would be a good idea to change the catchment area to Pitteuchar East Primary School.

The comments from the second group of pupils were as follows:

- None of the pupils had heard about the consultation.
- One pupil asked what would happen if the proposal went ahead
- One pupil suggested it would be an option to split the Westwood Park housing site into two catchments rather than all children attending Pitteuchar East Primary School.
- The pupils questioned if there would be more children in their school.
- The pupils did not think there would be any difference made to their time in school/educational experience.
- The pupils suggested if there were fewer pupils in their school due to the roll decreasing, there would be fewer classes and teachers as well.

- One pupil advised she had attended school during the Covid lockdowns. They were one of only five children attending and they thought the school felt really empty.
- One pupil advised they think the proposal should go ahead as it would be easier for children to travel to school.
- One pupil asked how long it would be before the houses start to be built.

Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School – Monday 5 February 2024

Fifteen pupils of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School took part in the discussion. The same questions were asked of each group. The pupils were positive in their views and eager to share information with the officers.

The pupils were split into two focus groups, the first included 5 children who live within the current Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (2 x P3s, 1 x P4, 1 x P5 and 1 x P7) and the second group included 2 x P4s, 2 x P5s and 6 x P6s. The comments received from the first group were as follows:

- Two pupils were aware of the consultation, three were not aware.
- One pupil would like both Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary Schools to be open so there was a choice for children living in the area.
- The officer advised if Milton of Balgonie Primary School was to reopen, the number of children attending would be low based on the projected school rolls. They then asked how the children would feel if they were in a class with only a few other children. Their responses were as follows:
 - They would get to spend more time with older siblings as they would be in the same class.
 - The older children would be able to help the younger ones in the class.
 - It would be weird.
 - P1 would struggle being in the same class as P7 as their work would be completely different.
 - Would be upset being the only P3.
 - The teacher would struggle to teach P1-P7 at once.
 - You wouldn't be able to get a sports team together for competitions.
 - The younger children would have different interests from the older ones.
- All pupils advised they would like to be part of a larger school.
- All pupils thought it would be better to change teachers and not keep the same one.
- All pupils thought it would be better to have similar aged children in their class.
- All pupils thought it was right to have the correct number of pupils in their class.
- One pupil advised there are roughly 100 children currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- In relation to transport to school, the pupils commented the following:
 - Would be nice to have the option to walk to school however highlighted the busy main road in Milton of Balgonie.
 - One pupil felt they would prefer getting transport to school anyway.

- Another pupil felt the transport was fine as there is no option to walk.
 - One pupil has walked to Milton of Balgonie after school with one of their parents and felt it took a while.
 - Another pupil thought it would be good to have buses and taxis for children however they would also like a safe walking route so if they wanted to walk to school, they would have that option.
- One of the pupils in the group previously attended Milton of Balgonie Primary School until there were only five pupils left on the school roll. They advised the children all played with each other however, they would prefer a school with more classes.
 - The officer asked children how they would feel if Milton of Balgonie Primary School was permanently closed. The responses were as follows:
 - It would be harder to see people who lived in the village if there was no school.
 - It would be more difficult for parents to meet and get to know other parents.
 - One pupil thought it would be a reasonable idea as there are not a lot of children in the village. I know you need 75 children to open the school therefore I think it would be unlikely there would be enough for it to reopen.
 - A few pupils thought the school should be knocked down and something else put there instead. The ideas included building a house, soft-play, playground or a shop.
 - Three of the pupils did not want the land used for housing as there were other things which it could be used for. They advised there was nothing to do in Milton and not even a shop.
 - Pupils thought it would cost a lot of money to rebuild the school.
 - One pupil thought it should be kept closed, fixed or knocked down as it was a waste of time trying to make it better.

The comments from the second group of pupils were as follows:

- None of the pupils had heard about the consultation.
- One of the pupils advised there were around 100 children at their school and they were concerned there would be too many children.
- One of the pupils raised their concerns over the delivery costs involved with two schools using school meals as an example.
- A few pupils wanted to keep the numbers higher at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- The officer asked what the group thought of closing Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezoning the catchment area. The responses were as follows:
 - Lots of new children at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School would mean we would need more staff and space.
 - Worries about climate change, gas prices and greenhouse gases. The environmental effects of transporting children from Milton of Balgonie to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
- 9 out of 10 children advised they would prefer to be in a class with other people the same age as them.

- One pupil commented P1 and P7 children's likes and dislikes will be different which would be difficult for the teacher.
- If there was only one class and it included P1-7, the teacher would need to do one-on-one time all of the time.
- Break times and lunch times would be very quiet.
- P7s would not get much work done as the young ones would need help.
- One pupil who currently lives in the Lochtyview area would like the opportunity to be able to walk to school.
- The same pupil would also like to go to school with the children who live in the same area as them (neighbours)
- One pupil thought walking to school was better than getting on transport as it meant they got more exercise.
- All the pupils agreed that it would be better to have the Lochtyview area at one catchment school.
- One of the pupil's commented that it is better to do this now whilst there are still houses being built.

Thornton Primary School – Wednesday 21 February 2024

27 pupils of Thornton Primary School took part in the discussion. The same questions were asked of each group. The pupils were positive in their views and eager to share information with the officers.

The pupils were split into two focus groups, the first included 5 x P4s and 9 x P5s, the second group included 7 x P6s and 6 x P7s.

The comments received from the first group were as follows:

- Two of the pupils had heard about the consultation through discussion.
- One pupil thought it would be good to have children from the Lochtyview area attend Thornton Primary School as they didn't think it was a good idea to have 10 or fewer children in a class if Milton of Balgonie Primary School was to reopen.
- Another pupil asked how gym would be taught at Milton of Balgonie Primary School if there were only a few children.
- A few pupils thought it would be a good idea to rezone the catchment area for Thornton Primary School as there are year groups which currently have space.
- All pupils thought it was a good idea to include the Lochtyview area in the Thornton Primary School catchment.
- The officer asked the pupils why it would be a good idea to rezone the catchment area. The responses were as follows:
 - More children in the school would mean the classes would be better.
 - Crossing the motorway can be dangerous.
 - More children would be able to walk to school which would mean they would get more exercise.
 - More children would mean bigger gym classes.
 - It would be better as more people for games.
 - P1-7 in the same class at Milton of Balgonie Primary School is not a good idea.

- If there were only a few children at Milton of Balgonie Primary School, it would be lonely.
 - We would make friends with any new people and make them welcome at our school.
 - It would be good to be able to make lots of new friends.
 - There would be more people to ask for help if we were stuck doing our work and we would be able to work together to get the right answer.
 - It would raise our numbers at Thornton Primary School.
- The officer asked the pupils if they would have any concerns with the Lochtyview area being added into their catchment. The responses were as follows:
 - Some classes are closer to full already.
 - It would cost the school money to buy furniture.
 - Some of the classrooms would not be big enough for more people.
- One pupil commented that at one point there was not enough space in the lunch hall for all children to have their lunch at the same time. They advised the P5s had to go outside before their lunch, then they went into the lunch hall after everyone else.

The comments received from the second group were as follows:

- None of the pupils had heard about the consultation.
- One pupil suggested the A92 would work well as a boundary.
- One of the pupils within the group currently lives within the Lochtyview area. They thought it wouldn't affect them however everyone they know from the Lochtyview area goes to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. They advised Thornton Primary School is closer therefore it made more sense for children from the Lochtyview area to go there.
- One pupil commented they would need more chairs and tables if there were to be more children within the school.
- One pupil thought it was too far for children to walk from the Lochtyview area to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School however if their catchment school was Thornton, they could walk to there.
- All pupils thought it would be a good idea to add the Lochtyview area to the Thornton Primary School catchment area.
- The officer asked the group if they thought there would be any challenges to adding the Lochtyview area into the catchment for Thornton Primary School. The responses were as follows:
 - The school might not have enough staff.
 - If there are more pupils, we would probably need more space.
 - A lot of people already have friends groups however we would welcome other children.
 - We would need more resources like pencils and rulers.

Summary of Comments from Pupil Consultation

Almost all pupils across the 3 schools were not aware of the consultation taking place as it had not been discussed at home. A few pupils had heard about the proposal or had overhead conversations at home around the detail.

Pupil comments from all sessions highlight almost all pupils are keen for more pupils to join their schools, to enable more friendship groups and new pupils to support the values of each of the schools. Additional pupils may allow more groups for gym and enable bigger groups for games.

Pupils recognised the importance of being able to walk to school and felt that both of the areas that were being considered for rezoning would allow pupils the opportunity to walk to school.

Pupils stated that it would be difficult for pupils in Milton of Balgonie Primary School if they were the only pupil in a year and pupils could be lonely. They also felt that being a one class school would create a lack of sports teams. For a single class school, younger pupils would also have different interests.

The majority of pupils liked being part of a bigger school but feel that more pupils would require more resource such as tables/chairs etc.

Overall, the pupils from all the groups at the individual schools were positive and enthusiastic to provide well considered feedback.

**Appendix I:
Any relevant plans, maps and photographs**

There are no relevant plans, maps or photographs.

WALKED ROUTE ASSESSMENT FORM

This form is for the purpose of recording the key findings and observations arising from a walked route assessment.

Record of Findings (collated from any Assessors notes/observations)

School/Educational Establishment & Route details

School/Educational Establishment Name	Route – write a brief description only (start/end point and key roads).
Thornton PS	<i>Lochtyview Estate to Thornton PS (via Lochtyview Garden, Lochtyview Way, Blackwood Road (B9130), Main Street, Donald Crescent, Birchtree Place, Station Road.</i>

Assessment Details

Date Monday 19 February 2024	Time 8.20 am
Weather Conditions Dry, sunny day	Key Observations

Assessors

Name	Designation	Organisation	Contact Details
	Team Manager	Education	444204
	Transportation Officer	Transportation	444379
	Project Officer	Safer Communities	446125

Observers (including Councillors)

Name	Designation	Organisation	Contact Details
n/a			

1. Is there a continuous adequate footway?

Describe the footpath suitability / condition / length

Continuous tarmacked footpath throughout the route and of suitable width – over 1m at some parts of the route.

Explain if there is a requirement to cross a road

Crossed the road at the pedestrian crossing on Blackwood Road and at Main Street just after Burnbank Terrace. Crossed at Donald Crescent and then at Station Road to the school.

Describe where it is appropriate to cross

Crossed after Burnbank Terrace junction as we could see traffic coming down in the distance over the parked cars.

Crossed at the dropped kerbs. Traffic was light on the route so was able to cross with no issue.

What is the visibility like at the point(s) of crossing?

Visibility on route was good.

If the width of the footway is less than 1 metre, consider the following specific factors:

	YES	NO
What is the length of the section(s)		
<input type="text"/>		
Is there the ability to step off onto an adjacent verge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can stepping onto the road be avoided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the traffic flow like and speed limit?		
<input type="text"/>		
Are sightlines and visibility good here?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the section free from any additional footway obstructions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there any relevant accident data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONCLUSION: continuous adequate footway? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, please go to question 2.

2. In the absence of a continuous adequate footway, are there step offs with adequate sight lines?

Describe the suitability and nature of step offs

What is the visibility like at the step offs?

CONCLUSION: step offs with adequate sight lines? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, please go to question 3.

3. In the absence of a continuous adequate footway or step offs with adequate sight lines, where the route requires walking on the road surface, are there adequate sight lines?

Provide details

CONCLUSION: are there adequate sight lines? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, the route is an unsafe walking route, please go to question 5.

4. Are there any other considerations that will impact on the assessment outcome?

Describe the overall visibility / sight lines for pedestrians*

Good sight lines on the entire route.

Describe traffic flow observations *

Traffic on the main street, but very little cars in the surrounding streets passed.

	YES	NO
Is there a need for a formal traffic count/gap analysis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

List all crossings / patrols / islands & speed limits

Lochtyview Gardens at dropped kerb – 20 mph
 Pedestrian crossing on Blackwood Road – 40 mph
 Crossed at bus stop on Main Street as visibility was good both ways – 20 mph
 Crossed at Donald Crescent at the dropped kerbs. – 20 mph
 Crossed at end of Birchtree Place – 20 mph
 Crossed at the traffic calming measures on Station Road. – 20 mph

Describe any Paths/ Wooded Areas/ Vegetation/ known flooding (frequency over a year)

On Blackwood Road – bark from the woodland area had slipped across the footpath, however, it did not impact on the route as the path here was nearer 2m in width.

What is the availability of public transport for the route?

n/a bus stop on Main Street so assume bus transport through village.

Are there any exceptional features on

n/a

the route e.g. type of vehicles?

Transport Scotland Input (if appropriate) for routes along A92 & A985

n/a

Accident Data (damage only, slight, serious & fatal covering the last 3 years)

n/a

CONCLUSION: Are there any other considerations that will impact on the assessment outcome?

Yes No

**Where the traffic flow / sight line is considered, a record of any vehicle count / speed survey should be retained. Only relevant where a road is crossed without available traffic interrupters.*

5. CONCLUSION: is the route available?

Yes No

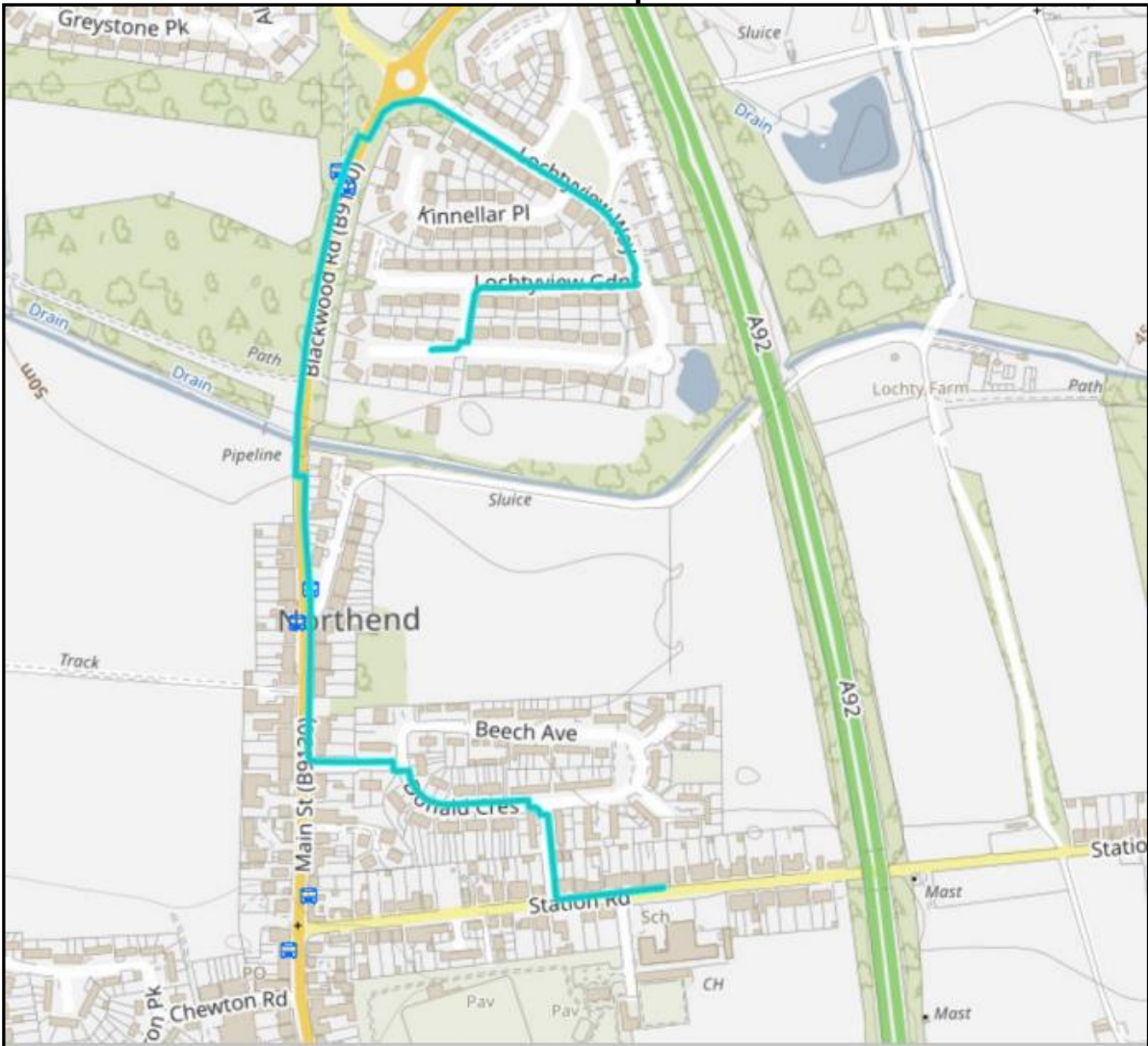
If the conclusion is no, please describe below any action that would be required that would allow for the route to be assessed as available in future

None

If the conclusion is yes, please describe below any action that would be recommended to improve the route.

None

**WALKED ROUTE ASSESSMENT FORM
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
Route Map**



Lochtyview Way to roundabout

168



Pedestrian crossing on
Blackwood Way



Footpath on Blackwood Way



Towards Main Street, Thornton



Crossing at Donald Crescent



Footpath at Donald Crescent



Station Road, Thornton



Side entrance to school



Parking available near Bowling Club

This form is for the purpose of recording the key findings and observations arising from a walked route assessment.

Record of Findings (collated from any Assessors notes/observations)

School/Educational Establishment & Route details

School/Educational Establishment Name	Route – write a brief description only (start/end point and key roads).
Thornton PS	<i>Thornton PS to Lochtyview Estate (via Station Road, Birchtree Place, Donald Crescent, Main Street, Blackwood Road (B9130), Lochtyview Way, Lochtyview Gardens)</i>

Assessment Details

Date Monday 19 February 2024	Time 3.10pm start
Weather Conditions Dry, mild, daylight	Key Observations Straightforward route.

Assessors

Name	Designation	Organisation	Contact Details
	Compliance Officer	Education	444220
	Technician	Transportation	444435
	Project Officer	Safer Communities	446157

Observers (including Councillors)

Name	Designation	Organisation	Contact Details
Sofia Dugan	Parent Council	Thornton PS	N/A

1. Is there a continuous adequate footway?

Describe the footpath suitability / condition / length

Continuous tarmacked footpath throughout the route and of suitable width – over 1 metre at some parts of the route.

Explain if there is a requirement to cross a road

Yes, there's a number of road crossings. Station Road, Birchtree Place, Donald Crescent, Main Street, Blackwood Road.

Describe where it is appropriate to cross

Numerous suitable crossing points throughout the route with plenty gaps in traffic. No issues at any of the crossing points. Crossed the B9130 at Burnbank Terrace junction as sightlines in both directions were good there. We used the pedestrian crossing near the Lochtyview roundabout to cross back over to the east side of the B9130.

What is the visibility like at the point(s) of crossing?

Visibility at all crossing points and throughout the route was good.

If the width of the footway is less than 1 metre, consider the following specific factors:

	YES	NO
What is the length of the section(s)		
<input type="text"/>		
Is there the ability to step off onto an adjacent verge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can stepping onto the road be avoided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the traffic flow like and speed limit?		
<input type="text"/>		
Are sightlines and visibility good here?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the section free from any additional footway obstructions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there any relevant accident data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONCLUSION: continuous adequate footway? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, please go to question 2.

2. In the absence of a continuous adequate footway, are there step offs with adequate sight lines?

Describe the suitability and nature of step offs

What is the visibility like at the step offs?

CONCLUSION: step offs with adequate sight lines? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, please go to question 3.

3. In the absence of a continuous adequate footway or step offs with adequate sight lines, where the route requires walking on the road surface, are there adequate sight lines?

Provide details

CONCLUSION: are there adequate sight lines? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, the route is an unsafe walking route, please go to question 5.

4. Are there any other considerations that will impact on the assessment outcome?

Describe the overall visibility / sight lines for pedestrians*

Good sight lines on the entire route.

Describe traffic flow observations *

Traffic flow light. A little busier around the school with cars picking up but light once away from the school.

	YES	NO
Is there a need for a formal traffic count/gap analysis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

List all crossings / patrols / islands & speed limits

Crossed at the traffic calming measures on Station Road. – 20 mph
Crossed half way along Birchtree Place – 20 mph
Crossed Donald Crescent at the dropped kerbs. – 20 mph
Crossed Main Street at Burnbank Terrace junction – 20 mph
Crossed Blackwood Road at Pedestrian crossing – 40 mph
Lochtyview Gardens at dropped kerb – 20 mph

Describe any Paths/ Wooded Areas/ Vegetation/ known flooding (frequency over a year)

There was a little mulch/bark on the very inside of the pavement going along Blackwood Road by the wooded area, however, it did not impact on the route as the path here was nearer 2m in width.

What is the availability of public transport for the route?

There will be sufficient service buses operating between Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy,

Are there any exceptional features on the route e.g. type of vehicles?

n/a

n/a

Transport Scotland Input
(if appropriate) for routes
along A92 & A985

--

Accident Data (damage
only, slight, serious &
fatal covering the last 3
years)

n/a

**CONCLUSION: Are there any other considerations
that will impact on the assessment outcome?**

Yes No

**Where the traffic flow / sight line is considered, a record of any vehicle count / speed survey
should be retained. Only relevant where a road is crossed without available traffic interrupters.*

5. CONCLUSION: is the route available?

Yes No

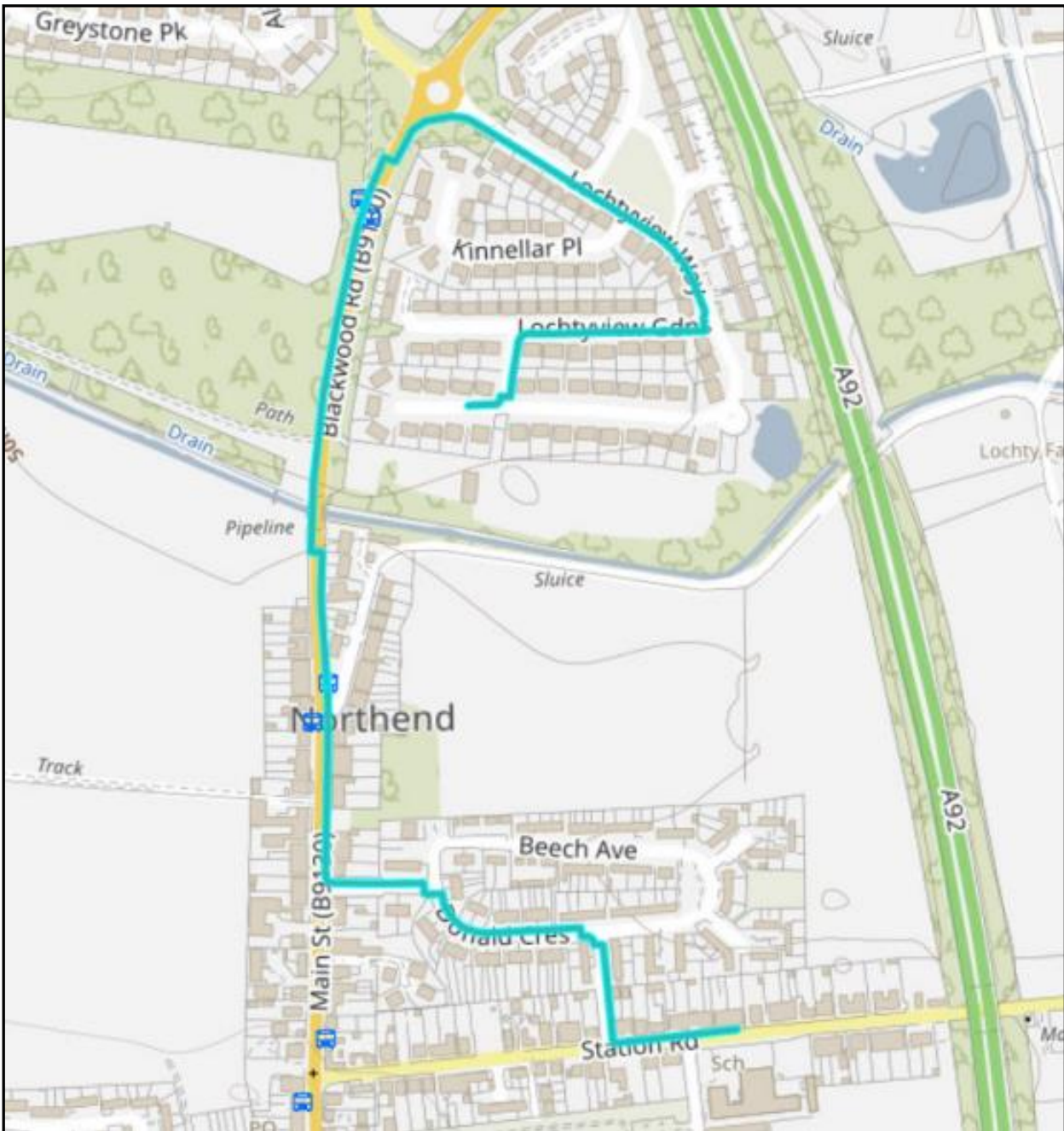
If the conclusion is no, please describe below any action that would be required that would allow for the route to be assessed as available in future
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None

If the conclusion is yes, please describe below any action that would be recommended to improve the route.

None

**WALKED ROUTE ASSESSMENT FORM
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**
Route Map



This form is for the purpose of recording the key findings and observations arising from a walked route assessment.

Record of Findings (collated from any Assessors notes/observations)

School/Educational Establishment & Route details

School/Educational Establishment Name	Route – write a brief description only (start/end point and key roads).
Pitteuchar East PS	<i>Foxton Drive (Westwood Park Housing Estate) to Pitteuchar East PS, via a footpath through Stenton, Footpath over the B921 then path through the Glamis Centre.</i>

Assessment Details

Date Monday 11 March 2024	Time 8.25 am (walk took 19 mins)
Weather Conditions Cloudy, light rain, cold day.	Key Observations Pedestrians using this route over the footpath and passed various primary aged pupils walking to Pitteuchar East Primary School.

Assessors

Name	Designation	Organisation	Contact Details
	Compliance Officer	Education	444331
	Transportation Officer	Transportation	444379
	Project Officer	Safer Communities	446157

Observers (including Councillors)

Name	Designation	Organisation	Contact Details
	Pitteuchar East PS Parent Council Co-Chair	N/A	N/A

1. Is there a continuous adequate footway?

Describe the footpath suitability / condition / length

Continuous tarmacked footpath throughout the route and of suitable width – over 1m all of the route.

Explain if there is a requirement to cross a road

Took the cycle path from Foxton Drive then crossed the road at the dropped kerb at Mar Drive and Blair Avenue. We then continued on the cycle path to gain pedestrian access from

the side of the school for the route. Did not need to cross any other roads.

Describe where it is appropriate to cross

These are roads within a housing estate however there was little traffic. We were able to walk across the road without waiting.

What is the visibility like at the point(s) of crossing?

Visibility on route was good throughout the route.

If the width of the footway is less than 1 metre, consider the following specific factors:

	YES	NO
What is the length of the section(s)		
<input style="width: 600px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		
Is there the ability to step off onto an adjacent verge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can stepping onto the road be avoided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the traffic flow like and speed limit?		
<input style="width: 600px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		
Are sightlines and visibility good here?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the section free from any additional footway obstructions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there any relevant accident data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONCLUSION: continuous adequate footway? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, please go to question 2.

2. In the absence of a continuous adequate footway, are there step offs with adequate sight lines?

Describe the suitability and nature of step offs

What is the visibility like at the step offs?

Visibility was good throughout the route.

CONCLUSION: step offs with adequate sight lines? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, please go to question 3.

3. In the absence of a continuous adequate footway or step offs with adequate sight lines, where the route requires walking on the road surface, are there adequate sight lines?

Provide details

CONCLUSION: are there adequate sight lines? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, the route is an unsafe walking route, please go to question 5.

4. Are there any other considerations that will impact on the assessment outcome?

Describe the overall visibility / sight lines for pedestrians*

Good sight lines on the entire route.

Describe traffic flow observations *

Very little traffic at this time of day. One car passed when we were approaching the suitable crossing point at Mar Drive.

	YES	NO
Is there a need for a formal traffic count/gap analysis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

List all crossings / patrols / islands & speed limits

Started route on Foxtan Drive (30mph) which had very little traffic. Crossed at dropped kerbs on Mar Drive (20mph) and Blair Avenue (20mph) without having to wait on any traffic passing. Traffic calming measures on route.

Describe any Paths/ Wooded Areas/ Vegetation/ known flooding (frequency over a year)

The paths from Mar Drive are though a paved, lit, woodland area which has proper hardstanding. Some of the woodland debris encroached over the footpath at some parts.

The paths from Blair Avenue are though a paved, lit, woodland area which has proper hardstanding. Some of the woodland debris encroached over the footpath at some parts.

What is the availability of public transport for the route? n/a would assume a main bus route through the town via Foxtan Drive or through Glamis Avenue.

Are there any exceptional features on the route e.g. type of vehicles? n/a

Transport Scotland Input (if appropriate) for routes along A92 & A985 n/a

Accident Data (damage only, slight, serious & fatal covering the last 3 years) n/a

CONCLUSION: Are there any other considerations that will impact on the assessment outcome? Yes No

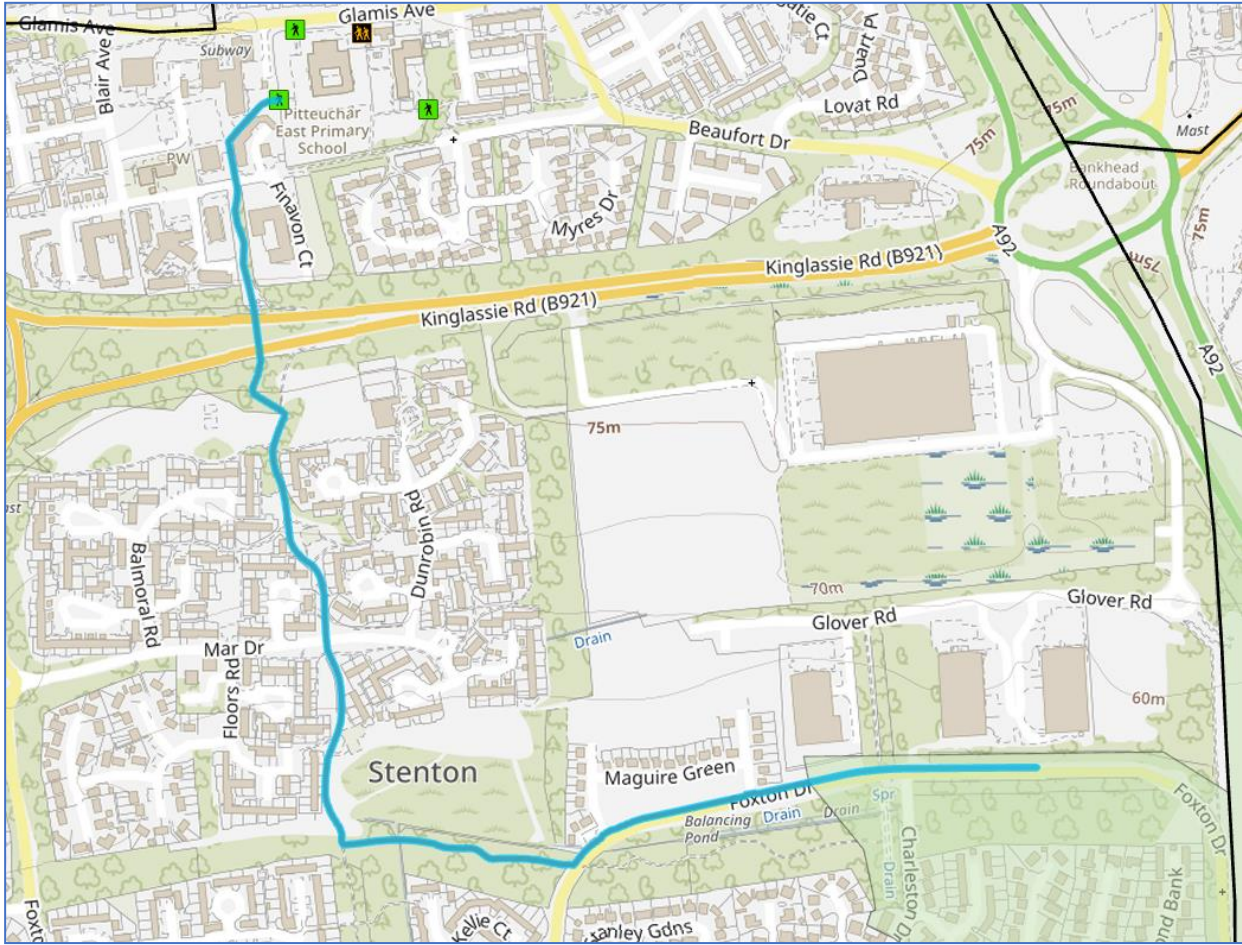
**Where the traffic flow / sight line is considered, a record of any vehicle count / speed survey should be retained. Only relevant where a road is crossed without available traffic interrupters.*

5. CONCLUSION: is the route available? Yes No

If the conclusion is no, please describe below any action that would be required that would allow for the route to be assessed as available in future
None

If the conclusion is yes, please describe below any action that would be recommended to improve the route.
None

**WALKED ROUTE ASSESSMENT FORM
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
Route Map**



Path from Foxton Drive to Mar Drive.



Crossing point at Mar Drive looking up towards the route of the walk.



Crossing point at Mar Drive looking down towards the route we had just came past.



Path approaching the Glamis Centre.



Path from Glamis Centre towards Pitteuchar East Primary School.



Path from Glamis Centre towards Pitteuchar East Primary School (closer to school).

This form is for the purpose of recording the key findings and observations arising from a walked route assessment.

Record of Findings (collated from any Assessors notes/observations)

School/Educational Establishment & Route details

School/Educational Establishment Name	Route – write a brief description only (start/end point and key roads).
Pitteuchar East PS	<i>Pitteuchar East PS to Foxtan Drive, via the Glamis Centre, Footpath over the B921, footpath through Stenton</i>

Assessment Details

Date Monday 11 March 2024	Time 3.17 pm (walk took 20 mins)
Weather Conditions Dry, cold day	Key Observations Pedestrians using this route over the footpath, and passed 2 pupils coming from Auchmuty High School. Officers walked straight down to Foxtan Drive. There is a cycle path which was walked on the way back. All pictures are included at end of assessment.

Assessors

Name	Designation	Organisation	Contact Details
	Team Manager	Education	444204
	Lead Consultant School Transport	Transportation	444414
	Project Officer	Safer Communities	446157

Observers (including Councillors)

Name	Designation	Organisation	Contact Details
n/a			

1. Is there a continuous adequate footway?

Describe the footpath suitability / condition / length

Continuous tarmacked footpath throughout the route and of suitable width – over 1m all of the route.

Explain if there is a requirement to cross a road

Used the pedestrian access from the back of the school for the route. Crossed the road at Blair Avenue and Mar Drive and then took the cycle path. Did not need to cross any other roads.

Describe where it is appropriate to cross

No dropped kerbs but on both streets there was little traffic. Did not have to wait to cross the road.

What is the visibility like at the point(s) of crossing?

Visibility on route was good throughout the route.

If the width of the footway is less than 1 metre consider the following specific factors:

	YES	NO
What is the length of the section(s)		
<input type="text"/>		
Is there the ability to step off onto an adjacent verge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can stepping onto the road be avoided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the traffic flow like and speed limit?		
<input type="text"/>		
Are sightlines and visibility good here?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the section free from any additional footway obstructions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there any relevant accident data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONCLUSION: continuous adequate footway? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, please go to question 2.

2. In the absence of a continuous adequate footway, are there step offs with adequate sight lines?

Describe the suitability and nature of step offs

What is the visibility like at the step offs?

CONCLUSION: step offs with adequate sight lines? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, please go to question 3.

3. In the absence of a continuous adequate footway or step offs with adequate sight lines, where the route requires walking on the road surface, are there adequate sight lines?

Provide details

CONCLUSION: are there adequate sight lines? Yes No

If yes, at this stage the route is deemed to be a non-hazardous walking route, please go to question 4. If no, the route is an unsafe walking route, please go to question 5.

4. Are there any other considerations that will impact on the assessment outcome?

Describe the overall visibility / sight lines for pedestrians*

Good sight lines on the entire route.

Describe traffic flow observations *

Very little traffic on Blair Avenue or Mar Drive. Traffic on the main street, but very little cars in the surrounding streets passed.

	YES	NO
Is there a need for a formal traffic count/gap analysis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

List all crossings / patrols / islands & speed limits

Crossed at dropped kerbs Blair Avenue (20 mph). Crossed without having to wait on any cars passing.
Crossed at dropped kerbs Mar Drive (20 mph). Traffic calming measures at the crossing – very little traffic – crossed without having to wait on cars passing.

Describe any Paths/ Wooded Areas/ Vegetation/ known flooding (frequency over a year)

The paths from Blair Avenue are though a paved, lit, woodland area which has proper hardstanding. Some of the woodland debris encroached over the footpath at some parts.

The paths from Mar Drive are though a paved, lit, woodland area which has proper hardstanding. Some of the woodland debris encroached over the footpath at some parts.

What is the availability of public transport for the route?

There is good public transport in the area. The service 38 serves Mar Drive and Glamis Avenue and the service 39 covers Foxton Drive and Glamis Avenue. The service 39 is better suited to school times.

Are there any exceptional features on the route e.g. type of vehicles?

n/a

Transport Scotland Input (if appropriate) for routes along A92 & A985

n/a

Accident Data (damage only, slight, serious & fatal covering the last 3 years)

n/a

CONCLUSION: Are there any other considerations that will impact on the assessment outcome?

Yes No

**Where the traffic flow / sight line is considered, a record of any vehicle count / speed survey should be retained. Only relevant where a road is crossed without available traffic interrupters.*

5. CONCLUSION: is the route available?

Yes No

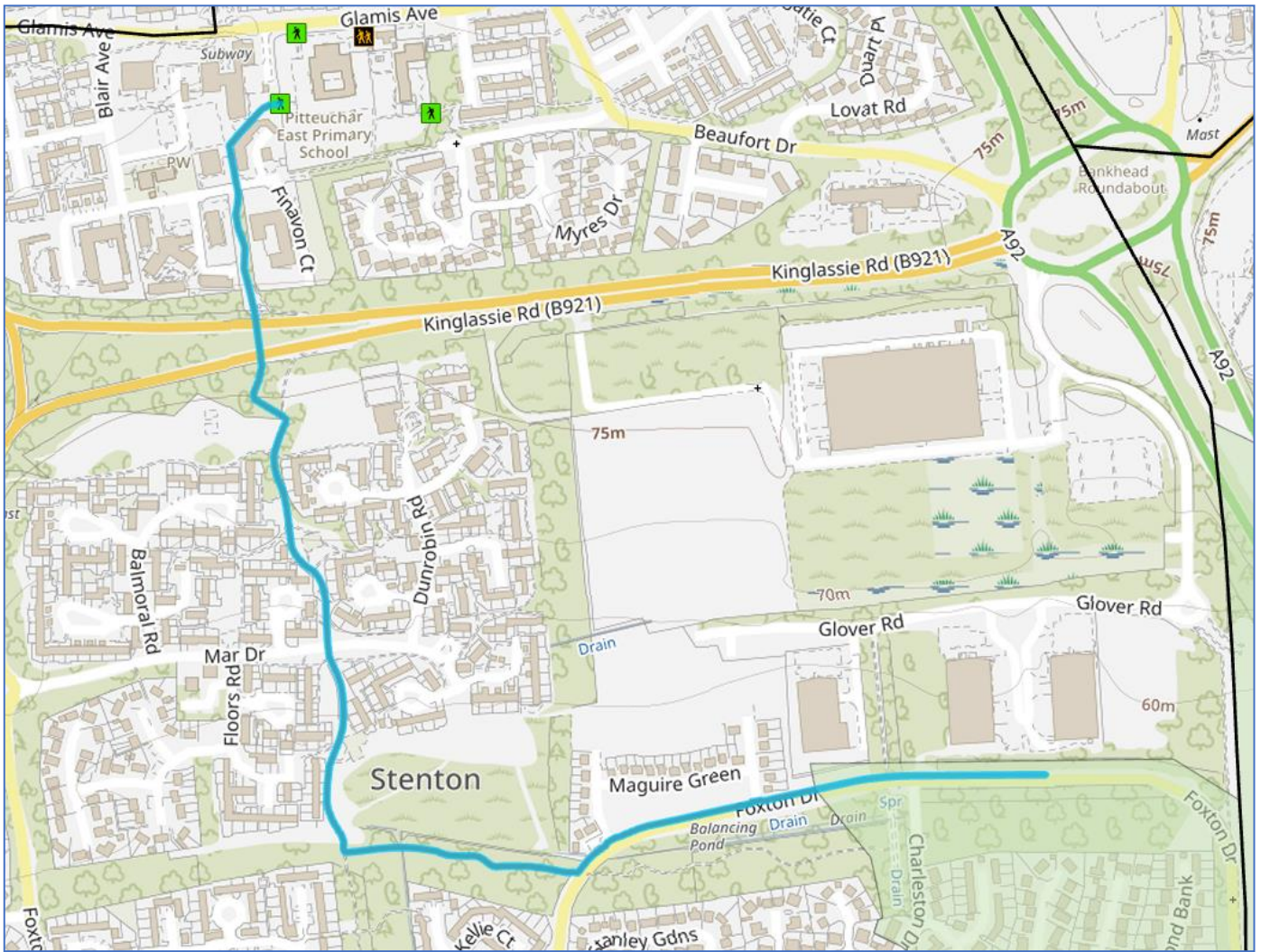
If the conclusion is no, please describe below any action that would be required that would allow for the route to be assessed as available in future

None

If the conclusion is yes, please describe below any action that would be recommended to improve the route.

None

WALKED ROUTE ASSESSMENT FORM
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
 Route Map



Footbridge crossing with Perspex panels



Route through woodland park area



Condition of footpath – some woodland debris



Crossing at Mar Drive



Cycle path



Foxton Drive



Blair Avenue crossing



Access to Footbridge crossing



Pedestrian crossing on Foxton Drive



Entrance to Westwood Park

**Appendix K:
Equality Impact Assessment**

Part 1: Background and information

Title of proposal	Proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools from Monday 19 August 2024.
Brief description of proposal (including intended outcomes & purpose)	<p>This is a proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and to rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools from Monday 19 August 2024.</p> <p>Milton of Balgonie Primary School has not operated since session 2018/19 when the school had 14 pupils. For session 2019/20, the school roll would have been one pupil and the parent made a decision to move their child to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The school was formally mothballed by the Education & Children’s Services Committee on 26 January 2021.</p> <p>There is currently a development site which overlaps into the catchment areas of Pitteuchar East and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary Schools, across the regional A92 road. This proposal, if approved, will eliminate this catchment anomaly and ensure all pupils from the new housing development attend the same primary school. The Lochtyview housing estate has been completed for a number of years and is situated south of Blackwood Road, in closer proximity to the edge of Thornton than Coaltown of Balgonie. This proposal, if approved will ensure that this development is located within the Thornton Primary School catchment area and this will enable pupils to walk to school with peers in their community. Pupils from this area are currently bused to school.</p> <p>The majority of primary aged children living in the Milton of Balgonie area are enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The proposal would enable the closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School rezoning the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area with Coaltown of Balgonie and enabling the housing within the catchment areas to progress. The housing situated furthest away to Coaltown of Balgonie, being rezoned to Thornton, would enable pupils located in close proximity to Coaltown of Balgonie to be accommodated within the local school.</p> <p>The distribution of pupils across the area will ensure that all three schools have an increased occupancy.</p> <p>It is not possible to continue to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School as the guidance suggests that a decision should be made on the future of the school within 3 years of the mothballing. If this proposal is not approved, the Council will continue to have an asset that requires significant maintenance and refurbishment. The reasons</p>

for formulating the proposal were:

- Milton of Balgonie Primary School has had no pupils enrolled for academic sessions 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- There are no pupils enrolled in Milton of Balgonie Primary School for session 2023/24. The one pupil due to enrol for Primary One, living in the catchment area, has chosen to attend an alternative school following a placing request application. Overall, the current number of pupils living in the Milton of Balgonie catchment area is 13.
- Milton of Balgonie Primary School has been formally mothballed since 26 January 2021. The school building is currently being maintained by Property Services to ensure it is wind and watertight.
- Updated birth information has shown that the births in the catchment area have not significantly increased in the last year and there is no other anticipated significant increased growth in the pupil population in the catchment area from, for example, large scale housing development over 100 units.
- Milton of Balgonie Primary School does not meet the Fife Council's guiding principles as outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the proposal (Appendix A to this report).

Failure to rezone the catchment area of Pitteuchar East to include all of the pupils from Westwood Park could result in an oversubscription of catchment pupils for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, where priority criteria would need to be applied for all catchment pupils to determine which pupils were allocated a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. This would result in a number of families with older siblings in the school unable to be accommodated in their catchment school. This option could result in a number families being offered places at alternative primary schools.

Failure to rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie could result in an oversubscription of catchment pupils for Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, where priority criteria would need to be applied for all catchment pupils to determine which pupils were allocated a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. This would result in a number of families with older siblings in the school unable to be accommodated in their catchment school. This option could result in a number families being offered places at alternative primary schools.

The proposal has been consulted on in accordance with the Schools

	<p>(Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.</p> <p>The proposal will not impact on any pupil who is due to start Primary One in August 2024, as they will have enrolled for their existing primary school.</p> <p>If this proposal is approved by the Cabinet Committee on 6 June 2024, this will result in the realignment of catchment areas to ensure a balance redistribution of housing across 3 primary school catchment areas, ensuring that Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School has sufficient space to accommodate catchment pupils and deliver the full breadth of the curriculum.</p> <p>For both Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools, this will ensure an increased roll and occupancy if the catchment areas are realigned.</p> <p>It is important to note that there will be no changes to the secondary catchment area of Auchmuty High School, as currently Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools are associated with Auchmuty High School. There are also no changes to the Roman Catholic catchment areas of St Paul's RC Primary School and St Andrew's RC High School.</p>
Lead Directorate / Service / Partnership	Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services
EqlA lead person	Avril Graham, Team Manager (Systems and Infrastructure) Education & Children's Services
EqlA contributors	All relevant consultees, as defined by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, were invited to participate in the formal consultation process. The Equality Impact Assessment was contributed to by a range of staff within Fife Council.
Date of EqlA	14 May 2024

How does the proposal meet one or more of the general duties under the Equality Act 2010? (Consider proportionality and relevance on p.12 and see p.13 for more information on what the general duties mean). If the decision is of a strategic nature, how does the proposal address socio-economic disadvantage or inequalities of outcome?)

General duties	Please Explain
Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation	
Advancing equality of opportunity	The 3 schools have sufficient accommodation to allow young people to socialise in a variety of areas both inside and out and this will include accessible areas to include any young people with additional support needs. Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools have a variety of multi-purpose

	<p>areas which allow the full breadth of the curriculum to be experienced. Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School has the gym/dining hall and one multi-purpose room to enable other activities to be delivered. The one classroom extension to be provided by the developers of 2 housing sites will provide additional permanent capacity within Coaltown of Balgonie.</p> <p>There may be some negative impact for Coaltown of Balgonie enrolled pupils with siblings who live in the Lochtyview area that is being proposed to be rezoned. Any parent of a younger sibling would be required to make a placing request if the proposal is approved. The Education Service will prioritise all placing requests as per the Admissions Policy and work with families to reduce any impact. Any pupil who is given a place through a placing request is not automatically entitled to free school transport.</p> <p>There should no impact on pupils living in the Westwood Park area as the existing house was already located in the Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area. A walk route has been identified for any pupils from this area. Some of this housing is within one mile, however, for any pupils who are over one mile, they will be entitled to free transport to school.</p> <p>The Education Service has assessed available walking routes as per existing policy from two different directions for pupils affected by this rezoning proposal.</p>
Fostering good relations	
Socio-economic disadvantage	<p>The Education Services does not consider there will be any socio-economic disadvantage. For parents/carers who may be living in the Lochtyview area with younger siblings, if they are granted a placing request the younger sibling would not automatically be entitled to free school transport. This may be a disadvantage to a small number of parents/carers. We recognise that the journey to school will be different for new pupils of this area, if the proposal is approved, as they would no longer be bused to school. We would continue to promote a healthy lifestyle which includes exercise and activity both within and outwith school, promoting active travel would contribute to this healthy lifestyle choice.</p>
Inequalities of outcome	<p>The Education Service is confident that the facilities and resources on offer within the 3 primary schools will ensure that the wide range of the curriculum is delivered with plenty of pupil opportunities, extra-curricular activities and inclusive approaches supporting a focus on improved outcomes for all of the young people.</p>

Having considered the general duties above, if there is likely to be no impact on any of the equality groups, parts 2 and 3 of the impact assessment may not need to be completed. Please provide an explanation (based on evidence) if this is the case.

--

Part 2: Evidence and Impact Assessment

Explain what the positive and / or negative impact of the policy change is on any of the protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
Disabled people			No impact
Sexual orientation			No impact
Women			No impact
Men			No impact
Transgendered people			No impact
Race (includes gypsy travellers)			No impact
Age (including older people aged 60+)		May impact on grandparents who have a longer distance to travel to collect pupils from school.	
Children and young people	School buildings with multi-purpose space available to provide greater flexibility and enhanced opportunities for pupils.	May be an impact on enrolled pupils with younger siblings who are no longer in the catchment area	
Religion or belief			No impact
Pregnancy & maternity			No impact
Marriage & civil partnership			No impact

Please also consider the impact of the policy change in relation to:

	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
Looked after children and care leavers	Additional spaces to ensure the needs of care experienced pupils can be met e.g. multi-agency meetings can take place		
Privacy (e.g. information security & data protection)			No impact
Economy			No impact

1.0 Please record the evidence used to support the impact assessment. This could include officer knowledge and experience, research, customer surveys, service user engagement.

2.0 Any evidence gaps can also be highlighted below.

Evidence used	Source of evidence
1. Knowledge of existing school provision/ practice	Officer discussion/ consultation
2. School facilities and accommodation	School layout plans
3. Feedback received from relevant parties during the statutory consultation process	Consultation Response Forms, public meetings and pupil consultation, report from HMI Education Scotland
Evidence gaps	Planned action to address evidence gaps

Part 3: Recommendations and Sign Off

(Recommendations should be based on evidence available at the time and aim to mitigate negative impacts or enhance positive impacts on any or all of the protected characteristics).

Recommendation	Lead person	Timescale
1. Ensure any pupil wishing to relocate to their new catchment school has an enhanced transition prior to relocating to the new school	Headteachers	August 2024 onwards
2. Ensure walked route assessments are completed and update school travel plans where appropriate.	Education/Transportation/ Community Safety	August 2024 onwards

Sign off

(By signing off the EqIA, you are agreeing that the EqIA represents a thorough and proportionate analysis of the policy based on evidence listed above and there is no indication of unlawful practice and the recommendations are proportionate.

Date completed:	Date sent to Community Investment Team: Enquiry.equalities@fife.gov.uk
Senior Officer: Avril Graham	Designation: Team Manager (Systems & Infrastructure)

FOR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT TEAM ONLY

EqIA Ref No.	
Date checked and initials	

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Report

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Report

(to be attached as an Appendix to the committee report or for consideration by any other partnership forum, board or advisory group as appropriate)

Which Committee report does this IA relate to (specify meeting date)?

11 January 2024 – Cabinet Committee

Report titled “Statutory Consultation Report on the Proposal to Close Milton of Balgonie Primary School and rezone the catchment areas of Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools”.

What are the main impacts on equality?

Proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School from Monday 19 August 2024

There will be positive aspects and benefits for all pupils and the wider community by the proposed closure of Milton of Balgonie Primary School. As the school has not been in operation since July 2019, if approval is given to the closure, all the existing and future catchment pupils will be enrolled in a larger school with greater learning opportunities with a bigger setting.

If a decision is taken to approve the closure, this will enable the Education Directorate to identify any other potential education use for this vacant building.

Proposal to rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie by rezoning the Lochtyview Area from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Thornton Primary School from Monday 19 August 2024

There may be a number of younger siblings who will no longer be catchment pupils which could have an impact on the family. There may be an impact on their travel time as previously any enrolled pupil would be transported to Coaltown of Balgonie. If the catchment change is approved, pupils under one mile would be able to walk to school with their peers from their own community. This would also remove this catchment anomaly across the A92 regional road.

Proposal to rezone the catchment area of Coaltown of Balgonie by rezoning the part of the Westwood Park area from Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School to Pitteuchar East Primary School from Monday 19 August 2024

There will be a positive aspect and benefit for all pupils and the community by this rezoning proposal. All the pupils from this one development site will be zoned to the same catchment area and pupils under one mile would be able to walk to school with peers from their own community. This would also remove this catchment anomaly across the A92 regional road.

In relation to a strategic decision, how will inequalities of outcome caused by economic disadvantage be reduced?

There is unlikely to be an economic disadvantage to the local businesses within the Milton of Balgonie village as a result of the proposal to close Milton of Balgonie Primary School. The school has been mothballed since 26 January 2021 and the school has not been in operation since July 2019.

What are the main recommendations to enhance or mitigate the impacts identified?

An enhanced transition for disabled pupils or pupils with additional support needs will be provided to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Where younger siblings of families within the Lochtyview estate, the Education Directorate will engage with families around the process to submit a placing request application for their younger child to attend Coaltown of Balgonie.

If there are no equality impacts on any of the protected characteristics, please explain.

n/a

Further information is available from: Name / position / contact details:

Avril Graham, Team Manager (Systems & Infrastructure), Education & Children's Services Directorate ext. 444204 – email avril.graham@fife.gov.uk

6 June 2024
Agenda Item No. 5

Strategic Equity Fund – Session 2024/25

Report by: Angela Logue, Head of Education

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To provide an overview of the rationale and plan for use of the Strategic Equity Fund to support the closing the poverty-related attainment gap in Fife’s educational settings in academic session 24/25.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to agree planned projects and actions within the Strategic Equity Fund workstreams for Session 2024/25 and the associated budget allocated to each.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications.

Legal & Risk Implications

None.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with school leaders, staff, pupils and parents. This was undertaken through questionnaires and focus groups of pupils, staff and families. The questionnaires generated 1054 staff responses and 2793 family responses which were used to support our key actions. Further consultation was undertaken with all headteacher in February 24.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In November 2021, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills detailed plans for a refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge from April 2022.
- 1.2 The mission of this refreshed Challenge was clearly set out, namely to “*use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.*”
- 1.3 The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) is an umbrella term used to describe the full allocation of monies provided to schools and other agencies to help tackle the poverty related attainment gap aligned to National policy. This policy was reviewed during Session 2021/22 and was re-launched on 30 March 2022 with the focus on a new central funding model for local authorities, known as Strategic Equity Funding (SEF).
- 1.4 Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) is a fund of £43 million to be shared by all 32 local authorities to invest in approaches to achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
- 1.5 Funding, shown below, is provided across four years. Session 2024/25 is year 3 of this funding.

Fund Sources	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 (final)	Total
Strategic Equity	£859,490	£1,708,651	£2,557,812	£3,406,972	£8,532,925
Pupil Equity	£10,456,020	£10,456,020	£10,456,020	£10,456,020	£41,824,080
Care Experienced	£697,025	£697,025	£697,025	£697,025	£2,788,100
Total	£12,012,535	£12,861,696	£13,710,857	£14,560,017	£53,145,105

NB – PEF and CEF figures are estimations based upon current knowledge of funding

- 1.6 This funding is a much welcomed addition to the overall Education Resources budget, however, it cannot and should not be viewed in isolation from existing plans, policies and resource allocations, e.g. additional staffing through recovery monies.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 This equity gap is evident using a range of statistical indicators of disadvantage, including measures of:
- household income
 - child poverty rates
 - benefit levels
 - and levels of employment
- 2.2 Evidence about the outcomes and experiences of children in Scotland consistently shows evidence of an equity gap, with the least disadvantaged groups of children having better outcomes than the most disadvantaged. This pattern is reflected in our local data.

- 2.3 The move towards a more centralised resource has allowed us to focus our efforts, across Fife, on what works in closing the poverty related attainment gap. This has enabled us to focus more sharply on both equity and excellence.
- 2.4 Work supported through the Strategic Equity Funding streams aligns with key aims set out within the National Improvement Framework, Fife's Directorate Plan and Fife's Children's Services Plan.
- 2.5 Central to these and our Strategic Equity Fund planning are:
- The policy framework of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC),
 - Improving the engagement and participation of children, young people and families,
 - Ensuring that the voice of the young person is central to our decision making.
- 2.6 Within the operational guidance for the Strategic Equity fund ([SEF Operational Guidance](#)), there is a requirement to ensure that the three organisers of learning and teaching; leadership; and, families and communities should shape local approaches. Within those, the following five key indicators may be helpful to take into consideration when deciding which approaches would have the most impact for children and young people impacted by poverty.
- Attainment
 - Attendance
 - Inclusion
 - Engagement
 - Participation
- 2.7 There is also a requirement for us to consider also consider how the plans for the use of Strategic Equity Funding will support the six priority family types identified by the Scottish Government as being at highest risk of experiencing child poverty:
- Lone parent families
 - Minority ethnic families
 - Families with a disabled adult or child
 - Families with a young mother (under 25)
 - Families with a child under one
 - Larger families (3+ children)

Planning Rationale

- 2.8 Our plan in 2022/23 and subsequent plan for 2023/24 (approved by Cabinet Committee in April 2023) was built around our evaluation of the work in schools receiving Challenge School Funding and those receiving Pupil Equity Funding. This evaluation identified the importance of a number of factors:
- The need for a targeted response, with a focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.
 - The value of trauma-informed and nurturing approaches, recognising the needs of vulnerable children and young people.
 - The importance of friendship and relationships, and of enabling children to re-establish and further develop their networks of support, and of supporting the wellbeing of children, families, and staff.

- The role of choice and participation, recognising the varied needs of children and young people, and allowing them greater voice in identifying how their needs are met.

2.8.1 Evidence from the work in schools shows greatest impact through the following themes:

- Literacy - Early Language Intervention
- Numeracy - focussing upon the knowledge and application of developing an understanding of number sense as the building blocks for future learning.
- Health & Wellbeing
- Nurturing Approaches
- Counselling
- Mentoring Programmes
- Family Engagement and Support
- Use of Quality Improvement Methodology

2.8.2 Our quantitative and qualitative data continues to confirm the need for interventions that support attainment in numeracy and literacy, particularly writing. Intelligence also suggests that more of our young people are displaying distressed or anxious behaviour which is impacting their attendance and learning.

SEF Plan Session 24/25

2.9 Our plan for 2022/23 marked a point in time in that it was designed to be a starting point for our refreshed strategy in that it was a live work-in-progress which would be built upon, updated and changed as circumstances dictated. As such, our plan for 2023/24 built upon the work undertaken in 2022/23 whilst developing additional work streams that were identified to further support our children and young people who are most disadvantaged. These additional workstreams included the introduction of Principal Teacher for Raising Attainment and Closing the Gap, piloting 1-1 attendance support and exploring a virtual platform for on-line learning.

2.9.1 As we move into year 3 of the Strategic Equity fund, we are continually reviewing progress and data to ensure that our resources are targeted to support the closing the poverty related attainment gap agenda.

2.9.2 A review of the data shows a continued need to focus upon the areas identified in year 2 of our plan and to grow resource and models around these. Year 3 of the plan will allow us to embed these approaches and, where possible, scale up these interventions.

2.9.3 A review of the impact of each intervention within the Session 2023/24 plan can be found in the Strategic Equity Fund – Session 23/24 Progress Report which was shared with Education Scrutiny Committee on 7 May 2024 ([Agenda and Papers - Education Scrutiny Committee of 7 May 2024](#))

2.9.4 Through our engagement with headteachers and practitioners, we know that attendance and attainment continue to be a challenge within schools and that mental health of our families and young people continues to impact upon this as does the language deficit of children entering nursery and primary one provisions.

2.9.5 Higher numbers of pupils within our school contexts with identified additional support needs and the widening range of families with English as a second language continue to challenge us to consider how best we can support engagement and participation across our broad range of learners.

- 2.9.6 Ensuring that our school staff are highly skilled and able to provide high quality learning, teaching and support remains central to our plan through professional development and curriculum approaches.
- 2.9.7 Further resource to develop family engagement and pupil participation will also continue to be a key driver within our plan.
- 2.9.8 To ensure that we have a strong evidence base to support our plan, the use of Quality Improvement Methodology will continue to be embedded across the system, with workforce development central to this.
- 2.9.9 Due to the success of the Principal Teacher Closing the Gap role, we will look to increase the number of these within our plan for session 24/25 by a further three. This will enable 15 out of the 18 clusters of schools to be supported.
- 2.9.10 Core universal supports will also continue to be provided across our settings and across sectors. These include:
- Engaging schools and settings in auditing and planning for improving digital literacy and learning through a supported programme.
 - Empowering Play Pedagogy (EPP) through a sustainable and empowered programme, with supported learning opportunities alongside developing the use of the Fife Play Toolkit.
 - Embedding core approaches for Literacy and Conceptual Understanding in Numeracy (CUiN) through practitioner workshops.
 - Supporting the implementation of a “Nurture Bundle” through a project focused on improving wellbeing, engagement & participation of targeted children & young people.
- 2.9.11 An overview of the plan for Session 2024/25 can be seen below (fig 1) along with an overview of the proposed spend (fig 2).

Strategic Equity Workstreams – Key Projects 24-25

Workstream 1:	Workstream 2:	Workstream 3:	Workstream 4:	Workstream 5:
Professional Learning	Learner Engagement	Curriculum	Pathways	Strengthening Relationships
<p>Core Approaches</p> <p>Deliver professional learning and networking support on the Fife Core Approaches of Workshop for Literacy and Conceptual Understanding in Numeracy.</p> <p>Play Pedagogy</p> <p>Embed the use of the Fife Play Toolkit in P1 and P2-P3 through an Empowered programme.</p> <p>Digital Learning Culture</p> <p>Engaging schools and settings in auditing and planning for improving digital literacy and learning through a supported programme.</p> <p>Closing the Gap/Raising Attainment PT</p> <p>Principle teacher post for identified clusters to support improvement in literacy and numeracy. Increase from 9 to 12 supporting 15 clusters</p>	<p>Family Support</p> <p>Embed the 50 Things App to promote early level learning, health, and wellbeing in all settings.</p> <p>Attendance</p> <p>Extend the implementation of 1-1 Attendance support to support re-engagement</p> <p>Virtual Classroom</p> <p>Develop and offer of online engagement in learning through a virtual classroom within the BGE.</p> <p>Tutoring</p> <p>1-1 tuition to support re-engagement with learning within primary 6 and 7 across identified schools.</p>	<p>Literacy</p> <p>Target P4 cohorts projecting high levels of non-achievement at 1st level.</p> <p>Continue to roll out and support the use of Fife’s Writing Assessment & Moderation Resource for primary and secondary BGE.</p> <p>Numeracy</p> <p>Support spread of Conceptual Understanding of Numeracy Approach in targeted clusters with secondary PTCs.</p> <p>Develop class level support for assessing and describing achievement of a level in the BGE at P1, P4, P7, S3.</p> <p>Tracking & Monitoring</p> <p>Implement standardised system across all schools.</p>	<p>Positive Destinations</p> <p>Pathway co-ordinators will deliver the MCR programme to targeted S1 and S2 learners across 4 secondary schools.</p>	<p>Family Support</p> <p>Family Support workers identifying and testing change ideas to support families improve attendance for identified learners.</p> <p>Nurturing Approaches</p> <p>Fife QI Nurture bundle will support targeted learners in identified schools improving wellbeing, engagement and participation.</p>

Budget Aligned to SEF Plan 2024-25

Type of Resource	FTE/ Units	Forecast Cost
Professional learning to support literacy & numeracy across schools	3	£265,097
Cluster Raising Attainment PT	12	£872,316
QI Coaching Support	2	£110,000
Family Support Work	FSW – 8 PSO-8	£709,150
PSA hours to support vulnerable pupils		£200,000
MCR Mentoring	Various	£150,000
Virtual Classroom		£100,000
1-1 Tuition	840 hours	£30,000
50 Things App		£10,000
Participatory Budgeting Pilot Projects	2 pilots (Beath & Glenrothes)	£40,000
Tracking & Monitoring System	All schools	£350,000
Budget allocated		£2,836,563 (£2,557,812 plus £278,751 carry forward)

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 Our vision in Fife Education is “Improving Life Chances for All”. We believe that our children should be encouraged and supported to maximise their potential and that, across our teams, we break down barriers to engagement and participation.
- 3.2 We place children and families at the centre of everything we do, seeking to provide the space and opportunity for learning, nurture, creativity and the development of skills. We are committed to ensuring our learners, regardless of background, leave school with the literacy and numeracy skills required to access the wider world.
- 3.3 Through this plan and continued partnership approaches, we will continue to take forward key interventions that will support all of our learners to achieve their best possible outcomes.
- 3.4 Scottish Government Guidelines state that:
- “Strategic Equity Funding must be used to deliver targeted activities, approaches or resources which are clearly additional to universal local improvement plans.”
- 3.5 Working within our existing planning structures, we believe that by embedding our strategies and interventions identified in years 1 and 2 of our Strategic Equity Fund plan, that we are in strong position to achieve our aim and to make the biggest difference to our children and young people who are most disadvantaged by poverty.

Report Contact

Sarah Else
Education Manager
Fife House
Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 + VOIP Number 471855
Email: sarah.else@fife.gov.uk

6 June 2024
Agenda Item No. 6

Review of Payments to Foster Carers, Kinship Carers, and Supported Lodgings Carers

Report by: Christine Moir, Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Service

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the council with information on the proposed uplift in payments to all carers.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the committee approve the application of an uplift of 3% in the fees paid to foster carers and supported lodging carers and note the ending of support for family carers allowance given Kinship legislation.

Resource Implications

The budgets for foster carer **fees** includes an inflationary increase of 3% which is sufficient to fund the increased proposed in this report.

There is a current pressure on the budget relating to foster carer **maintenance** payments, referred to in para 3.5 as this payment is now set by Scottish Government. It is noted that the amount of additional funding from Scottish Government to support the payment is not sufficient and there is an estimated pressure of £1.586m. This report does not propose any increase in the maintenance element.

Legal and Risk Implications

None

Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an impact assessment in respect of this report as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

Consultation

None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Carers provide an essential service for Fife's looked after children and young people allowing them to live in a family.
- 1.2 Fostering is a way of providing a family life for children and young people who are unable to live safely with their parents. This can be due to a variety of reasons from parental illness to abuse and neglect. Foster care gives children a secure, safe and stable environment where they can grow in confidence. Foster carers can offer care to young people up to the age of 21 years if they offer continuing care which allows young people the opportunity to 'stay put'.
- 1.3 Kinship Care allows children and young people who cannot safely live with their parents to remain within their wider family with their needs being met.
- 1.4 Supported Lodgings carers offer an alternative option to children and young people who have been looked after but who want to develop some level of independence, to receive nurturing support within an adult placement with a focus on increasing independent living and a supported step to living on their own.
- 1.5 Carers provide different types of care from providing a home for a few days, months, or even years. Many children and young people will return to their birth parents but others may need help for longer through continued fostering, adoption, kinship care through a variety of legal orders and, when ready, being helped to work on their independent living skills within Supported Lodgings. Efforts are made to ensure children have the opportunity to live with their sisters and brothers wherever possible.
- 1.6 The **fees** (payment to foster carer) and **maintenance** payments (payment per child for their needs) to foster carers have historically been reviewed in April each year following approval of the revenue budget. Increases to fees and maintenance are normally made in line with the level inflation provision applied to the relevant budgets.
- 1.7 The Scottish Government introduced the Scottish Recommended Allowance (SRA) in October 2023 for all foster carers in Scotland. A standardised rate for **maintenance payments** was set which all local authorities were asked to implement. In Fife, this was implemented in November 2023, backdated from April 2023.
- 1.8 As the rate for maintenance payments is now set nationally, this report considers only the traditional inflationary uplift for **fees**. This report details the full financial package of support offered to carers to allow decision making in relation to an increase in fees paid.

2.0 Review of Payments: Foster Carers

- 2.1 The payments made to foster carers are separated into two components: a **fee** that is paid to carers; and a **maintenance allowance** which is paid per child and which is now set by the Scottish Government (April 2023). There are currently three different levels of fees paid in Fife to carers which is based on an assessment and approval by the Agency Decision Maker of their skills and experience. In order to meet the criteria for each level, carers have to provide an annual portfolio indicating how they continue to meet these criteria.

2.2 Fife Council pay the following **fee** per week:

FC Fee L1	£279.55
FC Fee L2	£419.33
FC Fee L3	£613.22

Below indicates the current number of Foster Carers across each level:

FC Fee L1	82 Carers
FC Fee L2	87 Carers
FC Fee L3	2 Carers

2.3 National benchmarking for fee payment has been undertaken. See table below. Payments vary greatly across local authorities as there are a number of variables to consider and few, if any, like to like comparisons, for example: different levels of carers, maintenance per child and when more than one child, different fees and maintenance payments dependant on age of child.

Authority	Fee Range
Moray	102 - 673
North Lanarkshire	117 - 188
South Lanarkshire	131 - 210
Dundee	163
Scottish Borders	164 - 254
South Ayrshire	150
Falkirk	150 - 200
Dumfries	167 - 525
West Dumbartonshire	175
Inverclyde	193 - 381
Stirling	177
Edinburgh City	185 - 464
East Renfrewshire	206
West Lothian	220 - 552
Midlothian	255 - 379
Fife	279 – 419 or 613*
Aberdeenshire	279 - 593
East Lothian	315

* Fife Council have two Level 3 carers and it is unlikely we will be assessing for this level in the future so rates would be either Level 1 or Level 2

2.4 Fife Council, unlike some other authorities, do not pay foster carers a “fee per child”. Carers receive a flat rate payment of £50 per week for each additional child. Some local authorities pay the same fee per child which is generally reflected by a lower rate of fee payments.

The tables below provide an illustration for fee payments based on one or two children comparing Fife to other local authorities.

Fife Council

Level	1 Child Placed	2 Children Placed
1	£279.55	£329.55
2	£419.33	£469.33

Dundee City Council

Level	1 Child Placed	2 Children Placed
1	£163.00	£326.00
2	N/A	N/A

West Dumbartonshire Council

Level	1 Child Placed	2 Children Placed
1	£175.00	£350.00
2	N/A	N/A

East Lothian

Level	1 Child Placed	2 Children Placed
1	£315.00	£630.00
2	N/A	N/A

West Lothian

Level	1 Child Placed	2 Children Placed
1	£220.00	£220.00
2	£552.00	£552.00

Please see the Appendix for further detail.

3.0 Scottish Recommended Allowance(SRA): Maintenance

- 3.1 The Scottish Government introduced the Scottish Recommended Allowance (SRA) in September 2023. The SRA is a key commitment in the Programme for Government and the Scottish Government's Promise Implementation Plan, published in March 2022. It aligns with the Scottish Government and COSLA's commitment to #KeepThePromise and shared priority of tackling child poverty and supporting the most vulnerable in society, especially given the ongoing cost of living crisis. The SRA is intended to help ensure that children in foster and kinship care get the support they need to thrive and ensure there is parity in the financial support.
- 3.2 All foster carers receive a weekly maintenance allowance from the fostering service when they have a child in placement, which is given to meet the needs of the child or young person. This includes food, clothes, toiletries, travel and after school activities. Allowances vary depending on the age of the child and usually increase on an annual basis to reflect the increases of the cost of living and inflation.
- 3.3 Prior to the implementation of the SCRA, the maintenance allowance rate set for Fife carers was the **3rd lowest** when benchmarked across all local authorities in Scotland. As such, the increase in weekly maintenance payments in Fife was substantial. It should be noted that, as detailed above, our weekly fee was/is higher than many other authorities.

- 3.4 The table below indicates the maintenance allowance rate paid to carers before and after the SRA.

		Old Rate	New Rate
FC Age Related Maintenance	0 - 4 yrs	£110.76	£168.31 (53% increase)
FC Age Related Maintenance	5 - 10 yrs	£125.14	£195.81(56% increase)
FC Age Related Maintenance	11 - 15 yrs	£155.29	£195.81(26% increase)
FC Age Related Maintenance	16 - 18 yrs	£198.47	£268.41 (35% increase)

- 3.5 The Scottish Government invested £16 million funding for the implementation of the SRA. This was distributed on the same basis as the existing kinship care allocation. As such, Fife Council was allocated £1.204m. This allocation did not fully fund the cost of the increased payments which is estimated to be £2.790m. As such, there is a current budget pressure of £1.586m due to the shortfall in funding.

- 3.6 The Scottish Government have provided the following update in relation to annual increases in the SRA. The funding was paid as a redetermination of the General Revenue Grant (GRG) in March 2024 and subsequently will be baselined into GRG at current levels from 2024-25. The Scottish Government is committed to maintaining the 2023-24 levels of support for the SRA allowances going forward and to reviewing the funding implications for future years from 2024-25. However, a decision on the future uprating of the SRA has yet to be taken by Scottish Ministers and, in line with the principles set out in the Verity House Agreement, any decision will be progressed in consultation with COSLA.

- 3.7 The table below compares overall funding for Foster Carers across four local authorities:

Local Authority	Income for one child aged 5 - 10	Income for 2 children
Fife Council	475.36	721.17
Dundee City	358.81	717.62
East Lothian	510.81	1021.62
West Dunbarton	370.81	741.62

4.0 Review of “Additional Payments” made to Foster Carers

- 4.1 In Fife, Foster Carers receive seven weeks additional maintenance payments per year which are paid at the relevant age-related maintenance rate. These payments are made at the school holidays/birthdays/Christmas to provide additional funding which should be spent on the child. These additional payments are made in April (1 week), Summer (2 weeks), October (1 week), child’s birthday (1 week) and at Christmas (2 weeks).
- 4.2 Benchmarking across 10 local authorities has indicated that they all provide the same additional payments as Fife. Given local authorities have adopted the SRA, additional payments to carers will be at the same rates across Scotland.
- 4.3 Foster carers are not entitled to receive child benefit for any child in their care.

5.0 Review of Payments made to Kinship Carers

- 5.1 Kinship carers are not paid a fee when they provide care for a child or young person. Instead, they receive an allowance which is paid at the same rate as that received within foster care. As such, the Scottish Recommended Allowance is the national rate set for Kinship Carers and was implemented in Fife in September 2023.
- 5.2 All Kinship carers are encouraged to child benefit currently paid at £24 per week for one child and £15.90 for each additional child. Depending on their income, Kinship Carers who have Residence or Kinship Care Orders are also entitled to claim child tax credit. Any benefit claimed is deducted from their kinship allowance. Depending on income, Kinship carers are also entitled to claim additional benefits.
- 5.3 Any increase to the allowance paid to Kinship Carers will be set by the Scottish Government when they consider the SRA levels. No recommendation is being made to increase payments for Kinship Carers at this time.
- 5.4 There are three current pathways into receipt of Kinship payments within Fife:-
1. **Looked After Child Kinship Allowance** - Applicable when children have been placed by Social Work with kinship carers with a section 25 agreement or a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) through a Children's Hearing.
 2. **Non- Looked After Child Kinship Allowance** - Applicable when children have been placed by Social Work with kinship carers who have a residence order or kinship care order.
 3. **Support for Family Carers (SFCA)** - Applicable for children who live in a kinship arrangement but are not subject to any legal order and receive minimal, if any, ongoing support from Children and Family social work.

LAC and Non-LAC Kinship payments are paid at the SRA for age-related maintenance. For SFCA, a payment of £50.00 per week payment is made to the kinship carer.

- 5.5 Support for Family Carers (SFCA) is a scheme unique to Fife, initiated more than 10 years ago, before the Kinship Legislation (Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014) with the intention of preventing children from becoming "looked after". When first implemented, the scheme was congruent with legislation and was noted to be a positive example of Fife supporting children to stay with their families without children needing to become 'looked after'. However, it is now problematic and potentially generates risk for the organisation due to both the financial inequity but also legislative changes which support kinship carers without a need for this third pathway which has no legislative basis.
- 5.6 Following the implementation of the SRA, there have been no new SFCA arrangements made. As a service, we comply with the legislation that all Kinship Carers should be paid either under LAC Kinship or Non-LAC Kinship. Alternatively, if care arrangements are organised by family, our proposal is that there will be no payments made. However, the service would offer assessments if asked and we retain a duty to provide support under legislation: section 12 Social Work Scotland Act (1968) and section 22 Children (Scotland) Act 1995 which may be financial.

- 5.7 A review of all SFCA payments was made in September 2023. There were 109 SFCA payments in place with this number set to reduce by eight by October 2023 (due to the children turning 18 years old). During this review, 19 SFCA arrangements were transferred to LAC Kinship Payments after the kinship carer was assessed and the child/young person become formally looked after.
- 5.8 As of 1 March, 2024, there are 82 SFCA arrangements in place. Carers currently receiving the allowance will remain as such until the child/young person reaches 18 years. For assurance, it should be noted that all these arrangements are being formally reviewed with the family to ensure that if any carer should be subject to a Kinship Assessment, this will be undertaken. If the family do not want this but prefer to simply look after their child – as opposed to the formal Looked After process or applying for a Residence Order - we will continue to pay the SFCA allowance. The table below provides an estimate around the numbers of SFCA arrangements which will cease per year following the child/young person 'aging out' of the SFCA:

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
13	11	10	11	12	8	6	6	4	2

6.0 Review of Payments made to Supported Lodgings Carers

- 6.1 Supported Lodgings providers do **not** receive an allowance to care for young people as the young people will be in receipt of income or funds from the Children and Family Social Work Service's Young People's Team. Supported Lodgings is an adult resource for young people when they have left care with the focus being on fully equipping them for independence and movement to independence.
- 6.2 Supported Lodgings carers in Fife are the council's first line in offering care to unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). Currently the service offers care and support to 24 displaced and highly traumatised young people.
- 6.3 Current payments for supported lodgings carers are £278.16 per week. There is an expectation that the young person will pay the Supported Lodgings carer a weekly payment of £20.00 to put towards their food and toiletries. This assists them to build up their budgeting skills to prepare them for living independently.
- 6.4 It is proposed that a 3% inflationary increase is applied to the Supported Lodgings Carer's fees. This is in line with the budgetary increase and would be assessed as required to mitigate against increased cost of living experienced by Supported Lodgings Carers in Fife.

7.0 Cost implications

7.1 Fostering Fee increase:

The recommendation that an inflationary increase of 3% to fostering fees would be in line with the inflation provision in the budget for 2024/25. The total cost of the proposed increase as set out in the table below is £94,600.

The table below indicates the recommended increase:

	2023/24	2024/25	Weekly Increase	No. Carers	Annual Cost Increase
FC Fee L1	£279.55	£287.94	£ 8.39	82	£ 35,775
FC Fee L2	£419.33	£431.91	£ 12.58	87	£ 56,912
FC Fee L3	£613.22	£631.62	£ 18.40	2	£ 1,913
Total					£ 94,600

7.2 Supported Lodgings Carers fee increase:

There are 31 young people within supported lodgings placements.

It is recommended that an inflationary increase of 3% to supported lodgings fees should be approved. This is in line with the inflationary provision in the budget for 2024/25.

The table below indicates the recommended increase:

	2023/24	2024/25	Weekly Increase	No. young people	Annual Cost Increase
FC Fee L1	£278.16	£286.50	£ 8.34	31	£ 13,444

8.0 Rationale to Increase

- 8.1 The “Belonging to Fife strategy” was influenced by the Promise which placed an emphasis on children and young people being cared for within their local community. The success of the strategy led to a reduction in the use of external fostering providers. This is evidenced when considering the ratio of use of internal foster carers to external foster carers. In 2021, the % ratio was 52/48 (internal/external carers) which has been reduced to the current ratio 59/41 (internal/external carers). By making it more attractive to foster for Fife Council, it would be hoped this ratio could improve further.
- 8.2 Recruitment of Foster Carers presents a significant challenge both locally and nationally. In Fife, enquiries into fostering have been falling; in 2021 there were 221 enquiries, in 2022 there were 157 enquires and in 2023 there were 159 enquiries. This is reflective of the picture across Scotland. Should this trend continue, there will be a reduction in the availability within our internal fostering resource and a consequent increase in purchasing foster placements.
- 8.3 There has been an increase in foster carers being de-registered, largely due to retiral, which has had an impact on the number of new placements available for children. Over the 2022/23 recording period, there were 43 new carers approved and 34 carers de-registered. This meant there were only nine new placements available for children or young people requiring care. It is essential that Fife offer competitive payments to encourage foster carers to come and stay with Fife.

- 8.4 Payments to external foster care providers range from £855 per week (basic rate) up to £1629 per week (enhanced payments due to complexity of the child's care need). This payment is not inclusive of additional costs related to additional therapeutic support or travel in some instances. It is clear when comparing this to the package of support paid to Fife Council foster carers that any reduction in the use of external fostering facilitated by our in house provision would present a significant saving.

9.0 Concluding Remarks

- 9.1 The current position within fostering in Fife is causing concern with the reduction in fostering enquiries and increase in fostering de-registrations. This, combined with the changing profile of children and young people in need of foster care, has the potential to increase dependence on external fostering provisions which would be costly to the local authority.
- 9.2 The Scottish Government introduced an SRA in September 2023. Prior to this, Fife Council paid the third lowest rate for maintenance across all the Scottish local authorities. This meant that foster carers within Fife received a significant increase in their weekly payments following the SRA implementation but it also meant that there was a significant budget deficit to cover the increase.
- 9.3 Foster carers in Fife are aware the fee element of their payments would usually be subject to an inflationary increase. Given the pressures of recruitment and retention, if no rise was implemented, this may have an impact on subsequent retention of foster carers.
- 9.4 The benefit of having an attractive payment offer for our carers within Fife is an increase in recruitment and retention thus continuing to lower our dependence on the use of external fostering provisions. There would be a significant long term budget saving should Fife be able to lower this ratio in line with the National average.

Report Contact

Chris Moir
Head of Children and Families and Justice Social Work
Email: christine.moir@fife.gov.uk

Foster Care - Weekly Fees and Maintenance

	No. of Carers	Fee Per Week	Fee One Child	Fee Two Children	Maintenance Set By SG	Age 5-10 One Child **	Age 5-10 Two Children **	Fee & Maintenance	
								Total One Child	Total Two Children
Fife									
Level 1	82	279.55	279.55	329.55	*	195.81	391.62	475.36	721.17
Level 2	87	419.33	419.33	469.33		195.81	391.62	615.14	860.95
Level 3	2	613.22	613.22	663.22		195.81	391.62	809.03	1,054.84
Dundee									
Level 1		163.00	163.00	326.00		195.81	391.62	358.81	717.62
Level 2		n/a	n/a	n/a					
West Dumbartonshire									
Level 1		175.00	175.00	350.00		195.81	391.62	370.81	741.62
Level 2		n/a	n/a	n/a					
East Lothian									
Level 1		315.00	315.00	630.00		195.81	391.62	510.81	1,021.62
Level 2		n/a	n/a	n/a					
West Lothian									
Level 1		220.00	220.00	220.00		195.81	391.62	415.81	611.62
Level 2		552.00	552.00	552.00		195.81	391.62	747.81	943.62

* Fife provides an additional £50 per week for each additional child

** Shown for fostering children aged 5-10 to provide a comparison

Seven additional maintenance weeks are paid per child per year for holidays, birthday, Christmas
 Benchmarking across 10 local authorities indicated the same additional payments are made

6 June 2024
Agenda Item No. 7

Care Homes Replacement Programme

Report by: Nicky Connor, Director of Health and Social Care and John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: Ward 20

Purpose

To present an Exception Report and provide an update on the revised costs for Cupar Care Village due to an increased projected cost following receipt of the Tender Report prior to construction.

Recommendation(s)

Committee is asked to:

1. consider the current position of Cupar Care Village and approve Option 2 per the PF09 exception report;
2. agree that the increased costs of £1.019m for Cupar Care Home will be funded from the overall Care Home replacement budget recognising that this will result in a reduced budget for Anstruther Care Home which will then need to be considered as part of the upcoming Capital Plan Review; and
3. note that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) will address the budget gap of £0.605m by making use of the existing Affordable Housing Programme capital budget. This will reduce the budget available to fund other new build units.

Resource Implications

In November 2023, Cabinet Committee approved an increase in the budget for Cupar Care Home resulting in a revised budget of £14.106m which included £9.235m for the Care Home and £4.871m for the Supported Housing. The costs of Cupar Care Village have increased to £15.730m following receipt of the Tender Report ahead of construction. This has resulted in an increase in costs of £1.019m for the Care Home and £0.605m for Supported Housing.

It is proposed that the additional costs for the Care Home will be funded by reducing the Anstruther Care Home budget (recognising that Anstruther Care Home will need to be considered as part of the Capital Plan Review). The additional costs for the Supported Housing will be met from the Affordable Housing programme capital budget.

Legal & Risk Implications

We have agreed the monitoring of this project will be done in the same way as Education and large community projects by monitoring on a monthly basis. This monitor can then be presented to the Care Home Replacement Board and is an agreed position between Property Services and Finance.

The Programme Timeline is monitored at every Board meeting where any delays are discussed and resolutions sought to minimise any impact on cost and resources.

Policy & Impact Assessment

A full Impact Assessment for the replacement care home was carried out as part of the consultation process.

Consultation

The Care Home Replacement Programme Board and ISG have approved the proposals in principle. Regular consultation has taken place with the Project and Site Teams under the direction of the Board and seeking external advice where required with other bodies, for example, the Care Inspectorate.

Local elected members and the Community Council in Cupar as well as Northeden House residents, families and staff have been provided with regular updates.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Early enabling works commenced on the Dalgairn site in Cupar in November 2023 and were completed on 22 March 2024.
- 1.2 Three initial packages of works have been approved to commence as soon as possible to mitigate any downtime at site, this includes groundworks, timber frame and structural steel works.
- 1.3 It is anticipated construction will be completed on the Care Village by September 2025.
- 1.4 The table below shows the increased costs and reasons for these to date-

£m	£m	£m		
Care Home	Housing	Total		Reason for Increased Cost
6.600	3.200	9.800	2019 Original Budget	
7.879	4.100	11.979	Jan 2022 Cost estimate update, ISG & P&C	Enhanced drainage works, heating system to be gas free, ground contamination works, turbulent market conditions.
9.235	4.871	14.106	Nov 2023 Cost estimate update, Capital Plan Review	Price impact of the Ukrainian crisis with the rise of fuel, energies and raw materials; inflationary allowance to align with revised timescales; new requirement for Electrical sub-station
10.254	5.476	15.730	April 2024 Tender, ISG **	M&E Delay, new technology heat pumps, limited number of Contractors operating in the market, cost pressures related to joinery, window systems etc.

** this is the cost increase being put forward for approval in this paper

2.0 Update on Cupar Care Village

- 2.1 Approval was granted at Cabinet Committee on 2 November 2023 to approve the Business Case for Cupar Care Village at a cost of £14.106m.
- 2.2 Following early enabling work starting in November 2023 and completed in March 2024, a pre-construction Tender Report in March showed costs have increased again by 11.5% to £15.730m leading to a shortfall of £1.624m.
- 2.3 The main causes of the price increase are detailed in the PF09.
- 2.4 The Care Home Replacement Programme Board and the Head of Finance have approved three initial packages of works to commence as soon as possible to mitigate any downtime at site. This includes groundworks, timber frame and structural steel works.
- 2.5 The existing Northeden House in Cupar no longer meets National Care Standards or Care Inspectorate requirements of ensuite facilities and an appropriate mix of communal areas and accessible outdoor space.

3.0 Housing Services

- 3.1 Housing Services' share of the costs will be funded from the Affordable Housing Programme budget. The new units are classed as part of the Transitional Affordable Housing Programme (TAHP) which has a target of 500 new units and has a total programme budget of £100m. The shortfall of £0.605m will reduce the budget available to complete other units to achieve the goal of 500 units. The Affordable Housing Programme team will need to manage this shortfall as part of the overall programme costs.

4.0 Risk Management

- 4.1 All risks associated with the project are identified, transferred to the Risk Log and maintained throughout and beyond the life of the project by the Project Team. The Risk Log is a standing item on the agenda as assurance for the Care Home Replacement Programme Board.
- 4.2 In addition, a Client Costs Monitor (CCM) is produced for the Care Home Replacement Programme Board on a monthly basis to monitor use of contingency sums.
- 4.3 The value engineering process will be managed as part of the cost monitoring process – this has been used successfully on other large capital projects.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 To enable the Cupar Care Village project to progress and deliver the commitment made, it is recommended that Option 2 in the PF09 Appendix is approved.

List of Appendices

1. PF09 Exception Report - Cupar Care Village

Report Contact:

Fiona McKay
Head of Strategic Planning, Performance & Commissioning
Fife Health and Social Care Partnership
Tel: 07824 900242 - Email: Fiona.McKay@fife.gov.uk

Project Title	Cupar Care Village
Prepared By	Vivienne Smith, Change Manager
Date & Version	07/05/24 V.6.0

Impact	Catastrophic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Major	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Tick the appropriate box

The purpose of this document is to advise of an issue forecast to exceed programme tolerances, and provide an analysis and options on the way forward.

1. What is the issue and why has it occurred?

Property Services issued Cupar Care Village – Overall Client Tender Report V.3.0 on 6th March and this was discussed at the Care Home Replacement Programme Board on Thursday 14th March 2024.

The total project cost is £15.730m which is split between Health & Social Care (64%) and Housing Services (36%). The Tender Report shows a total increased budgetary requirement of £1.624m between the two services. Housing Services are managing their budget deficit.

The Care Home Replacement Programme Board and Finance have agreed to progress the first three elements of the construction phase totalling £3.6m: groundworks, timber frame and structural steel works, to mitigate any downtime on site.

This Exception Report is focusing on the increased budget requirement of £1.019m for the care home element of the build as the deficit has triggered ‘red status’ being 11% over the capital budget of £9.235m. The total cost is now £10.254m.

The agreed tolerance for ‘amber status’ within the Business Case is up to 5% over the capital budget and ‘red status’ is triggered by any percentage over budget that exceeds the amber cost threshold.

This has occurred due to a delay with the project starting and price inflation. In addition, there are specific issues within the construction industry:

- Supply and demand - there is a limited number of contractors operating in the market at present, meaning getting competitive tenders is very difficult and we must also be very careful that we are vigilant of contractors going into liquidation, as happened at Methil.
- Mechanical and Electrical Installations - this package was circa £1m over the cost plan, and that reflects the wider financial picture we are seeing across Scotland on all projects. This is a combination of issues, lack of contractors, contractors choosing what projects they tender for and, importantly, the new technology of heat pumps we are using is increasing pricing risk.
- Joinery work - this is another area that is creating significant cost pressures across Scotland's construction projects with products like doors and plasterboard running in double figures of inflation. It is also difficult to procure the supply and fit of our window systems.
- Whilst contractors are happy to fix tender prices now, they are still building in cost risk to their tenders as who knows what will happen next in the world. Our strategy will be to keep a very close eye on the market and target retendering packages at more suitable times.

2. Consequence of the deviation

The RAG indicators below should be assessed against agreed tolerances that should be detailed in the project's Business Case (Section 2.10).

Project element	RAG status	Details
Cost	R Red	The Care Home budget was increased to £9.235m following Cabinet Committee Approval on 02/11/23. The Tender Report now shows an increased budgetary requirement of £1.,019m for the Care Home taking the total cost to £10.254The Housing Capital budget is £4.871m per the Tender report. The increased cost is £0.605m bringing the total cost to £5.476m Total Cost of the Care Village has increased from £14.106m to £15.730m. The reasons for the increase in costs is explained in Section 1 above.
Time	A Amber	Enabling works now complete and main build procurement activities currently being progressed within projected timescales, however, any delay seeking approvals could impact timescales.
Quality	G Green	Value Engineering savings are being considered which could have an impact on quality although it is not expected this would be significant.
Resource	G Green	No impact.
Scope	G Green	No impact.
Risk	A Amber	Costs may increase further, driven by cost inflation and risks becoming issues.
Benefits	G Green	No impact.

3. What are the options?

Option 1: Accept new cost and agree funding solution to increase budget.	
Cost	£15.730m
Time	No impact.
Quality	No impact.
Resource	No impact.
Scope	No impact.
Risk	Costs may increase further, driven by cost inflation and risks becoming issues. Proceeding will impact funding for the remaining project in the programme at Anstruther.
Benefits	No impact.

Option 2:	Accept new cost and agree funding solution to increase the budget and continue to work to reduce costs where possible to minimise the impact on the Anstruther Budget
Cost	£15.730m
Time	No impact.
Quality	Value Engineering savings against six work packages are currently being considered, which could have an impact on quality although it is not expected this would be significant. Value engineering proposals are initially costed up by the Quantity Surveyors, then each item is jointly evaluated by the design team and the client. The Quantity Surveyor will monitor these as part of the monthly cost monitor. The monthly cost monitor is then fed into the overall project cost monitor. The Value Engineering process continues throughout the life of the project and assists with keeping the project within budget.
Resource	No impact.
Scope	No impact.
Risk	Costs may increase further however the Care Home Replacement Board will minimise the impact of delays to ensure tender prices are not impacted where possible.
Benefits	No impact.

Option 3:	Do not accept increase in costs resulting in not being able to proceed with project
Cost	Committed expenditure to date – circa £1.3m due to demolition and clearance of site, completion of early enabling works package and advance design work for groundworks, timber frame and structural steel works.
Time	No impact.
Quality	The existing Northeden House will continue to deteriorate and impact the quality of living standards for residents.
Resource	Resources are already in place and not proceeding would impact significantly on Project/Design and Site Teams.
Scope	No impact.
Risk	Failure to deliver the new care home in Cupar means further deterioration of existing Northeden House with increasing energy costs and a need to increase capital and revenue requirements to maintain the status quo. Northeden House, currently, will not meet the needs of future generations as dependency levels increase.
Benefits	Capital budget saving.

4. What is your recommendation?

Given the progress of this project to date, it is recommended that Option 2 is approved.

5. What was the decision of the Project Sponsor/Board?

Approval of Option 2.

6. Exception Report sign-off

Approved by	Role	Date approved
Fiona McKay	Project Sponsor	
Vivienne Smith	Project Manager	
Helen Guthrie	H&SCP Accountant	

Opportunities Fife Partnership – Strategy 2024-30

Report by: Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services

Wards Affected: All Wards

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Opportunities Fife Partnership's new strategy, priorities and structure for 2024-2030.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the committee:-

- (i) approves the updated Opportunities Fife Partnership (OFP) strategy, priorities, structure and measures;
- (ii) note the process that was carried out with partners and key stakeholders to codesign the new strategy; and
- (iii) support the intention for the OFP to put the client at the centre of employability delivery, through engagement with service users and the Lived Experience Team, to ensure employability projects are delivered in a way that participants want to engage with.

Resource Implications

There are no immediate resource implications associated with this report. Current activity on the employability pathway was commissioned through two rounds of open challenge funding; in 2022 to commission projects funded by Scottish Government through No One Left Behind (NOLB) and Tackling Child Poverty allocation; and in 2023 to include projects funded through UK Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation.

All existing employability activity is scheduled to run through to March 2025. New projects, in future will be commissioned in line with the priorities outlined in section 3.0 of Appendix 1 (OFP Strategy 2023-2030), and with reference to the relevant funding priorities for future No One Left Behind, UKSPF or replacement funds.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no specific legal and risk implications associated with this report.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA and summary form is complete. The summary form is an Appendix to the report.

The OFP completes an Equalities Impact Assessment for Scottish Government in line with NOLB conditions of Grant Award.

A representative from the Fife Centre for Equalities sits on the OFP's Delivery and Oversight Group, to monitor equalities data from the partners delivering on the Employability Pathway. Recommendations from this data analysis will inform future commissioning frameworks, in line with the "Strategic Targeting" priority outlined in section 3.0 of Appendix 1. Strategic Targeting, through the publication of specific commissioning frameworks will ensure that employability delivery is flexible and targeted at those in most need in Fife. This means specific funds, such as NOLB or UKSPF can be focused more effectively on specific localities, under-represented groups or areas where there are identified gaps in provision.

The Fairer Scotland Duty, which came into force on 1 April 2018, requires the council to consider how it can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. Both the Plan for Fife and Opportunities Fife Partnership Strategy align with this Duty in their commitment to working towards achieving Inclusive Growth and Jobs and Thriving places.

Consultation

The development of the strategy's priorities, structure and measures has been carried out through consultation and a series of workshops that took place between August 2023 and January 2024, with key partners and stakeholders such as; Department for Work and Pensions, Fife College, Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, Fife Voluntary Action, NHS Fife, Skills Development Scotland as well as the Tackling Poverty, Preventing Crisis Board and the Local Area Committee Policy Leads all represented.

The Heads of Finance and Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the production of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1. The Opportunities Fife Partnership (OFP) Strategy 2024-2030 (Appendix 1) has been developed to better reflect the changing policy landscape around employability funding in recent years. Employability funding is no longer supported by European Structural and Investment Funds and is now funded through a combination of Scottish Government and UK Government allocations.
- 1.2. The OFP Strategy 2024-30 updates and replaces the previous strategy that was in place between 2018 and 2022 and has been developed to reflect the priorities of both the Recovery and Renewal Plan for Fife 2021-2024 and the new Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-2030, with regard to tackling poverty, through promoting Inclusive Jobs and Growth.
- 1.3. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a framework for employability delivery that will drive responsive and sustainable approaches to skills and employability services that reflect current and future aspirations of individuals and employers, over the coming years.
- 1.4. The new strategy has been designed to provide an overarching strategic direction for employability delivery for a longer term, focusing on establishing the priorities and structures to implement, deliver and monitor effective employability projects across the Employability Pathway. Previously, strategies often required updating to reflect the changing focus of funding streams, this strategy will provide consistency for the OFP's approach to service delivery. It will then be supplemented by commissioning frameworks, that will inform the focus for delivery partners. Highlighting key target groups and priority locations that are relevant most relevant when the different funding streams are available.

2.0 Overview of the OFP Strategy 2024-2030

- 2.1. The OFP Strategy 2024-2030 was developed through a series of consultations and workshops that took place between August 2023 and January 2024, with the final draft approved by the OFP Board in February 2024.
- 2.2. The process of consultation and codesigning the strategy with stakeholders resulted in; an updated purpose and revised mission, a set of new strategic priorities, a new structure to support these priorities and a set of measures for monitoring progress.
- 2.3. The previous OFP Strategy 2018-2022 had five key objectives that were led by practical delivery drivers, such as:
 - Improving outcomes for those living in Mid-Fife
 - Reducing the number of people out of work due to health or disability issues (with a particular focus on mental health)
 - Increasing the number of young people leaving school to positive destinations
 - Reducing the number of people facing “in-work” poverty
 - Supporting the development of a higher skilled workforce

Although these practical drivers are still relevant, the partners felt that it would be more appropriate to focus on these through the supplementary commissioning frameworks that are produced to inform future delivery, when a challenge fund is opened for applications. This way, the practical drivers can be updated regularly and prioritised to allow us to be more responsive to the data and the needs of the clients when new delivery is being planned.

OFP Key Priorities

- 2.4. The OFP Strategy 2024-30 sets out five key priorities for the OFP that reflect a shift to a greater focus on strategic themes that will strengthen the Partnership and the connections between Partners.
- 2.5. The five priorities for the OFP (outlined in the diagram in section 3.0 of Appendix 1) are:
 - **Inclusive Jobs & Growth** – that the OFP are committed to meeting local industry needs, but working with businesses to ensure they are providing healthy, flexible and sustainable work and promoting career progression. This priority will also tie into a wider commitment to support the Community Wealth Building strategy, ensuring delivery partners embed fair, accessible work practices into their provision.
 - **Tackling Poverty & Inequality** – supporting businesses to address discrimination in the workplace and promote fair work and wellbeing, to minimise in-work poverty and ensure accessing employment is a way to escape poverty and end reliance on benefits.
 - **Client Experience** – that the quality of the service delivery is as important as the content. Over recent years the OFP has invested in a Lived Experience Team and co-produced Principles for Service Delivery that ensure the participant(s), whether individual or family are at the centre of the employability journey and support is tailored to meet their specific needs (The OFP Principles are outlined in Section 3.1 of Appendix 1).
 - **Effective Governance** – to ensure the OFP is informed by and compliant with National policy, but also provide strong performance management to get the best out of the projects that are commissioned and provide regional coherence to encourage regional alignment, where appropriate.

- **Strategic Targeting** - that commissioning is informed by data and the voice of lived experience, so that commissioning frameworks can be more flexible and responsive to the changing needs of Fife's labour market and reflect the terms of the available funding. Future commissioning frameworks will identify skills gaps and highlight the relevant delivery drivers, such as: those with health and disability issues, the economically inactive, young people who have left school to negative destinations and low-income, lone parent and workless families, which are the focus for the current provision.

OFP Structure

- 2.6. The previous OFP structure included four delivery groups, reporting to the OFP Board with specific focus on; Adult Employment; Youth Employment; those with Health and Disability Issues and Employer Engagement. These were very effective and relevant to the way funding was directed through European Funded projects, but now with NOLB and UKSPF funding and our established Principles of Service Delivery, the client journey is at the heart of all activity, regardless of age or barrier(s), meaning specific delivery groups working with these clients are no longer as relevant.
- 2.7. Section 4.0 of Appendix 1 outlines the new Structure of the OFP, which includes:
- **People and Skills Community of Practice** - bringing together all of the delivery partners commissioned to deliver activity on the Employability Pathway to identify skills gaps, share best practice, increase links and encourage future collaboration, as well as addressing common challenges such as compliance, evidence collection and monitoring.
 - **Place Advisory Group** – which may not be established as an exclusive OFP group but instead the OFP would consult with the Local Area Committees Policy Officer Group, linked to the Tackling Poverty, Preventing Crisis Board particularly when preparing future commissioning frameworks, to ensure projects are more grounded in place and reflective of local need.
 - **Supporting Business Group** – which will evolve from the existing Employer Engagement Group and work with businesses to project future skills demands, fill job vacancies, support alternative recruitment practices and promote fair work, wellbeing and healthy workplaces.

Performance Measures

- 2.8. Section 5.0 of the OFP Strategy 2024-2030 outlines how the OFP will measure performance and impact. The section outlines three sets of measures:
- **Vital Signs** – to help the OFP “take the pulse” of the partnership and the economic context in Fife. These will include key indicators such as: number of people and the rate of unemployment, number of people and rate of economic inactivity, the percentage of children living in low-income households, as well as looking at the number of people being supported on the Employability Pathway and the data provided through the participation measure, for those 16-24.
 - **Planning Measures** – will be used to decide where future interventions are targeted. The OFP will use the same indicators as outlined as vital signs, but will analyse them in more detail using key demographics such as location, gender, ethnicity, age, disabilities etc.
 - **Balancing Measures** – are essentially key measures that ensure that the Partnership is working correctly, legal, compliant and working within its means. These will be reported on a “escalation by exception” basis to the OFP and will include measures such as: budget, national reporting requirements, key risks, client experience and project performance.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The OFP is a strong and mature Local Employability Partnership that has been able to refresh and refocus to meet the changing financial circumstances surrounding employability and skills funding.
- 3.2 The OFP is widely recognised as sector leading in our approach to maximise the impact of both council-led and third sector delivery partners to deliver locally focused and client accessible projects. Our approach to commissioning has been endorsed by Scottish Government and the conditions of NOLB grant funding, to be delivered through the Local Employability Partnerships, such as the OFP is a direct result of the success we had during our European Programme.
- 3.3 The work that the OFP has done with the Lived Experience Team to produce the Principles of Service Delivery, and the commitment to developing services that are co-designed, and co-produced with those who use employability provision is unique and has also been regarded as a model other Local Employability Partners should emulate.
- 3.4 The OFP Strategy 2024-30 has been developed to support a longer term, strategic direction, that will be supplemented by commissioning frameworks that will be data led and client informed to ensure provision is focused on the correct localities and supports those that need it most to progress out of poverty.

List of Appendices

1. Opportunities Fife Partnership Strategy 2024-30
2. EqIA Summary Report

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

- [Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-2030](#)
- [Edinburgh and South East Scotland Regional Prosperity Framework 2021-2041](#)
- [Tay Cities Region Economic Strategy 2019-2039](#)
- [Recovery & Renewal: Plan for Fife 2021-24 Update \(Aug 2021\)](#)
- [UK Government White Paper on Levelling Up the UK \(Feb 2022\)](#)
- [Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation \(Mar 2022\)](#)
- [Scottish Government – No One Left Behind](#)

Report Contacts

Gordon Mole
Head of Business and Employability
Business & Employability
Place Directorate
Email: Gordon.Mole@fife.gov.uk

Adam Dunkerley
Opportunities Fife Partnership Manager
Business & Employability
Place Directorate
email: adam.dunkerley@fife.gov.uk

OPPORTUNITIES FIFE PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGY 2024-2030

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Opportunities Fife Partnership (OFP) is a strategic decision making partnership, reporting directly to the fife Partnership. It is responsible for delivering part of the Plan for Fife’s “Inclusive Jobs and Growth” priority theme.

This strategy document outlines the purpose, mission, structure, and measures that will direct the OFP from 2024.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Opportunities Fife Partnership is to ensure Fife has a healthy, vibrant economy.

2.1 Mission

The OFP’s Mission is:

“To shape and drive responsive, sustainable approaches to skills and employability services that reflect the current and future aspirations of individuals & employers.”

2.2 Remit

The OFP remit is to:

- Develop, implement and monitor the skills and employability delivery for Fife.
- Develop labour market driven approaches to address the needs of all client groups, with specific focus on:
 - Increasing employment opportunities for young people (16- 24)

- Increasing access to employment for people with health and disability issues
 - Unemployed adults (25+) and those facing multiple barriers to employment,
 - Lone Parent, Low income and Workless Families
- Ensure that maximum investment is secured in Fife from external funding streams for employability activities through collaborative approaches across the partners.
- Set the strategic direction for funding expenditure, ensuring that funding distribution is demand led and meets the strategic objectives for skills and employability.
 - Where possible funding should be agreed over multiple years to support sustainable delivery and continuity for delivery partners and the people they support
- Ensure that all skills and employability activities are focused in the appropriate geographical areas of Fife to address the social justice agenda.
- Develop employability activity that is co-produced and co-designed, to ensure that the user experience is at the heart of delivery.
- Co-ordinate and allocate all national and local skills and employability funding streams across the Partnership.
- Measure and manage the employability and skills performance across the Partnership's activities.
- Engage in activities which are outward looking, ensuring that Fife participates fully within a Scottish, UK and international context. Lobby on behalf of Fife to Influence policy development at the Scottish and UK levels.

3.0 OFF STRATEGY

The diagram below outlines the OFF's five key Priorities, set out below the Purpose and Mission:



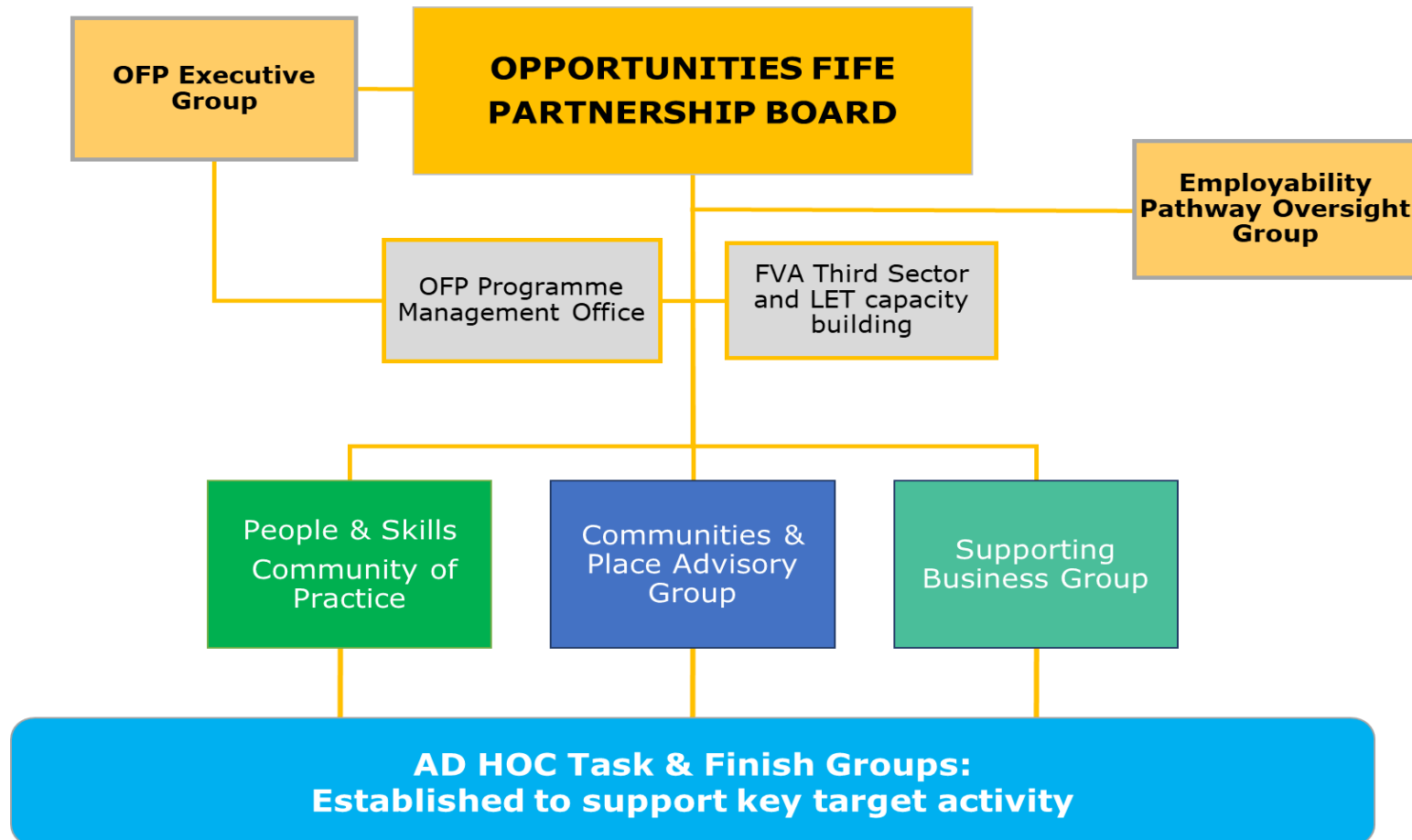
3.1 OFP Principles of Service Delivery

How services are delivered is as important as **what** they do. The OFP Principles of Service Delivery, set out below, have been developed by the Lived Experience Team, and form the basis for all employability service delivery in Fife. They connect with the National Charter for No One Left Behind (which can be found: [publication-customer-charter.docx \(live.com\)](#))

Equal and Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People accessing the service will be treated as equals, they will feel respected, trusted and listened to.
Strength Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision will focus on helping people to identify and grow their own strengths rather than solving problems for them. This also means giving people responsibility and allowing them to make mistakes and take risks.
Non-Judgemental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People will feel able to open-up without risk of judgment, staff will bring humility and an open mind to understand people's individual situation and challenges
Discreet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services will be provided in a way that respects people's need for privacy and the vulnerability associated with accessing support services
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services will work together to ensure people get the support they need when they need it. This includes warm handovers or working alongside one another, with clearly identified progression options and support pathways.
Time Unlimited	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services will balance consistency and dependability with energy, momentum and challenge at a pace that works for the individual and which maintains momentum towards improved employability
Continuously Improving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services will actively gather feedback from people who use their services, reflect on delivery and demonstrate a willingness to adapt and learn
Hopeful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision will hold the hope for everyone who comes through the door, (and those who don't), <i>and support people to recognise, voice and progress their individual hopes. Knowing that the right work is out there for them, and we are all on a journey.</i>

4.0 OFP STRUCTURE

To deliver the Strategy successfully, the OFP has set out the following group structure, to support the Board and manage the activity on the Employability Pathway:



4.1 OFP Board

The full OFP Board meets four times per year, once every quarter. A minimum of five representatives are required to constitute a meeting (quorum). Meetings vary between online, Teams meetings or are hosted on a rotational basis by partners where possible.

Meetings are structured around high-level strategic updates on the agreed priorities for skills and employability and agendas are formatted to structure discussion to agree and capture action points.

When forward planning, the Partners will look at thematic approaches to upcoming agenda items in line with the time of year. For example, when School Leaver Destination Return (SLDR) figures are published. This way any additional invitees can be scheduled to attend relevant meetings, depending on the theme or a specific topic.

The agenda for meetings will be set by the OFP Chair and Manager, in conjunction with the Executive Group.

Where items of business require approval or a decision, it is the intention that this will be reached by consensus, after discussion, however where this cannot be achieved, agreement will be decided by a simple majority of votes from the members present by a show of hands. Each member will have one vote and in the event of a tied vote the Chair will have a casting vote. When the OFP invites observers or guest speakers to specific meetings these individuals will have no voting rights.

It has been recognised that the agenda for the OFP can be busy with a lot of papers. Where possible, papers that require decisions/approvals will be highlighted for members attention, while other papers that are included for “information only” will be marked separately.

A forward planning item will be introduced at each meeting, so future agendas can be planned in advance, to ensure all Partners’ priorities are given appropriate time.

4.2 OFP Executive Group

The OFP is supported by an Executive Group, which meets when required throughout the year. Executive Group meetings are scheduled in advance, in case meetings are required, but may be cancelled if they are not required.

The role of the Executive Group is to drive forward the Partnership and its activities in discharging the remit for the OFP as outlined above. The Executive Group comprises of membership from; Fife College, Skills Development Scotland, DWP and Fife Council.

In the interest of separating strategic policy and funding decisions, the OFP Executive Group will have responsibility for the approval of employability pathway funding decisions. This ensures the separation of decisions making from those who are potentially bidding for delivery activity.

4.4 Employability Pathway Oversight Group

An Employability Pathway Oversight Group has been established to monitor and oversee the performance of Employability Pathway provision. The Oversight Group meets monthly and considers performance data, equalities information and qualitative feedback from delivery partners; who are invited to present to the group and highlight good practice as well as raising any issues or challenges.

4.5 Opportunities Fife Partnership Programme Management Office

The OFP Board, Executive Group and Oversight Group are supported by a Programme Management Office (PMO). The PMO has responsibility for facilitating meetings for all the above groups, the publication of new commissioning frameworks, the challenge fund process for commissioning new activity, the day-to-day programme management of the employability pathway provision and oversight of the OFP Core budget and the grant allocation to delivery partners.

4.6 Fife Voluntary Action Third Sector Capacity Building and Lived Experience Team

In addition to the PMO, the Opportunities Fife Partnership is supported by FVA's Employability Delivery Manager and Team, investing in and co-ordinating third sector delivery partners. Key to the success of the OFP's Employability Pathway has been the investment in local third sector delivery, capacity building, providing training for frontline workers, and strategic direction for organisations. This has resulted in strong relationships, increased co-operation between partners and the establishment of a high performing consortium.

The work of FVA has also supported the OFP to embrace a human rights based approach to service design and the value of lived experience in the co-production and co-design of employability activity. FVA currently support and facilitate a Lived Experience Team, who provide insight on the type of provision that individuals would engage with, support the commissioning process, the selection of employability provision and the oversight of delivery partners' performance.

4.7 People and Skills Community of Practice

Purpose:

To bring together employability and related services to grow collaboration and share learning to improve the experience and outcomes for clients in Fife.

Responsibilities:

- Ensuring client experience of funded services is in line with the OFP service delivery principles
- Working collaboratively with funded and other partners to meet gaps in provision identified by clients and strategic planning processes
- Providing a communication link between frontline staff and strategic decision-makers
- Informing and supporting engagement with continuous professional development priorities for OFP funded employability provision
- Supporting ad hoc task and finish (T&F) groups to tackle agreed issues

Success criteria:

- People from different services and contexts attend, contributing meaningfully and collaboratively (i.e. focusing on doing 'better with' not 'better than' each other)
- Discussions are action oriented and provide useful information to providers, the OFP Board and other Strategic groups as relevant
- CoP content connects with partner priorities
- Participants are willing to talk about mistakes as well as successes, and challenges as well as opportunities
- Collaborative actions and projects emerge either within this group with others out with
- It is a vibrant, dialogue-filled space

Leadership:

Planned and facilitated by the OFP Programme Management Team which includes FVA third sector employability development team and the lived experience team.

Hosted by the FVA Employability Development Manager but with specific sessions led by the most appropriate person for that session's theme.

Membership:

Open to any organisation delivering employment services in Fife.

Expectation that all OFP Funded employability services, all Fife Council employability services, Fife College employment support team and the FVA Lived Experience Team facilitator attend.

DWP, SDS & Health will also attend however attendees might vary depending on session theme.

Education, Developing Young Workforce & Community Learning & Development (Job Clubs?) also invited.

NB T&F group membership will be flexible to the theme but including the voice of lived experience by default.

Reporting:

The People & Skills Community of Practice will provide a 1-2 page summary of outputs from each session to the OFP Board.

Additional reporting will be flexible depending on session theme but may include: Communities & Wellbeing Partnership Board; Tackling Poverty Board; Whole Families Wellbeing Leadership Group; Fife H&SCP Integrated Joint Board and others.

Frequency:

Quarterly meetings + an annual 'Know Your Network' event

4.8 Communities & Place Advisory Group

Purpose:

To bring together local area representatives and key stakeholders in order to understand and inform the key skills and employability priorities in each of the seven local areas in Fife.

Responsibilities:

- Informing the OFP Commissioning of the key skills and employability priorities in each of the seven local areas (South West, Dunfermline, Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, Levenmouth and North East Fife)
- Directing resources accordingly, in order to address recognised need and inequalities across the seven local areas
- Establishing skills and employability priorities that are relevant in all seven local areas, to identify where there are Fife-wide issues
- Highlighting skills gaps and employability priorities that are locally relevant to specific areas
- Helping the OFP to avoid duplication through an understanding of what is locally available and supporting the commissioning of activity that is required and relevant to the locality
- Ensuring value for money by providing local intelligence on the scale of resource/investment required
- Helping to account for the activity that is commissioned to ensure it delivers accordingly or performance issues are addressed quickly so benefits can be maximised
- Supporting ad hoc task and finish (T&F) groups to tackle agreed issues or gather intelligence on key client groups/locations

Success criteria:

- All local areas are attending, contributing and their priorities recognised through the OFP Commissioning and Employability Pathway service delivery
- Local area priorities for skills and employability are being met through the activity Commissioned by the OFP
- Activity is appropriately aligned with local area priorities
- Data and priorities from each area is contributing to the OFP's priorities:
 - Informing strategic, targeted commissioning
 - Supporting inclusive prosperity and equalities
 - Tackling poverty and inequality
- Discussions are action oriented and provide useful information to partners, the OFP Board and other Strategic groups as relevant
- Participants are willing to talk about mistakes as well as successes, and challenges as well as opportunities
- It is an open and collaborative space

Leadership:

Planned and facilitated by Fife Council's Employability Manager, with support from the Area Services Managers and the OFP Programme Management Team, which includes FVA third sector employability development team and the lived experience team.

Membership:

Key stakeholders who are involved in local decision making in Fife, such as:

- Representative from each of Fife's Local Area Committees
- DWP
- Skills Development Scotland
- NHS Fife – possibly Public Health or Health Promotion
- Fife College
- Fife Council Education Service – linked to the Positive Destinations Group
- Third Sector Employability Development
- Representative from the Support for Business Group
- Transport – from a Strategic Transport point of view
- Representative from Lived Experience Team

Reporting:

The CPAG will provide a 1-2 page summary of outputs or a presentation on key priorities/progress against these priorities to the OFP Board (at least once per year), but will be required to prepare local area priorities to feed in to future Commissioning Frameworks, as required.

Additional reporting will be flexible, but could be required if any of the local areas wish to raise a concern or highlight good news/best practice to the OFP Board outside the regular update.

Frequency:

As required (but at least bi-annually) following more regular meetings in the first 6 months to establish the group.

Local area representatives will be tasked with compiling data and developing recommendations/priorities to feed into future Commissioning Frameworks possibly between meetings.

4.9 Supporting Business Advisory Group

Purpose:

To focus on the understanding and the articulation of business and employers' needs, including skills gaps, growth opportunities and potential to attract inward investment in support of regional economic growth. The group will act as a future focused strategic forum, whose role it is to inform and influence the OFP's commissioning approach.

Responsibilities:

- Engaging with employers at strategic level, ensuring that all stakeholders are included and informed and making recommendations for commissioning priorities and timelines as appropriate
- Providing a cohesive and streamlined opportunity for employers to engage with the partnership, ensuring that communication channels are streamlined and effective communication link between frontline staff and strategic decision-makers
- Gathering information from and providing feedback to relevant operational groups / networks, ensuring that strategic recommendations:
 - are data and evidence-based
 - are impact assessed and monitored accordingly
- Working with employers to advise on, influence and support the implementation and resourcing of fair work policies in line with the OFP's commissioning principles are adhered to

Success criteria:

- Robust data is made available & reported on effectively to support the commissioning process
- Duplication is reduced in relation to employer engagement at regional level
- The better understanding of business and employers' needs leads to a more dynamic commissioning process, better aligned to new and emerging needs
- Operational groups / networks can inform and support this more dynamic approach.

Leadership:

Chaired by a member of Fife Council's Business & Employability Service to facilitate coordination with the various employer engagement / employability teams within the partnership. The OFP Programme Management Team will support the facilitation of meetings and the Chair may rotate between partners as the group gets established.

Membership:

The group will include representatives of the OFP partners who are influencers / decision makers within their respective organisations. This will include NHS and DYW representatives.

Reporting:

The Supporting Business Group will report to the OFP Board every two months.

The specific content and format of the report will be devised by the group. However, the expectation is a dashboard approach, supported by an analytical narrative and associated recommendations.

Frequency:

Every two months.

4.10 Ad-Hoc Task and Finish Groups

Short life “task and finish” groups are established when required, to investigate, analyse and plan future delivery for particular client groups, or where possible gaps in provision have been identified.

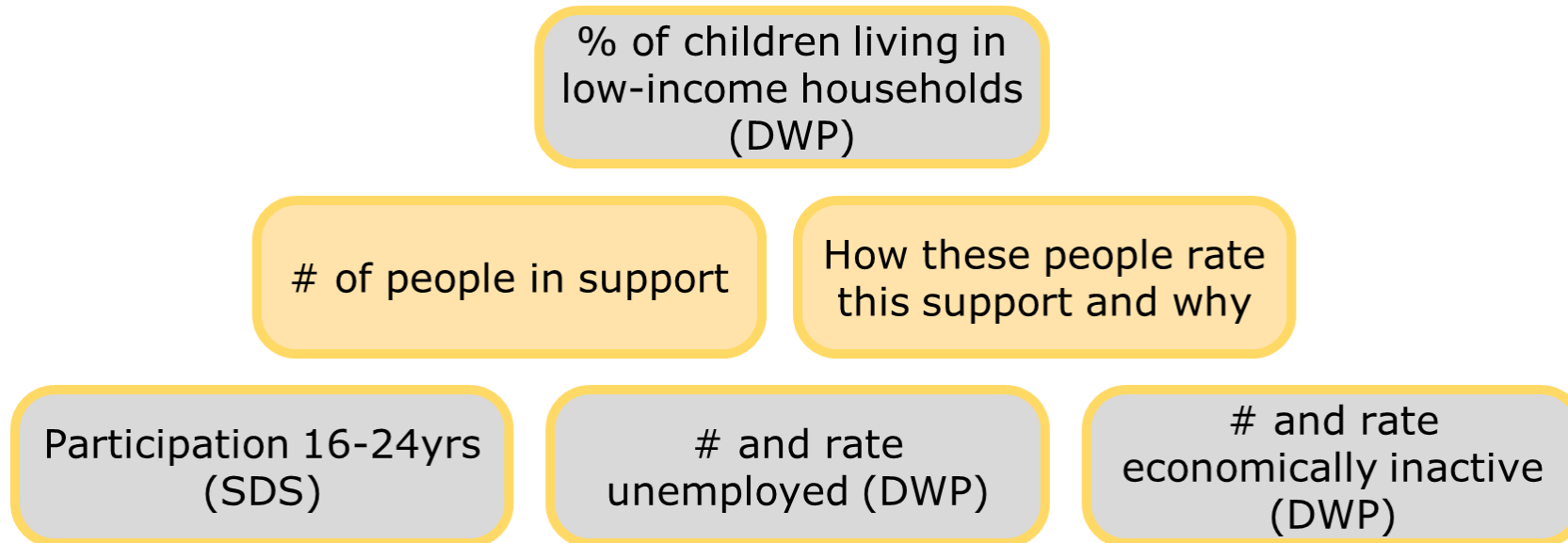
5.0 MEASURING PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

5.1 Vital Signs

These measures help us to ‘take the pulse’ of the Partnership and the context we are working in, so that:

- We know if the way we are working together is working.
- We are able to make sense of the difference we are making for individuals and stakeholders.

We can view these measures as describing the system that OFP oversees: need at the top, support in the middle and impact at the bottom:



5.2 Planning Measures

Are used to decide where future employability and skills interventions need to be targeted.

We will use the same Vital Signs, as above to inform the OFP Board, but by looking at them through different lenses to identify where there are inequalities and emerging patterns of need:

Each Vital Signs Indicator could be compared across key demographics, such as: **location, gender, ethnicity, age, disability**, etc.

5.3 Balancing Measures

These measures will help the OFP to ensure that we do not drop the ball on factors such as; staying legal and compliant, working within our means, delivering services that are out of touch with individual or business needs etc. They provide important context for our work together but should not drive it.

The following balancing measures are reviewed by the OFP Board on an “escalation by exception” basis for both positive exceptions and areas of concern:

MEASURE	ESCALATION TRIGGER
Budget	OFP Manager monitoring budget and financial profile of each delivery partner
National Reporting Requirements	Feedback from Scottish or UK Government on reports submitted by the OFP Programme Management Office
Key Risks	Risk Register reviewed by OFP Manager and OFP Executive Group
Client Experience	Oversight Group monitoring client experience feedback
Project Performance	Oversight Group monitoring progress against targeted outputs and results

Equality Impact Assessment

Part 1: Background and information

Title of proposal	Opportunities Fife Partnership – Fife Employability Pathway
Brief description of proposal (including intended outcomes & purpose)	<p>No One Left Behind is the Scottish Government’s most recent policy framework and approach to tackling employment issues across Scotland. Best Start Brighter Futures is the Scottish Government’s most recent policy framework and approach to tackling child poverty/employment. It aims to ensure those who experience complex and multiple barriers to moving into work are not ‘left behind’. No One Left Behind (NOLB) and Tackling Child Poverty (TCP) is supported through a Partnership Working Agreement which reflects shared principles and ambitions for improving outcomes for individuals between Scottish Government and local authority partners agreed with COSLA, with inputs and oversight through the Improvement Service, SLAED and SOLACE2.</p> <p>The NOLB approach proposes a shift from top-down programme design, where target groups and provision are set out at a national level, to one where local areas have the flexibility to use funding in line with the needs of their local community.</p> <p>The funding for NOLB/TCP aims to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide flexible and person-centred support; 2. Be more straightforward for people to navigate; 3. Be better integrated and aligned with other services, particularly with health, justice and housing provision; 4. Provide pathways into sustainable and fair work; 5. Be driven by evidence, including data and the experience of users; and 6. Support more people – particularly those facing multiple barriers – to move into the right job, at the right time. <p>Delivery of the various funding streams sitting under the NOLB/TCP banner in Fife is guided through the Commissioning Framework developed by the Opportunities Fife Partnership (OFP). More information about the Commissioning Framework, and No One Left Behind Fife Principles and Tackling Child Poverty for Service Delivery can be found at this link: https://d.docs.live.net/3994bbd8c88f0370/Desktop/Active%20Docs/OFP/OFP%20Commissioning%20Framework%20-%202023%20-%202025/2023-25%20Version/OFP%20Commissioning%20Framework%20-%202023-25%20FINAL%20-%20March%202023.pdf</p>
Lead Directorate / Service / Partnership	Opportunities Fife Partnership
EqIA lead person	OFP Manager

EqlA contributors	<p>The EqlA has been developed by the OFP's Delivery and Oversight Group, which consists Fife College, Skills Development Scotland, Fife Voluntary Action, Fife Centre for Equalities, DWP, Lived Experience Team, Opportunities Fife Partnership and Fife Council.</p> <p>Contributions were also sought from delivery partner organisations, enabling both their staff and clients to contribute to the wider understanding of the barriers faced in accessing employability services.</p> <p>Following the 'Continuously improving' principle of the No One Left Behind Fife Principles for Service Delivery, the EqlA contribution process will be ongoing throughout the programme delivery. Feedback on the barriers faced by people using the commissioned services will inform further service design and mitigations.</p>
Date of EqlA	April 2024

How does the proposal meet one or more of the general duties under the Equality Act 2010? (Consider proportionality and relevance on p.12 and see p.13 for more information on what the general duties mean). If the decision is of a strategic nature, how does the proposal address socio-economic disadvantage or inequalities of outcome?)

General duties	Please Explain
Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation	<p>Services commissioned under NOLB are designed to be open to all and as such contribute towards eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.</p> <p>Funded providers are expected to become bronze level Equality Pathfinders with a minimum number of staff trained in understanding the impact of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.</p> <p>Partners are also expected to have appropriate equality policies in place and/or work towards inclusive practices if they are working towards the Silver award (such as FEAT and Fife Gingerbread).</p> <p>Specialist services are asked to provide training and awareness sessions for both service providers and employers in Fife to better understand how discrimination can particularly impact the communities they support.</p> <p>Finally, continual service improvement through embedding the voice of experience in service design and delivery will maintain a constant focus on challenging stigma and discrimination.</p>

General duties	Please Explain
Advancing equality of opportunity	<p>The commitments within the commissioning framework are designed to advance equality of opportunity as they are based on the following principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote dignity and respect, fairness and equality and continuous improvement 2. Provide flexible and person-centred support; 3. Be more straightforward for people to navigate; 4. Be better integrated and aligned with other services, particularly with health, justice and housing provision; 5. Provide pathways into sustainable and fair work; 6. Be driven by evidence, including data and the experience of users; and 7. Support more people – particularly those facing multiple barriers – to move into the right job, at the right time <p>The OFP also analyses data on unemployment and key equalities groups to ensure that core provision is accessible to all such as those who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed adults from a minority ethnic background • Unemployed with (physical or mental) health conditions or illnesses lasting more than 12 months (aged 25+) • Common mental health problems (employed and unemployed) • Sexual Orientation (LGB and Other) (employed and unemployed) • Unemployment rate - not Equality Act 2010 core or work-limiting disabled • People undergoing Gender Reassignment (Trans men and Trans women) (employed and unemployed) • People aged 25+ with literacy and numeracy issues; facing digital exclusion; with health and disability issues; ex-offenders; with family and/or caring responsibilities <p>The Tackling Child Poverty Fund supports lone parents, disabled parents, families with 3 or more children, minority ethnic families, families who have a child under 1 year of age and mothers who are aged under 25 years of age.</p> <p>Support is also provided to long-term unemployed and those furthest removed from the labour market (e.g. people with a disability or with complex and multiple disabilities).</p>

General duties	Please Explain
Fostering good relations	<p>The OFP will foster good relations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in specialist services to act as early engagement partners with young people, helping them to gain confidence to access mainstream (or relevant specialist) employability services through group activities, outreach or 1:1 work. • Actively engaging with employer engagement teams and employer recruitment incentives in Fife to ensure that they are both accessible and being accessed by the young people they are looking to support. • Providing in-work support where necessary to help people to maintain or progress in employment and to address in-work poverty. • Delivering awareness sessions (min four/year) co-produced and co-delivered with the voice of experience, targeted at frontline staff, employers and the employer engagement team about their area of expertise.
Socio-economic disadvantage	<p>The OFP will work with young people, parents and those who have been long term unemployed by identifying the areas of Fife with sustained levels of multiple deprivation and proactively targeting delivery in key SIMD areas in Fife in order to reverse this decline.</p>
Inequalities of outcome	<p>The OFP will monitor equalities data for both participant registrations and outcomes annually to ensure that where there maybe issues of inequality of outcome both providers and commissioners are aware of this and able to adjust the focus of delivery to address it</p>

Having considered the general duties above, if there is likely to be no impact on any of the equality groups, parts 2 and 3 of the impact assessment may not need to be completed. Please provide an explanation (based on evidence) if this is the case.

Part 2: Evidence and Impact Assessment

Explain what the positive and / or negative impact of the policy change is on any of the protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
Disabled people	x		
Sexual orientation	x		
Women	x		
Men	X		
Transgendered people	X		
Race (includes gypsy travellers)	X		
Age (including older people aged 60+)	X		
Children and young people	X		
Religion or belief	X		
Pregnancy & maternity			x
Marriage & civil partnership			x

Please also consider the impact of the policy change in relation to:

	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
Looked after children and care leavers	x		
Privacy (e.g. information security & data protection)	x		
Economy	x		

Positive Impacts

The OFP will work with people identified under the commissioning framework to support them into employment irrespective of their protected characteristic. To ensure that people are able to take part in initiatives they will be provided with food, childcare, financial inclusion, family support and referral on to wider services where needed.

The Employability provision (which includes NOLB - Youth provision, Adult provision and Specialist Provision and TCP – family provision within Fife has the potential to actively promote equality of opportunity for all regardless of their protected characteristic and circumstances in relation to accessing employment, training and education and reducing poverty/in-work poverty. This will be monitored and actively promoted with providers during the timescale of the NOLB and TCP funding streams. The NOLB employability programmes actively target young people aged 16 to 24 years of age who have been ‘care experienced’. This will increase individual progression and employability prospects

There will also be a positive impact on older people due to the opportunities to access lifelong learning, accreditation, qualifications and new experiences.

All the employability programmes will comply with GDPR requirements.

Negative Impacts

Delivery partners do not routinely record the protected characteristics of participants in the MIS (FORT) but measures are being put in place by delivery partners to improve this and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Some delivery partners may lack knowledge about support required by disabled people, such as delivering outreach activities which are accessible.

Residents of rural areas in Fife have limited access to local face to face employability services and the high cost of travel impacts all groups facing socio-economic disadvantage

- Please record the evidence used to support the impact assessment. This could include officer knowledge and experience, research, customer surveys, service user engagement.
- Any evidence gaps can also be highlighted below.

Evidence used	Source of evidence
1. The report conducted by TERU was conducted using a variety of data and evidence sources, such as; desk based research, national statistics, stakeholder and partner interviews, client interviews and focus groups, client data from FORT client management system.	Commissioning Framework 2023/24 - Fife Employability Pathway Review (TERU 2013)
2. NOLB Oversight and Scrutiny Group	Members of the Oversight and Scrutiny Group are appointed as they have expertise in developing and delivering employability services.
3.	
Evidence gaps	Planned action to address evidence gaps
1.	
2.	
3.	

Part 3: Recommendations and Sign Off

(Recommendations should be based on evidence available at the time and aim to mitigate negative impacts or enhance positive impacts on any or all of the protected characteristics).

Recommendation	Lead person	Timescale
1. Regular snapshots through the FORT monitoring system reporting on protected characteristics of participants - Regular monthly monitoring of uptake by protected characteristics	Vicky Brown - Opportunities Fife Partnership Officer	
2. FCE Equality Pathfinders scheme provide basic understanding of the Equality Act 2010 – Ongoing	Elric Honore - Fife Centre for Equalities	
3. Employers are actively committed to be inclusive and non-discriminatory – Ongoing	Vicky Brown – Opportunities Fife Partnership Officer & Elric Honore – Fife Centre for Equalities	
4.		
5.		

Sign off

(By signing off the EqIA, you are agreeing that the EqIA represents a thorough and proportionate analysis of the policy based on evidence listed above and there is no indication of unlawful practice and the recommendations are proportionate.

Date completed:	Date sent to Community Investment Team: Enquiry.equalities@fife.gov.uk
Senior Officer: name	Designation:

FOR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT TEAM ONLY

EqIA Ref No.	
Date checked and initials	

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Report

(to be attached as an Appendix to the committee report or for consideration by any other partnership forum, board or advisory group as appropriate)

Which Committee report does this IA relate to (specify meeting date)? Cabinet Committee, scheduled for 6 June 2024
What are the main impacts on equality? The provision commissioned on Fife's Employability Pathway (which includes No One Left Behind funded provision for young people, adults and Tackling Poverty provision for families) actively promotes equality of opportunity for all regardless of their protected characteristic and circumstances in relation to accessing employment, training and education and reducing poverty/in-work poverty. This will be monitored and actively promoted with providers during the timescale of the NOLB and TP funding streams. There is provision that will actively target young people aged 16 to 24 years of age who have been 'care experienced', which will increase individual progression opportunities and employability prospects. There is also specific provision for adults (25 years and over) which will provide a positive impact due to the opportunities to access lifelong learning, accreditation, qualifications, new work experiences and access to healthy, sustainable, fair employment.
In relation to a strategic decision, how will inequalities of outcome caused by economic disadvantage be reduced? The Opportunities Fife Partnership Strategy outlines two key priorities as: Tackling Poverty & Inequality and Inclusive Jobs & Growth To reduce the inequality of outcomes caused by economic disadvantage delivery partners focus on key locations in Fife, to engage clients who have the greatest need. Delivery Partners are committed to working with employers to understand the specific industry needs in each local area and providing training and support to meet these needs. There is also a focus to keep working with employers to help them to promote career progressions and understand how they can evolve their working and recruitment practices to ensure they are providing healthy, flexible and accessible employment opportunities. Delivery partners, especially those working with longer term, inactive clients or those with health and disability issues continue to work with employers to address discrimination and promote sustainable, fair work and wellbeing in the workplace.
What are the main recommendations to enhance or mitigate the impacts identified? The main recommendations to enhance or mitigate the impacts identified is to constantly monitor the equalities data collected with the participants. With regular monitoring and analysis through the OFP's Delivery and Oversight Group we can recognise any gaps in provision that may be evident, or any specific key target group that are not being supported accordingly. This will allow us to re-focus delivery partners to address any identified concerns.
If there are no equality impacts on any of the protected characteristics, please explain. N/A
Further information is available from: Name / position / contact details: Adam Dunkerley Opportunities Fife Partnership Manager Adam.dunkerley@fife.gov.uk Vicky Brown Opportunities Fife Partnership Officer Vicky.brown@fife.gov.uk

6 June, 2024

Agenda Item No. 9

Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) 2024-27

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report outlines an initial and high-level response to the declaration by the Council in March 2024 of a Housing Emergency.

Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Committee is requested to consider the report and:-

- (1) agree the high-level Themes of the developing HEAP; and
- (2) agree further development of the medium-term actions set out in the HEAP.

Resource Implications

The Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) will need to be considered within the context existing resources available to Fife Council across both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA). There is currently no additional Grant or Subsidy funding available to Councils as a result of declaring a Housing Emergency.

The HEAP Board will consider how existing resources can be utilised to ensure delivery of the HEAP. This will include a review of Core Budgets and any Temporary Funding Sources which may be utilised.

The HRA capital plan review will be brought back to committee, and it will determine affordability in the context of the developing HEAP. Innovative financing models and alternative delivery options will need to be considered given the challenges that exist and the limited resources.

Legal & Risk Implications

Regular breaches of statutory homelessness duties partly triggered the declaration of the Housing Emergency, and it is highly probable these will continue without focussed, cross Council and Partnership action. The Council is also likely to experience significant legal, regulatory and reputational risk due to shortages of housing supply and related services.

Impact Assessment

An EQIA will be prepared as part of the ongoing development of the HEAP.

Following the Council Declaration in March, there has been full engagement with the Council's Executive Team and a HEAP Programme Board, chaired by the Executive Director for Communities, Heads of Service and Partners. Meetings have also been held with Housing and Community Planning partners and with the housing spokespersons from each political group. A Housing Emergency Summit was held on 27th May to seek the views of a wider range of organisations that have still to be considered by the Board and developed into a wider commitment to action within the HEAP.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Fife Council took the decision to formally declare a Housing Emergency on 21st March, 2024 and required the Head of Housing to develop a Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) and report this to Cabinet on 6th June 2024.
- 1.2 On the 15th May 2024, the Scottish Government declared a National Housing Emergency in the Scottish Parliament although the implications of this are not known at the time of writing. Fife was the fourth Local Authority in Scotland to declare a Housing Emergency, following Argyll and Bute, Glasgow City and the City of Edinburgh. West Dunbartonshire have subsequently done the same and other Councils are understood to be actively considering similar declarations. Contact has been made with each local authority to share experience and learning to influence the Fife HEAP. Argyll & Bute have recently published their plan, with the City of Edinburgh's published on 7th February 2024.
- 1.3 The Housing Spokesperson and Head of Service met the Housing Minister on 6th March 2024. Although no resources have been offered, the Minister has agreed to meet regularly with the Housing Spokesperson to discuss actions arising from the Housing Emergency. The Head of Service has taken steps to inform the Scottish Housing Regulator. There has been no formal engagement with Scottish Government officials around the Emergency, beyond the ongoing dialogue around the Affordable Housing Programme and homelessness.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 In response to the declaration, the Council Executive Team created a HEAP Programme Board on 3rd April. The Board has met on a fortnightly basis to prepare the response and encourage partner contributions with the following as the main basis for the development of the HEAP.
 - Opportunities in the social rented sector have reduced substantially since 2020 with an estimated 2,200 'gap' in turnover / housing allocations.
 - Changes in the Private Rented Sector which have resulted in significant uncertainty around an important part of a functioning housing system.
 - A 24% reduction by the Scottish Government to the Affordable Housing Subsidy has significantly constrained both the Affordable Housing Programme and Acquisitions Programme locally and nationally.
 - Inflation has had a major factor on the financial challenges facing the service.
 - Temporary accommodation pressures resulting in regularly breaching statutory duties and the impact on housing allocations.
 - The level of empty homes across sector, specifically within the private sector.

- predictions around projected increases in housing need and homelessness for the next 2 years¹.
- Potential housing and wider system pressures related to poverty, resettlement and humanitarian support.

2.2 The Board has focussed on the following themes;

Theme 1 - Maintaining Affordable Housing

Focussing on; Affordable Housing Programme, Property Acquisitions, land assembly, promoting housing options (such as mid-market rent), Public and private sector development contributions

Theme 2 - Making the best use of existing properties

Focussing on; Long Term Empty Homes, access and sustainability with the Private Rented Sector, Tenancy and property management, property conversions, maximising occupancy of social rented stock, enhancing hosting arrangements and incentives

Theme 3 – Enhancing housing access and prevention of homelessness

Focussing on; Enhancing safe prevention options, Housing allocations review and flexibilities, advice, positive interventions, housing pathways, increasing housing with support routes and public sector engagement in homelessness prevention

2.3 At this point in time, it is unclear if UK or Scottish Government financial resources are available to support local authorities declaring housing emergencies. This position may change with the declaration of the National Housing Emergency or the outcome of a UK General Election in early July. On this basis, further development work is required to produce a full financial and resource plan to deliver the HEAP as a strategic framework document which recognises existing pressures on HRA capital and revenue accounts.

2.4 At this time, there is an extensive amount of work going on to assess the impact of the reduction on the Affordable Housing Programme which is needed to inform the future new build programme, property acquisitions policy and the HRA Capital Plan. This is likely to take some time to conclude due to the complexity of the work involved. Based on current assumptions;

- New build is ongoing where legal and other approvals are in place. There are 715 Fife Council units and 381 Fife Housing Association Alliance units currently on site with phased completions estimated to take place between 2024 to 2026.
- Scottish Government have confirmed that there is unlikely to be any capacity to redistribute funds from other local authority areas. This has been the case in the past when Fife was well placed to take advantage of underspends in other areas.
- Property Acquisitions are approved on a property by property basis to meet priorities with Scottish Government guidance around an £80m fund still awaited. This is expected to focus on acquisitions and / or long-term empty properties.
- The Council continues to pursue a transfer led approach to housing allocations to increase turnover. The potential to enhance the Transfer Incentive Scheme will be considered by the Allocations Task and Finish Group over the summer.
- All social rented sector partners are accelerating improvement plans to reduce the time properties are empty and focus on longer term voids to increase capacity.

¹ [The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2024 | Crisis UK](#)

- Officers are working with Private Rented Sector (PRS) partners to introduce new supports for households looking to access and sustain tenancies in the private rented sector. This includes the launch of a new Rent Guarantee Scheme amongst other services. Officers are also continuing to assess the market to develop a new model of PRS Leasing Scheme to release properties back into the Allocation pool

2.5 It should also be noted that a Housing Bill, containing a range of measures impacting on the private rented sector, housing services and, perhaps most significantly, a public sector homelessness prevention duty was introduced to Parliament on 26th March, 2024 and will require detailed consideration with CoSLA as part of this work.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 Each Local Authority that has declared Housing Emergencies has adopted a different approach based on local circumstances, it is not clear what the impact of a national declaration will be at this stage.
- 3.2 There is significant uncertainty around the financial and resourcing arrangements which need more time to be formally considered as part of the development of the Emergency response. The areas of focus set out here are for endorsement on the basis that further work is required to assess, model and prepare options around the financial framework linked to the review of the Affordable Housing Programme and HRA Capital Plan, as well as partners financial flexibilities.

John Mills
Head of Housing Services

Report Contact

Gavin Smith, Service Manager, Housing Access and PMO for the HEAP
Email: gavin.smith@fife.gov.uk

List of Appendices.

1. Draft Conceptual HEAP 2024-27



The priority of Fife’s Housing Emergency Plan is to ensure we meet homelessness statutory duties and legal responsibilities to tenants and other housing customers. If we are unable to provide temporary accommodation to households in need, we are breaching statutory duty and Unsuitable Accommodation Order if stays in Bed and Breakfast, hotel type accommodation are over 7 days. As a result, the Themes within the conceptual Housing Emergency Action Plan contain actions to improve our ability to provide temporary accommodation and ensure stays in B&B/hotel type accommodation are 7 days or less.

THEME 1: Maintaining affordable housing supply

THEME 2: Making best use of existing properties

THEME 3: Enhancing housing access and prevention of homelessness

The HEAP builds on what we are doing already, through various strategies and policies, aiming to accelerate or boost actions to mitigate the Housing Emergency. The tables give a high-level ambition of a Fife HEAP,

however each area needs to be considered in detail, to be fully costed and identify the resources required. This will prioritise the immediate actions, plan and resource for medium actions and record what we need to achieve longer term. Currently there is no additional funding from Scottish or UK Government’s to support the Housing Emergency. As part of the Housing Emergency Action Plan current budgets will be reviewed, and ways to maximise any funding sources will be examined.

The document is an initial conceptual plan based on extensive feedback from across the Council and partners since the Emergency Declaration. The Plan provides an initial baseline for further development over the summer, specifically the financial and resource aspects of the policy options. The development of a more specific performance management framework with measurable indicators is also part of the ‘Routemap’ to be reported back to Cabinet on a regular basis.

April / May	Council Executive Team agreement of Governance Framework and engagement plan, Fife Partnership 21 st May, 2024, Fife Housing Partnership 21 st May and 26 th April Workshop, Fife HEAP Summit 27 th May
June	Cabinet Committee 6 th June, further Stakeholder Engagement, Incorporation of Summit Outcomes and ongoing development of the Action Plan through the HEAP Board Council Leadership Team and Extended Council Leadership Team Engagement
July	Development of financial and resource plan, with associated Performance Management Framework
From	Finalisation of the Housing Capital Plan and Affordable Housing Programme
September	Production of a final Housing Emergency Action Plan
Onwards	Progress Report back to Cabinet



Theme 1: Maintaining affordable housing supply	
We need to maintain affordable housing supply in light of Scottish Government reduction in housing subsidy to support the Fife Affordable Housing Programme and options across all tenures to ensure housing needs are being met, increasing housing options and choice	
Current Challenges	Impact
Scottish Government reduction in the Affordable Housing Programme housing subsidy provided in 2024/25 and potentially in future years	Reduction in the Affordable Housing Programme New site approvals in 2024/25 reduced with impacts on properties available for let
HRA and landlord capital fund and revenue budget pressures within the context of inflated supply, labour and material costs	Restricted funding capacity for acquisitions and to meet stock condition improvements
Key Outcome: Increase Affordable Homes and Property Acquisitions	
Improvement actions to be scoped, costed and considered with partners/stakeholders	
2024-25	Develop options to maintain the Affordable Housing Programme by October 2024
	Develop options to finance Property Acquisitions and develop a revised approach to acquisitions by December 2024
	Explore an approach to develop modular and other forms of innovative housing by working in partnership with Edinburgh & SE Scotland City Deal Regional Homes Demonstrator by March 2025
	Engage with public and private sector landowners to increase the HRA landbank and support development in line with Plan4Fife by March 2025
	Explore innovative housing investment and partnership models to maximise housing investment approaches
2025-27	Increase provision of Mid-Market Rent properties as a viable housing option for homeless and housing applicants in employment
	Test innovative housing investment models in partnership with the Scottish Government and the FHAA
Theme 2: Making best use of existing properties	
We need to make best use of existing properties, ensuring empty properties are minimised and out of use for as short a period as possible	
Current Challenges	Impact
2,600 long term empty private sector homes and 60 longer term empty social rented properties	Loss of potential housing supply, neglect and disrepair of the global housing stock
Barriers to accessing homes and predicted loss of homes in the PRS	Limited housing options and affordability issues for most households
1,900 statutory homeless households waiting for a permanent home	Increased temporary accommodation provision, households waiting for longer in transitional settings, Increased costs for unsuitable accommodation
Key Outcome: Improving engagement with the Private Sector and improved use of Public Sector properties	
Improvement actions to be scoped, costed and considered with partners/stakeholders	
2024-25	Promote Allocations Policy flexibilities and enhanced Transfer Incentive Scheme linked to the review of the Housing Allocations approach by December 2024
	Enhance approaches to address condensation, dampness and mould within social rented sector by October 2024

	Enhance the approach and applications of SMART technology (Sensors) to support effective housing management by March 2025
	Accelerate the reduction of private sector empty homes by increasing stakeholder engagement and piloting approaches through a new Long Term Empty Homes Strategy by December 2024
	Develop and approach to promote preventative action to ensure owners/tenants can remain in private sector homes through enhanced equipment and adaptation services, housing support or other measures by December 2024
	Improve change of tenancy timescales for all social rented sector voids with a focus on longer term voids by March 2025
2025-27	Re-provision harder to let retirement/specialist properties to mainstream let

Theme 3: Enhancing housing access & prevention of homelessness

We need to enhance housing access & prevention of homelessness to reduce the number of households requiring homelessness services and eradicate the use of B&B/hotel type unsuitable accommodation

Current Challenges	Impact
Statutory Duty / Unsuitable Accommodation Order breaches	Not meeting statutory duties, Increased rough sleeping and hidden homelessness
2,700 homeless applications per year with increases predicted over 2 years	More homelessness households and increased pressures on homelessness services
Introduction of new legislation focussed on prevention	Increased cost of crisis led services and impact on public services
Potential impact of resettlement and humanitarian schemes	Demand on properties

Key Outcomes: *Reducing homeless presentations and improving sustainment tenures*

Improvement actions to be scoped, costed and considered with partners/stakeholders

2024-25	Complete the work of the Allocations Task & Finish Group to improve the balance of supply and demand by December 2024
	Embed a prevention focus into the review of the Allocations Approach and Systems Review focussing on housing options and advice by March 2025
	Design and deliver a dynamic Public Engagement campaign focussed on the realities of homelessness and housing need until 2027
	Develop a scheme to manage 100 Private Sector Leased properties to release properties back to the allocation pool by April 2025
	Develop and upscale the Whole System Approach project to improve services to those facing household vulnerabilities and homelessness. Completing a first phase by December 2024
	Create a Task Force approach to engage public bodies to promote prevention measures linked to the Housing (Scotland) Bill by September 2024
	Address student homelessness pressures in St Andrews by exploring options in relation to HMOs by Oct 2024
2025-27	Develop a range of actions to support people to remain safely in settled accommodation
	Develop and test new private rented sector options in partnership with commissioned services to support tenancy sustainment
	Upscale the Housing First programme through collaborative commissioning
	Develop and implement an enhanced residential Hosting option linked to the existing Resettlement Scheme for Ukrainians

6 June 2024
Agenda Item No. 10

Bus Station Toilets – Removal of Charges

Report by: John Mitchell, Head of Roads and Transportation Services

Wards Affected: All Wards

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet Committee approval to remove the charge for entry to the public toilets at Fife Council owned bus stations.

Recommendation

It is recommended that committee approve the removal of the 30p entry charge for the use of public toilets at Fife Council bus stations (Dunfermline, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy and Leven).

Resource Implications

The actual income from the entry charge to use the toilets has reduced over the last few years with an average now of between £30K - £40K per annum.

Conversely, the maintenance costs have increased in recent years thus reducing the net income to between £20K - £30K per year. It is proposed that the shortfall will be managed within Roads and Transportation Services budget.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no legal risks noted or anticipated.

Impact Assessment

The general duties section of the impact assessment has been completed and no negative impacts have been identified.

Consultation

Finance and Legal Services have been consulted during the preparation of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Fife Council operates the public toilets at the bus stations in Dunfermline, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy and Leven. Each of these have baby changing facilities and free access for people with disabilities. A charge for the use of the public toilets has been in place since the early 1990s. The current charge is 30p.
- 1.2 The opening hours for the toilets are shown in the table below. The bus station cleaner (part time) or bus station supervisor (full time) manages any issues arising during these times.

Days	Hours Toilets Open
Mon – Fri	07:30 – 22:00
Sat	08:00 – 22:00
Sun	12:00 – 20:00

- 1.3 In addition to the bus stations, the council owns and maintains the Park and Ride sites at Ferrytoll and Halbeath which also have public toilets. These toilets have always been free to use. These facilities are operated and maintained by Stagecoach as part of an agreement with the council.
- 1.4 St. Andrews bus station is owned and maintained by Stagecoach. They used to charge 30p for entry to their public toilets but due to breakdowns and ongoing maintenance costs with their entry systems they have been allowing free access for some time. It is our understanding that they do not propose to reintroduce the charge.
- 1.5 The income from Fife Council bus station toilets has reduced over the years as footfall and passenger numbers have reduced reflecting a national trend in lower bus and town centre use.
- 1.6 A proposal to trial free access to the toilets at Leven Bus Station for a period of six months as part of the opening of the Leven Rail Link has already been agreed with Levenmouth Area Committee members.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 In recent years, public use of cash/coinage has lessened with more people preferring to use contactless payment which is not currently available at the bus station toilets. At times, the lack of contactless payment system has caused some issues for the public with bus station staff having to intervene to allow access in certain circumstances. The current barrier system does not lend itself to upgrade to a contactless payment method and any new system would be expensive at approximately £10K per bus station.
- 2.2 Removing the charge to use the bus station toilets would help to improve accessibility, provide a more welcoming arrival/departure point, particularly for more vulnerable groups and minimise maintenance costs and access issues.
- 2.3 The issue of whether free access would promote antisocial behaviour has been considered and whilst a potential there are equal instances of where the barrier system itself has promoted conflict issues. On balance, it is considered that removing the charge and barriers would help ease overall management of the bus stations.
- 2.4 If this proposal were approved, the charge could be removed with immediate effect.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The level of income from public toilet charges has reduced over the last few years and the maintenance costs have increased.
- 3.2 The removal of the charge to use the public toilets at Fife Council bus stations would help to improve access, particularly for vulnerable groups and encourage greater use of public transport.

Report Contact

Tony McRae
Service Manager, Passenger Transport Services
Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 (ext 444426)
Email: tony.mcrae@fife.gov.uk

6 June 2024
Agenda Item No. 11

Public Electric Vehicle Charging – Regional Collaboration

Report by: John Mitchell, Head of Roads and Transportation Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report seeks approval to explore potential joint regional working for the management and expansion of the public electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure network across the local authority areas of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that committee:

1. agree to Fife Council exploring joint working and procurement with other Local Authorities as part of Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal (ESES CRD) EV Regional Strategy (outlined in Appendix 1); and
2. note that a further report will be brought to this committee for consideration to seek approval prior to commencement of any joint, regional procurement exercise.

Resource Implications

The council's costs associated with this proposal would be recovered through the Transport Scotland Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) Grant award to Fife Council. From an initial award of £140K, Transport Scotland have accrued Fife Council's remaining allocation (£105K) to 2024/25. SEStran officers have indicated that the initial request from Fife Council would be £10K-£15K.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are risks and benefits associated with a collaborative approach. These are detailed in section 4 of the report in Appendix 1.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment and a Fife Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) have not been completed because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices at this time.

Consultation

Finance and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The development of Fife Council's EV strategy has considered key evidence and data, including evolving technology; the need to make the whole EV network accessible and equitable; locations for investment; and the capital investment required.
- 1.2 Fife's EV Strategy up to 2026 promotes provision of 'charging hubs' in council owned car parks across Fife. Officers are investigating investment and development opportunities in the commercial market through a commercial concession model to manage and operate the existing eFife fleet and public network and allow the expansion of the charging network.
- 1.3 Consultation with users on the short-term proposals is taking place in June 2024. Once this is complete, the finalised EV Strategy will be presented to Fife Council's Cabinet Committee for consideration.
- 1.4 Fife Council is working closely with Charge Place Scotland (CPS) to ensure that when the CPS facility in its current form ends (on 31 December 2025), there is back-office support for eFife network users and Fife Council Services.
- 1.5 The ESES CRD recognises that many local authorities in the region are in a similar position to Fife Council and are considering similar, commercial concession delivery models. ESES CRD and SEStran have established an EV Strategy Regional working group to explore opportunities for regional joint working in developing a future EV charging network.
- 1.6 A regional approach to EV provision offers potential synergies for procurement. It is proposed to explore regional opportunities whilst also continuing to develop Fife's own EV provision (including integration of public and fleet EV infrastructure), prior to making decisions about whether to procure on our own or as part of a collaboration.
- 1.7 Transport Scotland (TS) have funded the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) to date, and funding is available this financial year (2024/25) to support the identification and procurement of new initiatives.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 An ESES CRD EV group is seeking to procure external support to manage the development of this work, facilitate the assessment and identification of a preferred procurement strategy and a common set of tender and contract documents.
- 2.2 This proposed work has been discussed and endorsed in principle by the ESES CRD Directors' Group. ESES CRD and SEStran have prepared a committee template which is contained for information in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 This initiative does not preclude Fife Council from continuing to investigate its own approach to EV provision, including the need to balance public and fleet provision across the Fife Partnership.
- 2.4 It is anticipated that this work could be funded this financial year using the balance of EVIF grants from Transport Scotland across all ESES CRD Local Authorities.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 There is merit in exploring a collaborative regional approach to public EV infrastructure. Officers are keen to investigate this in parallel with current work prior to making decisions about whether to procure on our own or as part of a collaboration.

List of Appendices

1. Public Electric Vehicle Charging - Regional Collaboration – Template for Council Committees

Report Contacts

Jane Findlay
Lead Consultant, Climate Change and Partnerships
Bankhead Central, Bankhead Park, Glenrothes, KY7 6GH
Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 (ext 444407)
Email: jane.findlay@fife.gov.uk

Susan Keenlyside
Service Manager (Sustainable Transport & Parking)
Bankhead Central, Bankhead Park, Glenrothes, KY7 6GH
Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 (ext 444442)
Email: susan.keenlyside@fife.gov.uk

**Public Electric Vehicle Charging - Regional Collaboration –
Template for Council Committees**



1.	INTRODUCTION
1.1	This report provides the [Committee Name] with an update on proposed work to explore the potential benefits of a collaborative approach to expansion of the public electric vehicle charging infrastructure network across the 8 local authorities (LAs) of the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) region, which includes all 6 LAs in the City Region, plus Dumfries and Galloway.
1.2	This is known as ‘the exploration stage’ of the programme, and involvement in this stage does not commit LAs to any particular course of action following production of the documents listed in 1.3.
1.3	<p>The exploration stage must be complete by September 2024 in order for procurement to commence in October 2024. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Procurement Strategy, including exploring potential alternative approaches such as setting up a framework agreement, or joint procurement exercises between two or more LAs, or an individual LA procuring on its own • The preparation of a common set of tender and contract documents, including specifications, performance criteria and KPIs • Liaison with energy supplier(s) (DNO) to identify any required grid reinforcements and influence future investment <p>It should be noted that the above list is not exhaustive.</p>
1.4	The Procurement Strategy will take into account each LA’s requirements, preferred commercial model, attitudes to risk, potential collaborations etc. When complete, each LA will be asked to consider how it wishes to proceed. All outputs from the exploration stage will be available to all LAs whether they choose to procure collaboratively or on their own.
1.5	The report seeks delegated authority for the [insert appropriate Director] to approve the allocation of council resources and grant funding from TS this financial year to support the activities identified above.
1.6	This report is being considered by all of the LAs listed in 1.1 where approval of the activities listed in 1.3 - 1.5 does not already exist or is not already being sought.

2.	BACKGROUND
2.1	Over the past two years, LAs have been developing Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategies & Expansion Plans (SEPs). All City Region members have completed SEPs, which lay out current and possible future charging requirements. These will form the basis of funding applications for any future procurement exercise. Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Councils are in a similar position, and Dumfries & Galloway Council plan to have completed their SEP by early May.
2.2	These SEPs have identified similarities in the scope of authorities' expansion plans, including proposed use of the same, or very similar, delivery models. This indicates that there are potential synergies available through a collaborative approach to procurement, and it is recommended that this is explored by all LAs prior to them making decisions about whether to procure on their own or as part of a collaboration due to the benefits outlined below.
2.3	Work to date has been funded by Transport Scotland through its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF), and funding is available this financial year (2024/25) to support the identification and procurement of new initiative(s).
2.4	There are currently two key deadlines around the delivery of a public EV charging network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first and most pressing is the discontinuation of ChargePlace Scotland. TS currently funds this back-office function and have announced that the current contract, which expires in December 2025, will be the last. This could mean all local authorities need to procure a new back-office provider by December 2025. • The second is availability of the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) to support private sector delivery, which is of particular importance for charge point locations that may be less commercially viable. At present, this funding needs to be spent and claimed by March 2026. This funding window may be extended by TS and clarity is being sought.
2.5	If these deadlines are to be met, it is estimated that tenders would have to be issued by October 2024 to allow sufficient time for future procurement activities and local authority approvals.
2.6	SEStran has been working with the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT), its regional partners (which include the 6 members of the ESESCRD, Clackmannanshire Council and Falkirk Council), and Dumfries and Galloway Council to explore the potential benefits of a collaborative approach.
2.7	This exploration has been discussed and endorsed in principle by the City Region Directors' Group (which, for this item, included representatives from Clackmannanshire and Dumfries & Galloway Councils) which also approved the development of a Programme Initiation Document (PID) for the exploration phase, which will set out the vision, scope, timescales, costs and funding that would be required to develop a procurement strategy and accompanying contract documentation.
2.8	The exploration phase may result in one or more LAs concluding that their preferred approach is to go to the market on their own. While this may be the eventual outcome, depending on comparison with the benefits and costs of a collaborative approach to the market, it is essential that all LAs are fully committed to exploration of a collaborative approach in order that they can make best use of the funding

	available from TS, limit the resource demands on each LA, meet key milestones and achieve the optimal responses from the market through adopting a broadly consistent approach.
2.9	This initiative does not stop those who want to take a twin track approach (i.e. participating in the exploration phase but continuing to develop their own approach to market) such that they can go to the market on their own if, come September, that is the preferred option. But each LA is requested to defer commencing a procurement exercise until the exploration phase is complete.
2.10	Given that LAs would have to develop their own procurement strategies and contract documentation if they choose to go to market on their own, involvement in the exploration phase will not cause any material delay to the delivery phase.
3.	PROPOSAL
3.1	It is proposed to set up a small programme team, with appropriate governance, in order to drive the work outlined in the PID forward. As a minimum, the team is likely to consist of Council Officers / consultants with specific project management, procurement and legal experience, and also generalist finance experience.
3.2	Support and guidance will also be available from SFT who are able to share the learning from other major collaborations in Scotland to expand the availability of public EV charging, such as the eight authorities that make up the Glasgow City Region, the three Ayrshire Councils as well as the North of Scotland initiative that comprises Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City.
3.3	It is anticipated that the PID will take around 4 weeks to produce, and it will provide the estimated costs for the exploration phase. The Recommendations of this report include delegating authority for the [insert appropriate Director] to approve the allocation of council resources and grant funding from TS this financial year to support the activities identified above.
3.4	The project team will report to a Steering Group composed of representatives from each Council with relevant experience and the authority to make operational decisions. This group is likely to meet regularly – possibly weekly or fortnightly in the early stages of the programme.
3.5	Overarching governance will be provided by an Oversight Group, consisting of a Director or nominated deputy from each Council, which will meet infrequently – when significant decisions are required (e.g. to approve the PID, to consider the final exploration phase report and, if necessary, to commence a formal procurement exercise.)
3.6	It is recommended that external support, with extensive relevant technical experience, is procured by a LA or SEStran, to manage this work, facilitate the assessment and identification of a preferred procurement strategy as well as developing a common set of tender and contract documents. It should be noted that the Procurement Strategy may specify different approaches for different LAs. It is anticipated that all of this could be funded this financial year, using the balance of EVIF grants from TS which, aggregated across all LAs, is estimated to be in the order of £500k. It is possible that one or more LAs may be required to provide additional revenue funding if their entire EVIF grant has already been committed. Alternatively, these authorities could provide payment in kind by, for example, providing legal or procurement expertise in lieu of additional funding.

3.7	<p>Given the key deadlines noted at 2.4, the programme for this work is necessarily compressed, but is felt to be achievable provided it is adequately funded and resourced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree funding/resource allocation - Apr • Procure advisers to support contract development – Apr/May • Develop common tender and contract documents – June/July • Undertake further market engagement – July • Develop preferred procurement strategies – July/August • Finalise common tender and contract documents – July/August • Present findings and suggested next steps – September • LA approval to commence future procurements – from September • Target award of contracts – Spring 2025
3.8	<p>A summary of each individual SEP is being pulled together by consultants procured by SEStran. If approved by individual LAs, the final document will also fulfil a funding requirement from TS for each local authority to have a publishable SEP, thus eliminating the need for each local authority to produce a document separately.</p>
4.	<p>BENEFITS AND RISKS OF A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH</p>
4.1	<p>Benefits and Risks will be assessed more fully in the Procurement Strategy produced as a result of this work. However it is worth noting currently envisaged benefits and risks at this point.</p>
4.2	<p>Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pooling resources and funds to deliver common procurement documents offers significant savings in time and money across the region, as work can be done once that would otherwise have to be done individually by 9 local authorities. • Indications are that there is insufficient funding available for all LAs to go to the market individually, and this would adversely impact LAs' ability to 'prime' the market • There are also significant benefits in having a common set of tender documents and presenting the region as a single market for Charge Point Operators (CPOs), even if separate tenders are issued at a more local level. This should lead to better value overall and more competition from CPOs. • Making best use of the funding available from TS • Enabling all LAs to go to the market where funding constraints may otherwise mean some might not be able to go on their own • A common and consistent approach to the market, making the region a more attractive place to invest • Avoids unnecessary duplication of effort • Builds capacity in the public sector to continually develop transport decarbonisation initiatives
4.3	<p>Despite the clear benefits, there are also some risks associated with a collaborative approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk: A one-size-fits-all solution for regional collaboration may not be feasible or desirable across all partners. Mitigation: Despite the diversity in partners' needs, creating collaborative documentation and regional procurement with tailored 'Lots' or phased initiatives can add value, aligning LAs by risk appetite and readiness for procurement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk: Different LAs may have varying priorities and objectives, leading to potential conflicts or inefficiencies in the procurement documents. Mitigation: Establish a clear, shared vision and objectives early in the project, facilitated through workshops and regular communication. • Risk: Standardising specifications and requirements across different jurisdictions can be challenging. Mitigation: Build on existing templates and guidance which is already available, share lessons learned from other collaborations to develop a flexible framework that allows for customisation within certain standardised parameters. • Risk: Each LA may operate under different governance environments and compliance requirements. Mitigation: Careful planning, proactive communication and common reporting to streamline the governance and approval process. <p>With a robust governance structure and project manager in place as proposed, it is felt that these risks can be sufficiently mitigated to allow the full benefits to be realised.</p>
4.4	<p>It should also be noted that there are risks to not taking a collaborate approach. Not doing so could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in some LA being unable to progress until additional funding is made available. • Compromise a just transition that ensures equitable access to public EV charging across the region • Result in duplication of effort and therefore wasted time and money • Generate a buyers' market and result in competition for CPOs between LAs
5.	RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1	The [Committee name] is requested to instruct Officers to commit to the exploratory phase and not to commence any procurement until this has been concluded and reported to the Committee, which is likely to be around September 2024.
5.2	The [Committee name] is requested to note that a paper will be submitted to the Joint Committee on 6 June 2024
5.3	<p>The [Committee name] is requested to delegate authority for the [appropriate Director] to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the allocation of council resources and grant funding from TS this financial year to support the activities identified above. (As noted above, a further report will be submitted to [Committee name] seeking approval to commence any procurement exercise)
5.4	The [Committee name] is requested to approve publication of the [insert Council name] SEP as part of a regional SEP thus eliminating the need for [insert Council name] to produce a document separately.

6 June 2024
Agenda Item No. 12

Fife Council Electric Vehicle Public Charging Tariffs

Report by: John Mitchell, Head of Roads and Transportation Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to increase the level of tariff for the Fife Council public Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network in order to better align the tariff with private operators and make the existing charging infrastructure a more attractive investment opportunity for potential commercial operators.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that committee:

1. note the continued progress in developing the Fife Council EV Strategy as detailed in this report, including exploring joint working with SEStran and partner local authorities;
2. approve the increase in tariffs for the charging of electric vehicles in public car parks in Fife. The proposed tariffs for the three types of EV charge infrastructure are:
 - Trickle charger (7kW), £0.40/kWh
 - Fast charger (22kW), £0.40/kWh
 - Rapid charger (50kW), £0.60/kWh
3. approve the removal of the current connection fee of £1.60 for all charging sessions at Fife Council operated charging facilities;
4. approve the introduction of a maximum period of stay of 70mins at all Fife Council operated rapid chargers (this allows 60mins for charging, plus a 10mins grace period); and
5. approve the introduction of an overstay fee of £10 at all Fife Council operated rapid chargers to help manage the level of demand and encourage better utilisation of the infrastructure.

Resource Implications

In 2023/24, the income and expenditure within the EV charging (eFife) network was:

- Income* £367,111
- Expenditure £651,177 (detailed in Appendix 1)

(* Note - final income yet to be reconciled by ChargePlace Scotland (CPS))

It is estimated that the proposed revised tariffs could generate a total income of between £700,000 to £900,000 per annum, subject to the level of demand being similar to present levels. If achieved, this level of income would ensure that the public EV charging network in Fife could be self-financing.

Legal & Risk Implications

The introduction of the revised tariffs would help balance the income and expenditure budget within the EV charging network. This will help to attract private operators to invest and develop the charging network.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment and a Fife Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) have not been completed because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices at this time.

Consultation

Legal and Finance Services have been consulted in the development of this report. Consultation has been undertaken with Transport Scotland and Scottish Futures Trust to help develop Fife Council's EV Strategy and inform the level of tariff.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The existing eFife tariff of 15p/kWh with a £1.60 connection fee was implemented on 16 November 2020. It was approved by the Economy Tourism Strategic Planning and Transportation Committee on 20 January 2020 (2020.ETSPT.52 - para 120 refers). This tariff was set to cover the electricity and back-office support costs only.
- 1.2 The majority of the existing charging infrastructure has been delivered through Transport Scotland grant funding. To secure further grant funding, local authorities are required to develop an EV Strategy and introduce tariffs at a level that would be commercially attractive to external operators. The long-term focus is for the EV network within Scotland to be delivered by commercial operators, in partnership with local authorities.
- 1.3 Work is on-going to develop Fife's EV Strategy and explore opportunities for regional joint working in developing a future EV charging network.
- 1.4 The current level of tariff was set when Fife Council's electricity cost was 13p/kWh. The cost with the new local authority electricity provider now ranges between 23p-29p/kWh.
- 1.5 Currently, Fife Council has the lowest tariff for EV charging within the SEStran area and bordering local authorities, as detailed in Appendix 2.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 The eFife charging network has shown a year-on-year increase in charging sessions, power consumption and users, with an average of approximately 6170 users per month in 2023/24, up 75% from 2022/23 (as detailed in Appendix 3). The usage during the year the tariff was applied (2020/21) was lower than the previous year (2019/20). However, this was during the Covid pandemic when travel was restricted. Usage returned to higher than original levels by 2021/22.

- 2.2 With the use of new technology within the ChargePlace Scotland (CPS) App for payment and contactless payments, the data from CPS indicates that there are now over 12,000 unique users of Fife Council's public EV charging infrastructure.
- 2.3 The current usage of the three types of chargers and length of stay is shown in Table 1 below. The greatest number of sessions are for those who can access rapid chargers. Any tariff applied to the EV charging network needs to accommodate all users and ensure the turnover and management of all types of chargers.

Types of chargers	Number	Sessions	Power Consumption (kWh)	Average length of Stay (hrs:mins:secs)
Rapid (50kW)	10	32,540	848,345	1:04:07
Fast (22kW)	26	18,320	463,493	4:45:56
Trickle (7kW)	31	17,004	411,689	6:36:56

Table 1: eFife Network Utilisation

- 2.4 The investment in charging units is significant with rapid chargers costing approximately £30,000 per unit and fast/trickle chargers costing approximately £3,000 per unit. The higher investment for a rapid charger needs to be recovered.
- 2.5 The connection fee element of the current tariff structure has been contentious with drivers of EVs with small batteries and those with hybrid vehicles, as both types of vehicles require to refuel more often. This potentially disadvantages drivers with older EV models and second-hand EVs.
- 2.6 Rapid chargers are higher powered chargers (see Appendix 4 for more detail), capable of charging an EV battery quickly and designed for higher turnover of users. To combat inconsiderate use (including hogging) and improve turnover and availability, it is proposed that a maximum stay period and an overstay fee are applied to the 10 rapid chargers within Fife.
- 2.7 It is proposed that the maximum stay period at a rapid charger would be 70 minutes. This would comprise of a 60-minute charging period and a grace period of 10 minutes to allow drivers to return to their vehicle. Limited income from the overstay fee is expected due to increased compliance.
- 2.8 The revised tariffs have been based on comparison with surrounding local authorities tariffs (as shown in Appendix 2) to improve utilisation of the eFife network; to cover expenditure and make the eFife network financially sustainable; and develop a more commercially viable tariff to encourage commercial interest by Charge Point Operators. The tariffs are shown in Table 2 below.

Charger Type	Current tariff	Current connection fee	Proposed revised tariff	Proposed connection fee	Proposed maximum stay period	Proposed overstay fee
Trickle (7kW)	15p / kWh	£1.60	40p / kWh	£0	n/a	n/a
Fast (22kW)	15p / kWh	£1.60	40p / kWh	£0	n/a	n/a
Rapid (50kW)	15p / kWh	£1.60	60p / kWh	£0	70 mins	£10 (applied after 70 mins)

Table 2: Current & Revised EV tariffs

- 2.9 The implementation of the revised tariff and maximum stay and overstay fee for rapid chargers would be implemented following approval of this committee. This is expected to be within 4-6 weeks, allowing the necessary lead in time and advertising.
- 2.10 The EV tariff and overstay fee will be reviewed annually or until a CPO is appointed.
- 2.11 **Update on Fife EV strategy**
- Officers from Roads and Transportation Services are at the initial stages of developing a commercial concession model to engage a Charge Point Operator (CPO) to manage and operate the existing eFife Fleet and Public network and allow the expansion of the eFife network. Scottish Futures Trust is providing guidance and advice on contract documentation and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- 2.12 Fife Council is working closely with CPS to ensure that when the CPS facility ends on 31 December 2025 there is back-office support for eFife network users and for Fife Council Services.
- 2.13 User consultation on the short-term proposals to expand the eFife network is taking place from in June 2024. Once the consultation is completed, the final EV Strategy will be presented to Cabinet Committee for consideration.
- 2.14 The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal has established an EV Strategy regional working group to explore the potential benefits of a collaborative approach to the expansion of the public EV charging infrastructure network across the SEStran area. This may develop opportunities of joint working with other Local Authorities and partners. A report outlining this work is being considered by this Committee (refer to agenda Item 11).

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The tariff changes proposed would establish an EV charging structure that makes the EV network in Fife self-sustaining and makes the EV network more attractive to promote as an investment opportunity to commercial operators.

- 3.2 Work will continue on the development and implementation of the Fife Council EV Strategy, developing the documentation for the commercial concession model to appoint a CPO.
- 3.3 In parallel, officers will support the work of Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal EV Strategy Regional working group to explore the potential benefits of a collaborative approach to the expansion of the public EV charging infrastructure network across SEStran area and develop opportunities of joint working with other local authorities and partners.

List of Appendices

1. eFife Costs
2. Local Authority EV tariffs
3. eFife network usage
4. Rapid chargers & overstay fees

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

- Economy Tourism Strategic Planning and Transportation Committee, 20th January 2020, Item 5: Electric Vehicles – Public Charging Fees
- Scottish Futures Trust - Insight Report on Tariffs, [Layout 1 \(scottishfuturestrust.org.uk\)](https://www.scottishfuturestrust.org.uk/layout/1)
- https://www.eva.scot/assets/documents/EVA_Scotland_Tariff_Guidance_for_Scotland_2019_Issue_1-1.pdf

Report Contacts

Jane Findlay

Lead Consultant, Climate Change and Partnerships

Bankhead Central, Bankhead Park, Glenrothes, KY7 6GH

Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 (ext 444407)

Email: jane.findlay@fife.gov.uk

Susan Keenlyside

Service Manager (Sustainable Transport & Parking)

Bankhead Central, Bankhead Park, Glenrothes, KY7 6GH

Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 (ext 444442)

Email: susan.keenlyside@fife.gov.uk

eFife Costs

Annual Costs	Details	Total Costs 2023/24 (Actual)	Estimated Operating Costs 2024/25
Electricity charges (as set on 1 st April 2023)	23p/kWh and 29p/kWh, depending on location	£466,682	£466,682
Daily Standing charges for electricity	Vary between £0.31 to £17.31 per day, depending on location	£68,974	£68,974
Electricity Meter charge per year	46 meters @ £100 each	£4,600	£4,600
Warranty and Maintenance Contracts	48 hour call out (Note - Ad hoc repairs outwith contract are more expensive)	£50,644	£50,644
SIM cards and Data	To allow chargepoints to communicate with back office	£4,355	£4,355
CPS Back Office	Phoneline, website and app for driver support, manage tariffs, allow contactless payments (£150 per unit)	£10,050	£10,050
Merchant, Banking & Admin fees for tariff collection	Part of all payment transactions	£42,125	£65,905
Repairs outwith Maintenance contract	Vary between small repairs, vandalism & complete replacements	£3,687	£3,687
Replacement of units	15 x 7kW are now over 10 years old, installed 2014	Nil	£75,000
TOTAL		£651,117	£749,897

Local Authority EV Tariffs

Local Authority	Connection Fee	Overstay Fee	Trickle Charger (7kW) Rate/kWh	Fast Charger (22kW) Rate/kWh	Rapid Charger (50kW) Rate/kWh
Clackmannanshire	None	Fast £12 after 4hrs Rapid £20 after 1hr and every 1hr thereafter Trickle, Fast & Rapid minimum charge £5	48p	48p	69p
Dundee	38p	Trickle & Fast £10 after 190mins Rapid £10 after 70mins	45p	45p	50p
East Lothian*	None	Rapid £50 after 45mins Rapid minimum charge £2	45p (Peak 4–8pm) 35p (Off peak)		80p (Peak 4-8pm) 60p (Off peak)
Edinburgh	None	Trickle £30 after 12hrs Fast £30 after 3hrs started between 8am-8pm Rapid £30 after 1hr	45p	50p	55p
Falkirk**	None	Fast £12 applied every 4hrs Rapid £20 applied every 1hr All chargers minimum charge £5	48p	48p	69p
Midlothian	None	Rapid £1 per min after 1hr All chargers minimum charge £1	35p	35p	50p
Perth & Kinross	None	Fast £10 after 4hrs Rapid £10 after 1hr	45p	45p	50p
Scottish Borders	None	Rapid £1 per min after 45mins All chargers minimum charge £1	30p	30p	60p
West Lothian	£1 on 7kW only	Fast £10 over 3hrs 8am -8pm Rapid £10 over 50mins, no return 90 mins Fast & Rapid minimum charge £1	40p	40p	50p
Average			40p	41p	57p

Note:

* East Lothian Council have chargers > 50kW costing 80p/kWh (Peak 4 – 8pm) and 65p/kWh (off peak)

** Falkirk Council have Ultra Rapid Chargers 75p/kWh with minimum charge £5m, overstay £30 after every 40min

eFife network usage

The Table below provides of the eFife usage and tariff income.

Year	Number of Charging Sessions	Power Consumption kWh	Actual / Projected Income to Fife Council
2023/24 (1-4-23 to 29-2-24)	67,864	1,723,527	£255,323.77*
2022/23	42,357	998,978	£160,000.27
2021/22	21,955	475,814	£27,093.05
2020/21	19,270	300,281	£13,316.78
2019/20	37,440	467,317	£-

Note:

* Excludes March 2024 income

Rapid Chargers & Overstay Fee

Each rapid charger has 3 tethered cables, two DC and a single AC. The AC cable charges at 22kW. Only one DC cable can be used at a time, in conjunction with the AC.

If a vehicle is left connected to a DC cable, the other DC cable cannot provide a charge until the first DC cable is released. This limits the number of drivers who can use the rapid charger throughout the day.

It has remained the responsibility of users to manage use but there are a handful of drivers who repeatedly connect and leave their vehicle on a DC cable for several hours at a time.

The busiest rapid charger at Bankhead, Glenrothes can charge approximately 15 vehicles per day, with over 4,000 sessions per year. However, this is limited by the misuse of drivers using a DC cable for a long stay facility.

Notices have been added to rapid EV charging units in an attempt to combat the issue. The notices state '*Rapid Charger- Please be considerate of other users and limit charging to 1 hour maximum*'. This approach is supported by the CPS Electric Charge Point Etiquette Guide, [cps-etiquette-guide.pdf \(chargeplacescotland.org\)](https://www.chargeplacescotland.org/cps-etiquette-guide.pdf). Unfortunately, the issue persists.

The rapid chargers are the most expensive chargers to purchase, install and maintain, and some have high daily electricity fees. The use of the rapid chargers supports the lesser used network of trickle and fast chargepoints and not all vehicles can use rapid chargers at the 50kW rate.

Fife Council is one of a minority of Councils not implementing an overstay fee and the introduction would improve EV users' experience of the eFife network. EV drivers have requested Fife Council implement overstay fees on rapid chargers. The introduction of the fee aims to improve availability of the chargepoints and increase utilisation and increase driver confidence in being able to access a rapid charger.

It is not anticipated that revenue from the fee would be significant as once implemented, increased compliance is expected. Overstay fees would be implemented and collected automatically by the CPS back office.

There are 10 rapid chargers in Fife, located as shown below:

- 1 x Fluthers Car Park, Cupar
- 2 x Bankhead Central, Glenrothes
- 2 x Halbeath Park & Ride
- 1 x Halbeath Depot
- 1 x Glasswork Street Car Park, Kirkcaldy
- 1 x Cupar Road Car Park, Newburgh
- 2 x Petheram Bridge Car Park, St Andrews

Silverburn Park Flax Mill Project– Historic Environment Scotland - Conservation Burden Deed

Report by: Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service

Wards Affected: 21

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to agree the granting of a Conservation Burden Deed (CBD) in favour of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in relation to the Silverburn Park, Leven, Flax Mill Project.

Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- (1) agree to the granting of a Conservation Burden Deed (CBD) in favour of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and note the assumption of risk associated with this proposal; and
- (2) authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service to enter into legally binding agreements on terms to their satisfaction in respect of the Conservation Burden Deed request by HES.

Resource Implications

While agreeing to the CBD request is not expected to have any direct resource implications for Fife Council, in the event of failure by Fife Employment Access Trust (FEAT), with whom the council are working with in this project, the council could become liable for the completion of the scheme of works and the future maintenance of the building.

The total costs of the scheme of works as reported to the Cabinet Committee on 8th March 2023 is more than £8 million. This risk is time limited and will cease when ownership of the Flax Mill is transferred from the council to FEAT. The transfer is expected to take place in the first half of 2025.

Legal & Risk Implications

Advice has been procured from the council's external legal adviser Harper Mcleod.

- A CBD is a title condition to ensure the preservation or protection of architectural, historical, or other special characteristics of any land and can be enforced by HES against the council as owner of the property.
- This CBD will make the council responsible for terms of the HES grant should FEAT fail to meet the obligations of the grant offer.
- There are currently no concerns about FEAT's viability, and they are expected to complete the project as planned.

- This risk is time-limited and will cease when ownership of the Flax Mill is transferred from the council to FEAT.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

Both Legal Services and Finance have been consulted on the content of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This request is linked to the Flax Mill project which is a key piece of work in the wider Silverburn Park, Leven regeneration approach.
- 1.2 Silverburn Park is an estate of around 27 acres consisting of mature mixed woodland, formal gardens and paddocks between Leven and Lundin Links and situated on the A915 and on the Fife Coastal Path. It was the home of the Russell family and contained Silverburn House (destroyed by fire in 2018 due to vandalism), a dowager house, the Flax Mill and several cottages which once housed workers on the estate. The cottages are still in use, but the other buildings are not currently usable.
- 1.3 The Park was gifted to the predecessor of Fife Council in 1973. It was very well used up until the early 2000s with, at its peak, 20,000 visitors a year enjoying a range of activities offered including a small animal farm. A range of issues including vandalism, foot and mouth and lack of available investment funding saw Fife Council gradually reducing its commitment to the site.
- 1.4 The buildings deteriorated to the point that, in 2012, the Flax Mill had to be vacated as a base for Grounds Maintenance due to concerns over the condition of the roof.
- 1.5 After several attempts to promote the park and buildings on the open market, it was agreed that discussions with third sector partners would be useful to ascertain if an end use for the park and buildings could be found.
- 1.6 Any proposal for the park had to work within the limitations of an agreement to preserve the space as a place of quiet reflection and that access to the park for the residents of Levenmouth would never be compromised. Accordingly, no significant additional building development would have been allowed on the site and this was not an attractive proposition for any private investor. The park is subject to overview by the National Trust who remain a key consultee on any proposed activity or changes within Silverburn.
- 1.7 Fife Employability Access Trust (FEAT) submitted a proposal that found favour with the council and have been developing the site over the last few years. Several reports have been considered by the Levenmouth Area Committee highlighting progress and new developments.
- 1.8 In 2019, FEAT took on the long-term lease of the park and have opened a successful camp site which has won several awards. A number of buildings were excluded from that lease agreement, including the Flax Mill, and these remained the responsibility of Fife Council.

- 1.9 The key project within the wider regeneration of Silverburn Park is the redevelopment of the Flax Mill building and members will be aware that significant funding has been allocated from council capital budgets to support this work. There are several other funders supporting the project with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) being one of the major contributors.
- 1.10 The ask from this report is to secure agreement from members to allow officers within Legal Services to draw up and provide a CBD to facilitate the release of funding from HES to FEAT which would satisfy the requirements of the HES formal grant offer towards the Flax Mill project.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 HES have advised FEAT, in their draft offer of grant for £750,000, that this sum is to be applied towards the 'scheme works' that will be undertaken at the Flax Mill. This refers to all the works that are in the contract to be carried out to bring the building up to an agreed standard, not just the works that will be covered by the HES proportion of the overall grant funding.
- 2.2 In the event of various recovery events occurring, noted in the HES draft grant offer, which include; the disposal of the property, a breach of grant conditions or failure to achieve completion by the final account deadline (31 March 2027), HES has the right to claw back grant on a sliding scale.
- 2.3 Security for the HES grant would normally be enshrined in a standard security over the building which would have been granted in favour of HES by the council. In this case, however, the recipient of the grant will be FEAT, while the council remain the owner of the Flax Mill at this time.
- 2.4 On that basis, HES are asking in their draft grant offer to FEAT that a Conservation Burden Deed be delivered to HES. The CBD will be granted by Fife Council because it is the owner of the Flax Mill.
- 2.5 The grant offer also refers to the delivery of a letter of consent, issued by Fife Council to HES. This would be an undertaking by the council to HES to provide FEAT with access to the property to implement the terms of the grant agreement while the council remains the owner of the property and, secondly, if ownership title of the Flax Mill is not transferred to FEAT by a date to be agreed, that the council accept a novation of the grant agreement in place of FEAT and be bound by the terms of the grant agreement from then on.
- 2.6 The council have already put in place a licence to occupy agreement with FEAT and its contractors which allows them to occupy and work on the Flax Mill whilst it remains in council ownership. The council have also agreed that it has every intention of transferring the ownership of the Flax Mill to FEAT at a mutually agreed date.
- 2.7 The risk to the council from the CBD and letter of consent would be the obligation to complete the Flax Mill project to the agreed contract specification should FEAT not be able to carry this out. The most likely scenario for this would be if FEAT ceased to operate as a charity and trading arm.
- 2.8 Based on that scenario, this would potentially require the council to negotiate with other organisations who are directly funding FEAT to ensure the council can access those funds allocated to the Flax Mill, to complete the project, or to secure other sources of funding to cover any gap. It should be noted that the council are already co signatories to the NLHF grant to this project (£3.476 million) which would be advantageous in terms of any required negotiations with this major funder.

- 2.9 At this juncture, we have no concerns about the viability of FEAT in terms of the charity or trading arm and fully expect it to take the Flax Mill project to a conclusion.
- 2.10 The risks to the council arising from the acceptance of the HES request will only apply for the period until FEAT take on the title of the Flax Mill building from the council. As such, the risks to the council are time limited, up to the point of transfer of ownership of the Flax Mill from the council to FEAT.
- 2.11 FEAT have undertaken discussions with the council for the purchase of the property, but that title has not yet been taken.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The approach being taken here by HES in requesting a CBD and letter of consent is a workaround to suit the circumstances of the Flax Mill project. Had the council been the recipient of the grant directly from HES, the council would have been required to provide a standard security which would have committed it to the completion of the project and given the protection HES would have required for their financial investment.

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973: -

- [Silverburn Park , Flax Mill Regeneration Project - Cabinet Committee 9th March 2023 – Agenda Item 10](#)
- [Silverburn Park Leven: Proposed Disposal of Flax Mill Building - Assets and Corporate Services Sub Committee 27th January 2022](#)
- Scottish Government Website – [Title Conditions Scotland Act 2003](#)
- Historic Environment Scotland – Undated Draft Offer of Grant to FEAT

Report Contact:

David Paterson
Community Manager Levenmouth
Buckhaven Burgh Chambers
Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 + VOIP Number 493928
Email: david.paterson@fife.gov.uk

6 June 2024
Agenda Item No. 14

Café Inc

Report by: Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on Café Inc - the council's holiday hunger initiative over Easter 2024 and the recommended improvements and changes following on from the scrutiny working group reviewing Café Inc.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that committee:-

- (1) agrees that officers incorporate the changes to Cafe Inc as recommended by the scrutiny working group; and
- (2) notes the Easter performance of Cafe Inc and that further management action may need to be taken to provide a sustainable service within the available budget for Cafe Inc over the rest of the year.

Resource Implications

The core budget for Cafe Inc is £550k for 2024-25. In addition, £30k has been allocated to support the project from Education. Easter Cafe Inc costs were £107k. On the basis of the Easter demand, the project may overspend by £60k. This will be reviewed after the summer and in a future report on Cost of Living.

Legal & Risk Implications

There is a risk that the project will run out of budget to operate for all weeks of the school holiday period and the performance of the project across Fife will be closely monitored over the summer and necessary action taken.

Impact Assessment

Impact assessment will be incorporated into future changes to Café Inc.

Consultation

This is a report of the review undertaken by the Cafe Inc working Group and from feedback from families during Easter 2024.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The People and Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed a working group to undertake further scrutiny of the council's Café Inc Programme at its meeting in January 2023.
- 1.2 The working group agreed to examine the delivery model for Cafe Inc and to consider improvements and changes and agreed that these changes should be considered by Cabinet before Summer 2024.

2.0 Scrutiny Working Group

- 2.1 The working group comprised Councillors Goodall, Robb, Gulline, Verner, MacDougall, Caldwell and Clarke. The working group met on four occasions to review aspects of Café Inc and to discuss improvements and changes. This paper went to scrutiny in February 2024.
- 2.2 The following topics were considered:
 - Reviewing and delivering the aim and principles of Café Inc.
 - Addressing how we deliver a Service of equal standards across Fife.
 - Improving the quality and choice of meals served through Café Inc.
 - Improving procurement of food for Café Inc.
 - Enhancing the experience at Café Inc by providing recreational activities and additional support and information on services they may be entitled to access.
 - Evaluation and monitoring of café Inc
- 2.3 Identified improvements and changes have been collated in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The work of the Scrutiny Working group informed changes that were tested during Easter 2024.

3.0 Easter 2024

- 3.1 For Easter 2024, local area teams agreed venue changes for Easter and future Cafe Inc delivery. Venues were a mixture of voluntary sector and Fife Council provision with slightly more voluntary sector providers on board in comparison to October 2023. Menu choices were agreed with Catering Teams.
- 3.2 The communication team spent a great deal of time consulting with area staff to ensure that the messaging was clear regarding the aims of the project being for children, young people and their carers as a school meal replacement during the school holiday period. Information went out via group-call text messages and emails to parents/carers and was also shared on the council's 'Our' pages where appropriate.
- 3.3 The table compares meal volumes for Easter 2023 with Easter 2024. The expenditure in 2024 of £107k represents 18.4% of the available budget. This presents a financial risk should demand continue in line with that experienced during Easter. Ongoing monitoring will be undertaken during the school summer holidays of demand and any implication for additional resources or changes.

Area	Meals Easter 2023	Meals Easter 2024	2024 Cost
NEF	1,891	2,519	£7,179
Levenmouth	6,053	5,619	£16,014
Kirkcaldy	4,855	5,186	£14,780
Cowdenbeath	19,138	8,907	£25,385
Dunfermline	4,488	3,850	£10,972
SWF	5,015	4,149	£11,824
Glenrothes	4,336	4,580	£13,053
Other costs			£7,895
Total	45,776	34,810	£107,102

- 3.4 Clearer messaging about the project's aims and changing approaches to serving meals through Cafe Inc are believed to have accounted for the reduction in some areas. However, the poor weather may also have played a part in reducing demand.
- 3.5 Over the Easter holidays, around three times as many cold-packed lunches were given out to families 26,217 compared to 8,593 hot meals.
- 3.6 Although a more comprehensive evaluation could not be designed for easter, the team in North East Fife gathered some case studies and shared the following;

“One mum was new to the area having moved from a refuge in Perth and was slowly building up her confidence and Café Inc was a great space for her to do this. She was in a financial crisis due to an unexpected repair on her car. We were able to provide her with Cost-of-Living advice line, encouraged benefit check online and gave her info regarding next job club to try and help her with her situation”.

“One mum came in with a baby who was teething and she looked exhausted and emotional, a mum took the baby and told her to go and get a coffee, was nice to see this support which may not have happened if it were not for café inc.”

4.0 Developments

- 4.1 Cabinet agreed the Food4Fife Strategy at its meeting in May. An aim of this strategy is to stop and prevent food poverty by providing a dignified, fair and just access to healthy and affordable food for all one.
- 4.2 The council adopted the Dignity Principles in May 2018 and these underpin the work that is done in relation to food insecurity including Cafe Inc. Key principles include giving people the power to choose their meals and including families in decision making. A research project including both surveys and a focus group is planned for summer to discover from families (both children and adults) about what can be improved in the delivery of Cafe Inc and the difference it is making.

- 4.3 Following a successful bid, Fife Council has been awarded funding by the Scottish Government to run a series of tests of change over the next 24 months in each of the seven Area Committee areas exploring Cash First approaches to mitigating and preventing poverty. Building on Kirkcaldy Choice First cash first initiative and the Hardship grants provided during COVID, the tests of change will help understand and overcome specific local barriers experienced by individuals and families facing crisis. The areas chosen to reflect diverse local circumstances and levels of maturity in developing cash-first approaches.
- 4.4 Holistic Family and Household Support is a key ingredient of the Cash First for Fife funding. To ensure cohesion and consistency across Fife the project will coordinate support and collect data on the importance of embedding and unifying support across Fife. Mirroring the principles in Whole Family Wellbeing, the ambition is that support alongside cash will be anchored in prevention, providing early help across universal, targeted, and intensive need. The project will also support the development of no Wrong Door.
- 4.5 Further reporting and development work will be undertaken following the evaluation of cost-of-living support and incorporating learning from the pilot projects into future poverty prevention and mitigation projects including Cafe Inc.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The holiday periods can be a challenging time for many children, young people and families in the seven locality areas of Fife. Cafe Inc has ensured that over 38,000 meals have been given to children young people and their families over the Easter holidays and so fewer children and young people miss out on healthy and nutritious meals during the school break because of poverty.
- 5.2 Planning and delivering this programme in partnership with the voluntary sector, catering and Community Development teams will continue to offer support during school holidays.

List of Appendices

1. Scrutiny Working Group – Improvements and Changes

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

- Cafe Inc – Scrutiny Working Group – People and Communities Scrutiny Committee 29 February 2024
- [Agenda Pack for People and Communities Scrutiny Committee 29th February 2024 \(fife.gov.uk\)](https://www.fife.gov.uk/agenda-pack-for-people-and-communities-scrutiny-committee-29th-february-2024)

Report Contact:

Stephanie Gardiner
Corporate development Lead Officer
Email: stephanie.gardiner@fife.gov.uk

Scrutiny Working Group Improvements and Changes

Reviewing and delivering the objectives and principles of Café Inc

Café Inc aim:

- Supporting children, young people and their carers experiencing holiday hunger

Café Inc Principles

- Universal and free at point of access for children and young people of school age and their carers.
- Based on school meal guidelines and an agreed selection of cold and hot meals.
- Linked where possible to holiday activity provision and to social and welfare support through the developing No Wrong Door approach.
- Cafe Inc provision should be integrated with existing Fife Council and Voluntary Sector provision where possible and appropriate
- Compliant with Health and Safety and supervision guidelines.
- Sustainable.
- Scalable.
- Branded in the same way to ensure consistency across delivery areas
- Linked where possible to holiday activity provision and to social and welfare support through the developing No Wrong Door approach.
- Allowing local resourcing to vary delivery.

Addressing how we deliver a Service of equal standards across Fife

- Continuing consultation with areas to allow a mix of schools, and council and third sector community venues to deliver Café Inc
- Reviewing the balance between venues where the council provides Café Inc and where the voluntary sector provides Café Inc with consideration that high volume areas should be the focus for council delivery and that lower and more distributed volumes should be delivered via community and third sector groups
- Planning ahead for Café Inc delivery on a 24-month basis incorporating annual checks allowing for delivery of the programme funded from the Cafe Inc budget and additional investment from area budgets where agreed locally.
- Promoting venues where other activities were being delivered to support wider benefits along with reducing holiday hunger through access to food.
- Supporting employment and training opportunities through longer-term planning for Café Inc and helping tackle recruitment difficulties.
- Improving communication and marketing of café Inc with better use of communication through schools, local marketing and venue identification.
- Reviewing approach to mitigating holiday hunger at Christmas Holidays.

Improving the quality and choice of meals served through Café Inc. and improving procurement of food for Café Inc.

- The procurement impact of Café Inc should support the council's community wealth building strategy and further exploration should be made of using local suppliers and producers
- A continuation of a mix of hot and cold meals should be served with further development of training for the production and serving of food in venues and exploration of the investment requirements for equipment to allow safe production and serving of food in communities.
- The quality of food provided should conform to the quality standards for school meals and that voluntary sector organisations involved in Café inc delivery should be encouraged to work to these standards as far as possible
- Menu planning should include the inclusion of drinks for hot, cold, sit-in and take-away delivery.
- Area budgets can be used to locally enhance menu choices
- Staggered timing of the delivery of Café Inc in communities to be examined alongside alternative delivery approaches including mobile delivery using council vans.
- A lead officer in each area should be nominated to support coordination and delivery.

Evaluation and monitoring of Café Inc

- Including data on food wastage from Café Inc should be considered as part of monitoring and evaluation
- Continuing the survey of those using Café Inc and exploring how more interaction at venues can be used to assist in evaluating Café Inc along with the online surveys
- Assessing unmet need in areas and the gathering of information to show gaps in provision is considered
- Engaging with children and young people in understanding why they do or do not use Café Inc, the benefits they gain from Café Inc and the improvements they would like to see for holiday hunger and holiday provision, and what additional services should be accessible at Café Inc.

6 June 2024
Agenda Item No. 15

Increase in Fees for Planning Pre-Application Advice

Report by: Pam Ewen, Head of Planning Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for an increase to discretionary planning fees for pre-application advice.

Recommendation

Members are requested to:

1. approve the new fee structure for discretionary planning fees for pre-application advice as set out in Table Two below; and
2. agree implementation date for all requests for pre-application advice received from 1 July 2024.

Resource Implications

As a result of approving this report, it is estimated that Planning Service income will increase by £77.5k per annum (p.a.). Additional income of £40k is proposed to be used as part of the Change plan proposals, with the remainder of additional income in Pre-Applications fees to assist in funding the Local Development Plan work annually.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no specific legal and/or risk implications.

Impact Assessment

An equality and/or other impact assessment is not required because the changes proposed would serve to increase income from a completely discretionary service the impact on service users would be negligible.

Consultation

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The implementation of the new Planning Fees Regulations in April 2022 provided a substantive review of the basis of charges made for the submission of planning applications and established set fees in some areas where charges were previously entirely at the discretion of the planning authority.
- 1.2 This means the council can now only consider changes to fee levels for a small number of discretionary charges. Most of these were increased by 5% (or less) in April 2023 and again in April 2024, in line with corporate requirements to limit increases to this percentage. The main charges which remain discretionary are:
 - Pre-Application Advice
 - Property History Services
 - Adverts
 - Administrative
- 1.3 Of these, the provision of pre-application advice is the area where current charges are well below the resource cost involved in providing the service. Historically, pre-application fees were consciously set at a low level to encourage applicants to seek pre-application advice. The benefit of this approach was seen to encourage better quality planning application submissions, in turn, providing better information about proposed developments for members of the public and making it faster and easier for the Planning Service to process the subsequent planning applications. The pre-application service offered is now well established.
- 1.4 The pre-application fees set were related to the statutory fee for a planning application for development of a specific type. However, the pre-application fee levels have not been subject to a substantive review for more than ten years, whilst a substantive review of planning application fees in April 2022 resulted in significant increases in planning application fees for many types of development. As a result, the current pre-application fee levels are now out of step with the planning application fees.

2.0 Proposed Revision of Planning Pre-application Fees

Current Pre-application Fees

- 2.1 The current Pre-application Fees (April 2024) are set out in Table 1 below. Development proposals are categorised as Major/Local/Housholder depending on their scale. For Major developments, the main fee includes provision for two meetings with officers prior to the submission of a formal planning application and for all other development types, provision is for a single meeting. Where there is a need for an applicant to address issues revealed during the pre-application process, there is often a need for additional meetings, particularly for Major or complex Local developments. Fees are all subject to VAT.

Table 1: Current Pre-Application Fees

Development Type	Fee (Net of VAT)
Major Developments – 50% of the statutory planning application fee up to a maximum of:	£1650.00
Major Developments - Additional Meeting	£262.50
Local Developments - 50% of the statutory planning application fee up to a maximum of:	£560.00
Local Developments - Additional Meeting	£157.50
Householder Developments & Listed Buildings	£70.00
Householder Developments & Listed Buildings - Additional Meeting	£52.50

Issues with Current Pre-application Fees

- 2.2 The current fees are not reflective of the statutory applications fees, as outlined in paras 1.3 and 1.4 above. To illustrate this, the minimum fee for a Major planning application will always exceed £3300, which means that every pre-application for a Major development will attract the maximum fee of £1650. As an example, the planning application fee for a residential development of 50 units would be £23,800.
- 2.3 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) came into effect in March 2023 and, together with the Local Development Plan, has formed the development plan against which planning application proposals are assessed and decided. The cross-cutting nature of the policy framework set out in NPF4, together with the inclusion of new areas for assessment, has significantly increased the complexity of the planning assessment needed and, consequently, the officer time needed to respond to the majority of both planning applications and pre-application submissions. This impacts on the ability of the service to determine planning applications within the set statutory timeframes, thus impacting on key performance indicators.
- 2.4 An increase in pre-application fees would support the continued provision of a quality pre-application service, resulting in an increase in Planning Service income and thus supporting the retention of the resources needed to provide that service as part of managing the service's budget.

Proposed Pre-application Fees

- 2.5 Whilst it is important to keep fees at a low enough level to encourage prospective applicants to use the service, the fees must better reflect the officer time needed to provide the pre-application advice in order to avoid impacts on other aspects of service delivery. The proposed new fees are set out in Table 2 below. Recognising that, for Major developments, the pre-application fee will never equate to 50% of the planning application fee, it is proposed to introduce a new flat rate for all Major pre-applications. The new maximum fee for Local developments would apply to developments of more than six dwellings or buildings of over 600 square metres in size.

- 2.6 The process of charging for additional meetings can be cumbersome for both officers and applicants and whilst the charges may still be required, it is proposed to increase the number of officer meetings which are included within the base pre-application charges to allow for up to five meetings for Major developments and up to three meetings for Local developments. There would rarely be a requirement for additional meetings for householder applications so provision would remain at only a single meeting included as part of the pre-application process.

Table 2: Proposed Pre-Application Fees

Development Type	Fee (Net of VAT)
Major Developments	£4,250
Major Developments - Additional Meeting	£250
Local Developments - 50% of the statutory planning application fee up to a maximum of:	£2,100
Local Developments - Additional Meeting	£150
Householder Developments & Listed Buildings	£90
Householder Developments & Listed Buildings - Additional Meeting	£60

- 2.7 It is likely that the increase in fees will reduce the number of pre-application submissions and that this will likely be exacerbated by the continuing challenging economic conditions for developers. Looking at the types of pre-applications submitted in the 2023 financial year, the proposed increase could achieve an estimated additional income of £77,500 p.a. This assumes a similar mix of proposed developments comes forward and takes account of any estimated decrease in applications.
- 2.8 Details of the current pre-application charges for all Scottish Planning authorities are provided in Appendix 1 for comparison purposes.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The proposed new pre-application fees will provide a fairer basis for charging for pre-application advice by reducing the gap between the income generated and the resource cost to the council. Critically, it will support the retention of staff resources within Planning Services as part of managing the service budget, thus contributing to the economic recovery of Fife whilst responding to the climate, nature and housing crises by enabling new developments to come forward.

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

- [The Town and Country Planning \(Fees for Applications\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- [Planning Circular 2/2022 The Town and Country Planning \(Fees for Applications\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)
- [National Planning Framework 4](#)

Report Contact

Mary Stewart
Service Manager, Major Business and Customer Service
Fife House
Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 Ext. 480159
Email – maryj.stewart@fife.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Scottish Planning Authorities - Pre Application Fees (May 2024)

Authority	H/H	Local (max)	Major (max)	Authority	H/H	Authority	Local	Authority	Major
Aberdeen	150	750	2,000	Stirling	41	Falkirk	165	Falkirk	550
Aberdeenshire			6,000	Dumfries & Galloway	50	Stirling	174	Stirling	683
Argyll & Bute	53	900	1,124	Dundee	50	Midlothian	500	North Lanarkshire	1,050
Dumfries & Galloway	50	1,000	1,250	Argyll & Bute	53	Scottish Borders	500	Argyll & Bute	1,124
Dundee	50	1,250	2,000	Falkirk	55	North Lanarkshire	525	Midlothian	1,200
East Ayrshire		1,000	3,000	North Lanarkshire	68	West Dunbartonshire	550	Dumfries & Galloway	1,250
East Dunbartonshire	73	1,560	1,560	Fife - Current	70	Fife - Current	560	East Dunbartonshire	1,560
East Lothian	90	2,000	10,000	East Dunbartonshire	73	Moray	583	Fife - Current	1,650
Edinburgh		945	5,400	Midlothian	80	Aberdeen	750	Dundee	2,000
Falkirk	55	165	550	East Lothian	90	Argyll & Bute	900	Aberdeen	2,000
Glasgow	100	1,500	10,000	Fife - Proposed	90	Edinburgh	945	Scottish Borders	2,500
Highland		2,500	10,000	West Lothian	90	Dumfries & Galloway	1,000	West Lothian	2,600
Midlothian	80	500	1,200	Glasgow	100	East Ayrshire	1,000	East Ayrshire	3,000
Moray	100	583	3,500	Moray	100	Dundee	1,250	West Dunbartonshire	3,300
North Lanarkshire	68	525	1,050	West Dunbartonshire	110	Glasgow	1,500	Moray	3,500
Scottish Borders		500	2,500	Aberdeen	150	East Dunbartonshire	1,560	Fife - Proposed	4,250
Stirling	41	174	683			East Lothian	2,000	Edinburgh	5,400
West Dunbartonshire	110	550	3,300			Fife - Proposed	2,100	Aberdeenshire	6,000
West Lothian	90	2,400	2,600			West Lothian	2,400	East Lothian	10,000
Total	1,110	18,802	67,717			Highland	2,500	Glasgow	10,000
Average *	79	1,044	3,564					Highland	10,000
Fife - Proposed	90	2,100	4,250						

* of those authorities who provide the Service & Charge

Outstanding Remits from Committees

Title	Service(s)	Comments
15th August, 2024		
Budget Planning 2024-27 - HRA Capital Plan Update	Finance and Corporate Services	As agreed at 08.02.24 Cabinet - para. 11.5 of report refers - <i>Due to a number of emerging financial risks, more time will be taken to model and test affordability of the HRA Capital Plan and a further report will be brought to this committee in the coming months</i>
Change Planning and Organisation Change	Communities	As agreed at 30.11.23 Cabinet meeting - Para. 5.2 of report refers - <i>A further report will be brought to the Cabinet around June 2024 seeking agreement to the detail of change and to subsequent implementation.</i>
Fencing Policy	Housing	As agreed at Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee of 03.02.22 - Para. 4.1 of report refers.
12th September, 2024		
Housing Allocation Policy Review - Task & Finish Group Update	Housing	As agreed at 08.02.24 Cabinet meeting - para. 207 of 2024.CC.114 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 8th February 2024 - Report back to Cabinet Committee following completion of the Task and Finish Group remit in the Autumn.
10th October, 2024		
South and West Fife - Community Use Arrangements Update	Communities	As agreed at 07.03.24 Cabinet meeting - para. 221 of 2024.CC.121 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 7th March 2024 - A further report be submitted to Cabinet in Autumn 2024.
Community Wealth Building	Business and Employability	As agreed at 06.04.23 Cabinet meeting - para. 97 of 2023.CC.51 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 6th April 2023 - Six monthly update to be submitted to Cabinet
7th November, 2024		
Anti-Bullying Policy	Education	As agreed at 02.11.23 Cabinet meeting – para. 169 of 2023.CC.93 refers – Cabinet Committee Minute - 2nd November 2023 - Report to be brought back in a year's time

Title	Service(s)	Comments
7th November, 2024		
Housing Service – Domestic and Sexual Abuse Policy – Review	Housing Services	As agreed at 02.11.23 Cabinet meeting – para. 173 of 2023.CC.95 refers – Cabinet Committee Minute - 2nd November 2023 - Report to be brought back in a year's time
Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) - Scottish Government Consultation Response	Housing Services	As agreed at 07.03.24 Cabinet meeting - para. 223 of 2024.CC.122 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 7th March 2024 - A further report be brought back to Cabinet later in 2024.
6th February, 2025		
Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy Delivery Plan	Planning	As agreed at 30.11.23 Cabinet meeting - para. 176 of 2023.CC.98 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 30th November 2023 - Detailed Delivery Plan to be reported to Cabinet by March 2025
1st May, 2025		
Tackling Marine Pollution - Membership of KIMO UK - Update	Planning	As agreed at 09.05.24 Cabinet meeting - para. 243 of 2024.CC.132 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 9th May 2024 - Review of membership to be undertaken in a year's time May 2025
Unallocated		
Transfer of Development Land at North Fod, Dunfermline Update	Estates	As agreed at Cabinet 09.03.23 – para. 92 of 2023.CC.48 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 9th March 2023 - Further report on the details surrounding the development of the site to be reported back in due course
Wave Trust 70/30 Campaign	Education	As agreed at 16.03.23 Fife Council meeting – para. 60 of 2023.FC.70 refers - Fife Council Minute - 16th March 2023
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO): Review of the Overprovision Policy	Housing Services	As agreed at 04.05.23 Cabinet meeting - para 107 of 2023.CC.57 refers – Cabinet Committee Minute - 4th May 2023 - Report to be presented during 2024
Policy on the return of items of local, cultural or historical significance for local displays and heritage centres	Communities and Neighbourhoods	As agreed at 07.09.23 Cabinet meeting - para. 147 of 2023.CC.78 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 7th September 2023 Fife Tourism Strategy report

Title	Service(s)	Comments
Unallocated		
Pay Strategy and Job Evaluation Project	Human Resources	As agreed at 30.11.23 Cabinet meeting - para. 188 of 2023.CC.103 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 30th November 2023 - see also para. 4.1 of report - updates to be brought back to Cabinet
Pedestrian and Cyclist Access to Household Waste Recycling Centres	Environment and Building Services	As agreed at 11.01.24 Cabinet meeting - para. 199 of 2024.CC.110 refers - Deferred to a future meeting
Allotment & Community Growing Strategy 2024-2028 Update	Communities and Neighbourhoods	As agreed at 08.02.24 Cabinet meeting - para. 209 of 2024.CC.115 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 8th February 2024 - Further report back to Cabinet in due course.