

**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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## **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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>56.9%</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>30.5%</b>

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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15%</b>

- 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>35%</b>

- 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10%</b>

- 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point provides a link to the Consultation Response Form online. The form was accessible from the website at [www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary](http://www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary) but unable to be accessed from the link detailed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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](mailto: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, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Fife House North Street, Glenrothes or by email to: [avril.graham@fife.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.fife.gov.uk) and available from this link, [www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary](http://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](mailto: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, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor (West), Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5LT.
- [sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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 20<sup>th</sup> 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"> <li>• School needs to be closed.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• I understand the "why" of the current mothballed state, however I don't believe this state should remain.</li> <li>• It would be great to get the school open again if enough kids was to join.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• I feel that as a community the school should not have been mothballed.</li> </ul>				
7	<p>Did you attend an update information session on 7 or 8 November about the current 'mothballing' arrangements?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="386 1509 1489 1585"> <tr> <td data-bbox="386 1509 1382 1547">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="1382 1509 1489 1547">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="386 1547 1382 1585">No</td> <td data-bbox="1382 1547 1489 1585">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"> <li>• I would like to see the school reopened.</li> <li>• I firmly believe the school should be reopened. Children should attend school in their own community.</li> </ul>				
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"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should not re-open and children should remain at Coaltown</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• As pupil numbers at Coaltown are increased perhaps Milton should be reopened.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• I firmly believe the school should be reopened and remain open</li> <li>• Should be reopened due to the amount of kids attending other schools</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Closing and repurpose the building for other uses, or sell.</li> </ul>
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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.

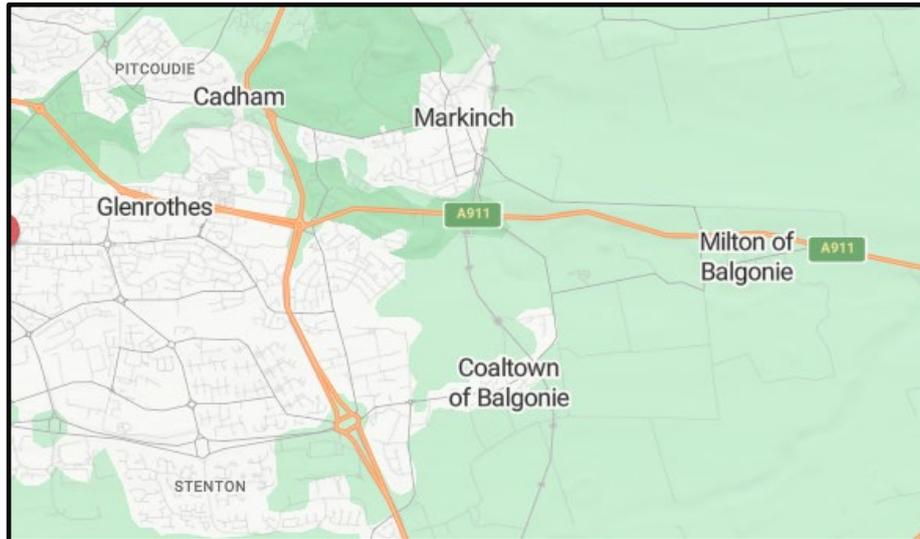
4.2.7.5 If the proposal is implemented, it is the view of Fife Council that the sustainability of the Milton of Balgonie village community will not be affected,

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 picture<sup>1</sup> below demonstrates the close proximity of Milton of Balgonie to other communities in the Glenrothes area.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Coaltown 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 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School because of a placing request, and any new pupils, free transport to Coaltown 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 Coaltown 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 Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. The rezoning of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area will sustain the long-term school roll at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, as well as meet the occupancy rate of above 60% and allow Coaltown 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 5<sup>th</sup> (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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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><b>Public meetings held on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 6-7 pm</li> <li>• Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 6-7 pm</li> <li>• Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 6-7 pm</li> <li>• Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 6-7 pm</li> </ul> <p><b>Drop-in sessions at:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitteuchar East Primary School on Tuesday 30 January 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am</li> <li>• Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School on Monday 5 February 2024 from 5-6 pm</li> <li>• Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 8.45-9.30 am</li> <li>• Thornton Primary School on Monday 12 February 2024 from 5-6 pm</li> <li>• Village Hall, Dickson Lane, Milton of Balgonie on Wednesday 21 February 2024 from 5-6pm</li> <li>• Pitteuchar East Primary School on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 5-6 pm</li> </ul>

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

The information included in this document can be made available in large print, braille, audio CD/tape and British Sign Language interpretation on request by calling 03451 55 55 00

Calls cost between 3p to 7p per minute from a UK landline, mobile rates may vary.

BT Text phone number for Deaf people 18001 01383 441177

## LANGUAGE LINES

এ নথিতে যেসব তথ্য আছে তা 03451555599 এ নাম্বারে ফোন করে অনুরোধ করলে বড় ছাপা, ব্রেইল, ওডিও সিডি/টেপ ও ব্রিটিশ সাইন ল্যাংগুয়েজ ইত্যাদি মাধ্যমে পাওয়া যাবে।

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.

如果你需要以大字體印刷、盲人點字、光碟/錄音帶格式或英國手語傳譯說明這份文件的內容，請致電 03451 55 55 88 提出要求。

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.

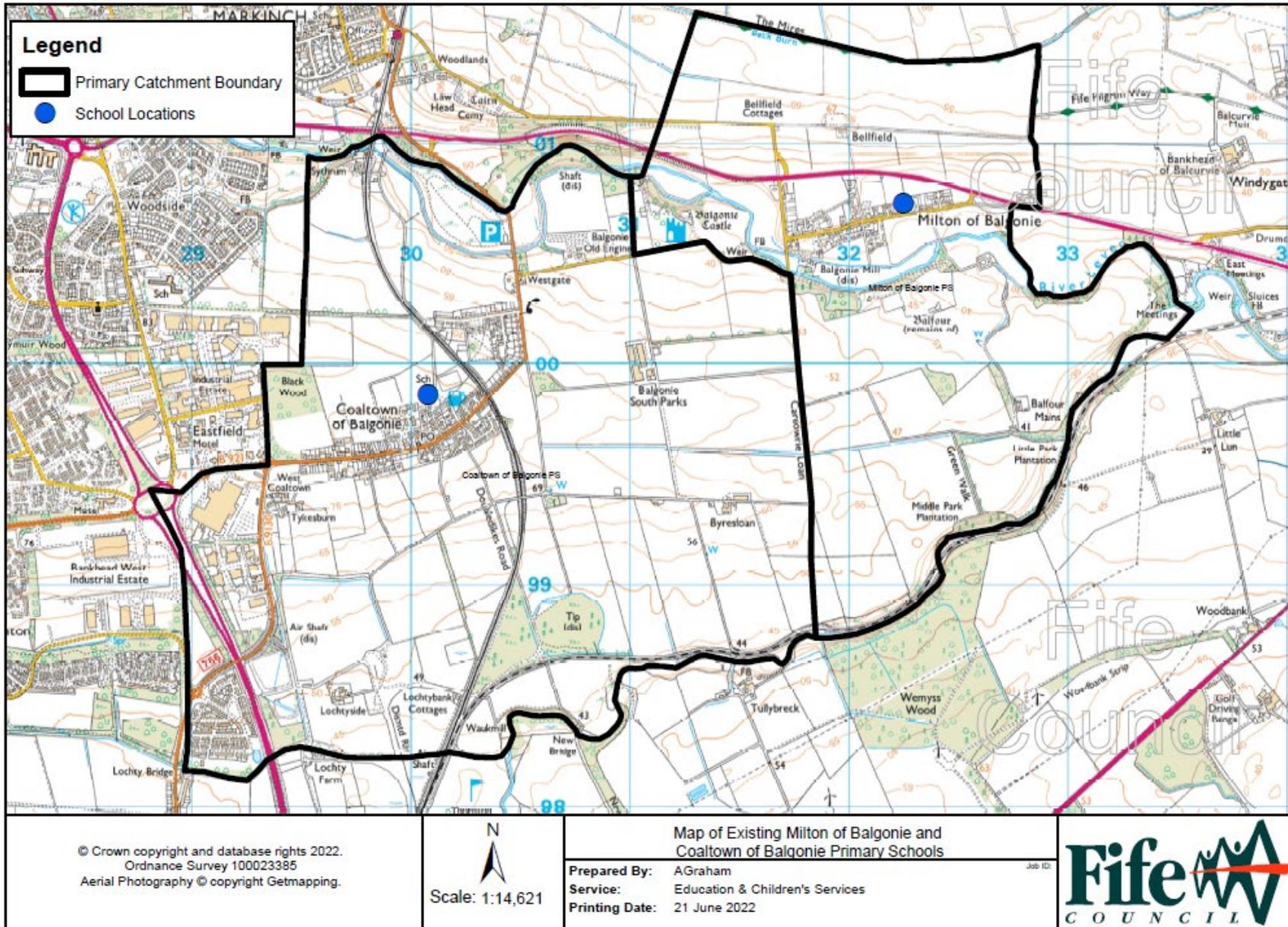
ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ 03451 55 55 66 ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬ੍ਰੇਅਲ, ਆਡੀਓ ਸੀ.ਡੀ./ਟੇਪ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਾਈਨ ਲੈਂਗੂਏਜ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕਰਾਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

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

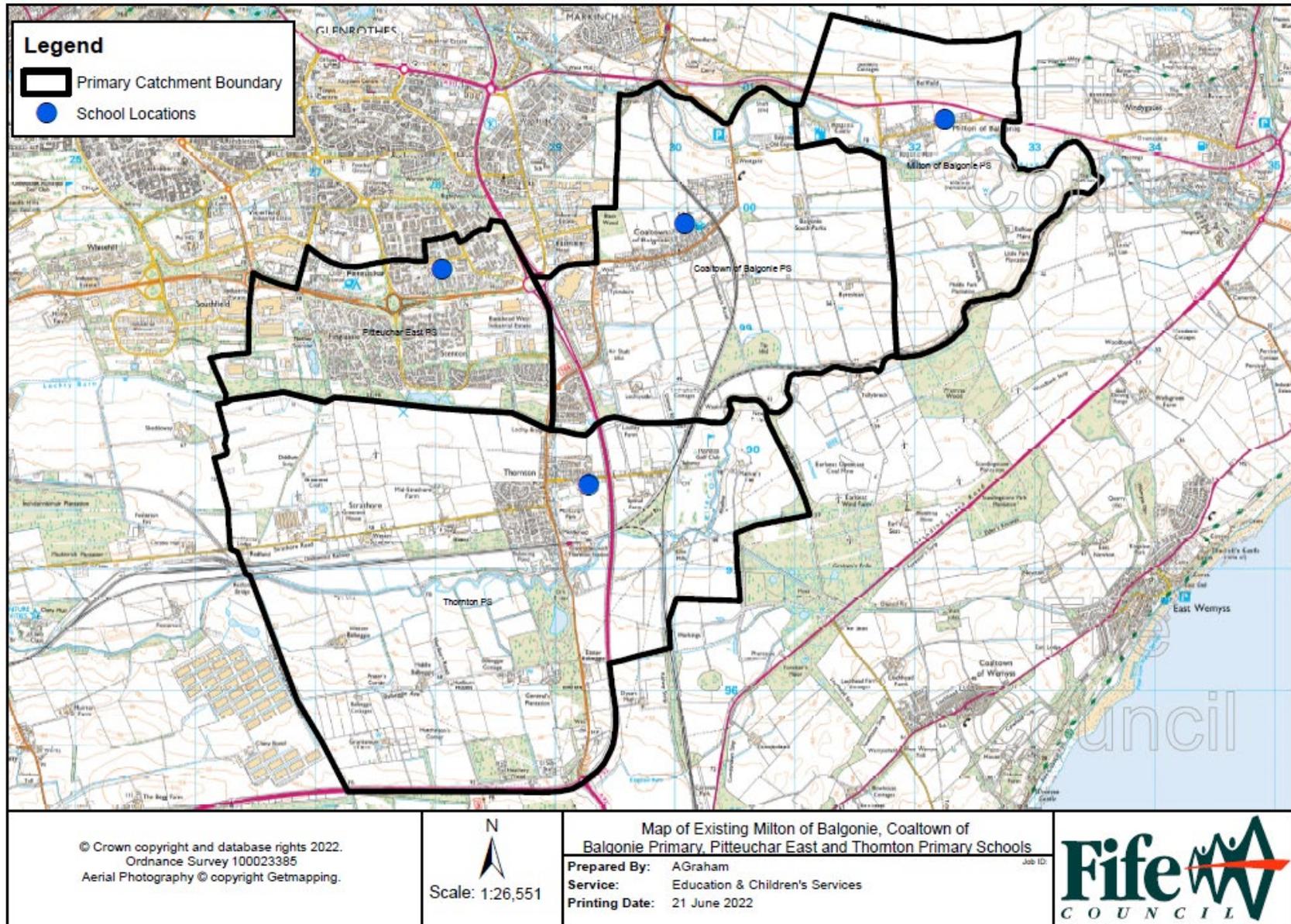
03451 55 55 66 پر درخواست کرنے سے اس تحریر میں دی گئی معلومات بڑے پرنٹ 'بریل' آڈیو سی ڈی/ٹیپ پر اور ترجمانی والی برطانوی اشاراتی زبان (برٹش سائن لینگویج) میں مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔

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

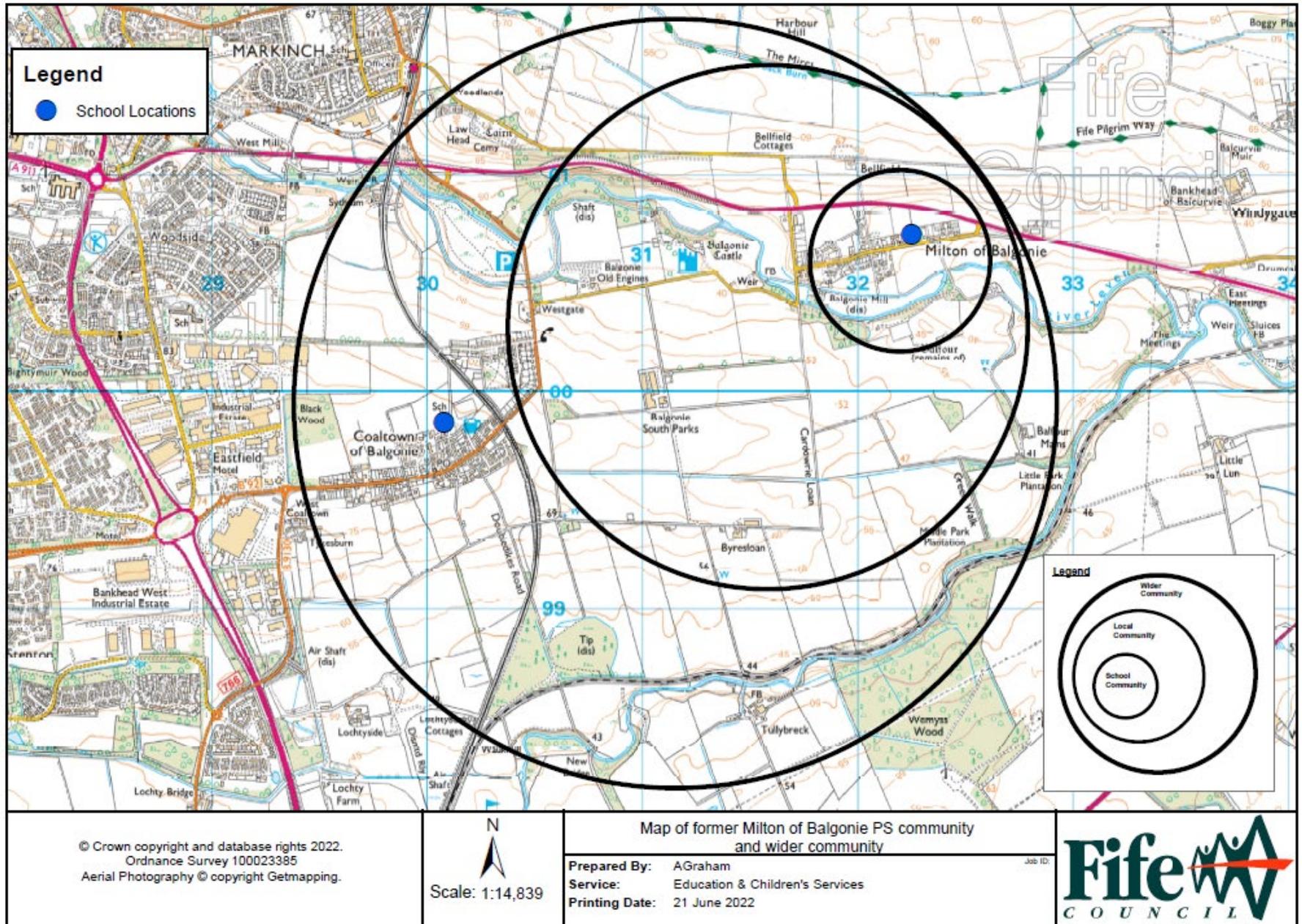
# Appendix 1 - Map of existing catchment areas – Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie Primary Schools



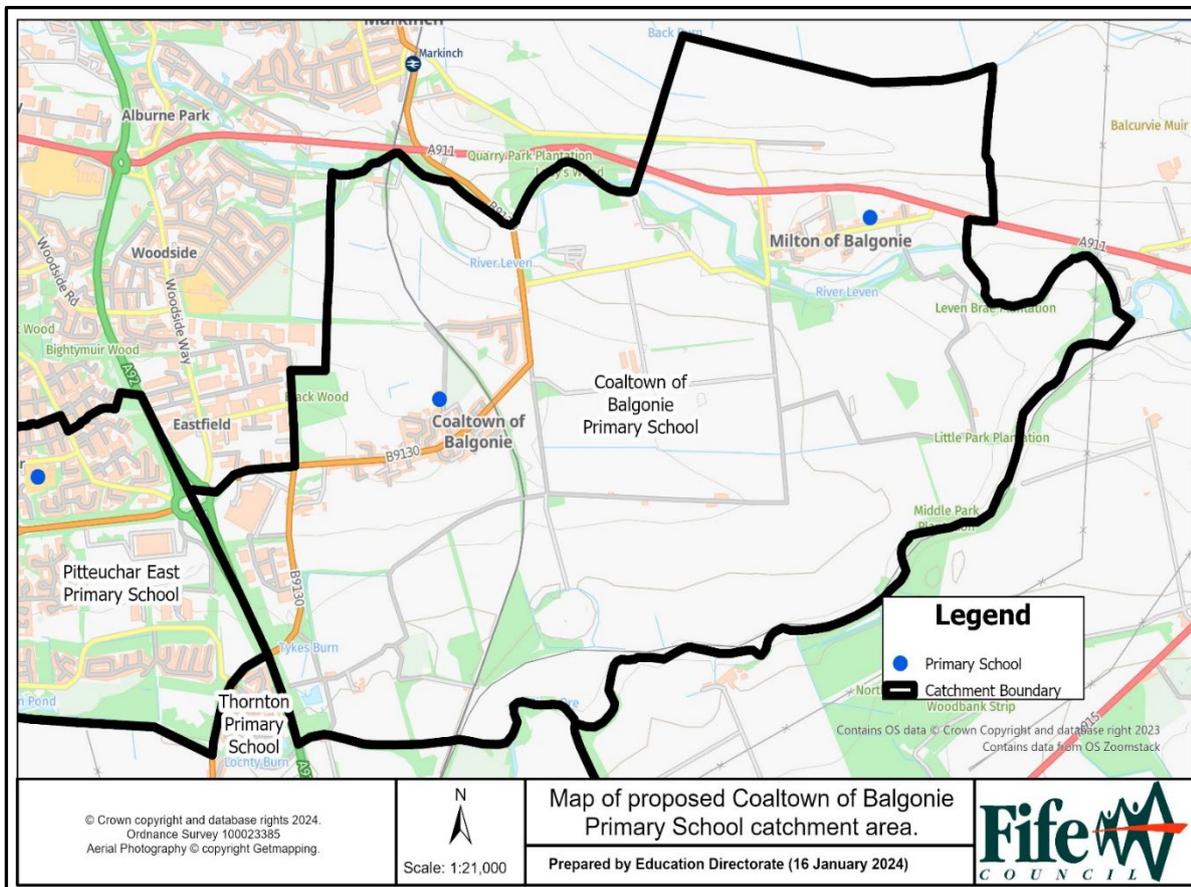
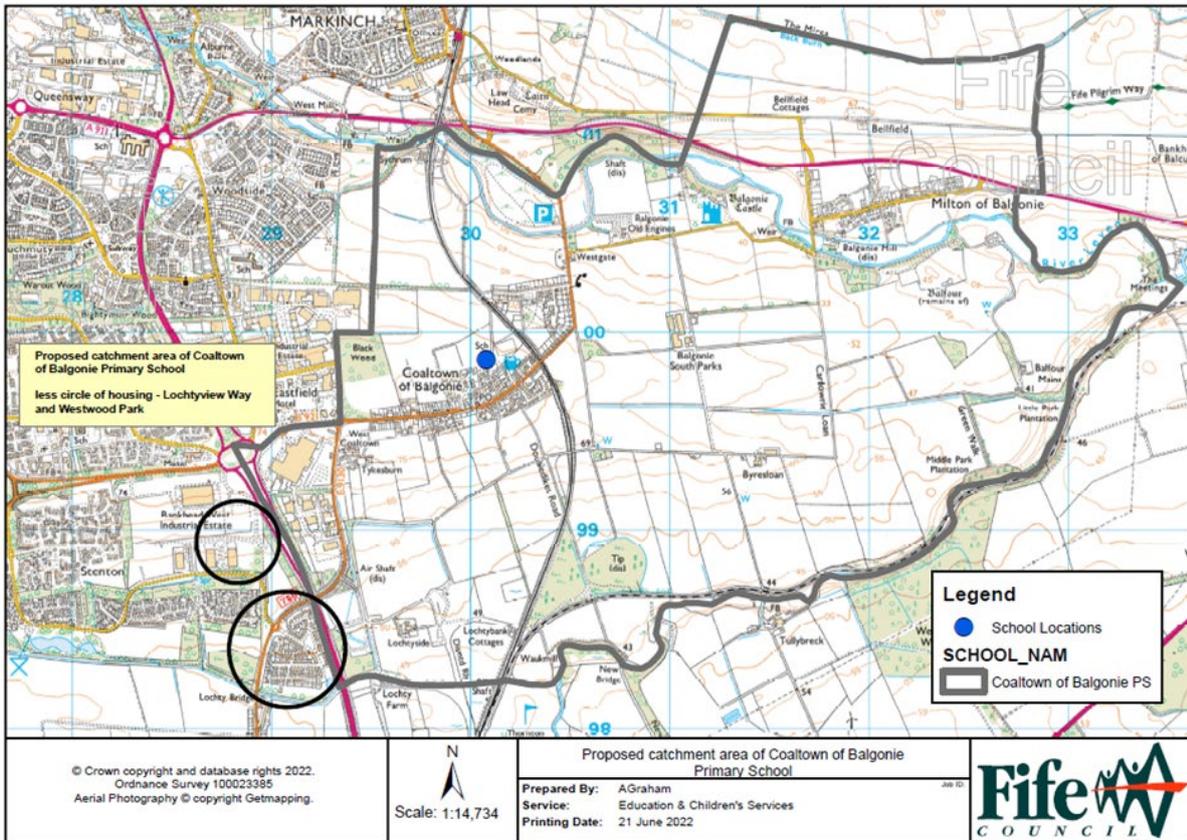
**Appendix 2 - Map of existing catchment areas – Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools**



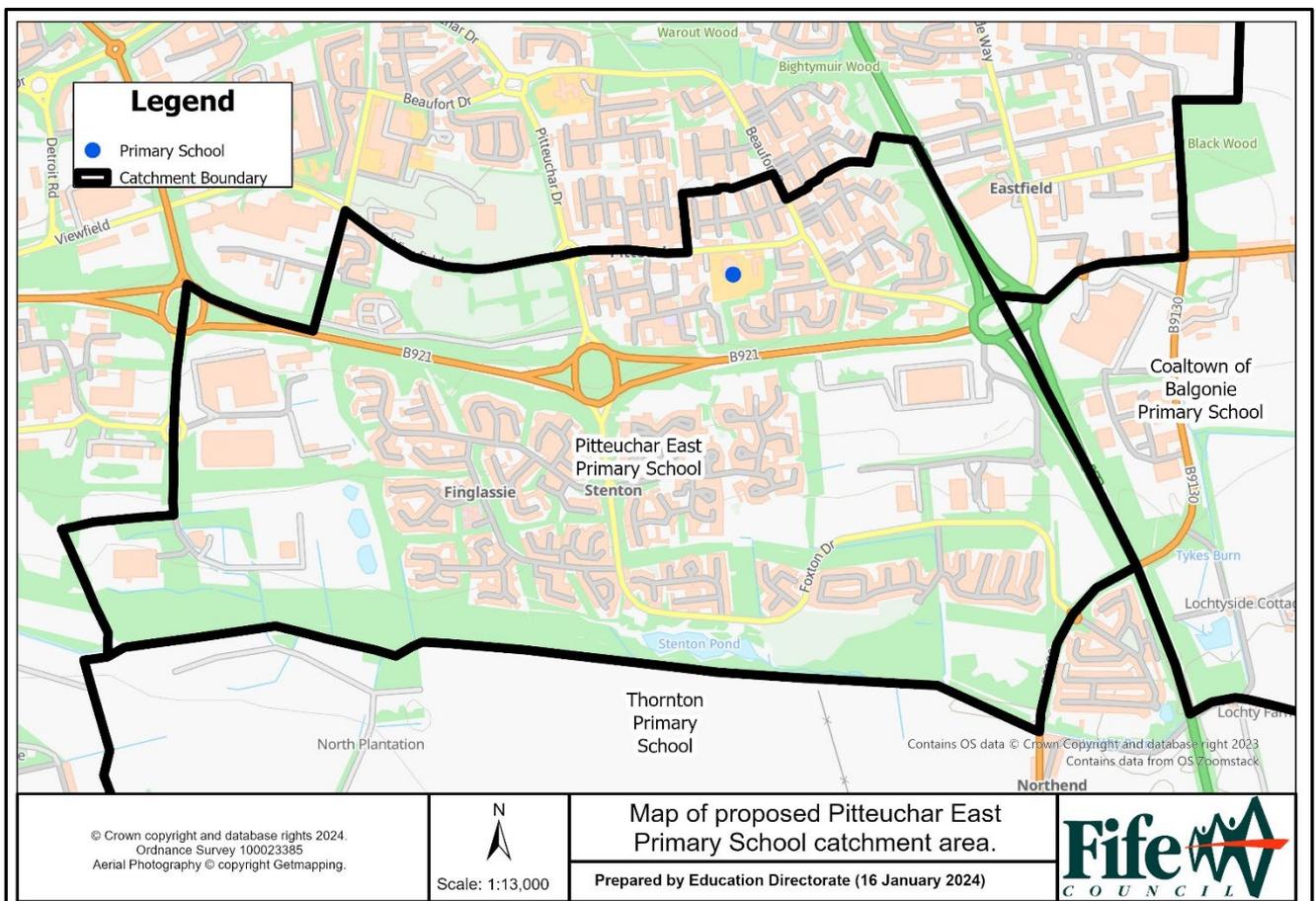
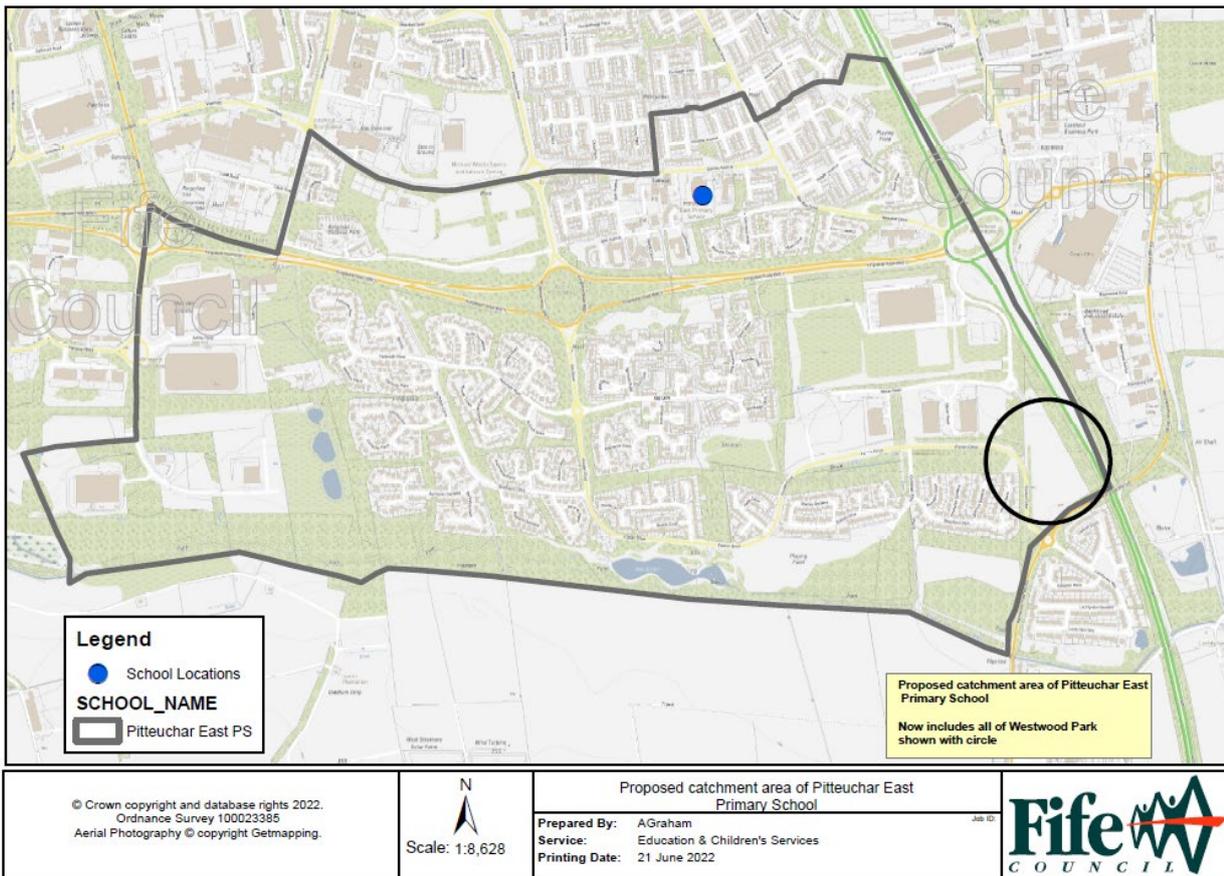
### Appendix 3 - Map of existing Milton school community, local community and wider community



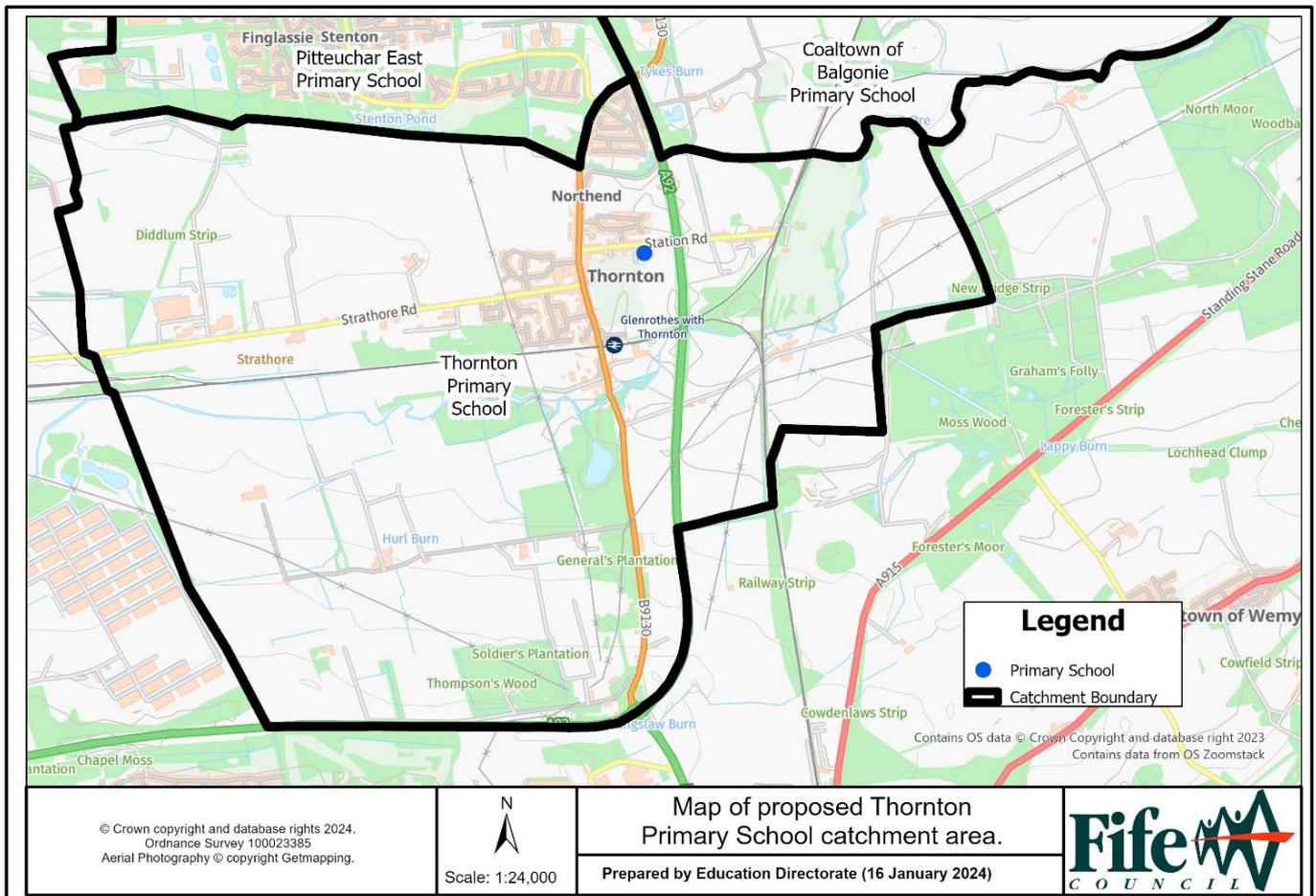
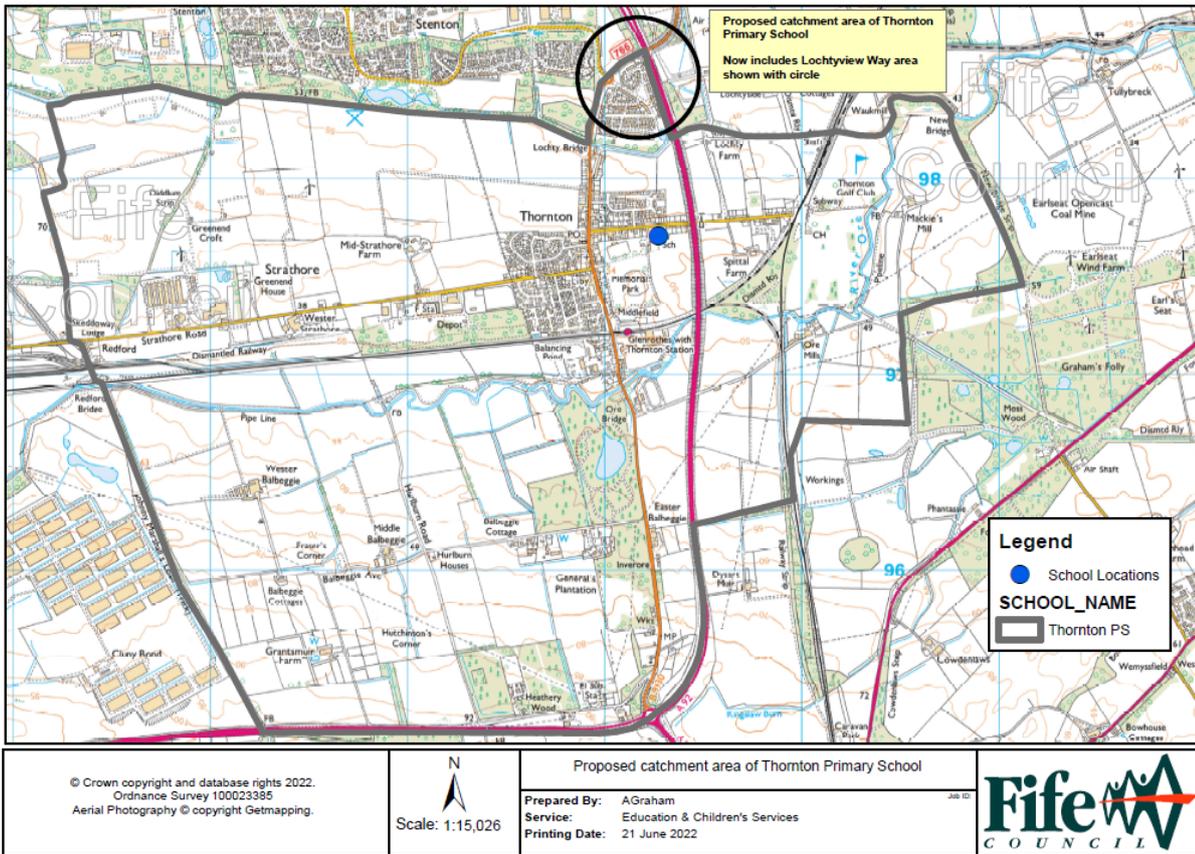
## Appendix 4 - Map of proposed Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (including Milton of Balgonie catchment area)



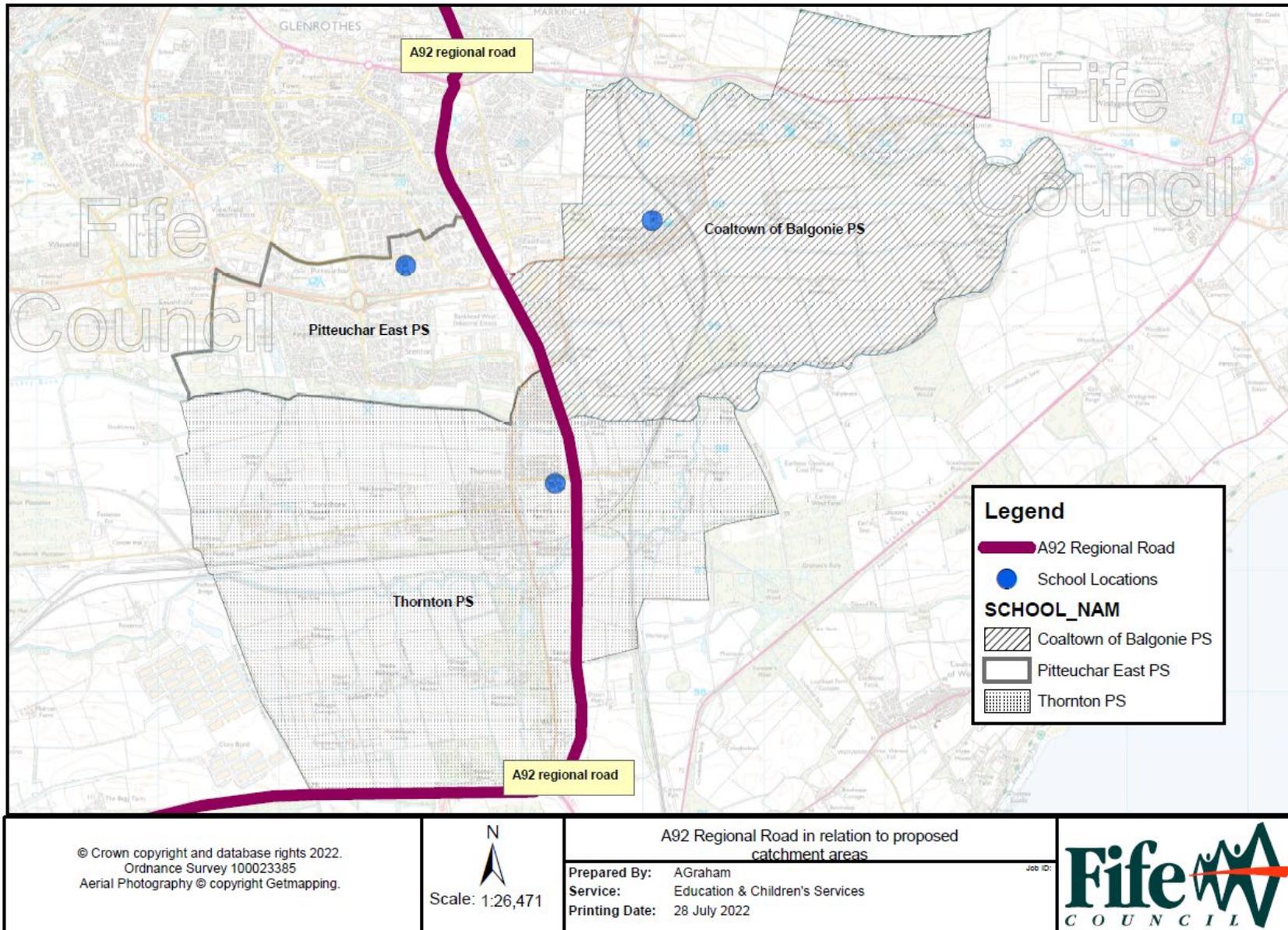
**Appendix 5 - Map of proposed Pitteuchar East Primary School catchment area (includes the housing in full at Westwood Park)**



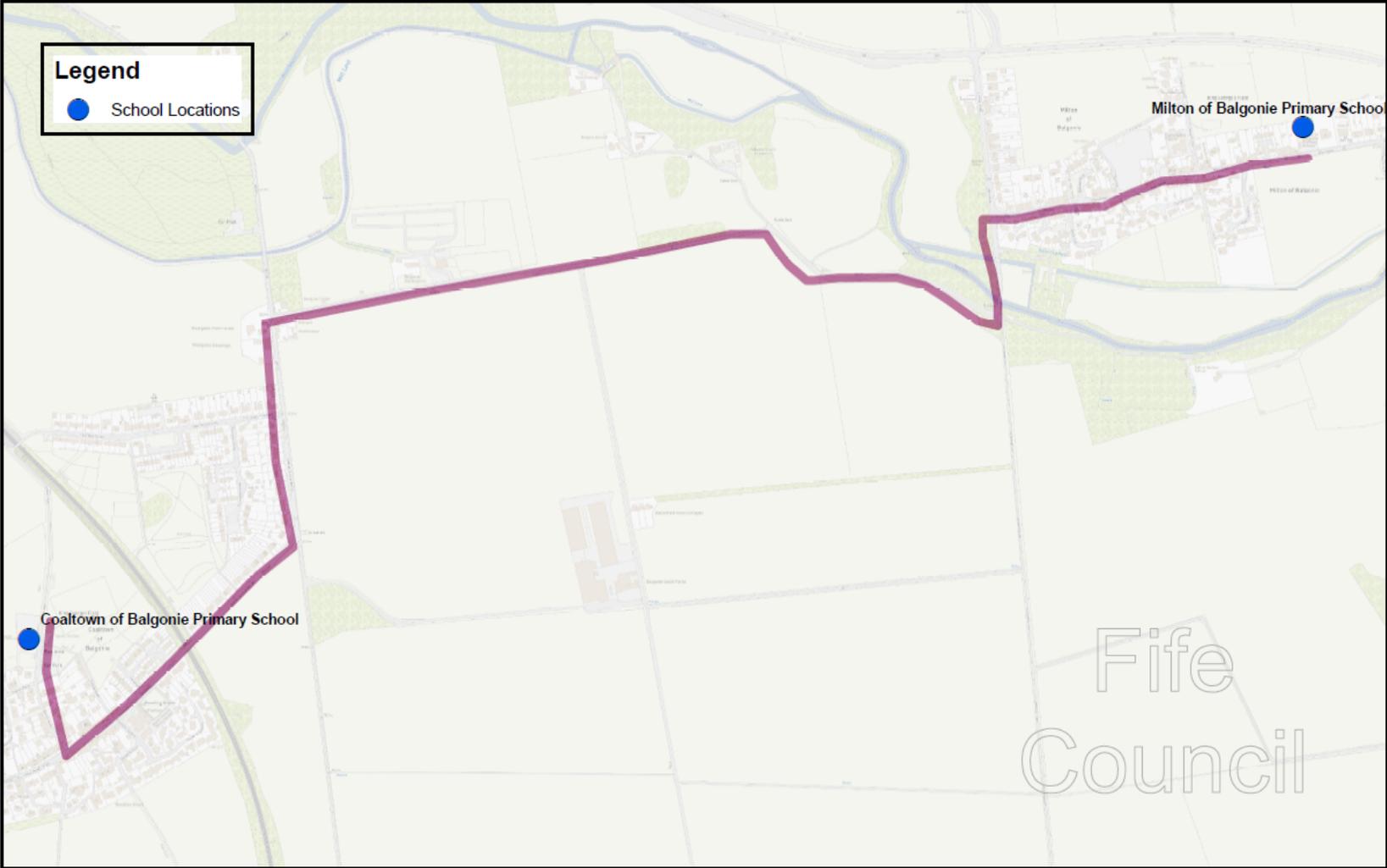
# Appendix 6 - Map of proposed Thornton Primary School catchment area includes housing at Lochtyview)



**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**



<p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey 100023385 Aerial Photography © copyright Getmapping.</p>	<p>N Scale: 1:5,850</p>	<p>Travel Route from Milton of Balgonie Village to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School</p> <p>Prepared By: AGraham Service: Education &amp; Children's Services Printing Date: 26 July 2022</p>	<p>Job ID: </p>
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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

<b>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</b>		
<b>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)</b>		
<b>Estimated cost reduction from closure</b>		
<b>Staff Costs</b>	<b>£</b>	
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
<b>Saving on Staff Costs</b>	<b>82,879</b>	
<b>Premises Costs</b>		
<b>Saving on Premises Costs</b>	<b>14,722</b>	Assumed full amount saved once building is disposed of.
<b>Other Costs</b>		
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	
<b>Saving on Other Costs</b>	<b>1,381</b>	
<b>Transport Costs</b>	<b>0</b>	Catchment pupils within walking distance
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98,982</b>	
<b>Estimated cost increase from closure</b>		
Transport	£5,700	Costs associated with pupils travelling to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from Milton of Balgonie village
<b>ESTIMATED NET COST REDUCTION FROM CLOSURE</b>	<b>£93,282</b>	

## 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](mailto: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 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) **[...]**<sup>1</sup> (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)

<b>I am a:</b>	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)

<b>I live in the:</b>	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 type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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 type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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"/>
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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	
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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](http://www.fife.gov.uk/privacy/education)

Please complete online at:

- [www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary](http://www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary)
- return this form by post to: Milton of Balgonie Primary School Closure Proposal, Education & Children's Services 4<sup>th</sup> 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

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**Education and Children's Services**

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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](http://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](mailto: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, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor (West), Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5LT
- by e-mail to: [sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk](mailto:sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk)
- by completing the Consultation Response Form available online at [www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary](http://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](mailto: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.

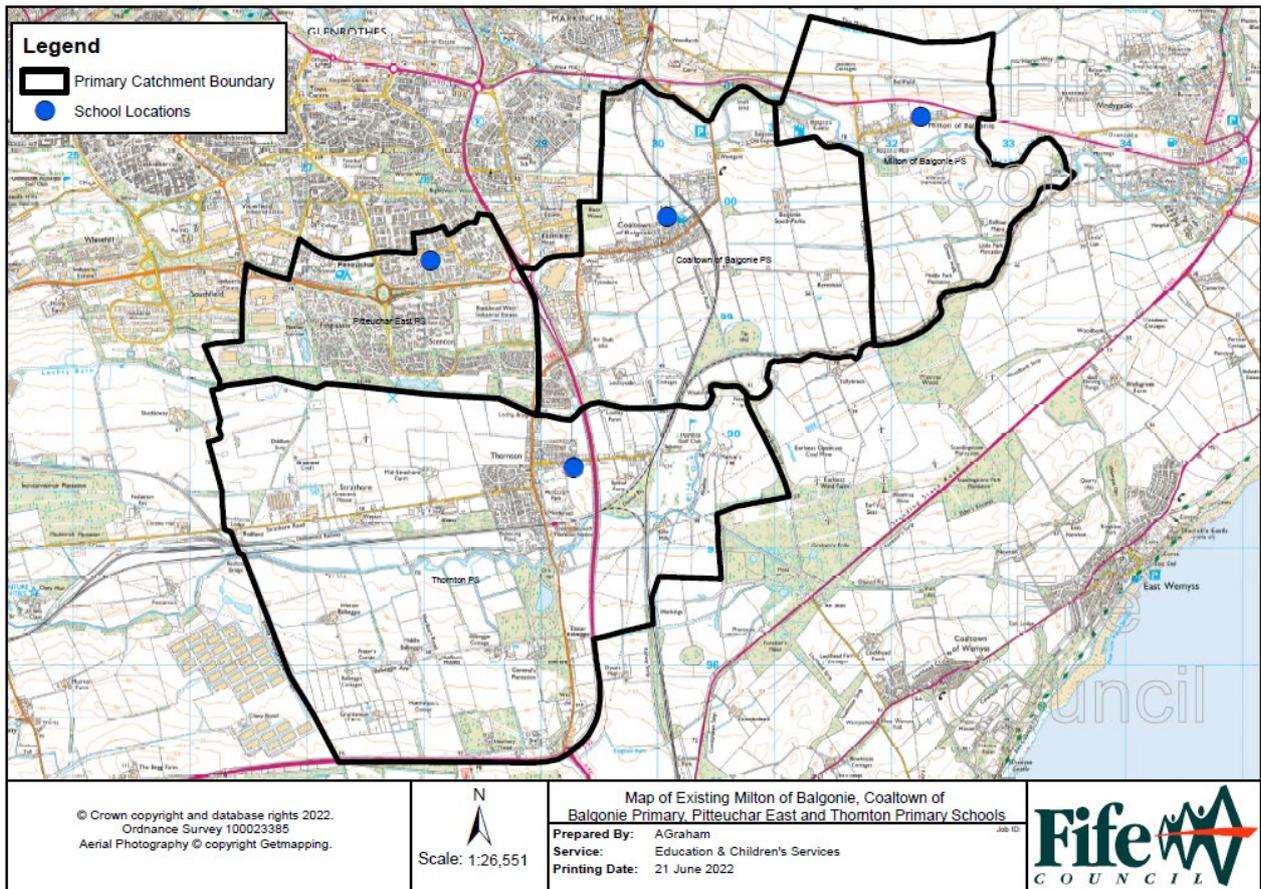
We look forward to seeing you at these events.

Yours sincerely

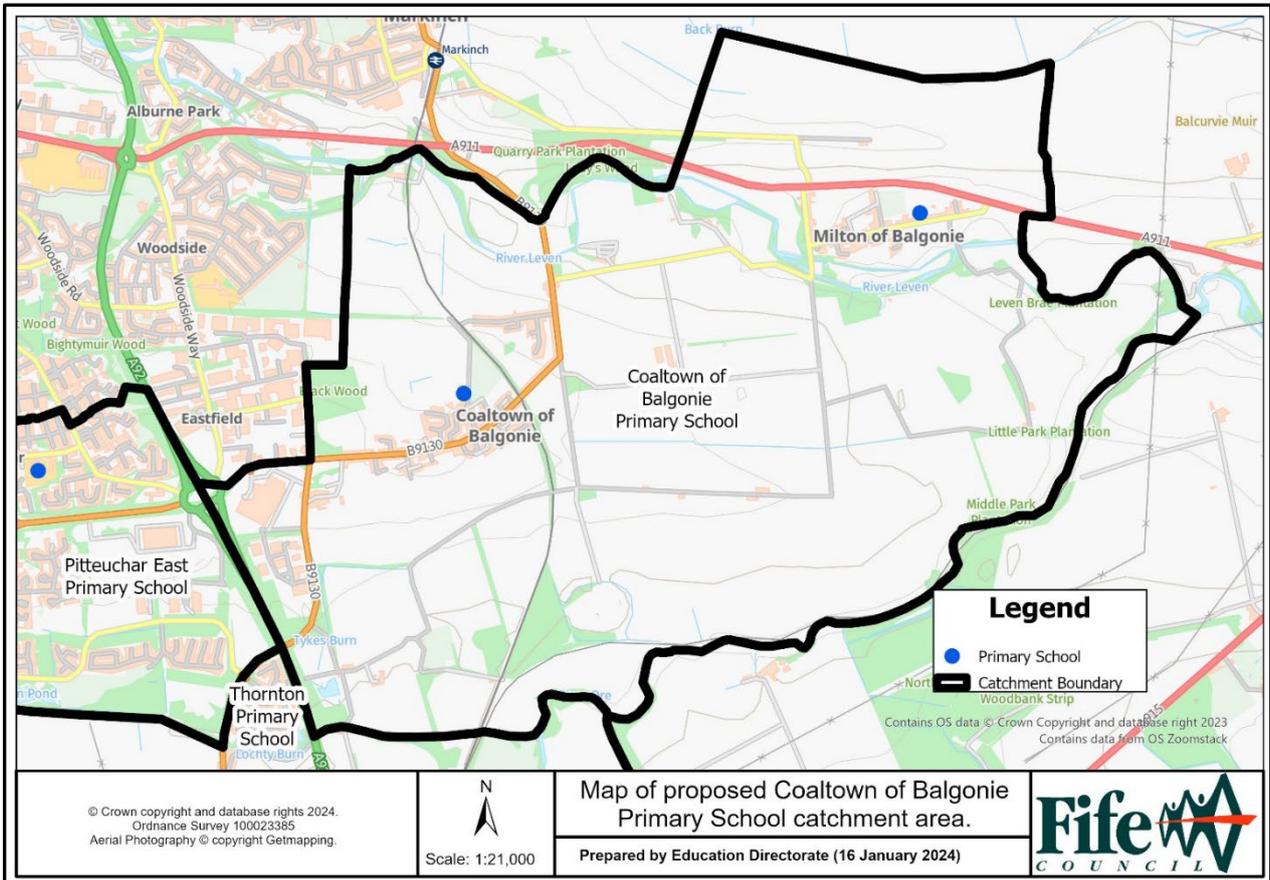
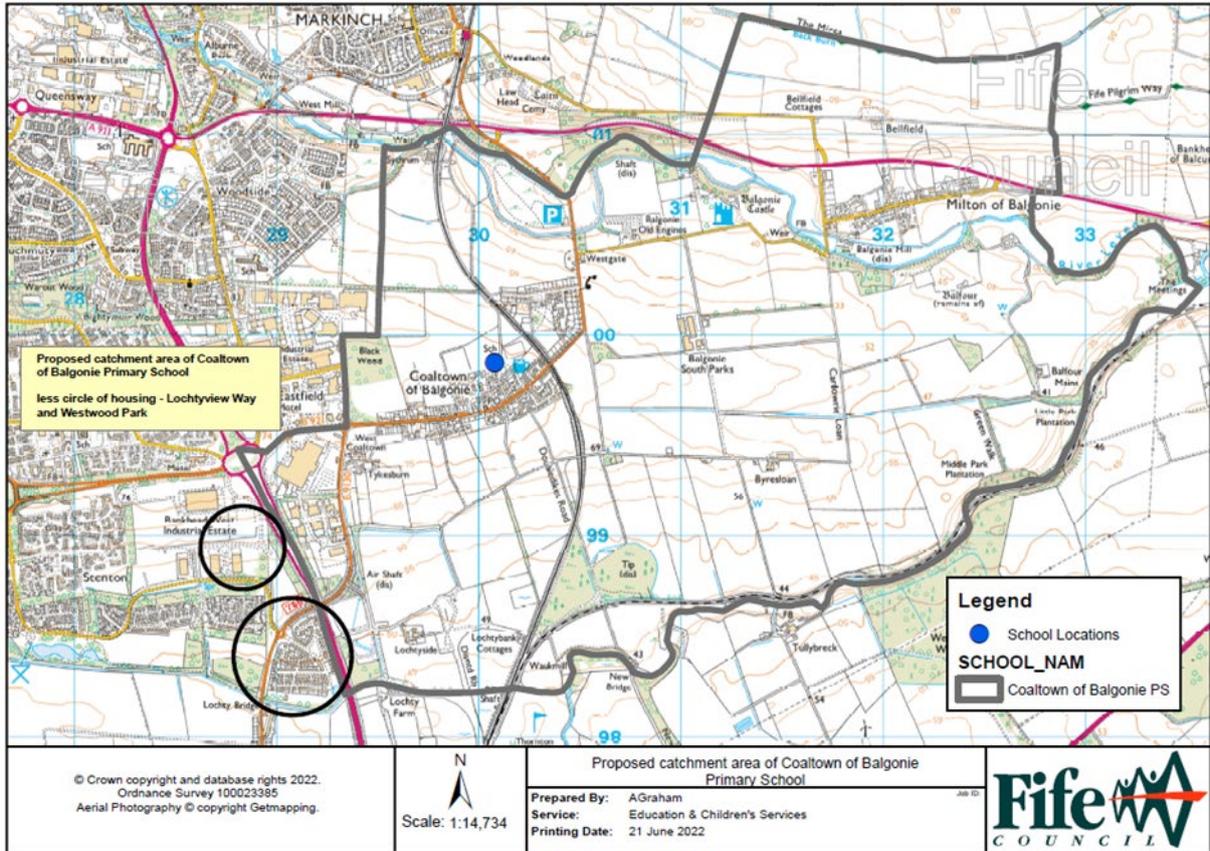


Shelagh McLean  
Head of Education & Children's Services  
(Early Years and Directorate Support)

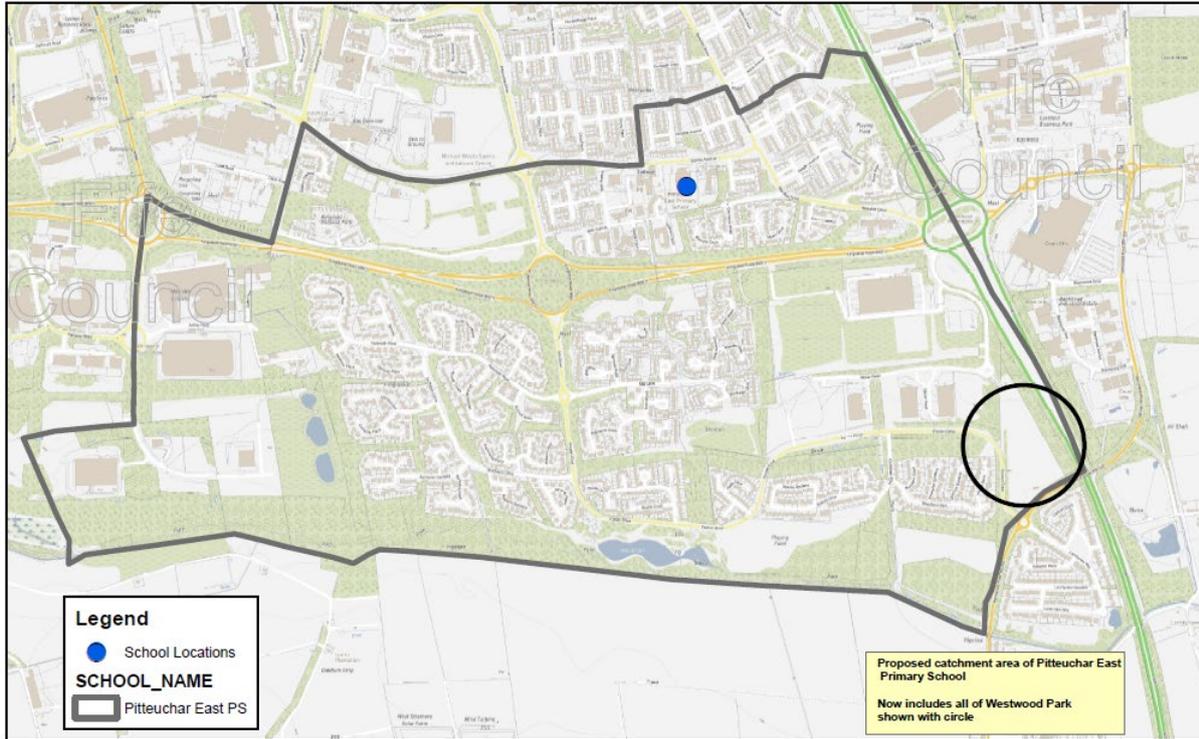
# Map of Existing Primary School Catchment Areas of Milton of Balgonie, Coaltown of Balgonie, Pitteuchar East and Thornton Primary Schools



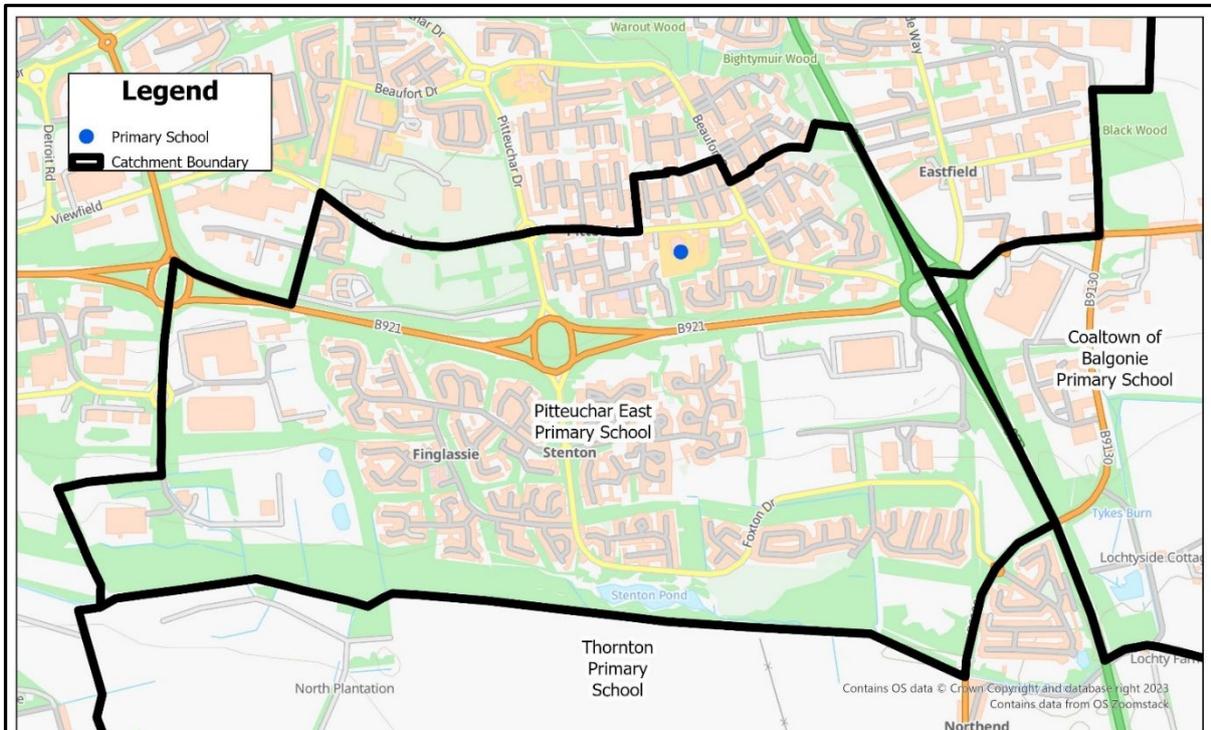
# Catchment area of Milton of Balgonie Primary School being rezoned to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School



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

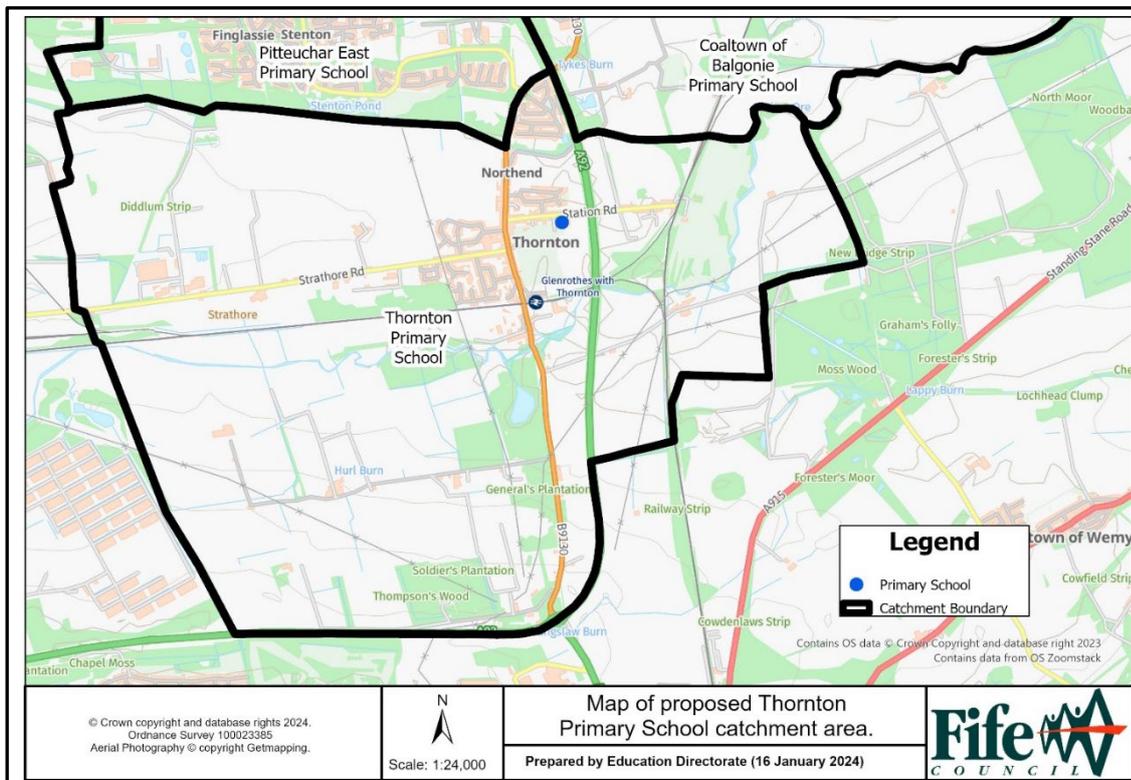
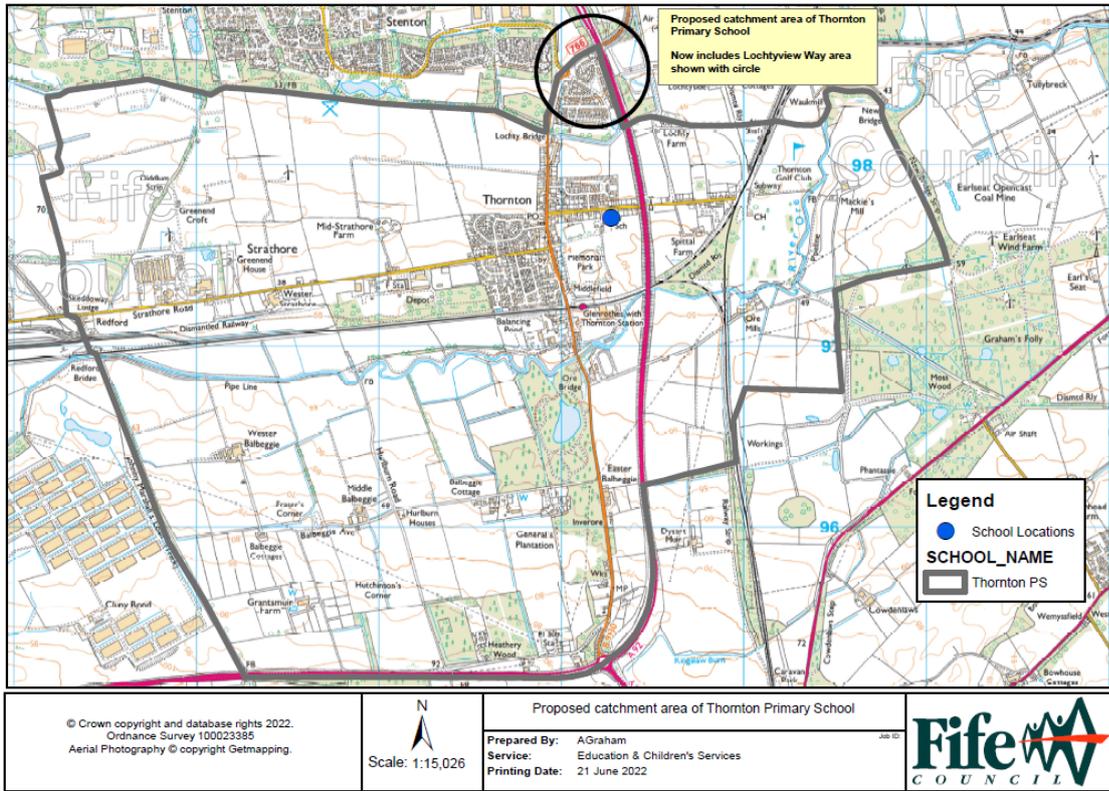


<p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey 100023385 Aerial Photography © copyright Getmapping.</p>	<p>N Scale: 1:8,628</p>	<p>Proposed catchment area of Pitteuchar East Primary School Prepared By: AGraham Service: Education &amp; Children's Services Printing Date: 21 June 2022</p>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

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**Education and Children's Services**

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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 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point provides a link to the Consultation Response Form online. The form is accessible from the website at [www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary](http://www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary) but unable to be accessed from the link detailed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor (West), Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5LT
- by e-mail to: [sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk](mailto:sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk)
- by completing the Consultation Response Form available online at [www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary](http://www.fife.gov.uk/miltonofbalgonieprimary) or <https://forms.office.com/e/LgQ0Qxkkmz>
- by emailing a completed Consultation Response Form to: [sustainableschoolestate.enquiries@fife.gov.uk](mailto: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, looping 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.

<b>Categories of stakeholders</b>	<b>%</b>
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%

<b>Percentage of respondents and the catchment area they live in?</b>	<b>%</b>
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%

<b>Which education establishment/s do you have a link with?</b>	<b>%</b>
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.

	<b>Question 3.1</b> 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 ✓)					
<b>Parent/Carer of a child living in the:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>3</b>	

<b>Pupil living in the:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	

<b>Member of staff:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	

Other Interested Party	3		1		0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>

	<b>Question 3.2</b> 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 ✓)					
<b>Parent/Carer of a child living in the:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>	

<b>Pupil living in the:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	

<b>Member of staff:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	

Other Interested Party	3		0		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>35</b>

	<b>Question 3.3</b> 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 ✓)					
<b>Parent/Carer of a child living in the:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>2</b>	

<b>Pupil living in the:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	

<b>Member of staff:</b>	Consultees who responded <b>Yes</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>No</b>	%	Consultees who responded <b>Don't know</b>	%
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						
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	

Other Interested Party	2		2		0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>

**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
---	---

**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	<b>Parent:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Parent:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Parent:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Parent:</b> In the presentation you said Lochtyview is 0.22 miles from Thornton/Thornton Primary School, however it is much further.
Response	<b>AG:</b> 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	<b>Parent:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Parent:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Parent:</b> For our family, the before school club would need to start at 7.30am to fit in with our circumstances.
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Parent:</b> How many children are currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from Lochtyview?
Response	<b>SMcL/Headteacher:</b> There are currently 20 children from Lochtyview enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
Question	<b>Parent:</b> How many children are currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from Milton of Balgonie?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> There are currently 7 or 8 children from Milton of Balgonie enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
Question	<b>Parent:</b> How far is Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from reaching full capacity?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Parent:</b> I've heard Thornton Primary School is almost full. Is this true?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> We need to explain the Educational Benefits for the proposal if it is to go ahead. These are all factors we have considered.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> We are proposing that Coaltown of Balgonie will form part of the wider parental community within Milton of Balgonie.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> Yes, this is a possibility. We need to decide about Milton of Balgonie PS first.
Statement	<b>Member of the local community:</b> I'd like to add that Hyndhead is currently bursting at the seams.
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> If Milton of Balgonie was to reopen as a one class school, how many pupils could be in that class?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> Up to 25 children.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> I have been advised Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School is currently at 60% capacity. How many pupils and classes are there?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> There are currently 96 children enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and they have 4 classes.
Statement	<b>Member of the local community:</b> I don't think all of the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School children are always in the one building.
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> In addition to the main Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School building, there is an annex which is located further down the same road.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> What about house developers?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> How many children from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area are currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> There will be more children living in Milton of Balgonie with the new housing. Will there be enough space for them?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> The new housing has been included in the figures.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> How is the developer for the new houses in Milton of Balgonie under no obligation to give planning obligation payments?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> The developer is not required to fund this as there are spaces available for the children who could potentially move into these properties.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> So, a property developer could be granted planning permission and not contribute to schools in the area they will be building within?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> Is Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School's current capacity above 60%? There are always groups out and about, where are they going?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> They are likely going to the annex, which is further down the same road. They use this for PE and for lunches.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> If Milton of Balgonie Primary School was to reopen, would it be like them using the village hall for gym etc?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> Yes, the annex is a flexible space. Rural schools tend to use community areas.
Statement	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> I wouldn't be able to take 2 children to different places at the same time.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> Do you know roughly how many placing requests are declined on average?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> Few placing requests are declined. The vast majority are accepted and the pupil roll is decreasing, which should help.
Statement	<b>Member of the local community:</b> The impression I'm getting is that we have no choice in this matter.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> No transport doesn't bother me, I would just like siblings to be able to go to the same school.
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> What happens if Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School ends up at full capacity?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> What happens to the children currently enrolled at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School whose catchment area will change. It seems unfair.
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> If there are any appeals, who sits on the education panels?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> We need to wait on the consultation reaches its conclusion then we can consider other potential uses.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> It would be a positive outcome if Milton of Balgonie Primary School could reopen for another purpose.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> There is no way any children came to any harm previously.

Response	<b>SMcL:</b> We are absolutely not saying that.
Statement	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> Are children who currently attend Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School from Milton of Balgonie able to do all of the extra-curricular activities?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> Would there be a possibility of having a Christmas concert in Milton of Balgonie?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> We could potentially consider this.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> If there were additional children, would all schools benefit from additional staffing?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> Yes, there would be more staff in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School rather than one in Milton of Balgonie Primary School. <b>PG:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> We had a teacher who was the master of all trades when I was at the school.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> Could there be a show in Milton of Balgonie?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> The headteacher is trying to do that.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> How long have children from the Milton Primary School catchment gone to Coaltown Primary School?
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> This is the fifth year they have attended Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.
Statement	<b>Member of the local community:</b> Well, there has been no show in all that time.
Question	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Local Councillor –</b> If we were rezoning the catchment areas based on geographical location, it would be a good option to include Markinch Primary School.
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> We have considered the nearest schools to the affected areas.
Statement	<b>Member of the local community:</b> I would like to see Milton of Balgonie Primary School used for educational purposes.
Response	<b>SMcL:</b> 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	<b>Member of the local community:</b> I would hate for options to be put forward then rejected.
Statement	<b>Member of the local community:</b> 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/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 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
<b>Weather Conditions</b> 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
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**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

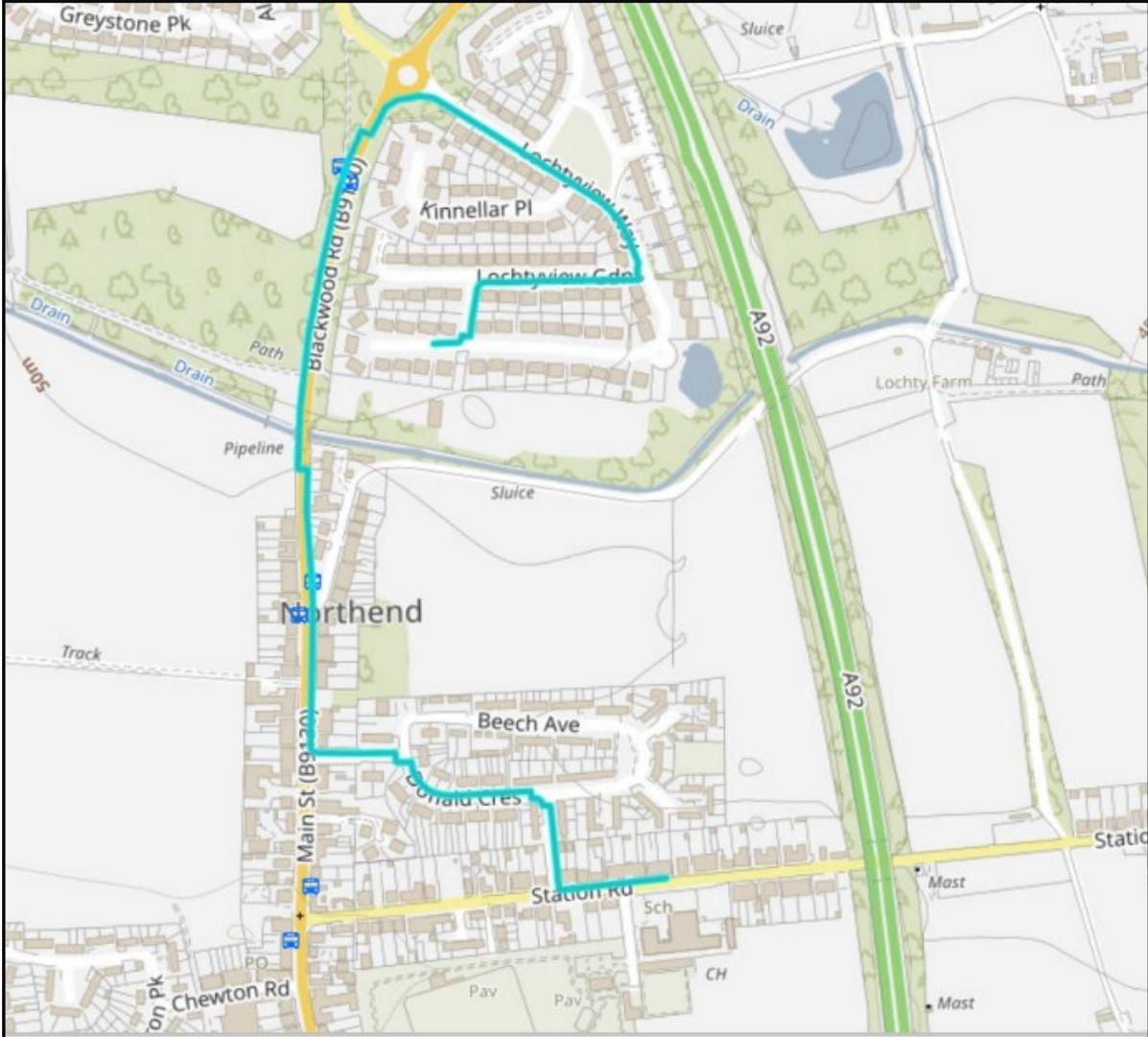
**If the conclusion is no, please describe below any action that would be required that would allow for the route to be assessed as available in future**

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



Pedestrian crossing on Blackwood Way



Footpath on Blackwood Way



Towards Main Street, Thornton



Crossing at Donald Crescent



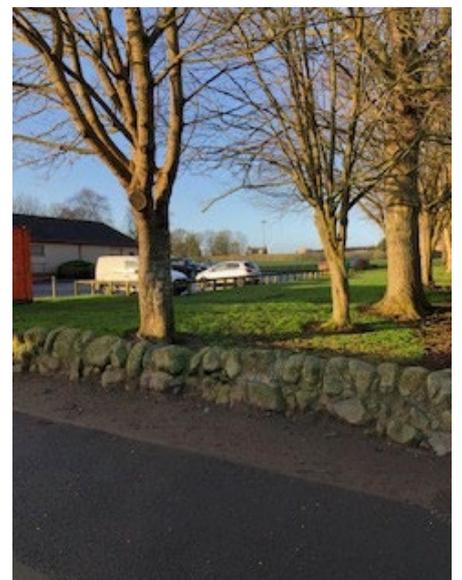
Footpath at Donald Crescent



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
<b>Weather Conditions</b> Dry, mild, daylight	<b>Key Observations</b> 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

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Accident Data (damage  
only, slight, serious &  
fatal covering the last 3  
years)

n/a
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**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

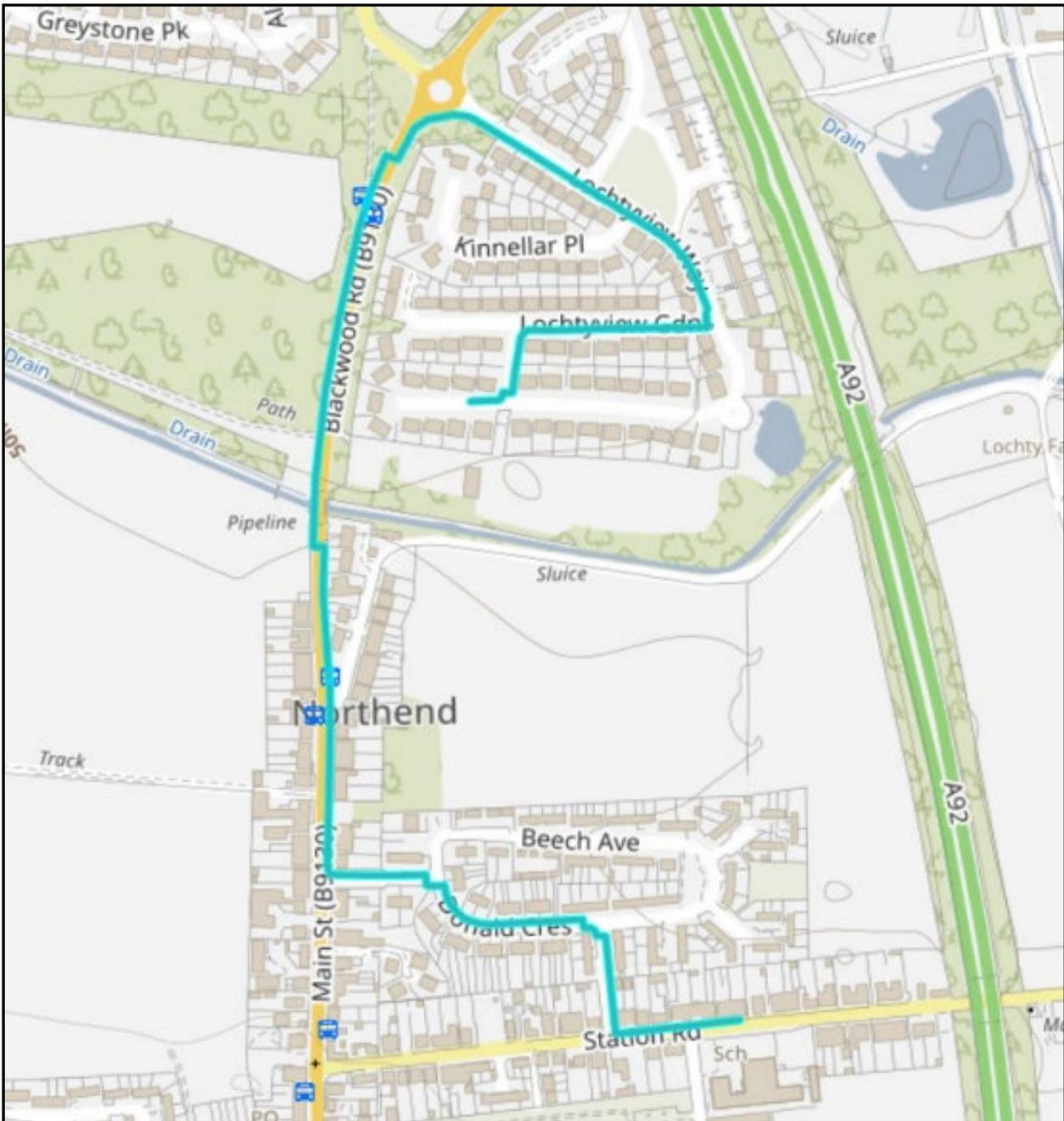
<b>If the conclusion is no, please describe below any action that would be required that would allow for the route to be assessed as available in future</b>
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None
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<b>If the conclusion is yes, please describe below any action that would be recommended to improve the route.</b>
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None
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**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)
<b>Weather Conditions</b>  Cloudy, light rain, cold day.	<b>Key Observations</b>  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 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?

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 Foxton 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

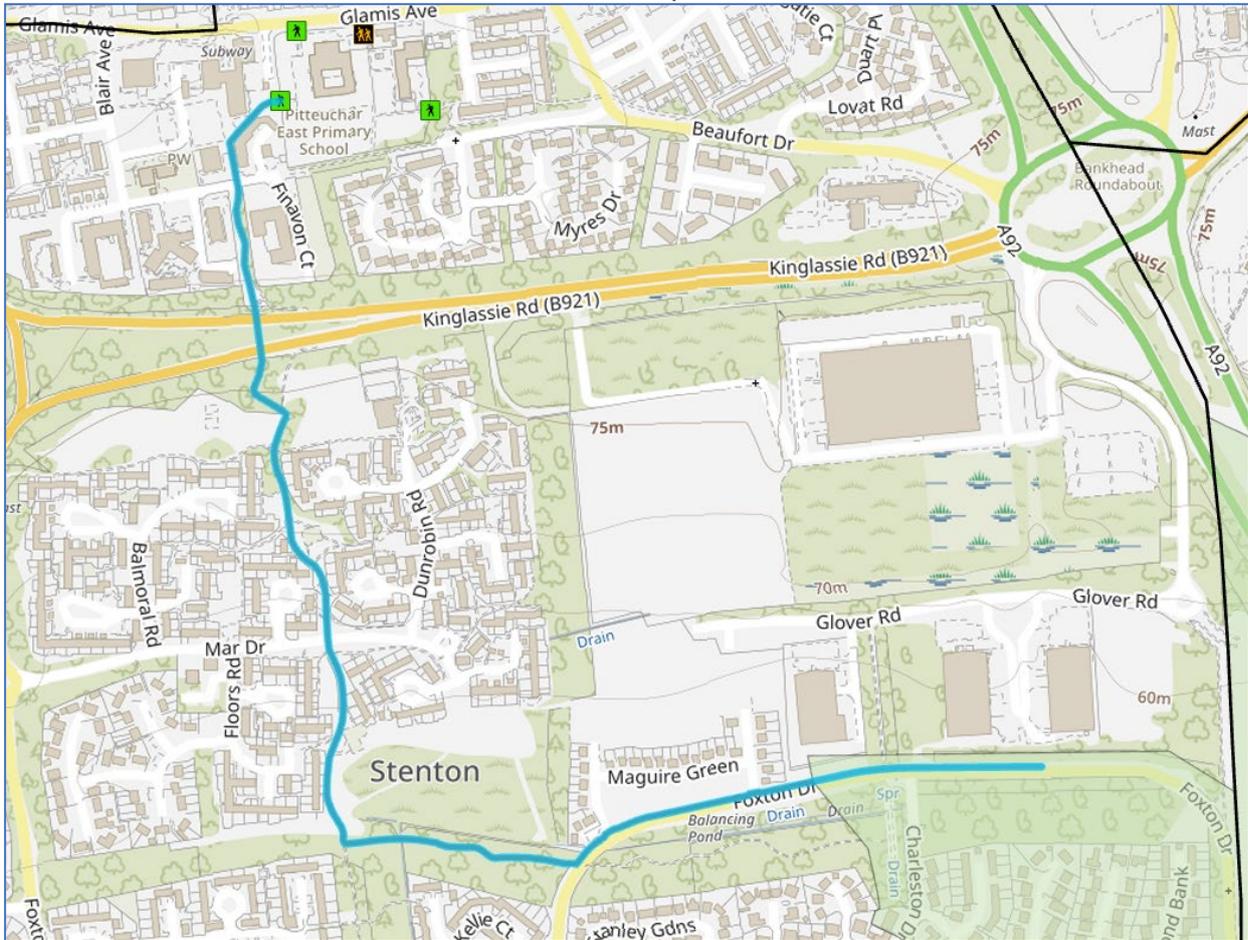
*\*Where the traffic flow / sight line is considered, a record of any vehicle count / speed survey should be retained. Only relevant where a road is crossed without available traffic interrupters.*

**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 Foxton 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)
<b>Weather Conditions</b> Dry, cold day	<b>Key Observations</b> Pedestrians using this route over the footpath, and passed 2 pupils coming from Auchmuty High School.  Officers walked straight down to Foxton 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

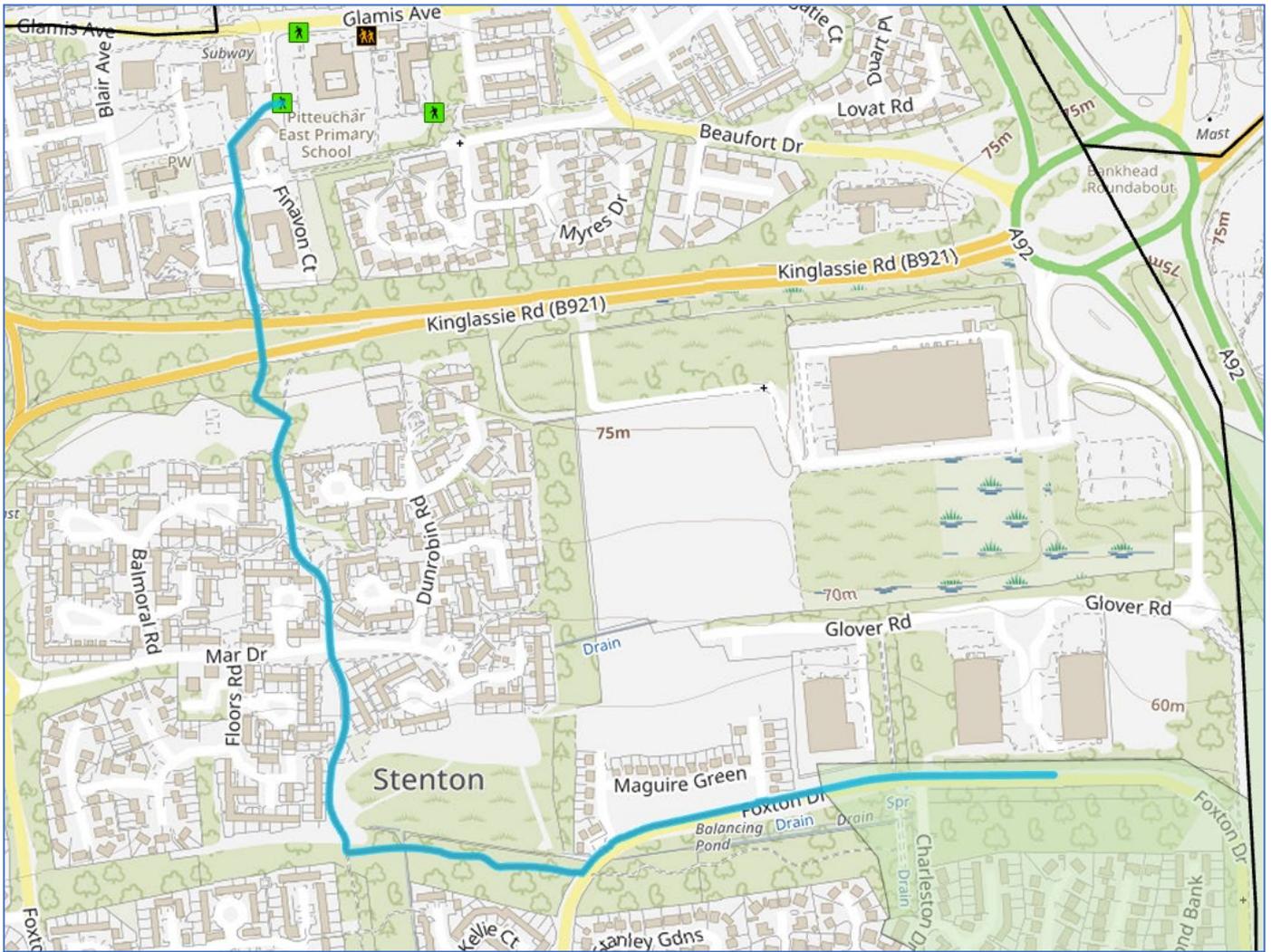
**If the conclusion is no, please describe below any action that would be required that would allow for the route to be assessed as available in future**

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**

<b>Title of proposal</b>	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.
<b>Brief description of proposal (including intended outcomes &amp; purpose)</b>	<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 &amp; 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>
<b>Lead Directorate / Service / Partnership</b>	Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services
<b>EqlA lead person</b>	Avril Graham, Team Manager (Systems and Infrastructure) Education & Children's Services
<b>EqlA contributors</b>	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.
<b>Date of EqlA</b>	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?)

<b>General duties</b>	<b>Please Explain</b>
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.

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**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.

<b>Evidence used</b>	<b>Source of evidence</b>
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
<b>Evidence gaps</b>	<b>Planned action to address evidence gaps</b>

### **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).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
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: <a href="mailto:Enquiry.equalities@fife.gov.uk">Enquiry.equalities@fife.gov.uk</a>
Senior Officer: Avril Graham	Designation: Team Manager (Systems & Infrastructure)

### **FOR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT TEAM ONLY**

EqIA Ref No.	
Date checked and initials	