

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
11 MARCH 2010

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Future development of the ECS Estate – Greater Fort William area

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service

Summary

This report sets out for Member's consideration the outcome from the option appraisal exercise carried out into future Pre School and Primary School provision in the greater Fort William area. The report also seeks Member approval to carry out the related statutory consultations in accordance with the statutory requirements of the School Consultation (Scotland) legislation.

This report contributes towards the following outcomes in **Strengthening the Highlands:**

- Work with the Scottish Government to develop an ambitious 10 year Capital programme to provide modern schools for Highland's children and we will ensure the completion, on time, of the current 5 year programme of 3 new and 5 refurbished schools.
- Place Primary schools at the centre of our communities and work to secure their long term future by developing community schools with a wide range of activities and services extending beyond the traditional school day.
- Continue to develop Gaelic Medium Education in Pre School and Primary Schools...
- Develop our asset management plan to ensure that the Council owns or occupies only the appropriate number of buildings and that these are fit for purpose

1. Background

- 1.1 The ECS Committee on the 15th January 2009 approved the appointment of consultants to identify the future needs for Pre School and Primary School educational provision within the greater Fort William area. The original project specification contained within **Annex 1** sets out the rationale for the project.
- 1.2 Caledonian Economics Limited (CEL) was the consultant appointed, in accordance with the Highland Council Contract Standing Orders, to work in partnership with officials from ECS, Housing & Property Service and Finance Service to conduct the option appraisal exercise.
- 1.3 The option appraisal exercise was conducted on a model devised by CEL based on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the options under consideration. Section 2 of the report outlines the option appraisal approach adopted. Section 3 outlines the preferred options. Section 5 outlines the recommended statutory consultations that will be required if the preferred options outlined in section 3 are approved by Members.

1.4 Inverloch Primary School was not included within the scope of the option appraisal exercise. The initial assessment of schools within the area concluded that this school could continue on a sustainable basis, albeit with refurbishment in specific areas of the school.

1.5 On this basis the following schools were considered as part of the option appraisal exercise:

- Banavie Primary School
- Caol Primary School
- Lochyside Primary School (a Roman Catholic school)
- Fort William Primary
- Fort William Roman Catholic Primary School (this school includes a Gaelic Medium unit)
- Upper Achintore Primary School.

2. The option appraisal process

2.1 There were 7 options considered within the option appraisal. These options are outlined in **Annex 2**.

2.2 The methodology adopted for the option appraisal exercise followed the relevant guidance published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Scottish Government, the key aspects of which are:

- A qualitative comparison of the options under consideration carried out in a workshop environment with the appropriate specialists from the Council and CEL.
- A financial model which compared the whole life cost of the options under consideration
- A value for money (VFM) analysis which compares the results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses to arrive at an overall assessment
- An assessment of project risk

2.3 The qualitative comparison examined issues such as, learning and teaching, pupil entitlement/equality of opportunity, community facilities and activities, campus traffic management, community identity, temporary accommodation during construction and travel distances and time

2.4 The quantitative assessment included teaching costs, non teaching costs, loan charges, facilities management costs, utility costs, life cycle maintenance costs, temporary accommodation costs and safe routes to schools options.

2.5 Copies of the Greater Fort William Pre School and Primary School option appraisal report produced by CEL have been made available in the Members' Lounge.

3. The preferred options

3.1 The summarised findings from the option appraisal report are outlined in the CEL options appraisal report, copies of which are available in the Members' lounge.

3.2 The highest scoring options identified were:

- A new combined Fort William PS and Upper Achintore PS on a new site

- A new combined Caol PS, Banavie PS, Lochyside PS and Fort William RC PS built on a joint campus basis on the site of the existing Caol PS.

3.3 However as the new combined school on the Caol PS would create a very large school campus, it is recommended that there is a new combined Caol PS, Lochyside PS and Fort William RC PS on a joint campus, with Banavie PS remaining on a standalone basis.

3.4 The ECS Committee on the 8th November 2008 approved the principle of a standalone Gaelic School in Fort William subject to a report on suitable sites being brought back to a future ECS Committee. The identification of an appropriate site for the standalone Gaelic School is on-going and on that basis it is proposed that the Gaelic Medium unit within Fort William RC PS remains on an interim basis until a suitable site is found for the new school.

3.5 It is proposed that Banavie PS will be refurbished from the Major Fabric Improvement allocation within the Capital programme on an on-going basis as and when the need arises

4. Consultation

4.1 The relevant stake-holders, local Members, Head Teachers, Parent Council representatives and Community Council representatives were consulted at the inception of and throughout the option appraisal exercise.

4.2 There were regular meetings with stake-holders throughout the process including:

- Drop-in days for the general public in Fort William and Caol in May 2009
- Various stake-holder meetings – May 2009, January 2010
- Ward Forum – February 2010 at which CEL presented their report and findings
- Attendance at Ward Business Meetings as required throughout

5. Statutory Consultations

5.1 Members are asked to agree that statutory consultations are undertaken for the following options:

- A new combined school amalgamating the former Fort William PS and Upper Achintore PS on a new site.
- A new combined school on a joint campus basis amalgamating the former Fort William RC PS, Lochyside PS and Caol PS on the site of the existing Caol PS.

5.2 The statutory consultation will reflect the requirements of the soon to be enacted Schools Consultation (Scotland) Bill and the consultative papers will include the following:

- Educational impact
- Are there viable alternatives to closure?
- Community impact assessment
- Travel implications – pupils and staff
- Building condition score
- Building suitability score
- School roll working capacity
- Current school roll

- Percentage occupancy rate
- Breakdown of devolved budgets
- Physical distance between schools
- Capital investment implications

5.3 The consultative papers in relation to each of the proposals outlined in paragraph 5.1 above are appended as **Annex 3** and **Annex 4** respectively.

5.4 The outcomes from the respective statutory consultations will be reported to the ECS Committee on the 5th August 2010.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Members are requested to note the outcome of the optional appraisal exercise relating to future Pre School and Primary School provision in the Greater Fort William area and to agree that statutory consultations are undertaken for the following options:

- A new combined school amalgamating the former Fort William PS and Upper Achintore PS on a new site.
- A new combined school on a joint campus basis amalgamating the former Fort William RC PS, Lochyside PS and Caol PS on the site of the existing Caol PS.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 3 March 2010

Author: Ron MacKenzie, Head of Support Services, Education, Culture and Sport

Background Papers

Annex 1 – Project specification Greater Fort William Pre School and Primary School option appraisal exercise.

Annex 2 – The options considered with the option appraisal exercise

Annex 3 – Proposal to amalgamate Fort William PS and Upper Achintore PS in a new school on a new site.

Annex 4 – Proposal to amalgamate Fort William RC PS, Lochyside PS and Caol PS in a new school on a joint campus basis on the site of the existing Caol PS.

CONSULTANT SPECIFICATION

OPTIONS APPRAISAL – Greater Fort William Pre School and Primary School educational provision

The Highland Council Education, Culture and Sport (ECS) Service is seeking bids from suitably qualified and experienced Consultants to produce options for future Pre School and Primary School educational provision in the Greater Fort William Area

An outline approach is set out below for information and consideration by perspective bidders. It is anticipated that this initial outline will be expanded and modified in conjunction with the successful bidder.

1:0 Options Appraisal Approach

1:1 Introduction

1:2 The ECS Service has undertaken a degree of preparatory work in relation to this project, including:-

- Assessing demographic trends and the related impact on future school rolls
- Assessing the condition and suitability of each of the 7 Primary Schools within the Greater Fort William area
- Identifying potential sites for new schools within the existing area

1:3 The purpose of this option appraisal exercise is to build upon the work already done and to produce options for the future provision of Pre School and Primary School educational provision. The completed report will be in a suitable format for consideration by elected members to enable decisions to be taken re future educational provision.

1:4 The methodology adopted in the preparation of the options to be considered by elected members should be sufficiently robust as to form a template for similar urban centre reviews to be carried out in future elsewhere within the Highland Council area.

1:5 The following sections set out the following in relation to the option appraisal exercise:-

- The scope
- The objectives
- The potential options to be examined
- The information gathering process
- The co-ordination and reporting of options
- A suggested framework for the analysis of options

1:6 As intimated above the initial project outline may be modified in conjunction with the successful bidder.

2.0 Conduct of Options Appraisal

2:1 The Scottish Government has recently published policy documents associated with development of the School Estate under the heading "Building our future; Scotland's School Estate". This policy document includes guidance on the production of option appraisals. One of the main purposes of this option appraisal report is to further inform the ECS Service's School Estate Management Plan and future Capital programme to bring about the following:-

- Corporate requirement for improved asset management
- Improved Demographic trend forecasts
- The creation of an improved educational environment taking into account current educational policies and priorities – a curriculum for excellence, class size reduction and additional special needs
- The opportunity to create community facilities within the Primary school
- The inevitability that future investment will be required on the existing school estate within the greater Fort William area
- An opportunity to address the requirements of the approved Gaelic Plan for the area
- An opportunity to create a template for improved school asset management that could be used in other locations.

2:2 Highland Council's School Estate Management plan and the published Scottish Government options appraisal publication will be used as the lead guidance document for

- Definition of objectives
- Development of options
- Information gathering
- Assessment of options
- Analysis of options
- Consultation
- Selection of preferred option
- Reporting requirements

2:3. The CIPFA Options Appraisal Guidance is also to be considered as part of the development of this appraisal as this is seen to be a lead document for future asset management within the Council.

3:0 Defining Objectives

3:1 The primary objective of the options appraisal is to establish the appropriate action for the development of the schools within the Greater Fort William school catchment areas taking into account the following.

- Current building condition
- Demographic trends to 2018 (low, medium and high development projections)
- Educational Benefit
- The creation of educational and community facilities that will result in category A facilities for both condition and suitability

- Financial information and appropriate modelling* for the options that:
 - a) Sets out the revenue consequences over a 60 year period with cost projected at 1 year, 5 years, 10 years, 15, 20 and 60 years.
 - b) includes capital cost modelling, life cycle costing and carbon footprint assessment.
 - c) That includes the impact of loan charges based up the Local Authority Fixed Asset Management financial system.

* the financial information will largely be provided from internal sources

- Capital budget costs as defined by outline proposals for the options as developed through professional consultancy services.
- Community Benefits/disbenefits
- Need for temporary accommodation during any building works.
- Safer Routes to school for pedestrian and vehicular traffic, Health and Safety implications and traffic management issues
- Matching the appropriate criteria of the Administration's programme for the Highland Council 'Strengthening the Highlands'

3:2 It is essential that as part of this appraisal that the objectives are seen to be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and that the output is time bound in order that the appraisal can be undertaken in an open and transparent manner. The Objectives therefore have been approved by the highland Councils administration and will be shared with the relative communities and stakeholders.

4:0 Options to be examined

4:1 Amalgamation of the existing Fort William PS and Upper Achintore PS

- Amalgamate the 2 schools within the existing Upper Achintore PS with refurbishment to category A for condition and suitability. Allow for 80% capacity initially to allow for growth. Rename amalgamated school. Dispose of the Fort William PS site including the former Secondary school.
- New community school on existing Upper Achintore PS site (2 storey). Issues with access and construction processes and decanting. Disposal of existing Fort William PS site including the former Secondary school.
- New community school behind the Angus Centre, Lundavra Road. Disposal of former school sites. However need to acquire the site for the new school.
- For each option take into account Pre School facilities (including wraparound childcare) and what other community facilities should be included within the refurbished/new school.

4:2 Amalgamation of the existing Caol PS and Banavie PS

- Amalgamated school on existing Caol PS site with refurbishment to category A for condition and suitability. Disposal of former Banavie PS school site
- New community school on the site adjacent to the BMX track in Caol. Disposal of former school sites
- New community school on a site adjacent to Lochaber High School. Disposal of former school sites
- For each option take into account Pre School facilities (including wraparound childcare) and what other community facilities should be included within the refurbished/new school.

4:3 Amalgamation of the existing Fort William RC PS and Lochside PS

- Amalgamate the denominational schools within the existing Lochside PS campus with refurbishment to category A for condition and suitability. Dispose of Fort William RC PS site.
- Take into account Pre School facilities (including wraparound childcare) and what other community facilities should be included within the refurbished school.

4:4 Consultation outcomes regarding the development of Gaelic Medium Education are currently being reported upon and the outcome of that reporting will require to be factored into the options appraisal process. The following identifies the terms of the consultation:-

To develop a dedicated Gaelic school for the Greater Fort William area which will accommodate 120 pupils plus pre-school provision with wraparound childcare and will act as a hub for Gaelic related activity within the area by:

- i) the adaptation of an existing building for a dedicated Gaelic school to category A for condition and suitability; or
- ii) building a free standing new school on a new site; or
- iii) building a free standing Gaelic school as part of a campus arrangement with a new primary school for the Greater Fort William area the nature and location of which would be identified as part of the option appraisal.

4:5 Inverlochy PS is not within the scope of this project

5:0 Gathering of Information

5:1 There is a requirement for packaged sets of information to be gathered for each option. The main challenge will be how best to present these in a form suitable for analysis and assessment, a process that will be led by the successful bidder. It is considered that the work breaks into four elements, namely:-

- Technical
- Financial
- Programming
- Communication and Consultation

Further breakdown into discrete work packages will take place upon appointment of the successful bidder based upon the knowledge and information held within the Council and that of the consultant.

5:2 The objectives set out in section 3 above have been established to provide a clear statement and they align themselves well with the requirements of the information gathering process. However, there is a requirement for management of the project timescale, oversight and an approvals framework of the information gathering process. Given the Resources available within the Council the Consultancy will have a important roll in managing the programme, reporting progress, resolving problems.

5:3 It is essential that there is effective communication with stake-holders throughout the option appraisal exercise. The successful bidder will be expected to work closely with Council officials in this regard.

6:0 Co-ordination and Reporting of Information

6:1 The successful bidder will be responsible for the production of a report that presents the information in a format that can be readily assessed. This will include the development of a risk management framework that can be factored into the evaluation process.

7:0 Analysis of Options

7:1 It is essential that an appropriate framework is produced for the analysis of the various options. The successful bidder will be responsible for the creation of this framework taking into account current best practice within the industry.

7:2 The following Matrix is proposed but is recognised that it will require further development associated with the various outcomes of the options.

Objectives	Weighting	Option 1		Option 2	
		Basic	Weighted	Basic	Weighted
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					

8:0 Choosing the Preferred Options

8:1 The final part of the analysis is to combine non financial and financial factors. A value for money approach is proposed to be undertaken in order to facilitate the selection of a preferred option.

8:2 The VFM approach is simply the total weighted score divided by the total financial cost. The project with the highest for value money rating should be the preferred option. For the purposes of this exercise it is considered

that the most effective approach to VFM would be to use the ratings for 10, 15, 20 and 60 year costs.

9:0 The Report

9:1 The heads of terms of the report will be established once the key team members have been engaged and discussion has taken place with respect to the Committee reporting cycle.

Background Papers

Scottish Government
MCC Options Appraisal document (Westbrook)
CIPFA Guidance
Etc.

Agreed Options to be Appraised

Option 1	Status Quo Upper Achintore PS, Fort William PS and Fort William RC Primary School refurbished
Option 2	Amalgamation Fort William PS and Upper Achintore PS at a new site new school
Option 3	Amalgamation Fort William PS Upper Achintore PS and Gaelic* combined campus at a new site/new school (*referred to late in presentation – Stand Alone)
Option 4	Status Quo Banavie PS, Caol PS and Lochyside RC PS refurbished
Option 5	Amalgamation Caol PS, Banavie PS, Fort William RC PS and Lochyside RC PS on existing Caol site
Option 6	Amalgamation Caol PS, Fort William RC PS and Lochyside RC PS provision on joint campus at Caol site. Separate Banavie PS (refurbished)
Option 7	Gaelic stand alone school, site to be determined

ANNEX 3

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE EDUCATION PROVISION IN GREATER FORT WILLIAM

FORT WILLIAM AND UPPER ACHINTORE PRIMARIES

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE PAPER PREPARED IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATION
AUTHORITY'S AGREED PROCEDURE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE
SCHOOLS CONSULTATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010.**

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE PAPER PREPARED IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S AGREED PROCEDURE TO MEET THE RELEVANT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO CHANGE EDUCATION PROVISION IN GREATER FORT WILLIAM

This paper sets out a proposal by Highland Council to amalgamate Fort William Primary School and Upper Achintore Primary School in a new school on a site yet to be identified.

1.0 THE PRESENT POSITION

- 1.1 **Fort William Primary School** serves the lower part of Fort William from the River Nevis as far west as the Three Mile Water.
- 1.2 The teaching complement is 3 full-time equivalent teaching posts, including that of the Head Teacher who is class committed. Additionally, there is a part time janitor, clerical assistant, classroom assistants and crossing patrollers. There are other staff allocated to the school from area teams.
- 1.3 There are 7 classrooms, 4 of which are used as teaching rooms, a gym hall, dining room and general purpose room. The buildings are generally in poor condition, in need of significant investment and do not provide an appropriate 21st Century learning environment. There is no pre-school provision. Building Condition is C and Suitability Condition is B.
- 1.4 The playground is small. There is no provision for car parking and all vehicles must remain in the Highland Council car park which is across the A82.
- 1.5 The notional capacity of the school is 185 pupils and the current roll is 58. Projections for the next 5 years suggest that the maximum roll in Fort William Primary School will be 95. Further accurate predictions are difficult to make as any additional rationalisation within Greater Fort William may impact on the numbers attending Fort William and Upper Achintore Primaries. Currently the school is operating at 31% capacity.
- 1.6 **Upper Achintore Primary School** serves the Upper Achintore and Plantation areas in Fort William. The teaching complement is 6 full-time equivalent teaching posts, including that of the Head Teacher who is class committed. Additionally, there is a full time janitor, clerical assistant, classroom assistants, nursery staff and crossing patrollers. There are other staff allocated to the school from area teams.
- 1.7 There are 14 classroom, 7 of these currently used for teaching purposes. Additionally there is a library, gym hall, community room and 2 general purpose rooms. Three further rooms on the ground floor accommodate pre-school provision for nursery and playgroup. There is good office space and a large

staffroom. Building Condition is C and Building Suitability B. There is an extensive playground area with an attractively developed Super Grounds project, a well maintained all weather pitch and good parking facilities.

- 1.8 The notional capacity of the school is 233 pupils and the current roll is 141, with 21 in the Nursery. There is also a Playgroup. Projections for the next 5 years suggest that the maximum roll in Upper Achintore Primary will be 152. Further accurate predictions are difficult to make as any additional rationalisation within Greater Fort William may impact on the numbers attending Fort William and Upper Achintore Primaries. Currently the school is operating at 61% capacity.

2.0 EFFECT OF PROPOSALS

- 2.1 New improved facilities would be available to pupils of both schools. This would be the provision of a 21st learning environment offering opportunities for the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence.
- 2.2 The communities would have enhanced facilities in terms of library, community hall and sporting facilities.
- 2.3 As the schools are within 0.5 miles of each other it is not anticipated that there would be any significant issues in relation to transport for either pupils or staff. However, no decision has yet been taken on where a new school would be situated although it is anticipated that it will be in the area of the current two schools.
- 2.4 The Revenue budget for Fort William Primary School for financial year 2010-11 is £233,480 of which £188,314 relates to staffing. Closure would realise a capital receipt.
- 2.5 The Revenue budget for Upper Achintore Primary School for financial year 2010-11 is £471,866 of which £379,512 related to staffing. Closure would realise a capital receipt.

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 Rolls in Fort William and Upper Achintore Primaries, which are within 0.5 miles of each other, have been steadily declining and both schools are operating at significantly under capacity. Additionally Fort William Primary buildings are generally in poor condition, in need of significant investment and do not provide an appropriate 21st Century learning environment. Retention of the status quo with refurbishment of both schools would be an expensive option.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 For the reasons set out in this paper, the Highland Council proposes to amalgamate Fort William Primary School and Upper Achintore Primary School in a new school on a site yet to be identified.

ANNEX 4

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE EDUCATION PROVISION IN GREATER FORT WILLIAM

CAOL, LOCHYSIDE RC AND FORT WILLIAM RC PRIMARIES

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE PAPER PREPARED IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATION
AUTHORITY'S AGREED PROCEDURE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE
SCHOOLS CONSULTATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010.**

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE PAPER PREPARED IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S AGREED PROCEDURE TO MEET THE RELEVANT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO CHANGE EDUCATION PROVISION IN GREATER FORT WILLIAM

This paper sets out a proposal by Highland Council to build a new Caol Primary School and to merge Lochyside RC and Fort William RC Primaries building a new replacement Roman Catholic School on a joint campus at the site of the current Coal Primary School.

1.0 THE PRESENT POSITION

- 1.1 **Caol Primary School** serves the village of Caol and is bounded on the north and west by part of a line running from the point at which the Caledonian Canal enters Loch Linnhe, along a mid-point of canal towards north and east until the point is reached where the canal is crossed by the trunk road from Fort William to Mallaig.
- 1.2 The teaching complement is 9 full-time equivalent teaching posts, including that of the Depute Head Teacher who is class committed and the Head Teacher who is non teaching. Additionally there is a full time janitor, clerical assistant, classroom assistants, nursery staff, crossing patrollers, and cleaning and catering staff. There are other staff allocated to the school from area teams.
- 1.3 There are 9 classrooms occupied for teaching purposes, 2 General Purpose rooms and a Room 13 facility. Additionally there is a gym hall, dining room, kitchen, office accommodation, staffroom and entrance foyer. There is also a Nursery. The Building Condition is C and the Suitability Condition D. The buildings are in need of significant investment and do not provide an appropriate 21st Century learning environment. There are good playground facilities and adequate provision for car parking. The school is currently operating at 49% capacity.
- 1.4 The notional capacity of the school is 316 pupils and the current roll is 155. Projections for the next 5 years suggest that the maximum roll in Caol Primary will be 189 pupils.
- 1.5 **Lochyside RC Primary School** does not have a delineated area. There is no Pre School provision.
- 1.6 The teaching complement is 4 full-time equivalent teaching posts, including that of the Head Teacher who is class committed. Additionally there is a clerical assistant, classroom assistants, part-time janitor, playground supervisor, and catering and cleaning staff. There are other staff allocated to the school from area teams.
- 1.7 There are 14 rooms, 4 of these used as classrooms, the remainder as General Purpose rooms. There is also a gym hall, dining room, office accommodation and a staffroom. The Building Condition is C and the Suitability Condition A. There is good playground space and grounds, although parking is limited and the access to the main road from the parking area is only adequate. The school is currently operating at 31%.

- 1.8 The notional capacity of the school is 286 and the current roll is 89 pupils.
- 1.9 **Fort William RC Primary School** does not have a delineated area. It is a denominational school with a non denominational Gaelic Medium Department.
- 1.10 The teaching complement is 3 full-time English Medium equivalent teaching posts, 4 Gaelic Medium full-time equivalent posts, one of which is the Depute Head Teacher (Gaelic Medium). The Head Teacher is non teaching. Additionally there is a janitor, clerical assistant, classroom assistants and Nursery Staff. There are other staff allocated to the school from area teams.
- 1.11 There are 7 classrooms occupied for teaching purposes, 2 general purpose rooms, a gym hall, dining room, kitchen, office accommodation, staff room and entrance foyer. There is also pre-school provision in the form of a Gaelic Nursery and an English Nursery. The Building Condition is C and the Suitability Condition C. There are inadequate playground facilities and access to the school is via a steep route at the back of the building. Car parking facilities are limited.

2 EFFECT OF PROPOSALS

- 2.1 New improved facilities would make provision for a 21st Century learning environment offering opportunities for the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence.
- 2.2 The communities would have enhanced facilities in terms of a library, community hall and sporting facilities.
- 2.3 There would be no travel implications for pupils from the delineated area of Caol Primary or those attending Lochyside Primary who reside in the immediate area of the two schools. Transport would require to be provided for RC pupils transferring from Fort William RC Primary. Additionally, it would be necessary to provide transport for non RC pupils and their siblings, currently enrolled at Fort William RC.
- 2.4 The Revenue budget for Caol Primary School for financial year 2010-11 is £564,449 of which £433,331 relates to staffing. Closure would realise a capital receipt.
- The Revenue budget for Lochyside Primary School for financial year 2010-11 is £359,647 of which £278,752 relates to staffing. Closure would realise a capital receipt.
- The Revenue budget for Fort William RC Primary School for financial year 2010-11 is £542,701 of which £452,333 relates to staffing. Closure would realise a capital receipt.
- 2.5 Staffing at Caol Primary School would be unaffected by the proposals, (with the possible exceptions of janitorial, catering and cleaning staff). Staffing at the merged RC schools would be subject to change based on the number enrolled at the new merged facility. In line with Highland Council policy, efforts would be made to redeploy all staff in to existing vacancies elsewhere.
- 2.6 It is proposed that Gaelic Medium pupils currently enrolled in Fort William RC Primary would transfer to a new stand alone Gaelic School which it is proposed to build in Fort William.

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The provision of one 21 Century denominational school would meet the needs of RC families within the Greater Fort William area while Gaelic Medium pupils would transfer to the proposed new Gaelic School. Additionally, Caol Primary School would be replaced with a building which has an appropriate learning environment to meet the needs of 21st Century education. Retention of the status quo with refurbishment of both schools would be an expensive option, in particular as all three schools are operating well under capacity.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 For the reasons set out in this paper, the Highland Council proposes to build a new Caol Primary School and a Roman Catholic Primary School on a joint campus basis, to accommodate pupils from Lochside RC and Fort William RC Primaries, on the site of the present Caol Primary.