**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**The proposal is to establish a new primary school to serve the Ness Castle and Ness-Side housing developments**

**EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT**

**THIS IS A PROPOSAL 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 is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process:

* To establish a new primary school in Inverness to serve the Ness Castle and Ness-side housing developments.
* To amend the delineated area (catchment area) of the current Holm Primary School, in order to create the catchment area for the new school.

In this paper, the new school will be referred to by the provisional name of “Ness Castle Primary School”. In the event that the new school is approved, the final name of the school will be subject to detailed consultation with stakeholders.

Three options are under consideration to create the delineated area of Ness Castle Primary School:

* Under **Option A**, the boundary of the delineated area for Ness Castle Primary will begin on the River Ness at a point just below Whin Island, from there running east to the B862. It then runs in a south westerly direction along the B862 to where it meets the Inverness Distributor Road, after which the boundary extends east along that road to the point where it meets the Lochardil PS catchment. The areas of the present Holm PS catchment that are south and west of this line will become the new school’s catchment area;
* Under **Option B**, the boundary of the delineated area for Ness Castle Primary will begin on the River Ness at a point just below Whin Island, from there running east to the B862. It then runs in a south westerly direction along the B862 to where it meets the Holm Burn, after which the boundary extends south and east along the burn to where it meets the Lochardil PS catchment. The areas of the present Holm PS catchment that are south and west of this line will become the new school’s catchment area;
* **Option C**, under which the delineated area for Ness Castle Primary will be that part of the current Holm Primary catchment that lies south of the current Holm Burn, and south of a line that would leave part of the proposed Ness-side housing development within the Holm Primary catchment.

Maps of the options for the new Ness Castle Primary and revised Holm Primary catchments are at **Appendices A, B** and **C**. This paper invites views on the identified options.

The paper also discusses a potential variation to Option A, which includes Essich Gardens, (currently part of the Lochardil PS catchment), in the new Ness Castle Primary. A map of this variation can found at **Appendix A(i).**

**SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**

**PUBLICATION INFORMATION**

**Proposal Paper Published**

The proposal paper will be available for inspection, free of charge, at:

* Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX
* Holm Primary School, Stratherrick Road, Inverness IV2 4YL
* Lochardil Primary School, Lochardil Road, Inverness IV2 4LB
* Inverness Library, Farraline Park, IV1 1NH

and published on the Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

Copies of this Proposal Paper are also available on request from:

Brian Porter

Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service

Highland Council HQ

Glenurquhart Road

Inverness

IV3 5NX

E-mail: [carelearningadmin@highland.gov.uk](mailto:carelearningadmin@highland.gov.uk)

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please contact The Business Support Team (South and HQ) Highland Council HQ, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX. Email: [carelearningadmin@highland.gov.uk](mailto:carelearningadmin@highland.gov.uk)

Formal notice of the Proposal and relevant information will be given and be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

1. Parents of pupils attending Holm Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
2. Parents of pupils attending Lochardil Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
3. Parents of pupils attending Aldourie Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
4. The Parent Councils of the above schools.
5. Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
6. Staff of Holm Primary School; Lochardil Primary School; and Aldourie Primary School

(vi) Trade union representatives;

1. Lochardil and Drummond Community Council;
2. Dores and Essich Community Council

(ix) Education Scotland;

(x) Highland Youth Convener.

**Advertisement in Local Media**

A notice announcing the public meeting will be placed in the local press and on the Highland Council’s Facebook page.

**Consultation Period**

The consultation for this Proposal will begin on Monday 23 October 2017 and will end on Friday 1 December 2017. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

**Public Meeting**

A public meeting will be held, the details of which are set out below:

7.00pm on Wednesday 8 November at Holm Primary School.

Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Care and Learning Service.

The meeting will be an opportunity for the public to hear more about the proposal; to ask questions about the proposal; and to have the views of all stakeholders recorded so that they can be taken into account. A note will be taken of questions asked and views expressed. This note will be published on the Council website. The meeting will also be recorded.

The note will be forwarded to Education Scotland, along with other submissions and comments received by the Council during the consultation process.

**Meetings with Pupils and Staff**

School staff will arrange to discuss the proposal with pupils (who are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) in the affected schools. A record of questions, responses and views will be taken and this will be published in the Consultation Report.

**Responses to the Proposals**

Interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposals by making written or electronic submissions on the Proposals to:

Brian Porter

Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service

Highland Council HQ

Glenurquhart Road

Inverness

IV3 5NX

E-mail: [carelearningadmin@highland.gov.uk](mailto:carelearningadmin@highland.gov.uk)

Or via an online form, a link to which can be found on

[www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

When responding, you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “carer”, “relative”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the community” etc. However it is not compulsory to do so.

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically, should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and Council Officers of Highland Council”. Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available. All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, Friday 1 December 2017 at 5.00pm.

**Involvement of Education Scotland**

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 8 January 2018, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. Education Scotland will also receive the summary note of the public meeting that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 26 January 2018. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries of people there as they consider appropriate.

**Further Consultation**

Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made at the public meeting. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website as well as at the affected school and local library, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the Education Scotland Report, together with the Council’s considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the People Committee, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

In publishing the report the Council will invite any person or party to make further representations to the Committee prior to its meeting. A notice to this effect will also be published on the Highland Council website.

**Timescale Following Consultation**

At the present time the Council intends to publish its Report in April 2018, prior to submission to the People Committee on 30 May 2018. However, this timescale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give full consideration to those issues. In the latter event, the Report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

Any proposal approved at People Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council.

If approved, the Proposal will then move to the implementation phase. A Stakeholder Group will be established to act as a formal forum for the dissemination of information relating to this development, and to ensure that there is an effective two way flow of information between the Group and the Council, Project Team and Contractor (once appointed). The Group will also have the opportunity to comment and provide feedback on the Council’s proposals in relation to the new school. It is anticipated that the requirements of design, planning permission and build will require a further 30-36 months after the conclusion of the statutory consultation process.

**Note on Corrections**

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal paper, either by the Council or any other person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, if the paper contains an inaccuracy. The Council will then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and HMI will be advised.

**Legislative Background**

* 1. The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (S.3 of The Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act 2000). As with all Council duties, the Council also has a duty to make arrangements to secure best value, and in securing best value the Council is required to maintain an appropriate balance between, inter alia, the quality of its performance of its functions and the cost to the authority of that performance (Local Government in Scotland Act 2002, section 1). Each of the above, and all other legislative requirements, have been taken into account in the preparation of this Report.
  2. A statutory consultation on this proposal is required under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the following grounds:

1. Proposal to establish a new school;
2. Proposal to alter the catchment area of a school or schools.

**Reason for the Proposal**

2.1 This proposal is being advanced because on current projections the pupil numbers at Holm Primary School will exceed the school’s capacity within the foreseeable future. The capacity issue arises from the construction of a new housing development at Ness Castle and proposed developments at Ness Castle. A map showing the proposed site of the new school, can be found at **Appendix D.**

2.2 The consultation process, together with the planning process, and the design and construction of the new school, is likely to take at least 3 years. Additional modular accommodation will be installed as required at Holm Primary in the intervening period. This accommodation will be an interim measure and will not offer a long term solution to the capacity issues that will arise at Holm Primary.

**Current Details – Holm Primary School**

3.1 Holm Primary School is a non-denominational school serving a residential area of Inverness. The school opened in 1974 and was extended in 1979. There are four main buildings:

The Administration Block, which contains the office accommodation; staffroom, hall, dining area and kitchen;

Teaching Block A, where the P.1 and P.2 stage classrooms are situated; Teaching Block B, where P.2/3, P.3, P4, and P4/5 stage classrooms are situated

Teaching Block C, where P.5, P.6, P.6/7, and P.7 are situated.

In addition, a new Nursery building was opened in 2012.

Each of the Teaching Blocks has a central "open area" adjacent to classrooms. The "open areas" are provided as classroom extensions. Each Teaching Block has its own toilet facilities.

3.2 The school has outside playing and recreational areas. The grass area provides space for sports and the tarmacadam quadrangle in the centre of the school grounds can be used for playground games and other activities There is a basketball court at the edge of the playing field and an Adventure Trail. There are other grassy areas, which have picnic benches for the children, a ‘bottle’ greenhouse, an outdoor classroom and our school garden which is looked after by our pupils.

3.3 The school has both car parking and drop-off facilities for visitors and parents of nursery children.

3.4 At the time of writing, the P1-7 roll for the 2017-18 session is 281 pupils. Without taking account of a new Ness Castle Primary, current roll projections for future years are as follows, taking account of the estimated impact of the new housing developments at Ness Castle and Ness Side:

2020-21 - 383

2021-22 - 416

2022-23 - 437

2023-24 - 469

2024-25 - 504

2025-26 - 539

2026-27 - 567

2027-28 - 602

2028-29 - 637

2029-30 - 672

2030-31 - 700

3.5 The school had a permanent planning capacity of 244 at the start of the current school session, with a roll of 281. A modular two classroom unit has since been installed at the school to provide additional accommodation to address this immediate pressure but further temporary units will be required in the coming years as the roll continues to grow.

3.6 The size of the school roll at Holm Primary has led to the school already being capped to prevent enrolments as a result of placing requests.

3.7 The Highland Council assesses all of its schools for Suitability and Condition, in line with the Scottish Government’s School Estate Management guidelines. School buildings are assessed on a scale with the ratings “A” (good) “B” (satisfactory), “C” (poor) and “D” (bad). Holm Primary School is currently rated as “B” for educational suitability and “B” for building condition.

3.8 The most recent HMIe report was published in May 2015. A copy is at **Appendix E.**

3.9 The year group numbers for the 2017-18 session are as follows:

P1 – 34

P2 – 37

P3 – 45

P4 – 38

P5 – 47

P6 – 34

P7 – 46

**Proposed New School**

4.1 The new school would be of modern design, environmentally efficient, and allowing pupils the opportunity to enjoy a comfortable, naturally lit and well ventilated environment designed to meet the needs of modern learners and teachers; meeting the requirements for “A” assessments for both Suitability and Condition; and influenced by good practice elsewhere.

4.2 The projected roll of the new school varies according to which catchment area option is chosen, but is estimated as follows:

OPTION A (Appendix A)

2020-21    - 265

2021-22    - 303

2022-23    - 321

2023-24    - 357

2024-25    - 392

2025-26    - 427

2026-27    - 455

2027-28    - 490

2028-29    - 525

2029-30    - 560

2030-31    - 588

Option Ai would result in a marginal upward variation to the figures in Option A

OPTION B (Appendix B)

2020-21    - 239

2021-22    - 282

2022-23    - 304

2023-24    - 343

2024-25    - 378

2025-26    - 413

2026-27    - 441

2027-28    - 476

2028-29    - 511

2029-30    - 546

2030-31    - 574

OPTION C (Appendix C)

2020-21 - 95

2021-22 - 115

2022-23 - 142

2023-24 - 168

2024-25 - 189

2025-26 - 217

2026-27 - 245

2027-28 - 266

2028-29 - 294

2029-30 - 322

2030-31 - 343

4.3 Pre-school accommodation would be provided, and the pre-school accommodation would be suitable for use by breakfast clubs and after-school clubs, should any be created. Flexibility will be built in to take account of the increased entitlement to free provision required by 2020.

4.4 It would be important to include a degree of flexibility and adaptability within the design in order to provide options to alter spaces in the future in response to the changing needs of the school. This approach would optimise the use of available space.

4.5 The needs of every child would be placed at the centre of developing the design in recognition of the transitions from pre-school to primary and ultimately to secondary education. The design would be planned to enable the flexibility required to meet the evolving needs of the school curriculum and other developments, including:

* The Pre School educational area having sufficient space to accommodate a variety of activities to support early years learning, together with close internal links with the infant department in order to encourage regular collaborative learning through active play and to enhance the transition between pre-school and Primary 1.
* Learning and teaching spaces for primary age pupils which have access to internal shared activity areas and external teaching spaces which provide flexibility and opportunities to maximise the use of space inside and outside the building.
* HT office, reception/admin office, staff room, and meeting room/staff base.
* Kitchen with dining area.
* Games hall with changing facilities (potentially accessible to community outwith school hours).
* Grass playing field, and Multi-use Games Area.
* A variety of other spaces to support activities within the school, including general purpose space and spaces specifically designed for pupils with Additional Support Needs.
* Design which will maximise the use of natural daylight and natural ventilation, together with heating, ventilation and electrical systems which provide modern requirements in an energy efficient and sustainable manner.
* The landscaping around the school will be designed in conjunction with the school users to ensure that there is an interesting “play and learning” environment.
* Safe access to the school with the appropriate arrangements for those arriving/departing on foot, by bicycle, by bus or by car.

4.6. The above overview provides an outline of the design opportunities that exist taking into account recent experience with similar primary school projects elsewhere within Highland. These opportunities will be developed in conjunction with the school communities to ensure that the new school design takes account of the aspirations of future users of the facility.

4.7 The Scottish Government’s Climate Change Policy specifies that new buildings should be nearly zero in terms of carbon emissions. The Council’s expectation is that the new school would have a Carbon Dioxide equivalent impact of about 15 tonnes per year at most.

**Educational Benefits**

5.1 Highland Council is of the view that the school environment should be of a quality that sustains and improves education provision, pupil performance and outcomes for the young people of Highland.

5.2 With the above aim in mind, Highland Council has adopted the above indicators in reviewing its school estate:

1. Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
2. Pupils should be members of an age-appropriate peer group.
3. Pupils should have the opportunity to engage in the widest possible range of activities beyond the core curriculum, including music, sports, drama and art.
4. Pupils with Additional Support Needs should be educated in the most appropriate local setting.
5. Pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 30 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school (primary) although it is recognised that this may not always be possible in a rural Council area such as Highland.
6. School facilities should be of a size appropriate to the delineated area that they serve, paying due regard to demographic trends.
7. School delineated areas should reflect geography, travel routes and population distribution.
8. Safe school transport should be provided and safe traffic management in and around school sites should be implemented.
9. Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising at least 3 members located in the same facility.
10. The implications of school location to local communities should be considered.
11. Schools, wherever possible, should be located where there is a recognised village or other built up community.

5.3 The projected rolls at paragraph 3.4 indicate that the new school is required in order to address point 6 of the Highland Council criteria *“School facilities should be of a size appropriate to the delineated area that they serve, paying due regard to demographic trends.”* The Ness Castle/Ness-Side housing developments mean that in future Holm Primary will no longer meet this criterion. There is a need for a new school to balance the number of children in the area with the facilities that are available.

5.4 Should the new school be constructed, the revised projected rolls for Holm Primary would be as follows. Again, the projections vary according to which catchment option is chosen:

Option A (Appendix A)

2020-21    - 118

2021-22    - 113

2022-23    - 116

2023-24    - 112

2024-25    - 112

2025-26    - 112

2026-27    - 112

2027-28    - 112

2028-29    - 112

2029-30    - 112

2030-31    - 112

OPTION B (Appendix B)

2020-21    - 144

2021-22    - 134

2022-23    - 133

2023-24    - 126

2024-25    - 126

2025-26    - 126

2026-27    - 126

2027-28    - 126

2028-29    - 126

2029-30    - 126

2030-31    - 126

Option C (Appendix C)

2020-21 - 290

2021-22 - 297

2022-23 - 300

2023-24 - 308

2024-25 - 315

2025-26 - 322

2026-27 - 329

2027-28 - 336

2028-29 - 343

2029-30 - 350

2030-31 - 357

5.5 The roll projections provide an overwhelming case for the construction of a new school. It is clear that without a new school in the area, Holm Primary, and probably other local schools, would be faced with an unmanageable level of overcrowding. Indeed, under Option C above, capacity issues could still arise at Holm Primary, even after the building of the new school. The delineation of the catchment will therefore be a significant factor in deciding on the size of the new school.

5.6 It is of course impossible to predict future school rolls with complete accuracy. Much will depend on the pace of housebuilding in the area. The projections shown are also partly based on the past pattern of local placing requests, but this pattern could itself be changed by the construction of the new schools. The Council is also looking at new school capacity for the Slackbuie area, which might further affect the above projections.

5.7 By alleviating future capacity pressures expected to arise at Holm Primary, the proposal would improve the learning environment for the pupils of both Holm Primary and Ness Castle Primary.

5.8 In summary, the new school offers the possibility of educational benefit arising through averting future overcrowding at Holm Primary.

**Alternative Solutions**

6.1 In arriving at the proposal set out within this report, the Council has considered alternative solutions. However, none of the neighbouring schools have the capacity to accommodate the number of additional pupils that will arise from the new housing. It has been recognised from the outset that the housing development at Ness Castle would require the construction of the new school.

**Options for New Catchment**

7.1 Under Option A and its variant, Ai, the area of existing housing known as “Holm Dell” would transfer to the Ness Castle catchment, and Option Ai would also affect the Lochardil catchment, in that the small area of housing at Essich Gardens would transfer to Ness Castle.

7.2 A separate review is underway regarding education provision in the Slackbuie area of Inverness, the outcome of which could have implications for the Lochardil PS catchment. Full consideration of the best future catchment area for Lochardil PS will be included within any forthcoming proposal arising from that review, and Highland Council does not recommend altering the Lochardil catchment as a consequence of the current proposal for Ness Castle Primary.

7.3 Under Option B, “Holm Dell” would remain within the Holm Primary catchment, and the Ness Castle catchment would encompass all of the Ness Castle and Ness-side developments.

7.4 Option C would offer Ness Castle Primary a smaller catchment than the other options and would leave a significant amount of new housebuilding within the Holm Primary catchment. It would therefore lead to a larger roll at Holm Primary than would any other catchment option, and would potentially still result in some capacity issues at Holm Primary in the future, which would need to be addressed.

7.5 As mentioned above, the delineation of the catchment area will have a significant effect on the required size of the new school.

7.6 Highland Council would welcome the views of local people on which of the catchment options would be the most appropriate.

**Effects on School Transport**

8.1 Pupils attending Holm Primary are not entitled to school transport as the home to school distances are within walking distance. Appropriate arrangements would be made for any transport required for pupils due to Additional Support Needs.

8.2 The construction of the new school will not therefore have any significant impact on school transport.

**Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements**

9.1 An appropriate management structure will be put in place at the new school, reflecting the size of the school and consistent with such arrangements elsewhere in Highland. Consideration will be given to the need for transitional arrangements, to fully establish Ness Castle Primary.

9.2 The staffing arrangements for Ness Castle Primary will also be consistent with the staffing of other schools in Highland. Staffing levels will be arranged in accordance with local and national agreements, and relevant legislation.

9.3 The projected roll at Holm Primary would fall under catchment options A and B above, which would mean less staff being required at the school. This would however be within the context of an overall rise in roll within the Inverness area, and consequently there would be numerous redeployment opportunities for staff, not least at Ness Castle PS itself.

9.4 At the present time the new school is too far off to be able to look at the effect on individual staff. The Council will at all times follow its redeployment policy, should there be a need to assign any staff to a new school.

**Effect on the Local Community**

10.1 The establishment of the new school provides the opportunity to improve and expand access to community facilities, within the new school, and through the continuation of the existing Holm Primary school. The scope of, and access to, community facilities would be considered through the briefing and design stage following conclusion of the Statutory Consultation.

**Financial Consequences**

11.1 The capital and revenue implications of constructing the new school will be taken account of within the Council’s capital programme and revenue budget planning.

**Equalities Impact Assessment**

12.1 The proposal has been assessed as having no impact on the following Equality areas:

* Gender
* Gender reassignment
* Pregnancy or Maternity
* Marriage/Civil Partnership
* Race
* Religion or Belief
* Sexual Orientation
* Looked After Children
* Young Carers
* Children and Young People Living in Deprivation

12.2 In respect of age equality, the proposal relates to 2 primary schools and as such primarily affects children in the 3-12 age group, and their parents. The proposal is advanced on the basis of educational benefit to the children in the area concerned. No negative age related effects arise. Age is not a protected characteristic for the purposes of schools provision.

12.3 The proposed new school would be built to modern standards, offering disabled access for children, parents and the wider community, as well as purpose built teaching accommodation for children with additional support needs. It would therefore have a positive impact on disability issues.

**Mitigation of Adverse Effects**

13.1 Adverse effects from the proposal could include the separation of pupils who previously attended the same school, with implications for existing friendships.

13.2 When Ness Castle Primary School opens, any pupils from within the delineated area of the new school who are already enrolled within the Nursery or P1-7 classes at Holm Primary, will be given the opportunity to enrol in the new school or to continue attending Holm Primary, without having to submit a placing request. Where the latter option is taken, this opportunity will also be extended to any younger siblings of pupils attending Holm Primary at the time of the younger child’s admission. This is to enable siblings to attend the same school.

13.3 Subsequent to the opening of Ness Castle Primary School, any pupils not falling within the above categories will be enrolled in their catchment school. Parents who wish their children to attend an alternative school may submit placing requests to that effect.

**Recommendation**

14.1 Taking the above into account Highland Council recommends that a new primary school is constructed to serve the Ness Castle and Ness-Side Housing Developments. The new school’s catchment area would be chosen from one of the three options shown at Appendices A - C.

14.2 This proposal paper is issued in terms of the authority’s procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements*.* Following the consultation period, a report reviewing the consultations, and the submissions received, will be presented to the People Committee of the Highland Council***.***