

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND ADULT SERVICES
COMMITTEE - 28th AUGUST 2014

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	ECAS/25/14

Sustainable School Estate Review – initial proposals for a statutory consultation arising from the Easter Ross review

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report sets out for Members' consideration the recommendations contained within the option appraisal exercise carried out into future educational provision in Tain. On the basis of the recommendations contained within the option appraisal report Members are asked to approve that the following statutory consultations be progressed in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:

- To discontinue education provision at the following campuses – Tain Craighill Primary School, Tain Knockbreck Primary School and St Duthus School and to relocate provision to a new 3 to 18 campus to be established on the site of the existing Tain Royal Academy;
- As an interim measure, until the proposed 3 to 18 campus is available, to relocate current Pre School provision from St. Duthus School campus (English Medium) and the Tain Knockbreck Primary School campus (Gaelic Medium) to temporary modular accommodation on the current Tain Craighill Primary School campus;
- To establish a new 3 to 18 community campus on the site of the existing Tain Royal Academy to provide Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Additional Support Needs (ASN), Gaelic Medium provision to replace all other local authority education provision within Tain, including the existing Tain Royal Academy building and Community Complex;
- To combine the existing school catchment areas of Tain Craighill Primary School and Tain Knockbreck Primary School to serve the new combined Primary School within the 3 to 18 campus.

This report contributes towards the following outcomes in **Working together for the Highlands**:

- The Council will work with the Scottish Government to continue to develop an ambitious 10-year Capital programme to provide modern schools in the Highlands. We are determined to ensure the completion of the current school building programme;
- The Council will ensure that all new school buildings will act as a community-hub. We will investigate new and innovative ways to deliver more community access to existing buildings as part of a review of the schools estate.

1. Background

- 1.1 The ECS Committee in January 2010 agreed that a review of education provision across Highland be undertaken. This review, subsequently known as the Sustainable School Estate Review (SSER), has progressed and developed in the intervening period. The review process is consistent with the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010, although it does not, of itself, constitute a consultation in terms of that Act .

- 1.2 Caledonian Economics Limited (Cal Ec.) was appointed, in accordance with the Highland Council Contract Standing Orders, to work in partnership with officials from the Care and Learning, the Development & Infrastructure and Finance Services to progress the SSER. The option appraisal methodology employed to progress the review has been used successfully during reviews of education and community provision in the greater Fort William area and Wick town. A number of reviews are currently being progressed in parallel namely, Easter Ross, Inverness and the A96 corridor and Skye and Lochalsh. This report focuses on the initial proposals emerging from the review of education and community provision in Tain.
- 1.3 Progress with the Easter Ross SSER process has been reported to each Adult & Children Services Committee (and the successor Committee) since 2012 when initial engagement with local Members began.
- 1.4 Initial preparatory work relating to the Easter Ross SSER review has focussed on education provision in Alness, Invergordon and Tain. The decision to progress with the Tain statutory consultation, ahead of future proposals for education provision in Alness and Invergordon, was determined by the availability of Capital funding freed up as a result of further Scottish Government investment in the Wick Community Campus project and the specific criteria attached to that funding.
- 1.5 The Scottish Government's funding contribution towards the Wick project was on condition that the Council Capital funding previously allocated to Wick should be used for a "clean" project which would benefit the maximum number of pupils within the period in which the Council's funding for the Wick project would have been utilised. The Tain 3 to 18 campus meets these criteria as follows:
 - It will benefit approximately 900 pupils;
 - The principle has already been agreed by Committee in November 2012;
 - The preferred site is under consideration by this Committee today.

Therefore, there is confidence that a formal statutory consultation re a 3 to 18 campus in Tain can progress quickly.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is outlined in **Appendix 1**. The proposal document was informed by the following key components:
 - The Scottish Government's School Estate strategy and the Highland Council's "Working together for the Highlands" manifesto objectives that Capital investments in the School Estate should deliver educational benefits for as many pupils as possible. In addition, the objective contained in both documents that community use of school campuses should be maximised by creating community hubs;
 - The option appraisal document produced by Cal Ec. in 2012, on which the Committee decision to agree the principle of a 3 to 18 campus in Tain was founded;
 - The site selection report for the proposed 3 to 18 campus in Tain which is the subject of a separate report to this Committee;
 - Updated building condition surveys which high-lighted the fact that the condition of the 2 Primary Schools in Tain is amongst the worst in the Highlands;

- The condition of St. Duthus School building which has resulted in the decision to relocate pupils to temporary modular accommodation on the existing site until permanent suitable alternative accommodation can be provided.

2.2 The proposal document also includes a proposal to consolidate English Medium Pre School provision (currently on the St. Duthus School campus) and Gaelic Medium Pre School provision (currently on the Knockbreck PS campus) in temporary modular accommodation on the Craighill PS campus until permanent suitable alternative accommodation can be provided. The justification for these measures is outlined within section 3 of the proposal document (at Appendix 1).

3. The Statutory Consultation Process

3.1 The statutory consultation will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 as updated. The related Guidance and Timeline documents are appended at **Appendices 2** and **3** respectively.

3.2 The proposed timeline for the statutory consultation is as follows (subject to approval to proceed being agreed today):

- Formal consultation period - 1st September to 29th October 2014 inclusive
- Public meeting – 16th September
- Education Scotland report on merits of proposal document and feedback received during formal consultation period – the 3 weeks commencing 10th November
- The Council publishes final consultation report responding to all issues raised during the formal consultation period 3 weeks in advance of the Education Children and Adult Services (ECAS) Committee at which the final decision will be made (on the assumption that this Committee will take place in February 2015, this report will be published in early January 2015)
- During the 3 week period in advance of the Committee members of the public have the opportunity to submit comments on the consultation report which must be made available to Elected Members at the Committee when the final decision will be taken.

3.3 The above is a brief overview of the key dates between the formal consultation commencing on the 1st September 2014 to the ECAS Committee that will make the final decision in February 2015 (or the first ECAS Committee in 2015) and thereafter submit recommendations to the next available Highland Council meeting. The complete timeline for any statutory consultation process is contained within **Appendix 3**.

4. Implications

4.1 **Resource implications** – there are a number of resource implications associated with the proposal that can be summarised thus:-

- Section 7 of the proposal document outlines the financial implications which suggest, inter alia, annual Revenue savings of £0.385M will be achieved as a result of the creation of a 3 to 18 campus in Tain in comparison with the corresponding costs of upgrading the existing provision to A/A for building condition and educational suitability;
- Within the approved ECS Capital programme there is a generic budget heading entitled “SSER – Major Projects” and “SSER – Primary Schools” which contains a

combined funding totalling £64.0M over the 3 financial years from 2016/17 to 2018/19, the period in which the 3 to 18 campus would be constructed, if approved. It should be noted that this project will also benefit from the £10.0M Capital funding previously allocated to the Wick Community Campus project, but now available as a result of the additional funding provided for that project by the Scottish Government.

4.2 **Legal implications** – a number of issues to consider, including:-

- The title deeds of the existing school buildings
- Compliance with all related legislation including, the requirements of the updated Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 and all other legislative references therein.

4.3 **Equality implications** – the creation of a new community campus will address all issues relating to compliance with the Equalities legislation. In addition the appropriate accommodation and access/egress will be provided for all users of the community campus.

4.4 **Climate change implications** – energy efficiency will be reflected in the designs of the new community campus thereby reducing the carbon foot-print in comparison with the existing school buildings. In addition, reducing the number of the existing school buildings and the creation of sustainable energy solutions on the new campus will result in an overall reduction in energy consumption.

4.5 **Risk implications** - in relation to the delivery of the proposals the key risks could be as follows;

- The proposed site is relatively physically constrained and there are therefore challenges in relation to creating the appropriate campus configuration and the management of access/egress to/from the campus at the beginning and end of the school day;
- The management of the campus site during construction, in particular the challenges associated with managing health and safety on a live construction site on an existing school campus;
- Ensuring that the challenges associated with creating a safe/secure play area for the Pre School and Primary-age pupils are addressed to the satisfaction of parents and the school community generally.

4.6 **Gaelic implications** – the opportunity will be taken to create appropriate accommodation within the campus that will recognise the importance of learning and teaching through the medium of Gaelic in a continuum from 3 to 18. This proposal should therefore be regarded as an enhancement to Gaelic Medium learning and teaching.

4.7 **Rural implications** – whilst there are no rural schools (as defined by the Scottish Government) included within this proposal, this investment when added to the significant investment in educational/community provision across the Highlands in recent years demonstrates a significant commitment to create sustainable provision which will inspire learning and teaching.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Members are asked to agree that a statutory consultation be carried out in relation to the following proposals in accordance with the updated requirements of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010;

- To discontinue education provision at the following campuses – Tain Craighill Primary School, Tain Knockbreck Primary School and St Duthus School and to relocate provision to a new 3 to 18 campus to be established on the site of the existing Tain Royal Academy;
- As an interim measure, until the proposed 3 to 18 campus is available, to relocate current Pre School provision from St. Duthus School campus (English Medium) and the Tain Knockbreck Primary School campus (Gaelic Medium) to temporary modular accommodation on the current Tain Craighill Primary School campus;
- To establish a new 3 to 18 community campus on the site of the existing Tain Royal Academy to provide Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Additional Support Needs (ASN), Gaelic Medium provision to replace all other local authority education provision within Tain, including the existing Tain Royal Academy building and Community Complex;
- To combine the existing school catchment areas of Tain Craighill Primary School and Tain Knockbreck Primary School to serve the new combined Primary School within the 3 to 18 campus.

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 18th August 2014

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EDUCATION CHILDREN AND ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Proposal document prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

The Highland Council, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, proposes:

- To discontinue education provision at the following campuses – Tain Craighill Primary School, Tain Knockbreck Primary School and St Duthus Special School and to relocate provision to a new 3 to 18 campus to be established on the site of the existing Tain Royal Academy;
- As an interim measure, until the proposed 3 to 18 campus is available, to relocate current Pre School provision from St. Duthus School campus (English Medium) and the Tain Knockbreck Primary School campus (Gaelic Medium) to temporary modular accommodation on the current Tain Craighill Primary School campus;
- To establish a new 3 to 18 community campus on the site of the existing Tain Royal Academy comprising Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Additional Support Needs (ASN) and Gaelic Medium provision to replace all other local authority education provision within Tain, including the existing Tain Royal Academy building and Community Complex;
- To combine the existing school catchment areas of Tain Craighill Primary School and Tain Knockbreck Primary School to become the catchment area of the new combined Primary School within the 3 to 18 campus.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Adult and Children Services Committee, in November 2012, approved the principle that a 3 to 18 campus should be created in Tain to replace existing education provision at Tain Royal Academy, Tain Craighill Primary School (hereafter referred to as Craighill PS), Tain Knockbreck Primary School (hereafter referred to as Knockbreck PS) and St Duthus Special School (here after referred to as St Duthus School). To avoid repetition it should be assumed that the related Pre School provision is included within any reference to each Primary School. For ease of reference that report, including the option appraisal document produced by Caledonian Economics Limited which informed the recommendation can be accessed via the following link [Item12ACS5112\[1\] Tain.rtf](#) . It should be noted that, per the above legislation, the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, a statutory consultation cannot be carried out so far in advance of a proposed implementation date that it would not be possible to engage meaningfully with anyone likely to be affected by the proposal. For this reason, a proposal

document was delayed until there was certainty about the timescale within which any proposal could be implemented. That certainty now exists as a result of greater clarity about the funding arrangements for the proposal.

- 1.2 It was agreed at the Education Children and Adult Services (ECAS) Committee on 21st May 2014 that a site selection consultative process should be carried out in relation to 3 sites within Tain namely, the existing Tain Royal Academy site, the existing Craighill PS site and a site at Kirksheaf Road, Tain. The outcome of that consultative exercise, which is the subject of a separate report to this Committee, is that the recommended site for the proposed 3 to 18 campus is the existing Tain Royal Academy site. It is assumed for the purposes of this proposal document that the recommended site, which reflects the preference of the majority of the views expressed during the site selection consultative process, will be approved by Members at the ECAS Committee on the 28th August 2014.

2.0 CURRENT PROVISION

- 2.1 The schools under consideration in this proposal document are as follows:

- Craighill PS
- Knockbreck PS
- St Duthus School
- Tain Royal Academy and Community Complex

None of the above schools is classified as rural per the Scottish Government's published list of rural schools.

- 2.2 **Craighill PS** is a non-denominational school serving the catchment area shown at **Appendix 1. Appendix 1 (a)** outlines an additional geographical area from which parents have the option to send their children to either Craighill PS or Knockbreck PS. The school provides Primary-age education through the mediums of English or Gaelic. The projected school roll estimates for August 2014 are 208 English Medium pupils and 33 Gaelic Medium pupils. There is no Pre School provision on the Craighill PS site. English Medium Pre School provision is on the St Duthus School campus and Gaelic Medium Pre School provision is on the Knockbreck PS campus.
- 2.3 **Knockbreck PS** is a non-denominational school serving the catchment area shown at **Appendix 2**. The school provides Primary-age provision through the medium of English. The projected school roll estimate for August 2014 is 165 pupils. As indicated above, there is Gaelic medium Pre School provision on this campus, although Primary-age Gaelic Medium provision is delivered at Craighill PS.

- 2.4 **St Duthus School** provides a learning environment for a range of pupils with Additional Support Needs resident in the Easter Ross and east Sutherland areas. The projected school roll estimate for August 2014 is 14 pupils. The existing school building is in a very poor condition. In order to provide appropriate and sufficient accommodation it is necessary to provide alternative temporary modular accommodation on the site of the existing school for a period lasting no longer than 5 years or until such time that long term permanent accommodation is available in the new 3 to 18 campus.
- 2.5 Pre School provision in the Tain area is currently provided via the following outlets:
- Local authority English medium provision is located within the St. Duthus School campus – there are 35 pupils enrolled for session 2014/15;
 - Local authority Gaelic medium provision is located within the Knockbreck PS campus – there are 7 pupils enrolled for session 2014/15;
 - Partner Centre provision is provided via private day care centres at Ankerville Tain (66 enrolled for 2014/15) and Stepping Stones Nursery (35 enrolled for 2014/15).
- 2.6 **Tain Royal Academy and Community Complex** - There are 8 Primary Schools within the Tain Royal Academy Associated School Grouping (ASG) namely, Craighill PS, Knockbreck PS, Edderton PS, Gledfield PS, Hill of Fearn PS, Hilton of Cadboll PS, Inver PS and Tarbat Old PS. In addition, St Duthus School is situated within Tain. The existing catchment area of Tain Royal Academy is shown in **Appendix 3**. The projected school roll estimate as at August 2014 is 487 pupils. There is a Community Complex, including a swimming pool, within the campus. The Community Complex is managed by High Life Highland on behalf of the Council.
- 2.7 Details of the following are provided in **Appendix 4** for each of the above schools:
- Building condition, suitability, capacity and occupancy
 - School roll projections
 - Placing request details
 - School meal uptake

Details of the capacity calculations for Craighill PS and Knockbreck PS, per the current Scottish Government's guidance, are provided in **Appendices 4 (a) and (b)**. In addition, **Appendix 4 (c)** provides details of the numbers of pupils in who reside in the Tain Royal Academy, Craighill PS and Knockbreck PS school catchment areas and the schools which they actually attend. It should also be

highlighted that in the recently completed condition survey of school buildings Craighill PS and Knockbreck PS were the lowest scoring buildings in the Highland Council area.

- 2.8 The budgeted staffing entitlements for each of the schools as at April 2014 are provided in **Appendix 5**. The overall budget entitlement for the Tain schools is 99.46 full-time equivalent staff.
- 2.9 The current school transport arrangements for each of the schools are outlined in **Appendix 6**. In summary there are 151 pupils transported on combined TainRoyal Academy/Craighill PS routes, 121 pupils transported on dedicated routes to TainRoyal Academy, 28 pupils transported on dedicated routes to Craighill PS (of whom 13 are Gaelic Medium) and 11 pupils transported to St. Duthus School. The overall annual cost of school transport provision to these schools is £0.565M with, on average, 311 pupils transported on a daily basis.
- 2.10 Detail of recorded school letting activity is provided in **Appendix 7**. The letting activity at Tain Royal Academy is organised by High Life Highland. There is little recorded letting activity at the Primary Schools with no lets at Knockbreck PS and St.Duthus School and on average 3 after- school clubs per week recorded at Craighill PS.
- 2.11 The most recent Education Scotland reports for each school are included in **Appendix 8**.
- 2.12 School Travel Plans are available for Tain Royal Academy and Knockbreck PS. These documents are at **Appendix 9**. These documents are reviewed on an on-going basis by the school management teams. There are currently 4 Road Crossing Patrollers employed in Tain, with 2 based at Craighill PS and 2 based at Knockbreck PS.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Highland Council is currently undertaking a strategic review of its school estate over a 10 to 15 year period. This review, known as the Sustainable School Estate Review (SSER), is under-pinned by a number of key drivers, namely:
- The Scottish Government's School Estate strategy which encourages local authorities to maximise the number of pupils learning in school buildings which score A/A per the national building condition and educational suitability scoring classifications;
 - Also, per the national strategy; to encourage local authorities to move towards the creation of community hubs when undertaking their school estate and community facility strategic planning

- 3.2 In addition, **Working together for the Highlands** (the Council Administration's manifesto document) contains a clear commitment that the Council will ensure that all new school buildings act as community-hubs and that new and innovative ways to deliver more community access to buildings will be identified as part of a review of the schools estate.
- 3.3 The option appraisal report produced by Caledonian Economics Limited in 2012 is accessible via the link in paragraph 1.1 above . This document was the basis on which the proposal to create a 3 to 18 campus in Tain to replace the existing provision at Tain Royal Academy, Craighill PS, Knockbreck PS and St. Duthus School originated. This report, which was approved by the Adult & Children Services Committee in November 2012, concluded that the creation of a 3 to 18 campus provided a better option, in qualitative and quantitative terms, than refurbishing the existing schools. At that time a site for the proposed 3 to 18 campus had not been identified.
- 3.4 In the intervening period, the condition and suitability of the Craighill PS, Knockbreck PS and St. Duthus Schools has deteriorated to such an extent that significant investment is required for each within the next 3 to 5 year period. Of most immediate concern is the condition of the St. Duthus School building where it has been necessary to provide temporary modular accommodation for a maximum period of 5 years until permanent accommodation can be provided. In addition, as a result of the Planning conditions associated with this temporary provision it is necessary to demolish the existing St.Duthus School building within 12 months. On the basis that this building also accommodates English Medium Pre School provision it will therefore be necessary to relocate this provision to modular accommodation at Craighill PS for a temporary period.
- 3.5 In addition, as a result of the significant accommodation pressures at Knockbreck PS it is necessary to relocate the Gaelic Medium Pre School provision on that campus in order to free up space at the school (as the school is currently over capacity). It is proposed therefore to relocate Gaelic Medium provision to temporary modular accommodation on the Craighill PS campus. As a result, both English Medium and Gaelic Medium Pre School provision will be co-located on the Craighill PS campus. This proposal has merit from an educational perspective as it locates provision adjacent to the Primary School to which historically Pre School pupils at the St. Duthus School and Knockbreck campuses have transferred. This, in future, will facilitate the transition from Pre School to Primary education until such time that the proposed 3 to 18 campus is available.
- 3.6 The Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 (as amended) stipulates that a statutory consultation is required when any relocation of educational provision (including Pre School) is proposed. As a result, the proposal to relocate the

existing local authority Pre School provision in Tain to the Craighill PS campus is part of this wider statutory consultation process.

- 3.7 It is apparent from the above evidence that there is a relatively urgent requirement to improve educational provision in Tain. The creation of a 3 to 18 campus provides an opportunity to address these requirements, as well as providing exciting new opportunities for curriculum delivery. This proposal also provides opportunities to further strengthen health and well-being provision in partnership with High Life Highland.

4.0 THE PROPOSED NEW CAMPUS

- 4.1 The Highland Council, as an outcome of the SSER process, has had recent experience in creating a 3 to 18 campus in Wick (this project received a significant funding contribution from the Scottish Government). It is felt that the campus concept created for Wick provides an appropriate template for initial consideration of the Tain Community Campus. The configuration for the Wick Community Campus is provided at **Appendix 10**. The experience gained from developing the Wick Community Campus provides a very useful reference point when considering what might be possible in Tain.
- 4.2 Currently, 3 to 18 education provision in Tain is spread across four separate campuses. Allied to this there are disparate factors, with the Craighill PS English Medium Pre School facility located on the St. Duthus School site. In addition, Gaelic Medium Pre School provision is situated on the Knockbreck PS campus, whilst Primary Gaelic Medium education is provided at Craighill PS.
- 4.3 The proposal is, therefore, to consolidate existing education and community provision within a new build 3 to 18 campus on the existing Tain Royal Academy site. As indicated in paragraph 3.6 above, as an interim measure, there is a requirement to relocate Pre School provision from the existing sites at St. Duthus School and Knockbreck PS to temporary modular accommodation situated adjacent to Craighill PS.
- 4.4 An initial description of what might be provided on the campus is outlined in **Appendix 11 (a)** (the campus layout) and **Appendix 11 (b)** (the campus specification). It should be emphasised that this initial campus layout is merely an illustration produced by the architect to confirm that the accommodation required will fit on the site. During the consultation period there will be an opportunity to provide comments on the site layout as initially configured. Another issue to consider is the ability to increase the scope of the accommodation provided if there is a significant increase in the local population in future years.
- 4.5 The key features of the initial 3 to 18 campus layout outlined in Appendix 11 (a) can be summarised thus:

- The Secondary School and Primary School despite being co-joined will have separate identities with the initial assumption being that each will have its own Head Teacher;
- The Primary School building will have its own Games Hall;
- Concerns re separate access and safe/secure play areas for Primary-age pupils were addressed as part of the design of the Wick Community Campus. This experience will be replicated when developing the design/campus configuration of the campus proposal;
- There will be a covered “shared street” which will link the Primary and Secondary school buildings providing a large social/recreational/dining space;
- The community facility will be physically separated from the school buildings. This building will be controlled and managed by High Life Highland. However, the schools will have access to the community facilities for agreed times during the school day. At all other times (including week-ends and school holidays) the building will be available for community use.

4.6 The campus will be provided with a wireless-enabled environment which will allow the use of mobile ICT devices throughout. The opportunity will also be taken to ensure that the ICT reconfiguration within the school campus is closely aligned to the objectives of the Council’s ICT in Learning strategy.

4.7 It is anticipated that the extensive community facilities provided within the campus will enable the Council’s health and well-being strategy to be further enhanced within this area of Easter Ross and east Sutherland. It is proposed that High Life Highland manage these community facilities on behalf of the Council. Their recent track-record in increasing utilisation of Council-owned community facilities will build upon the solid customer base at the existing TRACC facility.

4.8 During the site selection consultative process concerns were expressed by residents south of the existing Tain Royal Academy site that their properties would be over-looked by a building situated further south on the site. In recognition of these concerns the architects were asked to adopt a sympathetic approach in designing a campus configuration that required minimal decant. The proposed school buildings are approximately 50 metres from the houses at the south end of the site, compared with approximately 105 metres between these houses and the existing school building. In addition, the south-facing elevations are 11 metres to the eaves as opposed to the existing south-facing building elevations which vary between 3.67metres and 11 metres to the eaves.

4.9 During the statutory consultation period a scale model of the indicative campus lay-out will be on public display for viewing and comment at each of the existing schools in Tain and in the community library.

- 4.10 Concerns have also been expressed about disruption to the local community during the construction phase if the project progresses beyond statutory consultation. The Council has experience in working with contractors who have constructed major new school buildings adjacent to existing school buildings and therefore have the relative expertise and empathy to manage such projects successfully. Recent examples include Portree High School, Millburn Academy and Dingwall Academy.
- 4.11 If this proposal progresses beyond the statutory consultation phase consideration will have to be given to the future use of the sites vacated. There are established Council policies and procedures for dealing with assets which have been declared surplus by a Service which include the opportunity for the local communities through the local Ward Manager to identify potential future uses.
- 4.12 It is important that Primary-age pupils from all schools within the Tain Royal Academy Associated School Grouping are able to benefit as appropriate from the facilities/opportunities in the new campus. This will receive careful consideration and handling as the ASG management arrangements are developed.

5.0 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 The local schools in Tain do a good job in providing pupils with a high quality educational experience. However, in looking to the future the current school stock in Tain is in need of replacement. At the moment the majority of Pre School provision is provided by private sector organisations. Over recent years the Primary Schools in the town have come under capacity pressures. The existing St Duthus School building is no longer fit for purpose. Tain Royal Academy would benefit greatly from having access to a modern up to date facility in supporting its plan to fully deliver the Curriculum for Excellence.
- 5.1.2 The 3-18 model is best placed to meet the educational requirements of Tain. The new school can provide the community of Tain with the impetus for improvement and will be a facilitator for change. It offers a real chance to put the school at the heart of the community and offers all those who engage with it new opportunities for developing themselves and their community.

5.2 Learner Experiences

- 5.2.1 The flexible learning spaces provided in the new campus will provide greater opportunities to deliver a variety of approaches to learning. In addition to traditional teaching areas, there will be a range of more flexible areas where the available space can be used for investigative work and active learning.

Outdoor learning, including more readily accessible sporting facilities, will promote opportunities which are more likely to engage all pupils.

5.2.2 Collaborative learning is an important educational opportunity which is more easily achievable in a school with flexible learning spaces.

The new campus will allow different learning and teaching approaches, including investigative and interdisciplinary learning.

5.2.3 Pupils are likely to experience a higher quality learning experience because of the enhanced facilities which will be designed for the purpose of delivering Curriculum for Excellence, rather than the adaptation of the less flexible spaces in the existing schools.

5.2.4 There will be an emphasis on innovation and personalisation rather than on standardisation. Learners and teachers will have more opportunities for challenge and inspiration, this being made possible through the provision of flexible and non-standard spaces of different dimensions and configuration.

5.3 The Health & Well-being of Pupils

5.3.1 The 3-18 campus offers the chance to put the Highland Practice model at the heart of its practice and processes. It provides the opportunity to build-in policies and procedures which will ensure Health Care, Social Work and Education staff work together more effectively and therefore provide better outcomes for all pupils.

5.3.2 A key aim of the new campus will be to develop a sense of belonging, engagement and ownership. The 3-18 structure offers the opportunity to create a real sense of family across the whole school where younger pupils are supported and looked after by the older pupils.

5.4 The Curriculum

5.4.1 The new campus will provide access to up to date facilities, including ICT provision. This will allow the pupils who attend the school to engage with the curriculum in a more flexible and innovative way.

5.4.2 It will offer the opportunity to deliver a fully joined up curriculum from the ages of 3-18. Staff will be able to develop learning and teaching materials which will deliver progression, coherence and challenge in a joined up fashion through the Broad General Education stage.

5.4.3 The new school will also provide the opportunity to deliver a Senior Curriculum that goes beyond the traditional academic subjects. It will provide the opportunity to establish partnerships with colleges and businesses. If this is done at the planning stage it offers the possibility to

develop an approach which puts the skills required by the Highland employers at the centre of what the school is trying to offer its pupils.

- 5.4.4 The 3-18 structure will also offer pupils the opportunity to develop their leadership and personal skills in a more coherent and systematic manner.

The 3-18 structure will allow pupils to set and achieve clear health targets which can be monitored and adjusted as they progress through the school. This will have a positive impact on their achievement and attainment.

- 5.4.5 The new campus will also provide the wider community of Tain with an opportunity to make use of high quality facilities and encourage them to re-engage or continue with their formal education. It also provides the local community with the opportunity to build greater community capacity by using the school for formal and informal social events.

5.5 Meeting Learning Needs

- 5.5.1 The 3-18 campus will have a greater concentration of teaching staff in one location. This will lead to a broader range of staff experience within the new school structure. This will allow a better sharing of good practice, due to the broader experiences of a more diverse range of staff. Teachers at the 3-18 school will, therefore, be better placed to have a deeper understanding of pupils' learning and development and a better understanding of the need to provide high quality feedback, personalised for each learner.

- 5.5.2 Effective assessment strategies and tracking of progress and achievements will be regarded as highly important and will be effectively managed in the 3-18 campus, again assisted by the wider staff experience. This will allow pupils and staff to better plan the next steps in the learning journey.

- 5.5.3 The 3-18 campus will also allow more teachers to plan and work closely with other staff and agencies and establishments to ensure continuity and progression for pupils.

- 5.5.4 Better learning and sharing of experiences of teachers will allow pupils to work consistently at an appropriately brisk and challenging pace.

- 5.5.5 A more diverse and experienced staff who share their experiences with colleagues are more likely to prepare and deliver lessons and activities which are well organised and set in meaningful contexts with challenging outcomes.

- 5.5.6 Different approaches to learning and use of a broader range of materials and resources will ensure that learners are enabled to master concepts and are able to move onto appropriate next steps more quickly.

- 5.5.7 Overall, these advantages of the 3-18 campus make it much more likely that pupils' learning needs will be met.

- 5.5.8 As the 3-18 school will have a broader age range of pupils it will provide for a richer cultural and learning experience.
- 5.5.9 Outcomes will be better delivered in curricular terms but also the on-going work of all professionals on the campus including (pastoral support to children and families) will be greatly facilitated by having all pupils from 3-18 age range on the one campus. The possibility also exists at the design stage to consider the co-location of related professionals from different professional backgrounds, reflecting the new configuration of services in the Highlands into a Care and Learning delivery model, involving Education, Social Work and Health professionals, working across a range of activities with a particular emphasis on early intervention and a focus on early years children and families.
- 5.5.10 The potential co-location of professionals on the one campus, plus the interchange of information – in particular the “soft” intelligence so vital in properly planning on an early intervention approach would greatly support the children and families in the local communities.
- 5.5.11 In addition, a new campus with the potential to locate workshop facilities would allow greater integration of the Skills for Work agenda for pupils, which in turn could be integrated in to preparing young people for work and a longer term career in large commercial operations such as Global at Nigg, who are involved in fabrication work related to wind farm and off-shore energy developments.

5.6 Pupils with Particular Support Needs

- 5.6.1 There are a number of pupils within the schools involved who have support needs.
- 5.6.2 The provision of a new 3-18 campus with enhanced facilities will make it easier to provide the support individual pupils require.
- 5.6.3 There will be a continuum of the support for all learners, and in particular those who have specific identified needs.
- 5.6.4 The 3-18 structure will allow the pulling together of staff expertise and experience. It will allow a more focused approach across the age range and will enable better use of the staff and resources that are available in this area.
- 5.6.5 The new service delivery in Care and Learning and greater cooperation between professional groups will be strongly enhanced in a 3-18 campus. There are currently a significant number of vulnerable families in the town. In light of the Council's focus on the Early Years Collaborative initiative, targeted support from a range of professionals will be more focused and

better coordinated than would normally have been the case with discrete schools.

- 5.6.6 In terms of better support, the 3-18 campus allows the potential to develop within the new build discrete facilities for pupils experiencing social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (SEBN), where intensive support particularly to develop emotional literacy for pupils (and by implication their families) can be developed. This type of facility is particularly effective in allowing pupils to be temporarily removed from the class for a brief, or time limited, period to access intensive support, and lead to full integration with their local peer group. Tain does not currently enjoy a local facility of this kind and have had in the past to place SEBN young people in alternative facilities in Alness – inevitably leading to dislocation from their natural peer group.
- 5.6.7 The 3-18 campus will also include a replacement St Duthus School. However, the opportunity to design in to the eventual build genuinely bespoke facilities including specialist therapy rooms for example will be literally life changing for both pupils and families. This will greatly enhance the quality of provision and experience for pupils with Additional Support Needs, often associated with medical needs.
- 5.6.8 It is likely therefore that there will be enhanced, rather than equivalent support available to pupils.

5.7 Improvement through Self-evaluation

- 5.7.1 The Tain schools have a good reputation within their community.
- 5.7.2 There is, however, an opportunity to fundamentally change and improve the approaches to learning and teaching through the establishment of the 3-18 campus.
- 5.7.3 Staff will be able to work more collaboratively and effectively on improving their self-evaluation techniques. A common framework will be agreed for use across the 3-18 age range and as a result the school will have more confidence in identifying its improvement objectives.
- 5.7.4 Therefore the new campus will provide opportunities for significant improvement and better outcomes for learners.

5.8 Leadership of Improvement and Change

- 5.8.1 There is significant evidence that where a new campus is created, particularly one which is designed to provide all the facilities required, pupils and staff feel more valued and educational outcomes often significantly improve. There is an opportunity to provide a new school ethos along with the establishment of the new school.

- 5.8.2 It will be important that the Management Teams of the existing schools work collaboratively to prepare the staff, pupils and parents for the move to the new school.
- 5.8.3 This will be a long-term process which will begin as soon as a decision to progress is reached, and will continue beyond the occupation of the new school. There are additional opportunities afforded by the establishment of a new school. These include the establishment of a new ethos and school identity.
- 5.8.4 The new campus will also allow the opportunity for a different management structure to be developed over a period of time. A future suggested model could be developed around the appointment of a Campus Manager who would be a Leader of Learning and would lead a team of Learners' Leaders. It is envisaged that this approach will offer the opportunity to make better use of available resources while at the same time freeing up key staff to ensure the quality of outcomes is maximised.
- 5.8.5 The new campus can effectively start afresh, and strive to increase the quality of learning and teaching and increase the proportion of learners whose needs are being effectively met. This will ultimately deliver greater attainment and achievement to all pupils who attend the schools.

5.9 Ethos

- 5.9.1 A positive ethos is one of the most important factors in the delivery of a high quality learning experience for young people. The new campus offers the opportunity to build on the good practice that already exists. It will enable the development of an approach that is based on strong positive relationships across the 3-18 age range. It will offer the chance to develop high standards of pupil expectation from an early age and a real sense of family across the school, where older pupils care for and look after younger pupils and where the school is able to develop a real sense of mutual respect and responsibility among all its pupils and staff.
- 5.9.2 It provides an opportunity to establish a positive behaviour management approach based on the best practice in the Highland Council and also allow the schools to set new levels of aspiration, ambition and self-confidence.
- 5.9.3 This approach will provide pupils of all ages with opportunities to develop a range of skills including leadership, mentoring and personal development.
- 5.9.4 This approach will ensure pupils who attend schools within the community campus are safe, happy, cared-for and successful.

5.10 Staff

5.10.1 There will be substantial benefits for staff, both teaching and non-teaching, working in a 3-18 campus environment. The new state-of-the-art buildings will provide a vastly improved working environment for staff and access to modern resources and facilities.

5.10.2 For both teaching and support staff there are advantages in being part of a larger professional community with regard to professional development, increased opportunities for leadership development and opportunities to build experience in developing a broader range of learning and teaching approaches across the 3-18 age range.

5.10.3 Bringing together staff from the Primary and Secondary sectors would also have the potential to combine their experience, both of managing learning and teaching as well as support for pupils' health and well-being.

5.11 Extra-Curricular Opportunities

5.11.1 The new school will provide the opportunity to enhance the delivery of the extra-curricular programme available to pupils. It will capitalise on the additional capacity provided by secondary pupils through the existing leadership programmes to offer a broader programme of activities. There is also the real possibility of increasing the number of local volunteers that may be willing to become involved with delivering extra-curricular activities in the new school. The 3-18 structure should reduce the number of parents who normally disengage with the Secondary School once their son/daughter leaves Primary School.

5.11.2 Provision to access these activities, particularly those after school, will have to be better, and the management of the new school will work to ensure that pupils from throughout the catchment area will be able to attend activities and return home safely.

5.12 Conclusion

5.12.1 There are clear educational benefits for current and future pupils within the schools of Tain Royal Academy, Craighill Primary, Knockbreck Primary and St Duthus being educated in a single, new amalgamated 3-18 community school campus.

- It will be readily possible to build upon established links which already exist between the schools.
- A new school will provide a far better learning environment for pupils and working environment for staff.
- It will eventually deliver an innovative management structure which will allow better use of resources and a more focused approach to improving outcomes for pupils.

- A new school will ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of health and well-being.
- Although there will still be key stages of curricular transition for pupils the 3-18 approach will ensure that pupils progression from one stage to the next will happen with due regard to their curricular progression and health and well-being.
- The new school will deliver the opportunity for significantly improving the delivery of learning and teaching.
- The 3-18 approach will offer the opportunity to deliver a more effective curriculum which should ensure better outcomes for pupils.
- The 3-18 approach will allow the Highland Practice model to be put at the heart of the work of the school and as result ensure that pupil needs are met effectively.
- Pupils will be able to undertake more relevant and appropriate courses, increasing their motivation and the likelihood of positive outcomes for learners, including educational attainment and broader achievement.
- There will be the potential for positive changes in the ethos of a new school and enhanced leadership opportunities for pupils.
- A wider range of extra-curricular opportunities will also be possible.
- Staff motivation is likely to be increased and teachers will have much more opportunity to deliver innovative and interesting programmes of work which again is likely to result in improved outcomes for learners.

The educational benefits outlined within this document for current and future pupils within the combined school would provide an improved educational experience and enhance the life chances of learners.

6.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

6.1 There are clear benefits to both members of the community and visitors to Tain through the provision of enhanced community facilities at the proposed TRACC Campus. Appendix 11 (b) outlines the community facilities that would be incorporated into the community building.

- Investment at other highland facilities including The Fingal Centre (Portree), Aviemore Community Centre,(Aviemore), Craig Maclean Leisure Centre Grantown, and Dingwall Academy Dingwall has substantially improved facility provision, allowed increased hours of opening for some services and increased public use.
- The current enclosed reception area is not customer friendly, users would benefit from a new reception layout that would allow staff to better engage with the customer and speed entry to facilities and activities.

- The introduction of a café area would greatly enhance the customer experience, providing a dedicated area for parents and users to relax whilst waiting for their children or after using the facilities.
- The introduction of a sauna and steam room would provide additional facilities, would be equivalent to others rounded leisure facility offerings and would greatly add to the customer experience.
- Currently there are no dedicated spaces designed to facilitate fitness classes. Customers would greatly benefit from a specifically designed fully air conditioned gymnasium / dance studio.
- Tain has a very good reputation for competitive swimming but is hampered by the current non-standard size of the swimming pool. A standard 6 lane, 25 metre swimming pool would allow increased usage and would benefit the swimming club allowing them to stage national competitions and galas. The introduction of the floating floor would give greater flexibility in how swim lessons were delivered leading to better use of the water space and increased delivery for primary and pre-school lessons.
- The current poolside changing is dated and not fit for purpose. A new changing village would incorporate individual and family changing cubicles, including dedicated vanity and shower areas giving the user a much improved experience.

In summary there will be undoubted health and well-being benefits by having state of the art community facilities with members of the community able to access greatly improved facilities.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 One of the reasons that the proposed 3 to 18 campus project was allowed to proceed to statutory consultation at this stage was that the project benefitted significantly from the availability of approved Capital funding previously assigned to the Wick Community Campus project. This Capital funding became available as a result of the recent decision by the Scottish Government to provide additional funding provided for the Wick Community Campus which allowed £10.0M to be made available for an alternative significant development which could be progressed at pace.
- 7.2 **Appendix 12** provides details of the financial implications of this proposal based on the financial template developed collaboratively by a number of local authorities in conjunction with COSLA officials.
- 7.3 Appendix 12 compares the total costs of the 3 to 18 campus proposal with the total costs (including borrowing costs) of upgrading the existing schools to building Condition/Suitability scores A/A. The respective costs also include life cycle maintenance costs over the anticipated 60 year life of the buildings. The 3

to 18 option is £0.385M lower per annum than the cost of upgrading the existing provision.

8.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As indicated above the initial assumption is that the Primary and Secondary Schools will have their own management structures. It is also assumed that the former St. Duthus School facility will be managed by the Primary Head Teacher. On the basis of the assumptions the “before and after” staffing entitlements, expressed in full time equivalents and monetary values, are contained within **Appendix 13**.
- 8.2 It should be emphasised that this initial assessment of staffing structures is for illustrative purposes only and that it is likely that there will be some modification to these figures as the future staffing arrangements for a 3 to 18 campus on this scale are developed.
- 8.3 It is inevitable when 4 separate school campuses come together within a single campus that there will be an overall reduction in the level of staff required. As a result the initial assessment of staffing implications suggests that there would be an overall reduction of 3.65 full time equivalent staff which would result in an annual saving totalling approximately £0.149M.

9.0 SCHOOL TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Discussions with colleagues in the Council’s Integrated Transport team suggest that there will be no significant variation to the existing school transport arrangements. For example, the existing school transport arrangements to Tain Royal Academy will remain unaltered.
- 9.2 Out-with the school transport routes the remaining routes identified in Appendix 6 relate either to Gaelic Medium pupils (travelling to Craighill PS) or to pupils with Additional Support Needs (travelling to St. Duthus School). None of the existing routes will be affected by the proposed relocation of each of these schools.

10.0 SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

- 10.1 Initial discussions with the Council’s Safe Routes to School team suggest that the choice of the existing Tain Royal Academy site for the proposed 3 to 18 campus represents a lower risk than any other sites under consideration. This is on the basis that Tain Royal Academy has a School Travel Plan which is reviewed on a regular basis. The main challenge, however, is almost the almost doubling of the number of pupils who will access this site on a daily basis if this proposal is accepted.

10.2 On the basis of current roll figures approximately 844 Primary/Secondary pupils will access/egress the existing Tain Royal Academy site on a daily basis if this proposal is accepted. In addition, it is estimated that there will be approximately 40 Pre School pupil accessing the site on a daily basis. On the basis of current school transport numbers 311 Primary/Secondary pupils use free school transport provided by the Council on a daily basis leaving approximately 530 pupils either walking/cycling or transported to school by parents or guardians. In addition, there will be the traffic generated as a result of staff and users of the community facility coming and going on a daily basis.

10.3 The Safe Routes to School team will carry detailed analysis work throughout the statutory consultation period to ensure that final agreed mitigation actions are included within the final consultation report submitted to this Committee early next calendar year.

11.0 ACCOMMODATING GOVT. POLICY CHANGES

11.1 There are 2 significant Scottish Government policies to be implemented during academic year 2014/15 that will have a significant impact on existing school accommodation. These policy changes are universal free school meal provision in P1 to P3 from January 2015 and the availability of 600 hours Pre School provision per annum for 3 and 4 year olds from August 2014. In addition, provision for 2 year-olds from un-waged households will be required from November 2014. It is likely that there will be further enhancements to Early Years provision in future years.

11.2 As a result of the above policy changes there will be a requirement to make Capital/Revenue investments in some existing Primary Schools, including those in Tain. The design of the proposed 3 to 18 campus will take into account these accommodation requirements including the ability to extend the accommodation at some future point if required.

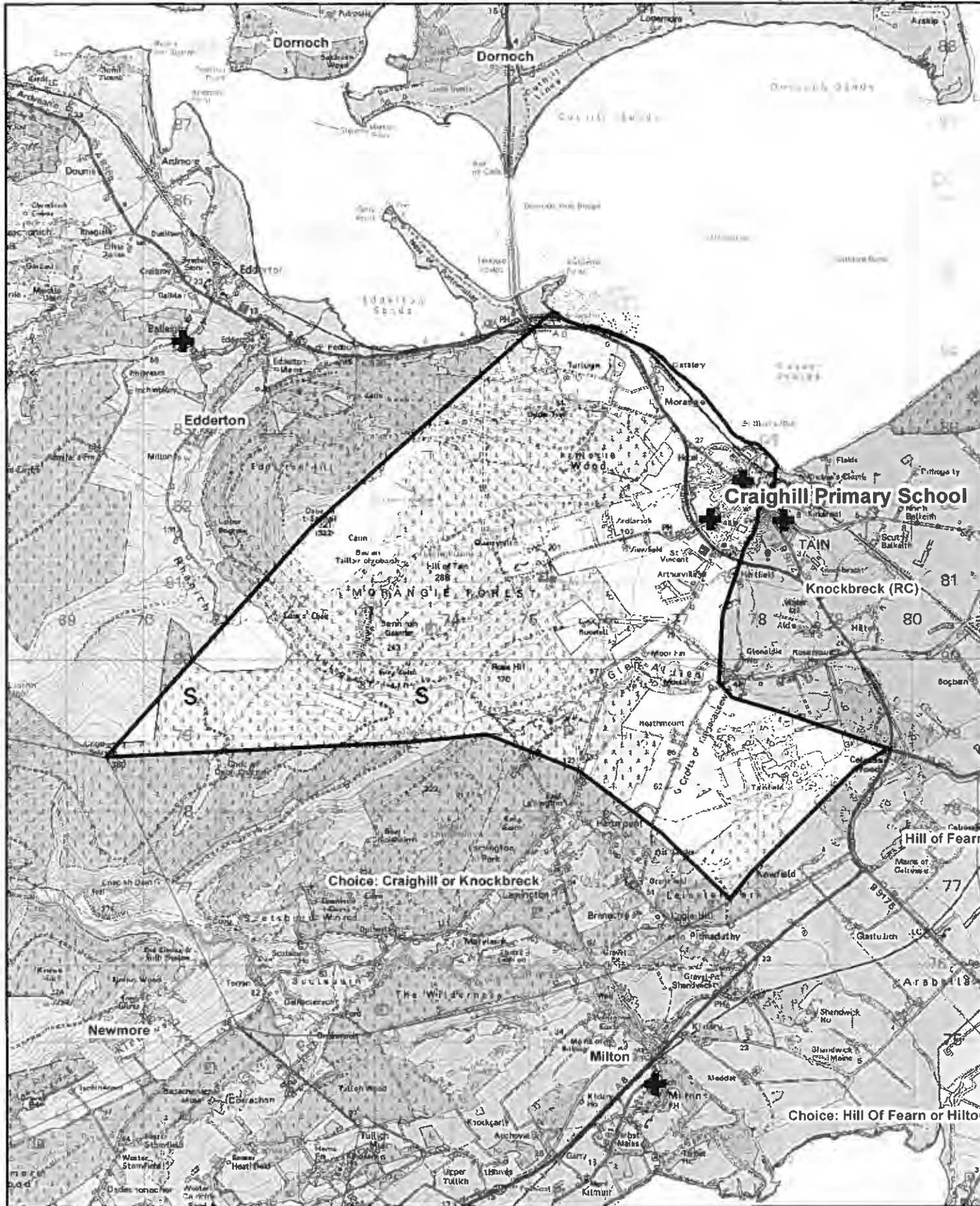
12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 The preceding chapters outline the justification for this proposal which can be summarised thus:

- In accordance with the stated objectives of the Scottish Government's Schools Estate strategic aims this proposal will, by replacing the existing education and community provision in Tain, ensure that, on average going forward, a further 900 pupils (in the age-range 3 to 18) will learn and enjoy the benefits of a community campus that scores A/A in terms of building condition and suitability;
- The existing school buildings and campus configurations in Tain are generally poor, both in terms of condition and suitability for learning and teaching. There is, therefore, an imperative to address this problem;

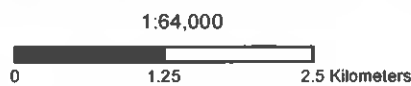
- By delivering the above proposals the Council will deliver demonstrable educational benefits, deliver greatly improved community facilities in partnership with High Life Highland and also ensure that by consolidation of provision within a single campus, the Council's aim of achieving Best Value when delivering front-line services is further enhanced;
- This investment will ensure that education and community facilities provision is placed on a sustainable footing for at least the next 60 years;

END OF PROPOSAL DOCUMENT



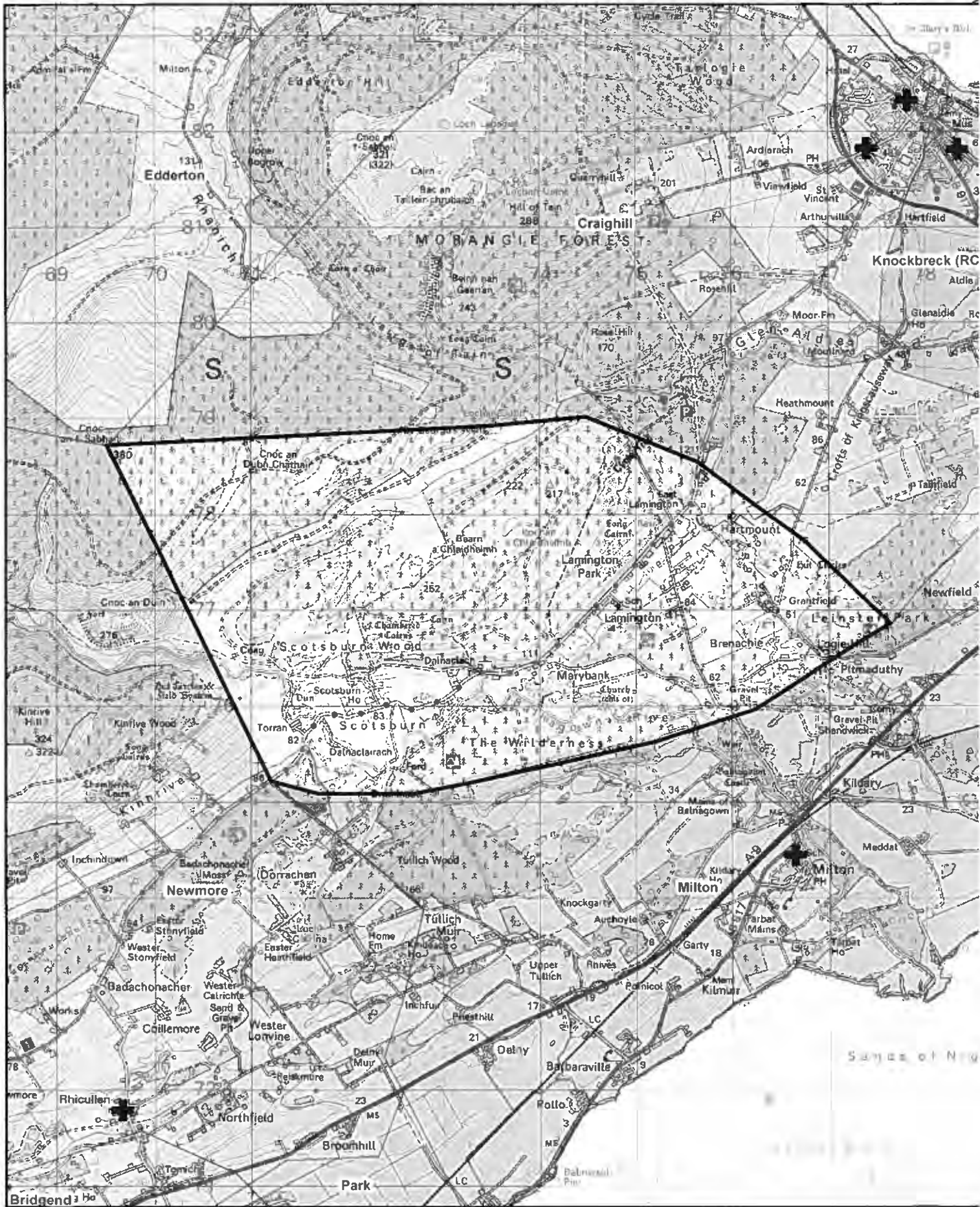
Craighill Primary School

**Primary School
Catchment Boundary
March 2013**



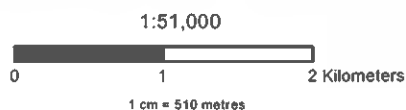
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Choice: Craighill or Knockbreck

**Primary School
Catchment Boundary
March 2013**



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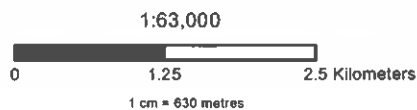


Planning & Development Service



Knockbreck (RC) Primary School

**Primary School
Catchment Boundary
March 2013**



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Planning & Development Service



Tain Royal Academy

**Secondary School
Catchment Boundary
March 2013**

1:263,000



1 cm = 2,630 metres

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Planning & Development Service

EXISTING TAIN SCHOOL PROVISION

APPENDIX 4

		TRA	Craighill PS	Knockbreck PS	St. Duthus School
--	--	-----	--------------	---------------	-------------------

Buildings					
Condition		C	C	C	C
Suitability		C	C	C	D
Planning Capacity		845	296	150	18
Roll - August 2014		487	241	165	14
Occupancy		57.63%	81.42%	110.00%	77.78%

Note 1
Note 2

Primary School roll projections					
English Medium school roll - August 2014		456	208	165	14
Gaelic Medium school roll - August 2014		31	33	0	0
Combined projected school roll - August 2019		592	223	153	NA
Combined projected school roll - August 2024		617	230	168	NA
Combined projected school roll - August 2027		634	249	181	NA

Placing requests - based on August 2013 enrolments					
Number of pupils residential in school catchment area		480	242	130	NA
Number of pupils from catchment area who attend local school		440	186	75	5
Number of pupils from out-with catchment area who attend local school		54	61	81	9

Note 3

Note 4

School meals					
Average daily paid uptake		129	80	51	8
Average daily FSM entitlement		65	39	29	2

Average daily FSM uptake		30	28	16	2
Additional uptake as a result of universal FSM for P1 to P3 pupils		NA	58	39	0
Premises issues associated with FSM policy implementation		NA	Y	Y	N

Note 1

Condition ratings per the Scottish Govt. classification are as follows					
Condition A			Good	Performing well	
Condition B			Satisfactory	Performing adequately	
Condition C			Poor	Showing major defects	
Condition D			Bad	Economic life expired	

Note 2

Suitability ratings per the Scottish Govt. classification are as follows					
Condition A			Good	The school buildings and grounds support the delivery of services to schools/communities	
Condition B			Satisfactory	The school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to schools/communities	
Condition C			Poor	The school buildings and grounds impede the delivery of services to schools/communities	
Condition D			Bad	The school buildings and grounds seriously impede the delivery of services to schools/communities	

Note 3

St. Duthus - This figure refers to pupils resident in the Craighill PS and Knockbreck PS catchment areas

Note 4






Craighill PS - 41 pupils from the Knockbreck PS catchment area attend this school

Knockbreck PS - 48 pupils from the Craighill PS catchment area attend this school.

Classrooms in School	11
GP Rooms in School	2
Potential Teaching Spaces	13

Planning Capacity (Based on No. of Classrooms)	296
--	-----

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Projected Roll	241	246	254	250	241	223	214	222	230	226	230	236	244	249	0
No. of Classes	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	11	10	10	10	10	10	0
Occupancy (Based on Planning Capacity)	81.4%	83.1%	85.8%	84.5%	81.4%	75.3%	72.3%	75.0%	77.7%	76.4%	77.7%	79.7%	82.4%	84.1%	0.0%

Key	
	Not all classrooms in use
	All classrooms in use
	1 GP Room in use
	2 GP Rooms in use
	Additional teaching space required

Knockbreck Primary

APPENDIX 4 (B)

Classrooms in School	6
GP Rooms in School	1
Potential Teaching Spaces	7

Planning Capacity (Based on No. of Classrooms)	150
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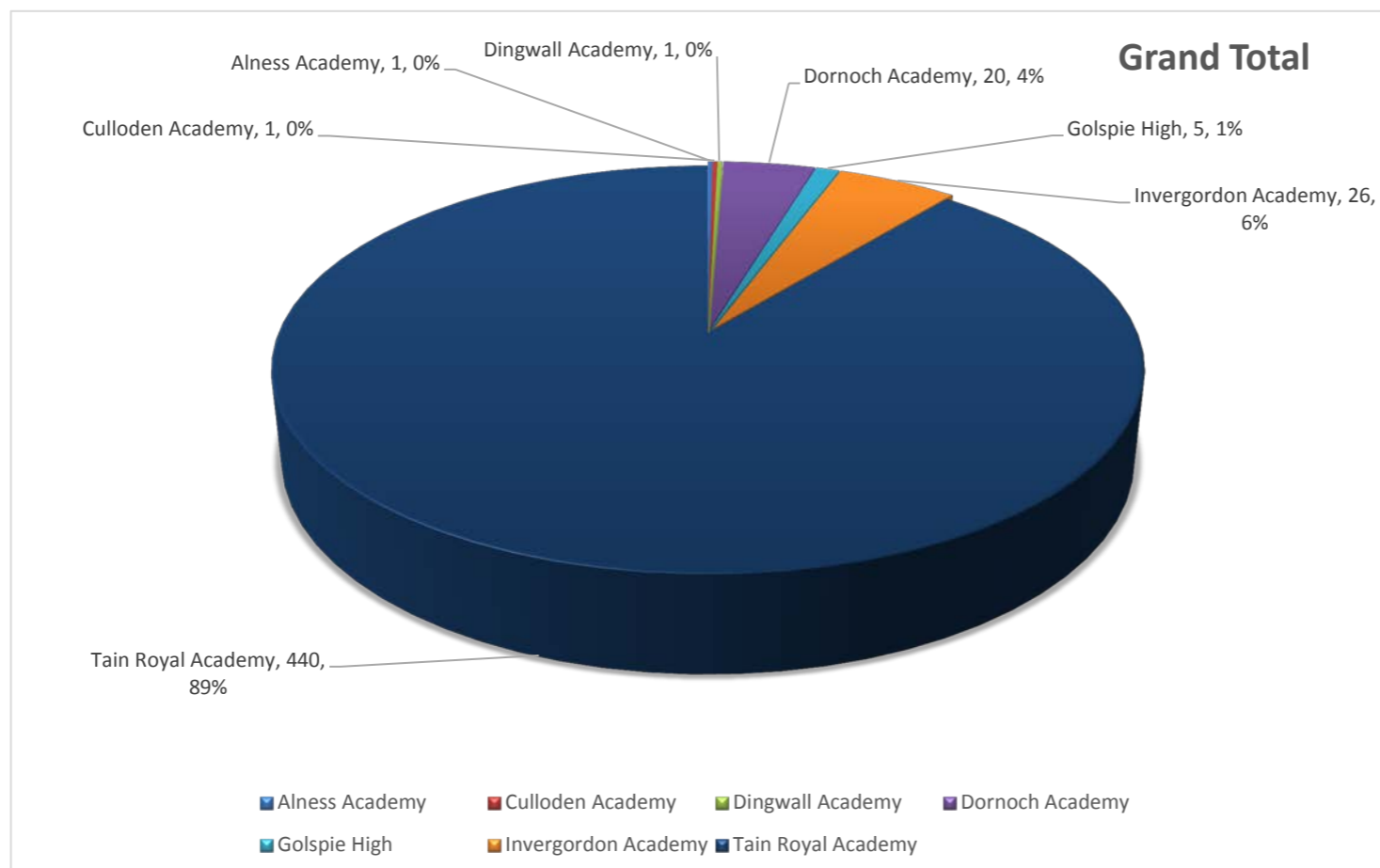
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Projected Roll	165	167	167	163	158	153	152	158	156	162	168	168	175	181	0
No. of Classes	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	0
Occupancy (Based on Planning Capacity)	110.0%	111.3%	111.3%	108.7%	105.3%	102.0%	101.3%	105.3%	104.0%	108.0%	112.0%	112.0%	116.7%	120.7%	0.0%

Key	
	Not all classrooms in use
	All classrooms in use
	GP Room in use
	Additional teaching space required

**Home catchment area
of pupils attending
TRA**

Appendix 4 C

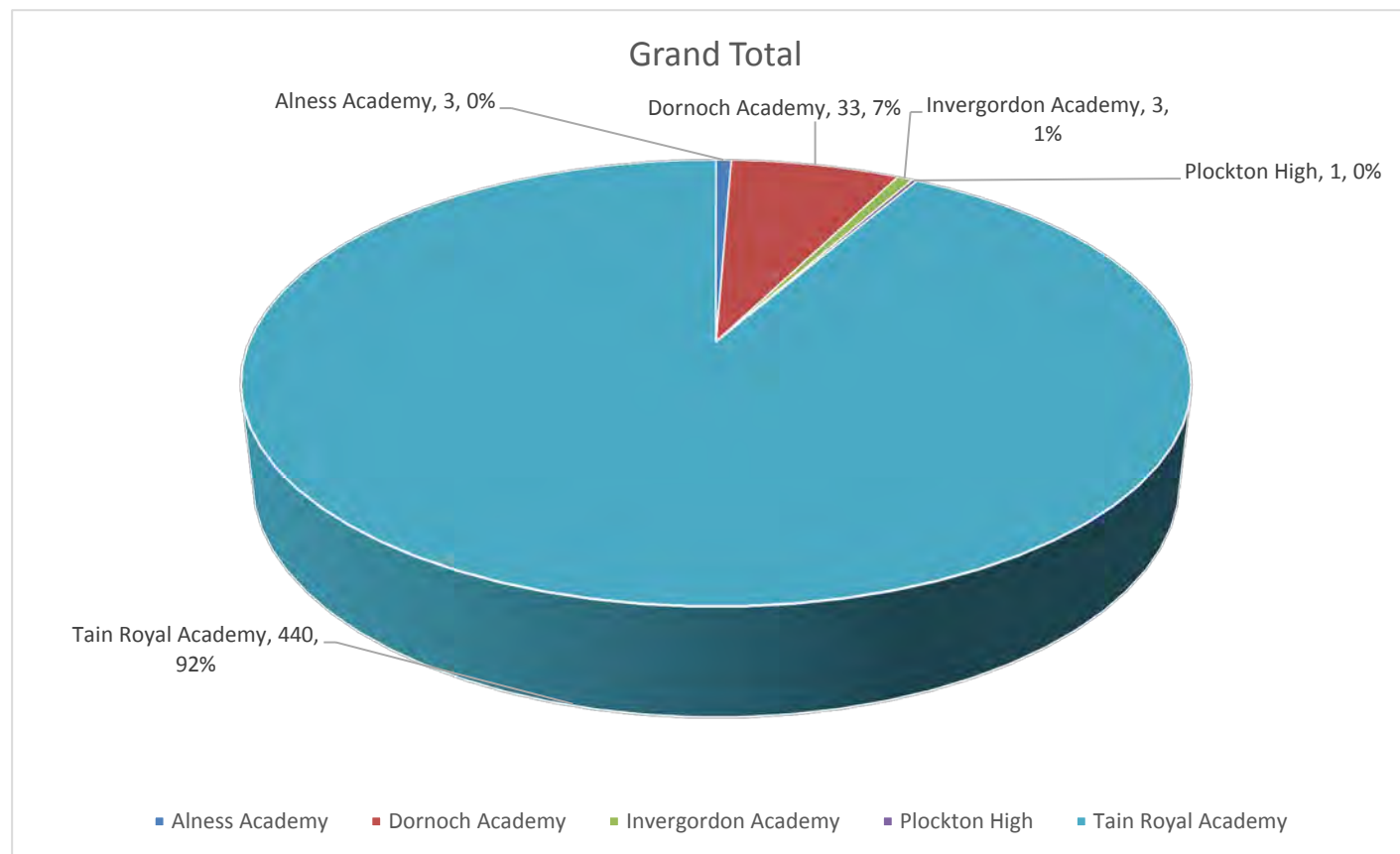
School Living In	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Grand Total
Alness Academy			1				1
Culloden Academy					1		1
Dingwall Academy					1		1
Dornoch Academy	4	6	3	1	3	3	20
Golspie High	1		1	1	2		5
Invergordon Academy	6	4	4	4	5	3	26
Tain Royal Academy	67	70	75	93	82	53	440
Grand Total	78	81	83	101	92	59	494



Schools attended by pupils living in TRA catchment area

Appendix 4 C

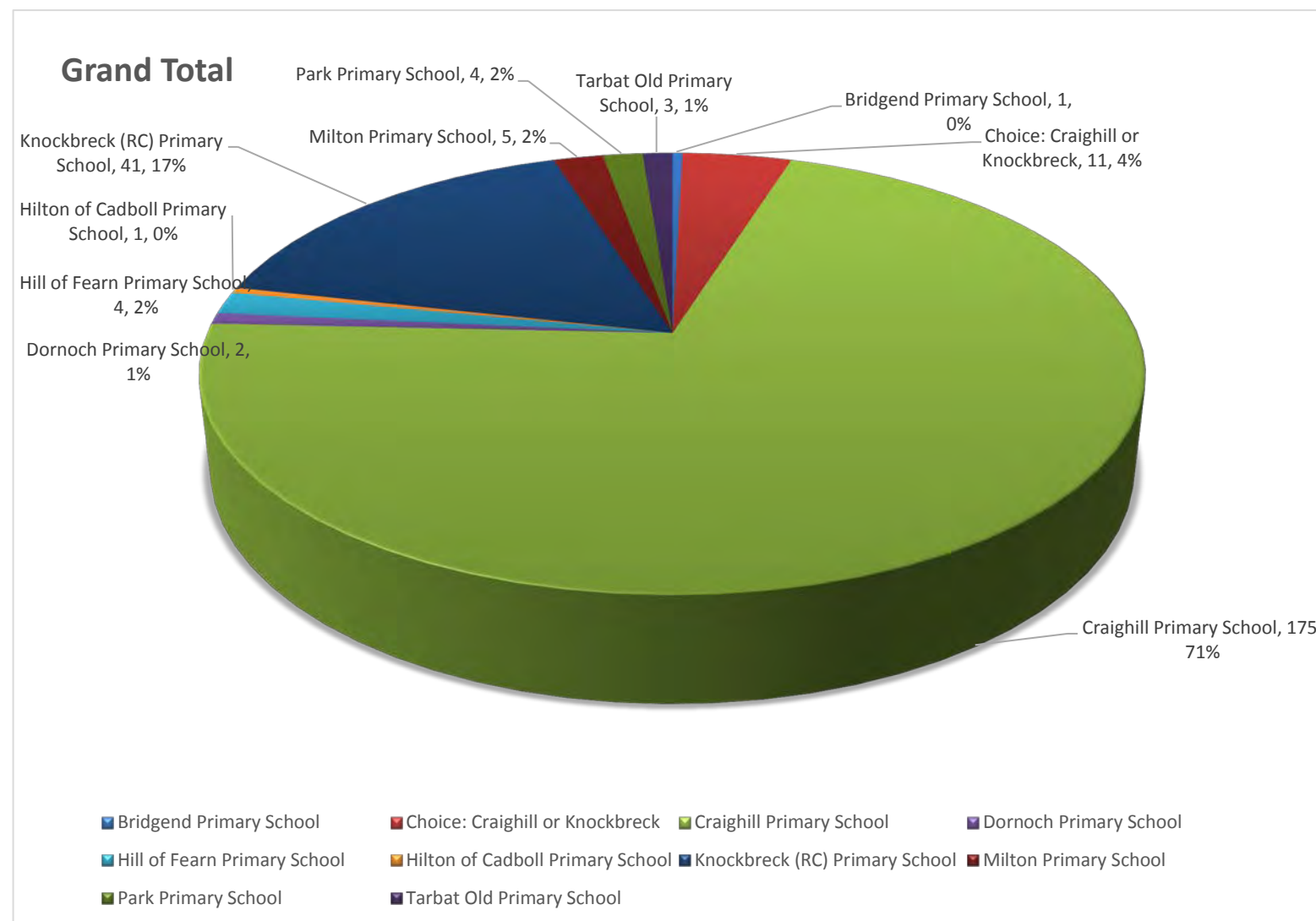
School Attending	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Grand Total
Alness Academy				1		1	3
Dornoch Academy	4		3	10	6	7	33
Invergordon Academy			1		1	1	3
Plockton High							1
Tain Royal Academy	67	70	75	93	82	53	440
Grand Total	71	74	86	100	91	58	480



Home catchment area of pupils attending Craighill Primary School

Appendix 4 C

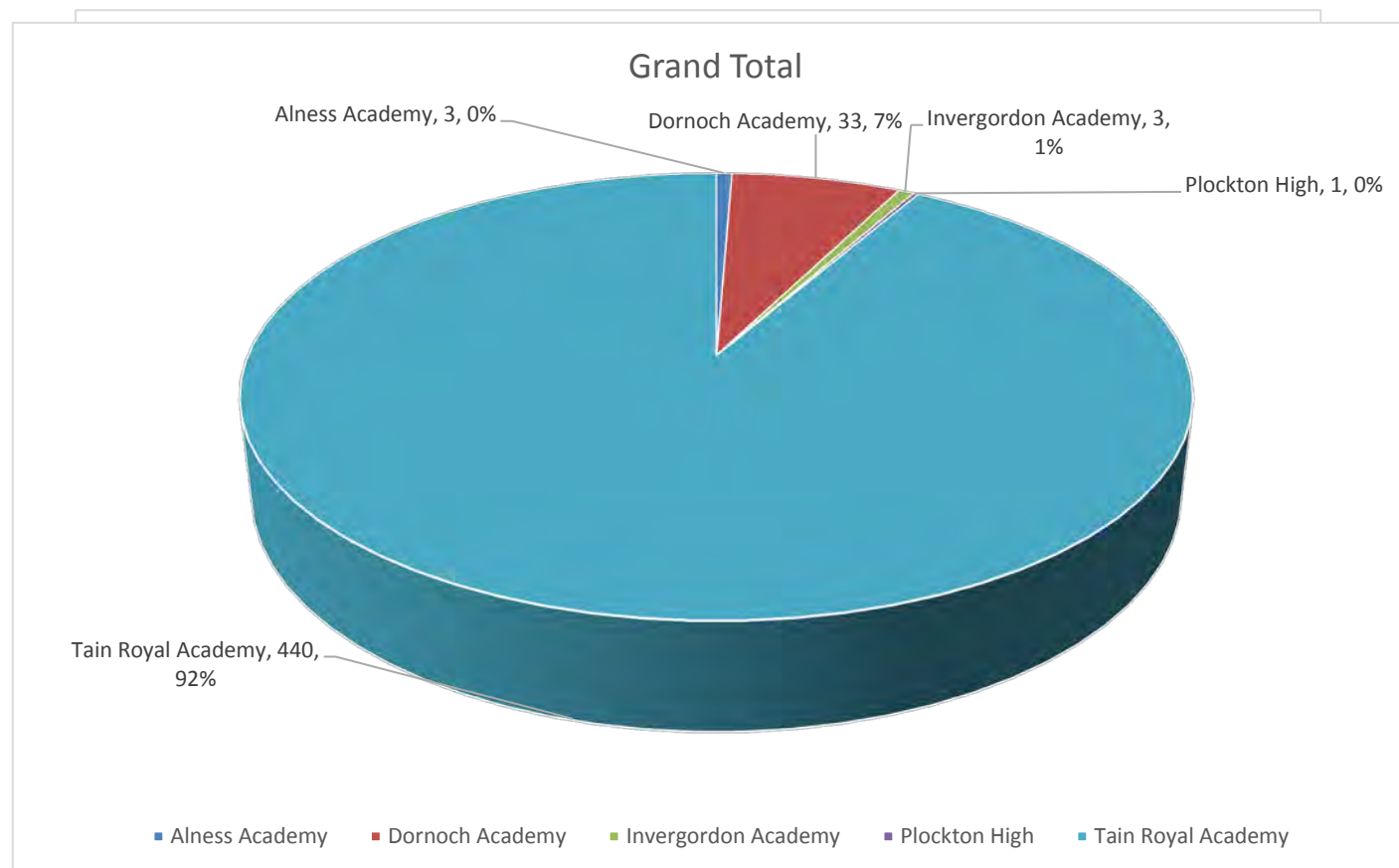
School Living In	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Grand Total
Bridgend Primary School								1
Choice: Craighill or Knockbre	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	11
Craighill Primary School	28	39	28	20	20	15	25	175
Dornoch Primary School	1		1					2
Hill of Fearn Primary School	1	1	1	1				4
Hilton of Cadboll Primary School					1			1
Knockbreck (RC) Primary Sch	6	6	2	10	8	5	4	41
Milton Primary School			1	1	1	1	1	5
Park Primary School			2			1	1	4
Tarbat Old Primary School			1				2	3
Grand Total	39	48	37	34	32	24	33	247



**Schools attended
by pupils living in
Craighill PS
catchment area**

Appendix 4 C

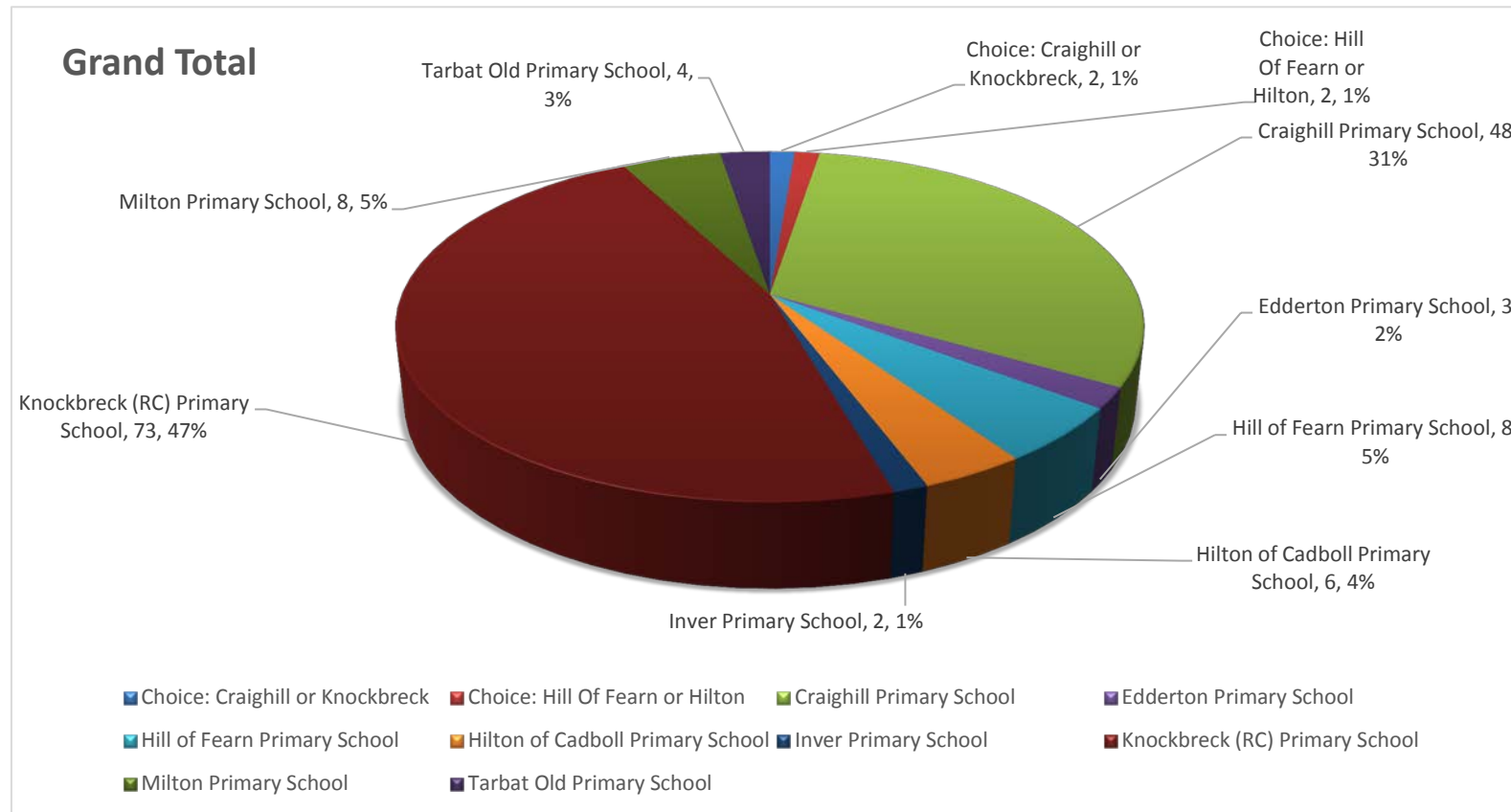
School Attending	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Grand Total
Alness Academy				1		1	3
Dornoch Academy		4	3	10	6	7	33
Invergordon Academy			1		1	1	3
Plockton High							1
Tain Royal Academy	67	70	75	93	82	53	440
Grand Total	71	74	86	100	91	58	480



Home catchment area of pupils attending Knockbreck Primary School

Appendix 4 C

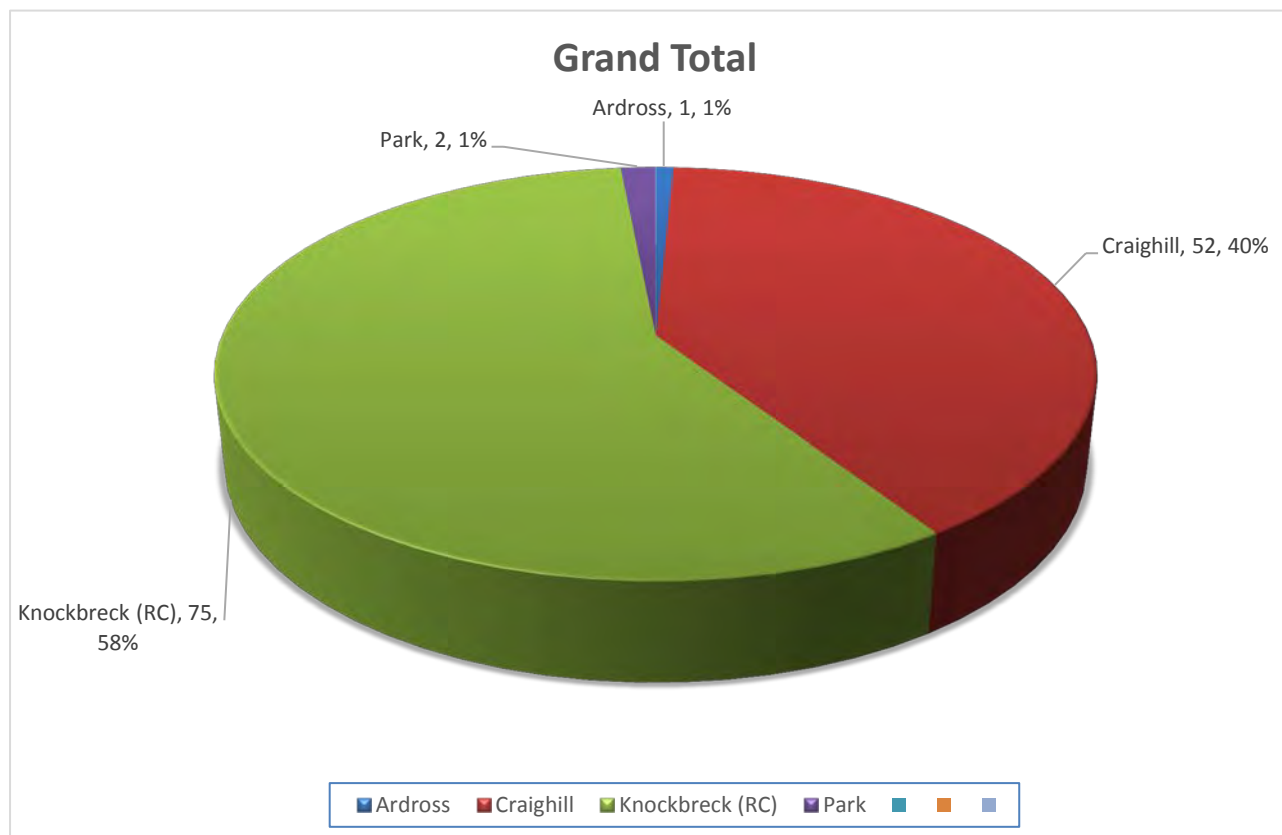
School Living In	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Grand Total
Choice: Craighill or Knockbreck			1			1		2
Choice: Hill Of Fearn or Hilton								2
Craighill Primary School	5	11	6	8	5	8	5	48
Edderton Primary School					1	2		3
Hill of Fearn Primary School	1	2	3	1	1			8
Hilton of Cadboll Primary School			1			1	3	6
Inver Primary School		1					1	2
Knockbreck (RC) Primary School	17	9	13	9	6	9	10	73
Milton Primary School	2	1		3	1		1	8
Tarbat Old Primary School			1				2	4
Grand Total	25	25	24	22	17	23	20	156



**Schools attended
by pupils living in
Knockbreck PS
catchment area**

Appendix 4 C

School Attending	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Grand Total
Ardross								1
Craighill	8	8	3	11	10	7	5	52
Knockbreck (RC)	17	10	13	9	7	9	10	75
Park				1	1			2
Grand Total	25	18	16	21	18	16	16	130



TAIN STAFFING OPTIONS - CURRENT ENTITLEMENTS

APPENDIX 5

	Head Teacher FTE	DHT FTE	PT FTE	Teachers FTE	ASN Teachers (secondary) FTE	Management Time FTE	CCR FTE	Admin Assistant FTE	Clerical Assistant FTE	PSA FTE	Technicians FTE	Playground Supervisor FTE	Early Years Assistant FTE	Janitors/F MA FTE	Catering FTE	Cleaning FTE	TOTAL FTE
Tain Royal Academy	1.00	2.00	8.00	25.34	1.50	0.00		1.00	2.53	0.00	1.25			2.87	3.58	5.34	54.42
Knockbreck	0.50	1.00	1.00	6.00	0.00	0.20	0.40		0.80	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.00	1.00	0.97	0.70	12.73
Craighill	1.00	1.00	1.00	7.00	0.00	1.20	0.50		1.17	0.00	0.00	0.16	3.04	1.00	4.00	1.29	22.35
St Duthus	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.42	0.00	5.54	0.00		0.00		0.32	0.17	9.96
Total	3.50	4.00	11.00	39.84	1.50	1.40	0.90	1.42	4.50	5.54	1.25	0.31	3.04	4.87	8.88	7.50	99.46

SCHOOL TRANSPORT - ROUTES

Appendix 6

Schools served	Route description	Gaelic Medium	Annual cost
TRA/Craighill PS	Balintore/Arabella/Nigg/Hilton	N	136,333.92
TRA/Craighill PS	Portmahomack	N	92,594.40
TRA/Craighill PS	Dornoch/Badinish	Y	13,300.00
TRA	Milton/Arabella/Barbaraville	N	68,034.96
TRA	Migdale	N	6,688.00
TRA	Fearn	N	33,299.40
TRA	Amat/Ardgay	N	18,186.80
TRA	Arday/Bonar Bridge/Edderton	N	42,765.20
TRA	Culrain	N	1,900.00
TRA	Altass/Achany	Y	8,892.00
TRA	Lamington/ Hartmount/ Heathmount/Scotsburn	N	26,856.50
Craighill PS	Scotsburn/Lamington/Heathmont	N	20,768.90
Craighill PS	Fearn/Portmahomack	Y	16,271.60
Craighill PS	Invergordon	Y	7,733.00
Craighill PS	Pitcalnie	Y	2,470.00
St Duthus School	Lochside/Tain	N	24,211.70
St Duthus School	Alness	N	13,300.00
St Duthus School	Hill of Fearn	N	4,081.20
St Duthus School	Evelix	N	3,439.00
St Duthus School	Balintore	N	23,940.00
TOTAL COST			565,066.58

Lets at TRACC and TRA

APPENDIX 7

GROUP/CLUB NAME	SCHOOL/COMMUNITY	SITE	ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN	DAY / TIME
Gizzen Briggs	School	Assembly Hall	Gaelic Music	Monday 7.00-9.00pm
McLelland Football	Community	Gameshall	Football	Monday 7.00-8.00pm
Royal Burgh Tain Pipe Band	Community	Dining Room and Classroom	Pipers	Tuesday 6.00-9.00pm
Tain Juniors	Community	All Weather Pitch (AWP)	Football	Wednesday 6.30-8.30pm
Tain Juniors	Community	AWP	Football	Friday 6.00-8.00pm
Scottish Kempo Academy	Community	Small Gym	Kempo	Thursday 3.45-4.45pm Friday 6.45-8.45pm
Waddell FB	Community	AWP	Football	Friday 8.00-9.00pm
TASC	Community	Pool	Tain Swimming Club	Mon-Fri (Excluding Wed) 4.00-6.00pm
Gaelic Karate	Community	Multi Purpose Hall (MPH)	Karate	Friday 6.30-8.00pm
Do Soccer	Community	AWP	Football	Mon & Thurs 6.00-8.00pm Tuesday 5.00-6.00pm
Andy's Indoor	Community	Gameshall	Football	Monday 8.00-9.00pm
Tain Badminton Club	Community	Gameshall	Badminton	Tuesday 7.00-9.00pm
Friends of Rankin Dance Theatre Club	Community	Small Gym	Dance	Monday 4.15-5.45pm
Tain Gaelic Youth Theatre	Community	Small Gym	Youth Theatre	Tuesday 3.40-5.00pm
Sewing for Beginners	Community	Room 22	Sewing	Thursday 7.00-9.00pm



1 April 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**Knockbreck Primary School
The Highland Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including the impact of new teaching methods on children's attainment, the effectiveness of the school's assessment and tracking procedures and the impact of the new writing programme. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Overall, the quality of children's learning is very good. Children are highly motivated and actively involved in their learning. In most lessons, children work very well on their own, in small groups and in whole-class settings. They support each other very effectively when working together. Relationships between children and staff are very positive. Children use their personal learning plans very well to set relevant and achievable next steps in learning which they agree with their teacher and parents. Teachers are giving them increasing opportunities to take on responsibility. For example, children are members of the pupil council, the school nutrition action group, junior road safety officers, and team green, and act as buddies to younger children. Most children participate in a very wide range of experiences beyond the classroom. Commendably, teachers are helping children build on these achievements in school. Children are developing very important skills for learning, life and work through, for example, working with chefs to prepare a 'Gala Dinner' as part of the Albert Roux 'Adopt A School' initiative.

Children are making very good progress in their literacy. Across the school, children listen very well to their teachers and to each other. They are articulate and can express themselves confidently. By P7, children are fluent and confident readers who talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and some of the techniques they use in their writing. Children are benefitting from applying their writing skills across the curriculum and in relevant and real-life contexts. For example, they wrote a personal journal following their whole day experience of living life as an evacuee. Children's numeracy skills are developing well. They are able to apply their numeracy skills in different contexts. For example, children were using bank statements to develop an

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Transforming lives through learning

understanding of negative numbers and the need to budget. Across the school, children are developing good skills in written calculations. In religious and moral education, children are developing an understanding of and respect for a wide range of world religions. Children are aware of the benefits of eating a healthy diet and being active. They are developing a very good understanding of social and emotional wellbeing through engagement with the 'Resilient Kids Programme'. The school has been awarded two 'Green Flags' from Eco-Schools Scotland. Children talk knowledgeably about the need to protect the environment.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Staff have successfully created a nurturing environment where children feel included and respected. Teachers plan tasks and activities at an appropriate level for most children. They now need to increase the pace of learning across the school and ensure that all tasks provide sufficient challenge for all children. Together, staff form an effective team, delivering many high-quality learning experiences for children. Teachers and support staff work closely and effectively with a range of partners to support children who need extra help with their learning, including those who have English as an additional language. The school should now proceed with its plans to involve children further in setting personal learning targets. Teachers have worked together with colleagues in neighbouring schools to refresh the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence. Across the school, children have a broad and balanced experience across all curricular areas. Staff have developed new curriculum planners which are leading to more consistent learning approaches across the school. They provide children with relevant themes to link their learning across curriculum areas. Staff should now ensure that programmes for all curriculum areas develop children's skills systematically and provide progression in learning across all levels. Staff now successfully track children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They should now use this information better in setting next steps in learning. The school has successfully informed and involved parents in developing the curriculum. The school works closely with local schools in the Tain Associated School Group to develop a shared curriculum, which aims to support children to build on their learning when they enter S1.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The headteacher, since her appointment eighteen months ago, has provided strong leadership and has gained the confidence of children, staff, parents and partners. She has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school. She has developed several areas of the school successfully. This has led to improvements in the quality of children's learning experiences and an improved curriculum. The views of staff, parents and children are now sought regularly and inform school improvement. The headteacher observes class lessons, samples children's work and talks to children about their learning. Teachers now regularly reflect, individually and collectively, on their practice. These approaches are leading to improved and more consistent learning experiences for children. Parents are very positive about the school and the way in which they are involved in their children's learning.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Enthusiastic, motivated and respectful children who are proud to be at Knockbreck Primary School.
- Partnership working between parents and the school to improve children's learning experiences.
- Teamwork of the staff and their positive relationships with the children.
- Leadership of the headteacher which is bringing about school improvement.

We discussed with staff and the Highland Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue with the school's plans to develop progressive programmes for all curricular areas.
- Further develop the school's use of tracking of progress information to set next steps in learning.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, the Highland Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Peter Gollogly
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/KnockbreckPrimarySchoolTainHighland.asp>

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

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**Education
Scotland**
Foghlam Alba

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How good is our school?*¹. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Knockbreck Primary School.

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/KnockbreckPrimarySchoolTainHighland.asp>

¹ *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence: part 3*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf. Please note that the term "adequate" in the document has been replaced with "satisfactory".

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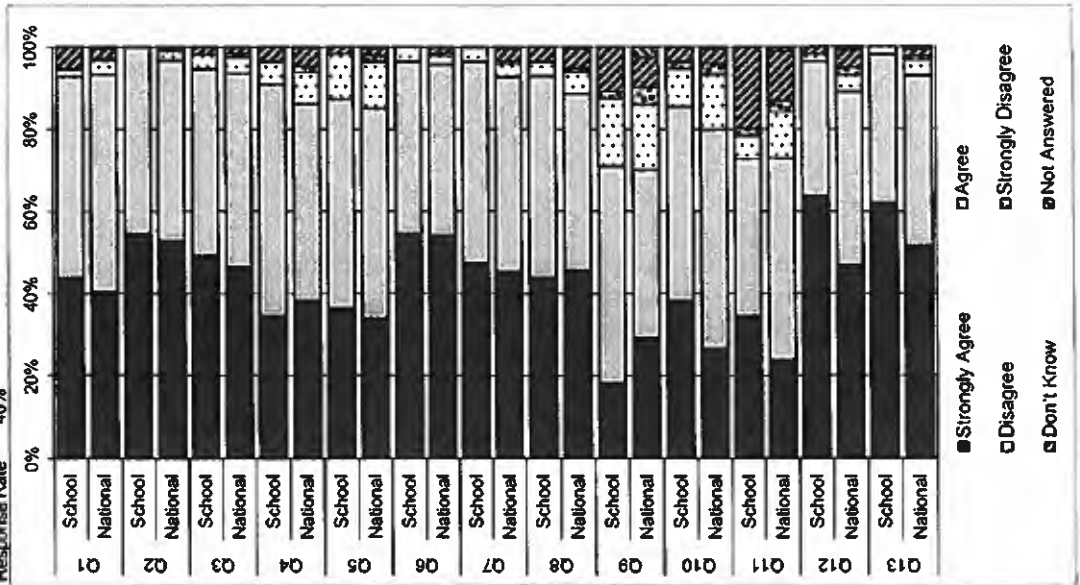
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Transforming lives through learning

A sample of parents, children and young people, and all members of staff were invited to give their views of the school using a pre-inspection questionnaire. Their views informed the inspection process, including the nature of discussions in a number of meetings. Strengths and issues identified were explored by the inspection team, and the findings are included in the inspection report. The following information gives the statistical detail from those that returned questionnaires.

Parent Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name Knockbreck Primary School
 SEED Number 5118328
 Quest. Issued 120
 Quest. Input 55
 Response Rate 46%

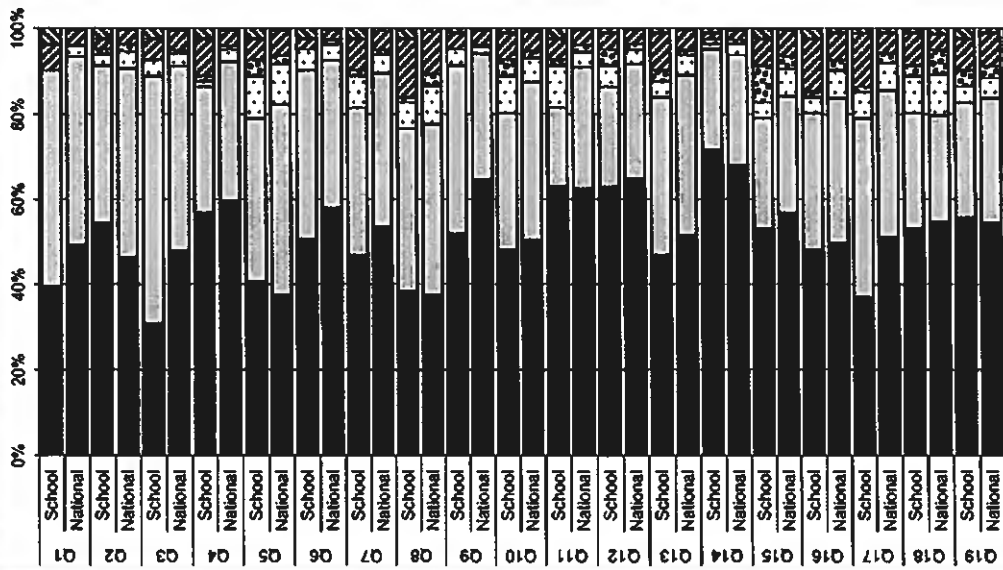


Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Disagree
Q1	44%	49%	2%	0%	5%	0%	93%	2%
Q2	55%	45%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Q3	49%	45%	4%	0%	2%	0%	95%	4%
Q4	39%	56%	5%	0%	4%	0%	91%	5%
Q5	36%	51%	11%	0%	2%	0%	87%	11%
Q6	55%	42%	4%	0%	0%	0%	96%	4%
Q7	47%	49%	4%	0%	0%	0%	96%	4%
Q8	18%	53%	16%	2%	11%	0%	71%	18%
Q9	38%	47%	9%	2%	4%	0%	85%	11%
Q10	35%	38%	5%	2%	20%	0%	73%	7%
Q11	64%	33%	2%	0%	2%	0%	96%	2%
Q12	64%	33%	2%	0%	2%	0%	96%	2%
Q13	62%	36%	2%	0%	0%	0%	98%	2%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Pupil Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name Knochbreck Primary School
 SEED Number 5118328
 Quest. Issued 85
 Quest. Input 81
 Response Rate 95%



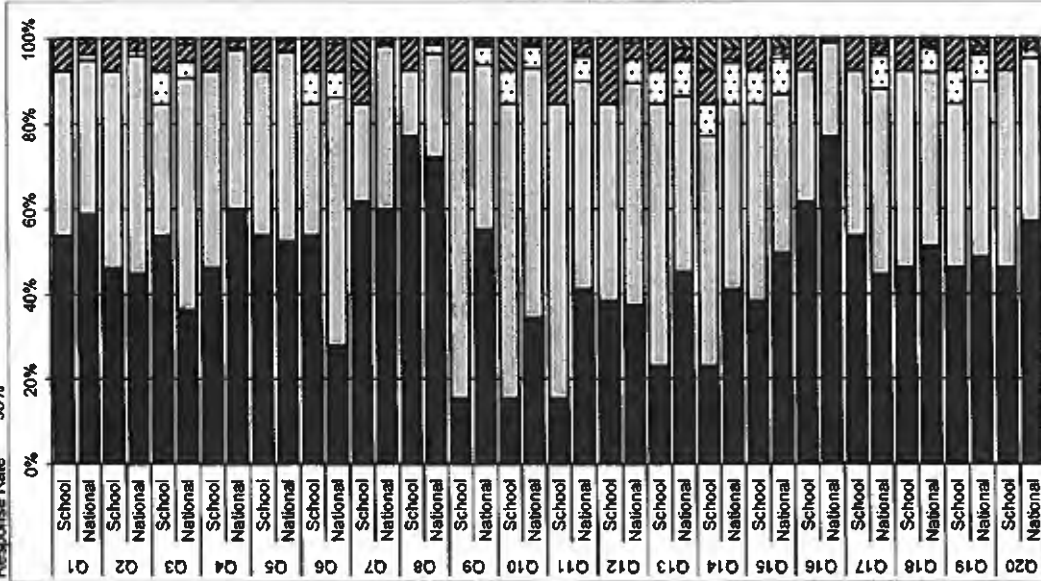
Strongly Agree Agree
 Disagree Strongly Disagree
 Don't Know Not Answered

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Agree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	40%	51%	0%	0%	6%	4%	90%	0%
Q2	54%	37%	2%	1%	2%	2%	91%	4%
Q3	31%	58%	4%	0%	5%	2%	89%	4%
Q4	57%	30%	1%	1%	9%	2%	86%	2%
Q5	41%	38%	10%	4%	5%	2%	79%	14%
Q6	51%	40%	5%	0%	2%	2%	90%	5%
Q7	47%	35%	7%	1%	7%	2%	81%	9%
Q8	38%	38%	6%	0%	14%	2%	77%	7%
Q9	52%	40%	4%	0%	4%	1%	91%	4%
Q10	48%	32%	9%	4%	6%	1%	80%	12%
Q11	63%	19%	10%	1%	5%	2%	81%	11%
Q12	63%	23%	5%	4%	4%	1%	86%	9%
Q13	47%	37%	4%	2%	9%	1%	84%	6%
Q14	72%	23%	1%	1%	1%	1%	95%	2%
Q15	53%	26%	4%	1%	6%	2%	79%	12%
Q16	48%	32%	4%	1%	12%	2%	80%	5%
Q17	37%	42%	6%	1%	12%	1%	79%	7%
Q18	53%	27%	9%	2%	7%	1%	80%	11%
Q19	50%	27%	4%	4%	7%	2%	83%	7%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

Teacher Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name: Knockbreck Primary School
 SEED Number: 5118328
 Quest. Issued: 14
 Quest. Input: 13
 Response Rate: 93%



Strongly Agree Agree
 Disagree Strongly Disagree
 Don't Know Not Answered

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Strongly Disagree
Q1	54%	38%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q2	48%	46%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q3	54%	31%	0%	0%	8%	0%	85%	8%
Q4	48%	46%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q5	54%	38%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q6	54%	31%	8%	0%	8%	0%	85%	8%
Q7	62%	23%	0%	0%	8%	8%	85%	0%
Q8	77%	15%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q9	18%	77%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q10	15%	69%	8%	0%	8%	0%	85%	8%
Q11	15%	68%	0%	0%	15%	0%	85%	0%
Q12	38%	46%	0%	0%	15%	0%	85%	0%
Q13	23%	62%	8%	0%	8%	0%	85%	8%
Q14	23%	54%	8%	0%	8%	8%	77%	8%
Q15	38%	46%	8%	0%	8%	0%	85%	8%
Q16	62%	31%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q17	54%	38%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q18	46%	46%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%
Q19	46%	38%	8%	0%	8%	0%	85%	8%
Q20	46%	46%	0%	0%	8%	0%	92%	0%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

DISCLOSURE CONTROL APPLIED

Non-Teaching Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name: Knockbreck Primary School

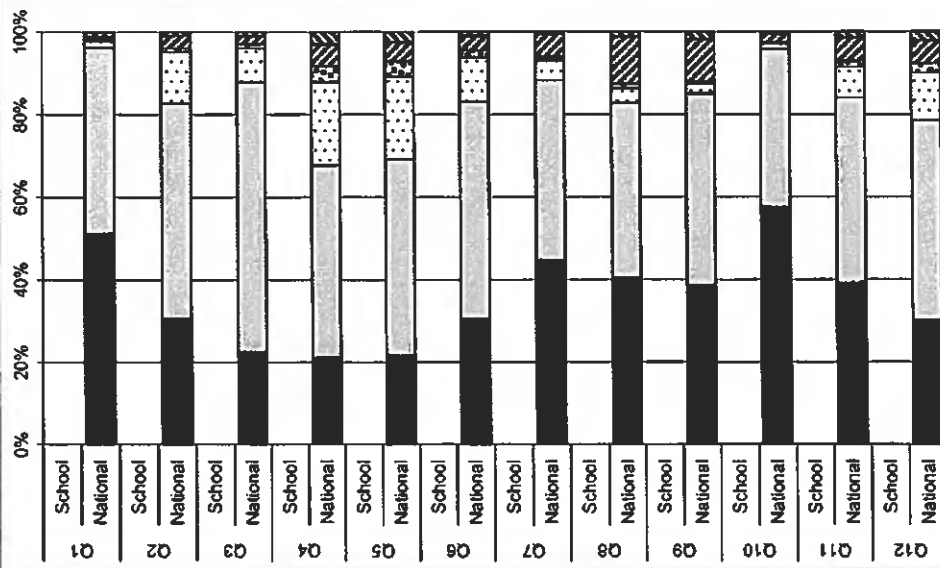
SEED Number: 5118328

Quest. Issued: 3

Quest. Input: 1

Response Rate: 33%

Fewer than 10 responses received therefore the data has not been published.



Strongly Agree Agree Disagree
 Strongly Disagree Don't Know Not Answered

Question	Percentage %					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered
Q1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q4	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q5	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q6	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q7	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q8	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q9	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q10	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q11	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q12	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Q1 I have access to the information I need to carry out my work.
 Q2 All staff and pupils respect each other.
 Q3 Pupils are well behaved.
 Q4 I am involved in staff discussions about how to achieve school priorities.
 Q5 I have good opportunities to be involved in making decisions.
 Q6 Staff communicate effectively with each other.
 Q7 Staff treat all pupils equally.
 Q8 Support for pupils with additional support needs is effective.
 Q9 Parents are fully involved in the school and their children's learning.
 Q10 I am aware of the school's procedures for protecting children.
 Q11 Leadership at all levels is effective.
 Q12 I have good opportunities to take part in training activities.

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
Structure of the curriculum	good
The teaching process	good
Pupils' learning experiences	adequate
Pupils' attainment in English language	good
Pupils' attainment in Gaelic language	very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	good

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting pupils' needs	good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Pastoral care	very good
Accommodation and facilities	adequate
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	good
Partnership with parents, the Parent Council, and the community	excellent

Leading and improving the school	
Leadership of the headteacher	very good
Self-evaluation	good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

26 November 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

**Tain Royal Academy
The Highland Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well young people are learning and achieving and how well the school supports young people to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including how well the school's approaches to self-evaluation are helping to raise attainment. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving young people's education.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Most young people enjoy school and learn well. In almost all classes, relationships are positive and young people feel safe and well looked after. Most young people listen well to instructions and contribute willingly when answering questions and sharing their thoughts. In most classes, they settle quickly and the majority remain engaged in their learning. Young people would benefit from more opportunities to take responsibility for their work. When they have the opportunity, they work well together, developing their skills in team working. Learners' experiences are enriched through a range of visits to places of interest and local and international trips, including annual visits to France and Poland. There is scope for staff to improve the consistency of how effectively they give feedback to pupils about their learning. Young people are not always sure about what they need to do to improve. Young people would like to have more opportunities to discuss their learning with staff and to have a greater say in making the way they learn better.

Young people gain confidence and new skills through taking part in various activities, including out-of-hours clubs. Young people at S5/S6 take on leadership roles with enthusiasm and support younger pupils well as mentors or buddies. Across the stages, a large number of young people participate in sporting and cultural activities. The junior and senior *Gizzen Briggs* traditional music groups demonstrate consistently high standards of performance. At S3, young people in the construction skills group have worked very well together with partners in the community to create an impressive new learning area. At S2, young people learn various skills, including project management, by participating in the *Youth Philanthropy Initiative*. Staff should continue to develop approaches to gathering information about young people's

achievements and skill development in and out of school. The school does not collate information on the progress and attainment of young people from S1 to S3 across all their subjects. At S4 to S6, the attainment of young people is, overall, below national averages and poorer than in schools serving young people with similar needs and backgrounds. There is considerable scope to improve the attainment of young people by the end of S5. The proportion of young people who leave school and move on to further and higher education, employment or training is below local and national averages.

How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

In the majority of lessons we observed, tasks and activities were well-matched to the needs of most learners. In some classes, teachers' expectations were suitably high and lessons were pitched at a level of difficulty which ensured that all young people were encouraged and challenged to do their best. In a significant number of lessons, however, activities were too easy and the pace of learning was too slow, especially for higher-achieving pupils. Young people who require additional support with their learning are identified effectively. Across the school, staff are very caring, and support for learning teachers and assistants provide effective support. A range of partners, including the youth action team, help staff to support young people and their families. Staff are working to make better use of available information on pupils' progress to ensure that young people's support needs are met. Staff should now look to improve strategies for reducing absence and exclusion from school. In line with national advice, staff need to develop their approaches for ensuring that all young people receive appropriate personal support for their learning.

Staff are developing a clear vision for the curriculum, based on raising attainment, which takes appropriate account of Curriculum for Excellence. At S1 to S3, young people experience a broad range of courses with some opportunities for choice. A range of interdisciplinary learning projects helps young people to link their learning across different subjects. Partners from a range of organisations, including Tain Youth Café and the Youth Development officer work well with staff and make a positive contribution to young people's learning. Staff have identified that young people at S4 to S6 would benefit from a wider range of opportunities and should look to develop existing links with partners, including other schools, colleges and employers. Across the school, some courses need to be improved. For example, the quality of provision for Gaelic across the stages does not meet young people's needs well. The programme of personal and social education should be developed further to ensure that all young people receive appropriate advice and information.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The school's approaches to self-evaluation and planning for improvement are not having enough impact on young people's learning experiences and achievements. In some faculties, staff are highly reflective and their planning for improvement is thorough. Overall, however, whole-school approaches to monitoring and improving the quality of young people's learning and progress are not effective enough. Across the school there is a positive, caring ethos and staff are very supportive of each other. Staff find the senior management team approachable and appreciate the support they provide. Senior staff now need to provide a stronger lead for school improvement,

providing clearer direction and sharing their vision and expectations more effectively. In doing this, staff have identified that they should take greater account of the views of parents and other partners.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Positive relationships between staff and young people.
- The safe and caring environment.
- The commitment of staff to providing young people with a wide range of learning experiences.

We discussed with staff and the Highland Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Increase the involvement of young people in their own learning and the life of the school.
- Increase the level of expectation and challenge in young people's learning.
- Improve the quality of provision of Gaelic within the curriculum.
- Continue to develop the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners.
- Improve approaches to self-evaluation to raise young people's attainment.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will discuss with the Highland Council the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will return to carry out a further inspection within 18 months of publication of this letter. We will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the school has improved.

Alistair Brown
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/TainRoyalAcademyHighland.asp>

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Here are the evaluations for Tain Royal Academy.

Improvements in performance	weak
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	weak

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/TainRoyalAcademyHighland.asp>.

¹ *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence: part 3*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf. Please note that the term "adequate" in the document has been replaced with "satisfactory".

Tha comharran càileachd a' cuideachadh sgoiltean, ùghdarrasan foghlaim agus luchd-sgrùdaidh a' breithneachadh dè tha math agus dè dh'fheumas a bhith air a leasachadh ann an obair sgoile. Gheibh sibh na comharran càileachd sin anns an fhoilseachadh *Dè cho math 's a tha an sgoil againn?*¹.

'S iad seo na measaidhean airson Tain Royal Academy.

Leasachaidhean ann an coileanadh	lag
Suidhichidhean luchd-ionnsachaidh	math
Coinneachadh ri feuman ionnsachaidh	riarachail

Rinn sinn measadh cuideachd air na roinnean a leanas de dh'obair na sgoile.

An clàr-teagaisg	riarachail
Leasachadh tro fhèin-mheasadh	lag

Gheibhear lethbhreac den litir air fad air làrach-lìn Foghlam Alba
www.educationscotland.gov.uk no le bhith a' cliogadh a' cheangail seo
<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/TainRoyalAcademyHighland.asp>.

¹ *Dè cho math 's a tha an sgoil againn? An t-Slighe gu Sàr-Mhathais: earrann 3, Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Bannigh airson Foghlaim, 2007,*
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf. Anns a' Phàipeir seo, thathar air an facal "iomchaidh" atharrachadh gu "riarachail".

A sample of parents, children and young people, and all members of staff were invited to give their views of the school using a pre-inspection questionnaire. Their views informed the inspection process, including the nature of discussions in a number of meetings. Strengths and issues identified were explored by the inspection team, and the findings are included in the inspection report. The following information gives the statistical detail from those that returned questionnaires.

Parent Questionnaire Summary

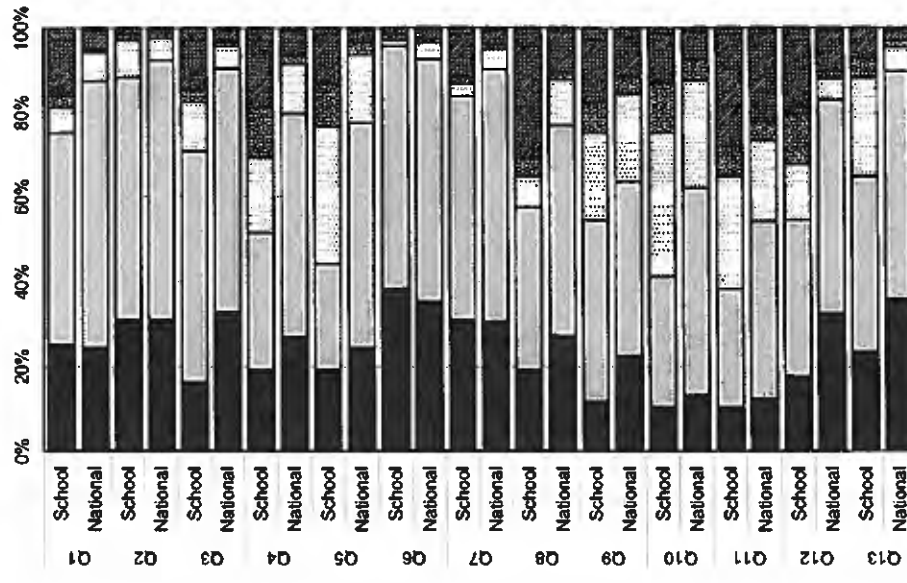
Centre Name Tain Royal Academy

SEED Number 5119839

Quest. Issued 186

Quest. Input 68

Response Rate 37%



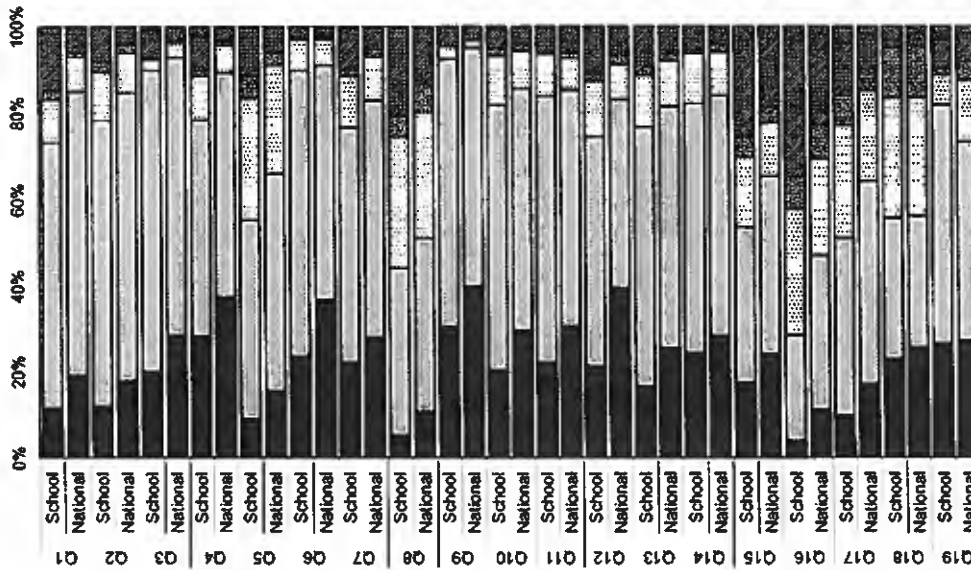
Strongly Agree
 Disagree
 Don't Know
 Agree
 Strongly Disagree
 Not Answered

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Disagree
Q1	25%	50%	6%	3%	13%	3%	75%
Q2	31%	57%	9%	1%	1%	0%	86%
Q3	16%	54%	12%	3%	12%	3%	71%
Q4	19%	32%	18%	12%	16%	3%	51%
Q5	19%	25%	32%	10%	12%	1%	44%
Q6	38%	57%	1%	1%	1%	0%	96%
Q7	31%	53%	3%	1%	10%	1%	84%
Q8	19%	38%	7%	4%	26%	4%	57%
Q9	12%	43%	21%	7%	15%	3%	54%
Q10	10%	31%	34%	12%	12%	1%	41%
Q11	10%	28%	26%	7%	28%	1%	38%
Q12	18%	37%	13%	12%	18%	3%	54%
Q13	24%	41%	24%	4%	7%	0%	65%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Pupil Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name Tain Royal Academy
 SEED Number 5119639
 Quest. Issued 240
 Quest. Input 235
 Response Rate 98%



Strongly Agree Agree
 Disagree Strongly Disagree
 Don't Know Not Answered

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree & Disagree
Q1	11%	62%	10%	2%	13%	2%	73%
Q2	12%	66%	11%	3%	8%	0%	78%
Q3	20%	70%	3%	0%	6%	1%	90%
Q4	28%	50%	10%	1%	8%	2%	78%
Q5	9%	46%	28%	5%	11%	0%	55%
Q6	23%	66%	7%	0%	3%	0%	90%
Q7	22%	54%	12%	2%	9%	0%	77%
Q8	5%	39%	30%	5%	21%	0%	44%
Q9	31%	62%	3%	0%	5%	0%	92%
Q10	20%	61%	11%	2%	4%	1%	82%
Q11	22%	62%	10%	0%	6%	0%	84%
Q12	21%	53%	13%	2%	11%	0%	74%
Q13	17%	60%	12%	2%	9%	0%	77%
Q14	24%	58%	11%	1%	6%	0%	82%
Q15	17%	36%	16%	5%	22%	3%	54%
Q16	4%	25%	29%	7%	31%	3%	29%
Q17	10%	41%	26%	7%	12%	4%	51%
Q18	23%	33%	28%	11%	2%	3%	56%
Q19	26%	55%	7%	2%	7%	3%	82%

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Teacher Questionnaire Summary

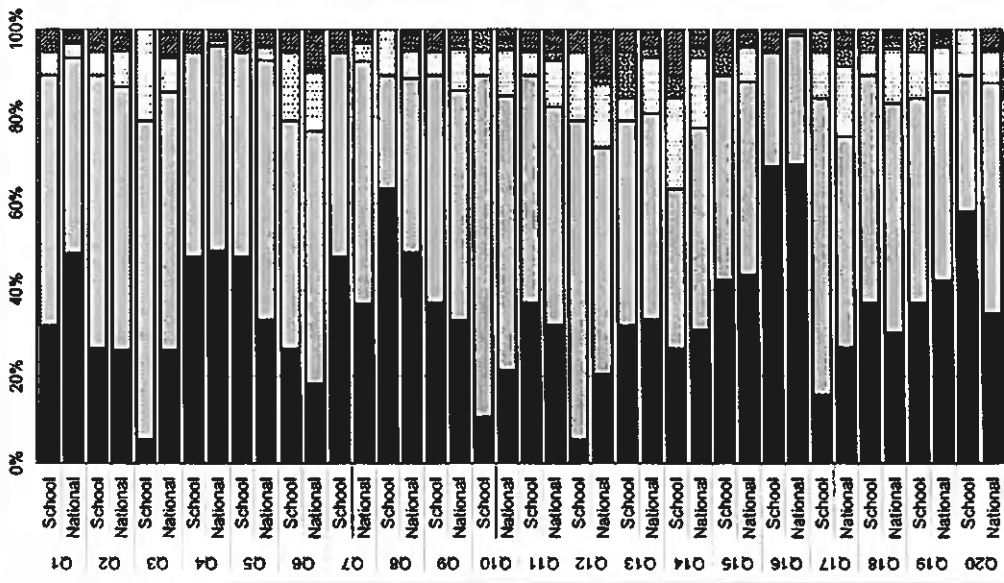
Centre Name Tain Royal Academy

SEED Number 5119839

Quest. Issued 50

Quest. Input 19

Response Rate 38%



Strongly Agree Disagree Don't Know
 Strongly Disagree Not Answered

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1	32%	58%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	5%
Q2	26%	63%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	5%
Q3	5%	74%	0%	0%	0%	0%	79%	79%	0%	21%
Q4	47%	47%	0%	0%	0%	0%	95%	95%	0%	0%
Q5	47%	47%	0%	0%	0%	0%	95%	95%	0%	0%
Q6	26%	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	79%	79%	0%	16%
Q7	47%	47%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	0%
Q8	63%	26%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	11%
Q9	37%	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	88%	88%	0%	5%
Q10	11%	79%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	11%
Q11	37%	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	5%
Q12	5%	74%	0%	0%	0%	0%	79%	79%	0%	16%
Q13	32%	47%	0%	0%	0%	0%	79%	79%	0%	16%
Q14	26%	37%	0%	0%	0%	0%	63%	63%	0%	26%
Q15	42%	47%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	5%
Q16	68%	26%	0%	0%	0%	0%	95%	95%	0%	0%
Q17	16%	68%	0%	0%	0%	0%	84%	84%	0%	16%
Q18	37%	53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	11%
Q19	37%	47%	0%	0%	0%	0%	84%	84%	0%	16%
Q20	58%	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	89%	0%	11%

Q1 Staff regularly discuss how to improve achievement for all pupils at both stage and whole-school level.

Q2 All pupils are given activities which meet their learning needs.

Q3 Pupils are involved in setting learning targets.

Q4 Pupils are provided with regular feedback on what they need to do to improve.

Q5 Pupils are provided with opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others.

Q6 Staff regularly ask for pupils' views on how their learning experiences could be improved

Q7 Pupils take an active part in their learning.

Q8 Staff treat all pupils equally.

Q9 Staff and pupils respect each other.

Q10 The pupils are well behaved.

Q11 Support for pupils with additional support needs is effective.

Q12 Parents are fully involved in the school and their children's learning.

Q13 I have been actively involved in developing the school's vision and values.

Q14 I am actively involved in setting priorities to improve the school.

Q15 I have regular opportunities to help shape the curriculum by having staff discussions and working groups.

Q16 I am aware of the school's procedures for protecting children.

Q17 Leadership at all levels is effective.

Q18 Staff communicate effectively with each other.

Q19 I have good opportunities to take part in continuing professional development.

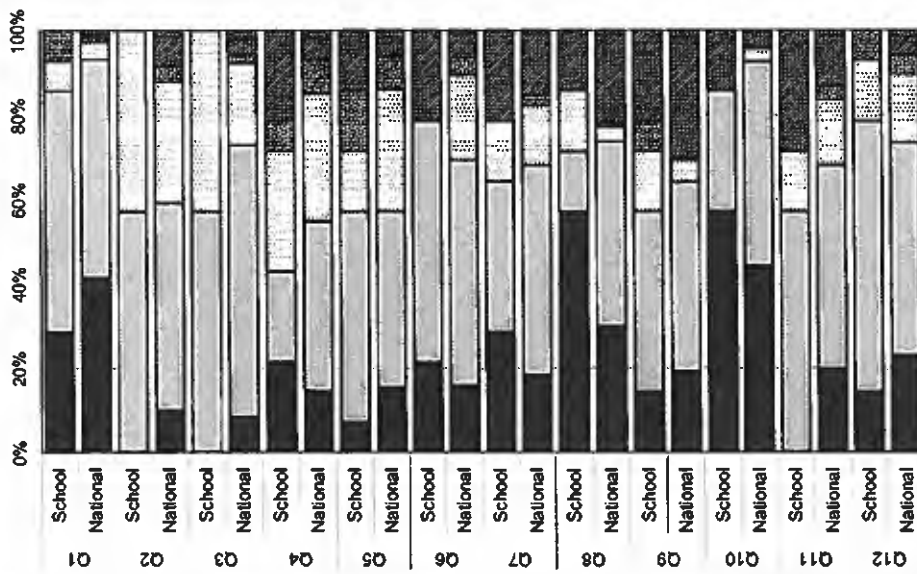
Q20 Staff across the school share good practice.

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

DISCLOSURE CONTROL APPLIED

Non-Teaching Questionnaire Summary

Centre Name Tain Royal Academy
 SEED Number 5119839
 Quest. Issued 22
 Quest. Input 14
 Response Rate 64%



Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Disagree
 Not Answered
 Strongly Disagree
 Don't Know

DISCLOSURE CONTROL APPLIED

Question	Percentage %					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Not Answered
Q1	29%	57%	7%	7%	0%	0%
Q2	0%	57%	43%	0%	0%	0%
Q3	0%	57%	43%	0%	0%	0%
Q4	21%	21%	29%	7%	21%	0%
Q5	7%	50%	14%	14%	14%	0%
Q6	21%	57%	0%	21%	0%	0%
Q7	29%	36%	14%	0%	21%	0%
Q8	57%	14%	14%	0%	14%	0%
Q9	14%	43%	14%	7%	21%	0%
Q10	57%	29%	0%	0%	14%	0%
Q11	0%	57%	14%	0%	29%	0%
Q12	14%	64%	14%	7%	0%	0%

Q1 I have access to the information I need to carry out my work.
 Q2 All staff and pupils respect each other.
 Q3 Pupils are well behaved.
 Q4 I am involved in staff discussions about how to achieve school priorities.
 Q5 I have good opportunities to be involved in making decisions.
 Q6 Staff communicate effectively with each other.
 Q7 Staff treat all pupils equally.
 Q8 Support for pupils with additional support needs is effective.
 Q9 Parents are fully involved in the school and their children's learning.
 Q10 I am aware of the school's procedures for protecting children.
 Q11 Leadership at all levels is effective.
 Q12 I have good opportunities to take part in training activities.

Note: Will not always sum to 100% due to rounding

Additional inspection evidence

Selected attainment information

Inspectors use this information together with a wide range of other information gathered during the inspection to evaluate and report on young people's overall achievement. It helps inspectors and schools to understand how successful young people are in SQA qualifications compared to young people nationally and to those in other schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds¹. However, this is only one aspect of young people's achievement, and it is only by blending these results with a wide range of other information, including achievement in the four capacities of curriculum for excellence², the quality of learning in lessons and other activities, the impact of the curriculum, and the extent to which learning needs are being met, that a well-informed evaluation of achievement can be made. You can find this evaluation of young people's overall achievement in the report on the school, published on this website.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C

6: Higher at A-C

5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2

4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4

3: Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S4

		2011	2012	2013
English and Mathematics @ Level 3	Tain Royal Academy	100	93	94
	Comparator schools ¹	93	94	94
	National	93	94	94
5+ @ Level 3 or better	Tain Royal Academy	97	90	92
	Comparator schools	91	93	94
	National	93	94	95
5+ @ Level 4 or better	Tain Royal Academy	89	72	89
	Comparator schools	78	79	80
	National	79	80	82
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Tain Royal Academy	30	22	31
	Comparator schools	32	35	37
	National	36	37	38

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S5

		2011	2012	20133
5+ @ Level 4 or better	Tain Royal Academy	78	89	76
	Comparator schools ¹	82	82	83
	National	81	82	84
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Tain Royal Academy	38	56	40
	Comparator schools	50	50	50
	National	51	52	54
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Tain Royal Academy	31	52	38
	Comparator schools	42	43	43
	National	45	47	48
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Tain Royal Academy	15	21	14
	Comparator schools	22	23	25
	National	26	27	28
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Tain Royal Academy	2	8	5
	Comparator schools	10	10	11
	National	12	13	13

Percentage of relevant S4 roll gaining awards by end of S6

		2011	2012	20133
5+ @ Level 5 or better	Tain Royal Academy	57	41	62
	Comparator schools ¹	51	54	55
	National	53	55	56
1+ @ Level 6 or better	Tain Royal Academy	51	37	59
	Comparator schools	48	51	51
	National	50	52	53
3+ @ Level 6 or better	Tain Royal Academy	38	25	35
	Comparator schools	31	33	34
	National	35	37	38
5+ @ Level 6 or better	Tain Royal Academy	26	8	20
	Comparator schools	21	22	22
	National	24	26	26
1+ @ Level 7 or better	Tain Royal Academy	14	4	6
	Comparator schools	12	13	13
	National	16	16	17

More attainment information and other statistics for this school can be found on the Scottish Schools Online Website <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/scottishschoolsonline/>

¹ The comparator schools taken into account in HMIE's evaluations are those schools (up to 20) which are statistically close enough to the school in terms of the key characteristics of the school population.

² The four capacities are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors.

³ 2013 Pre Appeal

**Craighill Primary School
and Nursery Classes
Tain
The Highland Council
18 March 2008**

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1. Background

Craighill Primary School and nursery classes were inspected in December 2007 as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated nursery children's and pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language, Gaelic language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined the quality of the children's experience in the nurseries, pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council, and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the north-western area of the town of Tain. At the time of the inspection the roll was 334, including 41 children in the nursery classes. Forty-four pupils were in three primary Gaelic-medium classes and eight children were in the Gaelic-medium nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was in line with the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

Evaluations in this report, except where otherwise indicated, apply equally to the Gaelic-medium and English-medium classes.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Partnership with parents and the wider community.
- The leadership of the headteacher.
- Pupils' attainment in Gaelic language in the Gaelic-medium classes.
- The promotion and celebration of pupils' wider achievements.
- Effective transition arrangements from the nursery to P1 and from P7 to S1.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Parents, staff and pupils were very positive about the work of the school. All parents of nursery children felt welcome in the nursery and thought that their children were well cared for there. At the primary stages almost all parents thought that the school was well led and that parents' evenings were helpful and informative. All parents felt that the school had helped to explain to them how they could support their children with their homework. Pupils were pleased with almost all aspects of the school. Almost all felt safe and well looked after in school and enjoyed being there. A quarter of pupils expressed concerns about the behaviour of other pupils. Staff were very positive about working in the school and praised the effective communication with senior managers. A few support staff would have liked more opportunities to be involved in making decisions.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall quality of the curriculum was good. In the nursery classes, children chose independently from a wide range of activities. They had appropriate opportunities to learn through well planned play activities. At the primary stages, staff had planned a broad and balanced range of experiences for pupils. At the early stages, pupils did not have sufficient opportunities to learn through play. Staff had effectively allocated additional time within the school week to English language and mathematics. The school had recently allocated some additional time for physical education (PE) but had not yet succeeded in providing two hours each week for all pupils, in line with national recommendations. Visiting specialist teachers made a positive contribution to pupils' development in art and design, music and PE. Staff did not systematically develop pupils' skills in information and communications technology (ICT) throughout the school. The quality of teaching was good overall with some examples of very effective teaching. Almost all teachers were well organised and gave clear explanations. Most teachers interacted well with pupils and taught whole class groups effectively. Too few teachers consistently shared the aims of lessons with pupils or reviewed learning at the end of lessons. Homework was set regularly and helped to reinforce pupils' learning in class.

The overall quality of pupils' learning was adequate. In the nurseries, children effectively developed their awareness of space and engaged in energetic physical activity outdoors on the climbing frame. They were able to express themselves confidently through their paintings and collage work. Staff did not always intervene sufficiently to extend children's play activities or to develop their skills. In the primary classes, almost all pupils were well-behaved, motivated to learn, and interacted well together. Staff had worked successfully to establish a positive learning environment. Pupils did not have sufficient opportunities to work independently or collaboratively in groups. At all stages, pupils produced good quality art work. Pupils in the P5-7

Gaelic-medium class worked well to produce interesting models in a technology lesson. Pupils at P7 were developing confidence in inventing tunes in music. At all stages, in too many lessons, the pace of learning was too slow.

Children in the nursery classes were happy and settled. Staff successfully encouraged the development of children's early social skills. In the primary classes, staff had taken effective steps to develop pupils' wider achievements. At all stages, most pupils had made good progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem. They were effectively involved in making decisions in the school. They contributed effectively to the school by being part of committees, such as the Eco School committee, the School's Nutrition Action Group and pupil council. Pupils at the upper stages enjoyed developing good citizenship skills by being buddies to younger pupils. Pupils at P7 contributed well to the community by organising events to raise money for a cancer charity. Across the stages, pupils had developed skills of teamwork by performing to audiences through music and drama. They enjoyed and benefited socially from many opportunities to contribute to events in the community, for example, P3 taking part in St Duthac Day celebrations in the local church along with another local primary school. A significant number of pupils in the Gaelic classes competed successfully at the national Mòd.

English language

Children in the nursery were making good progress in communication and language. They listened well to instructions and talked with confidence to adults and each other. They enjoyed story time and listened attentively. Staff did not always encourage children to predict what might happen next or develop their ideas sufficiently. Across the primary classes, the overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was good. In recent years standards of attainment in reading had been consistently good and had steadily improved in writing. Most pupils were attaining appropriate national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing. Across the stages, a significant number of pupils were attaining these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Most pupils had developed good skills in talking and listening and were confident in a range of different situations. Across the stages, most pupils were fluent readers and were keen to read for pleasure. At P7, pupils demonstrated effective skills in analysing written texts. At all stages, pupils were developing a sound knowledge of language and produced good quality writing in a range of styles. Pupils' skills in writing at length were not sufficiently well developed. Across the stages, pupils presented written work neatly.

Gaelic language

In the Gaelic nursery, children were making very good progress in learning the Gaelic language. They listened well to instructions and stories and were developing confidence in speaking to adults. Children developed social skills by playing imaginatively and by taking turns to play a matching game. In the primary Gaelic-medium classes, the overall quality of attainment in Gaelic language was very good. Almost all pupils achieved national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing. They were making very good progress with their coursework. At all stages, almost all pupils were making very positive progress in the acquisition of the Gaelic language. Almost all pupils listened attentively to their teachers' instructions and responded appropriately. Almost all pupils spoke confidently and used

Gaelic very well in discussion with their teachers and each other. They read fluently and with understanding. By P7, pupils were able to talk in depth and give opinions on their favourite books and authors. Pupils performed well in small group discussions. At the early stages, pupils were making a good start in writing stories. At the middle and upper stages, pupils wrote effectively for a range of purposes.

Mathematics

Children in the nursery classes were making good progress in their understanding of early mathematics. Most could identify simple colours and patterns. They used a range of puzzles and computer games to match and sort. Children's skills in counting, investigating and solving simple mathematical problems were not yet well developed. In the primary classes, the overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Almost all pupils at the early stages, and most at the middle and upper stages, were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment. A significant number of pupils attained these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Standards of attainment had improved in recent years. Across the stages, pupils could interpret accurately information from appropriate graphs and charts. Their skills in using ICT to organise and present information using spreadsheets and databases were not well developed. Pupils at P1 were making effective progress in learning early number skills. At all stages, pupils were developing appropriate skills in mental calculation. At P7, pupils demonstrated effective skills in working with units of measurement. At the middle stages, pupils had a sound understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes. At the upper stages, pupils showed appropriate knowledge of coordinates. Across the stages, pupils had successfully developed appropriate strategies in problem solving.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Arrangements for meeting children's and pupils' learning needs were good overall. Staff in the nursery classes supported children well and were sensitive and responsive to the needs of individuals. They assessed children's progress regularly but did not always use this information to focus sufficiently on children's learning needs. Staff did not always organise groups and activities to provide effective challenge for all. In the primary classes, teachers set tasks and activities which were well matched to the needs of individual pupils in most classes. Staff did not always set challenging tasks for more able pupils and pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to learn independently. There were effective procedures for identifying pupils requiring additional help with their learning. Support staff gave helpful support to individual pupils and groups of pupils. Staff worked well in partnership with a range of support agencies to assist pupils with additional support needs. Pupils were well supported in transferring from pre-school to P1 and from P7 to Tain Royal Academy through, for example, the effective links developed by the Children's Services Worker.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	<p>In the nursery classes, staff provided a very safe and welcoming environment for learning. At the primary stages, staff had very good arrangements for pastoral care. These included appropriate procedures for action against bullying, administration of medicines and safe use of the Internet. All staff had undertaken appropriate training in child protection. Pupils were confident that staff would deal effectively with any incidents of bullying. Pupils had a range of appropriate ways of informing staff of any concerns. They were knowledgeable about keeping healthy and benefited from taking part in a wide range of after-school clubs which promoted physical activity. Pupils at P7 provided helpful support to pupils entering P1. Parents had been kept well informed about how sensitive health issues were taught.</p>
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The overall quality of accommodation was adequate. There were appropriate security arrangements in place for access to the nurseries and school buildings. Teaching areas were too small and restricted some pupils' activities. Access for users and visitors with restricted mobility was limited. Storage space was insufficient. The school hall was of a reasonable size and was in almost constant use for PE, drama and school assemblies. Many windows did not open properly and were in a poor state of repair. In some areas, heating was difficult to control. The demountable buildings provided spacious classrooms but required redecoration.</p>

Aspect	Comment
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality</p>	<p>Staff had created a very welcoming environment for pupils, parents and visitors. Relationships between staff and pupils were very good and almost all pupils were polite and friendly. Pupils had a very strong sense of pride in the school and had appropriate opportunities to be involved in making decisions. Staff had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Teachers' expectations for pupils' attainment were not consistently high enough. The school successfully celebrated pupils' school and wider achievements at assemblies, special awards and through displays. All pupils had an achievement folder which was used very successfully to record a wide range of their achievements. There were appropriately frequent opportunities for religious observance. The school had an appropriate policy for racial equality and pupils were treated fairly in school. The school did not consistently promote diversity and equality issues through the curriculum.</p>
<p>Partnership with parents and the community</p>	<p>The school had developed excellent links with parents and the community. Parents and members of the community made a significant contribution to pupils' learning by, for example, helping in classes, on trips and with clubs. A small group of parents provided helpful administrative support and assisted in the library. Parents and other members of the community worked well with staff and pupils in the various school committees and action groups, including the active Parent Council and PTA. The headteacher produced regular and informative newsletters and met frequently with parents. He had provided very helpful advice for parents on various ways in which they could help with their children's learning. For example, the headteacher, assisted by pupils, demonstrated effective story-telling skills for parents. School reports were clear and provided helpful advice. The school had developed sound links with community organisations and businesses who regularly visited the school and contributed to pupils' learning. School performances and events were very well supported by parents and the local community. The school had developed very effective links with local nurseries and schools. Pupils benefited from positive curricular links with Tain Royal Academy. For example, pupils at P7 transferring to S1 developed a range of skills through an effective problem solving activity day.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Overall, the quality of education provided by Craighill Primary School had many strengths. The school, led by the very caring and enthusiastic headteacher, provided a welcoming and supportive environment in which almost all pupils were well behaved. Parents provided very good support for the school. Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was good, and, in the Gaelic-medium classes, very good in Gaelic language. The quality of teaching was good overall but was not maintained consistently across all classes. Teachers were committed to the school and worked well with senior managers and the wide range of support staff. Staff had not yet ensured the consistent development of pupils' skills in learning independently and in collaborating with each other.

The experienced headteacher provided very effective leadership. He had gained the respect and confidence of parents, pupils and staff. He showed a very strong commitment to pupils' education and well-being. The headteacher demonstrated a high level of professional competence and staff appreciated his enthusiasm and support. He had improved several aspects of the school's work, for example, by successfully involving parents in school life and in recording and celebrating pupils' achievements. The headteacher and his two deputy headteachers formed an effective senior management team. The deputy headteachers fulfilled their appropriate remits well and had led some successful initiatives including the school's buddy scheme and pupil council. They worked well with the headteacher to monitor and evaluate the work of the school using a wide range of approaches. The senior management team worked effectively with teachers to systematically track the progress of pupils and to set learning targets for them in reading, writing and mathematics. They met regularly with teachers to discuss pupils' progress. The headteacher and deputy headteachers formally visited lessons and gave teachers some helpful feedback for improvements. These arrangements were not sufficiently rigorous and had yet to result in sustained and consistent improvements in learning and teaching. Senior managers worked with staff to evaluate the school's work and had identified a number of appropriate priorities for improvement. The headteacher, with the support of his deputy headteachers and the education authority, had the capacity to make continued improvements.

Nursery staff were aware of the implications of the Scottish Social Services Council's Codes of Practice. At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery classes there was one requirement. This had been addressed satisfactorily.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to improve learning and teaching. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- provide more opportunities for pupils to be independent, active learners;
- develop more systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating classroom practice to ensure consistently effective teaching and learning across the school; and
- ensure that pupils develop more systematically and consistently, across the school, their skills in using information and communications technology.

What happens next

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Alistair Brown
HM Inspector

18 March 2008

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
Structure of the curriculum	good
The teaching process	good
Pupils' learning experiences	adequate
Pupils' attainment in English language	good
Pupils' attainment in Gaelic language	very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	good

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting pupils' needs	good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Pastoral care	very good
Accommodation and facilities	adequate
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	good
Partnership with parents, the Parent Council, and the community	excellent

Leading and improving the school	
Leadership of the headteacher	very good
Self-evaluation	good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

<p>What parents thought the school did well</p>	<p>What parents think the school could do better</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff made them feel welcome in the school. • Parents' evenings were helpful and informative. • The school had explained how parents could help children with homework. • Their children were treated fairly in the school. • The school was good at consulting parents on decisions affecting their children. • The school was well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost a fifth of parents felt that school buildings had not been kept in good order.
<p>What pupils thought the school did well</p>	<p>What pupils think the school could do better</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers told them when they had done something well. • Teachers expected them to work to the best of their ability. • The school helped them to keep themselves safe and healthy. • If they were upset, the school was good at helping to sort things out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quarter of pupils felt that pupils could be better behaved.
<p>What staff thought the school did well</p>	<p>What staff think the school could do better</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school was well led. • Pupils' success was regularly celebrated. • They liked working in the school. • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few non-teaching staff wanted to be more involved in decision-making processes.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spsso.org.uk.

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TAIN ROYAL ACADEMY

TRAVEL PLAN

Revised December 2002

Contents

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Appendices: Location Map
 School Road Safety Policy

Background

The 'new' Tain Royal Academy was opened in 1969 with a further extension in 1974 as the school roll climbed to over 800. Since the economic circumstances have changed locally and the roll has stabilised at just under 700.

The catchment area stretches from Ardgay to Nigg and includes the associated primary schools, Craighill, Edderton, Gledfield, Hill of Fearn, Hilton, Inver, Knockbreck and Tarbat Old. In addition, some pupils from Bonar Bridge and Milton transfer to TRA as a result of parental placing requests.

The school is one of four designated community schools in Highland. Facilities are shared with the community and, increasingly this happens during the school day, in clubs ranging from Third Agers to Young Parents. Work on a new all weather pitch begins in January and plans are being put in place to refurbish indoor sports facilities, including a new fitness room.

In 2002 TRA acquired 'new community school' status in recognition of the diversity of needs in the catchment area. A raft of initiatives are expected to follow in the next 3 / 4 years, not least in the area of health promotion in its widest sense.

A third additional component is the developing curricular links with St. Duthus Special School whose pupils are beginning to access the specialist facilities of the secondary school.

Tain Royal Academy is, in all senses, a fully comprehensive secondary school.

School Ethos

The school's single aim is encapsulated in the statement 'The needs of the individual are at the centre of everything that we do.'

This aim applies to all, adults and children alike, who come on to TRA campus. It is intended to be all embracing and refers as much to pupil safety as it does to pupil achievement.

As stated elsewhere, most pupils have no option but to travel to and from school by bus. But all others are encouraged to travel by the most environmentally friendly method of transport possible.

The incidence of 'lifts' to and from school rises in the winter months and parents/carers are discouraged from dropping off/picking up children on Scotsburn Road. Despite our advice, examples of inconsiderate parking, particularly at the end of the school day, add to the hazard created by buses on Scotsburn Road. Where drivers are identified as parents / carers of pupils at

school, we appeal directly to them and advise them to use the school car park rather than the street. All taxi drivers comply with this request.

The Action Plan on page 9 summarises the actions taken in relation to pupil safety on roads.

Existing Travel Plans

The scattered nature of the catchment area means that most pupils have no option but to travel to and from school by bus.

For pupils who live within walking distance of the school, seasonal factors affect the statistics. In the winter the number of 'lifts' to school rises and in the summer the number of cyclists roughly doubles compared to winter statistics. The following figures relate to early October 2002.

52% travel by bus

41% walk

4% travel by car

3% cycle

Of the 108 adults who work at TRA

46% travel by car

46% walk

6% cycle

2% travel by bus

Issues

The key issues are summarised in the Action Plan Record on page 9.

But the main issue at the moment is the need to provide off road parking for school buses at the beginning and end of the school day.

Scotsburn Road is a busy road and one of the main routes from the by-pass to Tain town centre. Apart from providing the main access to the school, it also has a series of entrances to private houses. The entrance to the Mansfield Hotel is opposite the pedestrian access to the school. One of the main access points to the police station and ambulance station is also on Scotsburn Road.

The existing bus bay at the school will hold three buses and a minibus (double parked) with the remaining five buses parked on Scotsburn Road. The bus bay also houses the main pedestrian access/exit to the school.

Scotsburn Road curves slightly and with buses parked on the road, sight lines are lost. On a dark winter's afternoon or on a busy summer day, the combination of parked buses, moving traffic, parked cars, multiple entrances to private homes and the Mansfield Hotel, pedestrians and cyclists is felt to create all the circumstances for an accident waiting to happen.

It is the view of the School Board and the School Safety Team and the school staff that there is an urgent need to address this problem.

Future Plans Likely to Impact on Travel Pattern

The rural nature of the catchment area means that there is unlikely to be any change to the number of pupils dependent on school transport for travelling to and from school.

However, the following factors are likely to increase congestion on Scotsburn Road in the next few years.

- increased community use of school facilities during the school day once a new all weather pitch is opened (May 2003) and indoor facilities are refurbished (October 2003).
- increased adult use of classroom facilities through adult learning initiatives.
- increased adult/child use of school campus through Healthy Living Centre status – co-ordinator to be in post by February 2003.

Background to the Current Proposal

The congestion on Scotsburn Road at the beginning and end of the school day has been the subject of public/parental/staff comment for several years. However, the resources were not available to address the problem effectively.

Following consultations in 2000 with Highland Council's Road Safety Officer, Highland Council Roads Department and Northern Constabulary, it was agreed to draw up proposals to convert the car park at the Scotsburn Road side of the school into a bus park.

Plans were drawn up and presented to the School Board and TRA Health and Safety Committee. Both groups felt that the proposals created new problems and that the mix of buses, pedestrians and cyclists in school grounds was as dangerous as the situation pertaining on Scotsburn Road. The plans were rejected.

The School Board contacted Northern Constabulary for further advice and with a request that a traffic warden be on duty on Scotsburn Road at peak times. However, it was impossible, to guarantee that a traffic warden could be available in this location twice a day for five days a week during term time. Peak times on Scotsburn Road were also peak times in the town centre.

In 2001, the School Board put forward two further proposals:

- i) The creation of a second entrance on the Hartfield Road side of the school, the removal of a grassed area and the construction of a bus park. A pedestrian access would also be required.
- ii) The purchase of derelict buildings on Victoria Road (at the bottom of TRA playing fields), the demolition of said buildings and the creation of a new bus park area. A new pathway from Victoria Road to the Academy would also be required.

However, both options proved to be prohibitively expensive and were not considered further.

In June 2001 it was agreed that the school should prepare a Safer Routes to School Plan as suggested in the Scottish Executive Guidance on *How to Run Safer Routes to School*. The existing school Health and Safety team consisting of the Rector, representative of the three teacher unions, head janitor, centre co-ordinator and pupil representative should take on the remit of School Safety Team and draw up a plan which would be updated annually. The rector would also liaise with TRA School Board on all safety issues.

In January 2002, TRA School Board and the School Safety Team considered seven options put forward by Highland Council Roads Department.

- i) Create a dedicated long bus bay on Scotsburn Road to accommodate all the buses.
- ii) Create a loop road into the school grounds off Scotsburn Road.
- iii) Make Scotsburn Road a one way street from the entrance to Mansfield House Hotel to Quebec Avenue.
- iv) Make Scotsburn Road a one way street from Victoria Road to Quebec Avenue.
- v) Install part time signals on Scotsburn Road to regulate the flow of traffic to single working at peak times.
- vi) Create a dedicated bus stance off Scotsburn Road.
- vii) Relocate some buses from Scotsburn Road to Hartfield Road.

All seven options were fully considered by both the School Board and the SST. Option 1, although the preferred option, at £68,000 (estimate) was felt to be outwith the resources likely to be available in the near future. Similarly,

COSTINGS

3/12/2002

CONTRACTORY PRICE TO BUILD LAYBY 54,000 Pat Munko

CONTRACTORY PRICE TO REBUILD WALL 14,000

COST TO INSTALL ZEBRA CROSSINGS 6,000 Roads

PUBLIC UTILITY COSTS FOR PLANT DIVERSION 15,000 BT
↑ upper price.

ESTIMATED WORKS COST 89,000

CONTRIBUTION FROM A. CHIND 21,000

CONTRIBUTION FROM S. PATTERSON 32,000 TEL

OUTSTANDING BALANCE: 36,000

[Signature]

Options 2 and 6, with outline costs of £61,000 and £97,000 respectively, were felt to be unaffordable. Options 3 and 4 were expected to incur objections from the public and local residents who would be inconvenienced by a one way system. Strategy 7 was rejected on the basis that it was simply moving the problem rather than solving it. The exits on Hartfield Road would also need considerable improvement. Both groups felt that Option 7 at £16,000 was the most cost effective and this opinion was relayed to Mr Jim Stevenson, Head of Resources, Education Department, Highland Council and from there to the Roads Department.

On 19 March 2001, School Board members were informed by the Roads Department that there were legal implications associated with the erection of part-time traffic lights, particularly if they were to be controlled by the school. It was agreed that an extended bus bay should be the number one objective if funding could be identified. Mr Bill Robbins, Highland Council Roads and Transport Dept. confirmed that there was sufficient room for the provision of a long bus bay adjacent to the proposed new all weather pitch.

Costed Proposal

The proposal for an extended bus bay has been costed in December 2002 by Mr Jim Yuill, Highland Council Technical Services as follows:

Contractor's price to build layby	£54,000
Contractor's price to rebuild wall	£14,000
Cost to install zebra crossing	£ 6,000
Public utility cost for plant diversion	<u>£15,000</u>
Estimated total cost	<u>£89,000</u>

Funding Sources

* Contribution from Councillor Alasdair Rhind	£21,000
* Contribution from Councillor Jim Patterson	£32,000
Outstanding balance	<u>£36,000</u>

- Both councillors have agreed to divert a substantial proportion of Scottish Executive 'windfall money' to this project. Councillor Richard Durham's windfall funding has been allocated to other priorities but this project enjoys his complete support.

Note:- The projected cost of £89,000 contains an element of contingency funding. In reality, a further contribution of £30,000 is likely to close the gap.

Benefits of Proposal

The first and most obvious benefit is to move the buses off Scotsburn Road which will restore sight lines for all traffic moving traffic up and down the road.

The restoration of two way traffic will make it considerably safer for cyclists emerging on to Scotsburn Road. The zebra crossing will improve safety for pedestrians, particularly pupils going to the Mansfield housing estate, the pedestrian entrance to which is linked to the proposal crossing.

Partners in the Proposal

Councillors Richard Durham, Jim Patterson and Alastair Rhind
Craighill Primary School
Highland Council Education, Culture and Sport Department
Highland Council Technical Services Department
MSP Jamie Stone
Tain Royal Academy Pupil Council
Tain Royal Academy School Board
Tain Royal Academy School Safety Team

Why Now?

Work on a new all weather pitch on the school grounds adjacent to Scotsburn Road is contracted to begin on 6 January 2003. The project will involve breaking into the existing wall. With a contractor scheduled to be 'on site' for five months, there is an opportunity to have the layby constructed at the same time.

The fact that £54,000 worth of funding is available from local councillors' 'windfall allocation' is a one-off opportunity. A £30,000 contribution from Safety Routes to School would effectively close the funding gap.

Alternatives

The Background to the Current Proposal section describes in detail the steps that were taken before deciding that extending the bus bay was the only viable option. If this opportunity is missed, it may be some considerable time before Council funding can be found to carry out this much needed work. In the short term, if no action is taken, the congestion at the school gates will continue to pose a real risk of serious injury or worse, to the many pupils and adults who access or exit TRA from the Scotsburn Road side.

KNOCKBRECK PRIMARY SCHOOL
School Travel Plan

I

Travel To and From School

Pupils should be encouraged to walk to school. Parents accompanying young children should take the opportunity to teach their children how to come to school safely, highlighting issues such as-

- using the Green Cross Code
- being aware of "Stranger Danger"
- never playing with balls or toys on route to school

TEC SP 15
REC...
- 4 APR 2003

When entering or leaving the school grounds always close the gates and use the patrolled crossings.

If parents drive their children to school, please ensure your child exits the vehicle on the pavement side, never on the road side. Park carefully away from entrances and zigzag lines. Please do not park in staff car park.

If children are transported to school by bus, parents and teachers should reinforce the rules of-
always siting properly and using the seat belts
no shouting or distracting the driver
thank the driver on exiting the bus

Only children who have gained the Cycling Proficiency Award are allowed to cycle to school. Helmets must always be worn. Cyclists should park their bikes in the cycle racks (these are to be provided by the safer routes to school funding). **NEVER** cycle in the school playground, even after the school day.

Cycling Proficiency lessons are to be given to primary 6 and primary 7 if anyone misses them. At the end of the course, a visiting officer for the Cycling Proficiency Award tests pupils.

No child is allowed to leave the school premises during the school day without permission from their teacher. If pupils, who are normally picked up, find no parent to meet them, they must return in to the school and report to their teacher or the school secretary.

Any teacher driving a Highland Council minibus must have passed the Council's minibus test. Any classes or groups of pupils using private contractors' transport must be accompanied by a staff member.

Classes or groups of pupils visiting local places of interest on foot must be accompanied by adults on a 1-10 ratio. They should walk in twos, in an orderly fashion, on the inside of the pavement making sure they consider other walkers.

Travel plan objectives:

To reduce the risk of accidents and injuries.

To encourage pupils, parents and the community into making healthier, safer and more energy efficient school and other journeys. To achieve a more equitable balance between the vehicle speed culture and the safety needs of pupils.

KNOCKBRECK PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Travel Plan

To provide a safe footpath from the Fendom road end of the school, increase parking facilities within the school grounds, widen exit for emergency vehicle access and make motorists aware they are entering a school zone. Provide cycle racks for cyclists.

Travel Plan Benefits:

An improved environment and culture within the school and wider community.

Greater community consciousness of the safety needs of school pupils.

More effective safety education for our young people.

Who Will Benefit:

PUPILS - travel habits developed early in life are usually maintained. Walking to school, cycling, respecting public transport encourages social interaction, develops road safety and personal safety skills.

COMMUNITY - the fast vehicle culture is difficult to change but a raised awareness of young people's needs will help complement new measures to reduce risks.

What the project will bring to the school:

Improved health and safety for our young people from age 5-12 .

An increased awareness of road safety for all concerned reflected in more responsible and considerate behaviour of all road users.

More responsible behaviour of pupils traveling on school buses.

A greater appreciation by parents and community (including drivers) of the travel problems faced by schools in an expanding urban and rural environment.

ALTERNATIVES:

In the short term, if no action is taken, there will remain a high risk of a fatal accident on the Fendom Road entrance to the school.

Failure to encourage walking and cycling will continue to have a detrimental effect on our poor national health record.

The school plans to:

Work in partnership with Highland Council, Northern Constabulary and other stakeholders.
Make a significant contribution to the attainment of Scottish Executive Targets.
This to be achieved through the Safer Routes to School project which will itself be implemented in the personal and social development of the school.

KNOCKBRECK PRIMARY SCHOOL
School Travel Plan

Action required by parents:

Encourage their children to behave in a safe and sensible manner at all times during their journey to and from school.

Encourage their children to follow the basic road safety rules as pedestrians, cyclists and as motorists.

Make appropriate democratic representations to public authorities in order to secure improvements.

Act as a role model and lead by example.

Action required by others:

Elected representatives to take account of the wishes of the local communities in these matters.

Travel Plan Targets:

Update the school through a newsletter of the Safer Routes to school project.

Have the necessary work started by Aug 2003 to make the Fendom road end, carparking, widening of emergency exits and cycle racks.

Reporting Changes

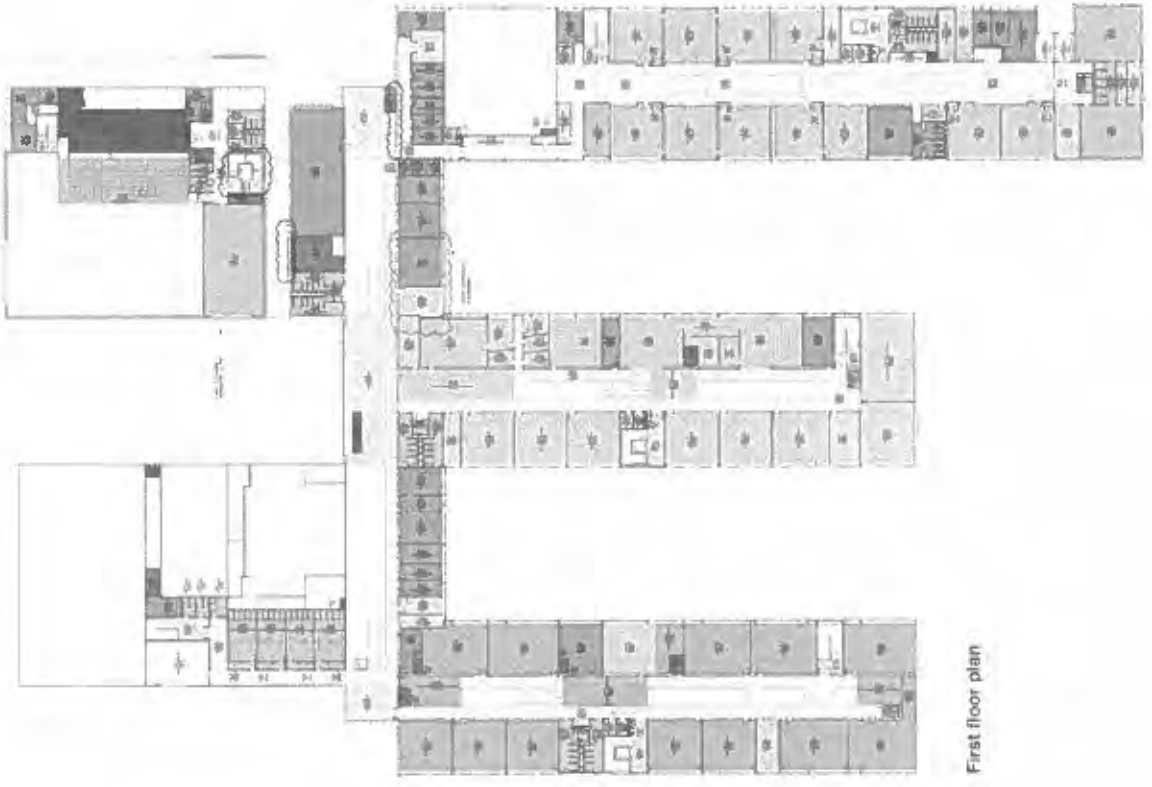
Safer Routes to school working party to meet once a term.

Minutes to be circulated to interested parties.

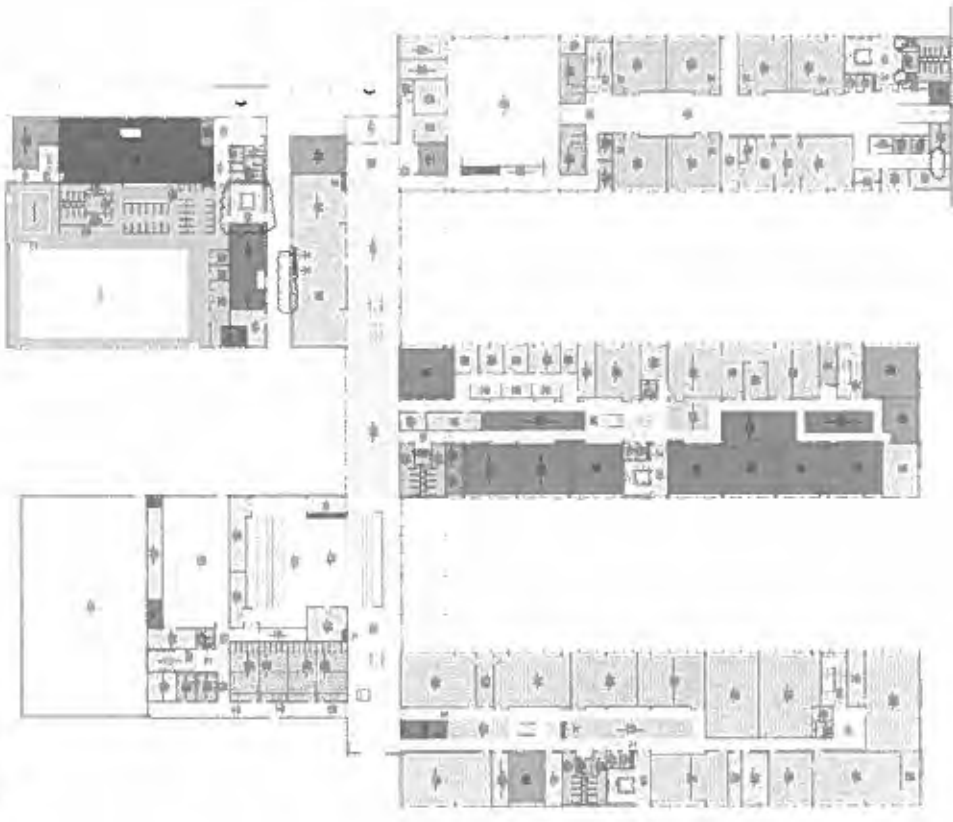
Annual review of the travel plan by the Safer Routes to school working party.

Wick Campus

Ryder



First floor plan



Ground floor plan

Highland Council

Wick Joint Campus & East Caithness Community Facility
Current Ground and First floorplans

Option 1A.01 - Tain Royal Academy



New-build 3-18 campus

SECONDARY

Maximum Roof Projection
824 (m²)
Area Based on SFT Method
8,312m²

PERIMETRY (incl. 2 x 60 Nursery pods)

Maximum Roof Projection
429 (m²)
Area
7
The
Classrooms
16
Area Based on THC Accommodation Schedule
3,746m²

ABN
Area
801m²

COMMUNITY USE

Area
3000m²

TOTAL
14,788m²

EXTERNAL SPACES
(based on Sportscode guidelines)

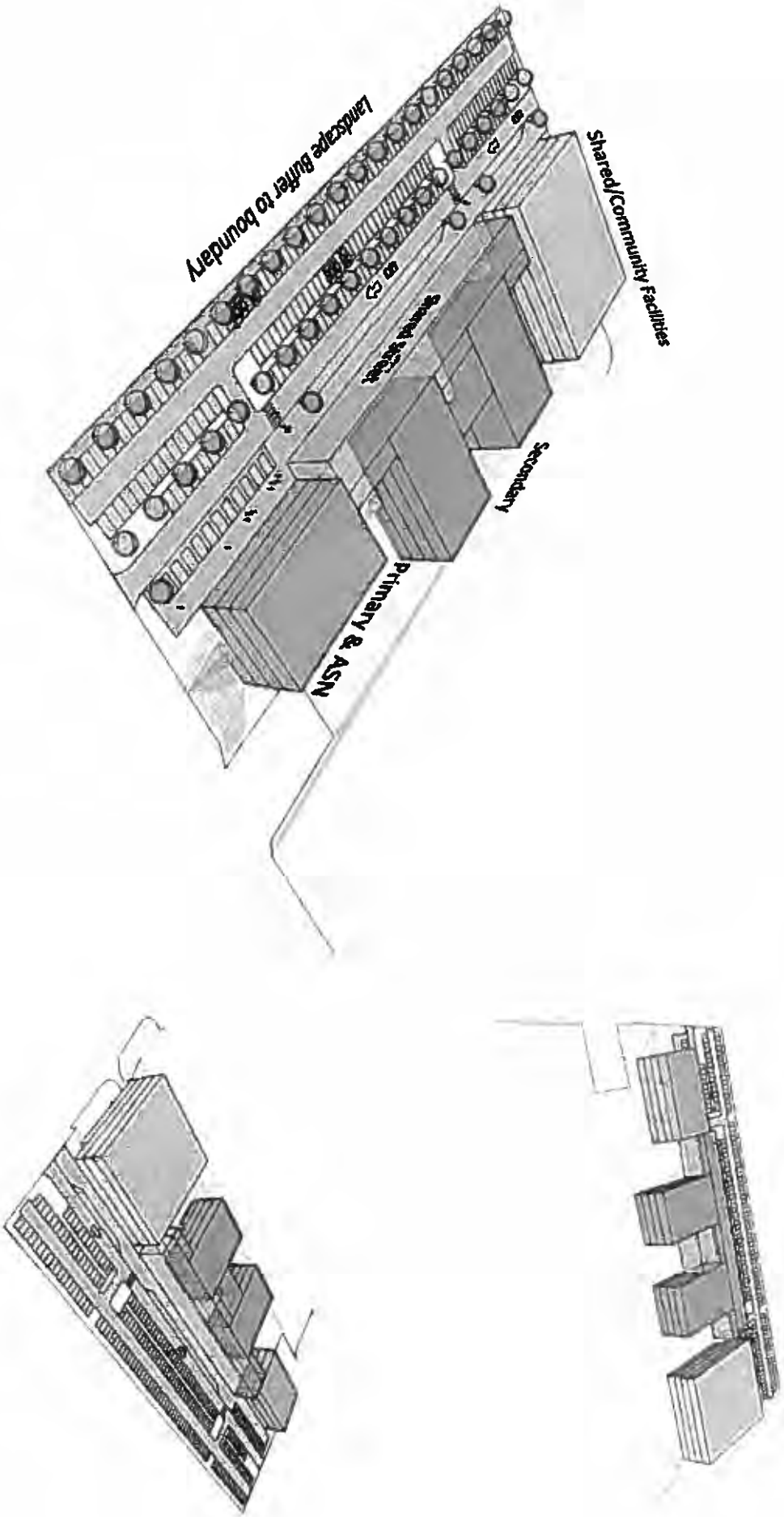
All Weather Pitch - 101 x 60m (108 x 60m with run-off)
Football Pitch Size 1 - 108 x 60m (108 x 60m with run-off)
Pugby Pitch Size 1 - 120 x 70m (130 x 80m with run-off)
MATCHA - 60 x 40m (4 x 2m run-off)

PARKING

218 spaces

DROP-OFF & THROUGH ROUTE

Option 1A.01 - Tain Royal Academy



1 Introduction

The 3-18 Campus will consist of a Primary School, with Nursery and Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision, a Secondary School with full provision to meet the requirements for 650 pupils, together with ASN provision, and community facilities, all as outlined in more detail below.

It should be noted that the detailed accommodation brief for this provision will only be completed following full consultation with staff and Stakeholder Groups to be set up specifically for this project.

2 Primary School Provision

The current joint school roll projected for August 2014 is 406. The combined roll is projected to rise to 429 by 2027/28. The proposed Primary School will provide for a maximum of 442 primary age pupils, 120 Nursery age pupils, Gaelic provision for Primary and Nursery age pupils, have ASN provision for those pupils of Nursery / Primary school age who require it.

The new school will consist of:

- 16 classrooms, each with built in store and cloakroom
- Expressive arts and music rooms
- Gaelic provision
- Library and break-out space
- 2 nursery rooms, with kitchen, cloakrooms, toilets and storage
- 2 learning support rooms
- Enhanced provision area for children with specific needs
- Games hall – 2 badminton court size, with changing and stores
- Offices – administration, head teacher and deposes, staff work base
- Dining facilities
- Medical room, inter agency meeting room, offices for Children's' Services and Active Schools Coordinator
- Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and grass pitch
- External areas including garden area – for work and play
- Car and cycle parking and drop off area

3 Secondary School

The current projected roll for August 2014 is 487. The school roll is projected to rise to 634 by 2027/28. The proposed High School will provide for 650 pupils, and have ASN provision for those pupils of secondary school age who require it. Please note that the actual number of classrooms required will only be calculated after detailed consultation with senior staff in the school and within the authority.

The new Tain Royal Academy will consist of:

- General classrooms - all to a very high standard of ICT provision, and to include all new furnishings
- Specialist facilities for art and design, music, drama, home economics, business and computer education, technology and science equipped to the most modern standards
- Specialist vocational provision for practical craft skills, professional cookery and hair and beauty
- Specialist provision for assisted support needs
- Collaborative and cooperative break out space to promote a variety of teaching methods
- An Assembly Hall
- Kitchen and dining facilities
- One full sized synthetic pitch (existing)
- Grass Pitches
- Car and cycle parking, drop off area and bus bays

3 Community Building

This facility will be managed and operated by High Life Highland (HLH).

The provision would consist of:

- Reception, with café area
- 4 court Games Hall
- Gymnasium
- Gymnasium / Dance Studio
- Fitness suite
- Associated changing rooms etc for the above
- Swimming pool with floating floor
- Sauna and Steam rooms
- Associated changing rooms for the pool
- Meeting / party room
- Offices and other ancillary space as required to manage the building

The Schools would have priority use of the community building as required during the school day and for extra curricular activities, with community use during the evenings, at weekends, and during the school holidays.

Tain SSER- Financial Template- Table 1- School Revenue Costs

Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure	Option 1- bring existing schools up to A/A standard				
	Costs for full financial year- Tain Royal Academy	Costs for full financial year- Craighill Primary School	Costs for full financial year- Knockbreck Primary School	Costs for full financial year- St Duthus Special School	TOTAL COST OF SCHOOLS UNDER OPTION 1
<i>Employee costs</i>					
teaching staff	1,807,913	407,452	549,235	173,317	2,937,917
support staff	114,476	19,287	109,272	159,861	402,897
teaching staff training (CPD etc)	5,951	1,347	1,883	536	9,717
support staff training	732	146	669	912	2,459
Supply costs	54,237	15,269	19,054	6,933	95,493
<i>Building costs:</i>					
property insurance	8,500	2,900	2,800	270	14,470
non domestic rates	171,592	15,304	41,452	0	228,348
water & sewerage charges	34,041	1,310	6,819	1,819	43,989
energy costs	102,723	10,424	-3,108	6,368	116,407
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	94,039	12,405	24,744	3,285	134,473
building repair & maintenance	11,512	2,271	4,290	361	18,433
grounds maintenance	11,500	2,200	3,000	0	16,700
facilities management costs	71,662	24,969	24,969	0	121,601
other	0	0	0	0	0
<i>School operational costs:</i>					
learning materials	53,246	10,123	17,441	8,407	89,218
catering (contract or inhouse)	77,355	18,303	80,240	6,101	182,000
SQA costs	37,995	0	0	0	37,995
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	36,000	0	0	0	36,000
<i>Transport costs:</i>					
home to school	403,773	0	92,321	68,972	565,067
other pupil transport costs	0	0	0	0	0
staff travel	1,983	324	380	77	2,764
SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	3,099,232	544,035	975,461	437,219	5,055,946
<i>Income:</i>					
Sale of meals	-52,188	-18,184	-28,692	-1,778	-100,842
Lets	0	0	0	0	0
External care provider	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	-52,188	-18,184	-28,692	-1,778	-100,842
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	3,047,044	525,851	946,769	435,441	4,955,105
revenue costs arising from capital	1,936,117	608,667	443,501		2,988,285
TOTAL NET COST INCLUDING COST OF CAPITAL	4,983,161	1,134,518	1,390,269	435,441	7,943,389

UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR (excl. costs of capital)

5,151

APPENDIX 12

Option 2- new 3-18 campus	
Tain 3-18 campus cost- TRACC site	Annual recurring additional cost/(savings)
2,832,223	-105,693
370,515	-32,382
8,960	-756
2,286	-173
91,038	-4,455
20,400	5,930
338,819	110,471
50,264	6,275
136,428	20,021
161,330	26,858
21,117	2,683
11,500	-5,200
99,878	-21,723
0	0
87,411	-1,807
165,977	-16,023
37,995	0
61,000	25,000
565,067	0
0	0
2,470	-293
5,064,678	8,732
-100,842	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
-100,842	0
4,963,837	8,732
2,594,519	-393,766
7,558,355	-385,034

5,160

Tain SSER- Financial Template- Table 2- Capital Costs

Option 1- bring existing schools up to A/A standard	
Capital costs	Receiving school
Construction costs	43,614,211
Capital Life Cycle cost	55,305,029
Third party contributions to capital costs	0
Capital receipts	0
	98,919,240

Option 2- new 3-18 campus	
Capital costs	Receiving school
Construction costs	44,222,769
Capital Life Cycle cost	40,068,854
Third party contributions to capital costs	0
Capital receipts	-1,247,000
	83,044,623

Tain SSER- Financial Template- Table 3- Annual Property Costs Incurred Until Disposal

Option 1- bring existing schools up to A/A standard

No properties will be disposed of under option 1 so there will be no such costs under this option

Option 2- new 3-18 campus

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	1,400
non domestic rates	0
water & sewerage charges	655
energy costs	3,000
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	0
security costs	500
building repair & maintenance	500
grounds maintenance	200
facilities management costs	0
other	0
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	6,255

Under this option the sites at Craighill, Knockbreck and St Duthus will become surplus. It is intended that the Craighill building is demolished immediately and the cost of this will be offset against the capital receipt realised from the sale of the land. The Knockbreck PS building is category B listed and will not be demolished. The costs in the table above reflect the property costs for mothballing that building. The modular buildings will be removed from the St Duthus site and any site clearance costs offset against the capital receipt realised from the sale of the land.

Tain SSER- Financial Template- Table 4- Non-Recurring Revenue Costs

Option 1- bring existing schools up to A/A standard

Non-recurring revenue costs	
No such costs expected	-
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	0

Option 2- new 3-18 campus

Non-recurring revenue costs	
Removals costs	50,000
Knockbreck PS- securing of buildings	10,000
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	60,000

Under this option it is assumed that any surplus staff members will be redeployed elsewhere within the Council at no additional cost or be managed through natural wastage

Tain SSER- Financial Template- Table 5- Impact on GAE

Option 1- bring existing schools up to A/A standard

Impact on GAE - note 5	
No impact on GAE	0
GAE IMPACT	0

No change to the current situation is proposed under option 1. Consequently there will not be any impact on GAE

Option 2- new 3-18 campus

Impact on GAE - note 5	
No impact on GAE	0
GAE IMPACT	0

There is not anticipated to be any impact on GAE as a result of this proposal. Any possible impact would only occur if the schools affected had a roll of fewer than 70 pupils.

TAIN 3 TO 18 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

APPENDIX 13

FTE ENTITLEMENTS

	SCHOOL ROLL - SEPTEMBER 2013				Head Teacher FTE	DHT FTE	PT FTE	Teachers FTE	ASN Teachers (secondary) FTE	Management Time FTE	CCR FTE	Admin Assistant FTE	Clerical Assistant FTE	PSA FTE	Technicians FTE	Playground Supervisor FTE	Early Years Assistant FTE	Janitors/F MA FTE	Catering FTE	Cleaning FTE	TOTAL FTE
	Sec	Special	Prim	Nurs																	
Tain Royal Academy	494				1.00	2.00	8.00	25.34	1.50	0.00		1.00	2.53	0.00	1.25			2.87	3.58	5.34	54.42
Knockbreck			156		0.50	1.00	1.00	6.00	0.00	0.20	0.40		0.80	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.00	1.00	0.97	0.70	12.73
Craighill			247	51	1.00	1.00	1.00	7.00	0.00	1.20	0.50		1.17	0.00	0.00	0.16	3.04	1.00	4.00	1.29	22.35
St Duthus		14			1.00	0.00	1.00	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.42	0.00	5.54	0.00		0.00		0.32	0.17	9.96
Total					3.50	4.00	11.00	39.84	1.50	1.40	0.90	1.42	4.50	5.54	1.25	0.31	3.04	4.87	8.88	7.50	99.46

Tain 3-18 Campus	494				1.00	2.00	8.00	25.34	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.90	2.28	0.00	1.25	0.00	0.00	4.00	7.91	9.33	63.50
Primary			403	51	1.00	1.00	4.00	10.00	0.00	1.60	0.80		1.39	0.00	0.00	0.16	3.04				22.99
Special		14			0.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.30	0.38	0.00	5.54	0.00		0.00				9.72
Saving resulting from Declustering of Knockbreck/Inver					0.50	0.00	-1.00	0.00	0.00	0.10											-0.40
Total	494	14	403	51	2.50	4.00	12.00	36.84	1.50	1.70	1.10	1.28	3.67	5.54	1.25	0.16	3.04	4.00	7.91	9.33	95.81

Change in FTE entitlements					-1.00	0.00	1.00	-3.00	0.00	0.30	0.20	-0.14	-0.84	0.00	0.00	-0.16	0.00	-0.87	-0.97	1.82	-3.65
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COSTING OF ABOVE FTE ENTITLEMENTS

	SCHOOL ROLL - SEPTEMBER 2013				Head Teacher £	DHT £	PT £	Teachers £	ASN Teachers (secondary) £	Management Time £	CCR £	Admin Assistant £	Clerical Assistant £	PSA 1 £	Technicians £	Playground Supervisor £	Early Years Assistant £	Janitors/F MA £	Catering £	Cleaning £	TOTAL £
	Sec	Special	Prim	Nurs																	
Option 1																					
Tain Royal Academy	494				92,031	129,018	436,069	1,086,481	64,314	-	-	23,620	52,274		38,583		-	71,662	77,355	94,039	2,165,446
Knockbreck			156		30,982	46,744	46,744	257,257	-	8,575	17,150		16,529		-	2,758	-	24,969	18,303	12,405	482,417
Craighill			247	51	69,142	60,327	46,744	300,133	-	51,451	21,438		24,203		-	2,758	82,311	24,969	80,240	24,744	788,460
St Duthus		14			60,327		48,676	64,314				9,991	-	149,869	-		-	-	6,101	3,285	342,563
Total					252,482	236,088	578,232	1,708,185	64,314	60,027	38,589	33,611	93,006	149,869	38,583	5,516	82,311	121,601	182,000	134,473	3,778,887

Option 2																					
Tain 3-18 Campus	494				92,031	129,018	436,069	1,086,481	64,314	-	-	21,258	47,046		38,583	-	-	99,878	165,977	161,330	2,341,985
Primary			403	51	69,142	63,763	186,975	428,761	-	68,602	34,301	-	28,690		-	2,758	82,311				965,303
Special		14			-	58,387	48,676	64,314	-		12,863		149,869		-		-				334,110
Saving resulting from Declustering of Knockbreck/Inver					30,982		46,744			4,288											- 11,474
Total					192,155	251,168	624,976	1,579,556	64,314	72,889	47,164	21,258	75,736	149,869	38,583	2,758	82,311	99,878	165,977	161,330	3,629,923

Change in staffing budgets					- 60,327	15,080	46,744	- 128,628	-	12,863	8,575	- 12,353	- 17,270	-	-	- 2,758	-	- 21,723	- 16,023	26,858	- 148,964
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SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010**STATUTORY GUIDANCE**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. This statutory guidance is issued under section 19 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (hereinafter referred to as ‘the 2010 Act’) and replaces the guidance which was published in February 2010. The guidance also reflects recommendations made in the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education’s Report¹, and that Report is a useful source of further information, discussion and advice on many of the issues arising from this guidance or in managing the school estate.

2. The 2010 Act was amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and most of those amendments will come into force on 1 August 2014.² This guidance provides advice on those new requirements, and on transitional arrangements for consultations on closure proposals which are underway on 1 August 2014. Further amendments to the 2010 Act have not yet been brought into force, and when they are brought into force early in 2015, this guidance will be further revised. These other amendments relate to the School Closure Review Panels and will only affect section 4.3 of this guidance.

3. The 2010 Act’s principal purpose is to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools. These consultation processes are expected to be robust, open, transparent and fair, and seen to be so. They are also expected to be consistent across Scotland.

4. The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools, establishing a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools. This requires education authorities to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal. These are set out in sections 11A to 14 of the 2010 Act and sections 2.5, 3.4 and 4.2 of this guidance.

5. The 2010 Act applies to a wide range of changes to the school estate, referred to as “relevant proposals” (see section 2(1) and paragraphs 1 to 10 of schedule 1 to the 2010 Act). There are additional requirements for education authorities to comply with, both in carrying out the consultation process for school closure proposals and when the authority decides to implement the proposal. When the authority makes such a decision, the 2010 Act requires this decision to be referred to the Scottish Ministers for their consent and the proposal cannot be implemented in full or in part until the call in period is complete and, if the proposal is called in, consent has been granted. (The arrangements for consent will change significantly when further amendments to the 2010 Act are brought into force early in 2015, establishing the School Closure Review Panels which will review closure proposals that are called in instead of the Scottish Ministers.)

¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/04/5849>

² The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI No. 165) sets out the amendments which come into force on 1 August 2014 and transitional and transitory provisions regarding these.

To whom is this guidance addressed - who should read it?

6. Section 19 of the 2010 Act requires an education authority to have regard to any guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers for the purposes of, or in connection with, the Act. This guidance is therefore issued to local authorities and is intended to assist local authority officers who are involved in overseeing the consultation and decision making processes around proposed changes to their school estate, as set out in the 2010 Act. It is intended to help ensure that full, fair and rigorous consultations are undertaken and does so by providing guidance and illustrative examples of the good practice which is expected to be the norm.

7. This guidance will also be of interest to parents and carers; school pupils and staff; members of the local community; and anyone else with an interest in how authorities undertake consultations on proposed changes to schools. It is important that these stakeholders are reassured that the consultation and decision making process and procedures are fairly, fully and rigorously carried out by the local authority.

8. The structure of this guidance follows the timeline of a consultation from initial preparation, through formal consultation, decision and, where applicable, possible call in of the proposal by the Scottish Ministers. The specific areas covered, and the level of detail offered on those areas, reflect the debate on these issues in recent years. Comments on this guidance are very welcome and should be sent to schoolestate@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

2. PREPARATION FOR CONSULTATION

2.1 The basics

What type of proposal is being made?

9. It is important to be clear what type of proposal is being made, to understand whether and, if so, how the 2010 Act applies to it. The types of “relevant proposals” covered by the Act are defined in paragraphs 1 to 10 of schedule 1 to the Act, and further detail on these is set out in section 5.2 of this guidance. Authorities should consider whether schools or stages of education will be closed or, as the case may be, established. For some scenarios, for example, where two schools are being brought together on a single site, there can be questions as to whether one or both schools is being relocated or closed, and if there is doubt, it will be helpful to get legal advice at an early stage. In determining what type of proposal is involved it is important to understand the proposed management arrangements and whether, therefore, a school(s) continues as the same entity or changes.

10. These examples may be helpful:

- A new school is to be built in the grounds or adjacent to the existing school, which will then be demolished. This would not require a consultation, as the school address and management does not change.
- A new school building is to be built on a new site, and all the pupils and staff will transfer to the new building. This would be considered as a relocation, not a closure.
- Two schools are to move to a new joint site. Depending on the proposed management arrangements, this might be considered to be a closure and a relocation (if the new school is to retain the name and management of one of the schools), two closures and the establishment of a new school, or, if the site is to be a shared campus and both schools will retain their existing management arrangements, two relocations.
- A standalone nursery is to be incorporated into a local school as a nursery class. This would be considered as the closure of the nursery school and the establishment of a new stage of education, a nursery class, at the school.

Is a rural school closure involved?

11. The authority must consider whether any rural school will be closed as part of the proposal, by checking whether the school is listed on the Rural School List maintained by Scottish Ministers.³ If the proposal does involve a rural school closure, the special provisions in sections 11A to 13 of the 2010 Act apply. More

³ The Rural School List is published at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/changestoschoolestate/Ruralschoollist>, and an explanation of how the list is compiled and maintained is provided at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/changestoschoolestate/RuralGuidance>

detail on these is given in sections 2.5, 3.4 and 4.2 of this guidance. Specific further steps require to be taken for rural school closures. Authorities may also want to consider taking some of these steps for schools that are not designated as rural, as they are intended to ensure that the consultation and the reasons for the closure proposal are as thoroughly and rigorously examined as possible.

Attention to detail

12. It is essential that authorities seek and achieve high standards both in the information that underpins school consultations and in the consultation documents that are published. These will be examined closely by communities, staff and parents, and errors in details can easily undermine confidence in a proposal. It is a key learning point from the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education's work that a failure to provide accurate, high quality consultation documents has led to consultations being abandoned, taking much longer than expected and to increased conflict with communities. Significant inaccuracies in the information in consultation documents for a closure proposal could also be grounds for a decision to be called in by the Scottish Ministers.

13. When an authority is using statistics or data to support an argument it must ensure it only makes comparisons where the statistics or data is measured and presented on a like for like basis. For example, comparable statistics on the 'condition' of schools across different authorities is possible because there is detailed national guidance available to all authorities. Particular care should be taken that data relates to the same time period or that any differences and inconsistencies are transparently explained. For example, it would not be appropriate to have some costs covering an academic year and others relating to a financial year, or to use pupil roll data from one year and costs from another.

14. Other areas of difficulty can include allocating central or shared costs for the education authority to individual schools, and accounting for one off maintenance costs which occurred or are projected to occur in a single year but do not recur. Further guidance on presenting financial information, including how to address these areas of potential difficulty, are provided in the financial template referred to in section 2.4. High standards of transparency on how costs have been treated are important, to ensure stakeholders have confidence that costs have been allocated reasonably and consistently.

Timescales for proposals

15. Consultations under the 2010 Act take a significant length of time, particularly where a school closure is involved and if the requirements for rural school closure proposals apply. A sample timeline is available on the Scottish Government website.⁴ It is important to discuss a proposed timetable with Education Scotland (HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE)) at an early stage to ensure that they can allocate an HM Inspector to the proposal and that they are able to complete their report on the proposal without delay to it or disrupting other work. Time must also be allowed for closure proposals to be referred to Ministers – for up to eight weeks –

⁴ The timeline is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/changestoschoolestate>

and the possibility that these might be called in, which could take two to four months⁵ to determine.

16. When planning a consultation, it is important that authorities consider not only the requirements of the 2010 Act but the impact on the children and young people most directly affected by the proposal.

17. There needs to be sufficient time from the date of the final decision for the authority to ensure that effective transitional arrangements for children and young people are in place. A timeline that would allow very little time to confirm the school that children and young people would attend in the next school session could be detrimental to their education. In such cases, unless there is overwhelming support for such a proposal, there is a strong probability that HM Inspectors would be critical of this in the Education Scotland report. While there may be occasions when this is not necessary or possible, as a general guideline it will be important to have at the very least a full term to work with children and young people on transition arrangements, and this will require the staff involved to have a further period beforehand in which to prepare for this work. Even where the authority considers there is a high likelihood that a closure decision will be taken, firm transition planning can only take place once there is certainty for all involved. Particular sensitivity is required where there has been a high degree of opposition to a proposal.

18. Authorities will also wish to consider the most appropriate point in the school year for a transition. For a school closure where children and young people will move to another school this would preferably happen at the beginning of a new school year. In other circumstances, for example a relocation to a new building, the issues will be mainly practical and could depend, for example, upon a construction timetable.

Grouping proposals

19. Authorities are required to prepare a proposal paper to set out the detail of the relevant proposal or proposals. In order to minimise confusion, authorities should only consider grouping together more than one proposal in a single paper if the proposals are connected. If proposals are not strongly linked, separate proposal papers would be more appropriate. Different issues and concerns are likely to arise during the course of the consultation process in relation to each school involved. It is important that the authority takes separate decisions on the proposals at the decision making stage of the process – i.e. can accept one or some of the proposals whilst refusing one or some of the other proposals. It is also sensible to be able to adjust the timetable of proposals separately if necessary. Publishing separate consultation documents for each closure proposal will make this possible.

Other statutory obligations relating to education

20. A local authority has other statutory duties relating to the provision of education in its area which it requires to fulfil and therefore needs to consider when assessing proposals to change the way in which education is delivered in its area.

⁵These are target timescales, based on past experience, there is no statutory deadline on Ministers' determination.

The Educational Benefits Statement is the place for the authority to set out the relationship between a proposed change and these other statutory duties regarding education – and how what is proposed fits with the continued fulfilment of these other obligations. The following list of statutory duties is illustrative rather than exhaustive:

Education (Scotland) Act 1980, section 1 of which requires authorities to secure for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education; section 17 which deals with sufficient school accommodation and sections 22C and 22D which deal with change to provision of denominational education (see guidance in section 4.3).

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, section 3 of which requires authorities to endeavour to raise standards and secure improvement in the quality of school education provided in their schools. Section 2 of this Act states that it is the duty of the education authority to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children or young people to their fullest potential.

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009. These Acts require authorities to identify and provide support for any children with additional support needs and prepare co-ordinated support plans for those with the most extensive needs. This is a critically important group of pupils whose particular needs require special consideration.

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, section 11 of which requires authorities to give advice and information when a Parent Council reasonably requests it from them on any matter. Section 12 requires authorities to give advice and information to a parent of a school pupil when reasonably requested, on any matter relating to the education provided to that pupil.

2.2 Pre-consultation and consulting particular groups

Pre-consultation

21. Sometimes known as informal consultation or pre-statutory consultation, “pre-consultation” can cover a range of engagement with communities regarding a proposal before a formal 2010 Act proposal paper is published. It is not a substitute for, nor does it reduce any of the requirements for formal consultation under the 2010 Act. However, pre-consultation can play an important part in information gathering and sharing in advance of a statutory consultation. For example, it can be a good opportunity to consult the community on detailed aspects of the proposal and seek to resolve these ahead of formal consultation. There is a particular need for engagement with communities in preparing and informing a rural school closure proposal, and this is considered further in section 2.5.

22. There are many different approaches to pre-consultation, from an extension to the authority’s regular engagement with parent councils to consider concerns regarding a school’s future and possible options, to an authority issuing a pre-consultation paper on a wider range of possible options for the school estate before refining which of these should become closure proposals. In the latter case, it is

important to handle these options carefully. For example, sometimes an authority chooses to pre-consult on a wide range of possible options, which may seem fairer than focusing on a single area. However, if there is little likelihood that some of these options would ever be taken further, a broad approach may simply generate concern and opposition, and distract effort from the details of the proposal that the authority does intend to take to consultation. A disadvantage to pre-consultation is that the process set out in the 2010 Act does not apply to it. This, and the lack of access to those requirements during pre-consultation, for example, to challenge inaccuracies, can leave communities frustrated. For this reason, it may be less successful for highly controversial proposals.

23. It is important for authorities to consider how to engage constructively with communities in advance of statutory consultation, so that the statutory consultation is not a surprise to the community and addresses the issues that concern them.

Consulting with children and young people

24. One way of seeking to ensure that Scotland's children and young people become responsible citizens, a cornerstone of Curriculum for Excellence, is by helping them to understand the decisions that are made about and for them by adults, by involving them and by ensuring that they have an opportunity to have their say. The office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, and Children in Scotland, produced, in light of the 2010 Act, guidance aimed at assisting local authorities in undertaking their duty to consult children and young people. It is designed to ensure best practice across Scotland and is available at the following link:

www.childreninscotland.org.uk/docs/Participantsnotpawnsguidance20100315.pdf

25. The 2010 Act requires pupils to be consulted in so far as the authority considers them to be of suitable age and maturity (for example in relation to closure proposals, in terms of schedule 2, paragraph 1(d)). Authorities should be aware of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which gives a child the right to express a view on matters that affect his or her life and to have that view taken into account, and to consult children and young people wherever possible. The focus should be on where children and young people do have capacity and where decisions are of interest to them – some proposals will be technical or of little interest to some categories and ages of pupil.

26. The 2010 Act therefore provides for the views of children and young people to be sought and taken into account on an equal basis to other statutory consultees and there is a clear expectation that authorities will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the greatest number of children and young people are meaningfully consulted, in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity. They should also consider how best to provide feedback to children and young people on how their views have been taken into account in the Council's final decision. This should be done in an accessible and age-appropriate way that will help them understand the process and how and why the decision has been taken.

27. Pupil councils are relatively commonplace throughout Scottish schools and in many cases will provide an ideal platform for proposals to be shared and views to be

expressed and captured. The authority should, however, consider a range of means for communicating and consulting with children and young people of varying age groups and levels of maturity.

28. It is important to ensure that parents and carers are fully informed and, where appropriate, they give consent to consultation with children and young people, and that the children and young people are given an appropriate opportunity to reflect on and consider the issues they are being consulted on.

29. Evidence of an authority not making all reasonable efforts to ensure that the greatest number of affected pupils have been meaningfully consulted on a proposal may result in Ministers calling in the decision.

Consulting widely

30. The 2010 Act prescribes a detailed list of “relevant consultees” who must be consulted on a proposal under the Act. Parents are a key group, and the authority is required to consult the parents of pupils at any affected school, the parents of any children the authority expects to attend any affected school within two years of the publication of the proposal paper, and the Parent Council of any affected school. It will be important for the authority to work with parents to answer their concerns and provide the information they seek.

31. More detail on the “relevant consultees” is given in section 5.3 of this guidance.

2.3 Educational benefits

32. The 2010 Act reflects the Scottish Ministers’ view that educational benefits should be at the heart of any proposal to make a significant change to schools. Consequently, the 2010 Act specifies that the local authority must, for all consultations, prepare an Educational Benefits Statement and publish it within the proposal paper. The 2010 Act requires authorities to consider current and future pupils of any affected school, current users of its facilities, and the pupils of other schools in the authority’s area; and also to explain how the authority intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects of the proposal. The authority must also include its reasons for reaching the views which it sets out regarding the educational benefits. Reasons should be supported by evidence, including HM Inspector reports or condition or suitability ratings of the schools involved, to assist consultees in their understanding of the projected educational benefits.

33. It is important that the closure of a school, or other relevant changes covered by the 2010 Act, is or are proposed for positive educational reasons, and these are set out for each relevant proposal. The authority is required to produce a comprehensive Educational Benefits Statement that clearly sets out the benefits that would accrue for the children and young people (both those directly affected by the change and more widely those in other schools in the local authority area).

34. The impact of a proposal on a range of educational factors will rarely relate only to benefits – any proposal is likely to involve both pros and cons. The Educational Benefits Statement is the place for the authority to explore that balance.

However, the local authority must demonstrate why the proposal is of overall positive educational benefit to the pupils of the affected school(s), children who would be likely to become pupils at the school(s) and other pupils in the authority area. Consultees reading the Educational Benefits Statement, including of course an HM Inspector within Education Scotland, should be able to clearly identify details of the benefits that would accrue from implementation of the proposal. It is likely that an Educational Benefits Statement which is too brief or general and fails to identify **specific benefits** to the pupils of the **affected school** would result in criticism by HM Inspectors and/or a proposal being called in by Scottish Ministers.

35. HM Inspectors within Education Scotland have prepared guidance and a self-evaluation toolkit which authorities may find helpful in developing an Educational Benefits Statement. This is available from Education Scotland. While HM Inspectors cannot advise local authorities on preparing specific proposals – given their duty to report on the proposal under section 8 of the 2010 Act and their duty to advise the Scottish Ministers – they can support authorities more generally in building capacity to carry out these tasks and in planning timelines for consultations. Past HM Inspector reports on 2010 Act proposals also provide a sound guide to the Educational Benefits Statements which have met their expectations, and these reports are all published on Education Scotland’s website.⁶

Effect on different school users

36. The 2010 Act specifies that the authority must set out, within the Educational Benefits Statement, its assessment of the effect of the proposal on a range of school users. The first such group is the pupils at the affected school or schools. It applies to all pupils, not just some. It will often be important for an authority to distinguish between different groups – for example, those with additional support needs – and how a proposal may benefit/impact on them differently. An affected school would include a school proposed for closure either in its entirety, or in part (e.g. where a stage of education was proposed to be discontinued). Where the proposal was to establish a new school, those schools whose rolls would be consequently reduced or changed as a direct result of the new school should be counted as affected schools. Proposals to change catchment areas (which are not subject to Ministerial call in) normally also affect more than one school – and in some cases schools from across neighbouring authorities. In such cases authorities will want to consider carefully how any proposal might have a consequential effect on other schools.

37. The Educational Benefits Statement must also assess the impact of the proposal on other users of the school’s facilities. That may include, for instance, adult or community users, who perhaps attend school-based classes, or users of a school’s theatre or hall or sport and recreation facilities. The authority must also consider and set out the impact of its proposals on children or young people who would have been likely to have become pupils of the school, if the proposal is not implemented. In the case of a primary school, that would generally be those children who would within two years be expected to attend, or in the case of a secondary school, those children in its associated primary schools. However, authorities should

⁶ Education Scotland school consultation reports:
<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/schoolconsultations/index.asp>

consider the interests of any and all children and young people they know may come into this category.

38. Finally, the authority is required to set out its assessment of the likely effects of the proposal – its potential implications and consequences – on some or all of the pupils in other schools across the authority's area. Care should be taken to ensure that any such benefits are appropriately specific and can be clearly understood by consultees. For example, sometimes a relatively small saving is projected and it is indicated that it would benefit other pupils in the area. It is important, if that is the case, to be clear that the likely impact on those other pupils would be minor compared to the impact on the pupils directly affected. In such a case, it would be important that the Educational Benefits Statement focused on the educational benefits to the pupils directly affected. As the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education noted, "it is important to avoid an argument that any cost saving from a closure would leave more funds for other educational purposes and have an educational benefit for the majority of children in the area, as this could be an argument against many aspects of rural service provision. Remoteness should always be a key consideration, recognising the impact of moving education provision an unreasonable distance from any community."⁷

39. In assessing the likely benefits and effects on users, authorities will want to take into consideration a range of factors which will vary from case to case and in scale, depending on the particular circumstances and the type of proposal being consulted on. In many circumstances, the affected groups will not necessarily share a common benefit from what is proposed. In these cases, it will be important that the Educational Benefits Statement demonstrates clearly how the authority has identified and intends to balance these diverse interests. An overall picture of the benefit (or disbenefit) for each of the categories of user set out in section 3(1)(a)(i) to (iv) should be set out, and it is important that this demonstrates a clear educational benefit from the proposal. It is expected that this would normally focus on the children and young people directly affected by the closure.

Factors to cover in the Educational Benefits Statement

40. Neither the 2010 Act nor this guidance are framed in a way that either lists or limits the range of factors that may be relevant in the case of a particular proposal, that an authority might take into consideration and/or articulate in the Educational Benefits Statement. The Scottish Government, however, expects that, as a matter of course, the rationale and arguments offered in the Educational Benefits Statement, indeed in the whole of the proposal paper, will be set within the context of an authority's range of statutory duties, including those set out in paragraph 18 above and in the section below.

41. Also of relevance will be the way a proposal sits within the context of a range of national and local policies. *Curriculum for Excellence* sits at the heart of what both national and local government are looking to achieve in terms of raising levels of achievement and attainment, and improving educational outcomes for all children and young people. It is intended to nurture successful, effective, confident and

⁷ Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, paragraph 90.

responsible young people, able to learn and utilise learning in a way that helps them reach their full potential and to respond to the increased variety and pace of change in today's and tomorrow's world.

42. In preparing the Educational Benefits Statement, authorities will want to set out how a proposal will improve the quality of the curriculum and create positive environments for more effective learning and teaching better matched to the needs of children and young people. The Educational Benefits Statement should focus on how the proposals will improve the depth, breadth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment provided by the curriculum. It should also demonstrate how opportunities for greater personalisation and choice in learning and improved progression will enhance learning experiences. This may include the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and arrangements for assessing and planning learners' progress. Authorities will want to consider setting out clearly how approaches for meeting children and young people's learning, personal, social, health and emotional needs will be improved as a result of implementation of the proposal. A particular aspect is the need to set out the ways in which support for children and young people who require additional support with their learning⁸ will be improved. In making such cases the council may make reference to relevant legislation such as the requirements of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009.

43. Authorities will want to consider setting out the intended positive impact of the proposal on the overall morale and ethos of the school, including the care and welfare of children and young people and their personal and social development. A key aspect for an authority to consider is the positive impact of the proposal on ensuring equality of opportunity for all⁹ within an inclusive educational experience. The authority also needs to consider setting out the ways in which access to improved accommodation and facilities will bring improvements to the environment for learning for children and young people.

44. Where appropriate, authorities will want to consider how the proposal enhances and builds leadership and leadership capacity within the schools covered by the proposal and improves arrangements for planning and taking forward improvements through effective self-evaluation. Authorities may also consider the ways in which the proposal may improve partnership working and liaison between schools.

45. Other potentially relevant issues in connection with educational benefit might include (but are not limited to):

- the condition and suitability of the school buildings and facilities (and where a proposal would involve children and young people moving from one school to another, the relative condition of both);

⁸ Groups and individuals who may have additional support needs arising from, for example, the learning environment, family circumstances, disability or health needs, or social and emotional factors.

⁹ The proposal may set out how it assists the council to fulfil its duties under the Equalities Act 2010.

- changing patterns of demand for school places if there is a growing mismatch between supply and demand; and
- the travel and transport context and implications of a proposal if, for instance, it would affect pupils' broader social experiences and opportunities to participate in and benefit from out-of-hours learning.

46. Financial and budgetary considerations may also be relevant in situations where the costs of the delivery of education have reached the point where an authority considers that they require to be reviewed.

Personal or attributable information

47. In the Educational Benefits Statement, sensitive or personal information that could be linked to or attributed to individuals – for instance, individual pupils – should be avoided, although it is recognised that this may be more difficult where very small numbers of individuals are involved. The objective should be to couch the text of the Educational Benefits Statement in such a way as to avoid the identification of individuals and focus on the generic or on groups or categories of persons affected.

48. While the Educational Benefits Statement provides the local authority with the opportunity to set out the educational case for their proposal, the proposal paper itself is where the authority can and should set out all the other contextual and relevant evidence and information around and in support of the proposal. This can be presented alongside the Educational Benefits Statement in the published proposal paper.

2.4 Proposal paper

49. Section 4 of the 2010 Act sets out the statutory requirements for a proposal paper.

Factors to cover in the proposal paper

50. In considering what material to include in the proposal paper (in addition to the educational case set out in the Educational Benefits Statement) an authority may wish to explain what has given rise to consideration of the matter being consulted on and why it has decided upon the particular proposal set out for consultees (and this is a requirement in the case of a rural school closure proposal, under section 13(2) of the 2010 Act). An authority's School Estate Management Planning (SEMP) process, described in more detail in the later in this section of the guidance, can play a key role in helping to frame that explanation. The proposal paper would be an appropriate place to make reference to how the proposal fits into this wider authority planning. It may also want to explain clearly why the change is required, what other reasonable alternatives have been considered and why these have been rejected. More detail on the special arrangements for rural school closure proposals is given in section 2.5 of this guidance.

51. The authority should ensure the proposal paper provides sufficient detail on areas likely to be of concern to communities. This would include a clear travel plan for pupils, including identifying safe routes to the new school location and providing clarity, where relevant, on school transport that will be provided and traffic management around the school site(s). If the travel plan has not yet been finalised,

the authority would be expected to include as much detail as possible of what its proposed travel plan would be, with information on how and when it expects to finalise the plan. The proposal paper should also be clear on the authority's plans for the future use of any school building and associated facilities that will be released by the proposal. It is reasonable for communities to be concerned whether a school building would have another public purpose, be available for the community, sold or may remain vacant for a significant period, and authorities should provide as much certainty and transparency as possible.

Financial information

52. There is a new requirement that all proposal papers for school closures published from 1 August 2014 must include information about the financial implications of the proposal (section 4(2A) of the 2010 Act). The purpose of this requirement is that information on all likely financial implications should be provided in a clear, complete and consistent form for all school closure proposals, rigorously evidencing any financial argument that is deployed.

53. Authorities are strongly recommended to base their financial information on the financial template¹⁰ which has been developed by COSLA in close collaboration with local authorities. The template is a direct response to recommendation 22 of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education and is supported by the Scottish Government. The template has been trialled with a number of authorities but detailed comments or feedback are still valuable. Comments on the template should be sent to COSLA or to the Scottish Government School Infrastructure Unit (schoolestate@scotland.gsi.gov.uk), and this feedback will be helpful in updating and improving the template as experience is gained applying it to different scenarios.

54. It is expected that the financial information provided should include both actual costs and a narrative. This narrative should explain the costs as well as covering other relevant factors which do not have a direct cost estimate.

55. The financial information required will depend on the circumstances of the proposal. For example, where one school is to be closed and the pupils to attend another existing school, the actual current costs for the school proposed for closure should be given. These should cover a full financial year and assume that the school remained open for the full year. The additional financial impact on the receiving school as a result of taking in extra pupils should also be given for a full financial year. By taking the second set of costs from the first, the annual recurring saving or cost of the proposal can be calculated. However, many scenarios may be more complicated than this, for example, where two schools are to be closed and a new school built, where the children and young people are dispersed to more than one receiving school or where only a stage of education is to be closed. The template is designed to be flexible, with authorities adding to and omitting parts of the 'standard information' to make it best suit a particular closure proposal.

¹⁰ The financial template and technical note are available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/changestotoschoolestate>

56. Data should also be given on the capital costs of the school(s) proposed for closure and the receiving school(s). Care should be taken to ensure that these are comparable and reflect the expected life cycle of a school, as costs are unlikely to be evenly spread through its life cycle. Annual property costs for a closed school before it is disposed of should also be given; and any non-recurring revenue costs.

57. The impact of the closure, if any, on the authority's Revenue Grant from the Scottish Government should also be given. Revenue Grant is based on a Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) formula with almost 100 categories. One of these is most relevant to school closures, the Primary School Teaching Staff line, which has a secondary indicator based on pupils in primary schools with fewer than 70 pupils. Authorities should indicate clearly whether GAE is likely to be affected by the proposal, and the level of this impact, providing a narrative explanation where appropriate.

58. There are some costs which it would be less appropriate to include, such as central management support costs within an education department. A closure of a school is unlikely to lead to a reduction in these costs and any such costs allocated to a school proposed for closure would not normally constitute a real saving.

Capacity

59. The Scottish Government has been working with local authorities to prepare guidance for authorities on calculating the capacity of their schools. This is due to be published shortly, and authorities are recommended to take this guidance into account once it is available. The new capacity guidance is intended to help authorities to make clear and consistent estimates of the capacity of schools, and this will, in turn, allow comparison not only within an authority but across Scotland.

Other legislation

60. There may also be legislation - other than that directly relating to matters educational - that is relevant to the proposal and its context. This includes:

- Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, section 1 of which sets out what a local authority is expected to demonstrate in fulfilment of a series of obligations placed upon it. One such obligation is the duty to secure best value by continuous improvement in performance of the authority's functions, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities and the achievement of sustainable development.

An authority may wish to demonstrate how a proposal helps to fulfil this duty and to achieve best value by setting out clearly cost benefit analyses of the financial and budgetary factors and implications of the proposal. Aspects of this may already have been covered in the Educational Benefits Statement but if there are cost issues which go beyond the purely educational, the proposal paper is where these should be set out, again, with full financial details and supporting evidence where these are significant factors in relation to the proposal.

- Equal opportunity legislation – it will also be important in the proposal paper to set out how the proposal assists the authority in fulfilling its obligations under the Equalities Act 2010. Preparing and publishing an Equality Impact Assessment in the proposal paper would be one way of fulfilling this.

School Estate Management Planning

61. *Building Better Schools*¹¹, is the Scottish school estate strategy which sets out the shared vision of national and local government of creating and maintaining a school estate which is fit for purpose, in good condition, well designed and accessible to all parts of the community. Local authorities' School Estate Management Plans (SEMPs) form a cornerstone of the strategy for the future of the school estate in Scotland. The plans should be an essential tool to local authorities for the proactive, effective and efficient management of their school estate. They should provide a focus for identifying and drawing together needs, priorities and funding streams to enable authorities to modernise and sustain their estate. Long term strategic changes to the school estate, such as a need for rationalisation in particular areas, should be part of this process and will help provide a context to support specific decisions to consult on individual proposals. It will also be important to link to an authority's wider estate management strategy and opportunities for co-location and integration of services.

Mothballing

62. In considering alternatives to closure, authorities may choose to consider "mothballing" a school (or a stage of education such as a nursery class at a school). This is a temporary closure which does not lead to a consultation under the 2010 Act. It is only appropriate in very restricted circumstances. When a school roll falls very low, the authority and/or community may consider that the school is not presently viable but do not wish to close it immediately because there is a reasonable prospect that the possible school roll will increase such that it should be re-opened in the future.

63. It is vital that this flexibility to close a school for a temporary period is not used to undermine the requirements under the 2010 Act to consult on all school closure proposals. 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 (or stage of education). 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. The condition of the school building and cost of maintaining the mothballed provision will also be relevant.

64. A school can be mothballed where the school roll has fallen to zero and continues to be zero. It *may* also be appropriate where the roll or potential roll is very low and the authority considers the only other option to be closure. However, 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 the parents involved, and the possibility should be raised as early as possible, in order to ensure that families can understand the options open to them. Mothballing should not be a way of denying parents access to the statutory consultation process required under the 2010 Act and if the majority of parents oppose mothballing, it would be appropriate to move to statutory consultation on closure as soon as possible.

¹¹<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/09/22154600/0>

2.5 Rural aspects

Presumption against closure

65. Sections 11A to 13 of the 2010 Act (as inserted into that Act or amended by section 80 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014¹²) make specific requirements for rural school closures, and these take effect from 1 August 2014. It will be essential for authorities considering proposing a rural school closure to understand these new requirements before fully formulating a proposal.

66. Section 11A provides that the authority may not decide to close a rural school unless it has complied with the requirements in sections 12, 12A and 13 and is satisfied that such a decision is the most appropriate response to the reasons it has identified for making the proposal. Section 11A is referred to as a “presumption against closure”, as compliance with specific requirements are necessary before a closure decision can be made. Section 12 requires an authority to carry out very thorough consideration of why it wishes to close a rural school prior to consulting on a closure proposal, to assess all reasonable alternatives to closure, and only to proceed, following consultation, if the authority is satisfied that the closure proposal is the most appropriate response to the issues identified.

When do the new requirements apply?

67. The new requirements for rural school closure proposals set out in sections 11A to 13 of the 2010 Act **as amended** will apply to all closure proposals for rural schools that are published from 1 August 2014. Proposals which **have been published before 1 August 2014** are not subject to the new requirements in sections 11A to 13.¹³

68. This means that there will be a small group of ‘transitional’ rural school closure proposals for which the authority has published the proposal paper prior to 1 August 2014 which will complete their consultation and decision making processes in accordance with the requirements in the 2010 Act prior to the amendments to that Act made by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

¹²As set out in The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI No. 165)

¹³ The transitional and transitory provisions regarding the amendments of the 2010 Act to insert new sections 11A, 12A and a substituted section 13 are set out in the above Order.

Preliminary requirements for rural school closures

69. An authority that is formulating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the 2010 Act before starting to prepare its proposal paper. It must identify the reasons for formulating the proposal. These will be the key challenges which the school faces and the authority requires to address. The authority is required to consider when making its decision on a proposal or any reasonable alternatives, so it is important that these are clear and as specific as possible. For example, reasons might relate to a falling school roll, difficulties delivering the curriculum or concerns about the school building. Rather than simply stating that the school is no longer viable, the authority is expected to set out the reasons why it considers the school to no longer be viable.

70. There is a new duty on the authority in terms of section 12A(2) to identify **any reasonable alternatives to the proposal** which might also address the reasons for the proposal. Full consideration should be given to including maintaining the current school as an option here unless it is clear that this would not address the reasons for the proposal. The authority is required to invite representations on these alternatives as well as suggestions for other reasonable alternatives (in terms of the additional consultation requirements in section 13(3)(b) and (c)).

71. The authority is required to assess, for the proposal and all reasonable alternatives that have been identified:

- the likely educational benefits;
- the likely community impact (assessed in accordance with section 12(4)); and
- the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements (assessed in accordance with section 12(5)).

72. The authority cannot make a decision as to whether to proceed to consultation until these preliminary requirements have been carried out and unless they are satisfied that that implementation is the most appropriate response (section 12A(4) to the 2010 Act). It is for the authority to determine how to meet these requirements and whether this requires formal or informal engagement and consultation with the school and community. It is expected that this type of engagement would lead to higher quality proposal papers and better statutory consultations.

Identifying reasonable alternatives

73. The policy intention here is to ensure that when an option to close is proposed, the decision to consult on that option is only taken after very careful consideration, and after all other reasonable alternatives have been considered. Early engagement with the local community and others with an interest will allow an authority to fully consider all suggestions and provide a clear assessment of the merits of these suggestions and their viability. Preliminary, informal discussions (pre-consultation) with members of the affected school and the affected community are a recommended way of establishing possible alternatives. It is important to ensure that all reasonable alternatives that the authority identifies are properly explored before the authority proceeds to consult on closure.

74. Schools are major public and community assets; it is important that their future is considered not just from an education perspective but across the full range of an authority's responsibilities. Consideration of alternatives to closure could include whether there is scope for the school to be better integrated into an authority's wider asset management and community planning processes. This could, for example, include building effective links with local community regeneration strategies. Examples of alternatives to closure that might merit consideration include:

- using the school as a 'community hub' where it accommodates and supports provision of a range of community services, e.g. health, community education, sport, recreation, social and cultural activity etc.;
- how the school roll might be increased, for example by realigning catchment areas, or encouraging or supporting community initiatives aimed at attracting employment or other inward migration to the area;
- how recruitment to teaching posts in remote areas might be improved;
- whether other management options might be a possibility, e.g. joint management arrangements between the authority and the local community, or input to the running of the school from other sources;
- suspension of consideration of a closure proposal for an agreed period to enable a community time to instigate a project/initiative aimed at, for example, increasing local development or employment opportunities in the community, which in turn may increase the viability of the school.

75. Once the authority has identified all the "reasonable alternatives", the authority is required to assess their educational benefits, community impact and effect on travel arrangements. This might be along similar lines to the assessment of the educational benefits for the proposal, to be included in the Educational Benefits Statement. However, HM Inspectors are not required to report on the educational benefits of the reasonable alternatives.

76. The proposal paper must set out the alternatives to the proposal it has identified, give the authority's assessment of these and explain why the authority considers, in the light of that assessment, that implementation of the closure would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal. The authority is required to consult on these alternatives and whether there are any further reasonable alternatives, by informing consultees of the alternatives and their opportunity, firstly, to make representations regarding these as well as the main proposal, and, secondly, to suggest further alternatives (in terms of section 13(3)).

Likely effects of closure on the local community

77. The authority is then required to assess the likely effect of the school's closure on the local community (assessed in accordance with section 12(4)) – whether closure of the school will affect the local community's sustainability and whether the asset of the school's buildings, facilities and grounds would still be accessible, or lost, to the community. Whilst the quality of educational experience of affected pupils remains the primary consideration, the purpose of this requirement is to ensure that the future of a rural school is also considered in the wider context of rural development planning and the sustainability of rural communities.

78. There are many considerations that are likely to be relevant in terms of community impact, for example:

- whether closure would encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community;
- what impact closure might have on other services provided locally, for instance if the school is the only remaining public building in a community;
- whether, or not, the school is a real hub of community life, used for other purposes – such as public meetings, local events, fetes, surgeries, and other get-togethers – which would either cease or be diminished by being required to move elsewhere.
- whether, or not, the loss of the school, and potentially families, would have a detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community.

79. Early engagement and communication with the local community is a good way of establishing and understanding all of the relevant factors.

Likely effects of different travelling arrangements as a result of closure

80. The authority is required to assess the likely consequences of the closure on travelling arrangement (assessed in accordance with section 12(5)) of the school's pupils, staff and other users, and the effect on them as well as the overall environmental impact (for instance as a result of increased car or bus usage). Relevant considerations in terms of the affected pupils include their health and wellbeing and impact on their education. For example, if pupils would be less able to walk or cycle to school, or less able to participate in pre- and after-school clubs, societies or activities. In some instances longer journeys to school may increase the likelihood of bad weather impacting on home to school travel.

Steps taken to address the reasons for the proposal

81. The proposal paper for a rural school closure has one further significant additional component. As well as explaining the reasons for the proposal, there is a duty on the authority to **set out the steps it has taken, if any, to address these reasons before formulating the proposal**. For example, the reason for the proposal might be the falling roll at the school and understanding what action, if any, the authority has taken in the past to seek to address this would help to understand whether such measures should be tried now, or have little prospect of success. Additionally if the authority has not taken any steps to address the reasons for the proposal, the authority is required to explain why it did not do so (in terms of section 13(2)(c)).

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 The basics

Notice and consultation period – section 6 of the 2010 Act

82. An authority must notify the relevant consultees of the proposal and the consultation period cannot commence until this has been done. The authority must also set a consultation period of at least 6 weeks, to include 30 days when the school is open to pupils. For example, if a consultation period commenced a week before the Easter holidays, the 30 day period would be calculated by excluding the Easter holidays, the early May bank holiday, if that is also a school holiday, and any intervening inset days. It might therefore last nearly 9 weeks in total.

The public meeting – section 7 of the 2010 Act

83. A public meeting at which the authority is represented must be held during the consultation period and advance notice given of its date, time and location to the relevant consultees and to HM Inspectors within Education Scotland. Maximum advance notice of the details of the public meeting is desirable. It is most efficient to give this information in the notice issued just prior to the start of the consultation period advising consultees of the proposal. A separate notice can be issued and would be necessary if the details changed or additional meetings were scheduled after the consultation had started.

84. The 2010 Act leaves the details of how the public meeting is conducted to authorities. In deciding when to hold the public meeting, authorities will wish to balance the need to give interested parties enough time to read and digest the proposal paper, in order to inform discussion and questions at the meeting, with the need to allow sufficient time after the meeting for those consulted to reflect and consider what response to make to the consultation. Unless there are good reasons to do otherwise it would be appropriate to avoid holding the public meeting during the first week of the consultation period and instead to arrange for it take place around half way through the period.

85. For the convenience of consultees and other interested parties, the public meeting should take place outwith normal/office working hours and at a convenient location.

86. If an authority considers it appropriate to hold more than one public meeting, for example, in each school that is affected by a proposal, the requirement in section 7(2) and this guidance applies in relation to each public meeting.

HM Inspectors' Involvement – Section 8 of the 2010 Act

87. The 2010 Act provides for Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education's (HMIE's, now part of Education Scotland but retaining their statutory responsibilities as HM's Inspectors of Education) involvement in the consultation process. This involvement will culminate in HM Inspectors preparing and submitting to the authority a professional and independent report on the educational aspects of the proposal being consulted on. As this guidance is addressed to local authorities rather than to HMIE, it focuses on authorities' responsibilities in relation to this section of the 2010 Act.

88. An authority will wish to engage with HM Inspectors before a consultation on a proposal is taken forward to ensure that practical arrangements are in place. For example, to ensure that papers and representations are sent to the appropriate person within Education Scotland. The three week period within which HM Inspectors must prepare and submit their report (unless the authority and HM Inspectors agree a longer period) does not commence until the proposal paper and representations received by the authority have all been forwarded to HM Inspectors.

89. The authority is required to send HM Inspectors a summary of the oral representations made at a public meeting and any other representations made to the authority. In most cases, an HM Inspector does attend the public meeting. However, the absence of an HM Inspectors' representative does not invalidate a public meeting. Where an HM Inspectors' representative does attend a public meeting it is important to emphasise to those present that he/she is doing so exclusively as an observer and cannot be asked to participate or offer any comment.

3.2 Questions, inaccuracies and omissions

90. Concerns about inaccuracies and omissions from proposal papers frequently arise, and where these are significant, can undermine confidence in any part of a proposal. It is important that authorities act quickly and openly to consider these and, if necessary, to correct information. This is underpinned by the requirements in section 5 of the Act. Section 5 has been significantly amended by the Children and Young (People) (Scotland) Act 2014 from 1 August 2014¹⁴ to place additional duties on an authority in this regard.

91. There is a requirement for the authority to consider any allegation of an inaccuracy or omission and determine whether it is accurate. This determination and the reasons for it must be notified to the person who has raised the issue, and they must be invited to make any further representations if they disagree with the authority's view (in terms of section 5(2)(aa) and (c)). Section 5(3) allows the authority to make a fresh determination if further representations are raised and to make a fresh decision as to whether or not to take action to address the inaccuracy or omission. The authority is required to inform the person who has made the further representations if they make a fresh determination or decision to address the inaccuracy or omission.

92. If the authority has found, either itself or through a concern being raised, that there is an inaccuracy or omission in the proposal paper, it must decide whether it relates to a material consideration relevant to the proposal. Where the omission or inaccuracy does not relate to a material consideration, in terms of section 5(4)(b), an authority may decide to take the action mentioned in section 5(5)(a) or (b) (to publish a corrected proposal paper, give revised notice of the corrected proposal in accordance with section 6 and send a copy of the corrected paper to HM Inspectors or to issue a notice to the relevant consultees and HM Inspectors providing the

¹⁴ As set out in The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI No. 165)

omitted information, or as the case may be correcting the inaccuracy, and if the authority considers it appropriate, extending the consultation period by such period as is reasonable by reference to the significance of the information provided or, as the case may be, the nature of the correction). Or the authority may take no further action, except by virtue of section 10(3) (which requires the consultation report to contain information as to any allegations of or actual omissions or inaccuracies in the proposal paper).

93. Where the confirmed inaccuracy or omission relates to a material consideration, there is a duty on the authority to correct it (in terms of section 5(4)(a)). There are two ways to correct information. In extreme circumstances, the omission or inaccuracy may be so significant that it would materially affect the consultees' ability to understand or respond to the proposal paper. In such a scenario, the authority would be expected to withdraw the proposal and either abandon it or start again with a revised proposal paper for the full consultation period (in terms of section 5(5)(a)). If the authority issues a revised proposal paper, it is required to give notice of the revised proposal paper to relevant consultees.¹⁵ Alternatively, for less significant corrections, the authority may issue an erratum or corrected proposal paper and send consultees and HM Inspectors a notice with the correct or omitted information. This issuing of a corrected paper or erratum note may include extending the consultation period if this is considered warranted (in terms of section 5(5)(b)).

94. As stated previously, the robustness of all information in the proposal paper is paramount to the process, and in some cases fundamental to the arguments for supporting the proposal under consideration. If this information is significantly inaccurate or missing, and if it is material to the question as to whether to implement the proposal or not, the inaccuracy or omission would undermine the process.

95. Concerns under section 5 of the 2010 Act must be raised during the consultation period and the authority is expected to determine them as quickly as possible and before the end of the consultation period if possible. However, if a determination under section 5 is made when the consultation period has finished, and an inaccuracy or omission is found to relate to a material consideration relevant to the proposal, the authority is still required to either publish a corrected proposal paper or a correction notice. Where the authority opts to issue a correction notice, it must consider whether the correction requires an additional consultation period which would be treated as part of the original consultation period (in terms of section 5(6)). If a concern is raised after the end of the consultation period, the authority is not required to make a determination under section 5 and instead should address the issue in whichever manner it considers reasonable in the circumstances and in accordance with any other relevant statutory obligations, such as the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

96. Section 10 of the Act requires that all inaccuracies and omissions in the proposal paper, including allegations of these, are detailed in the authority's

¹⁵ Section 5(5)(a) to the 2010 Act, as inserted by section 79(4) to the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

consultation report. This should include a statement of the action taken in respect of these or, if no action has been taken, of that fact (and why).

Requests for additional information

97. In considering questions or requests for additional information or advice on the proposal, from parents or Parent Councils, authorities will be mindful of their obligations under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. That Act places two specific duties on authorities – to give advice and information when a Parent Council reasonably requests it from them on any matter (section 11(1)) and to give advice and information to a parent of a school pupil when reasonably requested, on any matter relating to the education provided to that pupil (section 12(1)).

98. Beyond those statutory obligations it is also important that authorities – as a matter of good practice and courtesy – attempt to answer all relevant questions and requests for additional information timeously and, as far as is reasonably practicable, before the end of the consultation period. This particularly applies where the question or request is raised by a relevant consultee. Doing so will enable people to digest and consider the answer and/or additional information provided, before submitting their consultation response.

99. In some cases the questions posed or requests for additional information will be personal, sensitive or relate to individuals, in which case it will be appropriate for the authority to keep its response entirely confidential. In other cases, however, authorities are encouraged to consider whether the matters raised and answers provided or additional information supplied would be of wider interest to other consultees. In the latter case, the authority should consider how best to share and publicise the material – perhaps via its website (the FAQ section or some other prominent part) or some other means.

100. It will also be good practice to publicise the corrected or additional information as widely as possible, for instance on the Council's website.

3.3 The consultation report

101. The 2010 Act requires the authority to review the proposal consulted on in light of the written and oral representations it has received and HM Inspector's report, and then prepare and publish its consultation report.¹⁶ Section 10 sets out what the consultation report must contain. It should provide the number of written representations received, a summary of the written and oral representations made and the authority's response to those representations, the full text of the HM Inspector's report and finally a statement explaining how the authority has reviewed the proposal in light of the representations and HM Inspector's report.

102. In addition, the consultation report must address inaccuracies and omissions raised under section 5, as set out above.

¹⁶ Section 9(1) and (2) to the 2010 Act

103. In the case of closure proposals, the consultation report must also explain the opportunity which people have for making representations to the Scottish Ministers in the event that the Council decided to close a school. The consultation report should make clear that they have a period of 3 weeks after the Council decision is taken to bring to Ministers' attention any matter which they considered would justify the decision being called in under section 15(3) of the 2010 Act. This is explained more fully in section 4.

New or different option(s)

104. The consultation report must reflect the option or options that were included in the original proposal paper, or in a revised proposal paper, and consulted on. A genuine consultation process should, of course, allow for new or revised ideas or options to emerge during the process, and some variation is reasonable. However, the consultation report should not contain an altogether new or different option that consultees have not had the opportunity to respond to for the authority to take a decision on. If a new or revised option, which is significantly different to anything set out in the proposal paper, emerges during the process, an authority should either suspend the consultation and issue an erratum or revised proposal paper and extend the consultation period, or prepare a revised proposal paper and begin the consultation process again.

3.4 Rural aspects

105. Special requirements apply to preparing the consultation report on a rural school closure proposal. Following the consultation period, when the authority is reviewing its proposal under section 9(1) to the 2010 Act, the authority is required to carry out a further assessment for the proposal and each of the alternatives that were set out in the proposal paper (in terms of section 13(5)). This involves an assessment of the same matters that the authority was required to assess in formulating the proposal (under section 12A(2)(c)): the likely educational benefits, the likely effect on the community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements. The purpose of this further assessment is to take into account any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

106. The authority is also required to make this assessment for any new reasonable alternative to the proposal that has been suggested through the written representations.

107. In its consultation report, the authority is required to explain its assessment of the proposal and reasonable alternatives that it identified, how this assessment differs from their earlier assessment (if at all); and its assessment of any further reasonable alternatives. Finally, the authority is required to confirm whether it considers the implementation of the proposal (wholly or partly) to be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal. The authority must give its reasons for this conclusion (section 13(6)).

4. DECISION

4.1 The basics

Further consideration – section 11 of the 2010 Act

108. The purpose of section 11 of the 2010 Act is to ensure that a period of three weeks elapses between the authority's publication of the consultation report and the Council actually taking the decision on whether to implement the proposal(s). The intention is that interested parties should have time to see and digest the contents of the consultation report and also have time if they so wish to make the authority aware of final issues and opinions regarding its decision.

109. The Council's decision is taken on the day that the decision is binding for the authority. This will depend on the decision making structures within the individual authority. In some authorities, these decisions are taken by the full Council, but in other authorities, the decision will be taken by a committee with the possibility that the committee's decision might be reviewed by another committee or the full Council. Once the authority's decision is final, the authority will confirm the date that it was effective from in the notice it publishes under section 15(2A).

Notification and notices

110. When an authority takes a decision to approve a school closure proposal, section 15(2) and (2A) requires it to notify Scottish Minister, within 6 days of making the decision, and place a notice on its website of this fact and of the opportunity to make representations to the Scottish Ministers.

111. When the authority notifies the Scottish Ministers, it is required under section 15(2) to provide copies of the proposal paper, the consultation report and, where the decision relates to a rural school, the notice the authority has published under section 11A(3) of the 2010 Act.

112. The notice the authority publishes should provide the appropriate contact details for submitting representations: schoolclosure@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or post to The Scottish Government, School Infrastructure Unit, 2A (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ, and set out the deadline for making representations to the Scottish Ministers.¹⁷ This is calculated as three weeks from the decision date, including that day, therefore if a decision is taken on Tuesday, 1 March, the three week period ends at midnight on Monday, 21 March.

Next steps

113. There are three weeks for stakeholders to make representations either against or in support of the closure. In making a representation, it will be important to understand the grounds on which Scottish Ministers could call in a decision. These are set out in section 17 to the 2010 Act and are that *"it appears to the Scottish Ministers that the education authority may have failed:*

¹⁷ Section 15(2A)(b) of the 2010 Act

“(a) in a significant regard to comply with the requirements imposed on it by (or under) this Act so far as they are relevant in relation to the closure proposal, or

“(b) to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to its decision to implement the proposal.”¹⁸

114. Representations which clearly set out concerns that are relevant to these possible grounds will be more likely to result in a decision being called in if it is considered that they may be valid.

115. The Scottish Ministers understand that school closure decisions can be emotive and attract wide community interest, sometimes leading to high volumes of requests for call in or petitions. All representations are welcome, and of course these indicate the level of community feeling and concern. Nevertheless, the number of representations is not of itself a reason for the Scottish Ministers to call in a closure proposal, and it is the evidence of a failure under section 17(2)(a) or (b) of the 2010 Act as set out above that will decide whether a case is called in. Therefore, a single detailed representation providing evidence of a potential failing may carry much more weight than a number of representations raising issues which would not amount to potential failures in terms of the grounds specified in section 17(2)(a) or (b).

Considering whether to call in a decision

116. The Scottish Ministers have (from 1 August 2014) a period of eight weeks¹⁹ following an authority’s decision in which to decide whether to call in the decision or not (a further five weeks following the deadline for representations to be submitted). If the Scottish Ministers do not make a decision by that deadline, the implementation of the proposal is automatically permitted to go ahead. Normally, if Ministers decide not to call in a proposal, for the avoidance of doubt and to allow proposals to be taken forward expeditiously, Ministers write to the authority before the end of the eight week period to confirm that they do not intend to call-in a proposal and they try to do that as early in the further five week period as they can.

117. The purpose of the five weeks is to allow Ministers to consider all the evidence available to them from the documents submitted by the authority and all representations, if any, received and to reach a conclusion as to whether there appears to be a failure under section 17(2)(a) or (b) as set out above. Ministers will want to consider any issues raised in the HM Inspector’s report and also any issues that are apparent from the consultation report. It may be helpful for Ministers to consult HM Inspectors at this stage, and HM Inspectors are required, under section 17(3A) to provide Scottish Ministers with any advice which they reasonably require at this stage. Equally, Ministers may follow up issues with the education authority, which has a duty (under section 17(3) to the 2010 Act) to provide any information in connection with the closure proposal which Ministers may reasonably require for

¹⁸ Section 17(2) of the 2010 Act

¹⁹ Section 15(3), (4) and (6) of the 2010 Act, as amended by section 81(1)(c) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Section 81 has been partially commenced by The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI No. 165).

their consideration at this stage. The purpose of Ministers' consideration at this stage is to seek maximum clarity so that cases need not be called in unnecessarily.

118. The eight week period in which Ministers may issue a call in notice comes into force from 1 August 2014 and applies to decisions taken from and including that date. The previous six week deadline continues to apply to any decisions taken by an authority before that date, but which have not yet been determined.²⁰

Decisions which are called in

119. If Ministers decide to call in a closure proposal, the authority cannot proceed with the proposal until it has been determined by Ministers (under section 16 of the 2010 Act as **unamended** by section 81 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014).

120. Significant amendments to this section of the 2010 Act are due to be brought into force in 2015 (including the repeal of section 16, amendments to section 17 and the insertion of new sections 17A to 17D and new schedule 2A²¹). These will not affect the call-in consideration or decision by Scottish Ministers but will mean that once a proposal has been called in, it will be referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels for consideration by a Review Panel. These new provisions will apply to decisions that are called in after the Convener and the School Closure Panels are appointed and take on their responsibilities, currently expected to be in early 2015. Further guidance on how the School Closure Review Panel process will operate will be provided in advance of that date.

4.2 Rural aspects

121. Section 11A makes specific requirements in relation to an authority's decision to implement a rural school closure proposal. The authority may only decide to implement the proposal (wholly or partly) if it has complied with the requirements in sections 12, 12A and 13 (relating to formulating a rural school proposal and consulting on it) and is satisfied that such implementation is the most appropriate response to the reasons it identified for formulating the proposal.

122. Following a decision as to whether or not to implement a rural school proposal, section 11A(3) requires the authority to publish a notice on its website of that decision. Where the authority decides to implement the proposal, the notice must also give the reasons why it is satisfied that such implementation is the most appropriate response to the reasons it identified for formulating the proposal.

123. This notice must be sent to the Scottish Ministers, under section 15(2)(b)(iii), when the authority notifies Scottish Ministers of its decision to implement a rural school closure proposal. As that notification must be made within six working days starting with the day on which the decision is made, this has the effect of requiring the notice under section 11A (3) to be published within the same timescale.

²⁰ Article 2 to The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI 2014 No. 165 (C. 12))

²¹ Under section 81 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

124. In determining any closure proposals relating to rural schools under section 16 as unamended, Ministerial consideration will include whether the authority has complied with the requirements placed on it under sections 11A to 14 of the Act (unless, as previously stated, the education authority published its proposal paper before 1 August 2014, in which case Ministerial consideration will be restricted to consideration of the requirements in the 2010 Act as unamended²²).

4.3 Referral to the Scottish Ministers

Grounds for call in

125. As stated earlier, the grounds on which Ministers may call in a closure proposal are set out in section 17 of the 2010 Act. These are very limited. Call in is permissible only where Ministers consider that the education authority may have failed to comply with the requirements imposed on it under the 2010 Act in a significant regard; or where the education authority has failed to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to its decision to implement the proposal.

126. The 2010 Act does not further define what might or would constitute a 'material consideration' (in terms of section 17(2)(b)) – any particular closure proposal will be considered on a case by case basis. This Ministerial power is intended as a safeguard, in closure cases, to help to ensure that the consultation and decision-making processes and procedures are fairly, fully, correctly, openly and transparently carried out. The following examples are, however, included by way of illustration of the sort of issues and scenarios that could constitute a material consideration relevant to an authority's decision to implement a closure proposal (these are by no means exclusive or exhaustive):

- a school closure proposal is consulted on so far in advance of its implementation date that it would not be possible to identify all of the children and young people that would be affected or that consultees might not engage fully with a proposal that was a very long period into the future. The timeframe that is reasonable will vary – for a new school, there may well be a long planning phase;
- a consultation on a proposal to close a school that contains a special support unit, which includes details of where pupils in the mainstream section of the school would move to if the proposal is implemented, but does not contain appropriate information regarding the pupils at the special unit;
- a consultation on a proposal to close a school, which contains details of one alternative school but no details on another school which could reasonably be considered as a suitable alternative, where evidence would suggest that it is a popular school that parents are already choosing to send their children to (instead of the school proposed for closure or the school formally proposed as the alternative); or
- a consultation that fails to take account of the number of times when the road between the school proposed for closure and the alternative school would be

²² Article 5 to The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI No. 165)

shut due to bad weather (in an area where this was a known occurrence) – meaning that the pupils could not get to the new school.

127. In their consideration of whether or not there may have been a failure on the part of the education authority to comply with the requirements imposed on it by (or under) the 2010 Act, Ministers are also required to consider whether any procedural failure amounts - or could amount - to a failure in a significant regard. The 2010 Act does not define what might be a “failure in a significant regard”. An example might be a consultation that failed to notify *all* the relevant consultees in one of the groups set out in schedule 2, paragraph 1. Ministers would consider how significant the omission was, and a consultation that had failed to make reasonable efforts to notify the parents of the pupils at an affected school would be likely to be considered to have a significant failing, whereas a consultation that had failed to notify one parent might not be considered significant, especially if it was clear that the information had been available to the parent from other sources.

128. Since the grounds for call-in focus entirely on the activities of the authority, much will depend on how the authority has responded to concerns raised by consultees or by HM Inspectors. For example, how the authority reviews the proposal in light of these issues and how it reaches and explains its overall conclusion and final decision on the proposal is important.

129. If the Scottish Ministers do call in a closure decision, the authority cannot proceed to implement the decision – either in full or in part – until Ministers have informed the authority of their own decision in the case.²³ Ministers may refuse to consent to the decision or grant their consent to it, either unconditionally or subject to conditions. During the eight week period when Ministers are deciding whether to call in a closure decision, and subsequently if they do call it in, authorities are required to provide Ministers with such information as they may reasonably require in relation to their consideration either of the call-in or, following call-in, their determination.²⁴

Determination by the Scottish Ministers

130. Following call-in, Ministers will look at the totality of what has been considered by the education authority and thereafter determine whether the education authority has either failed in a significant regard to comply with the requirements imposed on it by (or under) the 2010 Act so far as they are relevant to the closure proposal in terms of section 17(2)(a) of the 2010 Act; or has failed to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to its decision to implement the proposal in terms of section 17(2)(b) of the 2010 Act.

131. Where, following such consideration, Ministers conclude there is no such failure by the education authority and the decision is a reasonable one, then consent will be granted either unconditionally, or subject to condition(s). The consideration at this stage may comprise any issue where Ministers have grounds to have concerns under section 17(2)(a) or (b) and is not limited to issues which are set out in their call

²³ Section 16(3) of the 2010 Act as unamended

²⁴ Section 17(3) of the 2010 Act as unamended

in notification as new issues may arise following call in of the decision which require consideration by Ministers.

132. Where, following such consideration, Ministers conclude there is a failure by the education authority, they are required to consider whether they should still grant consent, either unconditionally, or subject to condition(s). If, following that consideration, Ministers conclude that the failure is so serious that it cannot be remedied by the imposition of a condition(s), or if the decision is so unreasonable that no reasonable education authority could have taken it, then Ministers will refuse to give their consent.

133. Determination letters from Ministers will set out clearly the reasoning behind their decision to grant consent (either unconditionally or subject to condition(s)) or refuse consent.

Denominational schools

134. As a safeguard for the continued provision of denominational education in denominational schools, authorities must submit for Ministerial consent proposals which fall to be considered under section 22C and 22D of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. The 2010 Act revoked sections 22A and 22B, but left sections 22C and 22D untouched. Specific criteria apply in both sections before a proposal would fall to be considered:-

- Section 22C requires an education authority to submit for Ministers' consent a proposal which, if implemented, will have the effect that all or some of the pupils who attend the school will no longer receive school education in a denominational school, or that all or some of the children who would, but for the implementation of the proposal, have been likely to receive their education in a denominational school will not receive education in a denominational school. Ministers must not grant consent under section 22C unless satisfied that adequate arrangements have been made for the religious instruction of pupils and children who would, as a result of implementation of the proposal, no longer receive or be likely to receive school education in a denominational school.
- Section 22D requires an education authority to submit for Ministers' consent a proposal which relates to a change to a denominational school e.g. closure or amalgamation, where the church or denominational body concerned disagree with the proposal. After consultation with the authority and the church or denominational body, if Ministers are satisfied that the proposal if implemented would result in a significant deterioration for pupils in the local authority area (or to pupils belonging to the area of any other authority) in the provision, distribution and availability of school education in denominational schools compared with the provision, distribution and availability of school education in other public schools, consent to the proposal must be withheld.

135. Ministers will consider such a referral separately to their call-in powers under the 2010 Act and, if required, grant or withhold consent to a closure proposal under sections 22C or 22D of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

4.4 Forthcoming changes and transitional arrangements

136. As previously stated, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 made further amendments to the 2010 Act which are not brought into force on 1 August 2014 by The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI No. 165). These relate to the establishment of a Convener of the School Closure Review Panels and of those Panels. These Panels will, once the amendments are brought into force, take on responsibility for determining school closure decisions that have been called in by Scottish Ministers. It is currently expected that the Convener and Panels will be in place in early 2015. Once they are ready to take up their responsibilities, this guidance will be further updated to reflect their existence and role. Any transitional arrangements that are necessary will also be clarified at that point.

4.5 Restriction on repeating school closure proposals

137. Authorities are expected to seek to maintain a stable school estate, with strong community engagement around prospective changes well in advance and in such a way as to provide stability and certainty for children and young people, parents and the wider community. School closure consultations can have a substantially damaging effect on a school community. It is important that they are carried out properly and decisively so that communities receive a clear outcome and can adjust to that, rather than facing the prospect of a proposal nearly succeeding and then being repeated until it does eventually succeed, possibly due to the repeated nature of the process eroding opposition.

138. Section 2A of the 2010 Act (inserted by section 77 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014) provides for a restriction on making a school closure proposal in relation to the same school for a period of 5 years following either:

(a) a decision to refuse closure...; or

(b) a decision made by the education authority following the publication of consultation report not to proceed with the closure.

139. Section 2A comes into force on 1 August 2014 by virtue of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI No. 165). However, Article 3 of this Order amends the provision on a transitional basis so that it refers to a decision taken by the Scottish Ministers under section 16(2)(a) as opposed to a decision taken by the School Closure Review Panels under section 17C(1)(a) (until such time as the provisions which establish the School Closure Review Panels are commenced).

140. This means that any decision taken (either by the authority not to implement the closure proposal or by the Scottish Ministers to refuse consent for closure) on or after 1 August 2014 is affected by this restriction. Article 4 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2, Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2014 (SSI No. 165) clarifies that no restriction applies in regard to decisions taken before this date.

141. Section 2A is intended to provide a period of certainty and stability for a school that has been threatened with closure, its pupils, parents and community, by setting a minimum period before a closure proposal in relation to that school can be repeated.

142. However, the authority may still decide to repeat the school closure proposal. It may do this at the end of the five year period, in which case the authority may only publish a proposal paper when the period has expired. It would be acceptable for the authority to undertake preparation for consultation before the restriction has expired, for example, informal consultation with the community or preparation of the consultation documents.

143. Alternatively, if there has been a significant change to the school's circumstances, the authority may, in terms of section 2A(3), proceed with a closure proposal within the five year period of the restriction. Examples might include, but are not restricted to, where the parents request the authority to take this action, where the school roll falls very significantly, or where the school building requires urgent, significant investment. However, even in these circumstances, the authority will want to consider whether it would be better to wait until the five year period has expired, or whether mothballing the school or another solution would be more appropriate.

144. Following a consultation under the 2010 Act, occasionally an authority may decide that the elements of the proposal should be revised before it takes a decision as to whether to implement the proposal or not. In some cases, this will be a small revision which the authority concludes does not require further consultation. In other cases, the change may be such that further consultation is considered appropriate before the authority takes its decision. It may be however that a change is so significant that it would mean that the authority was in effect making a decision not to implement a closure proposal in terms of the 2010 Act, and that it was making a wholly different proposal which would therefore require the authority to start the process from the beginning again. This will have to be determined by the authority on a case by case basis. In the latter scenario, the restriction in section 2A to the Act would apply.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

5.1 Definitions and extent of the 2010 Act

145. Section 21 of the 2010 Act provides definitions of terms in the 2010 Act.

146. In particular, the schools to which this Act refers are public schools as defined in section 135(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. This means any school under the management of an education authority and includes nursery schools which are under authority management, i.e. are run by them.

147. The 2010 Act does not cover independent schools or nursery schools or nurseries which are managed and run independently, i.e. managed and run by persons or bodies other than local authorities.

5.2 Relevant proposals

148. Schedule 1 to the 2010 Act sets out all the categories of proposals to which this Act applies.

149. The provisions of sections 15-17 of the 2010 Act, relating to closure proposals, relate to all the categories of closure covered by paragraph 1 of the Schedule, not just to proposals for the closure of a whole school.

150. The reference in paragraph 10 of this Schedule to further education centres is only to such centres which are managed by local authorities. At the present time, such centres exist only in Orkney and Shetland.

5.3 Relevant consultees

151. Schedule 2 to the 2010 Act identifies a core set of relevant consultees who should be consulted in connection with every type of proposal set out in Schedule 1. These are the Parent Council, parents of pupils attending an affected school as well as the pupils themselves, parents of pupils likely to attend an affected school, staff at an affected school, any trade union which appears to the education authority to be representative of those staff, and any other users whom the authority considers relevant. The Schedule also specifies other relevant consultees in relation to specific categories of proposal - for instance the Community Council is included where the impact is likely to affect the wider community. Additionally, paragraph 11 to the Schedule specifies that Bòrd na Gàidhlig is to be consulted when a proposal affects the provision of Gaelic medium education (GME) such as where a GME class is to be established or discontinued or a GME school's catchment is to be changed. Paragraph 12 to the Schedule makes clear that where a change is being proposed which affects a denominational school, the relevant church or denominational body must be consulted.

**Scottish Government
Learning Directorate
July 2014**

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 TIMELINE

The following timeline has been prepared to guide authorities on planning a consultation under the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 from 1 August 2014.

Phase One: For rural school closure proposals only, the education authority must meet the preliminary requirements before publishing such a proposal paper

The authority has to:

- identify its reasons for formulating the proposal.
- consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to those reasons.
- assess, for the proposal and each of the alternatives, the likely educational benefit; the likely effect on the local community; and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements.
- decide, in light of this assessment, whether or not implementation of the closure proposal would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal. If the authority concludes that closure is the most appropriate response it should proceed to Phase Two.

Phase Two: An education authority consults on a proposal – for a minimum of six weeks, including at least 30 school days

The authority has to:

- prepare a proposal paper, which must include an educational benefits statement and all other required information, including:
 - for closure proposals, financial information.
 - for rural school closure proposals only, an explanation of the reasons for the proposal, the steps (if any) the authority took to address those reasons before formulating the proposal or why it did not take such steps, any alternative(s) to the proposal and the authority's assessment of these alternatives, and the reasons why the authority considers implementation of the proposal the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.
- publish the proposal paper, advertise the fact and notify Education Scotland and relevant consultees as prescribed by schedule 2 of the 2010 Act
- give the relevant consultees notice of the proposal which would include:
 - a summary of the proposal, where to obtain a copy of the proposal paper and how to make written representations.
 - the closing date of the consultation, which will be a minimum of six weeks to include at least 30 days of term time.
- give advance notice of the date, time and venue of the public meeting(s) about the proposal to the relevant consultees and Education Scotland.
- where an inaccuracy or an omission in the proposal paper is alleged or discovered, investigate and determine whether there is an inaccuracy or omission and whether it is material, complying with section 5 of the 2010 Act.
- following the end of the consultation, provide Education Scotland with copies of the written representations, a summary of oral representations made at the public meeting(s) and any other relevant documentation.

Phase Three: Preparation of Education Scotland's report on the educational aspects of the proposal - to be completed within a maximum of three weeks

The three week period begins **once** Education Scotland receives the proposal paper and other relevant documentation (timing should normally be agreed between Education Scotland and the education authority well in advance). HM Inspectors will consider the educational aspects of the proposal, including:

- the educational benefits statement;
- the representations received by the education authority;
- any further written representations made directly to Education Scotland on any educational aspect of the proposal which is considered relevant.
- undertaking consideration of the proposal; and
- finalising the report within a maximum of three weeks, although this can be extended by agreement between the authority and Education Scotland, and sending it to the authority.

Phase Four: Consultation report - within no specified timescale, the authority prepares and publishes a consultation report

The authority publishes a consultation report. It must contain:

- an explanation of how it has reviewed the proposal;
- the Education Scotland report ;
- a summary of points raised during the consultation – both written and oral – and the authority's response to them; and
- the substance of any alleged inaccuracies or omissions and details of the authority's response and action taken.
- an explanation of the Ministerial call in process and the opportunity for individuals to make representations to the Scottish Ministers in relation to call in.
- For rural school closure proposals, the authority is also required to explain the authority's further assessment (carried out as part of the review of the proposal under section 9(1)) of the likely educational benefits; the likely effect on the local community; and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements for the proposal and each of the alternatives identified by the authority; as well as its assessment of these factors for any other reasonable alternative suggested in representations. It must also explain if this assessment differs from its earlier assessment under section 12A(2)(c)), and, if so, why the authority considers implementation of the proposal to be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.

Phase Five: Authority decision - a minimum of three weeks after the publication of the consultation report the authority publishes its final decision

The authority takes its final decision on the proposal and implements the decision. However, **where the authority makes a closure decision**

- it must notify Scottish Ministers within six working days of making the decision, starting with the day on which the decision is made, and send a copy of the proposal paper and its consultation report.
- it must also, at the same time, publish a notice on its website that the Scottish Ministers have been notified. The notice shall also make clear the opportunity to make representations to Ministers, where these representations are to be sent and the deadline for submitting them.

- in the case of a rural school closure proposal, the authority must also publish a notice on its website of its decision to implement the proposal and why it is satisfied that implementation is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal (section 11A(3) to the 2010 Act), and send this notice to the Scottish Ministers with its notification of the decision.

Phase Six: Ministerial call in, only where the authority makes a closure decision - a maximum of eight weeks

Ministers have the power to call in decisions, but **only** in relation to school closure decisions and where it appears to Ministers that the authority may have failed (a) in a significant regard to comply with the Act's requirements imposed on it by (or under) the 2010 Act so far as they are relevant to the closure proposal, or, (b) to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to its decision to implement the proposal. This phase consists of:

- an initial three weeks from the date of the authority's decision, during which anyone can make representations to Ministers on whether the decision should be called-in.
- up to a further five weeks for Ministers to decide whether or not to issue a call-in notice. Ministers may require information from the authority during this period.

During the eight week period, the education authority may not proceed to implement the proposed closure, unless Ministers have informed the authority that they do not intend to call-in the proposal. However, such a decision will not be before the three week period for representations to be made to them has elapsed.

Phase Seven: Ministerial determination, within no specified timescale

If Ministers call in a closure proposal, it cannot be implemented in whole or in part until Ministers have made their determination. In determining a closure proposal, Ministers may refuse consent to the proposal, or they may grant consent to the proposal, either subject to conditions, or unconditionally.