

**The Highland Council**  
**Education, Children and Adult Services Committee –**  
**18 May 2016**

Agenda Item	12.
Report No	ECAS 37/16

**Black Isle Education Centre - Proposal to Proceed to Statutory Consultation on Closure**

**Report by Director of Care and Learning**

**Summary**

This report seeks members' agreement to proceed to a statutory consultation, under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, to discontinue the provision of education at the Black Isle Education Centre.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 There are presently no young people enrolled as pupils at the Black Isle Education Centre. In recent years the BIEC has been developing a more flexible approach to supporting pupils and has operated more as an Outreach Centre, providing support on a part-time basis to young people who remain on the roll of their local schools.
- 1.2 The accommodation at the Centre is in very poor condition and requires considerable investment. There is also now a consensus that the vast majority of children with additional support needs are best educated within their local school, through the application of the principle of inclusion. It is the responsibility of the education authority to ensure that schools have the necessary resources in terms of staff and equipment to meet the needs of all the pupils enrolled and that appropriate support is identified and strategies targeted for successful integration.
- 1.3 This proposal is being brought forward, following informal consultation with local stakeholders and elected members, and having examined viable alternatives that could be considered.
- 1.4 The consultation report and appendices, circulated in **Booklet A**, set out the basis of the proposal, and related information, including the educational, community and transport implications associated with the proposal.
- 1.5 Subject to a Committee decision to proceed to statutory consultation, a public meeting will be held in the Black Isle Education Centre to discuss the Council's proposal and in line with the legislation; there will be considerable opportunity for stakeholders to submit views to the Council in advance of any final decision being made. At this stage, it is expected the statutory consultation timeline would see a final recommendation being considered by this Committee in

January 2017, though this may be subject to change to ensure the Council has sufficient time to consider and respond to matters arising from the consultation.

## **2. Implications**

- 2.1 **Resources** - These are detailed in **Appendix F** to the report circulated in **Booklet A**.
- 2.2 **Legal** - the statutory consultation will be taken forward as per the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.3 **Equalities** - an equality impact assessment is included as **Appendix G** to the report circulated in **Booklet A**.
- 2.4 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever** - The attached report details the implications in relation to school buildings and school transport. It is estimated that in terms of the Council's carbon emissions, the proposal will see a net reduction.
- 2.5 **Risk** - These will be assessed as part of the statutory consultation process.
- 2.6 **Gaelic** – There are no implications for Gaelic.
- 2.7 **Rural** - The proposal does impact on a rural school. The attached report sets out in some detail the rural/community implications, as required by the legislation. A rural impact assessment is included as **Appendix H** to the report circulated in **Booklet A**.

## **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider this report and attached proposal, and agree to proceed to statutory consultation, per the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on a proposal to discontinue the provision of education at the Black Isle Education Centre.

Designation:	Director of Care and Learning
Date:	9 May 2016
Authors:	Brian Porter, Head of Resources Ian Jackson, Education Officer