

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	4.
Report No	EDU/28/25

Committee: Education

Date: 19 November 2025

Report Title: Statutory Consultation: Relocation of Beauly Primary School

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' agreement to proceed to a statutory consultation, under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on a proposal to relocate Beauly Primary School to a new site on the edge of the village, west of Cnoc na Ràth, to allow the construction of a new school as part of The Highland Investment Plan (HIP). The report at **Appendix 2** sets out the basis of the proposal and related information including the educational, community and transport implications.
- 1.2 The Highland Council has a longstanding commitment to replace Beauly Primary School and the construction of a replacement school has local support. The current school accommodation is unsatisfactory both in terms of condition and suitability.
- 1.3 Following the introduction of The Highland Investment Plan in May 2024, Beauly was identified as a Phase 1 project location and a new school for the village was reinstated in the Capital Programme. In March 2025, The Highland Council agreed to move to a Community POD development for Beauly Primary School, on the basis that this provides the greatest educational benefits for the school and the maximum economic benefit for the wider community.
- 1.4 It is proposed that the new school should be constructed at a site west of Cnoc na Ràth. A drawing showing the approximate extent of the new site is at **Appendix 3**. The exact location of the school within the site has yet to be determined. If agreed at the conclusion of the current consultation exercise, the building of the new school would be subject to planning permission.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. agree to proceed to statutory consultation, based on the proposal attached to this report at **Appendix 2**.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

The overall cost of investment into the Beaully phase 1 project is in the region of £20 million.

3.2 Legal

The statutory consultation will be taken forward as per the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

3.3 Risk

There is a risk that the relocation and new build of the primary school may face delays or increased costs due to unforeseen planning, site, or community consultation challenges. There will be mitigation in place to manage this.

3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)

A new school would meet modern standards for health and safety for pupils and staff.

3.5 Gaelic

None arising specifically from this report.

4. Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary

4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening was undertaken on 7 October 2025. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant manager review and approval.

4.3.2 As indicated below, the screening process has concluded that there are positive impacts across a range of areas through the provision of a new primary school. There are no known negative impacts for poverty, island and mainland rural communities or data protection. In due course, should approval be given for the building of a new school, a further impact assessment will be undertaken.

Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3 Impact Assessment Area

Conclusion of Screening

Equality

- Children and Young People – *Positive impact*
- Children affected by disability –

- Positive impact*
- Older adults – *No impact*

Socio-economic	<i>Positive impact</i>
Human Rights	<i>Positive impact</i>
Children's Rights and Well-being	<i>Positive impact</i>
Island and Mainland Rural	<i>Positive impact</i>
Climate Change	<i>Potential impact</i>
Data Rights	<i>No impact</i>

5. Overview

- 5.1 Beauly Primary School and Nursery provides education to children in the 3-12 age group. It is located in the centre of the village and admits pupils mostly within 2 miles of the surrounding area, with a few pupils attending from further afield. There are 113 pupils on the school roll and 20 in the nursery. The school dates from the late 19th to early 20th century, although there have been many building modifications down the years.

The current school accommodation comprises one larger and one smaller original building, a modular annexe and a temporary canteen. Overall, the accommodation is currently rated "C – (Poor)" for both condition and suitability, and another building was recently removed.

There is limited opportunity for outdoor play and learning.

There is general agreement that the accommodation does not adequately support the delivery of education for pupils.

- 5.2 A number of meetings have been held since November 2021 to discuss the future replacement of the school. These meetings were attended variously by representatives of the Parent Council, the Community Council, local Elected Members of The Highland Council and its chief officers. The focus was to look at suitable sites for a new build. Over time, a number of potential sites were identified as possibilities from the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

In 2023, there was an unsuccessful application for Learning Estate Investment Funding (LEIP). In the absence of LEIP funding, plans to build a new school were put on hold following a review and reduction of the then capital programme on grounds of affordability. It was stated at that time that capital priorities, including a new school, could be reconsidered if at some point in the future there was a material change of circumstances that could provide an opportunity to reconsider the Council's capital programme. The development of the Highland Investment Programme has provided just such an opportunity.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 Subject to Committee agreement to proceed to statutory consultation, a public meeting will be held to discuss the Council's proposal. There will also be considerable opportunity for stakeholders to submit views to the Council ahead of the public meeting and subsequently prior to any final recommendation and decision being

made.

- 6.2 At present, it is expected the statutory consultation timeline would see a final recommendation being considered by this Committee around Easter 2026, though this may be subject to change to ensure the Council has sufficient time to consider and respond to matters arising from the consultation. Much of the preliminary planning and development phases can be done in parallel to the consultation process so that progress can be made at pace.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 31 October 2025

Author: Derek Martin, Strategic Lead- Operations

Background Papers:

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Summary
Appendix 2 – Consultation Proposal Paper
Appendix 3 – Proposed Site Location

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Summary – Relocation of Beauly Primary School

The proposal to relocate Beauly Primary School to a new site within the village has been assessed for its potential impacts across key areas. The screening identifies positive outcomes in several domains, particularly those affecting children, equality, and socio-economic opportunity.

- **Equality:** The new school building will be fully compliant with disability access standards, supporting inclusive education and positively impacting pupils with disabilities.
- **Socio-economic:** The relocation is expected to enhance educational opportunities, contributing to improved life prospects for children and families in the community.
- **Human Rights:** The proposal supports the right to education and dignity, aligning with human rights principles by providing a modern, safe, and stimulating learning environment.
- **Children's Rights and Well-being:** The school will uphold multiple articles of the UNCRC, including the right to education, play, and participation. The design process may include pupil voice activities, promoting engagement and ownership.
- **Island and Mainland Rural Communities:** Rebuilding the primary school near its existing site supports continuity, community cohesion, and improved educational facilities for the rural population.
- **Climate Change:** Potential environmental impacts have been identified, including increased traffic, energy use, and disruption to biodiversity. Mitigation strategies such as low-carbon technologies and sustainable drainage systems are recommended to enhance climate resilience.
- **Data Rights:** There will be no significant change to personal data processing. Existing data handling practices remain in place, and no new risks have been identified.

Overall, the screening concludes that the proposal will have a positive impact in most areas, with climate and environmental considerations requiring further assessment.

Should approval be given for the building of a new school, a Full Impact Assessment is recommended for equality, children's rights, human rights, socio-economic factors, and climate change.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The proposal is to relocate Beauly Primary School, to allow the creation of new accommodation.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

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

INTRODUCTION

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

- To replace the current Beauly Primary School building with a new school building located on a new site, which will also accommodate a community point of delivery.
- The proposed change, if approved, will be implemented when the new accommodation has been completed.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

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

- Beauly Primary School
- Beauly Public Library
- and published on the Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

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

Business Support Team,
Education Service,
County Buildings,
High Street,
Dingwall
IV159QN

E-mail: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please also contact:

Business Support Team,
Education Service,
County Buildings,
High Street,
Dingwall
IV15 9QN.

E-mail: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

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

- (i) Parents of pupils attending Beauly Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils
- (ii) The Parent Council of Beauly Primary School
- (iii) All staff of the school
- (iv) Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal
- (v) Trade union representatives
- (vi) Beauly Community Council
- (vii) Councillors representing Aird and Loch Ness Ward
- (viii) Education Scotland

Advertisement in Local Media

A notice announcing the public meeting will be placed in the Ross-shire Journal and on the Highland Council's Facebook page and "X" account.

Consultation Period

The consultation for this proposal will begin on 1 December 2025 and will end on 23rd January 2026. This period allows for the statutory minimum of six weeks, including at least thirty school days.

Public Meeting

A public meeting will be held the week commencing 8 December 2025.

Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of The Education Service. Electronic invitations will be sent to all statutory consultees and the link for the meeting will be made available to others.

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

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

Responses to the Proposals

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

Business Support Team,
Education Service,
County Buildings,
High Street,
Dingwall
IV159QN

Email: Education.Consultations@highland.gov.uk

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

www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

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

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to councillors and officers of The Highland Council”. Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available. All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, 23 January 2026 at 5.00pm.

Involvement of Education Scotland

When the proposal document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by the Council. Education Scotland will also be sent, by 27 January 2026, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period.

Education Scotland will also receive the summary note of the public meeting that and, so far as is practicable, a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 27 February 2026. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries as they consider appropriate.

Review of Consultation Exercise

The Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made at the public meeting. It will then prepare a consultation report. This report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website as well as at the affected school and local library, free of charge.

The report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the Education Scotland report, together with the Council's considered response to the issues raised. The report will include details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The consultation report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Council's Education Committee, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

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

At the present time, the Council intends to publish its report in May 2026 prior to submission to the Council's Education Committee in June 2026. However, this timescale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give full consideration to those issues. In the latter event, the report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

Any proposal approved by the Education Committee would require to be confirmed by a subsequent meeting of the full Highland Council. This is currently planned for September 2026.

Note on Corrections

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

PROPOSAL

1. Legislative Background

1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to publish or otherwise make available information as to their arrangements for the placing of children in schools under their management (S.28 of the 1980 Act).

1.2 In common with all public bodies in Scotland, The Highland Council also has a duty to provide best value. This includes making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance, whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

2. Reason for the Proposal

2.1 Beaully Primary School currently suffers from poor quality accommodation. Relocating the school would permit the construction of a new build school.

2.2 The Council has had a long-standing commitment to replace the school. Initial

discussions took place in 2021, to look at possible options for the future of the school building.

2.3 In 2023, there was an unsuccessful bid for Scottish Government Learning Estate Investment Funding. Plans were put on hold following a review and reduction of the then capital programme on grounds of affordability. It was stated that capital priorities could be reconsidered if at some point in the future there was a material change of circumstances.

2.4 In May 2024, The Highland Council adopted a new Highland Investment Plan (HIP), which sets out how the Council will work over the next 10 years to optimise its investment of resources in its learning estate in a prioritised manner to meet the needs of 21st century learning and teaching. As part of this, a new generation of community facilities was envisioned for the Highlands, with Points of Delivery (PODs) providing a range of public services brought together in a single location.

2.5 Within the HIP, a commitment was made to rebuild Beauly Primary School alongside a number of other public services.

2.6 Following the approval of the HIP approach last year, work was undertaken to identify a site that could accommodate a community POD development for Beauly. A suitable site has been identified west of Cnoc na Ràth and, although it is not currently in Council ownership, positive discussions have taken place with the landowners, Lovat Estates, regarding the acquisition of the site. The exact location of the school within the site has yet to be determined.

2.7 Appendix 2 identifies the location of the proposed community POD and includes the relevant land areas that would be required for each of the component parts, i.e. the Primary School, and other co-located community and partner facilities.

3. Informal Consultation

3.1 A series of engagement events have been held to consider priorities for the Beauly area, as part of assessing local interest in new points of delivery. Included in this were views regarding a preferred site for a new school; the opportunities for better use of premises for delivering services; and for co-location of various services; and the future use of existing buildings. Council officers have also engaged directly with parent councils and specific community groups to raise awareness and understand views on the HIP approach and the potential opportunities for Beauly. Public drop-in events were held in Beauly in 2023 and 2024. The stakeholder group was reconvened in January 2025 with a further five meetings over a number of months.

The initial feedback has been generally supportive of the longer-term strategic approach and the concept of a community POD. There has also been discussion on the possible relocation of the Highlife Highland library from Phipps Hall and also the provision of leisure facilities. The community would like to see improved travel routes to school.

3.2 Within the informal consultations, officers of the Council have also engaged with parents of children at Beauly Primary School over the future location of the new school building. There has been ongoing engagement with

the parent council, with Council staff attending. Additional officer meetings have taken place with parent council office bearers around specific issues raised.

The drop-in sessions identified various site options, but feedback forms have not identified a clear preference.

Initial concept drawings of the potential new school at the POD site have also been shared with the stakeholders.

3.4 The Council has considered the views of parents submitted during informal engagement, described above. Having reviewed the options in their entirety, it takes the view that the relocation of Beaully Primary School to the new site offers educational benefits, due to the opportunities that arise from a new building to meet the educational needs of pupils.

4. Beaully Primary School – Description

4.1 Beaully Primary School provides education to children in the 3-18 age group. It is located in the centre of the village and admits pupils mostly within 2 miles of the surrounding area, with a few pupils attending from further afield. There are 113 pupils on the school roll and 20 in the nursery. The school dates from the late 19th-early 20th century, although there have been many building modifications down the years. The current school accommodation comprises one larger and one smaller original building, a modular annexe and a temporary canteen. Overall, the accommodation is currently rated “C – (Poor)” for both condition and suitability, and another building was recently removed.

There is limited opportunity for outdoor play and learning.

There is general agreement that the accommodation does not adequately support the delivery of education for pupils.

The proposed new build will significantly improve the learning environment for pupils. Further details on this are provided in Section 5 below.

5. Educational Benefits

5.1 The Council’s proposal to relocate the school in Beaully was based on the principle that a new school building offered the prospect of strong educational benefit arising from improved accommodation and west of Cnoc na Ràth is considered to be the best available site. Benefits include:

- Pupils

1. Enhanced Learning Environment

- Modern classrooms with better lighting, acoustics, and ventilation improve concentration and comfort.
- Purpose-built spaces for a modern curriculum support diverse learning styles and interests.

2. Access to Updated Technology

- Improved IT infrastructure supports effective access to a wide curriculum and modern learning styles and opportunities.
- 3. Improved Wellbeing
 - Inclusive design promotes emotional wellbeing and improved access for those with additional needs.
 - Safer, more accessible buildings reduce anxiety and increase engagement.
- 4. Greater Sense of Pride and Belonging
 - A fresh, well-designed school can foster a stronger school identity and community spirit.
- 5. Flexible Learning Spaces
 - More flexible spaces, and adaptable furniture encourage collaboration and creativity.
 - Spaces designed for project-based learning and group work support 21st-century skills.

Staff

1. Improved Working Conditions
 - Comfortable staff rooms, planning areas, and meeting spaces support collaboration and wellbeing.
 - Better temperature control, lighting, and acoustics reduce fatigue and stress.
2. Professional Development Opportunities
 - New facilities come with updated resources and training on how to use them effectively.
 - Spaces for CPD sessions and peer learning foster a culture of continuous improvement.
3. Enhanced Teaching Tools
 - Access to modern teaching aids and digital platforms improves lesson delivery and assessment.
4. Boosted Morale and Recruitment
 - A new school can attract high-quality staff and retain existing ones by showing investment in education.
 - Staff often feel more valued and motivated in a purpose-built environment for 21st century learning and teaching.
5. Stronger Collaboration

- Flexible teaching spaces encourage interdisciplinary planning and team teaching.
- Improved connectivity and layout support better communication across the school.

6. Impact on School Transport

6.1 As the new school will be located in the village, there is not expected to be any significant effect on school transport arrangements.

7. Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

7.1 The relocation will have no impact on school management or staffing arrangements.

8. Effect on the Local Community

8.1 The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on the wider local community.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment

9.1 The proposal has been assessed as having no negative impacts on data handling, or on island and rural mainland communities.

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

9.3 With respect to climate change, the construction phase of the new building may result in additional CO2 emissions, however the new buildings will provide a long-term benefit in being built to the most modern environmental standards. It is not expected that the overall effect on climate change will be significant.

9.4 The new school would have a positive impact on disability since it will include up to date and more inclusive facilities. As such it will have a positive overall effect on equalities, human rights, and children's health and wellbeing.

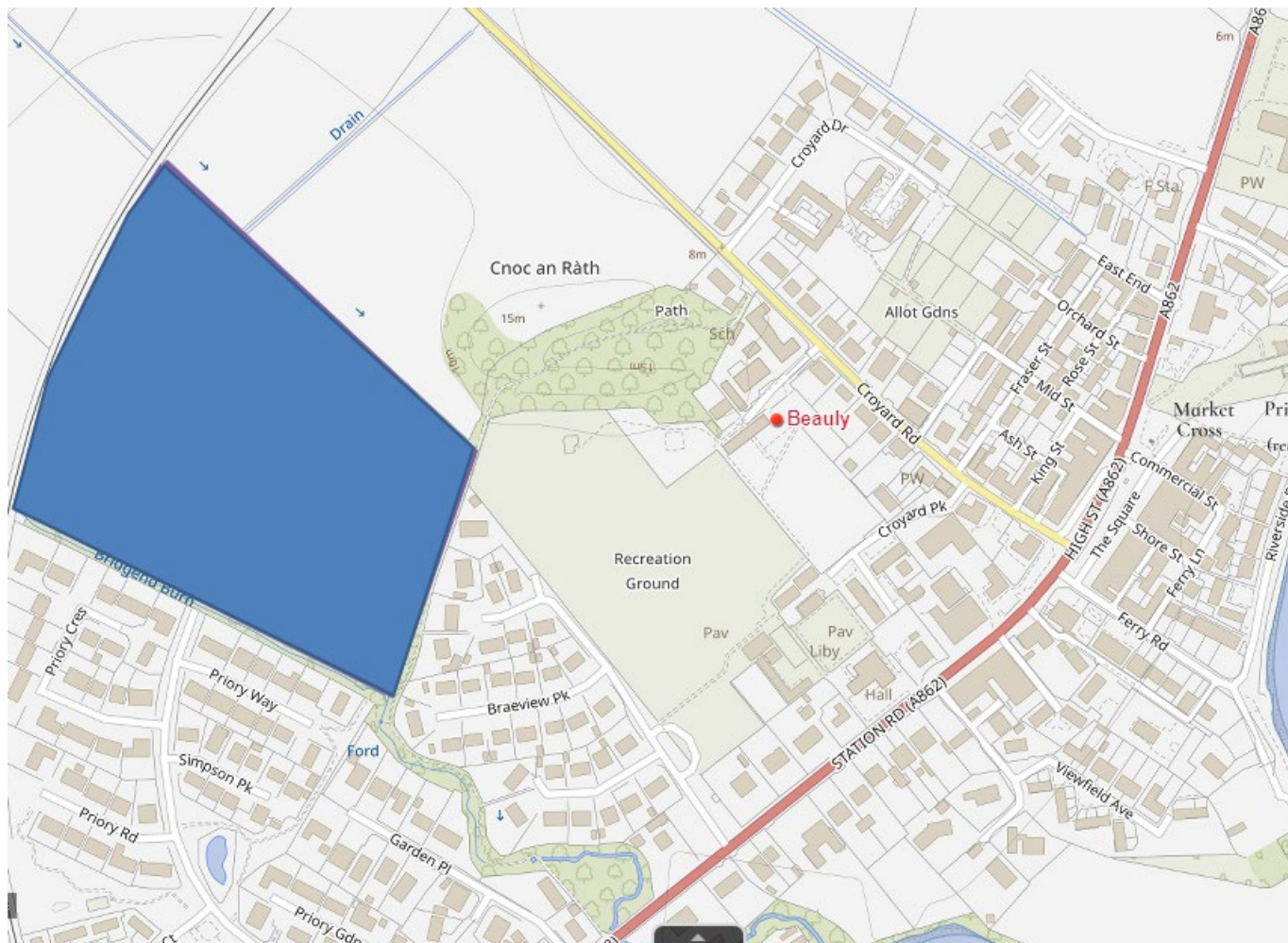
10. Recommendation

10.1 Taking the above into account, The Highland Council recommends that Beauly Primary School is relocated from its current site to a new school site in the village.

10.2 This consultation paper is issued in terms of the authority's procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a report and submissions received will be presented to the Education Committee of The Highland Council.

END OF PROPOSAL PAPER

Proposed Site Location: Beauly Primary School (BE04)



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