

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	EDU/13/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Education Committee

Date: 3 June 2026

Report Title: Statutory Consultation: Request to proceed to consultation on the relocation of Plockton Primary School

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from Members to undertake a statutory consultation, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on proposals relating to Plockton Primary School.
- 1.2 The proposal is to permanently relocate Plockton Primary School to Plockton High School campus. The relocation of the primary school has already taken place on a temporary basis following concerns regarding the condition of the former school buildings. This consultation will allow consideration of whether this arrangement should be made permanent.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Agree that the Council proceeds to a statutory consultation, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on the proposal to permanently relocate Plockton Primary School to the Plockton High School campus;
 - ii. Agree that the Council uses the opportunity to engage on an informal basis about the future location of Plockton Nursery Early Learning and Childcare to the High School campus;
 - iii. Note that a further report will be brought back to Committee following the conclusion of the statutory consultation.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

Plockton High School has capacity for 550 pupils and is currently sitting a 41% occupancy level – equal to 224 pupils currently. The Primary School roll is additional to this at 41 pupils currently.

There has been significant recent capital investment in the Plockton school site totalling £1,814,455.31. This includes works relating to the primary school relocating

to the High School; remedial works to the ASN Base; improvements to the residence; roof refurbishment and resurfacing of the pitch. Further works are planned to develop the primary school spaces within the school building which will be met through the existing Education generic capital budget.

Ongoing revenue implications in terms of business-as-usual education provision are expected to remain broadly cost neutral, with expenditure associated with staffing, service delivery and facilities management remaining materially unchanged. The High School, Primary School and Nursery already operate within an established 3 to 18 management structure, and the proposal does not involve the closure of any educational provision. The relocation of the Primary School to the High School campus has already taken place on a temporary basis, with the associated costs incurred within existing approved budgets.

Given the nature of the proposal, and that it formalises existing arrangements rather than introducing a new service model, a detailed financial case is not required at this stage.

The opportunity will be taken, alongside the statutory consultation, to engage informally around the potential for future colocation of the of the Plockton Nursery Early Learning and Childcare to the High School campus. This will fulfil the requirement for pre-engagement prior to any formal consultation that may follow. Feedback from this will be taken on board in the development of future phases of the Highland Investment Plan, alongside engagement with the Scottish Government's Gaelic Unit regarding the potential for a Gaelic Capital contribution.

- 3.2 Legal - The proposal is subject to the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Council must undertake a statutory consultation before any final decision is made.
- 3.3 Risk - There is a risk that concerns may be raised during the consultation process which could impact on the progression or timing of the proposal. This will be managed through full and transparent engagement.
- 3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) - The temporary relocation of the primary school followed concerns regarding the condition of the former buildings. The proposal supports continued delivery of education in accommodation that is suitable and safe.
- 3.5 Gaelic - Plockton Primary School and Nursery provide Gaelic Medium Education. Co-location of the Primary school on the High School campus is expected to strengthen continuity and progression within Gaelic Medium Education.

There is potential to apply for Scottish Government Gaelic capital funding to develop the campus further and feedback from the formal consultation and informal engagement will assist the Council in developing a bid.

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 6 May 2026. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The screening process has identified that the proposal is expected to have a generally positive impact in relation to educational opportunity and outcomes. No adverse impacts have been identified in respect of protected characteristics, socio-economic factors or access to services within the local community.

At this stage, the proposal relates to seeking agreement to commence a statutory consultation process and does not in itself result in any direct physical or operational changes. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1**.

4.3.3 Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No negative impacts identified. Positive impact for children with additional needs through improved accessibility
Socio-economic	<i>Positive impact on educational opportunity. No financial impact on families</i>
Human Rights	<i>Positive impact through continued access to education</i>
Children's Rights and Well-being	<i>Positive impact through improved learning environments</i>
Island and Mainland Rural	<i>No impact. Provision remains within the local community</i>
Climate Change	<i>Potential impact linked to future construction and estate changes. A full Integrated Impact Assessment will be undertaken if the proposal progresses following consultation.</i>
Data Rights	<i>No significant change</i>

5. Background and Context

- 5.1 Plockton Primary School was subject to an emergency closure following concerns regarding the condition of the building. Structural inspections identified significant defects, including one building which was no longer safe for use. As a result, the primary school was temporarily relocated to accommodation within the High School campus in March 2024, where it has continued to operate successfully.
- 5.2 Plockton Nursery Early Learning and Childcare remains on the former school site. A recent Care Inspectorate inspection in March 2026 has confirmed that the quality of provision is good across all measures. The report made limited reference to the physical environment and did not identify significant concerns regarding accommodation.

6. Proposal

- 6.1 The proposal seeks to formalise the relocation of Plockton Primary School to the High School campus on a permanent basis.

7. Educational Considerations

- 7.1 The primary school has continued to deliver education effectively following relocation, with inspection evidence confirming positive outcomes for learners.

8. Next Steps

- 8.1 If approved, the statutory consultation will:
- commence in August 2026
 - run for a minimum of 6 weeks
 - include a public meeting
 - include a report from Education Scotland
- 8.2 A further report will be presented to the Education Committee following the conclusion of the consultation period.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 20 May 2026

Author: Derek Martin, Strategic Lead- Operations

Background Papers:

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – The Proposal Paper

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

Summary

Proposal overview

The proposal seeks to permanently relocate Plockton Primary School to the Plockton High School campus following its temporary move in March 2024.

Who is affected

The proposal affects children and young people attending the primary school, parents and carers, teaching and early years staff, and the wider Plockton community.

Equalities impact

Overall impact is positive. The proposal represents a relocation rather than a reduction in services.

Poverty and socio-economic impact

The overall impact is positive. Prospects and opportunities are expected to improve, while there is no anticipated change to place or financial factors. There are no expected increases in costs or travel requirements, and local access is maintained.

Human rights

The proposal has a positive impact on the right to education. It maintains local access and improves the quality of learning without reducing provision.

Children's rights and wellbeing

A positive impact is expected. The proposal supports the best interests of the child and the right to education, while enabling participation through consultation.

Data protection

There is no change to existing data processing arrangements. Personal data will continue to be handled under current policies and purposes, with no new risks identified.

Rural communities

The proposal affects a rural community. The High School capacity is currently at only 41%. Permanently moving the primary school to the High School building

therefore potentially improves the longer term sustainability and viability of the campus.

Climate change

No differential or negative impacts have been identified.

The screening identifies a positive impact overall across equalities, human rights, and children's wellbeing. A full Integrated Impact Assessment is not required at this stage. Further detailed assessment will be carried out if the proposal progresses.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

PROPOSAL PAPER

Proposal to:

- Permanently relocate Plockton Primary School to the Plockton High School campus.

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

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Publication Information

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

- Plockton Primary School
- Plockton 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:

Education Business Support Team,

Highland Council Headquarters,

Glenurquhart Road,

Inverness

IV3 5NX

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:

Education Business Support Team,

Highland Council Headquarters,

Glenurquhart Road,

Inverness

IV3 5NX

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 Plockton Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils
- (ii) The Parent Council of Plockton 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) The Plockton & District Community Council
- (vii) Councillors representing Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward
- (viii) Education Scotland
- (ix) Bòrd na Gàidhlig

(x) Comann nam Pàrant (National Gaelic Parents Organisation)

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 period will begin on Wednesday 19 August 2026 and will end on Friday 2 October 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 during the week commencing Monday 24 August 2026.

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.

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:

Education Business Support Team,

Highland Council Headquarters,

Glenurquhart Road,

Inverness

IV3 5NX

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, Friday 2 October 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 9 October 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 30 October 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 January 2027 prior to submission to the Council's Education Committee in February 2027. 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 March 2027.

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 Plockton Primary School was subject to an emergency closure due to concerns regarding the condition of the building. Independent structural inspections undertaken in 2023 identified significant defects, including one building where structural stability was considered compromised and continued use was not possible.

2.2 As a result, the primary school was temporarily relocated to accommodation within Plockton High School in March 2024.

2.3 A recent Education Scotland inspection in January 2025 identified a number of strengths in the school, including positive relationships, a nurturing ethos and effective support for learners, confirming that the quality of education has been maintained despite the challenges associated with the condition of the former building.

2.4 Appendix A shows the location of the current primary and nursery school buildings and the Plockton High School campus.

3. Informal Consultation

3.1 Initial discussions have taken place regarding the future of the primary school in Plockton. These have primarily involved consideration within relevant Council services and have informed the development of the proposal and identification of key issues. Full consultation with all consultees will take place as part of the statutory consultation process.

4. Plockton Primary School Description

4.1 Plockton Primary School currently operates from within Plockton High School campus following its temporary relocation. There are approximately 41 pupils on the roll, with 33 in Gaelic Medium Education and 8 Gaelic learners.

4.2 The former Plockton Primary School site comprises a number of buildings of varying age and construction, which historically accommodated both primary and nursery provision. The layout of the accommodation, across multiple structures, presents challenges in delivering modern approaches to learning and teaching.

4.4 The condition of the building that is available for the Primary School does not provide a safe environment for pupils and staff.

4.5 Taken together, these factors mean that the former accommodation does not fully meet current standards or expectations for school and early learning environments.

5. Educational Benefits

5.1 Plockton Primary School (Retrospective Benefits)

Since relocating to the High School campus in March 2024, a number of educational benefits have been realised:

- Improved access to higher quality learning and teaching spaces has supported more effective delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence, with a more flexible and appropriate learning environment for pupils and staff
- The improved internal environment has enhanced pupil wellbeing and engagement in learning
- Access to wider school facilities and resources has broadened learning opportunities and supported a richer curriculum experience

- Co-location within the campus has strengthened delivery of Gaelic Medium Education by providing more suitable accommodation and supporting continuity and progression for learners

5.1.1 The successful operation of the school within the High School campus over the past two years demonstrates that there has been no adverse impact on the quality of education provided.

5.1.2 The relocation has ensured continuity of learning and has provided a more appropriate environment for the delivery of primary education. As such, the proposal to make this arrangement permanent is considered to be educationally sound.

6. Impact on School Transport

6.1 The relocation of the primary school has already taken place and has resulted in minimal changes to travel distances within the village.

7. Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements

7.1 No changes to staffing or management arrangements are anticipated as a result of these proposals.

8. Effect on the Local Community

8.1 The proposal is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on the local community.

9. Financial Impact of the Proposal

9.1 The proposal reflects an existing operational arrangement and does not introduce any new areas of ongoing expenditure.

9.2 Plockton Primary School has been operating from within the High School campus since March 2024. The financial implications associated with that move have already been met through approved budgets and form part of the current cost base. Where further internal works may be required to the host school, these will be met through the existing education generic capital budget

9.3 The High School, Primary School and Nursery are already managed within a 3 to 18 structure. This proposal does not change that structure, does not reduce or expand provision, and does not result in the closure of any establishment.

9.4 On that basis, there are no material changes anticipated in ongoing revenue costs. Expenditure relating to staffing, transport, property, and facilities management will continue at broadly current levels.

9.5 As the proposal formalises an arrangement that is already in place, it does not give rise to any new recurring financial commitments for the Council. A detailed financial appraisal is therefore not required at this stage.

9.6 Any future consideration of changes to Early Learning and Childcare provision, or further development of the campus, would be taken forward separately and subject to the Council's established capital planning and decision-making processes.

10. Integrated Impact Assessment

10.1 An initial Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) screening has been undertaken in relation to this proposal.

10.2 The screening has identified that the proposal is expected to have a generally positive impact in relation to educational opportunity, with no adverse impacts identified in respect of protected characteristics, socio-economic factors, or access to services within the local community.

10.3 At this stage, the proposal relates to the commencement of a statutory consultation process and does not in itself result in any direct physical or operational changes. On that basis, a full Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

11. Recommendation

11.1 The Highland Council recommends:

- That Plockton Primary School is permanently relocated to Plockton High School campus

11.2 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