Agenda Item	4
Report No	EDU/30/26

The Highland Council

Committee: **Education**

Date: **18 November 2026**

Report Title: **Statutory Consultation: Request to Proceed to Statutory Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Foyers 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, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on a proposal to discontinue education provision at Foyers Primary School, re-assign its catchment area to Aldourie Primary School and realign the catchment area of Stratherrick Primary School. The Proposal Paper is attached at **Appendix 1**, with maps of the existing and proposed catchment areas attached within and marked **Appendices A, B, C & C1.**

1.2 Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023, and no pupils currently attend the school. Seven primary-aged children currently reside within the catchment area, four of whom attend Aldourie Primary School and three of whom attend Stratherrick Primary School.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to agree to proceed to statutory consultation, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on a proposal to discontinue education provision at Foyers Primary School, re-assign the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area to Aldourie Primary School and realign the catchment area for Stratherrick Primary School, on the basis of the Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 1**.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource
The financial implications of the proposal are set out in the Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 1**. As Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023, the proposal is not expected to generate significant additional recurring savings beyond those already arising from the temporary closure. No additional school accommodation is anticipated as a consequence of the proposal.

3.2 Legal
The proposal has been prepared in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, including the additional statutory requirements applying to the proposed closure of a rural school. If approved, the statutory consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the 2010 Act. Any subsequent decision to discontinue education provision at Foyers Primary School would be subject to the statutory notification and Ministerial call-in provisions of the Act.

3.3 Risk
The principal risks relate to the statutory consultation and decision-making process, including the potential for any subsequent closure decision to be called in by Scottish Ministers. These risks will be managed through compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, consideration of reasonable alternatives, community engagement and full consideration of representations received through the statutory consultation.

3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)
There are no known risks to health and safety.

3.5 Gaelic
There are no known risks to Gaelic.

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 has been undertaken on 5 October 2026. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The screening process has concluded that there are both positive and negative potential impacts arising from the proposal. Positive impacts include wider educational, social, and wider achievement opportunities for children and young people. Potential negative impacts relate principally to longer journeys, accessibility and individual support needs, household travel costs, and the sustainability of the Foyers rural community. Mitigating actions have been identified within the assessment to address these impacts. The findings of the Integrated Impact Assessment Screening are set out at **Appendix D** of the Proposal Paper, with the Full Climate Change Impact Assessment at **Appendix E**.

4.3.3	**Impact Assessment Area**	**Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment**
	Equality	• Children and Young People – *Positive and negative impacts* • Children affected by disability – *Positive and negative impacts* • Older adults – *No impact*
	Socio-economic	*Positive and negative impacts*
	Human Rights	*Positive impact*
	Children's Rights and Well-being	*Positive and negative impacts*
	Island and Mainland Rural	*Negative impact, assessed as minor.*
	Climate Change	*Negative impact*
	Data Rights	*No impact*

5. Overview

5.1 Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023. Prior to temporary closure, the Council engaged with parents regarding the significant reduction in the school roll and the educational arrangements for the remaining pupils. Following those discussions, parents agreed that the school should be temporarily closed from the end of the 2022/23 school session. The school has remained temporarily closed since that date.

5.2 In accordance with Highland Council procedures and Scottish Government guidance, the temporary closure has been subject to regular review. As part of the most recent review, community engagement was undertaken on 24 June 2026 to gather views on the future of the school.

5.3 The review process included consideration of current attendance patterns, historic school roll information, available demographic information, and community feedback. At the time of publication of the Proposal Paper, no pupils attend Foyers Primary School. Seven primary-aged children reside within the catchment area, four of whom attend Aldourie Primary School and three of whom attend Stratherrick Primary School.

5.4 Officers have considered reasonable alternatives to closure, including continuation of the temporary closure, re-opening the school with its existing catchment area, and re-opening the school with an expanded catchment area. The assessment of these alternatives is set out in the Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 1**.

5.5 Having considered the available evidence and the reasonable alternatives to closure, officers consider that it is appropriate to proceed to statutory consultation on the future of Foyers Primary School. The proposal would discontinue education provision at Foyers Primary School and incorporate its existing catchment area into the Aldourie Primary School catchment area. It would also realign the Stratherrick Primary School catchment to lie east of the B852, providing a clearer geographical

boundary between the Aldourie and Stratherrick catchment areas. Detailed information on the rationale for the proposal, educational benefits, reasonable alternatives, community and travel impacts, and the additional considerations applying to a rural school closure is contained within the Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 1**.

6. Proposal

6.1 The Proposal Paper attached as **Appendix 1** sets out the detailed rationale for the proposal, including the Educational Benefits Statement, consideration of reasonable alternatives, community and travel impacts, financial implications, and the additional statutory considerations applicable to rural school closures.

6.2 Subject to Members' agreement, the statutory consultation will run from 25 November 2026 to 22 January 2027. This provides the statutory minimum consultation period of six weeks and includes at least thirty school days.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 6 October 2026

Author: Derek Martin, Strategic Lead-Operations

Background Papers:

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Proposal Paper
    - Appendices A, B, C - Catchment Maps
    - Appendix C1- New Aldourie Primary School Catchment Proposal
    - Appendix D - Integrated Impact Screening Assessment
    - Appendix E - Climate Change Impact Assessment

Appendix 1

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Education Committee

PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE EDUCATION PROVISION AT FOYERS PRIMARY SCHOOL, RE-ASSIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA TO ALDOURIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REALIGN THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR STRATHERRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROPOSAL

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

The Highland Council proposes:

- to discontinue education provision at Foyers Primary School and re-assign the school catchment area to Aldourie Primary School. Nursery provision will continue to be provided at Stratherrick Primary School.
- to realign the catchment area for Stratherrick Primary School to lie east of the B852, as shown in Appendix C.

The proposal will be implemented only following completion of the statutory consultation process and all legislative requirements.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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

Aldourie Primary School and Stratherrick Primary School

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

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio formats, or suitable language, please contact The Education Business Support Team, Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX.

Email: 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/carers of children resident within the Foyers Primary School catchment area.
(ii) Parents/carers of pupils attending Aldourie Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
(iii) Parents/carers of pupils attending Stratherrick Primary School; including parents/carers of pre-school pupils.
(iv) The Parent Council of Aldourie Primary School.
(v) The Parent Council of Stratherrick Primary School.
(vi) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal.
(vii) Staff of Aldourie Primary School
(viii) Staff of Stratherrick Primary School
(ix) Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council
(x) Dores and Essich Community Council
(xi) Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust
(xii) South Loch Ness Heritage Group
(xiii) Trade Union representatives

(xiv) Local Elected Members

In addition, arrangements will be made to seek the views of children and young people attending Aldourie and Strattherrick Primary Schools. Their views will be gathered in an age-appropriate manner and will be considered as part of the consultation process and reported within the Consultation Report.

Advertisement in Local Media

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

Consultation Period

The consultation for this Proposal will run from 25 November 2026 and will end on 22 January 2027. 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 7 December 2026. The date, time and venue will be confirmed and publicised by The Highland Council following publication of this proposal paper. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting will be invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, chaired by a senior elected member and 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 taken into account. 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 will also be recorded.

The note will be forwarded to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, along with other submissions and comments received by the Council during the consultation process.

Meetings with Pupils and Staff

Arrangements will be made to seek the views of children and young people affected by the proposal, including pupils attending Aldourie and Stratherrick Primary Schools. Engagement will be undertaken in an age-appropriate manner to ensure that pupils have an opportunity to understand the proposal, ask questions and express their views. The views expressed will be recorded, considered alongside other consultation responses and reported within the Consultation Report.

Staff at the affected schools will also have an opportunity to provide their views through the statutory 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, to be found at:

https://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.

Responses received will be considered as part of the statutory consultation process. The Council will prepare and publish a Consultation Report summarising the representations received and the Council’s response to the issues raised. Personal information will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection requirements. Anyone wishing particular information within their response to be treated as confidential should clearly identify this when submitting their response. The Council will take account of any such request, subject to its statutory obligations and applicable information-access legislation.

All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, 22 January 2027 at 5.00pm.

Involvement of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education

When the Proposal Paper is published, a copy will be provided to HM Inspectors. HM Inspectors will also be provided, by 29 January 2027, with copies of the written representations received during the consultation period, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting and, so far as practicable, any other relevant documentation.

HM Inspectors will prepare an independent report on the educational aspects of the proposal within three weeks of receipt of the Proposal Paper, representations and other consultation material, unless a longer period is agreed between the Council and HM Inspectors. In preparing their report, HM Inspectors may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries as they consider appropriate.

Review of Consultation Exercise

Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to HM Inspectors’ 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 electronically on the Highland Council website, and copies will be made available free of charge. Anyone who submitted a written or electronic response during the consultation will be notified when the Consultation Report has been published and advised where it can be accessed. Following publication of the Consultation Report and the statutory period for further consideration, the proposal will be considered by the Education Committee. The Education Committee will consider the Proposal Paper, Consultation Report, the report from HM Inspectors and any further representations received before deciding what recommendation to make to the Highland Council.

Any recommendation to implement the proposal would require to be considered and approved by a subsequent meeting of the Highland Council. The decision of the Highland Council would constitute the Council's final decision on whether to implement the proposal.

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.

Following conclusion of the consultation period, the Council will consider the representations received and the report from HM Inspectors and will prepare a Consultation Report. The Consultation Report will be published at least three weeks before the proposal is considered by the Education Committee. The timing of that consideration will depend on the matters arising through consultation, the time required to give those matters full consideration and the schedule of Education Committee meetings.

As the proposal involves the closure of a school, if the Highland Council decides to implement the proposal, the Council will notify the Scottish Ministers of its final decision in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Council will provide the Scottish Ministers with the Proposal Paper, Consultation Report and the required notice relating to the decision to implement the rural school closure proposal.

Following the Council's final decision, interested parties will have a period of three weeks in which to make representations to the Scottish Ministers in support of or against the closure decision. The Scottish Ministers will have an overall period of eight weeks from the date of the Council's final decision in which to decide whether to call in the closure decision.

The proposal cannot be implemented during the call-in period. If the Scottish Ministers decide to call in the closure decision, the proposal cannot be implemented unless and until the statutory review process permits implementation.

Subject to completion of the consultation process, implementation is proposed from the start of the 2027/28 school session.

Note on Corrections

If an alleged inaccuracy or omission in this Proposal Paper is identified during the consultation period, whether by the Council or by any other person, the Council will consider the matter in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Where an allegation is made by another person, the Council will determine whether the allegation has foundation and will notify that person of its determination and the reasons for it.

Where an inaccuracy or omission is identified, the Council will consider whether it relates to a material consideration relevant to the proposal and will take any action required under the 2010 Act. This may include issuing corrected or additional information, publishing a corrected Proposal Paper, extending the consultation period where appropriate or, where the matter is sufficiently significant, restarting the statutory consultation process.

Relevant consultees and HM Inspectors will be notified of any correction or additional information where required. Details of any alleged or identified inaccuracies or omissions, and the action taken in relation to them, will be included in the Consultation Report

1. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Foyers Primary School is classified as a rural school. In bringing forward this proposal the Council has had regard to the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 and the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 including the additional considerations applicable to rural school closures.

2. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

2.1 Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023, and no pupils currently attend the school. At the time of publication of this proposal, seven primary-aged pupils reside within the catchment area, four of whom attend Aldourie Primary School and three attend Stratherrick Primary School.

2.2 The Council has reviewed current attendance patterns, recent school roll information, community feedback and available demographic information. The Council has identified no evidence of current or foreseeable demand sufficient to support the sustainable re-opening of the school.

2.3 The Council considers that continued temporary closure would not provide an appropriate long-term solution and would prolong uncertainty regarding the future of the school. The proposal would provide clarity regarding the future provision of primary education for children residing within the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area and establish Aldourie Primary School as the catchment school for that area.

2.4 The Council has also identified potential educational benefits associated with access to a larger pupil group, including increased opportunities to learn and socialise with age-

appropriate peers, enhanced opportunities for collaborative learning and wider curricular and extra-curricular experiences.

2.5 Community engagement undertaken on 24 June 2026 identified no significant current demand for the re-opening of the school. Feedback received indicated that the former pupils represented at the engagement had settled successfully within their receiving schools. There has been no change to nursery provision, which continues to be provided at Stratherrick Primary School.

2.6 A catchment boundary change is proposed for Stratherrick Primary School, with the revised catchment boundary lying east of the B852. The proposed realignment would bring the B852 corridor and adjoining predominantly mountainous area into the Aldourie Primary School catchment, providing a clearer geographical boundary between the two catchment areas.

3. CURRENT DETAILS – FOYERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.1 The school serves the Foyers area of Inverness and has been temporarily closed since July 2023. The school has capacity for 46 pupils. No Early Learning and Childcare provision is currently associated with the school.

3.2 The school building comprises the original school building together with later extensions and associated grounds. The school has been assessed as having a Condition Rating of B (Satisfactory) and a Suitability Rating of C (Poor). The suitability assessment identified limitations associated with accessibility, the absence of a dedicated PE facility, the absence of a disabled toilet and limited space for additional support and group working activities. The location of the school adds an additional challenge for users trying to access the building, as the road leading to the school is up a steep hill and there are a small number of parking spaces available. Access may be further constrained when larger vehicles, including delivery or refuse collection vehicles, are attending the site.

3.3 School Roll History

The school roll at Foyers Primary School has fluctuated at low levels over recent years prior to temporary closure.

School Session	School Roll
2020/2021	10
2021/2022	7
2022/2023	5
2023/2024	*0

*The school has been temporarily closed since July 2023.

3.4 School Capacity and Occupancy

Prior to temporary closure, occupancy levels were very low. Based on the 2022/23 school roll of 5 pupils and a school capacity of 46 pupils, occupancy was approximately 11%.

3.5 Forecast Pupil Numbers

The Council has reviewed available demographic information and pupil forecasts for the catchment area. These forecasts indicate that pupil numbers are expected to remain at very low levels throughout the forecast period, with no evidence of a sustainable increase in the school roll. Available demographic information also indicates that the number of children expected to require primary education within the catchment in future years will remain low.

Whilst future pupil numbers may change as a result of factors such as family movement into or out of the area, the available evidence does not indicate a realistic prospect of establishing a sustainable long-term arrangement for education provision. The Council therefore considers that the forecasts do not support the sustainable re-opening of the school.

4. CURRENT DETAILS – ALDOURIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

4.1 Aldourie Primary School is a cluster school with Dochgarroch Primary School (and was clustered with Foyers Primary School prior to temporary closure) and currently has a roll of 18 pupils and a capacity of 50 pupils, providing sufficient capacity to accommodate future pupils from the area. Prior to the temporary closure of Foyers Primary School, the Foyers pupils travelled to Aldourie on a Friday. Future roll projections for Aldourie Primary School are noted below:-

School Session	School Roll
2026/2027	16
2027/2028	12
2028/2029	13
2029/2030	11
2030/2031	10
2031/2032	12

The school roll is forecast to remain at a relatively low and stable level over the longer term, ranging between 10 and 12 pupils from 2030/31 to 2040/41.

The school building comprises the original school building, an extension built in 2012 and associated grounds. The school has been assessed as having a Condition rating of B (satisfactory) and a Suitability rating of B (satisfactory). The suitability assessment identified concerns such as the proximity of the school building to a road (B862 Inverness to Dores road), however there is security fencing in place around the majority of the school boundary. The car park is not owned by the Council. The suitability assessment indicates that the internal learning environment is generally suitable, whilst identifying a need for additional space for teaching staff.

5. CURRENT DETAILS – STRATHERRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

5.1 Stratherrick Primary School currently has a roll of 21 pupils and a capacity of 25 pupils and is operating at 84% capacity. Future roll projections for Stratherrick Primary School are noted below:-

School Session	School Roll
2026/2027	18
2027/2028	22
2028/2029	22
2029/2030	22
2030/2031	24
2031/2032	23

These projections indicate increasing pressure on available capacity. By 2030/31, the school is expected to operate at approximately 96% capacity, limiting its ability to accommodate additional pupils over the longer term.

The school comprises the original school building, an extension, a demountable unit installed in 2020 and associated hard-surfaced and grassed grounds along with a car park. The school has been assessed as having a condition rating of B (satisfactory) and a suitability rating of B (satisfactory). The suitability assessment identifies good-sized teaching spaces throughout the school, together with a variety of outdoor spaces for pupils.

6. EXAMINATION OF ALTERNATIVES

6.1 As Foyers Primary School is a rural school, the Council is required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to consider reasonable alternatives to closure before formulating a closure proposal. In considering the proposal and the reasonable alternatives identified, the Council has assessed the likely educational benefits, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The Council has identified and considered the following reasonable alternatives:

- Continuing the current temporary closure arrangement.
- Re-opening Foyers Primary School with its existing catchment area.
- Re-opening Foyers Primary School with an expanded catchment area.

6.2 As part of its consideration of these alternatives, the Council has reviewed current pupil numbers, parental preferences, community feedback, existing attendance patterns and the availability of education provision at neighbouring schools. During the period of temporary closure, the Council undertook annual reviews of the position, taking account of the circumstances affecting the school and the potential for education provision to

resume. These reviews included consideration of pupil numbers, attendance patterns and available demographic information. As part of the most recent review, community engagement was undertaken on 24 June 2026 to seek views on the future of the school and to consider whether there was evidence of current or future demand to support re-opening.

Option 1: Continued Temporary Closure

6.3 Continuing the temporary closure of Foyers Primary School remains an alternative available to the Council. The Council has therefore considered whether the circumstances within the Foyers catchment indicate a realistic prospect of education provision resuming at the school and whether continued temporary closure would provide an appropriate response to those circumstances.

6.4 Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023, and no pupils have attended the school during that period. The temporary closure has been reviewed annually, taking account of the circumstances affecting the school and the potential for education provision to resume.

6.5 At the time of publication of this proposal, seven primary-aged children reside within the Foyers Primary School catchment area, four of whom attend Aldourie Primary School and three of whom attend Stratherrick Primary School. Educational arrangements are therefore already established at other schools for all primary-aged children currently residing within the catchment.

6.6 As part of the most recent review of the temporary closure, community engagement was undertaken on 24 June 2026. The engagement identified no current demand for education provision at Foyers Primary School and limited evidence of future demand sufficient to support re-opening.

6.7 Continued temporary closure would maintain uncertainty regarding the future status of the school and would provide no settled long-term position for parents, the local community or the Council. The annual reviews undertaken during the period of temporary closure, together with the current pupil population, available demographic information and community engagement, have not identified evidence of a change in circumstances likely to support re-opening.

6.8 Taking these factors into account, the Council does not consider continued temporary closure to be an appropriate long-term response to the circumstances affecting Foyers Primary School. The Council therefore considers that the long-term future of the school should now be determined through the statutory consultation process.

Option 2: Re-opening Foyers Primary School with its Existing Catchment Area

6.9 The Council has considered whether Foyers Primary School could be re-opened to serve its existing catchment area.

6.10 At the time of publication of this proposal, no pupils attend the school. There are seven primary-aged pupils living within the catchment area, all of whom attend other schools. Prior to temporary closure, the school roll remained consistently low, varying between five and ten pupils over the period 2020/21 to 2022/23. This historic pattern, together with current attendance arrangements, forms part of the Council's assessment of the potential for the school to re-open with its existing catchment area.

6.11 Feedback received during the temporary closure review indicated that the former pupils represented at the meeting had settled successfully into their receiving schools. Parents attending the meeting described benefits associated with their children moving to a larger school and stated that they were not aware of demand for Foyers Primary School to re-open.

6.12 The Council has identified no evidence of current parental demand for the re-establishment of education provision at Foyers Primary School. Available demographic information also indicates that the number of children expected to require primary education within the catchment in future years will remain low.

6.13 Re-opening Foyers Primary School would restore education provision within the local community and could reduce travelling requirements for children residing within the catchment. It would also retain the school as an educational presence within Foyers. The Council has balanced these potential benefits against the educational implications of the very small pupil population likely to attend the school, including the more limited opportunities for children to learn and socialise with a wider range of peers. These matters are considered in greater detail in Sections 7, 10 and 12.

6.14 Taking account of the consistently low historic school roll, current attendance arrangements, available demographic information, the absence of identified parental demand for re-opening and the potential benefits and disadvantages identified above, the Council considers that re-opening Foyers Primary School with its existing catchment area would be unlikely to provide an appropriate and sustainable long-term arrangement for education provision.

Option 3: Re-opening Foyers Primary School with an Expanded Catchment Area

6.15 The Council has also considered whether it would be appropriate to re-open Foyers Primary School by expanding the school's catchment area.

6.16 Any expansion of the Foyers Primary School catchment would require consideration of the existing catchment arrangements for neighbouring schools, including Stratherrick Primary School and Aldourie Primary School. This would require consideration of population distribution, geography, travel patterns, parental preferences, projected school rolls and the potential effect of any change on the affected schools and communities.

6.17 The Council considered whether changes to neighbouring school catchments could increase the pupil population within the Foyers Primary School catchment sufficiently to support the re-opening of the school.

6.18 Four of the seven primary-aged children currently residing within the Foyers Primary School catchment attend Aldourie Primary School, with the remaining three attending Stratherrick Primary School. Aldourie Primary School currently has a roll of 18 pupils and a capacity of 50 pupils. Existing attendance patterns therefore demonstrate established educational links between the Foyers catchment and Aldourie Primary School, which also has sufficient capacity to accommodate future pupils from the area.
6.19 Foyers and Aldourie are connected by the B852, with the distance between Foyers Primary School and Aldourie Primary School being approximately 12 miles and a travel time of around 28 minutes. This geographical relationship, together with the established attendance of children from the Foyers catchment at Aldourie Primary School, is relevant to consideration of whether an expansion of the Foyers catchment would provide an appropriate alternative.

6.20 School roll forecasts for neighbouring schools were reviewed as part of this assessment. Aldourie Primary School is projected to continue to operate with a relatively small roll and has capacity to accommodate future pupils from the Foyers area. Stratherrick Primary School has more limited capacity and is forecast to experience increasing pressure on available places, reaching approximately 96% of its capacity by 2030/31. The Council has therefore considered the extent to which any expansion of the Foyers catchment could increase pupil numbers at Foyers and the consequential effect that such a change could have on neighbouring schools.

6.21 Re-opening Foyers Primary School with an expanded catchment could increase the number of pupils attending the school and restore education provision within the Foyers community. However, achieving this through catchment realignment could also affect the pupil population of another rural school and the community it serves, and could alter travelling arrangements for children living within any area transferred to the Foyers catchment. The Council has considered these potential educational, community and travel implications alongside the existing pattern of school attendance, geography, projected pupil rolls and available capacity at neighbouring schools. These matters are considered further in Sections 7, 10 and 12.

6.22 Taking these factors into account, the Council does not consider that an expansion of the Foyers Primary School catchment would provide an appropriate basis for the sustainable re-opening of the school.

Conclusion

6.23 The Council has considered the reasonable alternatives to closure alongside the proposal to discontinue education provision at Foyers Primary School. In doing so, the Council has considered current and projected pupil numbers, existing attendance

patterns, parental and community views, the educational implications, the likely effect on the local community and the effect of different travelling arrangements.

6.24 Continued temporary closure would retain the possibility of Foyers Primary School re-opening should circumstances change but would provide no settled long-term position for the school or local community. Re-opening the school with its existing catchment would restore education provision within the Foyers community and could reduce travelling requirements for children living locally, but the available evidence indicates that the number of children likely to attend would remain very low. Expanding the Foyers catchment could increase the number of pupils available to attend the school but would require changes to existing catchment arrangements and could have consequential effects on neighbouring rural schools, their communities and travelling arrangements.

6.25 Having considered these alternatives and their respective benefits and disadvantages, the Council considers that none would provide a more appropriate long-term response to the circumstances affecting Foyers Primary School. The Council therefore considers that the proposal to discontinue education provision at Foyers Primary School and re-assign its catchment area to Aldourie Primary School is the most appropriate response to the reasons identified for bringing forward the proposal.

7. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

7.1 Highland Council considers that children and young people should have access to learning environments which support high-quality learning and teaching, positive wellbeing, achievement and attainment, and effective preparation for lifelong learning. In assessing the educational benefits of this proposal, the Council has considered the likely effects on current and future pupils residing within the Foyers Primary School catchment area, pupils attending the schools affected by the proposed catchment changes, and the educational opportunities that would be available through the proposed arrangements. The Council has considered both the potential benefits and any potential disadvantages arising from the proposal.

7.2 Prior to the temporary closure of Foyers Primary School, Foyers and Aldourie Primary Schools worked collaboratively through regular cluster activities, including arrangements for pupils from Foyers to attend Aldourie. This provided pupils with opportunities to learn and socialise with a wider range of peers, including children of a similar age and stage, and to participate in collaborative learning, physical education, performances, educational visits and other activities that can be more difficult to provide within a very small school roll. The arrangements also supported continuity between the two schools and provided opportunities for staff to collaborate in areas including curriculum planning, assessment and moderation. This experience demonstrates that collaborative working can mitigate some of the limitations associated with a very small school roll, while also requiring pupils to travel to another school to access some opportunities that would otherwise not be available within their own school setting.

7.3 At the time of publication of this proposal, no pupils attend Foyers Primary School. Seven primary-aged children reside within the existing catchment area, four of whom attend Aldourie Primary School and three of whom attend Stratherrick Primary School. Educational arrangements are therefore already established at other schools for all primary-aged children currently residing within the catchment. In assessing the educational effects of the proposal, the Council has considered both the experience of these children and the educational provision that would be available to children who may reside within the catchment in future.

7.4 Re-opening Foyers Primary School could provide a number of educational benefits for children living within the local community. A very small school setting could provide opportunities for individualised learning and substantial direct interaction between pupils and teaching staff, with flexibility to respond to individual learning needs and interests. The school's location would also provide opportunities to make use of the local landscape and environment to support outdoor and interdisciplinary learning. Re-opening would enable children within the Foyers area to receive their education within their own community, reducing the need to travel to another school and supporting closer links between pupils, families, the school and the wider community. A small school environment could also support strong relationships between pupils and staff and provide opportunities for children to participate actively in the life and development of their school.

7.5 Re-opening Foyers Primary School with the very small pupil population currently projected could also present educational challenges. A small number of pupils may limit opportunities for children to learn and socialise with peers of a similar age or stage and may reduce opportunities for collaborative learning, group discussion, peer support and the development of a wider range of friendships. Activities that rely on larger numbers of participants, including team sports, performances and some collaborative projects, may also be more difficult to provide within the school itself. Some of these limitations could be mitigated through collaboration with other schools, as occurred prior to temporary closure, although this would require pupils to travel elsewhere to access some opportunities. A very small pupil population could also create challenges in relation to staffing resilience, opportunities for professional collaboration and access to some specialist support and wider educational experiences. The effect of individual pupils joining or leaving the school could also have a significant impact on the size and composition of the pupil group.

7.6 The Council considers that pupils can benefit from being educated within an age-appropriate peer group of sufficient size to allow friendships, learning relationships and social groupings to develop and change over time. Access to a wider peer group can provide increased opportunities for children to learn with and from others, participate in collaborative learning and group discussion, develop teamwork and communication skills, and build confidence through a wider range of social experiences. In considering the circumstances at Foyers Primary School, the Council considers that the larger pupil group available at Aldourie Primary School would provide current and future pupils from

the Foyers area with greater day-to-day opportunities to learn and socialise with a wider range of peers than would be likely within a re-opened Foyers Primary School with its projected very small pupil population.

7.7 The Council considers that the size and composition of a school roll can influence the range of educational and social opportunities available to pupils. A re-opened Foyers Primary School would be likely to operate with a very small number of pupils. This could limit opportunities for collaborative learning, group discussion, peer support and social interaction when compared with the opportunities available within a larger pupil group. Whilst some of these challenges could be mitigated through joint activities with other schools, this would require pupils to travel elsewhere to access opportunities that are available as part of everyday school life within a larger establishment.

7.8 Aldourie Primary School currently has a roll of 18 pupils and a capacity of 50 pupils. Its larger pupil group provides greater opportunities for children to participate in group-based learning experiences and collaborative activities. Pupils are able to work alongside a broader range of peers, with opportunities to encounter different perspectives, abilities and experiences. These experiences can support the development of communication skills, problem-solving abilities and collaborative approaches to learning.

7.9 The Council considers that attendance at Aldourie Primary School would provide current and future pupils from the Foyers area with access to a broad range of curricular and wider achievement opportunities. These include sport, music, expressive arts, outdoor learning, educational visits, pupil leadership and community activities. Collaboration with cluster and neighbouring schools also provides opportunities for joint learning, sporting activities, transition events and social experiences involving a wider group of pupils. These opportunities support the development of pupils' individual interests, skills, confidence and wider achievement.

7.10 Aldourie Primary School provides these opportunities while retaining the benefits of a rural school environment. Mixed-age classes provide opportunities for peer learning, cooperative working and pupil leadership, while the local environment supports outdoor learning, environmental studies and community engagement. The school also has access to specialist provision and support services, including physical education and music instruction, educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and additional support for learning. Its proximity to Inverness also supports access to specialist services, educational visits and visiting partners.

7.11 Working with others is an important element of Curriculum for Excellence. Opportunities to undertake collaborative projects, share responsibilities, participate in group discussion and learn from peers can be enhanced where children have access to a wider peer group. The Council considers that these experiences can support the development of confidence, leadership, communication and interpersonal skills.

7.12 In considering the suitability of the school buildings and learning environments, both Foyers Primary School and Aldourie Primary School are capable of supporting core

learning and teaching. Foyers Primary School has a Suitability Rating of C (Poor), with identified limitations including accessibility, the absence of a disabled toilet and limited space for additional support and group working activities. Aldourie Primary School has a Suitability Rating of B (Satisfactory) and provides a range of indoor and outdoor spaces to support learning and teaching. Both schools benefit from access to outdoor learning environments and digital connectivity. While both buildings could support education provision, the Council considers that Aldourie Primary School provides advantages in relation to accessibility, outdoor facilities and the availability of established resources and support infrastructure.

7.13 Feedback received through the informal review process indicated that the former pupils represented at the meeting had settled successfully within their receiving schools. Parents attending the meeting described benefits associated with their children moving to a larger school, including access to a wider peer group and broader educational and social opportunities. This feedback has been taken into account alongside the other educational evidence considered in this proposal.

7.14 The Council has identified no evidence of current parental demand for the re-opening of Foyers Primary School. The community engagement identified no current requirement for education provision at the school and limited evidence of future demand sufficient to support its sustainable re-opening. This position is consistent with the current pupil population and available demographic information considered elsewhere in this proposal.

7.15 Taking all factors into account, including the potential educational benefits and challenges associated with re-opening Foyers Primary School, the Council considers that the proposal would provide overall educational benefits for current and future pupils residing within the Foyers Primary School catchment area through:

- access to a wider range of age-appropriate peers;
- enhanced opportunities for collaborative learning and peer interaction;
- greater opportunities for social development and relationship building;
- broader participation in sport, music, expressive arts and wider achievement activities;
- opportunities for pupil leadership and teamwork; and
- continued access to established education provision and associated support services.

The Council considers that these benefits, taken together, support the educational experience and wellbeing of current and future pupils residing within the Foyers Primary School catchment area.

7.16 The Council, therefore, considers that, taking account of the potential benefits and disadvantages identified, the proposal would provide overall positive educational

benefits for current and future pupils residing within the Foyers Primary School catchment area.

8. RE-ALLOCATION OF THE CATCHMENT AREA FOR FOYERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

8.1 Should the proposal be approved, the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area will be incorporated into the Aldourie Primary School catchment area. This will align the statutory catchment arrangements with the proposed future provision of primary education for children residing within the Foyers area.

8.2 A map showing the proposed revised Aldourie Primary School catchment area, incorporating the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area, is attached at Appendix B.

9. RE-ALLOCATION OF STRATHERRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA

9.1 A map of the current Foyers, Aldourie and Stratherrick catchments is attached at Appendix A.

9.2 As part of the proposal, the Council has considered the existing boundary between the Stratherrick and Aldourie Primary School catchments. The proposed realignment would bring the B852 corridor into the revised Aldourie Primary School catchment, providing a clearer geographical boundary between the two catchment areas. The area affected by the proposed change is predominantly mountainous and contains no settlements. The boundary change is therefore not expected to affect the current school attended by any pupil or result in the transfer of pupils between Stratherrick and Aldourie Primary Schools.

The Council has also considered the capacity and projected rolls of the affected schools. Aldourie Primary School has sufficient capacity to accommodate future pupils from the wider area. Stratherrick Primary School is currently operating at 84% capacity and is forecast to reach approximately 96% capacity by 2030/31. The proposed realignment would therefore establish a clearer geographical catchment boundary while having no identified impact on current pupil numbers at either school.

9.3 A map of the proposed realigned catchment for Stratherrick Primary School is attached at Appendix C.

10. EFFECT OF DIFFERING TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

10.1 The distance between Foyers Primary School and Aldourie Primary School is approximately 12 miles, with a travel time of around 28 minutes. Primary-aged children

currently residing within the Foyers catchment area already attend other schools and established travel arrangements are therefore in place. No current pupil would be required to transfer school as a direct consequence of the proposal. If the proposal is implemented, Aldourie Primary School would become the catchment school for future primary-aged pupils residing within the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area. Parents would continue to have the right to make a placing request for their child to attend another school; where a placing request is granted, responsibility for transport would normally rest with the parent or carer.

10.2 If the proposal is implemented, pupils residing within the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area who attend Aldourie Primary School will be considered for home-to-school transport in accordance with the Council's school transport policy. Transport arrangements will be determined according to the location of eligible pupils and other factors relevant to the safe and efficient provision of school transport, and will seek to minimise journey times where reasonably practicable. In determining these arrangements, the Council will have regard to the rural road network, accessibility and additional support needs, and the potential for disruption during periods of severe weather. Transport arrangements will be reviewed as required to respond to changes in pupil numbers, individual needs and local circumstances.

10.3 The Council recognises that travelling outside Foyers to attend school has both advantages and disadvantages for pupils and families. Feedback received indicates that the longer journey to and from school can be onerous for some pupils and families and may reduce opportunities for children to participate in activities within their home community. The Council also recognises that travelling to Aldourie Primary School enables pupils from the Foyers area to attend school alongside a wider group of children and to establish friendships and social connections beyond the Foyers community. These established relationships may also support transition to Inverness Royal Academy, where pupils from the area move into a larger secondary school community. The Council has taken these factors into account when assessing the travel implications of the proposal.

11. EFFECTS ON STAFF AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

11.1 Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023 and there are currently no staff employed at the school for the delivery of education provision. The proposal would therefore not result in the transfer or displacement of existing school staff from Foyers Primary School. No significant changes to the staffing or management arrangements at Aldourie Primary School are anticipated as a direct consequence of the proposal.

12. EFFECT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

12.1 The Council recognises that schools play an important role within rural communities and that their significance can extend beyond the provision of education. Schools can contribute to community identity, local heritage and perceptions of community sustainability. The Council has therefore given careful consideration to the potential impact of this proposal on the Foyers community.

12.2 Community engagement was undertaken on 24 June 2026 as part of the review of the temporary closure of Foyers Primary School. Feedback received during the engagement reflected the importance attached to the school within the local community and its historical contribution to the area. Participants expressed sadness at the prospect of the permanent loss of education provision at Foyers Primary School and highlighted the significance of the school to the community.

12.3 During the engagement process, participants recognised that Foyers Primary School had been temporarily closed since July 2023 following a period of very low pupil numbers, and that no pupils currently attend the school. It was also recognised that children residing within the Foyers catchment are already accessing education at other schools and that these arrangements have become established. Parents represented at the engagement described benefits associated with their children attending a larger school, while no significant current demand for the re-opening of Foyers Primary School was identified through the engagement process.

12.4 The Council has identified no evidence of current demand sufficient to support the re-opening of Foyers Primary School. At the time of publication of this proposal, seven primary-aged children reside within the Foyers Primary School catchment area, four of whom attend Aldourie Primary School and three of whom attend Stratherrick Primary School. No pupils currently attend Foyers Primary School. Available demographic information also indicates that the number of children expected to require primary education within the catchment in future years will remain low.

12.5 The Council recognises that the permanent discontinuation of education provision at Foyers Primary School may have an adverse effect on perceptions of community sustainability. The availability of local education provision can be a factor in the attractiveness of a rural community to families and in maintaining community identity. A potential negative impact on rural community sustainability has also been identified through the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment Screening. The Council has therefore considered the potential effect of the proposal on the longer-term sustainability of the Foyers community alongside the current and projected pupil population, existing educational arrangements and the views expressed through community engagement.

12.6 The Stratherrick and Foyers Local Place Plan identifies Foyers Primary School as an essential community facility and expresses a clear community aspiration to retain education provision within the area and maximise the wider role of local schools within their communities. The Plan also acknowledges that the Foyers school roll forecast is a cause for concern and identifies a need to explore the future of local school provision in

discussion with the Council, taking account of matters including childcare, transport and the role of schools within the local community.

12.7 The Council recognises that the permanent discontinuation of primary education provision within Foyers may give rise to concerns about the future attractiveness of Foyers to families considering moving to or remaining within the area. This potential effect is relevant to the longer-term sustainability of the community and has been considered as part of the Council's assessment of the proposal. However, the Council has identified no evidence that enables the scale or likelihood of any effect on future settlement decisions to be reliably determined.

12.8 Participants in the temporary closure review process highlighted the importance of the future use of the Foyers Primary School building and expressed an interest in opportunities for community use should education provision be permanently discontinued. The Council recognises the significance of the school building as a community asset. This proposal relates specifically to the future provision of education at Foyers Primary School and does not determine the future use of the building or associated grounds. Any future proposal for community use, asset transfer, alternative use or disposal of the property would be considered separately through the Council's relevant governance and asset management processes.

12.9 Taking all factors into account, the Council recognises that the permanent discontinuation of education provision at Foyers Primary School may have adverse effects on community identity and perceptions of longer-term community sustainability. The Council has considered these potential effects alongside the importance attached to the school through community engagement and the Stratherrick and Foyers Local Place Plan, as well as the current and projected pupil population and the educational arrangements already established for children residing within the catchment area. While the potential community impacts are acknowledged, the Council considers that these must be weighed alongside the educational benefits, travelling arrangements and reasonable alternatives considered elsewhere in this proposal.

13. FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

13.1 Foyers Primary School was temporarily closed in July 2023. Prior to closure, the school’s total expenditure in the previous financial year was approximately £52,000. The majority of expenditure related to staffing costs, including teaching staff, support staff and associated employer on-costs. Additional expenditure related to utilities, property costs and educational resources.

13.2 As Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023, the majority of staffing and operational costs associated with delivering education at the school are no longer being incurred. The proposal is therefore not expected to generate significant additional recurring savings beyond those already arising from the temporary closure. Costs associated with maintaining the school building and site continue to be incurred while the property remains in Council ownership.

13.3 Should Foyers Primary School re-open, staffing and operational expenditure associated with delivering education at the school would require to be reinstated. This would include teaching and support staff costs and associated employer on-costs, together with utilities, educational resources and other school operating costs. The level of expenditure would depend on the staffing and operational arrangements required at the time of re-opening.

13.4 Aldourie Primary School currently has sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils from the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area, and no additional school accommodation is anticipated as a result of the proposal. Current pupil roll forecasts indicate that sufficient capacity would remain available at Aldourie Primary School to accommodate future demand within the enlarged catchment area.

13.5 The proposal is not expected to result in significant additional transport expenditure in relation to current pupils, as children presently residing within the Foyers Primary School catchment area already attend other schools and associated travel arrangements are established. If the proposal is implemented, transport arrangements for future pupils attending Aldourie Primary School would be determined in accordance with the Council's school transport policy and the circumstances applying at the time. Any transport required as a consequence of a parental placing request would normally remain the responsibility of the parent or carer.

13.6 The proposal is being advanced on educational and sustainability grounds rather than as a financial savings measure. While the financial implications of the proposal have been considered, they are not the primary reason for bringing forward the proposal.

14. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

14.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken in relation to the proposal. The assessment identified both positive and negative potential impacts. Positive impacts include increased educational, social and wider achievement opportunities for children and young people, while potential negative impacts include longer journeys to school, the permanent loss of the opportunity to attend primary school within the Foyers community, potential barriers for some disabled children and families, additional household travel costs, and potential effects on the sustainability of the rural community. Mitigating actions have been identified within the assessment, including consideration of individual support and transport requirements, accessibility, financial and practical barriers to participation, and meaningful engagement with affected children and young people.

14.2 In relation to protected characteristics, the assessment identified potential positive and negative impacts associated with Age and Disability. Children may benefit from access to a larger peer group and wider educational and social opportunities, while younger children may be more affected by longer journeys to school. For disabled children, the accessibility of the receiving school and access to established support services may provide benefits, while longer journeys, changes in routine or transport

arrangements may have a greater effect depending on individual needs. Mitigating measures include consideration of individual support and accessibility requirements, reasonable adjustments and appropriate transport arrangements. No differential impact was identified in relation to Sex, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, or Marriage and Civil Partnership.

14.3 The screening identified potential negative impacts on the local rural community arising from the permanent discontinuation of education provision at Foyers Primary School. These include increased reliance on transport to access education, potential practical and financial barriers associated with attending school events and activities outside normal school transport arrangements, and potential effects on community sustainability and the attractiveness of the area to families with children. These impacts are mitigated to some extent by existing school transport arrangements and by the fact that Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023, with children currently residing within the catchment already accessing education elsewhere.

14.4 Overall, the Integrated Impact Assessment Screening identified both positive and negative potential impacts arising from the proposal. Positive impacts relate primarily to access to educational, social and wider achievement opportunities and the continued protection of children's right to education. Potential negative impacts relate principally to longer journeys, accessibility and individual support needs, household travel costs, participation in activities outside normal school transport arrangements, and the potential effect on the Foyers rural community. Mitigating measures have been identified within the assessment to address these impacts, including appropriate school transport arrangements, consideration of individual accessibility and support needs, reducing practical and financial barriers to participation, and ensuring that the views of affected children and young people are sought and taken into account.

14.5 The Integrated Impact Assessment Screening identified both positive and negative potential impacts arising from the proposal. Mitigating actions have been identified for the negative impacts, and the assessment concluded that a Full Impact Assessment was not required for equalities, poverty and human rights, children's rights and wellbeing, data protection, or island and mainland rural communities. A Full Climate Change Impact Assessment was required and has been undertaken separately. The Integrated Impact Assessment Screening and Climate Change Impact Assessment have informed the Council's consideration of the proposal alongside the Educational Benefits Statement, Rural Impact Assessment and consultation responses.

A full Integrated Impact Assessment Screening is attached at Appendix D.

15. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

15.1 A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed in relation to the proposal. The assessment identified no direct impacts in relation to energy efficiency, energy generation, procurement and material consumption, the circular economy, waste,

the natural environment or biodiversity. Potential negative impacts were identified in relation to transport, just transition, adaptation and resilience.

15.2 The principal climate change impact arises from the continued reliance on road transport for children living within the Foyers area to access primary education outside their local community. This has the potential to result in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions associated with school transport and other school-related journeys. The assessment recognises that much of this impact is already occurring because pupils currently residing within the Foyers catchment already attend other schools.

15.3 The assessment also identified potential impacts in relation to adaptation and resilience. Continued reliance on the rural road network and school transport may increase exposure to disruption arising from severe weather, including snow, ice, flooding and storms. Potential effects were identified in relation to infrastructure resilience, Council resilience and community resilience, including increased dependence on services and transport outside the Foyers community.

15.4 Mitigating actions identified through the assessment include consideration of opportunities to minimise additional private vehicle journeys; ensuring that individual transport requirements are considered for pupils with disabilities or additional support needs; maintaining appropriate severe-weather and emergency arrangements; considering the resilience of school transport routes when arrangements are reviewed; maintaining links between children living in the Foyers area and their local community where practicable; and monitoring the identified climate and resilience impacts following implementation.

15.5 The Council recognises that the proposal has potential negative climate change and resilience impacts, principally associated with transport dependence and the permanent loss of primary education provision within the Foyers community. These impacts and the identified mitigating actions have been considered alongside the educational, community, travel and wider impacts of the proposal.

16. RURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

16.1 Foyers Primary School is classified as a rural school for the purposes of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Aldourie and Stratherrick Primary Schools are also classified as rural schools. In developing this proposal, the Council has had regard to the additional statutory requirements applying to the proposed closure of a rural school.

16.2 As set out in Section 6, the Council has considered reasonable alternatives to closure, including continued temporary closure, re-opening Foyers Primary School with its existing catchment area and re-opening the school with an expanded catchment area. In assessing these alternatives, the Council has considered their likely educational benefits, effects on the local community and implications for travelling arrangements.

The Council has concluded that none would provide a more appropriate long-term response to the circumstances affecting Foyers Primary School.

16.3 The Council recognises that the permanent discontinuation of education provision at Foyers Primary School may have adverse effects on community identity, perceptions of community sustainability and the attractiveness of the area to families. These concerns are reflected in community engagement, the Stratherrick and Foyers Local Place Plan and the Integrated Impact Assessment Screening. They have been considered alongside the current and projected pupil population and the fact that education provision for children currently residing within the catchment is already established at other schools. The community impacts are considered in greater detail in Section 12.

16.4 The Council has considered the effect of different travelling arrangements on current and future pupils. No current pupil would be required to transfer school as a direct consequence of the proposal, although future pupils living within the Foyers area would be dependent on travel outside their immediate community to access their catchment school. The Council recognises the potential implications of longer journeys, transport dependence, access to activities and disruption during severe weather. These matters, including relevant mitigating arrangements, are considered in Sections 10 and 15.

16.5 The Council has considered the potential educational benefits and disadvantages associated with the proposal and with re-opening Foyers Primary School. While recognising the potential benefits of education within a small local school setting, the Council considers that the proposal would provide overall educational benefits through access to a wider peer group, greater opportunities for collaborative learning and social interaction, broader curricular and wider achievement opportunities and access to established education and support provision. The educational assessment is set out in greater detail in Section 7.

16.6 Having considered the reasonable alternatives, educational benefits and disadvantages, community impacts, travelling arrangements and the current and projected demand for education provision within the Foyers catchment, the Council considers that, notwithstanding the potential adverse effects identified, the overall evidence supports the proposal as the most appropriate long-term response to the circumstances affecting Foyers Primary School.

16.7 Taking these matters into account, the Council considers that the additional statutory requirements applying to the proposed closure of a rural school have been addressed. The Council considers that discontinuing education provision at Foyers Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to Aldourie Primary School and realigning the catchment area of Stratherrick Primary School would provide the most appropriate long-term arrangement for primary education provision within the affected area.

17. RECOMMENDATION

17.1 The Highland Council recommends that education provision at Foyers Primary School be discontinued and that the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area be incorporated into the Aldourie Primary School catchment area.

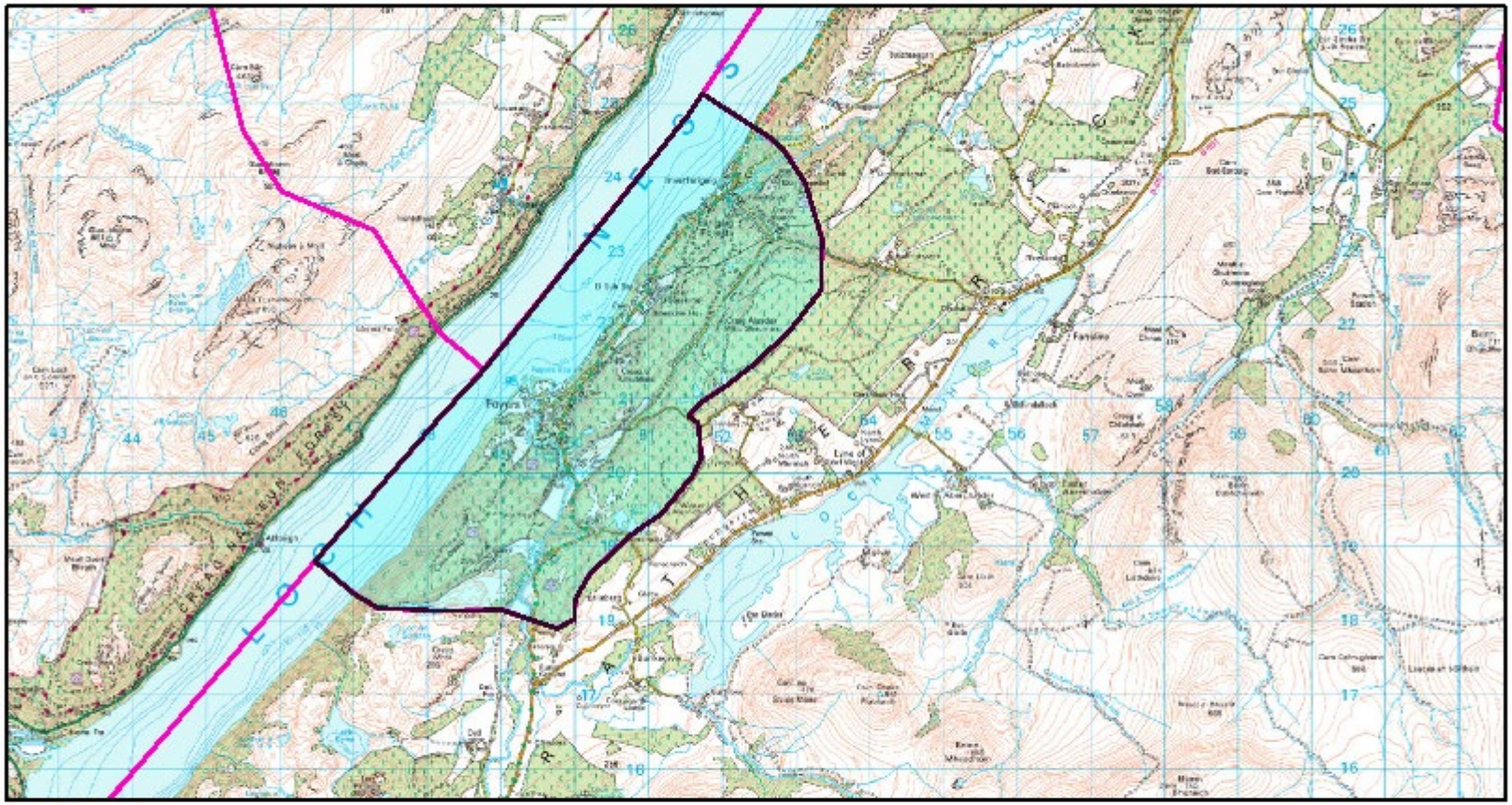
17.2 The Highland Council also recommends that the catchment area for Stratherrick Primary School be realigned to lie east of the B852, with the area west of the B852 incorporated into the Aldourie Primary School catchment area.

APPENDICES

- Appendices A, B, C- Catchment Maps
- Appendix C1- New Aldourie Primary School Catchment Proposal
- Appendix D- Integrated Impact Screening Assessment
- Appendix E- Climate Change Impact Assessment

Foyers Primary School

Appendix A



04/09/2026, 08:39:01

Primary School Catchments

1:50,789

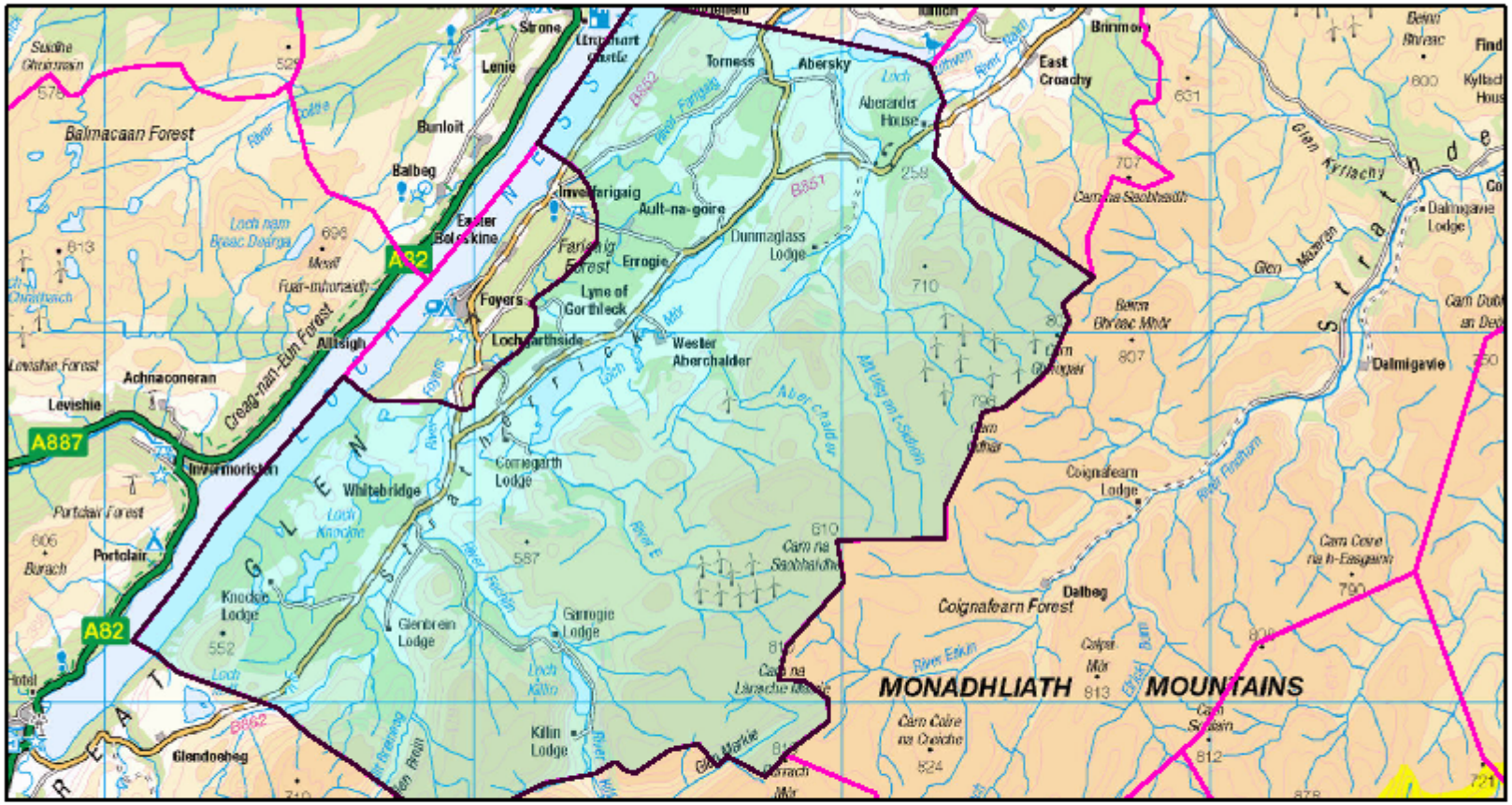
0 0.5 1 2 mi

0 1 2 4 km

The Highland Council
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Stratherrick Primary School

Appendix B



04/09/2026, 08:37:18

Primary School Catchments

1:101,577

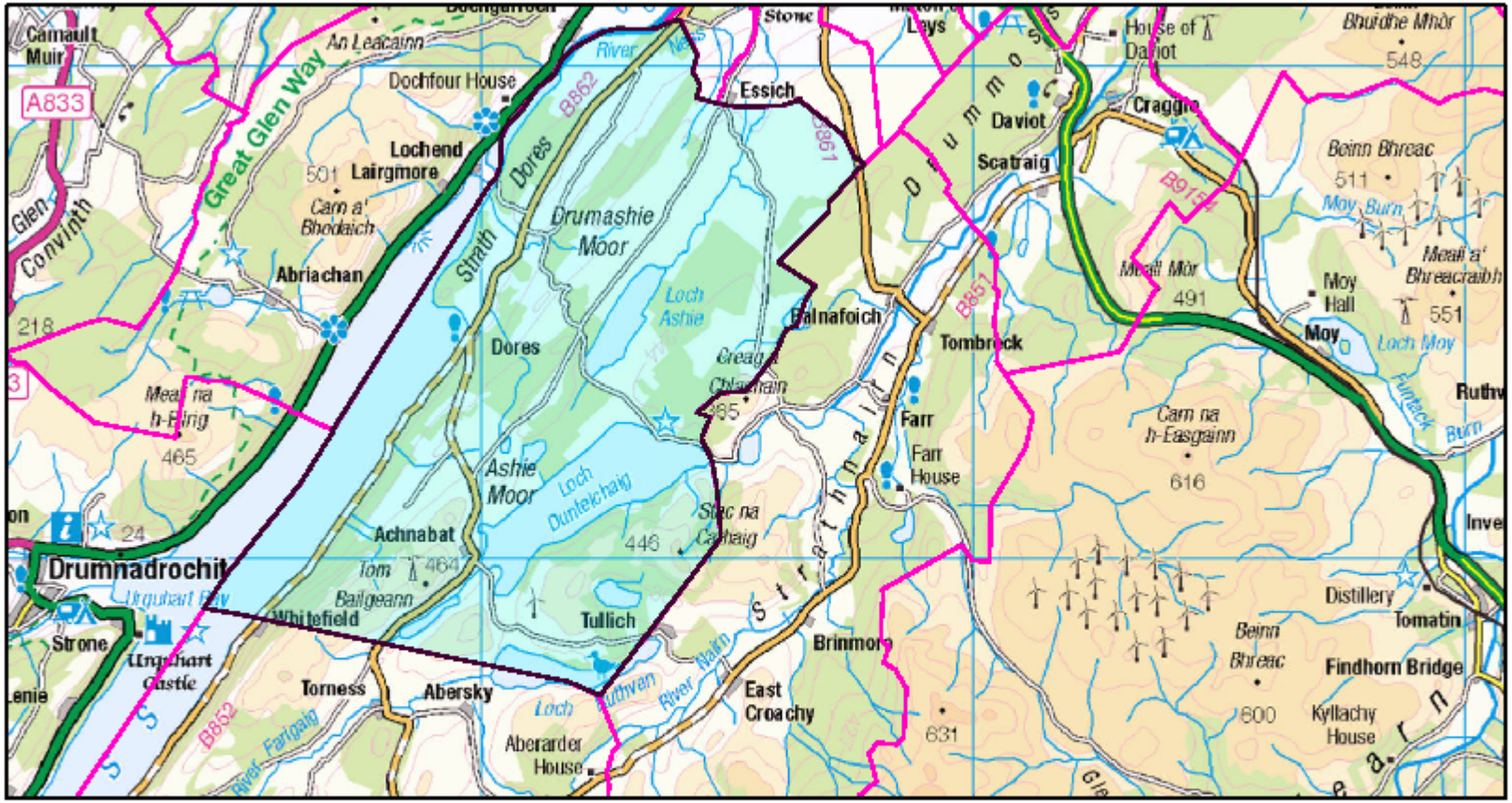
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0 2 4 8 km

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Appendix C

Aldourie Primary School



04/09/2026, 08:35:05

Primary School Catchments

1:76,183

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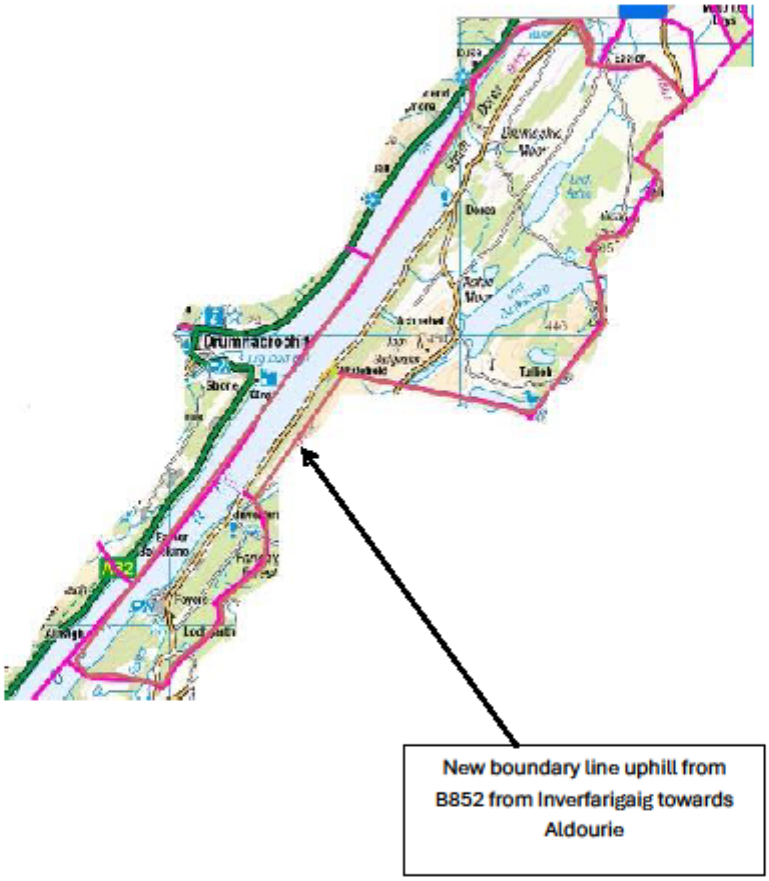
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Appendix C1

Aldourie Primary School

New Catchment Proposal



APPENDIX D

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

Discontinuation of Education provision at Foyers Primary School

High level summary of the proposal:

The Highland Council is proposing to permanently discontinue education provision at Foyers Primary School, which has been temporarily closed since July 2023, and to reassign the existing Foyers Primary School catchment area to Aldourie Primary School. The proposal also includes a realignment of the Stratherrick Primary School catchment boundary so that it lies east of the B852, with the intention of creating a more coherent geographical and community-based catchment arrangement.

Who may be affected by the proposal?:

Children and young people living within the Foyers Primary School catchment area, including current and future pupils; pupils attending Aldourie and Stratherrick Primary Schools; children and families affected by the proposed catchment boundary changes; parents and carers; children with disabilities or additional support needs; school staff; and the wider Foyers community. The proposal may also affect future families moving into the area, as it would permanently change the location of catchment primary school provision.

Which of the below children's rights will be affected by the proposal?:

- You are working in the best interests of the child (Article 3)
- You are providing an opportunity for children to express their views in any matter affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously (Article 12)
- Children have a right to education (Article 28)
- Education that develops their personality, talents, and abilities to the full (Article 29)
- Other childrens rights will be affected.

Explain how the children's rights selected above will be affected:

Article 2, Non-discrimination

Children should have equal access to education and educational opportunities regardless of disability, socioeconomic circumstances or other status. There is a potential for children who have additional support needs, disabilities or limited access to private transport to experience greater barriers associated with travelling to school or participating in activities outside normal school hours. Article 2 requires children's Convention rights to be secured without discrimination and recognises that some children may need additional support to access their rights equally.

Mitigation: Individual support and accessibility requirements should be considered, including transport needs. Consideration should also be given to financial and transport barriers when arranging activities to ensure children are not disadvantaged in accessing educational opportunities.

Article 3, Best interests of the child

The change has the potential to positively affect children through access to larger peer groups and a broader range of learning, social and wider achievement opportunities. There are also potential negative effects arising from longer journeys and the permanent loss of an opportunity to attend school within the

Foyers community. Children's best interests should therefore be a primary consideration when balancing these factors. Article 3 is one of the four general principles underpinning the UNCRC.

Mitigation: The educational, wellbeing and travel needs of affected children should be considered as part of decision-making and when determining individual arrangements.

Article 12, Respect for the views of the child

Children are directly affected and should have an opportunity to express their views about matters affecting them, with those views given appropriate weight according to their age and maturity. Article 12 is also one of the four general principles of the UNCRC.

Mitigation: Children affected by the change should be provided with accessible, age-appropriate information and meaningful opportunities to express their views. Those views should be recorded and demonstrably considered as part of the decision-making process.

Article 28, Right to education

Children will continue to have access to primary education. The change may provide wider learning and social opportunities, but children living within Foyers will need to travel outside their immediate community to exercise that right. Article 28 recognises every child's right to education.

Mitigation: Appropriate school places and eligible school transport should be available, with individual circumstances considered where particular accessibility or support needs arise.

Article 29, Goals of education

Access to a broader peer group and range of learning, social and wider achievement experiences has the potential to support children's development, abilities and preparation for later life. At the same time, consideration should be given to maintaining opportunities for children to connect with and participate in their own local community. Article 29 is relevant to the wider purposes and experience of education, not simply access to a school place.

Mitigation: Children should have equitable access to the full range of curricular, extra-curricular and wider achievement opportunities available through their school, including consideration of barriers associated with distance or transport.

Is a Full Impact Assessment required?:

No

What likely impact will the proposal have on children and young people? :

The change directly affects children and young people because it determines where primary education will be provided for children living within the affected catchment areas. It has the potential to affect their educational experience, peer relationships, social and wider achievement opportunities, journey to school and connection with their local community.

There may also be indirect impacts, for example through effects on parents and carers, household travel arrangements and the wider sustainability of the Foyers community.

What impact do you think there will be to children's rights and wellbeing?:
Positive and negative impact (potential or actual)

Does the proposal involve activities that could impact on greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e)?:
Yes

Does the proposal have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?:
No

Provide information regarding your selection above :
The proposal has the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions because children living within the Foyers area will continue to rely on road transport to access primary education outside their local community. This may result in emissions associated with school transport and other school-related journeys, although these travel arrangements are largely already established.

No direct impact on wildlife or biodiversity has been identified, as the proposal does not itself involve construction, development or changes to land use. Any future decision regarding the use or disposal of the school site would be separate and would require consideration of environmental impacts at that stage.

The proposal may also have implications for resilience to extreme weather and a changing climate because access to education will be dependent on road travel. Severe weather, including snow, ice, flooding or storms, may disrupt travel and access to school. Existing emergency closure and school transport arrangements would help to manage these risks.

Is a Full Impact Assessment required?:
Yes

Have you identified potential impact for any of the areas above or marked any as not known?:
Yes

Does the proposal have the potential to influence resilience to extreme weather or changing climate?:
Yes

Is a Full Impact Assessment required?:
No

Is any of this data already processed by the Highland Council?:
Yes

Is there an up-to-date privacy notice available on the Highland Council website?:
Yes

What is the purpose of the personal data being processed?:
To identify children, families and other stakeholders affected by the proposed changes to school provision and catchment arrangements, and to support the administration of the statutory consultation, assessment of impacts, school place planning and associated education and school transport arrangements.

What change will there be to the way personal data is processed?:
No significant change to current processing

Will your proposal involve processing personal data?:
Yes

Does this relate to an existing proposal? :
No

What impact do you consider this proposal to have on the human rights of people?:
Positive

Human rights impact details:
A positive impact is identified in relation to Protocol 1, Article 2, the right to education. The change will maintain access to primary education for children living within the affected area and provide access to a wider range of educational, social and wider achievement opportunities within a sustainable school setting. No child will be denied access to education as a result of the change. The right to education does not provide a right to attend a particular school, and appropriate educational provision will continue to be available for children living within the affected catchment area.

Which of the below human rights will be affected by this proposal?:
Protocol 1, Article 2: Right to education

Is a Full Impact Assessment required?:
No

Protected characteristics impact details:

Age: Positive and negative impacts

Positive impacts: Primary-aged children may benefit from access to a larger peer group, with greater opportunities for interaction with children of similar ages and stages, collaborative learning, friendships, group activities, sport and wider achievement.

Negative impacts: Children living in Foyers would permanently lose the opportunity to attend a primary school within their own community. They may experience longer journeys to school and spend more time travelling. The effect of travel may be greater for younger children.

Mitigation: School transport arrangements should minimise journey times where reasonably possible. The needs of individual children should be considered when transport arrangements are made. Children and young people should also have an appropriate opportunity to express their views as part of the decision-making process.

Disability: Positive and negative impacts

Positive impacts: Moving education provision to a school with better physical accessibility may benefit some disabled children. A larger school setting may also provide greater resilience in accessing additional support and specialist services.

Negative impacts: A longer journey to school could have a disproportionate effect on some disabled children, depending on their individual needs. Changes in school environment, routines or transport arrangements may also affect children with particular additional support needs. Accessibility cannot be considered solely in terms of the school building, as the whole journey to and from school is relevant.

Mitigation: The individual needs of disabled children should be assessed when determining educational support and transport arrangements. Reasonable adjustments should be made where required, including appropriate transport or assistance and consideration of accessibility within the receiving school.

Sex: No impact identified

There is no identifiable reason why the change would affect boys and girls differently. Access to education, school transport and educational opportunities would operate on the same basis regardless of sex.

Race: No impact identified

There is no identifiable differential effect arising specifically from race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin. The change to school provision and catchment arrangements would apply irrespective of a child's or family's race.

Consideration would nevertheless need to continue to be given to individual communication or language needs where these arise, but these do not in themselves indicate a differential impact from this change.

Religion or belief: No impact identified

There is no identified connection between the change in school provision and a person's religion or belief. Access to the affected education provision would not be determined by religion or belief, and there is no apparent basis for one religious or belief group to be disproportionately affected.

Sexual orientation: No impact identified

There is no identifiable connection between sexual orientation and the change to primary school provision or catchment arrangements. Access to education and associated services would operate on the same basis regardless of sexual orientation.

Gender reassignment: No impact identified

There is no identifiable reason why a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone gender reassignment would experience a different impact from the change in school provision or catchment arrangements.

Pregnancy and maternity: No impact identified

The change does not alter access to education or associated services on the basis of pregnancy or maternity. There is no identifiable reason why people who are pregnant or on maternity leave would experience a disproportionate impact.

Marriage and civil partnership: No impact identified

The change does not distinguish between families or individuals according to marriage or civil partnership status. There is no identifiable connection between this characteristic and access to the education provision concerned.

What impact do you think there will be to equalities, poverty and human rights?:

Positive and negative impact

Poverty and socio-economic impact details:

Prospects and opportunities: Positive impact

Impact identified: Children may benefit from access to a larger peer group and a wider range of collaborative learning, social, sporting, cultural and wider achievement opportunities. These opportunities can support learning, confidence, social development and the acquisition of skills that contribute positively to future educational outcomes and life chances.

Mitigation: No mitigation is required for the positive impact. Access to opportunities should continue to be monitored to ensure that children living further from the school are able to participate fully.

Places: Negative impact

Impact identified: The permanent loss of primary school provision within Foyers has the potential to affect the local rural community. A school can contribute to community identity, connections between families and the community, and the attractiveness of an area to families with children. The impact is particularly relevant because the change is permanent and affects a specific rural community.

Mitigation: The school has not provided education locally since its temporary closure in July 2023, so the change largely formalises an existing arrangement rather than immediately removing a service currently being used. Consideration should nevertheless be given to opportunities to maintain links between

children and families and the Foyers community. Any future use of the former school building should be considered separately through the appropriate Council processes and with regard to community needs.

Financial impact: Negative impact

Impact identified: Families may face additional household costs as a consequence of children attending school outside the local community. While eligible school transport may meet the normal journey to and from school, families without access to private transport could incur additional travel costs when attending school events, meetings, performances, after-school activities or collecting children outside normal school transport arrangements. This could have a greater effect on households experiencing financial hardship.

Mitigation: Statutory school transport should continue to be provided for eligible pupils. When planning activities and events, consideration should be given to whether transport arrangements could create financial or practical barriers to participation. Where individual financial barriers are identified, families should be signposted to relevant support and reasonable steps taken to ensure that children are not prevented from participating because of household financial circumstances.

Places – the potential to impact on specific vulnerable areas or communities:
Negative

Prospects and opportunities – the potential impact on people's life chances:
Positive

Does this proposal result in a change or impact to one or more Council service?:
Yes

Does your proposal impact island and mainland rural communities?:
Yes

Could people in island and mainland rural communities be affected differently?:
No

Is a Full Impact Assessment required?:
No

Have any negative impacts been identified?:
Yes

What impact do you think there will be to island and mainland rural communities?:

Minor differences

Provide details of negative impacts, mitigating actions and the service that is responsible for them:

The permanent loss of primary school provision within Foyers may have a negative impact due to the rural nature of the area. Children and families will be more reliant on transport to access education, with longer travel distances and journey times than would be required if education were available within the local community. This may also create practical or financial barriers for families attending school events or activities outside normal school transport arrangements, particularly where there is limited access to private transport. There is also potential for an impact on community sustainability and the attractiveness of the area to families with children. These impacts are mitigated to some extent by existing school transport arrangements and by the fact that Foyers Primary School has been temporarily closed since July 2023, with children currently living within the catchment already accessing education elsewhere.

Appendix E

Service: People	**Department: Education**
Proposal Title & summary: Discontinuation of Education at Foyers Primary School	

Energy, Emissions and Resources		
Objective	**Impact**	**Reasons/Mitigating Actions**
Energy Efficiency	**No Impact**	The change does not itself involve measures that would materially increase or reduce the energy efficiency of buildings or services. Any future decision about the use, alteration or disposal of the former school building would be separate and should be assessed at that point.
Energy Generation	**No Impact**	The proposal does not involve generating energy, introducing renewable energy generation, or changing how energy is generated or supplied.
Transport	**Negative**	The change creates an ongoing reliance on road transport for children living in Foyers to access primary education outside their local community. This has the potential to result in greater transport-related greenhouse gas emissions than provision within the community, including emissions from school transport and private vehicle journeys associated with school attendance and activities. Existing pupils already travel to alternative schools, so much of this impact is already occurring rather than being newly created.
Procurement & Material Consumption	**No Impact**	The proposal does not itself involve significant procurement of goods or materials, construction activity, or changes in the consumption or disposal of physical resources. Any future works, reuse or disposal associated with the school building would be a separate decision and should be assessed at that stage.
Circular Economy	**No Impact**	The proposal does not itself involve significant changes to the reuse, repair, recycling or disposal of materials or assets. Any future decision about the reuse, transfer, redevelopment or disposal of the school building would be considered separately.
Waste	**No Impact**	The proposal does not itself involve activities expected to materially increase or reduce waste generation. Any future clearance, reuse, redevelopment or disposal of the school building would be a separate decision and should be assessed at that stage.

Just Transition	**Negative**	The reliance on road transport to access education has the potential to affect households differently, particularly those without access to private transport or with fewer financial resources. This creates a risk that the move towards lower-carbon travel and services may be less accessible to some rural families.

Natural Environment & Biodiversity		
Objective	**Impact**	**Reasons/Mitigating Actions**
Quality of Natural Environment	**No Impact**	The proposal does not itself involve development, construction, land-use change or other physical activity that would materially affect air, water, soil, habitats, landscape or the wider natural environment.
Quantity of Natural Environment	**No Impact**	The proposal does not involve a change in land use, development or physical works that would increase or decrease the amount of natural habitat, green space or other natural resources.
Biodiversity	**No Impact**	The proposal does not involve a change in land use, development or physical works that would increase or decrease the amount of natural habitat, green space or other natural resources.
Adaptation and Resilience		
Objective	**Impact**	**Reasons/Mitigating Actions**
Adaptation	**Negative**	The change increases the long-term reliance on road travel for children in Foyers to access primary education. This potentially increases exposure to disruption from severe weather and changing climate conditions, including snow, ice, flooding and storms, compared with education being available locally. Existing emergency planning, school closure and transport arrangements provide mitigation for these risks.
Infrastructure Resilience	**Negative**	The change creates an ongoing dependency on the rural road network and school transport for access to primary education. Severe weather, flooding, snow, ice, storms or disruption to transport infrastructure could therefore affect access to education more significantly than if provision were available within the local community.
Council Resilience	**Negative**	The change creates an ongoing reliance on the Council's ability to maintain school transport and respond to disruption affecting rural travel routes. Extreme weather or other disruption could increase

		operational pressures associated with transport, emergency planning, communications and maintaining access to education.
Community Resilience	**Negative**	The permanent loss of local primary school provision may reduce community resilience by removing an important local service and increasing dependence on services and transport outside the Foyers community. It may also affect the community's ability to attract and retain families with children and reduce opportunities for connections between the school, families and the wider community.

Stage 2 – Summary of Actions
Please provide a summary of the mitigating actions raised in the above tables here along with timescales and identify a lead person for each action. This can be referred to throughout the proposal development and in the final CCIA. (Use TAB to add more rows if required)

Action	Timescale	Lead Person
The permanent loss of local primary school provision may reduce community resilience by removing an important local service and increasing dependence on services and transport outside the Foyers community. It may also affect the community's ability to attract and retain families with children and reduce opportunities for connections between the school, families and the wider community.	Prior to implementation and reviewed thereafter as required	Integrated Transport Officer
Consider opportunities to minimise additional private vehicle journeys when planning school activities, events and meetings, including appropriate use of digital participation where suitable.	From implementation and ongoing	Headteacher, Aldourie Primary School
Ensure individual transport requirements are considered where children have disabilities or additional support needs, including appropriate arrangements during adverse weather where required.	Prior to admission/transition and reviewed according to individual need	Head Teacher / Education Transport Officer

Maintain appropriate severe-weather and emergency arrangements for pupils dependent on school transport, including clear communication with families where transport or access to school is disrupted.	In place prior to implementation and reviewed annually	Head Teacher / Education Service
Consider the resilience of school transport routes and access arrangements to severe weather and other disruption when transport arrangements are reviewed.	Prior to implementation and as part of ongoing transport reviews	Education Transport Officer
Maintain links between children living in the Foyers area and their local community where practicable, recognising the potential impact that the permanent loss of local education provision may have on community resilience.	Ongoing following implementation	Head Teacher
Monitor the identified climate and resilience impacts following implementation and review mitigations if circumstances materially change.	Within 12 months of implementation, then as required.	Strategic Lead Operations