

Comparative Information Used for Consideration of Alternatives for Plockton Primary School

The following information has been compiled by Dr Dorothy Gibb, Principal Estates Officer, in response to requests for information made during the supplementary community engagement session for Plockton Primary School Statutory Consultation, held at Plockton High School on 28 September 2026. This information has been reviewed by Service Leads for Education, and Property and Assets, and is considered accurate.

USING THE COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The purpose of the comparison is to provide a comprehensive assessment of all identified alternatives against a consistent set of criteria. Individual criteria should not be considered in isolation. Instead, the information should be reviewed collectively to understand the overall strengths, challenges and implications of each alternative.

Inclusion within the comparison does not imply that an alternative is feasible or capable of implementation. Rather, the comparison is intended to ensure that all alternatives are considered on an equal basis, enabling a clear understanding of their respective benefits, constraints and implications.

In some instances, the assessment may demonstrate that certain alternatives have significant limitations or constraints. This is an important outcome of the comparison process, as it helps distinguish alternatives that are capable of meeting the identified requirements from those that are not.

ALTERNATIVES

Five alternatives are described and are assessed across nine defined criteria. The five alternatives are as follows.

Alternative 1: This represents the baseline situation where the full complement of the primary school (3 classes) and nursery is located at the Plockton Primary School site. Although primary pupils have been temporarily located at the High School, this alternative represents the Status Quo.

Alternative 2: The full complement of the primary school (3 classes) and nursery is located at the Plockton Primary School site but the canteen/multipurpose building is demolished but not replaced.

Alternative 3: The full complement of the primary school (3 classes) and nursery is located at the Plockton Primary School site and the canteen/multipurpose building is refurbished.

Alternative 4: The full complement of the primary school (3 classes) and nursery is located at the Plockton Primary School site and both the canteen/multipurpose and weaver's buildings are demolished.

Alternative 5: The primary pupils (3 classes) and primary staff relocate to available classrooms at Plockton High School, and the nursery remains in the Main Building at the Plockton Primary School site.

Criteria Used and Rationale of the Comparisons

Comparisons are based on the following defined set of criteria which are applied equally across all alternatives. Assessing each alternative against the same evidence base promotes consistency, objectivity and a balanced comparison.

Weighting of criteria is sometimes applied to reflect the relative importance of particular considerations. In this instance, however, the outcomes are sufficiently distinct that weighting would not materially influence the conclusions drawn from the assessment.

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Site Area	- Sufficient area for a single storey primary school and nursery with outdoor play, parking and drop-off, and secure bin store. - Site should provide positive primary school model for school, local and wider community. - Includes an element of future proofing for possible expansion (typically 2 further classrooms).
Local and Regional Significance	- The 2019 adopted West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan (being updated). - Local cultural/historic resources. - Ownership. - Opportunity for local community access for after-hours school lets (meetings, exercise classes, indoor sports/games, etc). - Off-street parking and drop-off avoiding local road congestion.
School and Nursery Requirements	- Meets latest WC requirements (School Premises (Scotland) Regulations 1967 (SPR); British Standard 6465-1:2006; (Building Scotland) Regulations Non-Domestic Technical Handbook. - Care Inspectorate nursery requirements (WC, nappy changing, free-flow). - Useable space requirements (typically for up to 25 primary pupils per classroom). - Outdoor education opportunities. - Outdoor play areal requirement for primary, learning support and nursery.
Infrastructure, Drainage and Utilities	- Sufficient capacity and availability of utilities and services (power, gas, potable water, sewer) to meet demand. - Flood risk (SEPA, April 2025), suitable area drainage infrastructure.
Access, Parking and Drop-off/Pick-up	- Suitable safe access to parking and drop-off for private and school transport, Learning Support (ASN) drop-off, and service and delivery vehicles. - Staff and visitor parking. - Accessible parking. - Safe access for pedestrians and cyclists. - Avoid or minimize local route congestion.

	- EV charging space/s.
Sustainable Active Travel (Pedestrians and Cyclists)	- Provide sustainable safe active travel for pedestrians and cyclists with direct walking routes including footpaths and cycleways, and/or with opportunities to improve local active travel routes.
Educational Opportunities	- Maximizes educational opportunities for primary and nursery pupils. - Emphasis on outdoor teaching areas, and outdoor play for nursery and primary, with dedicated outdoor learning support (ASN) area. - Maintain operational school through construction and/or refurbishment phasing to avoid decanting school to temporary accommodation.
Energy Efficiency	- Building design/refurbishment to achieve low energy target, and to meet the NZC¹ Public Buildings Standard (pending future compliance requirement).
Fiscal Viability Including Operational and Maintenance Costs	- Affordability of building design and construction, including potential additional/unforeseen costs. - Affordability of predicted operational and maintenance costs. - Anticipated abnormals.

¹ Net Zero Carbon is currently a Scottish Government voluntary standard for public buildings, with a nationwide net zero target to meet by 2045. *Public Sector Leadership on the Global Climate Emergency, Guidance*. Scottish Government, October 2021. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/public-sector-leadership-global-climate-emergency/>

Table: Comparative Information for Consideration of Alternative Options for Plockton Primary School.

Alternative	1. Primary and Nursery pupils remain at Plockton Primary School site (PPS). (Status Quo)	2. Primary and Nursery pupils remain at Plockton Primary School site (PPS) and Canteen building demolished.	3. Primary and Nursery pupils remain at Plockton Primary School site (PPS) and Canteen building is refurbished.	4. Demolish canteen and Weaver's buildings and refurbish Plockton Primary School site (PPS) to accommodate primary and nursery.	5. Primary pupils relocate to Plockton HS (PHS) and Nursery pupils remain at Plockton Primary School site (PPS). (This is Current Temporary Setup)	Summary Note
Criterion						
Site Area	Constrained site, bounded by public roads on all sides with little to no verges (public footpath Innes Street with protective railing). Expansion not feasible. Does not meet recommended area requirements even assuming 50% school capacity - 1,867m² site includes 3 buildings (468m²) with less than 1,300m² for outdoor play and education. No school parking (limited on street); not feasible to accommodate drop-off areas, staff or visitor parking.	Same as for Alt 1. Due to its location and the site boundary constraints, demolition of canteen would not provide opportunity to improve access, parking or drop-off.	Due to site constraints and limited footprint of the canteen building (105m²), it is not feasible to refurbish the building into a useable building (neither for servery nor education purposes). Compliance with regulations and guidance under Building Control, BB 103, and SPR could not be achieved within the canteen footprint. (Existing building has no pupil or staff WCs).	Constrained site - insufficient area even after removing both buildings. Not feasible to accommodate current capacities for 3-classroom primary and 1 nursery play room, and required ancillary support areas, especially outdoor play and education. Refurb would require Planning and Building Control approvals and these unlikely and/or not achievable due to site area and local significance of site and village. No ability to meet increased roll numbers – however, unlikely this would occur based on current roll projections.	PHS current capacity is 41% and projected to remain around this level for next 5-10 years. The 3 classes of Primary School pupils can be successfully accommodated at PHS following internal reorganization and primary pupil targeted refurbishment. The main building at the PPS has sufficient capacity to accommodate current and projected nursery rolls and there is sufficient outdoor area to provide improved outdoor play and potentially free-flow activity. The PPS could be further enhanced if both the other deteriorating, not listed, buildings are removed.	Alt 1 has multiple negative impacts for pupils and staff. It does not meet toilet requirements. Nursery provision would be downgraded by the CI as could not meet current guidance due to limited (reduced) nursery area. Alts 2, 3 and 4 are not feasible – cannot meet current regulation due to site area constraint. Nursery would be downgraded due to limited nursery area. Alt 5 provides potential benefits for primary and nursery, and meets relevant regulations and guidance.

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Local and Regional Significance	Main Building (built 1876) is Category C listed by Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Latest Council building condition rating is B. The Primary School site is considered locally to be a key feature of Plockton Village and is highly valued as a community asset. Neither the vacated canteen/multipurpose nor the weaver's building are HES ranked. The canteen/ multipurpose building is Condition D rated and proposed for demolition. When last rated, the Weaver's building was Condition B rated however further assessment indicates key vulnerabilities including failing roof finishes.	Same as for Alt 1. Demolition of the canteen/ multipurpose building is not anticipated to impact Category C listing for the Main Building. Demolition of the canteen/ multipurpose building could be considered beneficial to the overall site as it would remove this deteriorating structure which is in close proximity to the listed Main Building.	Same as for Alt 1 and 2. Refurbishment of the canteen/ multipurpose building is not considered feasible due to its condition and lack of suitable facilities (toilets/hand washing)	There is insufficient internal and external area to accommodate the primary and nursery and a new canteen building. However, demolishing both the canteen/ multipurpose and weaver's buildings would preserve the Category C listed building and the whole site could then be landscaped to the benefit of the Main Building and its setting.	Retaining the nursery at the Category C listed Main Building provides an appropriate ongoing use for the building. This also supports preserving its local significance as a key feature of the older village area. As noted under Alt 4, the PPS could be further enhanced as a key local feature if both the other deteriorating, not listed, buildings are removed. Unused areas/rooms in the Main Building could be available for community use, further securing mid- to longer-term use for the building.	Alt 5 uses the listed Main Building at the Primary School site as an active nursery, preserving the building and site thus acknowledging its importance to the local community as key village feature. Community usage could further secure mid- to longer-term use for the building. Alts 1 to 4 would continue to pressure for full closure and relocation of the primary school due to the site's limitations in meeting building and educational requirements.

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School and Nursery Requirements	This alternative fails to meet all elements of this criterion. Lack of toilet facilities across the site requires primary pupils and primary staff to move between buildings to access toilets. Nursery toilet and nappy changing cannot be accommodated without negatively impacting primary boys and girls toilet provision. Not feasible to modify/refurbish to meet even minimum requirements for pupil and staff toilet provision (2026); Care Inspectorate; usable indoor teaching space; learning support; or outdoor play for primary, nursery and learning support.	Same as Alt 1.	Same as Alt 1.	Same as Alt 1.	Most indoor and outdoor nursery related requirements can be (and are currently being) met at the PPS due to the increased indoor and outdoor space resulting from relocation of primary pupils and staff to PHS. Additional facilities and improvements for nursery can be developed in conjunction with staff and Care Inspectorate recommendations. Work has been undertaken at PPS for the nursery to provide compliant nappy changing, and toilet provision, and direct access to outdoors. Due to availability of area at PHS (currently and continuing at 40% capacity), the three primary classes can be accommodated with appropriate modifications being made. PHS Improvements made to date for the temporary arrangement include: new	The failure of the canteen building to meet required conditions led to the relocation of primary pupils to PHS in 2024. Since then, increasing compliance obligations across several areas and continued aging of buildings, means that a return to the previous arrangement (Alt1) is no longer feasible. Alt 5 with primary pupils relocated to PHS and nursery pupils remaining at PPS, eliminates compliance demands for both primary and nursery groups because each facility (PHS and PPS) meets the relevant respective requirements. All elements of this criterion can be met under Alt 5.

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					classroom storage/furniture; Clevertouch panel; pupil toilet provision with handwash troughs; primary height wash hand basin for messy play; primary staff office/meeting/staff base with furniture; learning support area; secured outdoor play area; internal fobbing/intercom; hardstanding outdoor play area (ongoing); and outdoor play equipment. Due to the size and existing facilities at PHS, further improvements can be identified and implemented to accommodate the primary pupils and staff. There is opportunity for primary and high school teaching staff to work together to improve the setting for both primary and high school pupils and staff.	

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Infra-structure, Drainage and Utilities	No infrastructure, drainage or utilities issues. SSE substation located within site behind weaver's building.	Same as Alt 1	Same as Alt 1	Same as Alt 1	No infrastructure, drainage or utilities issues. Inclusion of primary pupils and staff at PHS not expected to impact this criterion – PHS operating at well below capacity.	
Access, Parking and Drop-off/Pick-up	This alternative fails to meet all elements of this criterion. No safe drop off; Innes Street is narrow and congested much of the time; no nursery parking areas; no accessible parking, etc. Additional security fencing has reduced unauthorised visitor entry to the site and main building (mainly curious tourists). There is a large gated entrance to the hard surface play area but this conflicts with a limited street parking area.	Same as Alt 1. Demolition will have no benefit for access, parking, drop-off/pickup. There are no access points and there's a stone wall within the site between the weaver's building and the canteen. The weaver's building is at the top end of the site and there is no way to create an access from the adjacent boundary roads to get directly in to the site.	Same as Alt 1. Refurbishment will have no benefit for access, parking, drop-off/pickup.	Same as Alt 2. Demolition of both buildings will have no benefit for access, parking, drop-off/pickup as no ability to expand site area.	Access, parking and drop-off at PHS is congested especially at school bus drop off and pick up times. In spite of this the temporary relocation of primary pupils and staff has been accommodated. Going forward, an overall review of parking and access could be conducted so that optimum use is made of PHS to provide improved access for pedestrian and vehicular users, and visitors. Pressure for parking and drop off at PPS will be reduced with the relocation of the primary pupils and staff to PHS.	No improvements for this criterion are feasible for Alt 1. In comparison, Alt 5 may present opportunities to make improvements for both the PPS and PHS.

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Sustainable Active Travel (Pedestrians and Cyclists)	PPS sits on Innes Street which is a single spine road and the only point of access to the main village. As noted in the 2019 local development plan, Innes Street is congested by width, alignment, on-road parking and lack of suitable turning opportunities. The Innes Street public footpath is not continuous for the road length and pedestrians must cross the road to access the PPS. The other three boundary streets have no footpaths and are all single carriageway with parked vehicles.	Same as Alt 1.	Same as Alt 1.	Same as Alt 1.	Same as Alt 1, however, due to the much reduced pupil numbers (nursery pupils and staff only), there may be opportunity to encourage active travel. (Scooter and bike shelter, thermoplastic playground safety activities, etc.) Less travel required for families with children in both primary and secondary phases Active Travel arrangements for primary pupils can also be developed for the High School site.	Relocation of primary pupils and staff to PHS reduces number of daily trips to/from and users of PPS. This reduced activity may encourage active travel for those who live locally.
Educational Opportunities	Limited opportunity to improve for primary pupils. Insufficient indoor area for general purpose/resource room especially to meet separate EM and GM	Same as Alt 1. May be opportunity to have covered outdoor education shelter within footprint of	Same as Alt 1.	Same as Alt 2.	Significant potential opportunity to enhance indoor and outdoor nursery provision due to expansion into areas vacated by the 3 primary classrooms.	While staff at PPS have made the best use of the very limited indoor and outdoor areas, Alt 1 struggles to meet even basic

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	curricular activities. No learning support area and no gym facility. Nursery indoor area limited to single playroom with no opportunity for free flow. Nursery may struggle to meet Care Inspectorate registration requirements especially in accommodating 2-yr olds. Outdoor play and outdoor education severely limited due to site constraints. No covered outdoor learning area. Nursery has no direct access to soft play area (grass/garden). The Primary School site does have close proximity to the shore and village which provides opportunities for pupils to access learning activities away from the school.	former canteen/multipurpose building.			Care Inspectorate report (2026) improved review noting expanded area for meals/snacks. Potential for free flow and outdoor soft area play, especially if one or both canteen/multipurpose and weaver's buildings are removed. Opportunity remains for time-tabled visits by nursery to PHS to use facilities and participate in in shared activities. Co-locating primary and secondary pupils together offers recognised educational, social, and operational advantages including: smoother educational transitions through familiarity and academic continuity; stable relationships with continuity of pastoral care and ASN support; access to wider facilities such as food /science	educational requirements due to lack of GP room, learning support area, gym, assembly, and social area. Outdoor area is extremely restricted under Alt 1 and although activities are amended by off-site visits, the site is far below minimum requirements. Alt 5 benefits primary pupils with improved indoor and outdoor educational opportunities. Research shows that collocating primary and secondary pupils has benefits across the whole school in terms of fostering a gentler more family orientated environment and providing opportunities for older pupils to step

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					/tech and indoor and outdoor sports facilities (as timetabled); mentorship and social development PHS provides improved classrooms and facilities for primary pupils and primary staff. Concerns expressed about behaviour and noise are recognised but experience from elsewhere shows that this can be managed successfully by school leadership. PHS is still in close enough proximity to support pupils accessing the village and the shore for wider outdoor learning opportunities.	into leadership and mentorship roles, supporting younger pupils through reading schemes, sports coaching, or lunchtime clubs. Meanwhile, the nursery remaining located at the PPS can take advantage of the indoor and outdoor resources, which although limited, are sufficient to meet nursery school guidance.

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Energy Efficiency	The PPS operates on electricity for heat and power. Electricity consumption is poorer for the entire site compared to the equivalent for a comparable primary school.	Same as Alt 1. Closure of the canteen building has reduced electricity consumption but the site still remains poorer than an equivalent primary school. Demolition of the canteen would fix in place this reduced consumption for the site.	Same as Alt 1.	Closure of both the canteen and weaver's buildings would reduce electricity consumption and could mean that the remaining Main Building would potentially meeting the target for an equivalent electricity-powered primary school.	There would be an expected reduced energy demand at PPS following relocation of primary pupils to PHS. No increased energy demand for PHS is expected due to primary pupils being incorporated because no additional rooms or areas have been added – the primary pupils and staff occupy existing PHS areas.	Alt 5 should realise a reduction in energy demand for the PPS and no increase in demand for PHS because the primary pupils and staff are simply occupying existing available areas within the high school The greatest potential reduction in energy demand would be achieved if both canteen and weaver's buildings are demolished (both poor performing).
Fiscal viability including operational and maintenance costs.	Alt 1 would continue to incur significant and increasing maintenance and repair costs, but provide no improvement to the long-term viability of the buildings despite the investment. PPS	Similar to Alt 1 with reduced repair and maintenance burden because canteen building demolished. Similar to Alt 1, this alternative cannot deliver the range of requirements for a primary	Refurbishment of the canteen building would be a major project and would attract building warrant requirements, especially related to toilet provision, accessibility, fire safety and insulation.	Similar to Alt 2. This alternative does not deliver the range of requirements for a primary and nursery school and therefore this option is considered not fiscally viable.	Relocation of primary pupils and staff to PHS requires investment to cover relocation costs, repurposing classes, toilet facilities, office and staff areas. A suite of measures has already been done (See above under School and	Alternative 5 is considered financially viable because it enables investment to be focused on service improvement and educational provision, rather than being

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	would continue to fall short of requirements for effective primary and nursery education. Minor repairs can be continued through the Council's maintenance team and local contractors, but most major repairs would trigger Building Warrant with statutory requirements extending beyond the specific repair to: toilet provision, fire safety, insulation, etc. Also Listed Building Consent may be required due to proximity to the C-listed main building. Works needing more than 5 weeks would require temporary decant of primary and nursery pupils to alternative accommodation	and nursery school and therefore this option is considered not fiscally viable.	Primary and nursery pupils would need to be decanted to suitable temporary accommodation until works are completed. Contractor availability and cost is the same as Alt 1. Compliance with the range of Building Warrant and other requirements are unlikely to be cost effective and compliance alone would not deliver the required useable school educational spaces as noted above. This alternative cannot deliver the range of requirements for a primary and nursery school and therefore is considered not fiscally viable.		Nursery Requirements) to meet the temporary relocation arrangements and further improvements will be developed in conjunction with primary and high school staff. Investment under this Alt 5 delivers improvements to teaching environments and staff facilities, whereas investment under the other alternatives is predominantly consumed by maintenance and repair costs, providing limited improvement to educational provision. Similarly, investment associated with nursery provision at PPS would be targeted at improving educational facilities and outcomes, rather than being consumed by the maintenance and repair demands associated with the wider PPS site.	largely consumed by the ongoing and unpredictable maintenance and repair requirements associated with the existing estate. It provides opportunities to enhance teaching environments, staff facilities and nursery provision, while delivering benefits that extend beyond the preservation of existing unsuitable buildings.

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	which is costly and disruptive. Works conducted in remote Plockton and nearby areas attract an additional 20% location cost above UK baseline, as well as further accommodation costs due to tourism pressures and limited accommodation. These factors contribute lack of success in attracting qualified contractors and meeting budget constraints. Continued reliance on maintenance and repairs is therefore not a sustainable long-term solution. Consequently, this alternative does not represent an efficient or sustainable use of public resources and is not considered financially viable in the long term.					