

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Lifelong Learning Committee

4 September 2019

SCHOOL ESTATE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME PITLOCHRY HIGH SCHOOL

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(Report 19/238)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report explores options for the delivery of senior phase education for Pitlochry High School and Breadalbane Academy. The report recommends that the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) proceeds with the development of a Highland Perthshire Learning Partnership (HPLP). It is also proposed that the plan for the HPLP should be developed, as appropriate, with both school Senior Leadership Teams, Perth College UHI, young people, parents/carers and the wider community through a working group.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

School Estate Transformation

- 1.1 The school estate is a significant and valuable asset to the communities of Perth and Kinross. Between 2019 and 2029, the Council will invest £176m in the school estate. This funding supports a wide range of projects including the replacement of Perth High School and Blairgowrie Recreation Centre. A substantial upgrade programme for primary and secondary schools is also being funded. In addition, the new £32.5m Bertha Park High School opened in August 2019.
- 1.2 The School Estate Strategy ([Report No. 12/370 refers](#)) sets out the Council's aspirations for our schools, and in particular the high value we place on learning, through our vision for well designed, maintained and managed schools.
- 1.3 It is important, in light of the significant investment and cost associated with the school estate, that it is managed in an efficient and effective manner, and that the priorities which are addressed meet the wider strategic objectives of the Council and the needs of our communities.
- 1.4 There are significant challenges for managing the school estate over the coming years. These include changing demographics including population growth and movement, house building in certain locations, ongoing deterioration in building infrastructure, pressure on planned maintenance

budgets, increasing revenue costs and the expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare from 600 to 1140 hours.

- 1.5 The Council's Transformation Strategy 2015-2020 'Building Ambition' and Organisational Development Framework were approved by Council on 1 July 2015 ([Report No. 15/292 refers](#)). Together they detail how Perth and Kinross Council will deliver transformation over the next five years. Accompanying the strategy is a programme of major reviews which are considered to be key drivers and enablers of transformation across the organisation.
- 1.6 On 24 August 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No. 16/347 refers](#)) approved principles to be used as a basis for the transformation review, 'Securing the Future of the School Estate'.

The principles approved by Lifelong Learning Committee as a basis for the transformation review were as follows:

- (i) schools should have an occupancy rate where possible greater than 60% of the capacity and ideally should be operating at over 80% capacity;
 - (ii) every school should be rated as A or B ie at least satisfactory for condition and suitability; and
 - (iii) life expired buildings¹ within the school estate should be prioritised for replacement.
- 1.7 On 2 November 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No. 16/485 refers](#)) approved the development of a number of options appraisals to consider in detail schools which were identified as requiring further consideration.
 - 1.8 The development of the options appraisals is being phased. Phase 1 is close to completion. Phase 1 schools are:
 - Abernyte Primary School;
 - Balhousie Primary School;
 - Blairingone Primary School;
 - Braco Primary School;
 - Forteviot Primary School;
 - Greenloaning Primary School;
 - Logiealmond Primary School;
 - Methven Primary School;
 - North Muirton Primary School; and
 - St Ninians Episcopal Primary School.

¹ Life expired buildings are defined as buildings which are uneconomic to maintain.

1.9 Work on Phase 2 options appraisals began in August 2018 in relation to the following schools:

- Cleish Primary School;
- Grandtully Primary School;
- Logierait Primary School;
- Pitlochry High School (Secondary); and
- Ruthvenfield Primary School.

Key Legislation

1.10 Councils, as Education Authorities, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand.

1.11 Councils also have a statutory responsibility in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to achieve best value.

1.12 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 provides a strong, accountable statutory consultation process that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools. These consultation processes are expected to be robust, open, transparent and fair, and seen to be so. They are also expected to be consistent across Scotland.

1.13 The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in relation to rural schools, establishing a presumption against closure of rural schools. The result of this is that Education Authorities must have special regard to a number of factors before formulating a proposal to close a rural school, consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal. These factors are:

- Effect on the Community;
- Effect on Travel Arrangements; and
- Educational Benefit

2. PITLOCHRY HIGH SCHOOL – PROGRESS TO DATE

2.1 Pitlochry High School was included in the schools to be considered due to the occupancy level and condition rating of the school. The occupancy at the time of the 2015 Census² was 144 pupils. The capacity of the secondary school is 237 and therefore this was an occupancy of 61%.

In November 2016, the overall suitability of the building was rated “B” (Satisfactory - Performing well but with minor problems). At the same time the

² An annual pupil census in publicly funded schools in Scotland is carried out every year for publication by the Scottish Government. This usually takes place in September.

overall condition of the building was rated “C” (Poor – showing major defects and/or not operating adequately).

- 2.2 The following options were to be considered for Pitlochry High School as part of the options appraisal:
1. Improve condition rating of school;
 2. Improve condition rating of school and include S5 and S6 at Pitlochry High School to increase occupancy level;
 3. Improve condition rating of school and extend catchment area to increase occupancy level;
 4. S4 pupils move to Breadalbane Academy and review use of Pitlochry High School building; and
 5. Close Pitlochry High School and pupils move to Breadalbane Academy.
- 2.3 An update report for all Phase 2 schools, including Pitlochry High School, was submitted to Lifelong Learning Committee on 27 March 2019 ([Report No. 19/94 refers](#)).
- 2.4 The report detailed responses from a number of community drop-in sessions and feedback from S5/S6 pupils who attended Breadalbane Academy from the Pitlochry area.
- 2.5 There was strong support from the community to include S5 and S6 pupils at Pitlochry High School (option 2). There was a view that this would benefit the pupils who currently have to travel to and integrate at Breadalbane Academy at a critical point in their education.
- 2.6 As the options which relate to S4, S5 and S6 (options 2 and 4), known as the senior phase, affect Breadalbane Academy as well as Pitlochry High School, it was proposed that these be developed further as part of a wider review of the delivery of senior phase education across Highland Perthshire. It was agreed by this Committee that “the wider review would be carried out having regard to the principle that neither school will experience any educational detriment.”
- 2.7 The report recommended that the option of closure of Pitlochry High School be removed from the options appraisal. This was on the basis that there were potential alternatives to closure.
- 2.8 It was also proposed that any potential catchment review for Pitlochry High School (option 3) should not take place, if at all, until the outcome of this wider review of senior phase education is known. This is because the potential impact of any catchment review cannot be considered without first knowing the outcome of the wider review.
- 2.9 It was also noted in the report that there has been ongoing investment in the Pitlochry High School site/building with a view to improving the condition of the building. As a result of this investment, the site/building has now been improved and is now rated as condition ‘B’.

- 2.10 The roll of the secondary school at 19 August 2019 is 116, which is an occupancy of 49%.
- 2.11 It was agreed at this Committee in March, that staff, pupils and parents would be engaged in the process of developing models for senior phase education (S4, S5 and S6) in Highland Perthshire.

3. OPTIONS FOR SENIOR PHASE EDUCATION IN HIGHLAND PERTSHIRE

- 3.1 A number of options for senior phase education in Highland Perthshire, are explored in the options appraisal (Appendix A). These are:
1. Include S5 and S6 at Pitlochry High School to increase occupancy level;
 2. S4 pupils move to Breadalbane Academy and review use of Pitlochry High School building; and
 3. Highland Perthshire Learning Partnership (HPLP).
- 3.2 The curricular pathway at Pitlochry High School is based on the historical curriculum model (S1/2, S3/4, S5/6) instead of the current Broad General Education (BGE) curriculum model of S1-S3 then S4-S6. This creates a transition to Breadalbane Academy during the senior phase instead of at the beginning of the senior phase.
- 3.3 It became clear, during the engagement process with the Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) from Breadalbane Academy and Pitlochry High School, that there were opportunities for a collaborative approach to educational provision to benefit all pupils in Highland Perthshire, regardless of where and/or how the senior phase was delivered.
- 3.4 The Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) of both schools along with senior staff from Perth College UHI, considered a range of options developments which underpin such a collaborative model. The SLTs of both schools recognise that they are both stronger working together.
- 3.5 The focus of the HPLP would be on four key areas:
- Improved collaboration and partnership between Pitlochry High School and Breadalbane Academy;
 - Perth College UHI Highland Perthshire Learning Hub, located in Pitlochry High School;
 - Digital Learning; and
 - Wider Community Partnership.
- 3.6 There are also opportunities within the HPLP for delivering senior phase education in Highland Perthshire more flexibly with regard to the use of resources including staff and buildings. This would need significant work.
- 3.7 Any plan for the HPLP would be developed, as appropriate, with both school Senior Leadership Teams, Perth College UHI, young people, parents and the

wider community. A lead officer would be appointed to support and manage the implementation of the HPLP.

4. PITLOCHRY HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

- 4.1 The school building was built circa 1975 with two main linked buildings, the two storey high school and mainly single storey primary school and nursery. The nursery was extended circa 1995.
- 4.2 In November 2016, the overall condition of the building (secondary, primary and nursery) was rated "C". Since then there has been investment in the site/building including works to fire and detection systems, electrical upgrades, new lighting, new radiators/heaters, replacement pipework, repairs to the gym hall of the secondary building, new ceilings and replacement of sections of the roof.
- 4.3 The condition of the building is now a "B" rating and the building condition is unlikely to deteriorate over the next 20 years.
- 4.4 Works programmed for the remainder of 2019/20 include external lighting and a Wi-Fi upgrade and the installation of Smartboards. Further works are planned for the nursery and primary building in 2020/21.
- 4.5 Further investment in the site/school building will be specified in terms of the proposals for the future of the school, regardless of which option is approved for progressing.

5. ENGAGEMENT WITH STAFF, PUPILS AND PARENTS

- 5.1 A series of focus groups took place which explored the options considered for the delivery of senior phase education in Highland Perthshire. These focus groups included:
 - The Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) from Breadalbane Academy and Pitlochry High School (jointly);
 - Staff at Breadalbane Academy;
 - Staff at Pitlochry High School;
 - P6-S6 pupils at Breadalbane Academy;
 - P6-S4 pupils at Pitlochry High School;
 - Parents/carers of pupils at Breadalbane Academy; and
 - Parents/carers of pupils at Pitlochry High School.
- 5.2 The format of the focus group was to present, in detail, each of the options and the potential impact of each option. Discussion took place during the presentation and then participants split into groups to write up feedback on each of the options.

5.3 In general, the feedback was as follows:

- Both SLTs recognise that it would be difficult to implement option 1 and option 2 without detriment to both schools;
- Both SLTs recognise that option 3, a collaborative approach to educational provision, could benefit all pupils in Highland Perthshire;
- In general, Pitlochry High School staff, current pupils and parents/carers are in favour of option 1;
- Breadalbane Academy pupils recognised positives and negatives in each of the options; and
- Breadalbane Academy parents/carers are of the view that option 1 would be to the detriment of all senior pupils in Highland Perthshire .

5.4 Detailed feedback from the sessions has been uploaded to the Council website. The feedback has been considered in the detail of the options contained in Appendix A.

6. ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

6.1 Each of the three options detailed in paragraph 3.1, has been assessed, in Appendix A, on the basis of:

- Pupil Impact (educational);
- Staff Impact;
- Travel impact;
- Asset/building impact; and
- Financial Impact.

6.2 A summary of the impact on pupils, staff, travel, asset management and finance for each option is detailed in table 1 below.

Option	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact ³	Negative Impact
1) Include S5 and S6 at Pitlochry High School to increase occupancy level	Travel Impact	Staff Impact Asset Impact	Pupil Impact Financial Impact
2) S4 pupils move to Breadalbane Academy and review use of Pitlochry High School building		Pupil Impact Asset Impact Financial Impact	Travel Impact Staff Impact
3) Highland Perthshire Learning Partnership	Pupil Impact Asset Impact	Travel Impact Financial Impact Staff Impact	

Table 1: Impact of models

³ In some cases ‘neutral’ may mean that there is a positive and a negative rather than no change. For example with asset impact in option 1) there would be a positive impact on Pitlochry High School but a negative impact on Breadalbane Academy.

6.3 An assessment of each option is summarised in table 2 below.

Assessment	Summary
1) Include S5 and S6 at Pitlochry High School to increase occupancy level	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be less subject choice for senior pupils at Breadalbane Academy and Pitlochry High School which is an educational detriment for pupils. • There would be less travel involved for senior Pitlochry High School pupils. • Although this option would increase occupancy at Pitlochry High School, there would be a decrease at Breadalbane Academy, which is an expensive asset. • There would be an additional revenue net cost of £110k per annum. This is due to an approximate additional revenue cost of £250k per annum to fund additional teachers and a saving of approximately £140k per annum for travel costs. 	<p>A Statutory Consultation would be required to establish S5/S6 at Pitlochry High School. It is unlikely that we would be able to meet the requirements of the Act in terms of demonstrating educational benefit of the proposal for all affected schools.</p>
2) S4 pupils move to Breadalbane Academy and review use of Pitlochry High School building	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be educational benefit for pupils transitioning to Breadalbane Academy at S4. • Potentially in the long term the inability to recruit and retain quality staff at Pitlochry High School could eventually lead to educational detriment for S1-S3 pupils at Pitlochry High School. • Senior Pitlochry High School pupils would travel from S4 instead of S5. • The occupancy of Pitlochry High School, would decrease however there would be increased occupancy at Breadalbane Academy. • There would be additional travel costs of approximately £19k. 	<p>A Statutory Consultation would also be required for this option. While there would be an educational benefit for senior pupils, there could eventually be educational detriment for S1-S3 pupils through inability to retain or recruit quality staff at Pitlochry High School.</p>
3) Highland Perthshire Learning Partnership (HPLP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HPLP will positively impact the pupil transition for senior Pitlochry High School pupils. In addition, vocational opportunities will be available for pupils in Pitlochry through Perth College. • Travel arrangements would initially remain the same, however options for reducing travel would be considered in developing the HPLP • The HPLP will use some of the building for Perth College UHI and there is potential for reconfiguring the building to benefit the community and the primary school. • There are no financial or staffing implications, other than the capital funding required . 	<p>This option will have a positive educational impact for senior Pitlochry High School pupils and for vocational learning. There is also the potential in the longer term to develop this model into the flexible use of resources and buildings which could allow Pitlochry pupils to study in their community.</p>

Table 2: Assessment of models

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 There are challenges to delivering senior phase education in Highland Perthshire, irrespective of the option chosen, due to the low pupil population and the rurality of the area.
- 7.2 Significant work has taken place to explore alternative models for the delivery of senior phase education in Highland Perthshire, including engaging with staff, pupils and parents.
- 7.3 In general, there was support for the establishment of the HPLP, which would see a more collaborative approach to education across Highland Perthshire including the senior phase.
- 7.4 Pitlochry High School staff, pupils and parents/carers are in favour of S5/S6 being established at Pitlochry High School in addition to the HPLP.
- 7.5 Appendix A contains a detailed options appraisal of three options for senior phase education. These options are summarised in table 1 (paragraph 6.2) and table 2 (paragraph 6.3).
- 7.6 The outcome of the options appraisal is that options 1 and 2 cannot be implemented without educational detriment, which is the key principle under which the options are being considered.
- 7.7 The SLTs of both schools are supportive of the remaining option which is the establishment of the HPLP, which would see a more collaborative approach to education across Highland Perthshire including the senior phase.
- 7.8 The proposals for the HPLP detailed in Appendix A are the beginning of a partnership approach to education in Highland Perthshire. The plan for the HPLP would be developed, as appropriate, with both school Senior Leadership Teams, Perth College UHI, young people, parents and the wider community.
- 7.9 It should be noted that a key element of the plan for the HPLP will be to explore the development of and investment in the building, for the school and the wider community. Perth College (UHI) will be part of this partnership.
- 7.10 The development of the HPLP will be funded through investment of £50,000 (revenue) which was allocated towards working in partnership with Perth College (UHI) to explore the feasibility of enhancing the senior phase and wider learning opportunities outwith Perth City
- 7.11 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - (i) Requests the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to progress with developing a detailed plan for the HPLP as appropriate, with both school Senior Leadership Teams, Perth College UHI, young

- people, parents/carers and the wider community through a working group; and
- (ii) Requests the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to report back to the November 2019 Lifelong Learning Committee with an update on the work undertaken by the working group .

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to all of these objectives.

Corporate Plan

1.2 The Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan set out five strategic objectives:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to all of these Objectives.

- 1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:
- Maximising Resources

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no other direct financial implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

Workforce

- 2.2 As a result of this report there will be workforce/resource implications for various ECS teams and the Senior Leadership Teams of Breadalbane Academy and Pitlochry High School.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.1.1 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome and has been assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.2.1 However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because these matters relate to the School Estate Strategy which is being considered under the Act as part of The

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions. The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal and Governance Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Risk

- 3.5 A risk log is being maintained for the School Estate Transformation Programme.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Governance Services and Head of Property Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

External

- 4.2 This report details the consultation which has been carried out to date in regards to the development of this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 A communication plan has been prepared which will support effective communication and engagement with stakeholders, and to promote the anticipated efficiencies and benefits of this Transformation Project as well as the links to the wider Transformation Programme. A range of methods will be used to consult with internal and external stakeholders as identified in the draft communication plan, such as meetings, briefings, community consultation and focus groups.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Options Appraisal Report Pitlochry High School (Secondary)