

# PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

## Lifelong Learning Committee

4 November 2020

### ABERNYTE PRIMARY SCHOOL – SCOPING REPORT

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)  
(Report No. 20/208)

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks approval from Lifelong Learning Committee for the scope and principles to be used to underpin the options appraisal to be developed for a catchment review for Abernyte Primary School.

#### 1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 On 26 August 2020, Lifelong Learning Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the decisions taken relating to the proposal to close Abernyte Primary School ([Report No. 20/142 refers](#)).
- 1.2 Lifelong Learning Committee requested the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to bring back a scoping report for approval to Lifelong Learning Committee in November 2020 which will outline all possible options for a catchment review to build a sustainable roll at the earliest opportunity, including looking at the possibility of a nursery.
- 1.3 Lifelong Learning Committee had previously approved an assessment of a potential change to the catchment area at Abernyte Primary School on 21 March 2018 ([Report No. 18/86 refers](#)). That [assessment](#) sought to clarify whether a change to the catchment area would provide an increased and sustainable school roll for Abernyte Primary School. The outcome of that [assessment](#) was considered by Lifelong Learning Committee on 22 August 2018 ([Report No. 18/243 refers](#)).

#### 2. PROPOSED PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Prior to undertaking an options appraisal to consider a further review of the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School, Lifelong Learning Committee is being asked to consider and agree the principles which should underpin the scope of the options appraisal.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the principles should take account of the fact that Abernyte Primary School and all its adjoining primary school catchment areas are classed as rural schools.

2.3 A catchment review can, in principle, be a reasonable option to increase the potential pupil roll and, therefore, the sustainability of a school. It is proposed that the following principles should be considered:

- Any option to be considered will not cause a detrimental impact to the school roll or sustainability of another small rural school of 70<sup>1</sup> pupils or fewer;
- Any option to be considered would contribute to a sustainable roll for Abernyte Primary School;
- Any option to be considered would relate to a catchment area geographically adjacent to Abernyte Primary School catchment area;
- Any option would not result in a pupil travelling through another primary school catchment area to reach their catchment school;
- Any option would not result in a significant increase in the travel time or distance for a pupil to reach their catchment school;
- There should be no adverse pupil impact in terms of educational benefit in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010; and
- There must be support from those parents/carers and pupils living in the affected catchment areas.

### **3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

3.1 The options about a nursery and catchment review are separate but interrelated and decisions about one will affect the other.

3.2 Abernyte Primary School has capacity for 44 pupils. Learning and teaching spaces comprise of a classroom at the main entrance of the school which can accommodate 20 pupils and a classroom at the rear of the school that can accommodate 24 pupils. The current school roll is 10 pupils which consists of 4 catchment pupils and 6 placing requests.

3.3 In considering the possibility of a nursery, this could be achieved in either of the following ways:

- A nursery could be created within the existing school building by using space within the school. This would reduce the capacity of the school to either 20 or 24 pupils. The reduction in capacity is due to the fact that one of the two available classrooms would need to be used to create a nursery. The estimated cost of this could be £230,000 based on the recent cost of implementing similar nursery provision at another school. Actual costs would have to be determined through a feasibility study.

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<sup>1</sup> A small school is defined as 70 pupils or fewer in terms of the Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) - Pupil Numbers: Scottish Government Pupil Census 2019. Pupils in Small Schools: Pupils in primary schools of less than 70, in settlements in Scottish Government urban/rural classifications 5 and 6 (Source: Scottish Government Education Analytical Services Directorate).

- The school could be extended to include a separate standalone nursery as an additional building which would maintain the capacity of the school at 44 pupils. The estimated cost of this could be £800,000, again this cost is based on a current project. Actual costs will be determined through a feasibility study and may be higher than £800,000.

3.4 The detail of these estimated costs is set out in the Annex, Section 2.1.

3.5 The option which reduces the capacity of the school to 20 or 24 pupils provides limited scope in which to review the catchment area given that the current school roll is 10 pupils.

Any proposed review of the catchment area would need to ensure that the school had capacity, both now and in the future, to accommodate all the pupils from an extended catchment area. This is to avoid the situation where a catchment pupil could not be accommodated within their catchment school and would require to be zoned to the next nearest school with capacity.

#### **4. OTHER FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION**

4.1 In developing an options appraisal, the following factors will also be investigated:

- Impact on the capacity and school environment of Abernyte Primary School as a result of including nursery provision within the school;
- Impact on the capacity and school environment of Abernyte Primary School as a result of a catchment review affecting the school;
- Impact on other schools adjacent to Abernyte Primary School catchment area considered as part of a catchment review;
- Impact on the Early Learning and Childcare provision for the Carse of Gowrie as a result of including nursery provision within the school; and
- Financial impact and Best Value.

#### **5. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

5.1 As the options appraisal is only considering a catchment review and the addition of nursery provision, and is not considering the closure of a school, only parents/carers and prospective parents/carers, staff and children affected by the proposals will be consulted. Once the principles have been agreed, this will determine the scope of the options appraisal and will determine the school communities who will be consulted. The detail of this is set out in Appendix B.

#### **6. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

6.1 The following primary schools currently share a catchment boundary with Abernyte Primary School:

- Balbeggie Primary School
- Burrelton Primary School

- Collace Primary School
- Inchturre Primary School
- Kettins Primary School
- Longforgan Primary School

6.2 An assessment of the neighbouring schools was undertaken as part of the options appraisal which was considered by Lifelong Learning Committee on 21 March 2018 ([Report No. 18/86 refers](#)). An overview of the catchment areas detailed in the report is provided as Appendix A.

6.3 Since the previous assessment, a number of factors have changed which may mean that the outcome of a further assessment would be materially different now to what it was then. In March 2018, Abernyte Primary School was identified for inclusion in the Transformation of the School Estate where rationalisation through closure had been identified as a possible outcome. Now that the option to close Abernyte Primary School has been removed for 5 years, or earlier if there is a material change, current and prospective parents/carers may have a different view in relation to a catchment review. In addition, as the assessments were undertaken in October 2017 and May 2018, new families may be living within these areas and there may be new prospective parents/carers.

6.4 The following potential options could be explored for Abernyte Primary School as part of the options appraisal:

- **Option 1** – Maintain a school capacity of 44 pupils at Abernyte Primary School, increase the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School and not include nursery provision within Abernyte Primary School.
- **Option 2** – Maintain a school capacity of 44 pupils at Abernyte Primary School, increase the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School and build a nursery on site.
- **Option 3** – Maintain a school capacity of 44 pupils at Abernyte Primary School, retain the existing catchment area of Abernyte Primary School and build a nursery on site.
- **Option 4** – Maintain a school capacity of 44 pupils at Abernyte Primary School, retain the existing catchment area and not include nursery provision within Abernyte Primary School.
- **Option 5** – Reduce the school capacity of Abernyte Primary School to 20 or 24 pupils, include nursery provision within Abernyte Primary School and retain the existing catchment area.
- **Option 6** – Reduce the school capacity of Abernyte Primary School to 20 or 24 pupils, include nursery provision within Abernyte Primary School and a limited increase to the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School.

## **7. UNDERTAKING A CATCHMENT REVIEW**

- 7.1 In order to review the current catchment area, there would need to be engagement with the affected school communities in catchment areas adjacent to Abernyte Primary School. This would include Headteachers, school staff, Parent Councils, parents/carers of pupils currently attending these schools and prospective parents/carers and pupils of these schools.
- 7.2 There is a risk that revisiting schools which were previously discounted in the original assessment will cause concern within these school communities.
- 7.3 Appendix B provides a proposed scoping document for an options appraisal which would be carried out.

## **8. TIMESCALES/NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 Proposed timescales for the options appraisal are as follows:
- **November/December 2020** – Engage with Headteachers and Parent Councils at Abernyte Primary School and any other schools involved in the proposed catchment review.
  - **January 2021** – Letters issued to all households in Abernyte Primary School catchment area and households in any other school catchment areas involved in the proposed catchment review.
  - **January/February 2021** – Engage with parents/carers, staff and pupils directly affected by the proposed catchment review.
  - **March/April 2021** – Develop the options appraisal.
  - **May 2021** – Options appraisal considered by Lifelong Learning Committee.
- 8.2 Thereafter, a statutory consultation would require to be undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on any proposal to permanently change any school catchment area. It is intended that this would be undertaken between May 2021 and January 2022 prior to school registrations for August 2022.

## **9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 There are a number of options which could be considered for a catchment review for Abernyte Primary School and undertaking a comprehensive options appraisal will evidence the outcomes for each and the extent to which they may contribute to a sustainable roll for the school.
- 9.2 The options appraisal will also determine whether implementing nursery provision, with or without a catchment review, could build a sustainable roll.

9.3 It is recommended that Lifelong Learning Committee:

- (i) Approves the principles and factors detailed in Sections 2 and 4;
- (ii) Approves the proposed options that would form the options appraisal detailed in Section 6.4; and
- (iii) Requests the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to submit a completed options appraisal to Lifelong Learning Committee in May 2021, or as soon as possible thereafter.

**Authors**

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**Approved**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)	26 October 2020

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>No</b>
Workforce	<b>No</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>No</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>No</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>No</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>No</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>Yes</b>
Risk	<b>No</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>Yes</b>
External	<b>No</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>Yes</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This section sets out how 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 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 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 If a nursery was to be included at Abernyte Primary School following the review, the Council would require to identify capital resources estimated at between £230,000 and £800,000. The Council would also require to identify revenue resources in the region of £40,000 annually to cover staffing and resources.

The capital costs stated above are high level estimates and are based on the costs of other similar projects rather than a costed feasibility report for Abernyte Primary School. A feasibility study would need to be undertaken by Property Services to determine fully the costs and timescales for any project.

The cost of £230,000 is based on accommodating 8 children in one of the existing classrooms at Abernyte Primary School. The basis of this cost is the works undertaken recently to establish a nursery at Logierait Primary School for which the scope would be similar, ie provision of toilets, outdoor access, changing area and snack preparation area, as well as any electrical works and decoration required. It should be noted that COVID-19 may impact on the costs of a similar project.

A cost of £800,000 has been estimated for a standalone nursery to accommodate 8 children. This is based on a nursery of 170m<sup>2</sup> at a cost of £4762 per m<sup>2</sup>. This is calculated on cost per m<sup>2</sup> of the standalone nursery build at Inchtute Primary School which is currently on site. It is likely that the cost per m<sup>2</sup> of a standalone at Abernyte Primary School will be greater due to economies of scale (at Inchtute) and taking into consideration inflation. It should also be noted that COVID-19 may impact on the costs.

The standalone nursery is larger than the nursery accommodation which would be required within the school due to the requirement for its own plant room, staff toilets, staff/parent room, cloakrooms, stores and entrance.

Councils also have a statutory duty in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to achieve best value and this must also be considered in the options appraisal.

### Workforce

2.2 As a result of this report, there will be workforce implications in terms of resourcing pre-consultation required to develop the options appraisal and any statutory consultation required for several teams across Council Services which include Education & Children's Services (ECS) Resource Management,

ECS Business Services, ECS Finance, Human Resources and Legal Services. As part of any statutory consultation, there is a requirement to consult with staff affected by the proposal.

#### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no direct asset management implications arising from this report at this point. Asset management implications will not be known until any statutory consultation is complete or until a decision is made on nursery provision.

### **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 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed as part of any statutory consultation.

#### 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 The environmental impact of each option will be considered in the options appraisal; however there are no implications at this stage of the process. The environmental impact will be considered further through any statutory consultation.

#### 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.
- 3.3.1 There is no direct impact on sustainability as a result of this report, and sustainability will be considered further as part of any statutory consultation process.

## Legal and Governance

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

3.5 N/A

## Risk

3.6 N/A.

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

4.1 The Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

### External

4.2 N/A.

## **5. Communication**

5.1 A communication plan will be prepared which will support effective communication and engagement with stakeholders. A range of methods will be used to consult with internal and external stakeholders as identified in the scope, such as phone calls, virtual meetings, briefings and focus groups. A separate communications plan will be developed for any statutory consultation process.

## **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 – Overview of Neighbouring Catchment Areas  
Appendix B – Abernyte Primary School Proposed Scope