

Abernyte Primary School Options Appraisal

Introduction

The Council's Corporate Plan identifies the vision of 'a confident and ambitious Perth and Kinross with a strong identity and clear outcomes that everyone works together to achieve. Our area will be vibrant and successful; a safe secure and healthy environment: and a place where people and communities are nurtured and supported'.

This strategic approach embraces the vision for our area, our communities and our people as outlined in the Corporate Plan. Our key service priorities support the delivery of our commitments in the Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement and Corporate Plan, helping Education and Children's Services to focus on the local outcomes that will achieve meaningful improvements for the area, our local communities and our citizens.

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.

Councils also have a statutory responsibility in terms of the [Local Government in Scotland Act 2003](#) to achieve best value.

The Learning Estate is a significant and valuable asset to the communities of Perth and Kinross. The Council approved its updated 9-year capital programme in September 2020. The programme will deliver £160m of further improvements to the Learning Estate between 2021 and 2029.

As part of this investment, the Council has delivered replacement schools for Alyth Primary School, Kinross Primary School, Oakbank Primary School and Tulloch Primary School. At the same time, upgrade and extension projects were completed at several schools including Longforgan and Pitcairn Primary Schools. Upgrade projects are ongoing at Perth Academy, Perth Grammar School, Perth High School and Pitlochry High School.

In addition, a new secondary school, Bertha Park High School was completed and opened to pupils in August 2019.

The School Estate Strategy ([Report No. 12/370 refers](#)) sets out the Councils aspirations for our schools, and in particular the high value we place on learning, through our vision for well designed, maintained and managed schools. The School Estate Management Plan details how we plan to deliver the strategy.

It is important, in light of the significant investment and cost associated with the Learning 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. Legislation

The [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) provides a strong, accountable statutory consultation process that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals of 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. Education authorities must have special regard to a number of factors before formulating a proposal to close a rural school and in 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 Benefits.

The duties are outlined in the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) and the accompanying [Statutory Guidance](#).

In order to ensure a robust approach to each Options Appraisal carried out under the School Estate Review for any relevant proposal affecting a rural school, the factors that require to be considered as part of a rural school closure will be adopted in all cases as these are considered to be relevant to most proposals affecting a rural school, not just a closure.

[The Education \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) amends the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 by adding in new duties to address inequality of outcome. These duties apply in different ways to both Scottish Ministers and Education Authorities.

Where the Education Authority is making or implementing strategic decisions about school education, it is required to have due regard to the need to carry out its functions in a way which is designed to reduce inequalities of outcome. This is particularly directed in the Act towards pupils who experience those inequalities through socio-economic disadvantage, but there is also a power to extend the range of pupils who are covered by this duty.

In addition, the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) sets out a new right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. Public bodies, including Councils, must consider such requests and respond within a reasonable timescale to them.

2. Background

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](#)).

On 26 August 2020, Lifelong Learning Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the decisions taken relating to the closure of Abernyte Primary School ([Report No. 20/142 \(REVISED\) refers](#)). 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 outlined all possible options for a catchment review to build a sustainable roll at the earliest opportunity, including looking at the possibility of a nursery.

On 4 November 2020, Lifelong Learning Committee approved the scope and principles to be used to underpin the options appraisal to be developed for a catchment review for Abernyte Primary School ([Report No. 20/208 refers](#)).

3. Principles

An exercise has been undertaken using the principles agreed at Lifelong Learning Committee on 4 November 2020 to establish the catchment areas which could be considered as part of the catchment review. The principles take account of the fact that Abernyte Primary School and all its adjoining primary school catchment areas are classed as rural schools.

This initial exercise considered the following principles.

- Any option considered will not cause a detrimental impact to the school roll or sustainability of another small rural school of 70¹ 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; and
- Any option would not result in a significant increase in the travel time or distance for a pupil to reach their catchment school.

A detailed analysis of the principles detailed above can be found at Appendix 1. The outcome of the analysis is that only the areas to the north of the A90 in the Inchtute Primary School and Longforgan Primary School catchment areas should be within the scope of any catchment review on the basis of the principles.

4. Creating a Sustainable School Roll for Abernyte Primary School

4.1 Abernyte Primary School Catchment Area

Abernyte Primary School serves all of Abernyte village and the surrounding area.

¹ 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 delineated catchment area is from within a boundary line from Outfield Farm, Balloleys Farm, Dundriven, Little Ballo, Lauriston Cottage Knapp and the Scottish Antiques & Arts Centre.

4.2 Abernyte Primary School – Historic School Roll Data (Based on Census²)

Primary Classes	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Capacity	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
Pupils	21	15	15	14	11	8	7	5	6	10	7

Table 1 – Historic School Roll.

4.3 Current School Roll

At Census 2020, there were 7 pupils attending the school. The current school roll is 12³ pupils, as 5 pupils have enrolled as placing requests since the 2020 Census. Of the current school roll, 8 pupils attend the school as a result of successful placing requests and there are 4 catchment pupils.

4.4 Projected School Rolls

Table 2 below details the projected school roll at Abernyte Primary School without a catchment change.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Abernyte Capacity	44	44	44	44
Abernyte Roll	20	20	18	18

Table 2 – Projected School Roll.

The projected school roll for August 2021 includes 5 catchment children currently registered to start at the school in P1. There are also 4 placing requests that have been received. The projected roll also includes catchment children due to start at the school in P1 between August 2022 and August 2024. This information is provided by the NHS and relates to the number of under-fives registered at a GP practice for addresses in a catchment area.

It is likely there will be the requirement for both classroom spaces to operate at the school in the next four years as the roll is projected to exceed 17 pupils.

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.

³ School Roll correct at 1 April 2021.

5. Pre-Consultation

5.1 Overview

One of the principles underpinning any recommendation made by this options appraisal is that there must be support for any change from those parents/carers of children living in the affected catchment areas.

In order to establish whether there is support from parents/carers, officers have engaged with the school communities within the areas to the north of the A90 in the Inchtute Primary School, Longforgan Primary School catchment areas and Abernyte Primary School.

5.2 Contacting Parents/Carers

As any catchment review affects parents/carers and children, the consultation was focused on parents/carers of primary school children and children under the age of five.

As the Council only holds contact information for parents/carers of children currently attending our schools, letters (Appendix 2) were issued to all households, of which there are approximately 500, in the catchment areas concerned. This was to ensure all parents/carers in these areas were informed that the Council was undertaking a pre-consultation exercise and had the opportunity to respond.

5.3 Catchment Area(s) – Number of Children

The Council is aware of the approximate number of children under the age of five living within each school catchment area. This information is provided by the NHS and relates to the number of children registered at a GP practice in a catchment area.

Table 3 below shows the number of primary school age children currently attending Perth and Kinross Council schools and the number of children under the age of five due to start primary school between 2021 and 2024 in the catchment areas involved in the pre-consultation exercise.

Catchment Area	Primary School age children attending PKC Schools	Children under the age of five
Abernyte Primary School	15	9
Inchtute Primary School (north of A90)	11	11
Longforgan Primary School (north of A90)	20	13

Table 3 – Children – Catchment Areas.

5.4 Questionnaire

All parents/carers living in these areas were asked to complete an online questionnaire if they have primary school age children and/or children under the age of five.

Information on the proposed catchment area and nursery provision was provided on the Council website to inform parents/carers before they completed the questionnaire.

The letter and questionnaire were shared with the Parent Councils at Abernyte Primary School, Inchtore Primary School and Longforgan Primary School prior to issue. The questionnaire was available for completion between 22 February 2021 and 5 March 2021.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather the views of parents/carers regarding the proposed catchment review, implementation of nursery provision and to inform the options appraisal.

5.5 Summary of Pre-consultation Responses

Letters were issued to approximately 500 households in the catchment areas involved in the pre-consultation exercise.

In total, 23 families responded. Of the 23 families who responded, 4 responses have been excluded as the families do not live within the catchment areas involved in the pre-consultation exercise. A summary of the responses is detailed below.

5.6 Questionnaire Response

Table 4 below shows the number of children for whom responses were received in relation to the overall number of children living in the catchment areas.

Catchment Area	Primary School age children attending PKC schools	Primary School Children	Children under the age of 5	Children Under Five
		Responses		Responses
Abernyte Primary School	15	9	9	7
Inchtore Primary School (north of A90)	11	0	11	3
Longforgan Primary School (north of A90)	20	9	13	5

Table 4 – Questionnaire Response.

5.7 Children Under the Age of Five – Enrolment at Abernyte Primary School

Catchment Area	No of children living in the catchment area (based on CHI data)	No. of Children whose parents/ carers responded	No. of children who would not enrol at Abernyte Primary School	No. of children who would only enrol at Abernyte Primary School if nursery provision was implemented	No. of children who would enrol at Abernyte Primary School even if there is no nursery provision
Abernyte Primary School	9	7	1	0	6
Inchturle Primary School (North of A90)	11	3	0	0	3
Longforgan Primary School (North of A90)	13	5	4	1	0
Total	33	15	5	1	9

Table 5 – Children under the age of five – Abernyte Primary School.

5.8 Enrolment at an Abernyte Nursery Provision

Catchment Area	No of children living in the catchment area (based on CHI data)	No. of children who would attend a nursery at Abernyte Primary School
Abernyte Primary School	9	4
Inchturle Primary School (North of A90)	11	1
Longforgan Primary School (North of A90)	13	1

Table 6 – Enrolment - Abernyte Primary School Nursery.

6. Options

The Lifelong Learning Committee report dated 4 November 2020 ([Report No. 20/208 refers](#)) detailed a number of factors which should be investigated as part of the options appraisal:

- 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.

The scoping report detailed the potential options which 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; and
- **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.

There is commonality in the six options and in undertaking the analysis of the options, this report considers all options under two broad headings:

- An increase in the Abernyte Primary School catchment area; and
- The introduction of a nursery.

The analysis of these areas has considered these factors which include:

- Increasing the Abernyte Primary School catchment area;
- The impact on the school roll and capacity at Abernyte Primary School as a result of an increase to the catchment area;
- The impact on the school roll and capacity of other schools as a result of a change to their catchment areas;
- Introducing a nursery to Abernyte Primary School; and

- The impact on the school roll and capacity at Abernyte Primary School as a result of introducing a nursery.

7. Increasing Abernyte Primary School Catchment Area

One of the principles agreed in the scoping report is that any change to a catchment area would need the support of parents/carers. The purpose of increasing the Abernyte Primary School catchment area was to build a sustainable school roll.

7.1 Abernyte Primary School Catchment Area

Based on the feedback received, none of the primary school children's parents/carers from any of the areas would choose to move their children to Abernyte Primary School from their current school attended.

Parents/carers of 7 of the 9 children under five known to the Council, living in the Abernyte Primary School catchment area responded to the on-line questionnaire. Based on the responses received from parents/carers, 6 out of 7 of those children would be enrolled at Abernyte Primary School in future years.

7.2 Inchtute Primary School Catchment Area (north of A90)

Parents/carers of 3 of the 11 children under five known to the Council living in the Inchtute Primary School (north of the A90) responded to the on-line questionnaire. Based on the responses received from parents/carers, all 3 of those children would be enrolled at Abernyte Primary School by their parents.

7.3 Longforgan Primary School Catchment Area (north of A90)

Parents/carers of 5 of the 13 children under five known to the Council, living in the Longforgan Primary School catchment area (north of the A90), responded to the on-line questionnaire. Based on the responses received from parents/carers, 4 out of 5 of those children would not be enrolled at Abernyte Primary School. One child would be enrolled at Abernyte Primary School if nursery provision was implemented.

7.4 Pupil Impact/School Environment

The projected school roll at Abernyte Primary School is detailed in table 2. Based on the projected roll both teaching spaces are required up to 2024/25.

If the catchment area was to change to include the Inchtute Primary School catchment area (north of A90) and only the children covered in the response whose parents/carers said they would send their children to the school were to attend then, 3 children would attend between August 2022 and August 2025.

There would be very little impact on the school roll at Inchtute Primary School and the capacity at Inchtute Primary School would remain the same.

7.5 Travel Arrangements

The majority of catchment pupils who attend Abernyte Primary School are entitled to free home to school transport. If the catchment area was to change to include the Inchtute Primary School catchment (north of A90) it is likely pupils in the new part of the catchment would require to be transported to Abernyte Primary School as they would live further than the statutory walking distance of 2 miles from the school. This would need to be confirmed for each individual pupil. These children would likely be transported to Inchtute Primary School too so the impact on travel would be minimal.

7.6 Financial Impact

There would be limited financial impact if the Abernyte Primary School catchment area was to increase as an additional teacher is required from August 2021.

There may be some additional revenue cost for transporting children to the school from any new catchment area if existing school transport was not sufficient for all children. This would need to be confirmed on an individual basis.

7.7 Increasing Abernyte Primary School Catchment Area - Conclusion

One of the principles agreed was that there must be support from those parents/carers living in a catchment area for a catchment change to take place.

Information contained within the letter issued to parents/carers stated that feedback would be considered in determining whether the catchment area would change.

A total of 8 out of 24 children under the age of five known to the Council from the Inchtute Primary School catchment area (north of the A90) and Longforgan Primary School catchment area (north of the A90) were represented in the responses from families. It is therefore not possible to say that the principle of support from parents/carers has been met.

Parents/carers of 6 out of the 7 children under the age of five covered in the response living within the Abernyte Primary School catchment area indicated that they would send their children to Abernyte Primary School in future years.

The following options have been considered regarding increasing the Abernyte Primary School catchment area: -

- A. Include Longforgan Primary School catchment area (north of the A90);
- B. Include the whole of the Inchtute Primary School catchment area (north of A90); and
- C. Include only the postcode area(s) within the Inchtute Primary School catchment area (north of A90) where parents/carers live that responded to the online questionnaire.

Based on the response from parents/carers, a catchment change based on any of the options above, would not contribute to a sustainable school roll.

In conclusion, it is not proposed to carry out a statutory consultation to consider increasing the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School for the following reasons:

- The school roll has increased and for 2021/22 will be higher than it has been since 2010;
- Based on the responses received, feedback from the majority of parents/carers of children under five living in the Abernyte Primary School catchment area indicated that their children will be enrolled at their catchment school in future years. This will contribute to a sustainable roll;
- There is not sufficient evidence to show that the principle of parental support for a catchment review has been met for either of the catchment areas considered. Responses were received for only 8 children out of a possible 24 children under five years old and of these there were 4 children out of 8 whose parents/carers responded in favour or a change to the catchment area;
- If a catchment review took place, the number of children who would attend the school, based on responses received, would not contribute to a sustainable school roll; and
- If a limited catchment review took place for the part of the Inchtute catchment area where parents/carers have indicated that they were in favour of a change, again this would not contribute to a more sustainable school roll.

8. Introducing a Nursery to Abernyte Primary School - Analysis

The main factor in considering the implementation of nursery provision was to determine whether implementing a nursery provision, with or without a catchment review, could create a sustainable school roll at Abernyte Primary School.

8.1 Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

Early Learning and Childcare settings use a play-based approach towards learning, with qualified practitioners over-seeing the service and setting the curriculum. Funded ELC is available for all three- and four-year olds and some eligible two-year olds across Scotland. The emphasis on funded ELC is to ensure that all children are receiving the best start to life and receiving quality learning experiences within a safe environment.

If nursery provision was introduced at Abernyte Primary School, it would fall within the Carse of Gowrie Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) community.

There is sufficient existing capacity within the Carse of Gowrie ELC community as detailed in table 7 below.

	Total number of childcare hours available (per annum)	Total number of childcare hours of childcare taken (per annum)
Carse of Gowrie ELC⁴	225,720	191,520

Table 7 – Carse of Gowrie ELC.

⁴ Information correct at 4 March 2021.

8.2 Abernyte Primary School Catchment Area

The response from parents/carers living within the current Abernyte Primary School catchment area covered 7 children under the age of five known to the Council living in this area.

Four of these children would attend nursery provision at the school if it was introduced. All of the children who would attend a nursery would enrol at the school regardless of whether nursery provision is introduced or not.

8.3 Inchtute Primary School Catchment Area (North of A90) and Longforgan Primary School Catchment Area (North of A90)

Introducing a nursery at Abernyte Primary School would result in 1 child under the age of five included within the response, from the Longforgan Primary School catchment area (North of A90), attending the school. The 3 children under the age of five included within the response from the Inchtute Primary School catchment area (North of A90) would attend the school regardless of whether a nursery was introduced.

8.4 Abernyte Primary School Nursery – Projected Nursery School Roll

From the responses received to the online questionnaire, the maximum nursery roll at Abernyte Primary School would be 4 until August 2025.

8.5 Nursery Provision

Feasibility studies have been undertaken for the following options for nursery provision at Abernyte Primary School. The scope of the feasibility studies was for 8 nursery pupils which reflects the smallest nursery provision that could be implemented. All nursery settings require the agreement of the Care Inspectorate.

- Incorporating the nursery within the existing school building including the possible introduction of integrated Early Years provision;
- Extending the existing school building; and
- Creating a standalone nursery building (exploring the option of modular building accommodation).

The integrated nursery provision would see nursery children sharing the same classroom space as primary school children. This would require nursery facilities to be provided in one of the classrooms.

Additional information on the feasibility studies is detailed in Appendix 3.

8.6 Financial Impact

Table 8 below details the capital costs associated with the different nursery options that have been explored by the feasibility studies.

Any planned works to the school to re-model or extend the existing property will necessitate significant consequential replacement of the mechanical, electrical and plumbing infrastructure whilst also requiring significant works to the building fabric. This work is required by necessity to provide efficient services and also to meet stringent carbon reduction target which will be a requirement for all school buildings going forward.

The Mechanical and Electrical Report for the existing building, highlights that the Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Installations in the building are in poor condition and in need of urgent replacement. This work in such a small building, would entail extensive disruption to the interior of the building and affect the smooth running of the school. The proposed works will likely require access to the underfloor area where it is likely asbestos would be present. It is likely therefore that there will be decant costs in addition to the capital costs detailed in Table 8 below.

Extensive making good throughout would also be required to surfaces disturbed by the works, along with redecoration. In order to bring the existing building envelope performance, up to modern standards, extensive works will be required to insulate the existing floors, walls and roof along with replacement of doors and windows. These works are in addition to works which were detailed in previous committee reports for Abernyte Primary School.

Nursery Location	Indicative Capital Cost
Existing school building (Integrated Nursery)	£1.138M
Extension to Existing School Building	£1.868M
Standalone Nursery	£2.163M ⁵

Table 8 – Nursery Options Capital Costs.

Table 9 below details the indicative annual revenue costs for nursery provision based on current prices. All of the options would require one Early Childhood Practitioner and one part-time Play Assistant. Note that the estimated property costs are for rates, cleaning/facilities management, energy and water. They do not include annual building maintenance costs.

Nursery Location	Staff Costs	Property/Supplies Costs	Total Cost
Existing school building (integrated nursery)	£38,800	£1,500	£40,300
Extension to existing school building	£38,800	£11,500	£50,300
Standalone nursery building	£38,800	£22,500	£61,300

Table 9 – Nursery Annual Revenue Costs.

⁵The capital costs could be less if the main building was not refurbished.

8.7 Pupil Impact/School Environment

As detailed in section 5.4, both teaching spaces within the school will be utilised up to August 2024/25 based on current projections, therefore it would not be possible to create a nursery within the existing footprint of the building unless integrated Early Years provision was introduced. This provision would see nursery age children sharing the same classroom space as primary school children.

There would be a reduction in the available outdoor play space available at the school if a nursery was built as a standalone in the school grounds or as an extension. The extension option would also reduce the capacity of the school to 37 pupils.

8.8 Transport Arrangements

Parents/carers who choose to send their children to nursery are fully responsible for all transport arrangements and costs. The Council does not transport any nursery children or meet the cost of any transport in relation to nursery children.

8.9 Assessment of Introducing a Nursery to Abernyte Primary School

The proposal to introduce nursery provision to Abernyte Primary School was to establish if nursery provision would support the creation of a sustainable pupil roll at Abernyte Primary School as there is sufficient nursery capacity within the Carse of Gowrie ELC Community.

From the responses received, the majority of parents/carers of children under the age of five living in the Abernyte Primary School catchment indicated they would use nursery provision at the school; however, it would not impact on their decision to enrol their children at the school.

There was only 1 child from a family living in the Longforgan Primary School (north of A90) catchment area that would attend Abernyte Primary School if a nursery was introduced.

The school roll is increasing, and from the responses received, implementing nursery provision would not encourage more parents to send their children to Abernyte Primary School. The majority of parents who would enrol their children in the school would do so regardless of a nursery. The majority of parents who would not enrol their children at the school would not be attracted by a nursery.

Based on the feedback from parents/carers introducing nursery provision at the school would not meet the principle of creating a sustainable school roll.

An additional factor which the Council would have to take into consideration is the impact on business sustainability of funded providers ie childminders and private nurseries, within the Carse of Gowrie ELC community and other nearby ELC communities, if additional nursery provision was to be made available, when there was no requirement for additional capacity.

9. Alternative Options

As part of the pre-consultation exercise, parents/carers were invited to suggest any alternative options that the Council may not have considered.

The following alternative options were proposed:

- Close the existing Abernyte Primary School and children could attend an Abernyte Primary School that is located at Errol Primary School;
- Children living in the Inchtute Primary School catchment area (north of A90) that wanted to attend Abernyte Primary School as the result of a placing request could be provided with free transport; and
- Introduce a forest nursery at Abernyte Primary School.

9.1 Option - Close the existing Abernyte Primary School and children could attend an Abernyte Primary School that is located and operates from Errol Primary School.

On 26 August 2020, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No. 20/142 \(REVISED\)](#) [refers](#)) was provided with an overview of decisions taken relating to Abernyte Primary School. Following the decision by the School Closure Review Panel to refuse the Council permission to close Abernyte Primary School this option could not be considered for at least 5 years, or earlier if there is a material change to Abernyte Primary School.

9.2 Option - Children living in the Inchtute Primary School catchment area (north of A90) that wanted to attend Abernyte Primary School as the result of a placing request could be provided with free transport.

This option was proposed as an alternative to undertaking a catchment review for Abernyte Primary School.

It was suggested that:

- This option should be considered because there were a number of children living in the Inchtute Primary School catchment area (north of A90) that wanted to attend Abernyte Primary School and by attending the school this would build a sustainable school roll.
- The main factor in these children not already attending the school was that there was no free home to school transport and because of this, parents/carers have chosen not to send their children to the school.
- The option “**Increase the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School in order to build a sustainable school roll**” explored above would provide these identified children with free home to school transport from any new increased Abernyte Primary School catchment area if it was to change and they attended Abernyte Primary School.

This option could not be considered out-with a change to the catchment area. A condition of all placing requests being granted is that parents are fully responsible for getting their children to and from the school of their choice if they make a successful placing request. This would have far reaching operational and financial implications for every other school, many of which are rural schools, in Perth and Kinross where pupils attend as the result of a placing request.

9.3 Option – Create a Forest Nursery at Abernyte Primary School

The option of a forest nursery was suggested by the Abernyte Primary School Parent Council.

Some investigation has taken place for this option including land ownership searches and the preparation of a scope of works. Further information is detailed in Appendix 3. A full feasibility study would be required to establish costs.

Section 8 above assesses the requirement for nursery provision at Abernyte Primary School. It concludes that a nursery, including a forest nursery, would not contribute towards creating a sustainable school roll and also details concerns that providing additional capacity within the Carse of Gowrie ELC community may impact on the business sustainability of funded providers including childminders and private nurseries.

10. Options – Summary

Table 10 below summarises the outcomes for each option detailed in sections 8 and 9.

Proposal	Outcome	Impact
Reduce the school capacity of Abernyte Primary School to 20 or 24 pupils.	The projected roll for Abernyte Primary School indicates that both teaching spaces are required up to August 2024/25. The capacity of the school could not be reduced to 20 or 24 pupils in these circumstances. It is recommended that the capacity of Abernyte Primary School is not reduced.	Options 5 and 6 reduce the capacity of Abernyte Primary School therefore they are discounted.
Increase the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School.	There is insufficient response from parents/carers in the Inchtute and Longforgan Primary School catchment areas north of the A90 to evidence support from the majority of parents for a catchment change. In addition, the number of children who would attend the school, based on responses received, would not contribute to a sustainable school roll.	Options 1 and 2 increase the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School therefore they are discounted.

	<p>The pupil roll at Abernyte has increased and is the highest it has been since 2010. Also, the response from parents/carers of children under five years old living in the Abernyte Primary School catchment area will contribute towards a sustainable school roll in future.</p> <p>On the basis of the above, it is recommended that the catchment of Abernyte Primary School is not increased.</p>	
<p>Introduce a nursery.</p>	<p>The responses from parents detailed in this options appraisal indicated those that would send their children to the school, would do so without a nursery. Those who would not send their children to the school would still not do so if there was a nursery. Therefore, a nursery would not contribute towards the creation of sustainable school roll. In addition, there is sufficient capacity in the Carse of Gowrie ELC community, and consideration would also have to be given to the impact on business sustainability of funded providers in the locality ie childminders and private nurseries, if additional capacity is created,</p> <p>On this basis it is not recommended that a nursery is introduced.</p>	<p>Option 3 includes the option to build a nursery on site. This option can therefore be discounted.</p>
<p>Maintain a school capacity of 44 pupils, retain the existing catchment area and do not introduce nursery provision.</p>	<p>The projected roll for Abernyte Primary School indicates that both teaching spaces are required up to August 2024/25. The capacity of the school could not be reduced to 20 or 24 pupils in these circumstances.</p> <p>There is insufficient response from parents/carers in the Inchtute and Longforgan Primary School catchment areas north of the A90 to evidence support from the majority of parents for a catchment change.</p> <p>The school roll at Abernyte has increased and is the highest it has been since 2010. Also, the response from parents/carers of</p>	<p>Option 4 is accepted.</p>

	<p>children under five years old living in the Abernyte Primary School catchment area will contribute towards a sustainable school roll in future.</p> <p>The responses from parents detailed in the Options Appraisal indicated those that would send their children to the school, would do so without a nursery. Those who would not send their children to the school would still not do so if there was a nursery. Therefore, a nursery would not contribute towards the creation of a sustainable school roll.</p> <p>It is recommended that the school capacity is maintained at 44, the existing catchment area is retained and that a nursery is not introduced.</p>	
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Table 10 – Summary of Options.

11. Recommendation

The recommendation of this options appraisal is to progress with Option 4, detailed within section 7 and summarised in table 10 ie 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.

This recommendation is based on the following:

11.1 Catchment Review

- The school roll at Abernyte Primary School has increased and for 2021/22 will be higher than it has been since 2010;
- Based on the responses received, feedback from the majority of parents/carers of children under 5 living in the Abernyte Primary School catchment area indicated that their children will be enrolled at their catchment school in future years;
- If a catchment review took place, the number of children who would attend the school, based on responses received, would not contribute to a sustainable school roll at Abernyte Primary School; and
- The principle of parental support for a catchment review has not been evidenced for either of the catchment areas considered. Responses were only received for 8 out of a possible 24 children and of these there were only 4 children whose parents/carers responded in favour of a change to the catchment area.

11.2 Nursery Provision

- Based on the responses received from parents/carers introducing nursery provision at the school would not meet the principle of creating a sustainable school roll. Parents/carers who would enrol their children in the school would do so regardless of a nursery. Parents/carers, who would not enrol their children at the school, would not be attracted by a nursery.
- An additional factor which the Council would have to take into consideration is the impact on business sustainability of funded providers, ie childminders and private nurseries, within the Carse of Gowrie ELC community and other nearby ELC communities, if additional nursery provision was to be made available, when there was no requirement for additional capacity.

11.3 Conclusion

Option 4 is the recommended outcome of the options appraisal.

Option 4 is to 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.

An educational benefits statement has not been developed as the recommended option proposes that no changes to the school catchment area takes place and no nursery provision is introduced.

Appendix 1

Abernyte Primary School – Catchment Review

On 4 November 2020 Lifelong Learning Committee agreed the scope and principles which would underpin the review of the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School. The principles that were agreed have been explored and outcomes are detailed below.

Principles

- 1. Any option to be considered would relate to a catchment area geographically adjacent to Abernyte Primary School catchment area.**

Catchment areas that are geographically adjacent to Abernyte Primary School are Balbeggie Primary School, Burrelton Primary School, Collace Primary School, Inchtute Primary School, Kettins Primary School and Longforgan Primary School.

Only these schools will be included in the catchment review.

- 2. Any option to be considered will not cause a detrimental impact to the school roll or sustainability of another small rural school of 70 pupils or fewer.**

The only schools geographically adjacent to Abernyte Primary School that currently have a roll of 70 or less are Collace Primary School, Kettins Primary School and Balbeggie Primary School.

Kettins Primary School has a capacity of 46 pupils with a roll of 31 pupils giving an occupancy of 67%. The school roll is projected to rise in future years if placing requests continue to attend the school. If the school catchment area was to change and catchment children attend Abernyte Primary School rather than Kettins Primary School and the number of placing requests reduced this could have a detrimental effect on the school roll at Kettins Primary School.

The school roll at Balbeggie Primary School is currently 54 pupils with a capacity of 73 pupils. The occupancy of the school is currently 74%. The number of pupils attending is projected to remain the same (55 by 2024/25) over the next 4 years. There are approximately 10 pupils known to live in the area of the catchment to the east of the school that currently attend Balbeggie Primary School. This includes children under the age of 5 not yet attending school.

If an area of Balbeggie Primary School catchment was to be subsumed into Abernyte Primary School catchment it is likely it would be this area as it is the closest area geographically.

Losing the catchment pupils currently attending the school from this part of the Balbeggie Primary School catchment area would have a detrimental impact on the school roll. The occupancy of the school would reduce to 66% and may reduce further if the children known to live in this area of the catchment not yet attending school attended Abernyte Primary School.

The roll at Collace Primary School is currently 20 with an occupancy of 41%. The school roll and occupancy are projected to decrease further in the next few years (18 with a capacity of 37%). Losing any area of the catchment to Abernyte Primary School would have a detrimental impact on the school roll which is already low.

Balbeggie Primary School, Collace Primary School and Kettins Primary School are excluded from the catchment review after this principle has been considered due to the reasons explored above.

Only Burrelton Primary School, Inchtore Primary School and Longforgan Primary School are explored under the remaining principles.

3. Any option to be considered would contribute to a sustainable roll at Abernyte Primary School.

Burrelton Primary School

If part of the Burrelton Primary School catchment area was to be subsumed into the Abernyte Primary School catchment area. It is likely to be the area to the east and south of Burrelton Primary School. This is because it is geographically closest to the Abernyte Primary School catchment.

The majority of catchment pupils attending the school live near to the school around Burrelton. If the area to the east and the south of the catchment was to be subsumed into the Abernyte Primary School catchment it is likely that it would not contribute to a sustainable roll at Abernyte Primary School.

This is because:

- there are no known primary school age pupils currently living in this area of the catchment attending the school; and
- there are less than 5 children under the age of 5 due to attend school in the next 4 years known to live in this area. If these children attended Abernyte Primary School the school roll would increase slightly but it would not contribute significantly to a higher or more sustainable school roll.

Inchtore Primary School and Longforgan Primary School

There are currently approximately 5 catchment pupils known to live to the north of the A90 within the Inchtore Primary School catchment area that attend the school. There are also approximately 11 children under the age of 5 due to attend school in the next 4 years known to live in this area.

There are approximately 216 catchment pupils living to the south of the A90 within the Inchtore Primary School catchment area that currently attend the school.

There are currently approximately 15 catchment pupils known to live to the north of the A90 within the Longforgan Primary School catchment area that attend the school. There are also approximately 14 children under the age of 5 due to attend school in the next 4 years known to live in this area.

There are approximately 88 catchment pupils living to the south of the A90 within the Longforgan Primary School catchment area that attend the school.

There are enough pupils known to the Council living to the north of the A90 in both these catchment areas to create a sustainable roll at Abernyte Primary School if there is support from parents/carers for a catchment change.

If the areas to the south of the A90 in both these catchments were included in the catchment review it is likely that the school roll at Abernyte Primary School would be breached.

In addition, the travel distance and time for pupils living to the south of the A90 in these catchment areas would likely increase if their catchment area changed to Abernyte Primary School. There are no pupils living to the south of the A90 in these catchment areas, currently attending these schools, that would benefit from a reduced travel time or distance if the catchment area changed to Abernyte Primary School.

Considering catchment areas of Inchtute Primary School and Longforgan Primary School to the south of the A90 would therefore likely be excluded under principles 5 and 6 detailed below.

Burrelton Primary School and the areas to the south of the A90 within the Inchtute Primary School and Longforgan Primary School catchment areas are excluded from the catchment review after this principle has been considered due to the reasons explored above.

Only the areas to the north of the A90 within the Inchtute Primary School and Longforgan Primary School catchment areas are explored under the remaining principles.

- 4. Any option must have the support from those parents/carers and pupils living in the affected catchment areas.**

It is proposed to establish whether there is support for a catchment change from those parents/carers and pupils living within the areas to the north of the A90 within the Inchtute Primary School and Longforgan Primary School catchment areas only.

Until it has been established that there is support from parents/carers and pupils living in these catchment areas, the impact of further principles will not be considered.

- 5. Any option would not result in a significant increase in the travel time or distance for a pupil to reach their catchment school.**

This exercise will include establishing where pupils live in affected catchment areas, the number of pupils affected, the number of school transport vehicles required and the routes on which school transport would need to take to transport pupils to school.

This will be carried out once it has been established whether there is support for a catchment review from parents/carers and pupils living within the areas north of A90 within the Inchtute Primary School and Longforgan Primary School catchment areas.

6. Any option would not result in a pupil travelling through another primary school catchment area to reach their catchment school.

This exercise will be carried out once it has been established whether there is support for a catchment review from parents/carers and pupils living within the areas north of A90 within the Inchtute Primary School and Longforgan Primary School catchment areas.

The outcome of this principle is interrelated with principle 5 so it is likely they will be considered at the same time.

7. There should be no adverse pupil impact in terms of educational benefit in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

This principle will be explored within the options appraisal for any catchment area identified suitable as part of the catchment review and not excluded under principles 1 to 6.

Summary of Principles Analysis

Principle	Catchment Considered	Catchment Excluded	Reason for Exclusion
1	Balbeggie Primary School Burrelton Primary School Collace Primary School Inchture Primary School Kettins Primary School Longforgan Primary School	None	Catchment areas are all geographically adjacent to Abernyte Primary School
2	Balbeggie Primary School Burrelton Primary School Collace Primary School Inchture Primary School Kettins Primary School Longforgan Primary School	Balbeggie Primary School Collace Primary School Kettins Primary School	Losing all or part of catchment area could lead to detrimental impact on school roll or sustainability of school.
3	Burrelton Primary School Inchture Primary School Longforgan Primary School	Burrelton Primary School Inchture Primary School (catchment south of A90) Longforgan Primary School (catchment south of A90)	There are not enough pupils within the Burrelton Primary School catchment area that would be considered as part of the catchment review to make Abernyte Primary School roll more sustainable. Areas to the south of A90 in Inchture and Longforgan Primary School catchments would result in a breach of the Abernyte Primary School.

			It is likely some pupils living in these areas would also experience greater travel time/distance if they were to attend Abernyte Primary School.
4	Inchture Primary School (catchment north of A90) Longforgan Primary School (catchment north of A90)	None	

Table 11 – Analysis of Principles.

Appendix 2

Delayed Office Opening for Employee Training

*This office will be closed from
8.45 am - 11.00 am on the first
Thursday of each month.*



Business & Resources Service

Greg Boland, Head of Business & Resources

2 High Street, PERTH, PH1 5PH
Tel 01738 475000 Fax 01738 475710

Contact Greg Boland

www.pkc.gov.uk

Our ref GB / CN

Your ref

Date 15 February 2021

Dear Resident,

Abernyte Primary School Catchment

Perth and Kinross Council Lifelong Learning Committee is considering whether the catchment¹ area of Abernyte Primary School could be extended, and/or a nursery established at the school.

This address is within the area being considered as part of an extended catchment area. It is important that we engage with parents/carers of children living in this area as part of this exercise. This is because if the catchment area changes this would mean that the local school for this address would change from the current school to Abernyte Primary School.

The Council only holds information on children who currently attend our schools and nurseries therefore we are sending this letter to all households in this area in order that we can engage with as many parents/carers as possible.

If your household does not contain primary age children or children under the age of five, then you do not need to take any further action. However, if you would like to know more about this proposal information is available at the website detailed below.

If you are a parent/carer with a child/children currently attending primary school and/or have a child/children under the age of five years living at this address, then we would like your feedback. Your feedback will be taken into account in determining whether the catchment area for your address will change.

Please note that children currently attending another primary school would not be required to move schools if the catchment area change goes ahead. Younger siblings, not yet attending school may be able to attend the same school as their

¹ Councils use 'catchment areas' to decide where your child is allocated a place at school which is determined by your home address.

siblings by making a placing request. Parents always have a right to make a request that their child be placed in a school of their choice and, where there are available places, Perth and Kinross Council will always prioritise pupils with siblings above all other placing requests.

Any change to the catchment will not take place until August 2022 at the earliest. The operational date of any nursery will be dependent on any building works required.

Please visit the Perth and Kinross Council website at www.pkc.gov.uk/abernytecatchmentreview. Information regarding the catchment review and establishment of a nursery will be available on the website from 22 February 2021. You will also find a link to a questionnaire which will seek your views on the proposals. The questionnaire will be available for completion between 22 February 2021 and 5 March 2021.

If you do not have access to the internet or wish to speak to someone regarding this, you can contact Perth and Kinross Council on 07393 267949.

Thank you in advance for your valuable input to this process.

Yours faithfully,

Greg Boland
Head of Business and Resources
(Education and Children's Services)

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Date 15 February 2021

Dear Resident,

Abernyte Primary School Catchment

Perth and Kinross Council Lifelong Learning Committee is considering whether the catchment¹ area of Abernyte Primary School should be extended, and/or a nursery established at the school.

This address is within the existing Abernyte Primary School catchment area. It is important that we engage with parents/carers of children living in this area as part of this exercise as we want to understand your views on any future catchment change.

The Council only holds information on children who currently attend our schools and nurseries therefore we are sending this letter to all households in this area in order that we can engage with as many parents/carers as possible.

If your household does not contain primary age children or children under the age of five, then you do not need to take any further action. However, if you would like to know more about this proposal information is available at the website detailed below.

If you are a parent/carer with a child/children currently attending primary school and/or have a child/children under the age of five years living at this address, then we would like your feedback. Your feedback will be taken into account in determining whether the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School will change.

Any change to the catchment will not take place until August 2022 at the earliest. The operational date of any nursery will be dependent on any building works required.

Please visit the Perth and Kinross Council website at www.pkc.gov.uk/abernytecatchmentreview. Information regarding the catchment review and establishment of a nursery will be available on the website from 22

¹ Councils use 'catchment areas' to decide where your child is allocated a place at school which is determined by your home address.

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If you do not have access to the internet or wish to speak to someone regarding this, you can contact Perth and Kinross Council on 07393 267949.

Thank you in advance for your valuable input to this process.

Yours faithfully,

Greg Boland
Head of Business and Resources
(Education and Children's Services)

Appendix 3 – Nursery Provision

Existing school building

The school is on one level and is made up of 2 classrooms, a hall for dining and PE, toilets, resources room, school office/staff room and the kitchen. The classroom at the main entrance of the school can accommodate 20 pupils and the classroom at the rear of the school can accommodate 24 pupils.

A nursery could only be created within the existing school building by using space within the school. This would not be possible from August 2021 due the operation of 2 classes based on projected rolls unless integrated Early Years provision was introduced.

An alternative to a dedicated nursery would be Integrated Early Years Provision.

This provision would see nursery age children sharing the same classroom space as primary school children.

This option would likely see nursery age children sharing a classroom with primary 1 and primary 2 children with the other classroom space being used by primary 3 to primary 7 children.

Based on the projected roll of the school, detailed in table 2 section 5.4, a maximum of 4 nursery children could be accommodated in this option from August 2021.

The impact on the capacity of the school would be that the capacity would reduce to 30 as the integrated Early Years provision is likely to be accommodated in the larger of the 2 classrooms.

The requirements for this option are likely to be the same as for a nursery with all facilities required to comply with standards as set by the Care Inspectorate, however this has not been confirmed.

The total capital cost for this option is approximately £1.138m as detailed in table 12 which includes upgrading the existing school infrastructure.

Works Required	Capital Cost
Renovation Costs for 287m ²	£852,686
Fees, Planning, Asbestos etc	£181,586
Project Management FF&E and Contingency	£103,427
Total Cost	£1,137,699

Table 12 – Integrated Nursery – Capital Cost.

There will be a recurring annual revenue cost of approximately £40,300 to cover items such as staffing and property costs. Staffing required for this option includes one Early Childhood Practitioner and one Play Assistant

Extending the existing school building

An extension to the school building would create an additional classroom for nursery accommodation in addition to the existing 2 classrooms. The school capacity would be reduced to 37 in this instance.

The total capital cost for this option is approximately £1.868m as detailed in table 13 which includes upgrading the existing school infrastructure to service an extension.

Works Required	Capital Cost
Renovation costs for 287m ²	£815,155
New Extension Costs 148m ²	£627,244
Fees, Planning, Asbestos etc	£255,300
Project Management FF&E and Contingency	£169,770
Total Cost	£1,867,469

Table 13 – Extension to Existing School Building – Capital Cost.

There will be a recurring annual revenue cost of approximately £50,300 to cover items such as staffing and property costs. The property costs include rates, energy, cleaning and facilities management.

Standalone Nursery School building

The feasibility study for this option has explored a modular build and a traditional build.

This option would create additional capacity out with the existing school building for nursery provision. This option would see the existing capacity of the school (44) remain unchanged.

An option to deliver a modular standalone nursery school building has been explored as part of the feasibility but this option has been discounted due to the complexities involved in delivering such a building to site.

If a standalone nursery building was sited within the existing school grounds this would reduce the amount of hard standing area currently available for outdoor play.

The total capital cost for this option would be approximately £2.163m as detailed in table 14 which includes upgrading the existing school infrastructure in order to service any new building on site.

Works Required	Capital Cost
Renovation costs for 262m ²	£718,549
Freestanding Building	£962,067
Fees, Planning, Asbestos etc	£285,100
Project Management FF&E and Contingency	£196,572
Total Cost	£2,162,288

Table 14 – Standalone Nursery – Capital Cost.

There will be a recurring annual revenue cost of approximately £61,300 to cover items such as staffing and property costs. The property costs include rates, energy, cleaning and facilities management.

Forest Nursery

The suggestion to consider a forest nursery was put forward by Abernyte Primary School Parent Council. This has been explored further on a high level only basis.

The Council does not own any forest land in the locality of Abernyte Primary School. There would be a requirement to lease land for such a facility and seek permission for the use of the facility for this purpose. Land searches are currently being progressed in this regard.

Any such facility would require to comply with the standards as set by the Care Inspectorate. This will require the provision of a number of facilities as detailed below. Such provision would depend on the location of the forest nursery and whether or not services such as water, electricity and IT connections were available. Once land is identified, a feasibility would be required to determine:

- Access to car parking and pedestrian routes;
- Toilet facilities, including potential nappy change. May have to consider alternatives such as compost toilets, chemical and portable toilet and wild toileting;
- Hand washing arrangements;
- Shelter;
- Storage for equipment and resources;
- Storage/provision of snacks and meals; and
- Mobile phone and/or tablet and associated infrastructure.

This option would see the existing capacity of the school (44) remain unchanged.

Appendix 4

Projected School Rolls

Abernyte Primary School – Projected School Roll Including Inchtore Primary School Catchment Area (North of A90)

Table 15 below details the projected school roll at Abernyte Primary School if this area was included within the Abernyte Primary School catchment area.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Abernyte Capacity	44	44	44	44
Abernyte Roll	24	26	25	29

Table 15 – Abernyte Primary School Projected Roll.

This table includes all placing requests that have been received and due to start at the school in August 2021.

Abernyte Primary School – Projected School Roll Including Longforgan Primary School Catchment Area (North of A90)

Table 16 below details the projected school roll at Abernyte Primary School if this area was included within the Abernyte Primary School catchment area.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Abernyte Capacity	44	44	44	44
Abernyte Roll	26	29	31	31

Table 16 – Abernyte Primary School Projected Roll.

This table includes all placing requests that have been received and due to start at the school in August 2021.

Abernyte Primary School – Projected School Roll Including Longforgan Primary School Catchment Area (North of A90) and Inchtore Primary School Catchment Area (North of A90)

Table 17 below details the projected school roll at Abernyte Primary School if both these areas were included within the Abernyte Primary School catchment area.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Abernyte Capacity	44	44	44	44
Abernyte Roll	30	35	38	42

Table 17 – Abernyte Primary School Projected Roll.

This table includes all placing requests that have been received and due to start at the school in August 2021.