

The Highland Council
Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
20 January 2016

Agenda Item	7.
Report No	ECAS 03/16

Dalwhinnie Primary School - Proposal to Proceed to Statutory Consultation for Formal Closure

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

Dalwhinnie Primary School is currently mothballed, and has been since the end of session 2011/12. This report seeks the agreement of members to proceed to a statutory consultation, under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, for formal closure of the school.

1. Background

- 1.1 Dalwhinnie Primary School has been mothballed since the end of session 2011/12, when the school roll fell to 2. There are currently five pupils of P1-7 age living within the catchment area of the school, with one pupil of nursery age. Two of these pupils are in P7 at present and one attends Gàidhlig Medium education. Four of the six pupils attend Newtonmore Primary and two attend Gergask Primary.
- 1.2 Current projections indicate the maximum roll for Dalwhinnie Primary would be 5 pupils by 2019/20.
- 1.3 The Council proposes to proceed to statutory consultation for formal closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School. If approved, the Dalwhinnie catchment area would be re-assigned to that of Newtonmore Primary School.
- 1.4 This proposal is being brought forward, following informal consultation with local stakeholders and elected members, and having examined viable alternatives that could be considered.
- 1.5 The consultation report and appendices circulated separately in Booklet A sets out the basis of the proposal, and related information, including the educational, community and transport implications associated with the proposal.
- 1.6 Subject to a Committee decision to proceed to statutory consultation, a public meeting will be held in Dalwhinnie to discuss the Council's proposal and in line with the legislation; there will be considerable opportunity for stakeholders to submit views to the Council in advance of any final decision being made. At this stage, it is expected the statutory consultation timeline would see a final recommendation being considered by this Committee in August 2016, though this may be subject to change to ensure the Council has sufficient time to consider and respond to matters arising from the consultation.
- 1.7 Subject to closure, future use of the Dalwhinnie Primary School building would be considered in line with the Council's asset management procedures.

2. Implications

- 2.1 **Resources:** These are detailed in **Appendix I** of the report contained in Booklet A.
- 2.2 **Legal:** the statutory consultation will be taken forward per the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.3 **Equalities:** An equality impact assessment is included as **Appendix J** of the report in Booklet A.
- 2.4 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever:** The attached report details the implications in relation to school buildings and school transport. It is estimated that in terms of the Council's carbon emissions, the proposal will see a net reduction.
- 2.5 **Risk:** These will be assessed as part of the statutory consultation process.
- 2.6 **Gaelic:** Newtonmore Primary School offers Gàidhlig Medium education for the Kingussie ASG. This is currently available to children from the Dalwhinnie catchment and the proposal would not introduce any change to that arrangement.
- 2.7 **Rural:** The proposal does impact on a rural school. The report contained in Booklet A sets out in some detail the rural/community implications, as required by the legislation. A rural impact assessment is included as **Appendix K**.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider this report and the proposal contained in Booklet A, and agree to proceed to statutory consultation, per the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, regarding the proposal for formal closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School and the re-assignment of its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 7 January 2016

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