



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE 24 AUGUST 2022**

**SUBJECT: LEARNING ESTATE – CLOSURE OF INVERAVON PRIMARY
SCHOOL STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to undertake statutory consultation on the closure of Inveravon Primary School.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Council in terms of Section III (D) (7) of the Council's Scheme of Administration to consider the closure of schools and other educational establishments under the control of the Council as Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) **authorise a statutory consultation with local stakeholders (Parent Councils, parents, pupils, staff and the local community) on the proposal to close Inveravon Primary School attached as Appendix 1; and**
- (ii) **agree to receive a further report on the outcome of the consultation in January 2023.**

3. BACKGROUND AND DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 3.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that local authorities undertake a formal consultation process whenever changes are proposed to the school estate, including the proposed closure of a school.
- 3.2 The statutory consultation must run for at least 30 days during term time. The consultation exercise will ensure that any concerns or questions regarding the proposal can be addressed. A public meeting must be held as part of the consultation.

- 3.3 Inveravon Primary School is a remote rural school which is part of the Speyside Associated Schools Group (ASG). The Children and Young People's Committee agreed on 23 August 2017 (para 9 of the minute refers) to mothball the school from August 2017 as a consequence of the roll falling to zero at the end of the academic year 2017/8.
- 3.4 Consultation on mothballing the school took place with parents and interested parties in September 2017. There was no appetite for the school to remain open. Although there was a desire to make the building available for the local community as a hall for activities, this could not be facilitated during mothballing.
- 3.5 Since the school has been mothballed, there have been no requests from parents to enrol their children at the school during the Primary 1 enrolment periods in January 2018, January 2019, January 2020 and January 2021. Consequently, during this period the school has remained mothballed.
- 3.6 At its meeting of 24 November 2021 (paragraph 12 of the minute refers), the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee agreed to the preparation of an options appraisal regarding the future of Inveravon Primary School.
- 3.7 As part of the options appraisal process a number of engagement sessions were held with the wider Inveravon community. Comments boxes were made available in locations around the catchment and an online comments page was open from 16 February 2022 to gather views from all residents. The options appraisal document is attached as **Appendix 2** to this report, together with the comments/suggestions received at **Appendix 3**.
- 3.8 Following completion of the options appraisal, the majority of potential uses would require the building to be discontinued as a primary school for the Inveravon community.
- 3.9 In the event of the building no longer being used for education the land, and consequently the building, will be handed back to the Ballindalloch Estate. This limits the Council influence on future use of the land and building, although all potential uses proposed during the previous community engagement and future consultation will be passed to the Estate.

4. **PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The recommendation of this report is to launch a formal statutory consultation to permanently close Inveravon Primary School. The consultation is proposed to take place during school term time from 29 August to 7 October 2022.
- 4.2 To allow for Education Scotland reporting and analysis of the consultation responses, it is expected that a further report would be circulated for Committee consideration in November 2022.
- 4.3 To ensure a holistic approach officers sought to engage widely to explore ways to improve educational, social and related opportunities for all children, young people and the wider community within the Inveravon Primary School catchment area. Accordingly, engagement with parents and carers was an essential part of this process.

- 4.4 As part of the options appraisal process, the Inveravon community have been given the opportunity to present alternatives to closure and to present their views for the authority to consider.
- 4.5 Officers have taken many factors into account while completing the options appraisal and setting out the proposal for closure. However, the main driver must be that educational benefits are at the heart of any proposal to make a significant change to Inveravon Primary School, for current and future pupils in the area.
- 4.6 The proposal document regarding the closure of Inveravon Primary School will be the subject of consultation between 29 August and 7 October 2022. This adequately covers the required period of 30 days term time consultation.
- 4.7 Two public meetings for stakeholders will be held on 27 September 2022. The first at Inveravon Church at 1.30pm, the second at Speyside High School Community Centre at 7pm. An online meeting will held on 28 September 2022 at 7pm.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

This report supports the LOIP outcomes:

Building a better future for children and young people in Moray:

- Healthier Children: children get the healthiest start in life and are supported to achieve the best possible mental health and wellbeing and there is equity for vulnerable groups.

And the aims of the Corporate Plan to:

- Improve health and wellbeing for the people of Moray.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 have been referred to and adhered to and will continue to be during consultation and with respect to any future decisions on the future of Inveravon Primary School.

Title deeds indicate that the school building is on land not owned by the Local Authority, rather the Owner, Ballindalloch Estate, gave permission to use the building over a century ago. If there is a future decision to close the school it will revert back to the Owner.

The local authority purchased an area of land (0.305 acres) to extend the subjects in 1926 accordingly Moray Council retain title to that upon closure. Should the school be closed in the future it is expected this land will be given back to the Ballindalloch Estate.

(c) Financial implications

The mothballing of Inveravon Primary School over the last 5 years has resulted in an annual cost saving of just under £118K. A decision to close the school would realise a further annual saving of £45,175 (following the 3 year cash conserved salary period). A more detailed Financial Report is at **Appendix 4**.

The reopening of the school would require full remediation of the site, and significant capital works to the building to achieve overall Condition B status. The cost of this has been estimated to be over £206k to support reopening and a further investment of over £130k over the next 5 years. This capital sum is not within the current capital plan.

If Inveravon Primary School is closed the catchment rezoning options to adjacent schools in the Speyside ASG could result in an increase in costs for school transport provision, which would need to be met by Moray Council. The increase is not expected to be significant and may be managed within the value of the current Speyside ASG transport contracts.

(d) Risk implications

There is a risk, albeit assumed a low one, that the school may be required to re-open should more pupils come forward as a result of the community engagement.

Should the school be required to be operational in the future, Property have completed a full condition survey to determine any repair and maintenance costs to return to operational status and the costs of those are detailed in Section 5c above.

(e) Staffing implications

Inveravon Primary School is currently in a paired Head Teacher arrangement with Knockando Primary School. In the event of Inveravon Primary School closing the implications on Knockando based Teaching Staff are as per table below.

	FTE (during mothballing)	FTE (post closure)
Head Teacher	1.0 (SP4)	1.0 (SP2)
Principal Teacher	1.0	
Head Teacher Relief		0.46
Class Teacher	1.0	1.0
McCrone	0.28	0.28
Total	3.28	2.72

The Head Teacher would move to SP4 from SP2 – cash conserved for 3 years. The Principal Teacher would need to be redeployed and potentially cash conserved for 3 years

There are no non-teaching staffing implications should Inveravon Primary School close.

(f) Property Impact

Whilst the school has been mothballed, the state of the building has been maintained as wind and water tight. The building has been

drained down and regular janitor inspections conducted and any issues, e.g. water ingress, have been addressed. This minimal care and maintenance regime will continue during and to conclusion of the statutory consultation process.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact on the education service. An assessment has been carried out, as part of the options appraisal process for Inveravon Primary School.

The main impact for children in the P1-7 age group is the length of journey from Inveravon to either Knockando, Aberlour or Glenlivet primary schools; however, as Inveravon Primary School has been mothballed since July 2017, the majority of the current pupils are already making the journey to either Knockando or Aberlour. Should there be future journeys to Glenlivet these would be of a similar distance and duration.

Under the Equality Act 2010 education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. Any existing arrangements in place for pupils within the schools affected with additional support needs will continue. As discussed in Appendix 1 Section 10.28 Aberlour Primary School is the enhanced provision hub for the Speyside ASG, and as such is fully adapted to meet the requirements of pupils with a range of additional support needs.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

A carbon assessment of Inveravon Primary and Knockando Primary, where the majority of pupils moved to at the time of mothballing, has been undertaken by the Moray Council Climate Team.

Overall the carbon impact per pupil is substantially lower at Knockando – and that includes the pupils on the school roll from the Inveravon catchment from Aug 2017. The reopening of Inveravon Primary School would therefore significantly increase carbon emissions in the future, outweighing any additional transport emissions associated with longer pupil journeys. A closure of Inveravon Primary School is therefore predicted to lead to carbon savings.

Further detail on the carbon impacts can be found in **Appendix 1**, Sections 14.1 to 14.3

(i) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education, Education Resources and Communities, the Head of Housing and Property, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, the HR Manager, Paul Connor, Principal Accountant, the Legal Services Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have all

been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Committee is requested to consider this report and approve the recommendation herein to authorise a statutory consultation with local stakeholders (Parent Councils, parents, pupils, staff and the local community), in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, on the proposal to close Inveravon Primary School and rezone in accordance with one of the options detailed in Appendix 1.**
- 6.2 The Committee will receive a further report on the outcome of the consultation process in January 2023.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-9425411-46
SPMAN-9425411-47
SPMAN-9425411-48
SPMAN-9425411-49
SPMAN-9425411-50