

Schools, Learning and Education

Review of Education Provision:

Permanent Closure of Crianlarich Nursery School

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Proposal Paper – March 2024

The proposal outlined in this paper relates to the permanent closure of Crianlarich Nursery School.

A public meeting regarding this proposal will be held on Tuesday 16th April 2024 from 6 – 7.30pm in Crianlarich Primary School.

Introduction

- 1.1. Following the implementation of the expansion of early learning and childcare (ELC) across Scotland in 2020, all eligible children are entitled to 1140 hours of funded ELC provision per year. This provision can be accessed in a local authority or partner provider nursery, or with a childminder.
- 1.2. All children aged 3-5 years, along with some 2 year olds who meet a certain eligibility criteria, are eligible for this provision.
- 1.3. The underpinning guidance for the expansion of ELC, *Funding Follows the Child*, enables families to choose where to access their funded entitlement. This can be in their home authority, or within a different authority of their choice.
- 1.4. Children in Crianlarich and the surrounding Stirling Council area have had the option to access their entitlement to ELC in Crianlarich Nursery. Crianlarich Nursery is attached to Crianlarich Primary School building, and operates under a trial shared headship with Crianlarich Primary School, Killin Nursery and Killin Primary School.
- 1.5. Crianlarich Nursery provides ELC for children aged 2-5 years. It is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide 16 places for children aged 0-5 years.
- 1.6. Historically, a significant percentage of children who access Crianlarich Nursery have been cross boundary children resident in Argyll and Bute Council.
- 1.7. The roll of Crianlarich Nursery has been decreasing, with Argyll and Bute children now attending ELC provision more locally, affecting the roll of Crianlarich Nursery.
- 1.8. There has also been a staffing recruitment challenge, which has impacted on Crianlarich Nursery being appropriately staffed. Over the past few months, the children who should be attending Crianlarich Nursery have been transported to Killin Nursery, with a temporary amalgamation of Crianlarich Nursery with Killin Nursery, and this remains the current situation.
- 1.9. In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, this paper proposes the permanent closure of Crianlarich Nursery School with effect from 31st August 2025.

2 Reasons for Formulating the Proposal

- 2.1. Crianlarich Nursery is located close to the border with Argyll & Bute Council and has historically provided ELC to cross boundary children from that authority.
- 2.2. Following the expansion of ELC in 2020, the number of children attending Crianlarich Nursery from Argyll & Bute Council has reduced due to nursery sessions becoming available in Argyll & Bute local authority, which had not been available previously.
- 2.3. The roll of the nursery and attendance from both Argyll and Bute (AB), and Stirling Council (SC) areas since 2018-2019 is detailed below, outlining a declining roll over the past 5 years:

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
A&B - 5	A&B - 7	A&B - 2	A&B - 2	A&B - 2	A&B - 0
SC - 6	SC - 4	SC - 2	SC - 3	SC - 2	SC - 2
Total - 11	Total - 11	Total - 4	Total - 5	Total - 4	Total - 2

- 2.4. In addition, there is currently a significant national and local staffing recruitment challenge for ELC. This is particularly prevalent in rural areas such as in the Killin and Crianlarich area.
- 2.5. From March 2023, there have been difficulties in recruiting staff in the Crianlarich area. Vacant staff posts for Crianlarich Nursery have not been filled despite re-advertising the posts. In order to continue to provide a service for children of Crianlarich Nursery, a temporary amalgamation of Killin and Crianlarich nurseries was put in place from 6 March 2023, with Crianlarich children attending Killin Nursery for their funded entitlement to ELC. This temporary amalgamation of the two nurseries from March 2023 has been successful for children and families.
- 2.6. The current role for session 2023-2024 for Crianlarich Nursery is 2 children with these children continuing to be accommodated at Killin Nursery.
- 2.7. There are currently 22 out of a maximum 32 nursery places utilised by children aged 3 to 5 years at Killin Nursery. Based on future role predictions Killin Nursery, as the closest Stirling Council nursery, has capacity to continue to accommodate children resident in the Crianlarich area should parents wish to submit applications. Future roll predictions for Crianlarich Nursery for eligible children are as follows:

Academic Year	Predicted number of Crianlarich children
2024-25	3
2025-26	3
2026-27	2
2027-28	3
2028-29	1

- 2.8. The temporary closure of Crianlarich Nursery because of the amalgamation with Killin Nursery has not had an impact on the P1 enrolment to Crianlarich Primary School. All children eligible to enrol at Crianlarich Primary School for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school session have done so.

2.9.

A pre-consultation exercise was undertaken with families of children who are currently eligible for Crianlarich Nursery, and with families of school age children who previously attended the nursery. This group included local business owners. During this pre-consultation, challenges and possible solutions were explored. A summary of the points raised and responses are detailed for each point:

Parent/Carer Query	Stirling Council Response
<p>Are there any alternatives to the current nursery provision?</p>	<p>The option of a 'Onery' provision which amalgamates nursery and school age children in one classroom has been explored. The context of the building in Crianlarich Primary School presents challenges to this option. The school has 2 classrooms, and an amalgamation of nursery and younger school age children would mean a wide age range of children being supported in one room, an age range of 2- 8 year olds. In addition the school would require to have appropriate toilet and nappy changing facilities to meet Care Inspectorate regulations. The school building does not have the appropriate facilities or space to develop these.</p> <p>Stirling Council are currently working in partnership with the Scottish Childminding Association as part of a national campaign to recruit childminders to rural areas. If successful, this would provide an employment opportunity for local people within their own home and provide alternative childcare to nursery provision.</p>
<p>As the next nearest provision, would there be enough available space within Killin Nursery to continue to accommodate Crianlarich children?</p>	<p>Yes, Killin Nursery is registered for 16 children age 3-5 years. An operating model of 8am-6pm Monday to Friday over extended weeks of the year provides spaces for 32 children to access their funded entitlement of 1140 hours of ELC per year. Killin Nursery has capacity to offer provision for six 2 year olds at any one time. With this operating model, twelve 2 year olds can attend over the course of one day.</p>
<p>What are our travel options to Killin Nursery? Travel distance from Crianlarich to Killin is 13.8 miles and takes approximately 20 minutes by car.</p>	<p>Travel is by a main road and there is a limited bus service which travels this route. There is no statutory entitlement for travel to a nursery provision, however Stirling Council can provide transport or parent mileage for children who meet a certain eligibility criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any child who is recorded or at risk of being recorded on the Child Protection Register.</i> • <i>A change in family circumstances which has caused acute stress and where grave or specific concerns have been identified by an appropriate agency.</i> • <i>Children just removed from the Child Protection register (liaise with Social Care).</i> • <i>Children with Special Educational Needs (liaise with Service Manager with responsibility for ASN).</i> • <i>Developmental needs as assessed by Head of Establishment.</i> • <i>Children who are looked after by the local authority, are under a Statutory Supervision Order or are in foster care and do not meet any other eligibility criteria.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A family with an additional Health Plan Indicator (HPI). HPI indicates that the child, and/or their parent, requires sustained additional input from professional services to help the child attain their health and development potential.</i> • <i>Family stress (e.g. urban/rural deprivation, bereavement, multiple births, chronic illness, mental health issues, relationship breakdown) – this list is not exhaustive.</i> • <i>No transport.</i> • <i>No access to public transport.</i> • <i>No options to car share.</i> • <i>Rural isolation.</i>
Will the additional travel impact on our working hours?	Currently Crianlarich children access their funded entitlement over Monday to Friday from 9am-3pm during term-time. The Killin operating model is from 8am-6pm Monday to Friday over extended weeks of the year. Sessions can be offered flexibly over longer days, e.g. 8am-6pm over 3 days per week. This would allow families time to make the journey before and after working hours. There is also capacity to purchase additional hours to the funded entitlement to better meet working hours. This is currently not available in Crianlarich Nursery.
What about my child's transition to school?	A robust transition programme has been implemented as part of the temporary amalgamation of Killin and Crianlarich Nurseries. Due to the small school role, this can be flexible and a bespoke programme can be created to best meet the needs of individual children and families.
What will the impact be on the community?	<p>Due to the declining nursery role, it is anticipated that there will be some impact on a small number of local families, however all children will be offered an alternative ELC provision. It is noted that school and nursery families who participated in the pre-consultation meeting have expressed concerns that a lack of childcare may impact on new families moving to the area.</p> <p>There is potential for the existing nursery space to be leased to community groups.</p>

3 Financial information

- 3.1. Savings of £112k could be made. Further investigations are underway regarding possible future use or sale of the nursery building which is attached to Crianlarich Primary School and, of which could provide income generation.

4 Alternatives to the Proposal

- 4.1. An alternative to this proposal would be to mothball the provision at Crianlarich Nursery however future roll predictions do not indicate or guarantee any anticipated further increase in the nursery roll. In addition, given the ongoing national recruitment challenges, there is no guarantee that Stirling Council would be able to recruit and fill the vacant staff posts for Crianlarich Nursery.
- 4.2. For Crianlarich Nursery to remain operational, the same roll predictions and recruitment challenges would apply. In addition, the service would continue to operate at a financial loss to the council.
- 4.3. An alternative to amalgamate Crianlarich school and nursery provision was explored and discounted due to the physical environment of the school. The layout of the school allows for only 2 classrooms which are split into P1-P3 and P4-P7. This is

prohibitive for the age range of nursery and school children (2-11) to be fully supported in their learning across these rooms. The current arrangement with the amalgamation with Killin Nursery is working well.

- 4.4. Due to the rural nature of the community and a parental ask to provide local ELC options, Stirling Council are currently working in partnership with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) to promote recruitment of childminders in the area. If this is successful, families would have the additional option of choosing to access a childminder, or nursery provision within Killin Nursery, for their funded entitlement to ELC.

5 Educational Benefits Statement

- 5.1. The closure of Crianlarich Nursery would provide a range of educational benefits and enhance the Council's efforts to meet the statutory duties enshrined in:

- Education (Scotland) Act 1980
- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000
- Local Government in Scotland Act 2003
- Education Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

- 5.2. Specifically, the continuation of nursery provision for Crianlarich children within Killin Nursery (as the closest Stirling Council Nursery) will have the following educational benefits for children attending the nursery:

5.2.1. This will enable the children who would normally attend Crianlarich Nursery to play and learn with a larger group of peers at Killin Nursery, which is particularly beneficial for children of this age group to support development of social and life skills such as turn-taking, sharing, negotiation and collaboration. Crianlarich children are currently accessing Killin Nursery, therefore there will be no requirement for any child to move settings mid-year.

5.2.2. The larger space in Killin Nursery allows for a wider range of resources and learning experiences to be offered to children. Based in the heart of the village of Killin, the nursery is involved in community life, with an award winning link with the local retirement home for their intergenerational work.

5.2.3. If the proposal is formalised, there would be no change to the current arrangements for nursery provision for children in Crianlarich. This means that:

- Children from Crianlarich will continue to be offered nursery sessions from 9am – 3pm Monday to Friday during term time (38 weeks), with transport provided, until permanent closure in August 2025.
- After August 2025, the closest Stirling Council Nursery for children in Crianlarich would be Killin Nursery, which offers children 5 x 5hour sessions between 8am and 6pm over 45.6 weeks.

5.2.4. The temporary amalgamation of Crianlarich Nursery and Killin Nursery has enabled Killin Nursery to develop a robust transition programme with Crianlarich Primary School, which will continue to grow and develop if the proposal is formalised.

5.2.5. This proposal also supports the ongoing recruitment challenges in the local area. It will provide a secure offer of extended day and extended year provision in Killin Nursery. Both settings are 'sister' nurseries and have operated under the one service but over two sites for many years. Both nurseries share an improvement plan, standards & quality report, and a clear shared vision, values and pedagogy.

5.2.6. Killin Nursery has been evaluated with grades of Very Good from Education Scotland in 2018, and grades of Very Good with the Care Inspectorate in their most recent inspection in March 2023. This is robust evidence of the high quality ELC provided in Killin Nursery. Research evidences the positive impact for children who access ELC in settings which are assessed as very good and above.

6 Consultation Timeline

6.1. The consultation process will be carried out in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and a summary is shown below:

Process	Indicative Date
Consultation document issued to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Parent Council or Combined Parent Council of any affected school, • the parents of the pupils at any affected school, • the parents of any children expected by the education authority to attend any affected school within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper, • the pupils at any affected school (in so far as the education authority considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity), • the staff (teaching and other) at any affected school, • any trade union which appears to the education authority to be representative of the persons mentioned in sub-paragraph (e), • the community council (if any), • the community planning partnership (within the meaning of section 4(5) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) for the area of the local authority in which any affected school is situated, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ any other community planning partnership that the education authority considers relevant • i) any other education authority that the education authority considers relevant. 	04 March 2024
Consultation begins through the Engage platform.	04 March 2024
Promotion advising the public of the consultation and date of the public meeting.	04 March 2024
Public consultation meeting to be held on Tuesday 16 th April 2024 in Crianlarich Primary School.	16 April 2024
Public consultation ends (at least 6 weeks after the public consultation begins, excluding school holidays).	01 May 2024

Report to Education Scotland on the outcome of the consultation.	15 May 2024
Response from Education Scotland on the outcome of the consultation.	07 June 2024
Consultation response report prepared and published by the authority.	June 2024
Consultation report submitted to the relevant Committee or full Council as appropriate with final recommendations for consideration.	August/September 2024

7 Responding to the Proposal

- 7.1. Engage Stirling is the council's consultation and engagement platform. We now host all of our consultations and engagement projects in one place to make it easy for everyone to access all of our live consultations and petitions. This also ensures that we can provide easy to access updates so everyone can see how their views influence policy and practice within the council.
- 7.2. Engage Stirling is open to everyone over the age of thirteen. They can access Engage from any device and create an account by following the on screen prompts. Users are only asked to sign up once and when this is done, they can access all of our live consultations and petitions hosted on the site.
- 7.3. The consultation period will run from 04 March 2024 to 01 May 2024.

A public consultation meeting will take place on Tuesday 16th April 2024 from 6 – 7.30pm in Crianlarich Primary School. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so.

- 7.4. To submit a response using an alternative method please contact educationenquiries@stirling.gov.uk or call 01786 233185.

8 Data Protection

- 8.1. The information you provide in the survey will be treated as confidential and in adherence with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. To find out more about your data protection rights and how we will use your data please see this Privacy Notice.